

Phantom Menace

The Politics and Policies of Migration in Central Europe

Jacek Kucharczyk and Grigorij Mesežnikov (eds.)



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Authors: Olena Babakova, Vladimír Baláž, Sylvie Burianová, Zora Bútorová, Eva Čech Valentová, Joanna Fomina, Miroslava Hlinčíková, Tomáš Jungwirth, Katarína Karasová, Maryla Koss-Goryszewska, Nóra Köves, Jacek Kucharczyk, Grigorij Mesežnikov, Mikołaj Pawlak, Martina Sekulová, Béla Soltész, Attila Szabó, Hana Votradovcová

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English proofreading: Marek Šťastný

Project coordinators: Grigorij Mesežnikov, project leader (Slovakia), Jacek Kucharczyk (Poland), Nóra Köves (Hungary), Pavlína Janebová (Czech Republic)

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PREFACE

The crisis of the EU's refugee and asylum policy has polarised societies and turned political discourse upside down across Europe. Despite the presence of migration in the discourse of politicians, media and the general public in recent years, there is a persistent lack of facts and detailed information about the life situations and motivations of newcomers to Europe. This explosive state of play allows for enormous manipulation with public opinions and a political shift to the right which is threatening established as well as younger democracies. At the same time, 2018 marks the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and 2019 marks three decades since the fall of the Iron Curtain. The reflection on these jubilees seems of particular importance in the context of the above-mentioned developments.

The political abuse of issues related to refugees, asylum, and migration goes hand-in-hand with growing populism which is an alarming pan-European trend undermining democratic values. The escalating political debate and harshly rejectionist positions of the governments of all four Visegrad countries with respect to receiving refugees signaled to us a ripe reason to undertake this study. With this book we aim to contribute to a fact-based debate focusing on the politics and policies of migration in Central Europe.

We would never have been able to share the collective insight contained in this book without the contribution of the unique team of authors that came together, and two co-editors, Grigorij Mesežnikov and Jacek Kucharczyk. Special thanks belong to the Institute for Public Affairs and its president Grigorij Mesežnikov, the latter for coordinating the entire project. The texts were written by experts in the field who carry out independent research in the Visegrad states in a number of renowned institutions. We want to thank them for their valiant efforts and the very fact they accepted our invitation to join in this project. We sincerely hope their works will enrich the existent body of knowledge and deepen the understanding of the wider context of migration in this part of Europe.

In Prague, December 2018

Eva van de Rakt, Head of Office

Tomáš Bouška, Programme Coordinator

Prague Office of the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

INTRODUCTION

Migration debate in Central Europe: Between real challenges and imaginary threats

JACEK KUCHARCZYK – GRIGORIJ MESEŽNIKOV

Before 2015 the topic of migration and refugees was rather marginal in terms of public interest and influence on the voting preferences of the population in the countries of Central Europe. Consequently, it played secondary role in the programmes and discourses of political parties. However, since the summer of 2015, with the onset of the so-called “refugee crisis”, the situation has rapidly changed and this issue has become the arena of sharp political contestation. It has strongly affected domestic politics but also relations between Central European countries and their key European partners, especially Germany. Last but not least, the migration issues have had strong impact, almost invariably negative, on the relations between the Visegrad 4 countries and the key EU institutions. The policies and politics of migration and refugees quickly have moved from the margins to the centre of public and political debate.

Sharp political debate

In 2015, the number of migrants and refugees has risen sharply in Europe, a refugee crisis emerged when people from some Middle East countries (especially from Syria and Iraq), from Afghanistan, from Northern and Equatorial Africa, where long-term war and civilian conflicts and riots persist, started to move and arrive in substantial numbers to Italy, Greece and the Balkans and then throughout the European Union. This great migration has had a tremendous impact on the political realities and public discussions in most, if not all, European countries. It fuelled the popularity of anti-migrant populist parties, which attacked mainstream politicians for their alleged complacency or even complicity in what they described as “invasion of Europe” by predominantly Muslim migrants. Also the Central European countries were not spared the upsurge of populist politics fuelled by the refugee crisis.

The issue of migration is nowadays one of the most discussed topics in different societal environments (political sphere, state administration, media, and expert community). Despite the fact that numbers of persons who applied for asylum in V4 countries in 2015 – 2018 are incomparably lower than in the Western European states and that V4 countries (with certain exception of Hungary) were spared a massive flow of refugees during the escalation of crisis in 2015, the stances of V4 govern-

ments on the issue of migration and refugees were marked by reluctance or explicit rejection to participate in sharing of responsibility for managing the crisis with other EU member states. This clear position has been repeatedly demonstrated to Brussels and Western European capitals by Visegrad ruling political elites, either en bloc or by individual officials, national politicians. The situational differences between V4 countries on this issue did not matter too much, and as it seems, at least now, even within the current configuration of political landscape in the Visegrad states the rejectionist stances will sustain and will continue to influence the official policies.

Today, the countries of the V-4 group, consisting of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, are among the harshest opponents of the idea of distributing migrants between individual EU member states. The group actually refuses to accept refugees from Muslim countries on its territory. It is not surprising that the nationalist and radical political forces in these countries are strengthening their positions on the wave of anti-immigration moods.

The reasons why representatives of Visegrad political elites do not take the issue of migration and refugees as the challenge and opportunity for their societies are obvious – political positioning and power considerations in the conditions of persisting isolationist mindset and xenophobic moods of big parts of the population. Politicians present the issue purely as a problem, stressing concerns and fears, emphasising the costs, but avoiding to speak about possible benefits and opportunities of receiving migrants.

Migration in people's perception

The current situation with refugees and immigrants in Europe, including Central Europe, however, is neither new nor unique in the context of history of this phenomenon. The causes of recent migratory flow can be peculiar, but the political management of its course and consequences should be based on rational approaches and should employ the factors that would help to transform the opportunities into realities with a positive effects in social, economic and political sphere.

Migration in Central Europe, as elsewhere, is a multidimensional issue. It comprises the issues of border control and security that have dominated the discussions over the last three years. At the same time, for many Central Europeans, outwards migration is a social reality many of them have experienced, especially after our countries joined the European Union in 2004. Migration debates concern the challenges of ageing European populations, demand for skilled labour force, competition for the “best brains” and the departure of young and skilled people from individual countries abroad – either inside or outside of the EU. Migration is closely linked to the challenges of migrants’ integration, which in many ways is framed by the national legislations and policies, particularly with integration policies, as well as with the declared positions of state institutions.

The citizens of our countries often have only minimal experience with the “otherness”, with people from other countries and cultures, professing other religions, with different living habits. Sociological surveys confirm that it is because of the lack of knowledge that human fear often flows, the fear of a possible threat, anxiety from the possible disruption of the established ways of life. This fear is usually associated with alertness, distrust of something that people do not know or what they have distorted ideas about.

Fear, however, prevents them from seeing wider contexts, from recognising the new phenomena, expanding their horizons. People are often led by negative stereotypes and simplifications. Many politicians use mistrust and people's concerns to get more public support. Instead of explaining and creating space for reflection, for recall of not so old refugee history of the Central European countries

themselves, they rather strengthen stereotypes, link migrants and refugees exclusively with possible social and political problems, with the threat of violence, with terrorism. People, coming from outside of Europe, thus lose their identity and their individuality in the media and public discourse, becoming part of the abstract dehumanised masses.

Who are migrants?

The lack of clarity in terminology and categories that migrants are referred to often leads to misunderstandings and is used by some unscrupulous politicians to confuse the public. For example, the Polish government representatives on frequent occasions falsely claimed that Poland received over one million Ukrainian refugees whereas in fact very few Ukrainian citizens have been awarded refugee status in Poland. While hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians have moved to Poland in recent years, they have been welcome by employers and contributed to the dynamic growth of the Polish economy in recent years. They are economic migrants, not refugees. On the other hand, politicians and pro-government media frequently depict genuine refugees from Syria as 'economic migrants' and hence not deserving the refugee status. Therefore we consider it necessary to clarify the terminology used throughout the present publication.

Currently, there are migrants with different formal status located in the EU member states, here they live, work, study or enjoy protection from adverse external circumstances. In this regard we can speak of internal and external migration. We can distinguish between the motivations and goals of the movement, the length or the legality of stay, the cause of leaving, which can be either voluntary or compulsory. We can speak of compulsory migration when people are directly forced to leave from somewhere because of war or persecution, and the circumstances are so dreadful that people have no choice, but to flee. The voluntary migration is a movement made by choice, it can happen either in a hope for a better life, or because of the desire to study or work somewhere else.

When people are leaving from a place they live, they can either move within a country, which is internal migration or they can cross the state border, which is external migration. When people attempt to cross the border, they can do it legally with their ID or passport (plus visa if necessary). However, if they are fleeing from war or persecution and are not able to receive visa or they don't have a passport because of the circumstances, they cross the border irregularly. An irregular migrant is a person who does not possess the papers to cross the border legally at the official border crossing points, and when in the country he/she presents himself/herself to the authorities and demands international protection.

Since the form of arriving to a new country can be different, the status of a person can vary too. If someone comes legally to a new country (with visa or ID), he/she can arrange his/her permanent or temporary residence status, while if someone arrives irregularly he/she has to go through a different process. If a person does not wish to submit an asylum application in a country he/she arrived, then he/she will be detained and most probably expelled from the country. However, a person shall not be penalised for his/her illegal entry if one is coming directly from a country where his/her freedom and life is in danger, and if he presents himself to the authorities without delay, asking for international protection. Then the asylum procedure shall start where the authorities will investigate whether the person is allowed to have international protection or not. During the procedure, the applicant's case shall be examined individually and certain guarantees should be ensured, for instance the right to remain in the state during the examination, the right to information, a personal interview shall be conducted, one should receive free legal assistance and representation etc.

If the protection is granted, a foreign person can receive either refugee status or subsidiary protection. Refugee can be anyone if he or she "is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it." The European Union has established a new status called subsidiary protection in 2004, for those who are fleeing from conflict zones or war areas, but they are not personally persecuted, just in general danger. A third country national or a stateless person is allowed to receive subsidiary protection if he or she is subjected to serious harm, which means *inter alia* "indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict."

As soon as the international protection is granted, the EU member state should give a residence permit at least for 3 years to those who received refugee status, and a for a minimum of 2 years for those who were granted subsidiary protection. The state should also ensure that those receiving protection will have access to health care, employment, social welfare, and education, but the latest is just in the case of minors. A refugee status means a stronger protection, while the subsidiary protection is weaker. It could be dissolved more easily if the circumstances on which the decision was based on have ceased to exist or eased and the person would be no longer subjected to serious harm.¹

The need for informed debate

Public and political discourse in the V4 countries has been marked in recent years by presentations of various public figures, including politicians, on topics related to external migration and refugee issue, multiculturalism, the coexistence of people of different faiths and cultures. Often, however, these were persons who did not have sufficient knowledge of the mentioned issues. Many of them present instead of real knowledge only their own opinion formed under the influence of stereotypical ideas, often based not on the accurate and fair analysis and study of sources, but on their own ideological credo or political beliefs. It is too little for open and honest public discussion, not speaking about serious policy proposals for implementable practical solutions.

Therefore, proceeding from the need to summarise the diverse contexts of migration issues in the V4 countries into a compact analytical publication and to draw attention of the Central European public to its particular dimensions and contexts, the Germany's Heinrich Böll Foundation in cooperation with the Institute for Public Affairs (IVO) and two other partner organisations – the Institute of Public Affairs (ISP), Warsaw and the Association for International Affairs (AMO), Prague – and a group of independent experts from Hungary, decided to publish this book. Its authors, who have dealt with migration issues for a long time and in a systematic way, through their analysis, allow readers to look at the current movements across borders – in Central Europe and its surroundings – from different angles: via numbers, statistics, through public policy analysis, through wider contexts of migration in Europe and in the world, through experience with the integration of foreigners, through socio-economic and internal political aspects. This publication is elevating the theme of migration and refugees in the V4 from the general level of considerations to the level of specific facts and data, analysis of statistics and public policies, media responses, political programmes and policy statements. This gives a closer look at who and how is coming to the Central European countries, and how and if the V4 population and institutions are able to accept migrants and refugees and then to integrate them into society.

¹ Section containing the definitions of different categories of migrants has been prepared with the kind assistance of Nóra Köves, one of the authors of this book.

The publication *Phantom Menace: The Politics and Policies of Migration in Central Europe* consists of four analytical sections dedicated to individual Visegrad countries – Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. Each national section includes three topical chapters:

1. Chapter on socio-economic aspect of migration covering overall national historic and socio-political context, country's migration flows – to and from, statistics of foreigners (migrants, refugees, asylum seekers), dynamism in migratory trends, situation of expats/diaspora outside of the country (numbers, destinations, European contexts); proportion of costs and benefits of international (external) migration for the country; employment opportunities, situation on job market; demographic trends (ageing of the population, impacts to the social welfare sector etc.).
2. Chapter on aspect of integration of migrants/refugees covering state migration policy (strategies, approaches, documents); legislative regulations; policies in particular areas of integration of migrants and refugees (social, cultural, educational); experience on the national (country) and local (municipalities) levels.
3. Chapter on domestic political aspect covering domestic party politics toward issue of migration and refugees (party documents, politicians' statements and performance); activities of administrations, legislative regulations, political radicalisation, shifts towards right-wing extremism, mainstreaming of anti-migrant xenophobia, country's public opinion about external migration (polls results); public discourse and overall socio-political atmosphere.

Migration as a challenge and opportunity

External migration has a dual significance for every developed free and democratic country. It is both a challenge and an opportunity. When it comes to the question of reception of persons seeking international protection, it is a challenge testing the ability of states and populations to show solidarity and to provide assistance and help to those who need it, remaining firmly committed to the norms and values that form the basis of a free democratic society and thanks to which V4 countries are now constituent parts of the most advanced space of the world, the members of EU, NATO and OECD, and according to reliable comparative data they live better than in all previous historical periods ever. The issue of receiving refugees puts the particular onus on the political class in our countries. The politicians professing commitment to liberal-democratic and European values need to do a better job explaining and persuading the publics about the need to extend solidarity to those in need. They need to avoid the temptation of capitalising on politics of fear or seek to outbid the populists in their anti-migrant stance. Solidarity towards refugees is particularly important in Central Europe with its relatively recent past of foreign occupation, political persecution and political migration. We need to be able to show the same solidarity that the generation of our parents and grandparents received from many societies in Europe and beyond.

Another challenge related to migration in our countries is the issue of migrants' integration. Not enough attention, beyond expert and academic circles, had been paid to this issue before 2015. After the so-called 'refugee crisis' the debate on integration has been largely focused on 'securitisation' of state policies towards migrants. While our governments have been trying hard to limit the number of

refugees they accept, in some cases making it very difficult to even submit an application, relatively little attention has been paid to the challenges of the integration of economic migrants, who have arrived in large numbers in response to the needs of Central European labour markets. Once again, our politicians prefer to keep the public in the dark, insisting that these migrants do not require any integration policy on behalf of the central and local governments, thus repeating the mistakes of the "ga-starbeiter" policies of some Western European governments in 1950s and 1960s.

The issue of integration of both refugees and economic migrants requires special attention if we are to move beyond the view of migration as a 'threat' or a challenge and towards taking full advantage of the opportunities they present for our societies. Immigration presents us with an opportunity to increase the development potential of the Central European countries that is particularly important in the light of the unfavourable demographic trends in the region and in Europe. Central Europe has been subject to slow and probably irreversible demographic decline. The post-2004 migrations from Central to Western Europe have exacerbated these negative demographic tendencies. Some of our governments have launched expensive 'pro-family' programmes to increase fertility rates. The most ambitious (and expensive) of those, Family 500 Plus programme of the Law and Justice government in Poland has so far mainly contributed to maintaining public support for the ruling party, yet it failed to make a serious dent in the declining population trends. Migrations to V4 countries present us with an opportunity to address these demographic challenges. In fact, economic migration represents today one of the most realistic sources of sustainability of important societal sectors (social and pension systems, services, industry, agriculture, etc.). However, we can take full advantage of these opportunities only by abandoning the current politics of fear and securitisation and embrace ambitious migration and integration strategies instead. The editors hope that the present publication will help provide substantive arguments for such a paradigm shift in our migration debates.

SLOVAKIA

International migration in Slovakia: Past, present and future

KATARÍNA KARASOVÁ – VLADIMÍR BALÁŽ

1. Introduction

This chapter aims to provide an insight into the importance of intra-European migration. Until recently, the importance of this issue for the further fate of Europe and Slovakia has been rather underestimated. Much more media attention has been attracted by the migration crisis associated with the arrival of migrants from North Africa and the Middle East. However, the intra-European migration flows (understood in this study as migratory changes in the target countries of migration) are not only significantly larger than those of migrants from third countries but also have their long-term historical, linguistic and cultural frameworks that determine their geographical distribution.

Migration flows within the EU at first glance do not provoke so much controversy as the arrival of 1.2 million migrants from Asia and North Africa. However, freedom of flow within the EU makes these flows more difficult to control. The overall volume of intra-European flows is so high that it creates political and economic problems both in countries of origin and in the target countries of migration. The importance of intra-European migratory flows was only realised by the public after immigration from the new EU member states became the main topic of the referendum on the UK's continued membership in the EU. However, intra-European migration flows have long-term and very serious economic repercussions for origin countries of migration such as Slovakia. The European Union is undergoing a demographic change that is unmatched in modern history. Demographic projections indicate that, as a result of population's aging, there will be a significant decline in labour resources in most EU countries. Few countries, Britain paradoxically included, even significantly benefit from intra-European migration. However, the new member states lose human capital through the mentioned intra-European migration. In the end, this will jeopardise financial and economic stability of the source countries of migration. Countries affected by labour migration should therefore develop active migration policies aimed at reducing the emigration of young people and attracting immigrants from other countries. In the case of immigration, however, it is very important that the integration of immigrants is achieved with the lowest economic and social costs.

2. Migration flows in Europe: myths and facts

The year of 2015 was a turning point in the perception of migration in Europe. The photos of migrants carrying their children through the Balkans to the Austrian borders firstly touched Europe and then polarised the public opinion. The media coverage of these flows was much higher than their actual volume. Migrants from Africa and Asia, who first applied for asylum, were only 1.23 million in 2015 (Enderline – Koenig, 2016). This is only 0.2-0.3% of the population of the European Union. No migration flood occurred. Nevertheless, the arrival of migrants from the Middle East and North Africa caused political earthquakes in many European countries.

We have a natural tendency to see the accession of new member states as well as the arrival of migrants from Syria and North Africa as new and unique events. In reality, however, these flows do not deviate in particular from the historical tendency of migratory flows in Europe. The post 2004 labour migration from the new EU member states looks similar, considering motifs and volume, to the labour migration from the southern EU member states in the 1960s to the 1980s. The waves of refugees from Syria and North Africa are similar to the waves of refugees due to the conflicts ensuing after the collapse of Yugoslavia in the first half of the 90s. For example, in 1992, more than 800,000 refugees from Bosnia were registered by the OECD countries (OECD, 2015).

If we look at migration not through TV spots but through numbers and facts, we see that in reality, intra-European migration is much more important for Europe than the arrival of people from other countries. In 2013 according to OECD and Eurostat data, 14.2 million Europeans from another EU country lived in EU countries, which accounts for about 3% of the EU population. There are, of course, emigration-dominated countries and countries where immigration prevails. The most massive flows are from Romania to Italy (1.08 million people) and Spain (0.73 million people). Migration flows between Poland on the one hand and Britain and Germany on the other hand (0.68 and 0.61 million people) are also very strong. However, it is not only people from Eastern Europe who migrate. For example, 0.5 million Portuguese workers work in France and 0.55 million Italians work in Germany.

Significant migratory flows are not an exception but a rule in Europe². In the modern history of Europe, the largest migratory flows are linked to wars and political events, often accompanied by (mostly forced) population transfers. From our own history we can see, for example, the displacement of Germans and Hungarians. In the post-war history of Europe, especially the outflows of migrant workers from Turkey and the former Yugoslavia into Germany, as well as flows from Italy, Spain and Portugal to Germany, France and the Benelux countries in the 60s and 70s of the last century. In Western Europe at that time the period of economic prosperity culminated. The advanced countries of the then European Economic Community felt shortages of experienced labour, which they addressed by the import of "gastarbeiters" from southern Europe and Turkey.

Another important milestone in intra-European migration was 1989 when opportunities for travelling to the EU countries were opened for the people of the then Eastern Block. Even citizens of Czechoslovakia, and since 1993, citizens of Slovakia have been given the opportunity to travel to Western Europe for three months without work visas. Many have also used the opening of borders to find work. Some were able to obtain work permits, others worked within the grey economy.

2 The migration flow denotes movements of migrants between countries. We describe migration flows as changes in the topology of the international migration network. The 'flow' has no political or cultural connotations.

A significant breaking point in documented migration occurred in May 2004, when the new member states joined the EU. Since then, the size and composition of migratory flows have changed. The number of migrants has increased. There are significant migratory flows between the East and the West. However, not all EU15 countries³ have opened up their labour markets for migrants from the new member states immediately. Some countries implemented temporary restrictions that allowed gradual adaptation of labour markets. Immediately after accession, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom lifted all restrictions on the labour market for EU8 citizens.⁴ Other countries have opened their labour markets gradually. In 2006, Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Finland opened their labour markets followed by Luxemburg and the Netherlands in 2007, France in 2008 and Belgium and Denmark in 2009. In 2011, as the last ones, the Germans and Austrians opened their labour markets. Another milestone in intra-European migration was the entry of Romania and Bulgaria into the EU in 2007. Although Bulgaria and Romania gained full access to all EU labour markets officially only in 2014, as many as 3 million citizens were already present in the EU15 in 2014 from these two countries. Some countries (Sweden, Finland, Greece, Italy and Portugal) opened labour markets to Bulgaria and Romania already during the period of 2007 – 2012. Many Romanians and Bulgarians also worked illegally in the EU15 before and their presence is only documented via census data and surveys on labour force.

The enlargement of the European Union from 15 to 25 (and later 28) member states quickly resulted in a significant increase in the number of EU8 citizens working in the countries of EU15. While in 2004 there was only 0.85 million citizens from EU10⁵ in the EU15, in 2013 that number was already 3.05 million. Holland et al. (2011) assume that about three-quarters of migrants from the new member states came to Western Europe due to EU enlargement and about a quarter of migrants would have come to Western Europe anyway.

Intra-European migration flows can be depicted using a figure (see Figure 1a-b). The figure consists of circles and lines. Circles represent migration destinations. The size of the circle is directly proportional to the number of migrants living in the country (including children and non-working family members). The lines indicate the direction of migrants from the country of origin to the country of destination. The deeper the line is, the higher the number of migrants. For clarity, only migrant flows larger than 4,000 people are recorded in the figure. For example, for the period of 2005 – 2013, the most dramatic flows are generated by Romania towards Spain and Italy. However, very strong flows were also between Ireland and Britain, between Italy on the one hand and Germany and Switzerland on the other, and between Portugal on the one hand and France, Belgium and Switzerland on the other. The flow between Slovakia and the Czech Republic is well visible on both diagrams, although it belongs within the smaller ones within Europe. It is not difficult to note that many large flows are going on especially between countries that have identical or at least similar languages and cultures.

3 The EU15 countries include Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

4 The EU8 countries include Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

5 The EU10 countries include Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

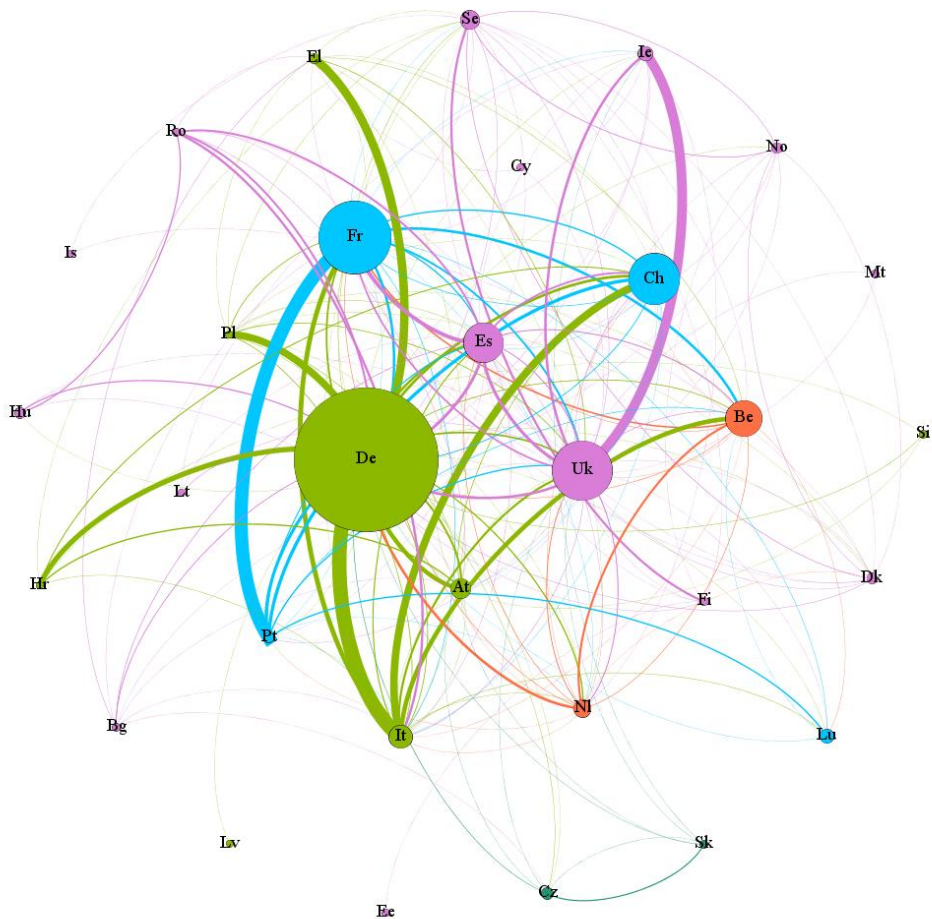
Analysis of the map of migration flows in Europe using network diagrams (Figure 1) points to the following conclusions:

- Intra-European migratory flows include millions of people and are far from being limited to work-related migration. A pair of countries can generate two strong flows driven by completely different factors. For example, Spanish and Portuguese flows for work in the UK are accompanied by British flows to Spain and Portugal, which are motivated by lifestyle and climate. Significant migration flows are also among developed countries such as Germany and Switzerland or Italy and Germany. Part of these flows is motivated by work, part by family relationships.
- A closer look at the geographic structure of flows reveals that, within the overall flows, there are groups of countries (so-called modules⁶) that exchange migrants more intensely than other groups. Within Europe, three major migration modules can be identified in the 1990s: (1) German, (2) British, and (3) French. After 2007 (and after the accession of Bulgaria and Romania), the fourth, Italian module was included in the migration flows system. These migration modules are not random factors but result from the long-term distribution of political and economic impacts in Europe. For example, individual modules are trading much more frequently, exchanging patents or exchanging flows within the travel industry. The exchange of migrants is just one of the manifestations of the interconnectedness of the states within the modules.
- The relevance of each country to a specific module is largely due to geographic, linguistic and historical factors. However, trade exchanges and foreign investment also plays an important role.

The existence of migration modules within Europe corresponds to the assumption of the theory of world systems (Zlotnik 1999; DeWaard et al., 2012). The theory assumes migratory flows from peripheral countries and semi-peripheries to the countries of the centre. We can also see such flows within Europe. The theory assumes that the migration flows system is the result of interactions of national states in the context of social, cultural, geopolitical and economic factors. The enlargement of the EU by 10 Central and Eastern European countries has not undermined the existence of three major migration models but it has expanded these modules. For example, the Romanians have created the largest intra-European flows that were directed mainly to Italy and Spain (Ciobanu, 2015). These migratory flows indicate that labour migration does not always depend on wage differences but also reflects a certain cultural and linguistic proximity.

⁶ The migration module denotes a group of countries, which exchange migrants in higher rates than countries outside of the group.

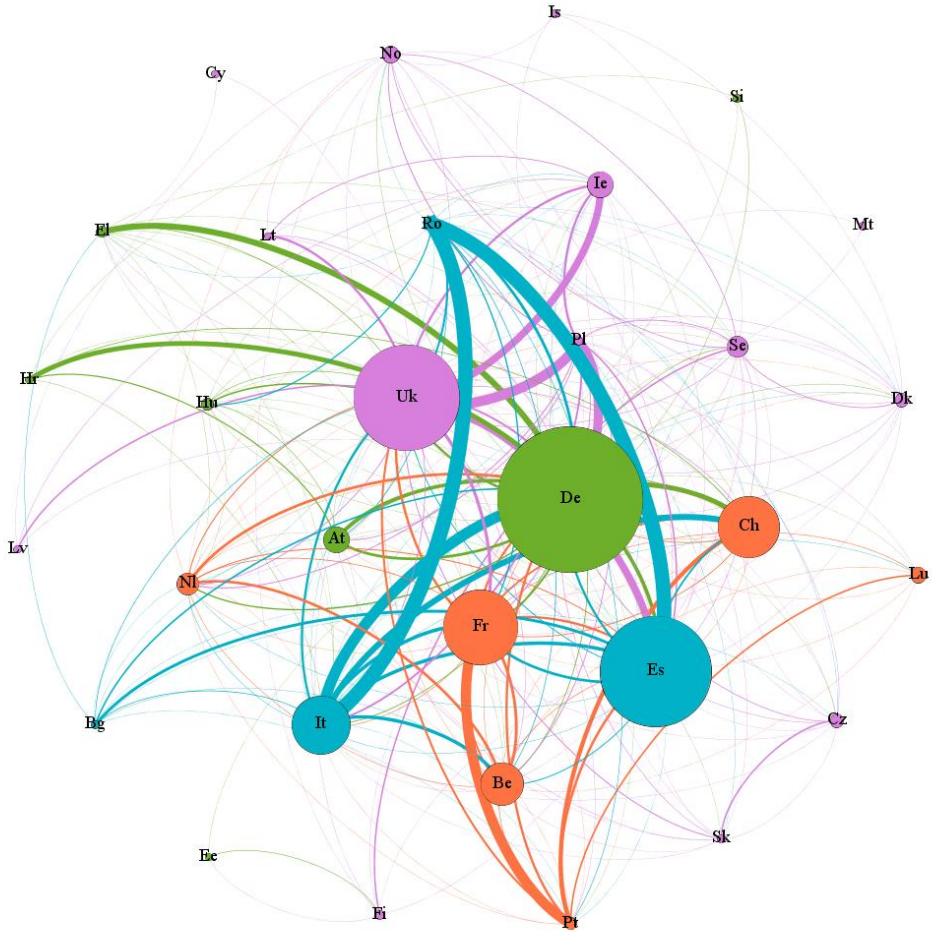
Figure 1a. Network diagrams for intra-European migration in 1997 – 2004 (period averages)



Note: Flows between countries contain the colour of the originating module. Diagrams only show migrant flows with more than 4,000 people.

Source: Author's calculations based on OECD and Eurostat data.

Figure 1b. Network diagrams for intra-European migration in 2005 – 2013 (period averages)



Note: Flows between countries contain the colour of the originating module. Diagrams only show migrant flows with more than 4,000 people.

Source: Author's calculations based on OECD and Eurostat data.

3. The Slovak migration flows: the European context

The history of Slovakia is a history of emigration. Slovaks emigrated massively to the US and Canada in the 19th and 20th century. Between 1899 and 1913, almost half a million people moved to the US and Canada from the Slovak part of Hungary, representing about 17% of the population of Slovakia (Bielik, 1980). Other thousands left during the interwar period.

New opportunities for labour migration started after 1989, although the labour markets of the EU member states remained officially closed for Slovaks until 2004. With the exception of the small number of professionals who could afford a work permit, most Slovaks worked abroad illegally until 2004. Typical for this period was not only brain-drain but also brain-gain. Young Slovak engineers were willing to do low-skilled jobs for a few thousand Austrian shillings (or a few hundred German marks) that the domestic population no longer had a taste for. "Throwing the brain into the canal" paid off financially back in the day. The job of young migrants was usually sought out by those who could speak the language of the host country (Baláž et al., 2004).

So what does migration look like today? We know that many people leave the country and we know that there are many young people among them. But we do not know their exact numbers today. Before 1989, it was relatively easy to quantify international migration. Most Slovaks moved to the Czech Socialist Republic, which was an intra-national change of residence. It was harder to move abroad for good. Only those who passed through the Iron Curtain or (most often) illegally stayed behind abroad on a tour or business trip actually succeeded in leaving the country. In any case, the state knew very well who left, where and for what purpose.

Freedom of movement ranks among the greatest achievements of the period after 1989. Slovak citizens can go wherever they want and nobody can prohibit them from doing so. A free country really does not have any reason to monitor the personal decision of where to work and live. On the other hand, the state should have information about (a) how many people are leaving it, (b) why they do it, (c) whether these people are returning home or not, and (d) what can the state do about it. Ultimately, the future of the country is not decided by things like oil fields or nice shores. The most valuable thing the country has is talented young people and if they are fleeing it, it's a very bad sign for the country. It is young people who start families, work and provide elementary things such as the survival of the country and its population.

3.1. Migration statistics

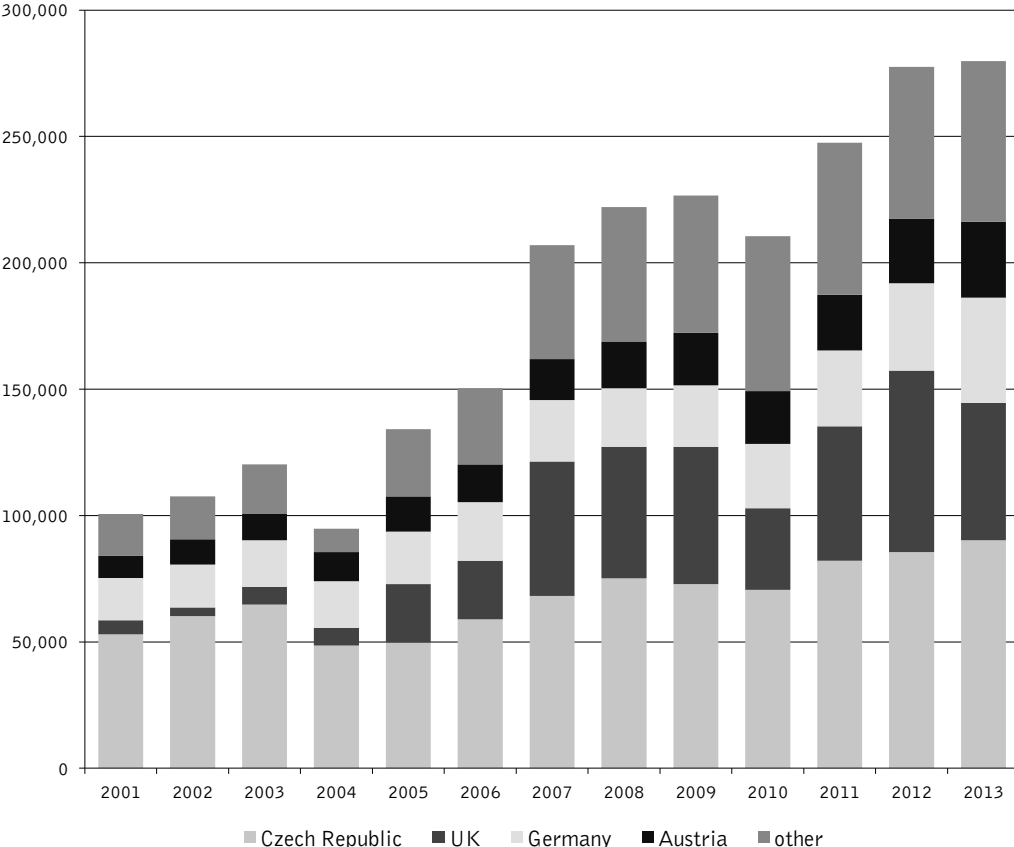
If we want to answer the question (d), first we need to have reliable data on questions (a) to (c). However, speaking of high quality data, there is a big problem in the way. The most frequently used source of data on emigration is the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which is produced quarterly by the Statistical Office. The findings are carried out on a sample of 10,250 households, which at first glance looks like a representative sample. However, a closer look at survey method reveals many problems. The entire survey focuses only on short-term migration for work, which means only people who are abroad for the period of less than one year. If someone has been working for three years in Munich or two years ago, has gone to the US, no migration statistics are available for his/her whereabouts.

According to LFS, some 142,000 Slovaks worked abroad in 2018 and only about 17% of them had university education. So we do not have to worry about any brain drain. However, the reality may be different. The emphasis on short-term migration means that statistics are overly represented by, for example, Slovak nurses in Austria or seasonal workers in Germany, who usually have secondary education. However, they do not include people with university education who have been building a career abroad for several years. And it does not include Slovaks in the US, Canada, or Australia, because

there are no low-cost airlines flying to these countries which means that they do not go there for only several months. LFS statistics also do not cover 32,000 Slovaks studying at foreign universities (as of 2016). Slovak students usually choose high-quality universities. For example, in the Czech Republic these are Charles University in Prague, the Czech Technical University in Prague and Masaryk University in Brno, which surpass our best universities⁷. In this case, Slovakia loses the highest quality human capital (Baláž, 2010).

A more realistic data on the number of Slovaks abroad can also be obtained from the target countries themselves, which produce it on the basis of registry offices, censuses, sample surveys at the borders or data from national social insurances. The first figures on the numbers of Slovaks coming from the target country databases have been available since 1997, but we lack data from such important countries such as Austria, which reports Slovaks only since 2001. Based on OECD and Eurostat data, the total number of Slovaks migrating within the EU grew almost three-fold in the period of 2001 – 2013 (see Graph 1).

Graph 1. Main European migration destinations of Slovak citizens (2001 – 2013)



Source: Eurostat and OECD.

⁷ The Webometrics ranking indicated the Comenius University in Bratislava was the best one in Slovakia and took 740th place in the world. The best Czech University (Charles University in Prague) took 189th and the best Hungarian University 429th place.

Other EU member states in 2013 reported about 280,000 Slovak nationals living on their territories. If we add them to the citizens of Slovakia living in the US and Canada, we get a conservative estimate of 300 thousand people living outside the country. A realistic estimate of 350-thousand may be true as well.

However, it is very difficult to obtain objective information on the number of foreigners on the territory of a state that is a member of the EU and applies the right of freedom of movement for citizens of other EU member states. New forms of temporary migration, such as circular migration and/or liquid migration, are increasingly emerging (Bonifazi et al., 2014; Favell, 2008; Engbersen et al., 2010). In the first case, such migration is about repeated migration and return to the home country. The second case describes a new phenomenon when young people in particular travel to Europe and spend a certain amount of time in different member countries without any registration.

If we seek to describe the migration of Slovaks for work, we unfortunately need to return to the inaccurate data from the LFS on short-term migration for work within one year. According to this data, Slovakia's accession to the EU has changed not only the scope but also the structure of migration. Thanks to this data we can see that Slovakia's entry into the EU was actually a milestone in the boom of labour migration. However, not only political factors contributed to this boom.

3.2. Changes in the structure of migration flows

After 2004 there are significant changes in the institutional context of intra-European migration:

- 1) Barriers to entry into the labour market are being removed for citizens of EU member states,
- 2) Organisational innovations are developing and consequently reduce the price of labour mobility (for example, low-cost interstate air and bus transport services),
- 3) The level of knowledge of foreign languages, especially English, is rising,
- 4) The role of employment agencies and / or internet job portals is rising,
- 5) Mobility schemes for selected groups of citizens, for example for students and health professionals, are being supported.

These changes have had an impact not only on the absolute size of migratory flows but also on their geographical structure.

- In 2001, 100,000 Slovaks worked in Europe. More than half (52.93%) went to the Czech Republic. The main destinations were also Germany (16.95%), Austria (7.46%), UK (5.96%) and Ireland (5.46%).
- In 2018, 142,000 Slovaks worked abroad according to LFS, of which 39.8% worked in Austria, 22.8% in the Czech Republic, 16.8% in Germany, 4.7% in Hungary and 3.0% in the UK.

The change in geographic structure is mainly related to the decline in interest of working in the Czech Republic. While in the 1990s the salary differences between the Czech Republic and Slovakia were considerable, these differences are now small and do not motivate Slovaks for migration. Slovak migrants choose countries with a high level of wages and pensions that they receive after having worked for a minimum number of years.

Removing barriers to work migration has also resulted in a change in the structure of destinations and a change in migrant qualifications. Today, migrants are predominantly over 35 years of age with secondary education and working within the construction and industrial professions. A large number of women who care for old people, in particular in Austria, but also in Germany and the UK, needs to be

included as well. Access to the EU labour market has made it easier for these people to work for different job agencies and to be offered jobs for which limited language skills are sufficient. Migration is often the only option for them to find work and acts as a safety valve in high unemployment regions. Higher-educated people no longer need to be “throwing the brain into the drain” as before. A person with university education earned a gross average of 1563 euros in 2017, which is almost double the earnings in the manual labour professions. A short work experience abroad is not a bad thing, but longer stays can mean a career break. In this respect, Slovakia’s is resembling the experience of Portugal and Italy from the 1960s.

Since 2004, the structure of foreign flows of migration has become considerably more diversified in terms of destinations and structure. On the example of data from Slovakia (coming from the LFS), we see that the abolition of work permits has favoured mainly people with secondary and lower education. Those with university education or specialists were able to obtain their work permit before 2004. The increase in Slovaks’ interest in work abroad was visible especially during the period of 2004 – 2007. The number of Slovak citizens working in Europe grew from 104 to 177 thousand. The economic crisis has slowed the flow of migrants from the EU8 to the EU15. The target countries of migration faced high levels of unemployment, and migrants from the EU8 were looking for jobs more intensely than in times of economic boom. For example, over the period of 2008 – 2011 the number of Slovaks fell from 168 to 115 thousand. The recovery of economic growth in Europe was reflected in a renewed increase in the number of Slovak citizens working abroad. In 2018, it was already 142 thousand.

The opening of the EU15’s labour markets for citizens of the Slovak Republic was not only reflected in their increased numbers and in the change in the geographic structure of the flows but also in their changing socio-demographic structure. It is well known in the migration literature that most migrants come from the ranks of young and single men who are tolerant of higher risk and have no family and other obligations. Higher legal protection, increasing knowledge of foreign languages and facilitating job search through agencies and internet work portals have made the labour market abroad also available to those sections of the population for whom migration has not been a typical way of looking for work. For example, in 2007 up to 40% of Slovak migrants abroad were aged 25-34, but only about 3% aged 55+. In 2018, migrants aged 25-34 accounted for one quarter of all migrants, but the proportion of migrants aged 55+ grew to 14.4%. This trend is mainly related to the increase in numbers of Slovak nurses in Austria, Germany and the UK (Bahna, 2014 and 2015b).

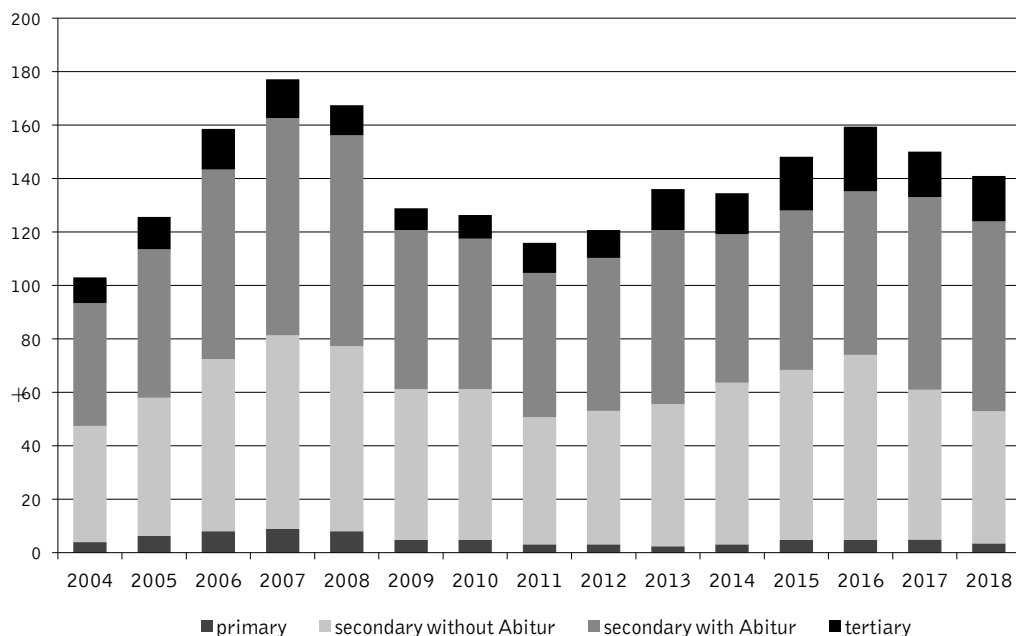
The employment structure of Slovak migrants by sector is not any different from the structure of migrants from other new EU member states. Industry, health and social services account for 45.1% of total employment abroad. In the developed countries, there is a dual labour market for migrants. While high-skilled labour in well-paid jobs with permanent employment are placed in the primary labour market segment, the secondary segment is characterised by a high proportion of casual, low-skilled, low-earning jobs (Castles – Miller, 2009). Migrants mostly occupy the secondary segment of the labour market. Majority of Slovak migrants had worked mainly in the secondary segment in 2004 – 2007. At present, however, on the basis of LFS data, we see a trend towards a higher proportion of Slovaks working in qualified professions.

During the economic boom in Europe between 2004 and 2007, the number of Slovak migrants with full and incomplete secondary education had increased (see Graph 2). This group represented up to 87 percent of total migration. Higher education graduates represented only 8.5% of total international employment in 2004, but in 2018 their share was 16.5%. The increase in the proportion of Slovaks with university education abroad is related to the overall growth in the education of the Slovak population as well as to the growing number of Slovak university students abroad. While in 1998 only 3,040 Slovaks studied abroad (of which 1,040 in the Czech Republic), in 2004 the number of students had already

risen to 15,000 and by 2013 to 37,000. In 2013, 15% of all Slovak students were studying abroad, one of the highest emigration rates in the whole Europe. In 2014 and 2015 there was a slight decrease in the absolute number of Slovak students abroad due to the demographic change and the drop in the total number of university students. However, the rate of student emigration remained unchanged. At present it is not yet clear what impact the student migration will have on the demographic situation and the economic development in the Slovak Republic. Ideally, Slovak students transfer new knowledge to the Slovak Republic and support the development of the Slovak economy and society. However, some research (Bahna, 2015a) suggests that a large number of Slovak students remain abroad after completing their studies. In this case, there is a risk of brain drain and loss of human capital.

For Slovakia, a high unemployment rate was typical during 1990-2010. For example, in 2000 it was almost 20%. Migration for work abroad has been a sort of valve in the labour market. According to data from LFS, the share of migrants abroad was between 5 and 7.5% of total employment in Slovakia. The highest rates of migration were represented by two regions, Košice and Prešov, which had the highest unemployment rates and the lowest average wages. An interesting development after 2013 is the increase in the number of Slovaks working abroad in the period when unemployment was falling and the average wage increasing. In other words, migration for work abroad grew despite the positive labour market and remuneration in the Slovak Republic. This trend may be related to an increase in the number of university-educated people who are well equipped in the language and want to apply their talent outside of Slovakia. An important factor in stronger emigration is the opening of labour markets in Austria and Germany as well as the expansion of migration networks, which means the networks of Slovak citizens who already work abroad and help find accommodation and work for others. This factor was less significant before 2004.

Graph 2. Structure of Slovak citizens working abroad for a period up to 1 year – by education (2004 – 2018)



Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak republic – Labour Force Survey.

4. Economic aspects of migration

4.1. Costs and benefits of international migration

Immigration has always been an unpopular political topic. This was clearly demonstrated in a traditional migration destination like the United Kingdom. Despite the long tradition of liberal politics, despite tolerance towards other cultures, lack of control over immigration eventually became the main argument for Britain's Brexit supporters. Interestingly, most of the arguments about the benefits and costs of migration revolve around immigration, even in countries like Slovakia where emigration is a much more significant phenomenon than immigration.

So are migrants economically beneficial for the host country? To a great extent, they are. How do migrants contribute to economic growth? There are short and long-term costs and benefits from migration.

Considering labour migration, there is usually no doubt that it is a benefit to the host country. The vast majority of working migrants are young people looking for work and income higher than in the home country. Employed migrants pay more taxes and levies than domestic households, including many economically inactive people. Nevertheless, the arrival of asylum seekers raises more doubt about the economic benefits of migration. Especially in tabloid media, we often find views that these people are only a burden for the economy of the host country and just leach off its social system. Asylum-seekers, in the initial period after the asylum application, are not allowed to work – regulated by specific legislation depending on the country. The fact is that a portion of the asylum seekers cannot immediately find a job. There is a number of reasons for this, in particular: (a) insufficient command of the host country's language, (b) insufficient knowledge of the host country's cultural and social standards, and (c) inconsistency between the qualification structure of the asylum seeker and the labour market requirements in the host country. However, this does not mean that asylum seekers are just a burden for the host country. In the short term, the costs of asylum seekers are higher than their economic benefits, but this situation changes over time.

Short-term costs of asylum seekers include, in particular, the cost of the state's immediate expenditure on accommodation, food, social benefits, and administration of asylum applications. This is followed by spending on the education of migrant children and healthcare. Nor should we forget the cost of language courses and the retraining of migrants especially provided by developed countries. So what is the short-term profit? This is primarily the profit from so-called multiplier effects. Entrepreneurs build accommodation for immigrants and provide meals. Thus, the business sector profits from social benefits provided to migrants to spend on food, clothing, etc. And what about long-term effects? The biggest disadvantages include higher social benefits for non-working migrants, the costs of education and healthcare for migrants and their family members. However, long-term benefits to the host economy prevail. These stem from the involvement of additional labour force in the economy. It creates more levies and direct taxes paid to public budgets. Higher consumption of the population generates more indirect taxes. Multiplier effects support increased consumption and generate additional jobs. Ultimately, it is people of economically active age who produce (economic) values and people of retirement age who consume these values. A country with a favourable demographic structure is financially sustainable. A country with a high proportion of the old population will inevitably get into big

financial problems. For example, in 2013 the British Budgetary Accountability Office (OBR, 2013) carried out a financial and demographic simulation of two scenarios:

- In the case with a zero net immigration, public debt would rise to 145% of GDP over the next 50 years.
- In the case of high immigration scenario, public debt would only reach 73% of GDP simply because most immigrants are young people who work, pay taxes and levies.

4.2. Employment of immigrants

From the statistical data by Eurostat, we see that in 2014 the average unemployment rate of the domestic population of the EU member states was 9.7%. Foreigners have a 16.4% unemployment rate in European countries. But it also depended on what kind of foreigners they were. If they were residents of another EU country, the unemployment rate was 11.7%. The difference between EU residents and immigrants was very small in this case. For foreigners from countries other than the European Union, the unemployment rate was 20.4%, which was due to higher demand for language skills, cultural adaptation and retraining. Even though such migrants represented a double unemployment rate figure, almost 80% of them worked anyway. In no case, however, it can be said that most non-EU migrants have come to abuse the host country's social system. Immigrants from so-called third countries have the same objectives as intra-European migrants: they also want to make money, raise children and provide them with better education.

The high unemployment rate of immigrants from third countries (20.4% in 2014) was a specific problem for some states, particularly France and Germany. In the UK, however, immigrants from the new EU member states registered higher employment rates than the domestic population. Paradoxically, we also encounter the opposite view, which means that migrants take work from the residents. In the economy, however, there is no fixed number of job positions. The more people the higher the consumption and the more jobs. The more migrants, simply the more jobs there are, even for the residents. Immigrants mostly take the work residents do not want to do. Nevertheless, certain problems caused by immigration have influence on low-skilled domestic workers. Migration Observatory from Oxford, for example, showed that the increase of the number of migrants by 1% in the short term worsens the wage by 0.3% (Devlin et al., 2014; Manacorda et al., 2012; Lucchino et al., 2012). In the long term, wages will increase due to higher consumer demand. In the short term, the low-skilled workers experience problems caused by migration. If the number of migrants increases by 1%, the wage for 5% of the lowest-wage workers will drop by 0.6%, but the wages of the best paid employees will increase. Migrants in the UK are also less likely to claim social benefits than domestic workers.

For the country of origin of migrants, however, the consequences of emigration of young people are overwhelmingly negative. Every country today invests in its population from birth to adulthood. Every citizen benefits from healthcare, social care, education, etc. This is a great loss for the country when these investments become wasted as a result of emigration of their beneficiaries. The loss is two-fold: on the one hand, in terms of "drowned costs" for the creation of human capital (Baláž, 2010) and on the other hand, in terms of loss of gross domestic product, which the emigrant creates elsewhere (Baláž et al., 2004).

5. International migration and demographic challenges

5.1. Changes on the labour market

For many years, Slovakia has been notoriously known as one of the countries with highest unemployment rates in the EU. Between 2000 and 2002, unemployment rate approached 20%. The situation changed in 2006 when, under the influence of economic expansion, unemployment began to fall sharply. In 2007, when the Slovak economy grew at a rate of 10.4%, unemployment rate fell down to 8.4%. The onset of the economic crisis in 2008 has gradually pushed unemployment up to 14.2% in 2013. Unemployment has fallen since then and reached 8.1% in 2017, less than before the economic crisis in 2007.

So why does unemployment drop so severely? There are roughly three reasons. Firstly, economic growth is not perfect but sufficient to create enough jobs. Secondly, active labour market policies, mostly funded by European money, also had a positive effect. Thirdly, the most important factor is demographic change. Strong population of 'baby boomers' (born in 1952 to 1956) is leaving for retirement in late 2010s. Almost 100,000 children annually were born in Slovakia in 1950s, while today they are applying for a pension. Their place on the labour market is taken by a relatively small population cohort born in the years 1992 – 1995. The annual number of births dropped from 75,000 to 60,000 per year. Fertility rates in the Slovak Republic have also dropped from 2.07 in 1989 to 1.48 in 2016. The child births in the Slovak Republic has long been insufficient for the simple reproduction of the population. At the time of this writing however, Slovakia is struggling with a low productive age population. Trends in the overall decrease in the Slovak population and the deterioration of its age structure could only be reversed by the significant positive balance of international migration.

Labour shortages have also been experienced by the country's labour market. Until recently, the labour market was a marketplace of employers who could take out a demographic dividend of the so-called "Husák's Kids" generation.⁸ People were willing to accept low wages, long and not always paid overtime as well as illegal labour. The future labour market will be increasingly seen as an employee market. The Slovak competitive economic model is still based on low-wage employees producing cars, TVs, and engineering products. Without them, the dynamic economic growth of Slovakia would stop.

5.2. Migration and population's aging

The true demographic droughts will come between 2020 and 2025 when the weakest population ages enter the labour market. Our employers will have to seriously think about four alternatives: 1) raise wages and attract back at least a part of Slovak emigrants from abroad, 2) break into the last stocks of free labour and seriously increase pay for employees over 55, Roma and the long-term unemployed, 3) in an increased rate employ people from the Balkans and Ukraine before they are lured over by other countries; 4) invest more in research, innovation and new technologies, saving jobs. A demo-

⁸ The label refers to the period of rule by Gustáv Husák, former President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

graphic crisis can be mitigated (not solved) by a combination of all these factors. In any case, however, it will be necessary to slow down the aging process of the labour force in order to preserve the financial and economic sustainability of Slovakia.

Slovakia is not the only country facing demographic challenges in Europe. However, it belongs among the most problematic ones (see Table 1). Long-term demographic trends are very unfavourable in Europe. The European Union will face sharp aging and population decline without significant immigration from third countries. However, the demographic perspective of Britain, Germany, France, Spain and Italy is very different. This is also reflected in approaches to immigration policy.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel adopted a very unpopular and controversial decision in 2015 when she said Germany would receive a million refugees. History will once mark this decision as statesmanlike. By 2060, Germany will lose 11 million people of working age due to aging, but will have 6 million more retirees than today. Another example is the situation of Britain, which has already had a high influx of immigrants for a quarter of a century, especially from Eastern Europe. Britain, therefore, is able to handle its population problem without Syrians. On the whole, the British population and its political representation were not enthusiastic about immigration. On the contrary Italy, France or Austria are prospering as they have benefitted from immigration from Central Europe, and their demographic problem is at least partly solved (see Table 1). The Central European states have the biggest problem with immigration, but paradoxically are the states that need it the most.

Table 1. Available workforce aged 20-64 (in millions)

| Country | 2013 | 2060 | Difference 2060 – 2013 (mil.) | % difference compared to 2013 |
|-----------------------|------|------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| UK | 30.3 | 35.1 | 4.8 | 15.8 |
| France | 29.1 | 31.6 | 2.5 | 8.6 |
| Austria | 4.1 | 4.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Italy | 24.0 | 24.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Spain | 22.8 | 20.3 | -2.6 | -11.4 |
| Czech Republic | 5.2 | 4.6 | -0.6 | -11.5 |
| Hungary | 4.3 | 3.7 | -0.6 | -14.0 |
| Germany | 40.6 | 30.0 | -10.6 | -26.1 |
| Greece | 4.8 | 3.5 | -1.3 | -27.1 |
| Romania | 8.6 | 6.0 | -2.6 | -30.2 |
| Poland | 18.1 | 12.5 | -5.6 | -30.9 |
| Portugal | 4.9 | 3.3 | -1.6 | -32.7 |
| Slovakia | 2.7 | 1.7 | -1.0 | -37.0 |
| Latvia | 1.0 | 0.6 | -0.4 | -40.0 |
| Lithuania | 1.4 | 0.7 | -0.7 | -50.0 |

Source: European Commission, 2015.

In the future, developed countries need migrants to help them to maintain the current level of social services for the population, especially pension and healthcare. The effects of population aging on pension systems will vary greatly depending on whether the main income is from public sources (Social Insurance) or private pension.

- In countries like the UK, Ireland or the Netherlands, the public pension is already relatively low today and basically fulfils the social benefit function for the retired. The aging of the population does not threaten the amount of the British public pension because it is both low, and on the other hand it can rely on the constant influx of immigrants.
- The situation is different in states like Germany, France or Sweden where the public pension is generous and at the same time it is the main income for the retired.
- The most vulnerable to population aging are the new members of the European Union who suffer from emigration of young people, and private pensions do not play a major role in these countries.

Immigration is not the only or sufficient tool to address demographic challenges. However, it is one of the few realistic options to at least mitigate the effects of demographic change.

6. Time for immigration policies

An aging Europe needs more immigrants than ever before, however unpopular it may sound. At the same time, however, it needs better immigration rules to secure high quality human capital as well as better integration policies to effectively use such capital. Rejecting this reality cannot be done indefinitely. There will be more and more migrants in Europe and Slovakia. Instead of negative emotions and rejection, we will have to seriously reflect on immigration policy. Not only for refugee quotas for Africa and Syria, but mostly because even today there is a lack of young people on the labour market. Measures to support family and increase fertility are offered as obvious solutions. Family policy definitely deserves more attention than ever before. Whether it is kindergarten or some start-up rentals for young families – these solutions has all worked before. But no family policy will solve the problem of demographic change. No developed country would achieve a natural increase of more than two children per woman of childbearing age.

The countries of Western Europe have long before started a number of recruiting programmes to attract skilled manpower. Germany began issuing green cards for foreign IT specialists as early as in 2000. The drain of qualified labour from Slovakia cannot be underestimated, and especially regarding some professions (doctors or nurses), the difference between home and foreign salaries is so dramatic that it motivates such specialists to emigrate. The big question is how many Slovak students would stay abroad and how many of them will return home. As was stated above, the greatest wealth of the country is represented by the supply of young and educated people capable of creating values.

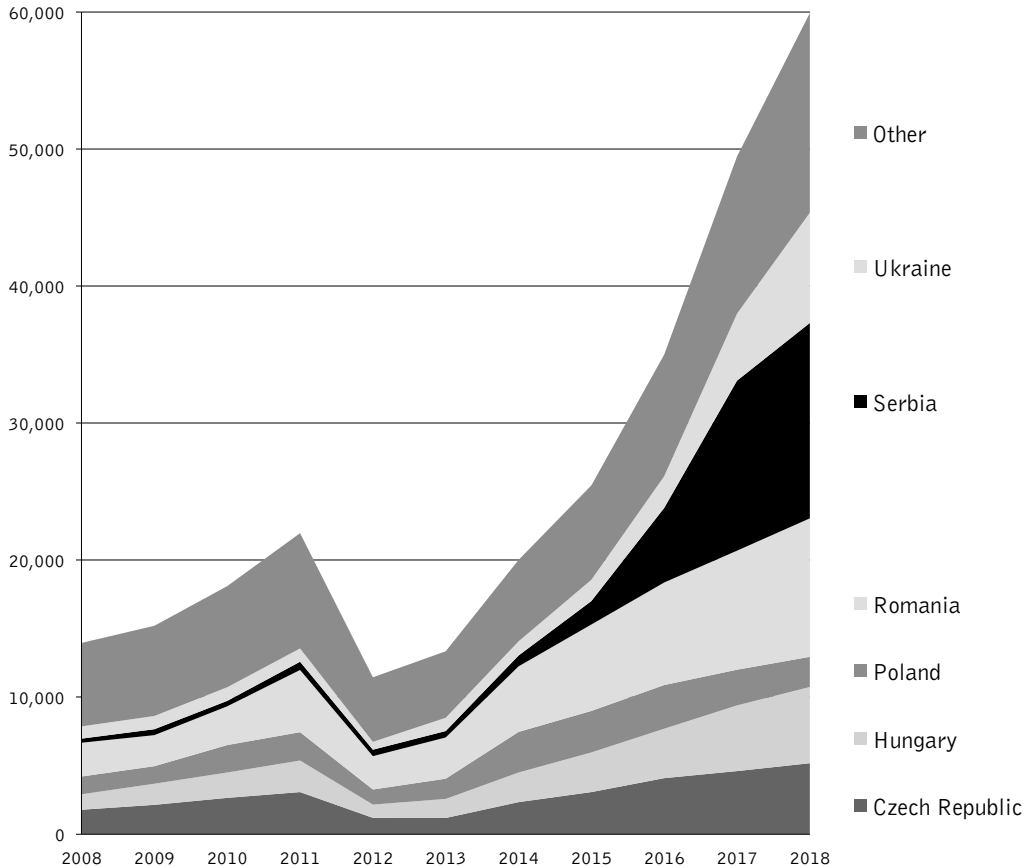
We need at least a part of the Slovaks to come back. Those who do not return can save Slovakia by keeping in touch with people in Slovakia and by enriching our culture and economy with the ideas transferred from their new homes. We need to know more about Slovaks working abroad. Without quality information, a good migration policy cannot be produced. To begin with, we need to change the statistics in such a way as to reflect the real life in more efficient way. The next step is to establish close cooperation with foreign social and health insurance companies that provide insurance for Slovak citizens living abroad. We will also have to think of modern forms of information gathering. The great future lies in

so-called big data collected and analysed from social networks. The world around us is becoming more and more mobile and the traditional forms of data collection are no longer sufficient.

Slovakia is also one of the European countries with a high level of work emigration. It may be surprising that 60,000 foreigners worked in Slovakia in 2018 (see Graph 3). By the way, this is not a new phenomenon. As early as 2008, nearly 14,000 foreigners were employed in Slovakia. In each country, employment of the domestic population is a priority. Politics, voters and unions share the same opinion on this. However, the employers have another view on employing foreigners. They need a workforce that is not only affordable, but it also has the needed qualifications structure and is willing to work in less lucrative positions than the domestic workforce.

The question may arise as to why so many foreigners have to work in our country when we have 181.5 thousand of unemployed citizens. Is it not possible to train our own unemployed? The answer is that it's not always possible. Half of Slovak unemployed domestic workforce either does not have a school graduation certificate and/or is unemployed for more than two years which results in loss of work habits. It is very difficult to employ such people. In 2018, 36.6 of 82.5 thousand vacant job positions were created for people with basic education.

Graph 3. Structure of foreign workers in the Slovak Republic by country of origin (2008 – 2018)



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

So what is the structure of foreign workers in Slovakia? The ranking of nationalities (see Graph 3) is led by the Serbs (23.6%), followed by Romanians (16.6%), Ukrainians (13.2%), Hungarians (9.1%), Czechs (8.8%) and Poles (3.8%). Almost 53% of foreigners came from European Union countries (Table 2) and did not need permission to work in our country. The structure of workers by nationality mostly reflects their country of origin. The British, the French, the Germans and the Koreans were mostly managers and specialists. People from the new EU member states worked predominantly as workers and technicians. This also applies to Serbs and Ukrainians. 83.5% of foreigners who worked in Slovakia did so in the manual labour professions. This structure stemmed from the economic and geographical determinants of international migration. Therefore, it is not surprising that it remained relatively stable over this period.

Table 2. Structure of foreign workers in Slovakia (%)

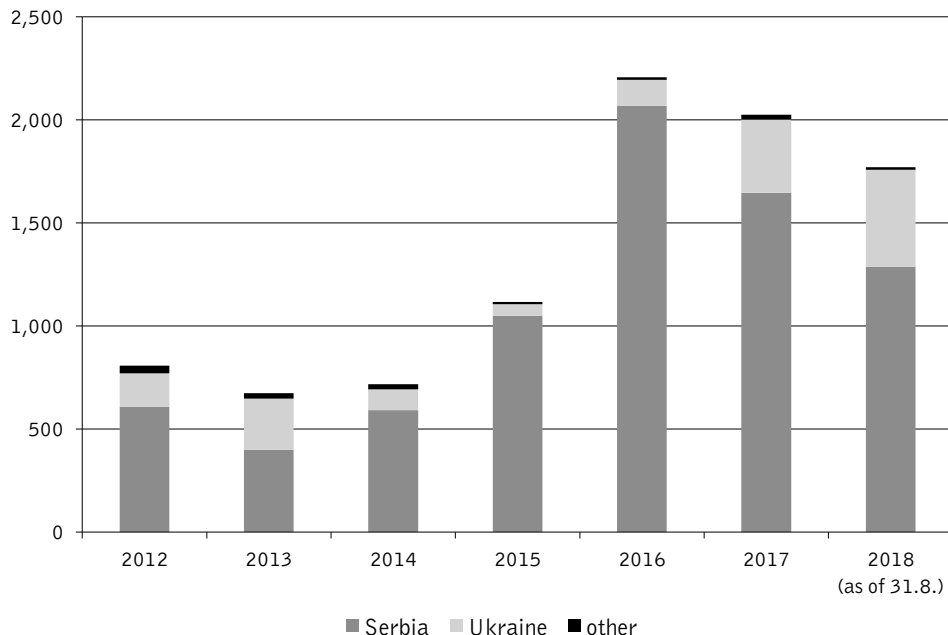
| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| EU citizens | 78.79 | 76.08 | 68.55 | 56.04 | 52.97 |
| Citizens of third countries | 21.21 | 23.92 | 32.45 | 43.96 | 47.03 |

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

At present, the employment of foreign workers is rising sharply. The numbers of foreign workers increased from 20,000 in 2014, to 60,000 in 2017. Most of the foreigners are transferred to Slovakia within intra-company transfers. Where the companies failed to accept Slovaks and required a certain combination of profession and wage requirements, they imported workers from countries using cross-border migration (from border regions of neighbouring countries) as well as from the Balkans, Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine. These origin countries are culturally (and in some cases also linguistically) close to us. Therefore, there is a valid assumption for the relatively easy integration of migrants in the Slovak Republic. The largest increase in the number of foreign workers on the Slovak labour market is from Serbia and Ukraine. In 2014, 3.2% of Serbs and 4.9% of Ukrainians worked in Slovakia. In 2018, these numbers went up to 23.6% of Serbs and 13.2% of Ukrainians.

Several countries in Central and Eastern Europe have large ethnic minorities abroad. Hungary has the largest foreign minorities, especially in Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine and Serbia. Poland has a minority in western Ukraine. Slovakia has also a strong minority abroad especially in Hungary and Serbia (Vojvodina region). Foreign minorities have become a source of immigration since 1990. For example, as early as the 1990s, we registered a strong immigration force coming from Romania (the area of Transylvania) into Hungary. This immigration has been facilitated by the provision of specific rights for ethnic migrants in the field of employment, study and medical care. Hungary was the pioneer in ethnic immigration whose ethnic minorities were the most numerous in the world (relative to domestic population) (Szoke, 1992; Illés, 2005). In Slovakia, since the 1990s, many ethnic Slovaks from Serbia's Vojvodina have been immigrating, especially for education. Immigration was facilitated by the issuance of Slovak foreign cards, which gave its holders a specific status. Immigration from Serbia has increased after 2015 (see Graph 4), when unemployment in the Slovak Republic has fallen sharply and wages have increased. This immigration favoured ethnic Slovaks from Vojvodina who could apply for an identity card of a foreign Slovak.

Graph 4. Certificates issued for Slovaks living abroad by country



Source: Bureau for Slovaks Living Abroad.

Every developed European country has the so-called dual labour market. One part consists of professionals with good education and salary and career prospects. In the second part, there are people with lower education, without a career prospects, working for minimum wages and within short-term contracts. The second part of the dual labour market is often intended for migrants since the domestic population is not willing to work under such conditions. The dual labour market with the employment of foreigners is also becoming a reality in Slovakia and we will have to come to terms with it.

Slovak migration policy will have to deliver primarily pragmatic goals. It will have to ensure the influx of specific professions, which are in shortage in Slovakia. In a much broader context, it will be also the aim of many such measures to prevent the Slovak Republic from disappearing from the economic and population map of Europe.

All of the developed countries compete for human capital. Even Slovakia should, especially for its own people. Migration policy will have to start paradoxically not with immigrants, but with Slovaks who are still hurrying to leave their country. In 2015, the Slovak Government presented some proposals for reintegration grants for Slovak professionals abroad. The number of grants is too small and their height is hardly a turning point in the migration behaviour of the Slovaks. What is important, however, is that an important issue of return migration and reintegration has been opened for discussion. In the next step, we will need to think about bringing young migrants from other countries to Slovakia. But what sort of migrants and from where? Many advanced countries have an immigration policy based on a point system. Those young and educated are granted preferential residence permits. It should not be any different in our country. However, we have to accept that Slovakia will be the second choice for many migrants.

An important, though controversial element of the point system is the low integration cost of migrants. Multiculturalism and the acceptance of different values and religions is often the subject of ideological discussions between conservatives and liberals. Experience with immigration to Western Europe has clearly shown that immigration cannot succeed without its acceptance by the domestic population. Ignoring the views of the domestic population opens up the gates of populism, xenophobia and racism. Indeed, it is not easy to set up an integration policy and its mechanisms for people from a completely different culture, who only know life in Europe from movies and TV. Integration costs will have to play an important role while creating the immigration policies.

For Slovakia, the lowest integration costs can be expected in case of ethnic Slovaks from the Balkans. Similarly, Hungary is increasing its population from Romania and the Czech Republic from Slovakia. For Slovakia, the natural resources of human capital will be Ukraine and Russia. It is possible that the East of Europe will face long-term instability. War conflicts and economic crises can create migratory flows to the West. One should not see these flows as a threat, but also as an opportunity. Consideration will also be given to non-traditional sources of human capital. Slovakia has a fairly good experience with the Vietnamese (Baláž – Williams, 2007).

7. Conclusions and recommendations

Significant migration flows are a standard part of Europe's political, economic and social history. The most massive flows in the modern history of Europe were caused mainly by war conflicts and political upheavals. However, economic factors are increasingly important, especially the need to provide sufficient workforce.

Migration flows in Europe after 2004, by their nature and volume, do not deviate from the history of migration in post-war Europe. Although political and warfare flows have occurred in Europe and in its immediate vicinity (1945, 1956, 1968, 1991-1992, 2014-2015), the European migration system is defined mainly by intra-European flows. These are motivated mainly by seeking better work, education and, in the case of developed countries, also by seeking an alternative lifestyle (e.g. migration of the retired people from Northern to Southern Europe). The opening of borders after 1989 and the enlargement of the European Union after 2004 did not change the character of the European migration system. The system of intra-European migration flows has been defined by the same economic, linguistic, cultural and geographic determinants as before 1989.

Especially for small countries such as Slovakia, the period 1989 to 2004 were milestones in their economic, social and demographic history. The ability to travel, study and work (whether legally or illegally) in the developed countries of Western Europe affected the labour market and education in the Slovak Republic. In the period of 1990-2006, emigration in Slovakia was perceived as a sort of safety valve in the labour market. The Slovak economy was cashing in the "demographic dividend" at this time. There were strong population vintages in the labour market from the 1970s and 1980s and with high unemployment it was difficult to find work for all interested. The strong economic growth in the period of 2003-2008, high emigration rate and the gradual retirement of those from strong population booms had compressed the unemployment rate in Slovakia to 8% in 2008. The arrival of the severe economic crisis in 2008 temporarily increased the unemployment rate to 14% in 2013. After 2014, however, the labour market is clearly dominated by demographic factors, in particular the aging of the population (due to extremely low birth rates) and emigration (Šprocha – Vaňo, 2012).

From the point of view of demographic forecasts, Slovakia may have to cope with one of the highest losses of workforce in the EU by 2060. If the birth rate does not increase significantly, by 2060

Slovakia would lose more than one-third of the working-age population (Table 1). In connection with the loss of workforce and the sharp increase in the number of pensioners, questions arise about the economic sustainability of the system of basic social services of the state (in particular pension, social security and health care). The situation is further aggravated by persistent high emigration through which Slovakia is losing part of its young and talented population. A particularly worrying trend is the high rate of emigration of university students.

International migration is one of the biggest challenges for Slovakia's future economic and social stability. Migration policies will play a much more important role in economic and social strategies than they do today. On the one hand, Slovakia will have to do everything to at least mitigate high emigration for work and better education. Part of the solution will be ensured by labour market trends such as falling unemployment and real wage growth. The lessons learned from the study of international migration suggest that the willingness of people to migrate abroad falls from a certain income and employment threshold. With regard to migration for better education, one possible solution is to support the creation of at least two or three elite universities in Slovakia. Demand for mass higher education will continue but Slovakia also needs elite educational institutions to maintain at least part of gifted students within the country.

On the other hand, Slovakia will be forced to fundamentally change the immigration policy towards third countries. The current structure of foreigners employed in Slovakia also indicates potential future labour resources from abroad. In addition to the EU countries, such as Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania, it will be necessary to focus more on the Balkan countries (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Ukraine. It is necessary to say openly that other developed countries of Western Europe will compete with Slovakia for these sources of labour. However, linguistic and cultural proximity may offer a certain competitive advantage for Slovakia.

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Integration of migrants and refugees in Slovakia: The perspective of policies, programmes and their outcomes

MARTINA SEKULOVÁ – MIROSLAVA HLINČÍKOVÁ⁹

1. Introduction

Integration of migrants and recognised refugees into the receiving society is a long-lasting social process, which is to a significant extent influenced by the existing policies. Academic debates on refugee integration (Korac, 2003; Smyth – Stewart – Lomba, 2010; Valtonen, 2004) brought importance of the institutional contexts to the fore. Integration is a process influenced by the institutional environment of the receiving society as well as personal capacities of the settling population (Valtonen, 2002). Integration policy and framework (integration programme with complex sets of services/activities provided to migrants) offered by the receiving countries facilitate the integration process to a considerable extent. From the perspective of receiving countries, governments and policies, integration is understood usually in terms of its practical or functional aspects. Consequently, result of integration as a social process is a reflection of the possibilities, limits and regulations of the particular country (Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015).

The main ambition of this chapter is to discuss integration of migrants and recognised refugees in Slovakia. To grasp the integration process in the concrete cultural, social, political and geographical space is complex and ambitious undertaking where besides wider national and local policy indicators of integration (MPG, 2015) also indicators of integration outcomes should be considered. As analysis of complex sets of integration indicators (e.g. Sekulová – Gyárfášová, 2009) for diverse integration dimensions would go beyond the framework of this chapter, we provide rather an overview of the selected aspects of integration in Slovakia – policy framework and their effects and migrants' performance in selected areas of society.

The chapter is structured as follows: in the first section we conceptualise the integration process. In the second section we analyse the integration policies in Slovakia and integration services tailored for migrants and refugees. The third section touches upon migrant integration in selected dimensions such as economic, socio-cultural and education.

⁹ Miroslava Hlinčíková is co-author of the section 4. *Integration and its selected dimensions*

2. Diverse characteristics of integration

Cultures and societies undergo constant changes and migration is one of the key triggers of these changes in contemporary open and globalised world. Integration is an integral component of migration as it starts immediately after person's arrival in a new country. Although the concept of migrant integration has been changing over the last two decades and may have different meanings in diverse contexts¹⁰, it is most commonly understood as a slow and continuous inclusion to a receiving society, to its particular components, institutions, to its "core" (Sekulová – Gyárfášová, 2009, p. 8) which is interactive, two-way and affects both the established community and the new arrival (Korac, 2003). Integration requires mutual adjustment and participation during which the migrants and the majority get more convergent and their differences mitigate. Integration is long-lasting social process, which is multi-dimensional, long-term and non-linear (Bürkin – Huddleston – Chindea, 2013) and goes on constantly.

However, integration does not mean adaptation of the minority to a social and cultural norms of the receiving society, leaving own values, cultural norms and undergoing change in order to be accepted by the majority (Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015), as it may be often presented in the public discourse. Also majority society should adapt to new cultural systems, respect diverse cultural codes, values and religion of those coming in. Mutual respect is an integral component on both sides and also new arrivals adapts to norms in the receiving societies. Successful integration is closely interlinked with social cohesion and social health of the society (Gallová Kriglerová, 2016; Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015). Recent studies revealed that the more inclusive a society is, the more trust towards migrants exists and the social health of the society is the strongest factor influencing the degree of social distance from migrants. If there is an inclusive society, trust to others, trust to institutions and openness, there is a higher trust towards migrants (Messing – Ságvári, 2018).

Real social situations, social interactions and consequently integration have, in spite of being influenced by nation-wide factors, a local character. Integration takes place on the local level, at the concrete particular locality, neighbourhood and region. The specific locality at the same time provides specific conditions, opportunities and limits, such as particular regional labour market, social and economic situation and conditions for the integration (Hlinčíková – Chudžíková – Gallová Kriglerová – Sekulová, 2014). Local self-governments have tools for affecting community as a whole and for supporting social cohesion on the local level. Hence, self-governments and municipalities play a substantial role in facilitating integration through respective integration policies and local integration and inclusion strategies.

Integration policies of European states vary widely from highly centralised and state sponsored programmes to those with only minimal social and decentralised assistance (Korac, 2003). Measures and activities of integration commonly employed by the governments of receiving societies include social services, language trainings, access to retraining and education to enhance employment opportunities, diverse counselling services, access to healthcare and support in community-building.

2.1. Need for zooming in: integration process and policies specific to different types of migrants

Migrants and refugees experience diverse challenges in relation to the integration process. The UN Refugee Agency strongly recommends that refugees should be disentangled from migrants in order to ensure their proper protection (Bürkin et al., 2013, p. 10). Diverse types of migrants and refugees have different reasons for leaving home country, social situation, position and the integration needs upon

¹⁰ For more on academic debates on integration see e.g. Korac, 2003; Loch, 2014; Sekulová – Gyárfášová, 2009.

arriving in the receiving society. Refugees are forced to flee in order to save their lives, preserve freedoms due to conflict and human rights violations, environmental catastrophes or poverty and a lack of life prospects (Bürkin et al., 2013). Consequently, the situation of the recognised refugees is different in receiving societies and also more difficult when compared with the legal migrants, as we will show later in our analysis. Refugees arrive without financial resources or material property, social networks or without their family members and their support. They must also overcome traumatic experiences from the past. Consequently, integration measures targeted to (economic) migrants and beneficiaries of protection (recognised refugees) should be disentangled and adopted to specific needs of both groups.

In this chapter we use a range of diverse terms to refer to migrants and refugees. Slovak legislation and policies do not recognise the term “migrant” or “migrant population”. Rather, official documents or legislation, including statistics, use the term “foreigner”. According to applicable law a foreigner is anyone who is not a citizen of Slovakia.¹¹ However, the term “migrant” has wider employability and allows also tracking second generation of the migrant population. Therefore, we use the terms “migrants” and “migrant population” in the paper and in the context of the official documents, legislation or statistics – “foreign population” and “foreigners”.

The term “recognised refugee” characterises a person with a granted asylum; asylum applicant might be granted with a subsidiary protection. Asylum is granted to a foreigner who is persecuted in his/her country of origin for diverse reasons such as race, ethnicity, religion or political views (NIEM, 2017). From the perspective of integration, asylum represents more stability and security and grants access to different aspects of social equality of citizens. Subsidiary protection is a synonym for temporary protection. This type of international protection is granted to those who are not eligible for an asylum, but would face a real risk of serious harm if returned to the country of origin. Subsidiary protection is first granted for a period of 1 year in Slovakia, and if the purpose for granting persists, it is extended for additional 2 years subsequently. Subsidiary protection holders in Slovakia receive temporary residence, however after meeting the eligibility criteria they have access to long-term residence (Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015).

3. Migrant and refugee integration from the perspective of policies and programmes

Integration process is facilitated by the policies of the receiving countries and, in close inter-linkage with the policy level by the implemented integration programme. The legal framework for migration and integration in Slovakia consists of several conceptual documents and legislation including those regulating residence permits, labour market, healthcare, social care or asylum.¹² We focus on the main conceptual strategic documents related to integration. Two key strategic conceptual documents governing migrant integration are *Integration Policy of the Slovak Republic (Integračná politika...*, 2014) and *Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic with Outlook to 2020 (Migračná politika...*, 2011).¹³

11 Act No 404/2011 on Residence of Aliens, including amendments and supplementation.

12 For more information on law regulating the situation of foreigners in the Slovakia see Bachtíková – Oboňová, 2017; Bargerová – Divinský, 2011.

13 For the development of the legislation regulating legal migration after 2004, as Slovakia did not adopt either a strategic document or legislation regulating legal migration before EU accession, see SBA, 2014.

3.1. Migration policy

Migration policy is an attempt of the states to regulate and control the entry to its national territory and to determine the conditions of the stay for people who are looking for permanent residence, seasonal work or political asylum (Freeman, 1992 in Bolečeková – Olejárová, 2018, p. 227). In Slovakia the key document on migration policy is *Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic with Outlook to 2020* (2011), which also touches upon migrant integration. Similarly to integration policy, the document sets main general aims and the framework for further development of the policies which are further elaborated by respective institutions or ministries. Partial aims and measures have the format of biannual action plans and are evaluated via annual comprehensive reports.

Among key aims of the migration policy is to create appropriate conditions in the area of legal migration in close relation to priorities of Slovakia, the needs of the country and its capacity to accept migrants, including their integration into society, to support mutual effects of migration and development and to improve quality of life in Slovakia (*Migračná politika...*, 2011, p. 4). *Migration Policy* defines integration as long-term, continuous, dynamic two way process which involves new arrivals and receiving society (*Migračná politika...*, 2011, p. 8). At the same time, the document gives emphasis to respect, reciprocity and considers migrants as beneficial for the society and as an integral part of Slovakia. The coverage of the *Migration Policy* has limits when it comes to subsidiary protection holders. According to the document, only those with a long-term residence permit¹⁴ are eligible for integration (*Migračná politika...*, 2011, p. 4).

In the context of integration, the main objectives are: implementation of the “integration mainstreaming” (throughout all levels of policy-making from sectoral policies to all other general legislation which may have impact on migrant integration), enhancing awareness of human rights, tolerance and fight against discrimination (for instance amplifying information among the general public, systematic cooperation with the media, initiating of discussion on migration). *Migration Policy* also aims to create mechanisms for systematic analysis of indicators of migrant integration, to create better conditions for implementing local integration policies, to involve migrant communities and improve mutual networking of actors in the area of migrant integration or to ensure Slovak language training and training of social and cultural integration for migrants (*Migračná politika...*, 2011, p. 9). The document however lacks precisely defined measures and instruments, which limits their application in the day-to-day policy implementation (Bolečeková – Olejárová, 2018). This policy document was prepared under a very different social and political context, therefore its revision is urgently needed (*Stratégia pracovnej mobility...*, 2018).

3.2. Integration policy

Integration Policy adopted in 2014 replaced the earlier *Concept of Foreigner Integration in the Slovak Republic* (2009) which in fact was the first attempt to conceptualise the key principles of migrant integration in Slovakia. *Integration Policy* is to a significant extent rooted in the strategic, conceptual documents and legislation on the EU level (Gallová Kriglerová, 2016). The quoted document understands integration as “a two-way process of mutual acknowledgement and respect by and for the ma-

14 Long-term residence is a European type of permanent residence (as defined in Directive 2003/109/EC), granted to a person who is not a citizen of an EU country but has resided legally and continuously within its territory for five years. This type of permit gives more stability to subsidiary protection holders. The permit is not easily abolished and after fulfilling the criteria, a person may apply also for a citizenship. Subsidiary protection holders have this opportunity only as of 2013.

jority society and foreigners" (*Integračná politika...*, 2014, p. 3) and recognises migration as beneficial for the society with positive contribution to the economy, culture, education, human rights or social situation in Slovakia.

In principle, the document sets general aims and framework for further development of particular policies to be implemented by respective institutions and ministries. Main measures and targets are elaborated in the annual action plans, which had been regularly evaluated up until 2018.¹⁵ The policy is a comprehensive tool with regard to target groups – it involves migrants with diverse residence permits and international protection holders who are subject to specific treatment via the policies (*Integračná politika...*, 2014, p. 9). The document focuses on several areas of migrant integration, namely accommodation, cultural and social integration, healthcare, education, employment and social protection, citizenship, unaccompanied minors, and last but not least, the role of municipalities (self-governments) and local integration.

In the context of this document, the process of the preparation should be specially mentioned where diverse actors were involved besides the state institutions – namely non-governmental organisations and experts (Gallová Kriglerová, 2016). At the same time, the policy has a broad coverage and offers comprehensive measures for migrant integration. Main criticism of the integration policy relates to insufficient implementation of set of objectives and measures, limited involvement of the responsible actors and lack of systematic attention to integration as an issue that requires multi-departmental attention.

3.3. Integration programmes for legal migrants and refugees

Integration programmes are closely interlinked with integration policies and are most commonly understood across the European countries as a comprehensive set of measures and activities (or services) which the newcomer has to or is encouraged to follow in order to ensure integration (Craig, 2015). Integration programmes are the practical manifestation of the wider integration policy settings which offer newcomer diverse guidance and support.

The official integration programme in Slovakia does not exist yet either for integration of legal migrants or for refugees. Integration programme for international protection holders is under preparation (the decision to adopt the programme was approved by the government Decree No. 568 from 21st October 2015) with planned publication at the end of 2016, however due to the repeating prolongations (*Súhrnná správa...*, 2018, p. 12) it has not been finished yet (October 2018). Hence, existing activities and services rather have the form of unsystematic regulations defined by the respective institutions. Migration and integration issues in Slovakia mainly fall under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior (implementing its agenda in migration and asylum mainly through two bodies – Migration Office and the Bureau of Border and Aliens Police); the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family which implements agenda in the field of employment of foreigners, setting the conditions for entry of diverse groups of foreigners, conditions for granting work permits, establishes legal norms regarding social care for foreigners (Bachtíková – Oboňová, 2017).

The core of the integration services in Slovakia is currently financed through the EU funding scheme – Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) (earlier for the period 2008-2013 it was

¹⁵ Abolished by the government decree 405/2018 from 5th September 2018.

European Fund for Integration of Third-Country Nationals and European Refugee Fund¹⁶) and from Slovak national budget, the fund plays a key role in defining priorities for the integration programme. In principle, relevant institutions in the area of integration cooperate with those service NGOs which provide a comprehensive set of integration services to their target groups – legal migrants and refugees. Generally, AMIF defines the integration programme priorities, services and particular measures and service NGOs compete for projects. Ministry of the Interior in close cooperation with other respective institutions sets conditions and the priorities for integration in the national AMIF programme¹⁷ (*National Programme AMIF*, 2014), further specified in the calls for proposals, where service organisations compete for delivery of services. Integration projects are fully covered – 75% by AMIF and the remaining 25% is a contribution from the national state budget. Projects last three years, a significant improvement compared to earlier practice when projects lasted one year only. National AMIF Programme defines the key aim of integration as supporting social cohesion and avoiding economically, socially and culturally split society with an excluded immigrant communities (*National Programme AMIF*, 2014, p. 11). The key priorities are service provision for migrants, activities in the area of local integration (support for municipalities and counties), research activities and activities directed towards majority population.

3.3.1. Integration activities and measures for legal migrants

The core of integration services includes counselling (social and legal), courses of social and cultural integration for migrants, support in job search and job counselling (administrative counselling), vocational trainings to migrants, courses of Slovak language and legal services for migrants offered free of charge. International Organization for Migration (IOM) with the Migration Information Centres (MIC) in Bratislava and Košice serves as a key provider of integration services for legal migrants since 2006. MIC/ IOM organises for instance “One-Stop Shop”, a comprehensive integrated counselling where migrants meet representatives of diverse institutions at the one place.¹⁸

Although certain services are available to all, e.g. consultations or counselling via telephone or email, for many migrants integration centres are not accessible as they operate in two spatially distant cities only. Thus, the coverage of the sponsored integration projects has certain limits and the involvement of other, especially local level institutions is needed.

3.3.2. Integration services for holders of international protection

Integration services for international protection holders, asylum and subsidiary protection, are provided by the service NGOs in cooperation with and supervision of the Migration Office of the Slovak Republic. The actual service provision rests with non-governmental organisations. Integration services are broad-ranged and consist mainly of financial-material contribution, counselling and services such as social work, assistance to refugees in a range of settings such as doctor visits, contact with institutions, housing, labour and psychological counselling, language training, vocational training, and social

16 For more details see http://www.minv.sk/?solidarita_a_riadenie_migracnych_tokov&sprava=vyzva-europskej-komisie-europsky-fond-pre-integraciu-statnych-prislusnikov-tretich-krajin

17 For information on National AMIF programme see <http://www.minv.sk/?fond-pre-azyl-migraciu-a-integraciu>

18 For more information visit www.mic.iom.sk

and cultural orientation. The components of the integration programme also include events organised in order to bridge the gap between the majority population and refugees.

The limits in existing integration services are rooted in the absence of national integration plan. Recognised refugees receive financial support (300 Euro) for a period of 6 months (Hamerlíková, 2016) during which they are obliged to attend language courses and job counselling. The financial benefit is aimed at covering housing and the basic needs. The financial amount is less than a minimum wage and only hardly covers expenditures of the refugee. At the same time it is questionable whether 6 months might be considered as sufficient time for the integration and start of an independent life-path (compare Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015). The provision of housing is not systematic as individuals receive accommodation in the lodging house and families in commercially rented apartments. Provision of education also has its limits – besides teachers service NGOs employ also volunteers, the courses are not provided by accredited institutions, the amount of hours per week is not sufficient and courses do not take into consideration the diversity of participants, their age, etc. (Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015). However, one of the positive recent developments was the extension of integration projects supported by AMIF from one to three years that makes integration activities more stable. Shorter periods led to relatively fast change of the service providers (service NGOs) and caused confusion among clients (Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015).

Service organisations as well as state institutions carry out also some activities directed to majority population and public sector representatives (e.g. increasing awareness among police, public servants or seminars for teachers (Bachtíková – Oboňová, 2017), cooperation between the public institutions, local level actors, etc.). The other side of the coin is whether the society reaches at least some level of social cohesion, inclusiveness and whether the migrants are successful in their integration. The answer to this question is complex and multi-dimensional where diverse indicators have to be taken into the account, including public opinion towards migrants and migration and general openness of the society. The following section examines some of these questions.

4. Integration and its selected dimensions

As we already mentioned, the integration process takes place on the local level where self-governments and municipalities play a substantial role. They facilitate integration through policies, tools and activities. In order to successfully facilitate the integration process, implementation of the locally tailored integration policies and integration measures are of substantial importance.

4.1. Local integration and the role of self-governments

The importance of local integration is recognised in all strategic conceptual documents. Local integration is among top priorities including the financial allocation necessary for preparation of local integration strategies. The *Integration Policy* document delegates responsibilities to the municipalities and self-governments, for instance to prepare local integration plans (*Integrační politika...*, 2014, p. 13). The *Migration Policy* document sees as its aim the creation of conditions for implementation of integration policy on the regional and local level through regional (county-level) and local level actors and inclusion of migrant communities in the integration on the local and regional level (*Migrační politika...*, 2011, p. 9). Also the newly adopted *Strategy on Economic Mobility of Foreigners*

(approved on 10th October 2018) identifies local integration as an objective for the long-term. According to the strategy, the local and regional self-governments can contribute to integration by implementation of local integration strategies considered as an important tool for achieving social cohesion, prevention of conflicts, segregation and ghettoisation (*Stratégia pracovnej mobility...*, 2018, p. 30).

However, in practice the implementation of the measures seems to be lagging behind and only very limited activity has been visible so far and if so, it was initiated by non-governmental organisations. Municipalities and counties in Slovakia are not prepared¹⁹ to implement either integration policies or target integration as such, they are often not even aware of migrant population in the city or their needs, nor do they recognise migrants as a target group of policies or support (Gallová Kriglerová, 2018; Hlinčíková et al., 2014). Although integration policy obliges counties and municipalities to prepare local integration plans and to deal with migrant integration (*Integračná politika...*, 2014, p. 14), so far local integration strategies were prepared only in Martin, Banská Bystrica, Dolný Kubín, Svidník, Michalovce and Prievidza.²⁰ Two municipalities – Snina and Senec – had prepared their local integration strategy, but local councils did not approve it. Only few steps have been taken so far and the self-government remains reluctant with respect to the integration agenda even in the cities with a significant representation of migrants and refugees (e.g. Bratislava). Regardless the fact that migrants constitute the potential electorate for local elections, they play only a minor and de-facto overlooked role that is a symptomatic indicator of the approach.

Thus, local integration remains without systematic attention, local institutions lack systematic support and guidance from upper-level authorities. The implemented activities remain on the shoulders of the non-governmental organisations under EU-funded projects or they are partially included in other non-integration specific agendas. Without the active role of the local level, effective integration cannot be expected.

4.2. Labour market and economic integration

Integration into the labour market is a key component of the successful integration process, which enables independent life, earning sufficient income to preserve dignity and support of the family. Through the work environment, the participants make social relations, people develop diverse interactions and contacts with each other (Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015, p. 93). Nevertheless, a synergetic effect of diverse aspects coming together is necessary for the successful integration process, including social stability, decent accommodation, mutual interconnections and ties with a majority population, feeling of belonging, etc. (Gallová Kriglerová, 2016).

Although comprehensive indicators on economic participation of migrants are not available (Sekulová – Gyárfášová, 2009), the existing data shows that migrants have been performing well at the labour market in Slovakia. IVO survey shows that the most significant share of migrants is employed on the basis of employment contracts, smaller share are self-employed on the basis of trade license (more often without employees), owners of small company or helping in a family enterprise

19 Several projects supporting capacities of self-governments and municipalities have been implemented. For instance *Kapacity* project actually works with municipalities to develop and enhance the professional capacities of municipal actors in the integration of third-country nationals. It is scheduled for three years from 2018 until 2020. Read more <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/index.cfm?action=furl.go&go=%2Fnews%2Fslovakia-improving-municipal-integration-efforts&fbclid=IwAR3kyvQ2XWUsC3VqFN9cGvPadyvApuDNtmM86HH-mZe8z7T1syAKCXg37bg>

20 Local integration plans were prepared within projects aimed at capacity building of municipalities, such as *Enhancing prospects of integration of third countries nationals on the local level* by the Centre for the research of ethnicity and culture (CVEK), for more information visit: <http://cvek.sk/enhancing-prospects-of-integration-of-third-countries-nationals-on-the-local-level/>

(Filadelfiová et al., 2011). According to the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (UPSVAR) at the end of September 2018 64, 449 foreigners worked in Slovakia, making up 2.35% of the employed persons. Third-country nationals accounted for a 1.13% share (30,930 employees), most of them coming from Serbia (48%) and Ukraine (30%) (UPSVaR, 2018). Compared to 2017, the growth is remarkable. At the end of September 2017 UPSVAR registered 45,922 employed foreigners. Over a period of a year, the number of employed foreigners increased by 18,527 persons (it constituted 40.3% growth) mainly due to the increased numbers of employees from Serbia and Ukraine. Foreign-born labour force is mostly evident in the automotive, construction and other production industries. Third-country nationals work mostly in positions of low qualified labour force or as machine operators (nearly 70%), qualified workers (9.6%), as specialists (7%), workers in trade and services (5.8%), technical experts (2.6%) (UPSVaR, 2018). EU nationals hold positions for highly skilled workers, managers, directors, specialists, lecturers, company representatives (Ibid.). Access of third-country nationals to the labour market is not straightforward or unproblematic. Migrants have to cope with discrimination, violation of the labour rights, they experience higher risk of exploitation or low wages (Chudžíková – Bargerová, 2018; Hlinčíková – Lamačková – Sekulová, 2011). Recent study by Institute of Economic and Social Studies (INESS) shows that employment of foreigners is over-bureaucratised and employment regulations needs higher flexibility. Administrative process of hiring foreigners takes longer than in other countries and administrative costs for employment of migrants are also higher than in other EU countries (Ďurana, 2018).

Main conceptual strategic documents consider socio-economic integration as key precondition for successful overall integration and recognise the importance of the economic potential of foreigners. The main direction of newly adopted policies is to make access of third-country nationals to the labour market easier, however with a certain limits aiming at labour market protection. The latest changes from May 2018²¹ make employing third-country nationals easier with certain limitations and conditions (applicable to a region with unemployment rate below 5%, the share of migrants in company cannot exceed 30%, fair labour conditions and accommodation must be provided for hired employees, the wages of migrant workers should reach the same levels as non-migrants employees).

In October 2018 Slovakia adopted a new *Strategy on Labour Mobility of Foreigners in the Slovak Republic (Stratégia pracovnej mobility...*, 2018), prepared by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. According to the strategy, labour market shortages and negative trends stemming from demographic factors (population ageing) might be resolved through the employment of third-country nationals, preferably those who are highly skilled, but not exclusively. The strategy calls for temporary measures with the possibility of further assessment of these measures in the future in accordance with the needs of the labour market. In the area of migrant integration the strategy touches upon local dimension of integration, local integration strategies, access of migrants to social housing, to name a few (*Stratégia pracovnej mobility...*, 2018, p. 29).

The limits in integration from a policy perspective in Slovakia are shown in the *Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015* (MIPEX) (MPG, 2015) which comprehensively compares integration policies in all EU member states and selected countries outside of the EU. In the area of employment, according to the MIPEX 2015, Slovakia does not create supportive conditions for both employment of migrants and for their business. Support for integration into the labour market is insufficient, which may

21 Amendment of the Act No. 404/2011 on Residence Stay of Foreigners adopted 13th March 2018, which came into force as of 1st May 2018.

threaten economic integration in the long term. Migrants in Slovakia are excluded from the opportunity to be employed in the public sector and certain types of professions, they do not have access to some public services and those with a temporary residence permits are extremely vulnerable.

International protection holders should not be perceived solely in term of their economic potential or solution to the population ageing and consequent challenges to the labour market as they face objective barriers in their socio-economic integration (Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015, p. 93). They must overcome trauma, isolation from family, and lack of knowledge of language of the recipient country. While asylum holders have similar access to labour market as citizens, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection have objective barriers for finding employment due to the temporary residence permit (Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015). Due to the uncertainty of the residence stay (one year or two years) employers may hesitate to hire them and choose other job applicants instead of them (Deneva et al., 2013). The beneficiaries of subsidiary protection were required to obtain work permit until recently (2013) and beneficiaries of international protection must overcome multiple barriers that makes finding job extremely difficult. They may have problems with recognition of their educational credentials, they must learn a foreign language, more often they have access to a low-qualified job positions, and they are often subjected to discrimination and xenophobia because of their ethnicity or religion, more often they experience short-term and uncertain work contracts (Ibid.). Long-term unemployment is not a rare occurrence among them, which also makes their social situation unfavourable. At the same time, these problems underline the importance of effective policies and integration measures, without which the holders of international protection would remain vulnerable.

4.3. Education

Education is one of the key dimensions of integration, which directly affects all other dimensions and position of a migrant in the society. For migrants and refugees it is crucial to learn the language of the receiving country in order to fully participate in the society. At the same time support in requalification or gaining of education increases the potential benefits from migration. In the context of integration, education plays two distant roles. Firstly, when it refers to newly arrived migrants and refugees who are of adult age and who are about to undergo the process of gaining language proficiency, acquiring social and cultural orientation in the receiving country, diverse vocational trainings with or without the support from integration programmes in order to increase their chances of employment. Secondly, when it relates to children and youth, migrants, refugees or unaccompanied minors and their inclusion in the regular educational institutions in Slovakia (in the compulsory education in particular). Both areas are subject to integration policies and face diverse challenges. This agenda is covered by different institutions. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport plays the key role in the education of foreigners, in particular through its Department of Inclusive Education.

4.3.1. Provision of education to migrants and refugees

Educational courses such as language courses and courses of social and cultural orientation are available to migrants and refugees as a component of the integration services. *Integration Policy* defines the need for education tailored to the needs of the adult migrants (*Integračná Politika...*, 2014, p. 24). With a financial support of AMIF such courses are currently free of charge and are

provided on a voluntary basis. The courses are available only in Bratislava and Košice and therefore they may not be accessible for migrants residing in other parts of Slovakia. Migrants may also apply for a financial allowance²² for an educational or vocational course (not applicable to Slovak language course).

The courses of Slovak language for refugees are free of charge and obligatory if the person receives financial/material support from the integration programme (Hamerlíková, 2016; Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015), i.e. the first six months upon status recognition. The extent of the courses (number of hours per week) however is not sufficient, the language courses are not tailored to needs of particular refugees (e.g. to age and gender). Moreover, language training is provided by unaccredited institutions, even by volunteers, and courses do not offer language proficiency certificates (Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015, p. 128). As a result, refugees may continue to cope with significant problems linked to language proficiency even after participating in the course (especially those without opportunity to train language competences, e.g. elderly or stay-at-home women).

4.3.2. Education of children (migrants, refugees and unaccompanied minors)

Slovakia guarantees all children equal access to education, including migrants, refugees and unaccompanied minors. According to the Slovak legislation, a migrant (and also refugee) children are obliged to attend compulsory education, which is provided to them under the same conditions as to Slovak citizens.²³ At the current school year (2017/2018) Slovak educational system has been attended by 1,666 children of other than Slovak nationality (CVTI, 2018). Compared to previous school year (2016/2017) this represents an increase by 15% (1,452 children). Future development will most likely copy the dynamic growth in third-country nationals in Slovakia during over last years and hence preparing the school system for migrants is crucial.

The educational system in Slovakia is still not prepared for an inclusive education and to accommodate specific educational needs of foreign-born children. The system does not support either schools or the children and the integration is left in the responsibility of the schools, or even in the responsibility of the particular teachers (Gažovičová, 2011). Among the deficits is the fact that children do not learn Slovak as a foreign language, they are often placed in the lower classes than they should be enrolled according to their age (Gallová Kriglerová, 2016). The schools and teachers in particular lack guidance and methodology for teaching migrant children (Gažovičová, 2011). Similar situation is also when it comes to refugee children for whom the educational system is the only way to learn Slovak language. However, compared to legal migrants, they may face additional disadvantages stemming from trauma and experience of fleeing. As some refugee families do not consider educational support for their children sufficient, they search for individual classes outside the schools, at home (Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015, p. 133). In the context of education, pre-school education represents a specific problem. As children of refugees arrive throughout the year, their parents have often problem enrolling them in state kindergartens and private ones are not affordable for them (Ibid.).

Despite the existing gearing of the educational system toward inclusive education, specific needs of particular groups of children including migrants, refugees and unaccompanied minors, the system is

²² Read more <https://www.mic.iom.sk/sk/socialne-veci/vzdelavanie/490-ponakame-moznost-ziskat-financny-prispevok-na-vzdelavaci-rekvalifikacny-kurz.html>

²³ Act No 245/2008 Coll. on Education and Training (School Act).

not prepared as of yet and the measures of integration policy are not implemented in a satisfactory way. Also MIPEX 2015 findings show that in the area of education Slovakia lacks appropriate integration strategies targeted to migrants on the level of schools or supportive mechanisms for schools. Schools deal with migrant integration without methodologies, "intuitively" and without the systematic support from upper levels of public administration. Migrant children encounter more limitation to their integration compared to their counterparts in other European countries. Slovakia scored 27th out of 38 researched countries.

4.4. Socio-cultural dimension of integration

When we speak of social integration, we take into consideration the social contacts and ties with the majority of the society, while its character, quality and frequency can differ from very approximate, informal and intimate relations (strong ties) to formal and institutionalised relations (weak ties) (Rákoczyová – Pořízková, 2009, pp. 32). New ties are important for the feeling of "belonging" to some society, somewhere.

New social ties are very important in the process of integration as they create space and social networks of people, with whom individuals can spend free time and rely on them. It also supports cultural integration – the cultural exchange, getting to know each other. Social and cultural integration can be supported by different tools: creating common events, engaging volunteers, supporting multicultural organisations and their cooperation, supporting socio-cultural events, trainings, language courses etc. These activities should be aimed both-ways – to migrants and majority society. Intercultural communication includes abilities through which people can learn about values, norms and goals from each other (Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015).

Cultural and social integration is also included in the *Action Plan of Integration Policy for 2017 – 2018*. It has eight goals: to inform about integration comprehensively and objectively based on facts (and to use different tools and engage wide range of actors) and support development of intercultural dialogue; to support expert dialogue about integration; to create and adopt ethical rules regarding informing about migration and integration; support engagement of foreigners in civic, cultural and political life; to improve cooperation between different communities, organisations and groups of foreigners; to support intercultural education for different actors (employers, public and state employees – Bureau of Labour, social workers) (*Akčný plán Integrovačnej politiky...*, 2017).

Socio-cultural dimension is addressed by the integration programme through diverse activities provided by non-governmental organisations from AMIF funded projects, both aimed at legal migrants and refugees. At the same time, these activities do not seem to be sufficient for supporting social cohesion. In spite of the undertaken activities, many migrants and refugees experience feelings of loneliness or detachment (Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015) or insecurity due to the negative attitude of public towards migrants. Numerous and wide-ranging activities are undertaken by domestic non-governmental organisations (Marginal, Adra, Human Rights League, Milan Šimečka Foundation) and international organisations (e.g. IOM). New initiative has been launched in 2017 by non-governmental organisation Mareena that brings new activities in social and cultural integration. Mareena is a civic organisation with a mission to connect local citizens and migrants through community activities in three locations – Bratislava, Nitra and Košice, where they offer language training, a range of counselling courses or community activities.

5. Conclusions: Challenges for integration in Slovakia

Integration takes place in the wider social and political arena, public and political discourse, with public opinion towards migration affecting the whole process. As the recent “migration crisis” of 2015 has shown, Slovakia orients itself rather to securitisation and protection of sovereignty than opening to migration and integration (Chudžíková, 2016; see also Grigorij Mesežnikov’s chapter in this publication). Such context does not contribute positively to promotion of migration and integration mainstreaming.

Although Slovakia has already approached integration from different angles, by setting up nationwide integration policies, priorities, establishing cooperation between public institutions, self-government and non-governmental organisations, integration of migrants still has its limits. Specifically, integration lacks systematic attention as the multi-faceted issue, implementation of policies are lagging behind, methodological guidance for actors involved in integration is missing (e.g. local self-governments) as well as sufficient financial allocation which enables systematic and specialised attention (Gallová Kriglerová, 2016; Hlinčíková – Sekulová, 2015). In MIPEX 2015 research, a survey which comprehensively compares integration policies in EU and some non-EU member states, Slovakia scored 34th out of 38 countries. This unfavourable position means that Slovak integration policy lags behind other European countries, including some V4 states (IVO, 2015). According to MIPEX 2015, implementation of legislation related to migrants in Slovakia is discretionary which makes integration policies in Slovakia unfavourable to migrants (IVO, 2015; MPG, 2015).

Integration of migrants in Slovakia needs more systematic approach and attention, including its policy dimension. Migration and integration policies need to be updated and such much-needed amendment is in the works in Slovakia. After the recent developments in migration and the arrival of refugees in Europe (“migration crisis” in 2015 in particular), Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family is calling for the revision of the existing policies as they are seen as not appropriate anymore with the changing situation.²⁴ These updates and their actual implementation may contribute to higher effectiveness of the processes, contribute to a more cohesive society and improve the position of migrants and refugees in the country. Last but not least, the success of the updates and their implementation will determine whether the country will be capable to utilise migration’s full potential.

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²⁴ Newly adopted *Strategy on Economic Mobility of Foreigners* (approved on 10th October 2018) identifies revision of the strategic documents in the area of migration and integration as an objective in short-term – integration policy with a deadline 2019/2020 and migration policy after the 2020 (*Stratégia pracovnej mobility...*, 2018, p. 34).

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Refugee crisis in Europe: Public opinion, state institutions and party politics in Slovakia

GRIGORIJ MESEŽNIKOV – ZORA BÚTOROVÁ

1. Introduction

The issue of foreign migration is one of the important topics of socio-political life of Slovakia – in the broader context of the society's transformation after 1989, establishment of the independent state in 1993 and joining the EU in 2004. It became especially salient after emergence and escalation of refugee crisis in Europe in 2015. It has significantly influenced the public discourse and public opinion, configuration of the party system and approach of the state institutions to migration, asylum and integration policies that affected the relations between Slovakia and other countries and the overall position of the Slovak Republic in the EU.

After the collapse of the Communist regime, foreign migration and long-term presence of foreigners became a reality in Slovakia. The country opened up to the outside world, people started to move in both directions – to the country and out of it. Many of Slovakia's citizens have gone abroad permanently, at the same time the numbers of foreigners who have chosen Slovakia for their residence – temporary or permanent, for study, work and family life – were increasing. However, the total share of citizens of other countries residing in Slovakia is still significantly lower than in many other EU member states.

During a relatively long period (since mid-90s until the mid-to-second decade of 2000s) the public debate on the arrival of foreigners was not very intense (even in time when Slovakia was experiencing large-scale increase of asylum seekers just before joining the EU and in the first year of its membership). For political parties it was basically a marginal issue with no special attention devoted in their programme documents or in activities aimed at addressing the voters. Parties were criticising each other rather for not creating favourable conditions for young Slovaks to stay and to work at home and therefore for pushing them outside of the country, de facto encouraging emigration and "brain drain", but they were speaking rather little about the inflows of foreigners to Slovakia. The topic of foreign migration (immigration), asylum policy, integration of migrants and refugees into the Slovak society remained primarily the domain of the designated officials, experts, activists and specialised journalists.

A radical change occurred in 2015. However, the topic of migration and refugees acquired particular importance not due to the real impact of immigration on the country's socio-economic development or due to serious consequences caused by arrival of migrants from abroad, but due to the fact that it began to be debated before the parliamentary elections.

The topic was one of the most discussed in the election campaign and eventually it significantly influenced the results of the elections. The paradox could be observed that this happened in a country which was not affected by the arrival of significant numbers of refugees from the Middle East or North Africa, and in a country in which relatively small numbers of immigrants live and where those coming to Europe from the outside world have little interest to permanently settle. Despite that, many local politicians have made

migration a key issue for their mobilisation strategies before elections. One of the outcomes of such an approach was the election to the Slovak parliament of the right-wing extremist anti-systemic party, which was considered by the xenophobic part of electorate as a more authentic defender of the domestic population against the “foreign invaders” than parties with a more moderate profile, which nevertheless decided to include the anti-migration and anti-refugee rhetoric into their campaign due to opportunistic reasons.

In November 2018, a new wave of anti-migration political campaign, close to hysteria, took place in Slovakia, when majority of relevant political parties positioned themselves as strong opponents of UN Global Compact for Migration.

It needs to be said that the number of foreigners seeking asylum in Slovakia since the beginning of 1990s has been significantly lower than in many other European countries. In the years preceding Slovakia accession to the EU (2001–2004) this number has increased, but since the national asylum policy was quite restrictive, during last 25 years the total amount of foreign citizens with the granted asylum did reached 855 (up end of December 2018); another 746 persons with foreign citizenship were granted subsidiary protection. Between 2015 and 2018, a total of 820 persons with foreign citizenship applied for asylum in Slovakia. Of these 210 were granted asylum and 115 were granted subsidiary protection (see Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1. Statistics on asylum seeking procedure in Slovakia (1993 – 2018)

| Year | Number of applications for asylum | Number of persons with granted asylum | Number of persons with rejected asylum | Granted /rejected subsidiary protection* | Suspended proceedings | Persons granted state citizenship |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1993 | 96 | 41 | 20 | | 25 | 0 |
| 1994 | 140 | 58 | 32 | | 65 | 0 |
| 1995 | 359 | 80 | 57 | | 190 | 0 |
| 1996 | 415 | 72 | 62 | | 193 | 4 |
| 1997 | 645 | 69 | 84 | | 539 | 14 |
| 1998 | 506 | 53 | 36 | | 224 | 22 |
| 1999 | 1,320 | 26 | 176 | | 1,034 | 2 |
| 2000 | 1,556 | 11 | 123 | | 1,366 | 0 |
| 2001 | 8,151 | 18 | 130 | | 6,154 | 11 |
| 2002 | 9,743 | 20 | 309 | | 8,053 | 59 |
| 2003 | 10,358 | 11 | 531 | | 10,656 | 42 |
| 2004 | 11,395 | 15 | 1,592 | | 11,782 | 20 |
| 2005 | 3,549 | 25 | 827 | | 2,930 | 2 |
| 2006 | 2,849 | 8 | 861 | | 1,940 | 5 |
| 2007 | 2,642 | 14 | 1,177 | 82 / 646 | 1,693 | 18 |
| 2008 | 909 | 22 | 416 | 66 / 273 | 457 | 4 |
| 2009 | 822 | 14 | 330 | 98 / 165 | 460 | 1 |
| 2010 | 541 | 15 | 180 | 57 / 101 | 361 | 3 |
| 2011 | 491 | 12 | 186 | 91 / 47 | 270 | 7 |
| 2012 | 732 | 32 | 334 | 104 / 153 | 383 | 0 |
| 2013 | 441 | 15 | 124 | 34 / 49 | 352 | 7 |
| 2014 | 331 | 14 | 197 | 99 / 41 | 163 | 12 |
| 2015 | 330 | 8 | 124 | 41 / 24 | 148 | 5 |
| 2016 | 146 | 167 | 82 | 12 / 13 | 35 | 3 |
| 2017 | 166 | 29 | 77 | 25 / 16 | 73 | 6 |
| 2018 | 178 | 6 | 127 | 37 / 23 | 69 | 18 |
| Total | 58,811 | 855 | 8,194 | 746 / 1,550 | 49,615 | 265 |

Source: *Azyl a migrácia. Štatistiky*. Ministerstvo vnútra SR – <https://www.minv.sk/?statistiky-20>

* - The collection of data on persons with subsidiary protection has begun in 2007.

Table 2. Statistics on asylum seeking procedure in Slovakia (1993 – 2018)

| Year | Number of applications for asylum | Number of persons with granted asylum | Number of persons with granted subsidiary protection |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 2015 | 330 | 8 | 41 |
| 2016 | 146 | 167 | 12 |
| 2017 | 166 | 29 | 25 |
| 2018 | 178 | 6 | 37 |
| Total | 820 | 210 | 115 |

Source: *Azyl a migrácia. Štatistiky.* Ministerstvo vnútra SR - <https://www.minv.sk/?statistiky-20>

Despite the fact that insignificant numbers of foreigners applied for asylum in Slovakia during the refugee crisis, Slovakia as a member of V-4 group and an EU member state took a reluctant stance towards the acceptance of refugees. It rejected the idea of proportional distribution of the arrived refugees in individual member states and insisted on the principle of willingness that de facto meant justification of refusal to support the common EU approach on the issue. Generally, it was a result of the fact that Slovak government over two consecutive cycles was formed by political parties with prevailing rejectionist stances (or these parties had dominant positions in the cabinet). Views of Slovakia's population on migration indicated the prevailing negative attitudes on the arrival of refugees.

2. Public discourse and public opinion

2.1. Public perception of migration before the elections

Although Slovakia was not affected by a massive arrival of refugees, its inhabitants reacted sensitively to the migration crisis. Public opinion polls conducted in June–December 2015 documented an increase of importance of this issue for the public, as well as widespread worries about the inflow of immigrants.

Respondents of the July 2015 survey by Polis Slovakia Agency named the issue of migrants as the second most urgent in the society (40%) that followed unemployment (43%) and preceded healthcare (29%), low pensions (28%) a low wages (26%) (*Najväčším problémom ...*, 2015). Two months later, in the September 2015 survey by the European Analytical Centre (EAC), the issue of refugees ranked first (34%), before unemployment (18%) and corruption (16%) (*Prieskum: Najväčším spoločenským problémom ...*, 2015).

As the polls showed, the willingness and preparedness of Slovakia's citizens to take refugees was limited. Only 18% of respondents of the September 2015 poll by 2muse agency agreed with the idea that Slovakia could become a new home for refugees (*Prieskum: Slováci nechcú ...*, 2015).

According to the June 2015 survey by Polis Slovakia, as many as 70% of respondents rejected the idea that "Slovakia could take in refugees from the Middle East and Northern Africa based on quotas suggested by the European Union". This disapproval was prevailing not only among the supporters of the ruling Smer-SD party (82%), but also among the adherents of the parliamentary opposition (68%). Almost two-thirds of respondents (63%) believed that refugees present a threat for the security of Slovakia and its inhabitants (*Prieskum: Slováci odmietajú ...*, 2015). Thus it was not surprising that

two-thirds of the population (64%) approved of the decision of the neighbouring Hungary to build a "Schengen" fence on its frontier with Serbia to prevent refugees from entering the country (*Ludom sa pozdáva...*, 2015).

The increase of the flow of refugees to Europe and the outbreak of migration crisis took place in the last months before the March 2016 parliamentary elections in Slovakia. The attitudes of the public became relevant for political parties and their leaders who included the issue of migration into their mobilisation strategies and used it extensively in their communication with potential voters. According to a September 2015 poll by the 2muse agency, over 40% of respondents admitted that the issue of migration might influence their voting decision in the 2016 parliamentary elections (*Prieskum: Slováci nechcú...*, 2015).

The government of Robert Fico managed to convince a vast majority of citizens that its approach towards the refugee crisis is appropriate: according to the September 2015 FOCUS survey, 89% of respondents expressed their support for it (Krbatová, 2016). The October 2015 poll by the Polis Slovakia agency (*Prieskum: Na utečeneckú krízu...*, 2015) showed that the largest portion of the public appreciated the steps by Prime Minister Robert Fico (44%) and Interior Minister Robert Kaliňák (18%) – two strongest representatives of the Smer-SD party (43%). Most citizens of Slovakia were dissatisfied with the attitude of the EU towards the refugee crisis. In the September 2015 EAC survey, 83% of respondents shared this critical view (*Prieskum: Slováci sú nespokojní...*, 2016).

Although the inhabitants of Slovakia were not directly afflicted by the migration wave, fears of refugees were widespread. According to the December 2015 survey by the Institute of Sociology of Slovak Academy of Sciences (SÚ SAV) 70% of respondents (76% of women and 64% of men) were worried – despite the fact that only 7% of them believed that refugees are interested in coming to Slovakia, while 64% thought the opposite. Thus the survey revealed a paradoxical combination of a realistic assessment of a low interest of refugees to come to Slovakia and heightened fears of their arrival in large numbers.

This inconsistent pattern of thinking was accompanied by a low willingness of Slovaks to help the refugees. When answering the question "How should Europeans treat the refugees who have already arrived?" 49% of respondents preferred the option "to help them only when it is inevitable"; 19% advised "not to help them at all" and 24% believed they should be helped "only in a restricted manner". Less than 2% of respondents declared that they would prefer a "substantial help" to refugees (Bahna – Klobucký, 2015).

This survey also shed light on reasons why people in Slovakia fear refugees. Respondents expected that the arrival of refugees could cause the increase of crime (41% of them expressed this view) and increase the probability of attacks by Islamic extremists (40%); they suspected that a substantial portion of refugees would not adapt to our way of life (29%); that the acceptance of refugees would present an economic burden for the country (29%); that too many refugees would come and our society and culture would be shaped according to their ideas and values (19%). Some respondents attributed religious intolerance to refugees (19%); they feared that they could spread dangerous diseases (13%) and that they could promote subordination of women in the society (8%).

Obviously, the religious profile of refugees is an important factor influencing attitudes of Slovaks towards them. When answering the question posed by Polis Slovakia agency in October 2015 as to what type of refugees they would prefer if Slovakia were obliged to take them in, 57% of respondents preferred Christians and only 1% Muslims; 18% did not care about their religion and 22% did not agree with accepting any refugees at all (*Prieskum: Na utečeneckú krízu...*, 2015).

2.2. Attitudes of Slovaks towards migration in a comparative framework

The findings of a comparative survey for the European Parliament in September 2015 (*Parlemeter 2015*) enabled to set the opinions of Slovaks about refugees into a broader European framework. According to the data, Slovaks differed from the EU average: they displayed much stronger resistance against the acceptance of migrants, as well as against the common approach of the EU member states to migration.

Additionally, Slovaks declared the lowest support for the idea that more decision-making should take place at the European level. Only 40% of Slovaks supported this idea, compared to 66% in the EU. Only 45% of Slovaks, compared to 62% of Europeans agreed with the decision of the EU to allocate financial support as a matter of priority to the member states currently facing the greatest migratory flows through their coasts and borders. Only 51% of Slovaks compared to 79% of Europeans believed that legal migration procedures should be the same in all the EU member states. Only 53% of Slovaks compared to 66% of Europeans agreed with the idea that simplifying the legal migration procedures would make it possible to effectively fight illegal migration.

Only 31% of Slovaks compared to 78% of Europeans agreed that the number of asylum seekers should be better distributed among all EU member states. Of those Slovaks agreeing with the need for a better distribution of asylum seekers, 51% agreed that the distribution of asylum seekers should be decided at EU level on the basis of binding quotas, compared to 75% of Europeans. All in all, only 15% of all Slovaks were supportive of binding quotas for a better relocation of immigrants, compared to 59% of Europeans who shared this view.

Besides a very strong resistance against the common approach of the EU member states to migration, Slovaks differed from most of the EU countries also in their perception of the need to attract foreign labour force for their economy. While in the EU average 51% of respondents agreed that their country needs legal immigrants in certain sectors of economy, only 19% of Slovaks shared this view – which was the lowest percentage in the EU (together with Hungarians, Bulgarians and Czechs).

Slovak respondents expressed scepticism not only of immigrants in general, but also of the presence of nationals from other EU countries in Slovakia: only 31% believed it is a good thing for the national economy, compared to 56% in the EU. In the same vein, only 39% of Slovaks believed that the presence of nationals from other EU countries in Slovakia contributes to the diversity of cultural life in Slovakia compared to 66% in the EU.

Similar conclusions about the prevailing unwillingness of Slovaks to accept refugees and grant them a permanent residence, about widespread negative stereotypes of migrants, as well as strong resistance to mandatory quotas for relocation of immigrants could be drawn from other surveys conducted in Slovakia on the verge of 2015 and 2016, including the poll by the Department of Political Science at the University of Alexander Dubček in Trenčín conducted in November 2015 – January 2016 (*Príeskom: Slováci sa stále obávajú...*, 2016).

At the same time, most of the population in Slovakia realised that their country did not become an attractive destination for refugees. In February 2016 almost two-thirds of respondents (62%) believed that there was no threat of a terrorist attack due to the refugee flow to Slovakia. They appreciated this feeling of safety and attributed it to the anti-migration policy of the government.

With the upcoming parliamentary elections, most politicians in Slovakia were intentionally spreading fears of refugees and mobilising their voter base. When media brought new information about the attacks of radical Islamists abroad, they exploited the opportunity to present themselves as defenders of the domestic population, its well-being, culture and security.

2.3. Increased social distance towards immigrants and other minorities in Slovakia

Naturally, anti-refugee and anti-migrant rhetoric has encouraged and cemented prejudices and legitimised wariness of ordinary people towards immigrants. The February 2017 IVO survey for Bertelsmann Foundation documented that wariness towards immigrants was typical also of the youngest generation (Gyárfášová, 2017). Around three-quarters of respondents aged 15-24 thought that immigrants could not contribute to Slovakia's economic growth and general prosperity. They disagreed with the opinion that immigrants are needed to improve country's demographic prospects and to balance the retirement system. They believed immigrants are a threat to the country's public safety. What's more, they perceived them as a burden on the social welfare system. On top of that, 75% of young Slovaks disagreed with the view that Slovakia should provide a safe haven to refugees from areas of military conflicts or to victims of political persecution according to internationally agreed conventions. As the survey indicated, the attitudes of young Slovaks were similar to young people from other Visegrad four countries and much more prejudiced and unwelcoming than those of young Germans and Austrians.

Undoubtedly, the use – or rather abuse – of the issue of migration by most of the political parties for the mobilisation of voters before the parliamentary elections had a broader negative impact: it contributed to the increase of general distrust among people. Also the attitudes of a substantial part of majority towards various minorities became more xenophobic; negative stereotypes and prejudices became more widespread (Bútorová – Mesežnikov, 2017). A comparison of social distance in 2017 and 2008 showed that this trend has marked the attitudes of the majority not only towards foreigners and immigrants, but also towards other minorities living in Slovakia – Roma, Jews, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, individuals with a mental handicap (Table 3).

Table 3: "Imagine that a person or persons belonging to the following groups would move into your neighbourhood. What would be your reaction: would you mind if they should become your neighbours, or not?" (% of answers "I would mind")

| | 2008 | 2017 |
|---|------|------|
| Roma family | 70 | 79 |
| Muslim family | 32 | 73 |
| Family of immigrants from a less developed country | 21 | 59 |
| Gay couple | 34 | 54 |
| Lesbian couple | 25 | 48 |
| Bisexual | 25 | 45 |
| Asian family | 22 | 43 |
| Black family | 21 | 43 |
| Jewish family | 11 | 30 |
| Ukrainian family | 17 | 25 |
| A person with a mental handicap | 11 | 23 |
| A Hungarian family | 17 | 18 |
| A person with a physical handicap | 3 | 6 |

Source: IVO/COPART-KVSBK, 2008; Institute for Public Affairs, 2017.

According to the findings of the 2017 IVO survey, social distance towards immigrants, foreigners and ethnic minorities is quite evenly distributed in the population. Gender and age do not play an important role. People with lower education feel stronger distance towards Ukrainians, blacks and Asians. However, attitudes towards the immigrants from less developed countries and Muslims are evenly distributed among all education categories.

Political adherence does not have a significant impact on the attitudes towards immigrants from less developed countries, Muslims and Roma. On the other hand, it is a significant, albeit a weak factor influencing social distance towards Ukrainians, Asians, Blacks, Jews and ethnic Hungarians. The supporters of the extremist ĽSNS party feel the greatest distance, while the SaS supporters belong to the least prejudiced (Table 4).

Table 4: “Imagine that a person or persons belonging to the following groups would move into your neighbourhood. What would be your reaction: would you mind if they should become your neighbours, or not?” (% of answers “I would mind” among party supporters)

| Parties | Immigrants | Muslims | Asians | Blacks | Ukrainians | Roma | Jews | Hungarians |
|----------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| OĽaNO | 66 | 76 | 37 | 30 | 23 | 77 | 32 | 21 |
| Sme Rodina | 49 | 65 | 35 | 37 | 13 | 76 | 14 | 10 |
| Most-Hid | 57 | 83 | 56 | 49 | 34 | 85 | 27 | 2 |
| SNS | 59 | 77 | 48 | 46 | 34 | 80 | 37 | 23 |
| Smer-SD | 61 | 74 | 45 | 49 | 25 | 79 | 27 | 16 |
| KDH | 55 | 71 | 39 | 36 | 18 | 73 | 25 | 9 |
| ĽSNS | 63 | 78 | 51 | 62 | 25 | 86 | 44 | 36 |
| SaS | 57 | 66 | 25 | 24 | 9 | 74 | 14 | 4 |
| SR population | 59 | 73 | 43 | 43 | 25 | 79 | 30 | 18 |

Source: Institute for Public Affairs, September 2017.

2.4. Slovak public opinion on migration remains out of the EU mainstream

The October 2017 Eurobarometer survey “Integration of immigrants in the European Union” (*Special Eurobarometer...*, 2018) provided new data documenting a persisting negative perception of migration and immigrants by the Slovak public. According to the findings, inhabitants of Slovakia differ from the “average” Europeans mainly in the following three respects.

2.4.1. Rare interaction of Slovaks with immigrants

Slovakia is the country with the lowest portion of immigrants living in the country – only 0.6%. However, the estimate of Slovak respondents is much higher – on average 8.3%, which is nearly 14 times the actual figure. In fact, the degree of overestimation of the portion of immigrants is the greatest among all EU member states.

Due to the low portion of immigrants, Slovakia belongs to the countries with the least frequent interaction of domestic population with immigrants. The number of people who do not have any personal ties with immigrants is much higher in Slovakia than in the EU as a whole (79% in Slovakia: 59% in the EU) and reaches similar levels as in the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary. Only 23% of

Slovaks meet immigrants at least once a week in their neighbourhood (e.g. shops, parks, restaurants and streets); 14% when using public services; 11% in their workplace; 7% at a childcare, school or university; 7% during sport, volunteering or cultural activity; 2% when using household services. This rare interaction may be one of the reasons why Slovaks belong to those EU nations which feel the least comfortable in their communication with immigrants – as friends, work colleagues, neighbours, family members, doctors or managers.

2.4.2. Negative perception of immigration

Slovaks belong to the nations with the most negative perception of immigration from outside the EU (ranking 4th among all 28 EU countries). Most of them (54%) believe that immigration from outside the EU is more of a problem than an opportunity; 24% perceive it as both a problem and as an opportunity; only for 7% it is more of an opportunity. An above-average portion of Slovaks believe that immigrants are a burden on their country's welfare system (69% of Slovaks: 56% of Europeans); that immigrants aggravate problems with crime in their country (61%: 55%); and that immigrants take jobs from workers in the country (58%: 39%).

At the same time, Slovaks are more sceptical about the positive effects of immigration. While in the EU, 72% agree that immigrants help to fill jobs for which it is difficult to find workers, in Slovakia only 51% think so. While in the EU, 51% of respondents believe that immigrants have a positive effect on the economy of their country. Slovakia belongs to the four countries, where less than a third of respondents agree (31%).

While seven in ten (69%) Europeans agree that fostering the integration of immigrants is a necessary investment for their country in the long run, Slovakia (44%), together with Bulgaria and Hungary, belongs to the countries with the lowest portion of people seeing these benefits.

2.4.3. Prevailing support of the approach of Slovak government and media

Negative perception of immigration in Slovakia, denial of its positive effects for the society and underestimation of its importance for the economic future of the country goes hand in hand with a prevalingly positive evaluation of the approach of Slovak government towards the integration of immigrants (62%). Slovaks are more satisfied with their government's actions – or rather lack of actions – than is the EU average (51%). They are also less critical of the presentation of immigrants in media: 47% of Slovaks believe in their objectivity and only 18% think they are too negative, while 23% believe they present immigrants too positively. The views of Europeans are more critical: according to 39%, media present immigrants objectively, according to 36% too negatively and only according to 12% too positively.

3. State institutions

Among those state institutions in Slovakia whose activities are relevant for handling migration and refugee issue (either domestically or internationally), the highest importance can be attributed to the president, parliament, government and three ministries – Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Substantial discrepancies were observed between

the president on one hand, and parliament and government on the other. Stances presented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs deviated in some partial aspects of the migration agenda from the political line defined by the government.

3.1. President

As the positions of Slovakia's head of state on any policy issues are defined mainly by the constitutional competences which can be characterised as quite limited in policy-making process, President Andrej Kiska played the most relevant role in migration issue based on his personal involvement in the public debate that embraced various aspects of migration and by his handling of the legislation, dealing with migration agenda approved by parliament (here the head of state has a power of veto over the approved laws).

Kiska was an active participant in the public debate on the refugee crisis. His attitudes were characterised, in particular, by appealing to the principles of humanism and solidarity, by denying stereotypical views of migrants and refugees, by trying to calm citizens affected by the deliberate dissemination of concerns linked to migration. President further stressed the need to preserve the unity of the EU in its approach to resolving the refugee crisis. In line with this view he opened this topic at meetings with the heads of the V-4 states.

In response to the results of the local referendum in the community of Gabčíkovo²⁵, president declared that the reason behind these results was fear of refugees as well as the belief that this problem does not concern Slovakia. Kiska said that Slovakia as a partner in the EU is expected to provide assistance. He stressed that with refugees and migrants "no security, cultural or social disaster is rolling into Slovakia" (*Prezident: Výsledok referenda...*, 2015).

The head of state issued a special statement on the refugee crisis, in which he clearly explained his position on several aspects. The statement was an extensive and logically well-structured document. No other political representatives in Slovakia, including the top constitutional officials, have produced a similar document. Remarkable was the phrasing of several sections of the statement where Kiska urged politicians to stop scaring people and to treat refugees according to principles of humanity and solidarity. President rejected the allegations that the arrival of hundreds or thousands of people from other cultures threatens or degrades the values or the way of life in Slovakia. He also opposed the spreading of myths about incoming migrants, for example, the myth about refugees as potential terrorists or economic speculators. He stressed the need to bring the EU member states to accord on the refugee issue. As he said, the public debate on refugees is going on "primarily because of human beings who need help and secondly because of ourselves. For many people who are fleeing to Europe, their acceptance is a matter of life and death" (*Prezident: Vyhlásenie...*, 2015). In his statement, President Kiska thanked civic activists, organisations, journalists and volunteers for helping refugees.

As for quotas on the relocation of refugees from Greece and Italy, president Kiska took a different stance than the Slovak government. On the one hand, he also did not support the proposal to introduce the mandatory quotas; on the other hand, he argued that Slovakia should respect the decision of the EU Council of Ministers since Slovakia is bound by the Union's treaties. As Kiska argued, the decision to sue the EU in European Court of Justice contradicted the direction of Slovak foreign policy, namely

²⁵ In August 2015 inhabitants of a small town of Gabčíkovo located in south-western part of the country, where the state authorities planned to use local facilities for temporary admission of refugees coming from the overloaded camps in Austria, rejected the arrival of refugees in the local referendum: 96.67% voting against the acceptance, 3.32% voted for, with the turnout 58.46% (*Migranti: Obyvatelia Gabčíkova utečencov nechcú...*, 2015).

the priority to preserve the country's position at the centre of the union (*RTVS: Kiska chce o migrantoch ...*, 2015). In 2016 President criticised the attitude of newly-formed government on the migration crisis and reception of refugees. "We have to show that we are a country that does not think only of itself". Although he called the mandatory quotas in the EU an "unfortunate idea", he emphasised that Slovakia should help on voluntary basis those countries with high numbers of refugees (*L'udia sú nespokojní...*, 2016).

At the end of 2015, President vetoed the so-called "anti-terrorist legislative package" (the amendment of Penal Code) which was approved by the Parliament on proposal of the government, which justified this legislation citing increased risk of terrorist activities in the context of the escalation of the refugees crisis in Europe. In December 2016 Kiska vetoed the Amendment of Law on Churches and Religious Communities approved by the Parliament, which tightened the requirements for registration of churches and religious communities clearly directed against the possibility of official recognition of a Muslim religious entity by the state (Parliament, however overturned President's veto in the subsequent vote).

3.2. Parliament

During the escalation of the refugee crisis in 2015 and in the subsequent years the Slovak Parliament (National Council of the Slovak Republic) has dealt with political and legislative documents, which were directly or indirectly related to the issue of immigration and refugees.

In June 2015, the Parliament responding to the increased flow of foreign migrants to Europe via a special resolution refused the mandatory quotas for relocation of refugees inside the EU calling it "a non-systemic solution". At the same time, it did not put into question the free movement of person principle within the Schengen area and stressed the need for solidarity with EU member states in tackling the problems linked with migration. Parliament also condemned the "misuse of migration for inflaming violence, racism and xenophobia". 125 out of 128 MPs present in the plenary session voted to approve the mentioned resolution (*NR SR: Ostro odsudzuje...*, 2015). In September 2015, Parliament again rejected mandatory quotas and demanded the government to proceed in accordance with the first resolution approved in June. 115 out of 119 MPs present in the session voted in favour of this resolution (*NR SR: Odmietla zavedenie...*, 2015).

At the end of 2015, the Parliament, on proposal of the government, formed by members of party Smer-SD, through the shortened legislative procedure approved the amendment of the constitution and amendments of several laws – all aimed at strengthening the fight against terrorism (legislation was labelled as "anti-terrorist legislative package"). The adoption of these norms was accompanied by an intense political and media debate, in which the migration and arrival of refugees from the Middle East to Europe was presented as a factor increasing the threat of terrorist activities.

In January 2017, Parliament passed an amendment to the Law on Churches and Religious Communities which increased the number of members required for registration of an individual religious community from 20,000 to 50,000 persons, which was undoubtedly related to the refugee crisis in Europe: the amendment was a clear step aimed at preventing the Islamic community in Slovakia from becoming a state-registered confessional association.

In November 2018, 90 MPs from both the ruling and opposition parties voted for a resolution in which Parliament rejected the UN Global Compact for Migration.

3.3. Government

Three governmental cabinets spanned the inception and escalation of refugee crisis in Europe: 1) Smer-SD's single-party government with Prime Minister Robert Fico (from March 2012 to March 2016); 2) the coalition government Smer-SD – SNS – Most-Híd also with Prime Minister Fico (from March 2016 to March 2018); 3) the coalition government with the same party composition but led since March 2018 by new Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini, who took over the office after Fico's resignation as a result of mass protests organised in response to the murder of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancé Martina Kušnírová.

Although the party compositions of government cabinets before and after 2016 were different, the overall position of the government on the migration agenda remained unchanged. After the 2016 elections, SNS and Most-Híd formed a ruling coalition with the dominant Smer-SD. The attitudes of SNS to migration were compatible with Smer-SD's anti-refugee stances. Most-Híd's views, quite friendly towards the refugees and positive towards possibilities of their integration in Slovakia, did not have an impact on the overall political line of the government.

In 2015–2018 there was a clear reluctant attitude of the Slovak government in all its party compositions and personal configurations to the arrival of refugees in the country. Among the members of the cabinet, the views on the issue of migration were most often transmitted to domestic public by Prime Minister Fico; another active presenter of the government's positions was Minister of the Interior Robert Kaliňák. Both politicians are key persons in Smer-SD.

The government defined the country's positions on the issue of migration and refugees at the international level – within the V-4 group, and towards the EU and its member states. Prime Minister Fico acted as a supporter of the V-4's strictly reluctant attitude to migration which was in clear contradiction to the EU's positions. He not only co-created this attitude, but also defended it and criticised those who pointed out that the Slovak government's policy (as well as the V4 group's position) was breaking the principles of solidarity and unity of the EU. When German officials critically responded to the Slovak government's policy, Fico said: "They are bothered that we do not want to obey. The idea is simple – I have invited millions of guests to my house, now I cannot manage them, so I come to the door of my neighbours and ask them: 'Take care of my guests'. Germany sees that we stand firmly. Germany was wrong when it opened its arms and said: 'Come to us'. I do not need to have here compact ghettos with another religion" (*TA3: Treba sa pozrieť..., 2016*).

Rejection of any quotas on refugees, highlighting the principle of volunteering, emphasising national sovereignty in decision-making in the area of migration over the common European solutions, criticising such proposals for reform of the European asylum system which would enable evenly distribution of refugees among EU member states, prioritisation of security dimension (the fight against terrorism) over other relevant dimensions (humanitarian aspects, social integration) and insistence on the strict protection of Slovakia's border and the external borders of the EU and Schengen, combined with the demand to keep the free movement within the Schengen – these were the main messages and practical steps of the Slovak government cabinet with respect to migration and refugees.

Stressing security as a dominant part of migration shortly before the 2016 elections, the government organised a spectacular training at the state border with the presence of media, in which the Slovak police units installed mobile barriers against refugees. Prime Minister Robert Fico, who was present at this training, said that "European Union is not capable of protecting the Schengen borders" and it is "only a matter of time when migration flows can turn to Slovakia" (*Migrácia: Policajti otestovali..., 2016*).

After the EU Internal Affairs Council September 2015 decision to relocate 120,000 asylum seekers from Greece and Italy (Slovakia was expected to accept 802 refugees on its territory and, if necessary additional 656), the Slovak government submitted a complaint to the EU Court of Justice and demanded to annul this decision, arguing that it violated the rights of European Parliament and national parliaments of member states. However, in September 2017, the European Court dismissed the action brought by Slovakia in its entirety. Prime Minister Fico commented on this apparent political loss by saying that although he as a Prime Minister must accept the decision (albeit two years ago he said he would not accept it), he continues to insist on his original rejection of quotas on refugees. He expressed his satisfaction that the system of quotas did not work and characterised the “hard guarding of the external borders” proposed and supported by Slovakia as an “effective form of solidarity” (*Fico: Rešpektujeme rozsudok...*, 2017).

Statement made by the new Slovak Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini who replaced Robert Fico in March 2018 as PM, about Syrian orphans’ case, however, indicated a shift at least in the Cabinet’s rhetoric. In October 2018 in an interview with Reuters on the side-lines of the international conference GLOBSEC Tatra Summit in Štrbské Pleso, Pellegrini said that Slovakia could accept several dozens of Syrian orphans. He argued that Slovakia was rich enough to take care of “ten, twenty or thirty children” residing in a refugee camp in Greece, that Slovak economy or culture could not be threatened by several dozens of orphans who would be placed in Slovak children’s homes (*Premiér: Slovensko by mohlo prijmout...*, 2018). No decision about the case with practical consequences was made till the end of 2018 and no Syrian orphans came to Slovakia.

In December 2018 Pellegrini’s cabinet agreed with the Parliament’s decision not to endorse the UN Global Compact for Migration and not to send an official representative of Slovakia to the conference on global migration in Marrakesh. At the same time in December 2018 Slovakia endorsed the UN Global Compact on Refugees. Unlike the Global Compact for Migration this document did not provoke any public and political debate in the country.

3.4. Ministry of the Interior

Ministry of the Interior is a supreme institution of executive power which directly deals with the migration and refugee agenda through its special unit – Migration Office, an administrative body deciding the granting of asylums and providing subsidiary protection to foreigners. The ministry also manages migration projects (for example those that are supported by the European Fund for Integration of the Third-Countries Nationals and implemented by NGOs in the areas of humanitarian assistance, integration, research etc.). It participates in the implementation of projects of the European Asylum Support Office and the European Migration Network. On the one hand, Ministry of the Interior carries out migration agenda tasks as defined by law, on the other hand, in the period of the outbreak and escalation of the refugee crisis and in its aftermath, the Slovak public received information about activities of the ministry concerning migration in an extremely politicised form. As a result this state institution positioned itself as a participant of a political debate with clear-cut partisan stances. The main driving force behind the politicisation was Minister of the Interior Robert Kaliňák, vice-chairman of Smer-SD.

Kaliňák was Minister of the Interior during 2006 – 2010 and 2012 – 2018 (he was forced to resign in March 2018 under the pressure of mass public protests caused by the murder of independent journalist Ján Kuciak). Being fully identified with the Smer-SD’s general line, he highlighted, in particular, the security dimension of the refugee issue, especially the need to protect the EU’s external

borders against refugee flows. He encouraged the tightening of the asylum policy, including the necessity to return refugees back to the countries of their origin after situation there would improve.

In February 2016, Kaliňák together with Prime Minister Fico in a special briefing informed that Slovakia is sending 20 policemen to Slovenia and 25 policemen to Macedonia to protect the borders of these states. In March 2016, several days before the parliamentary elections, Kaliňák and Fico travelled personally to the Macedonian-Greek border near the town of Gevgelija, where large numbers of refugees were amassing. The timing of this visit was an example of maximising the use of migration as a major mobilisation tool.

After the elections, Kaliňák as the re-appointed minister of the interior expressed his disagreement with the proposal for the reform of the European asylum system. He disagreed with the possibility of a more proportional (or, fairer) distribution of refugees among EU member states (*Kaliňák: S reformou ...*, 2016). Kaliňák also denied the idea of financial penalties for not taking in refugees by individual countries that the European Commission presented in its proposal. He called for the quickest possible end of admission of refugees arriving to Europe through Mediterranean Sea because, as he said, it only motivates people to take dangerous decisions that often lead to their death (*Kaliňák: Azylová politika ...*, 2016). Rejection of proposals to introduce the quota system for relocation of refugees by the Central European countries was described by Kaliňák as "voice of reason" (*V4: Projekt kvót ...*, 2017).

3.5. Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is responsible for contributing to the country's foreign policy-making and its implementation through diplomatic activities, has been involved in working with the multi-level migration agenda – in relation to the EU and its individual member states, including V4 states, in relation to other countries and international organisations (OSCE, UN, IOM). An important moment influencing the way the MFA handled the issue of migration and refugees was a position of Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajčák. He has represented Smer-SD in all three cabinets (2012 – 2018), however, he is not a member of this party and in addition to fulfilling his ministerial duties during the refugee crisis, in 2016 he ran in the elections of UN Secretary-General and later acted as a Chairman of the UN General Assembly (from September 2017 till September 2018). In this position, he was involved in preparing international migration documents (for example, the UN Global Compact for Migration).

Unlike Minister of the Interior Kaliňák, Lajčák was not obliged to promote Smer-SD's political line in communication with domestic public. His participation in the preparation of international documents on migration was a certain kind of commitment and it influenced his approach to the migration agenda, even in the situation where the MFA had to proceed in full compliance with the government's line. Lajčák and other MFA's representatives used a moderate vocabulary, tried to create a more balanced image of Slovakia as a country which sought to cooperate with all important international actors and adhered to universal principles in its approach to refugees.

Minister Lajčák and other representatives of the ministry tried to highlight the achievements reached by international actors in their approach to migration (for example, achievements reached by the EU). He emphasised a positive contribution of domestic actors seeking to contribute to solving of migration-related issues (e.g. NGOs or Catholic Church). He stressed *inter alia* the need to strengthen a dialogue within the international community, to seek consensual solutions, to overcome prejudices and to perceive migration as a global phenomenon (*Lajčák: Situácia s migráciou je lepšia ...*, 2017).

In his manner of communication about migration, Lajčák differed from other Smer-SD representatives and inclined to the communication style of President Kiska.

In October 2018, Lajčák became a target of harsh criticism from anti-refugee politicians, representatives of the ruling coalition SNS party and the opposition movement We Are Family of Boris Kollár for his support of the UN Global Compact for Migration. Representatives of these formations requested that Slovakia does not endorse this document. They insisted on special deliberations of the parliament about this document and spread false information about its provisions. Smer-SD did not respond to harsh attacks on Lajčák. In November 2018, Prime Minister Pellegrini announced that Slovakia will not endorse the Global Compact for Migration. Lajčák warned the ruling coalition that if this happens he would resign from his post. After Parliament approved the resolution rejecting Global Compact for Migration, Lajčák submitted his resignation to President Kiska. Few days later, however, giving in to the pressure from Prime Minister Pellegrini, he withdrew the resignation.

3.6. Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family

In its agenda, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family covers the issues of labour mobility of foreigners. It deals primarily with the employment conditions of nationals of other countries. On the one hand, during the refugee crisis, ministry's officials, including Minister Jan Richter, a prominent member of Smer-SD, sought to take on more "technocratic" positions, closer to the ministry's agenda. On the other hand, in their public appearances they did not outline the ideas of possible positive effects of deeper integration of foreign migrants for the country's socio-economic development. They rather emphasised the necessity to use the workforce from abroad to solve some partial, tactical problems (especially the lack of employees in certain regions or in particular companies that could lead to the withdrawal of foreign investors).

Informing about ministry's activities in the area of regulation of labour mobility of foreigners Richter stressed that "the arrival of workers from abroad should not be at the expense of the unemployed persons in Slovakia", that "it is not about opening of the country for all" and that "the aims are not refugees, nor asylum seekers" (*Richter: Vláda nemá záujem ...*, 2018).

Ministry prepared a document *Strategy of Labour Mobility of Foreigners in Slovakia*, which was approved by the government in October 2018. The document contains a list of measures aimed at easing the arrival of non-EU employees to the Slovak labour market. When presenting the document, Richter tried to avoid the impression that this step went contrary to the overall negative Smer-SD's stance towards refugees' arrival into the country. The Ministry characterised the measures contained in the *Strategy of Labour Mobility of Foreigners* as temporary and extraordinary, adopted as a response to the current shortage of qualified labour force on the Slovak market and admitted that the government would later consider whether to keep these measures in effect.

4. Political parties

The attitude of political parties in Slovakia to the issue of refugees serves as an important indicator of their programme and ideological profile, their cultural-civilisational preferences and value orientations, as well as an indicator of personal characteristics of individual politicians.

Attitude to migration, immigrants and refugees is also an important feature of various groups of citizens and electorates. We can examine here the two-way relationship: on the one hand, it is the support of voters for particular parties taking into account their stances on this issue and attempts of parties to rely on those groups of the population which are close to these views; on the other hand, these are the efforts of political parties to shape directly the attitudes of people towards migration and refugees, towards state policies and policies of international organisations (such as the EU) on this issue.

4.1. Political dynamism during the escalation of the refugee crisis and its implications for Slovak party politics and configuration of the party scene

The situation on the Slovak political scene gained particular dynamism in the context of the refugee crisis that escalated in the fall of 2015.

After the 2012 elections a single-party-government of Smer-SD was formed in Slovakia. All relevant centre-right formations (SaS, KDH, OĽaNO, Most-Híd, and SDKÚ-DS) were sitting in the opposition rows in the Parliament. One of them – once the ruling SDKÚ-DS – hibernated in a state of clinical death due to internal conflicts and splits, and struggle for its voters sparked between several medium-size formations. Another opposition party, Most-Híd which represented a part of the voters of Hungarian ethnic origin, competed with another party with a similar ethnic background – an extra-parliamentary SMK.

Before the 2016 elections, the nationalist SNS operated outside of the parliament. After 1990 this party was a parliamentary force during a relatively long period of time, however, it did not make it into the Parliament in the 2012 elections. Change of leadership in SNS had taken place of Ján Slota, the former scurrilous and aggressive chairman with frequent alcoholic excesses, was replaced by the more predictable Andrej Danko who became party chairman.

The right-wing extremist ĽSNS also operated outside of the parliament and tried to intensify its activities to make it into the core of the party system. This party which ran in two previous parliamentary elections and did not succeed in 2015 remained significantly below the election threshold. A new political formation with ambitions to become a parliamentary force – an anti-establishment populist movement We Are Family of Boris Kollár – has begun to develop its mobilisation strategies. Some new centre-right formations emerged, founded by the former members of KDH, SDKÚ-DS and SaS. Among them was the party Sieť (Network), founded by the presidential candidate in the 2014 elections, Radoslav Procházka, former vice-chairman of KDH, enjoying voter preferences above the needed 5% threshold, while other parties – namely SKOK and Šanca – enjoyed support of only about 1% of the voters.

With such a high degree of fragmentation of the centre-right part of the political spectrum and the increase in the number of parties with fairly realistic chances of getting into the Parliament, it was the small differences between each party's gains in elections that could decide the overall configuration of the party scene and the forms of government coalitions.

In this situation the issue of migration massively intruded into the public space and eventually it has fundamentally changed the character of public and political debate, especially in the context of the forthcoming elections scheduled for beginning of March 2016. While the issues of governance, efficiency of state administration, transparency and corruption, health, social affairs and education have been in the focus of public discourse previously, from the second half of 2015, the debates have mostly focused on the issue of migration, with the predominant "defensive" position of participating actors oriented – both towards the "refugee wave" and the EU institutions' proposals for common solutions that could be supported by the member states.

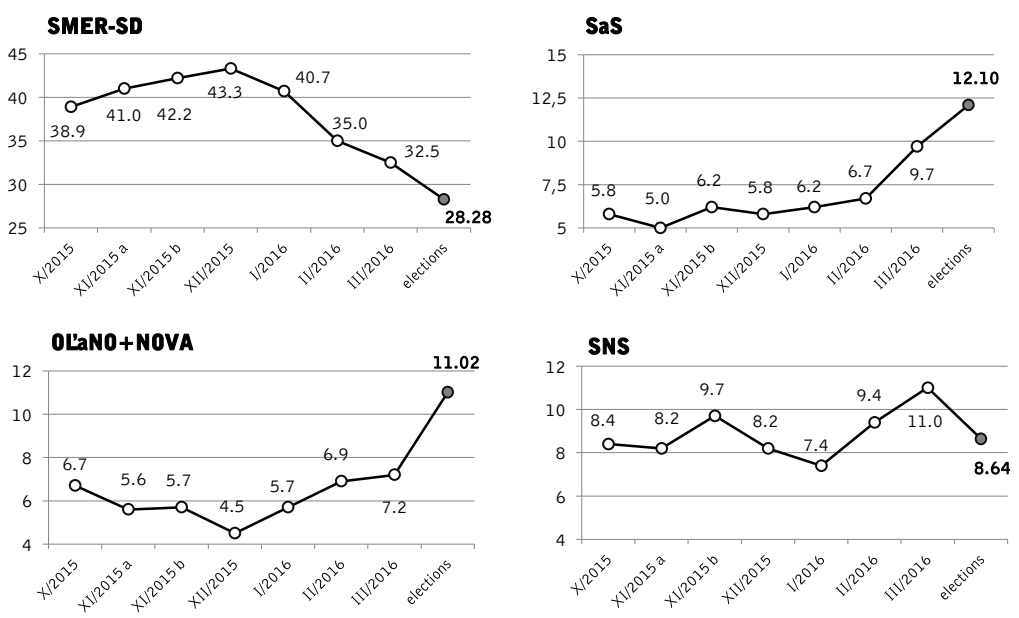
Individual parties started to work with the migration agenda in their communication with the public. Smer-SD was the most active since the very beginning. The party was in a difficult position at the end of electoral cycle: its support declined. Sharp problems in the social, educational and health sectors, frequent suspicions of clientelism and corruption in public administration complicated the party's prospects for electoral gain sufficient for a repeat of its strong power positions from the past. In addition, in the spring of 2014 Smer-SD's chairman and then prime-minister Robert Fico suffered a significant defeat in the presidential elections that reduced the party's overall functionality. Under these circumstances, Smer-SD decided to use the situation that emerged as a result of the arrival of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa to Europe, and turned the topic of migration and refugees into the centre of its pre-election mobilisation activities.

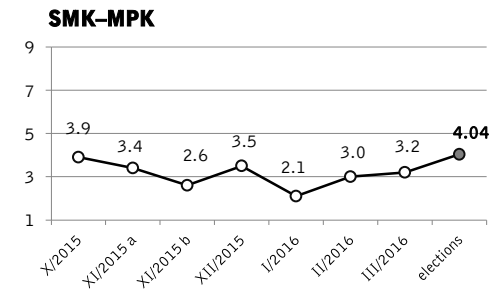
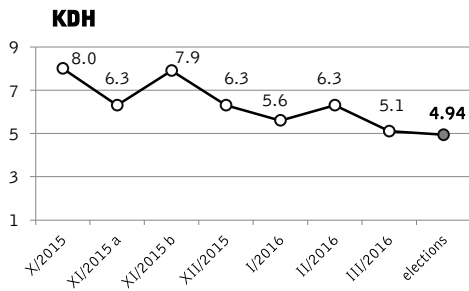
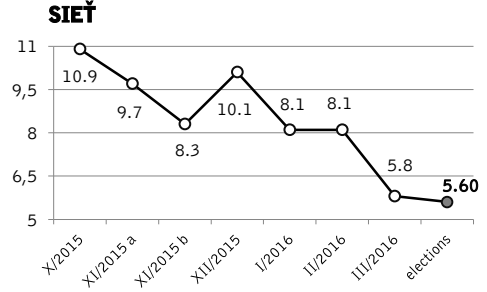
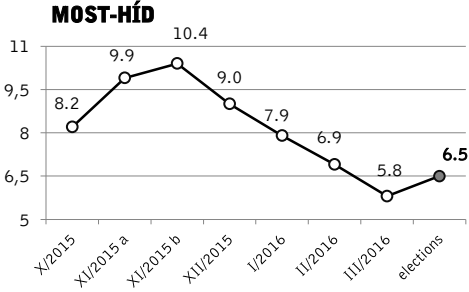
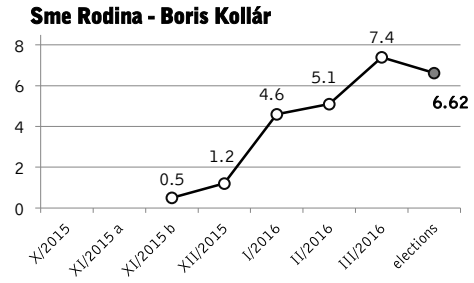
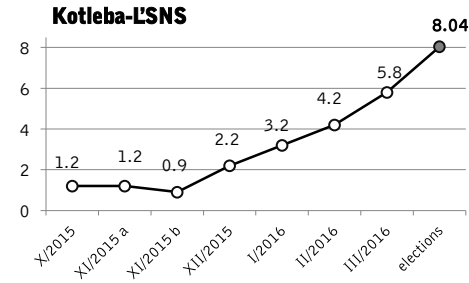
Only few parties clearly stood up against the opportunistic "pragmatic" utilisation of the migration agenda by the ruling Smer-SD in its campaign (Most-Híd, SKOK, Šanca), others rather followed this "migration" line, competing with Smer-SD in taking the same "defensive" positions.

Sometimes participants of Slovak domestic political debate on migration and refugees crossed the borders of their own country. For instance, SaS chairman Richard Sulík, who lived in Germany for years and was well-oriented in German domestic political discourse, participated in a television debates in Germany as an important political representative from the Central European EU member state, coming out in support of domestic opponents of Angela Merkel, de facto supporting the AfD's position.

Results of the 2016 parliamentary elections and findings of opinion polls have shown that while the topic of migration was appealing to the vast majority of the population (one could even say that there was a broad popular consensus concerning the rejection of the arrival of refugees and the dismissal of the EU proposals on their proportional distribution among individual member countries), this appeal had a different effect for individual parties.

Graph 1. Electoral support (rating) of political parties before the 2016 elections (October 2015 – March 2016) and the election results (in %)





Source: AKO polling agency, 2015 – 2016.

The effectiveness of the migration topic proved to be questionable in case of Smer-SD, which put it in the forefront of its campaign (in the 2016 elections this party gained only 28.28%, which was 16% less than in the 2012 elections when it gained 44.41%). On the contrary, in case of ĽSNS, the migration topic became one of the factors of its unexpected success: in 2016 election it gained 8.04% (while in 2012 only 1.58%). New strongly anti-refugee movement We Are Family – Boris Kollár was successful with 6.62% of votes. The extra-parliamentary SNS returned to the parliament with 8.64% of votes (in 2012 it received only 4.55%).

Much better results in comparison with the 2012 elections were achieved by two centre-right formations – SaS with 12.10% (5.88% in 2012) and OĽaNO with 11.02% (8.55% in 2012). Two other centre-right parties also qualified into the parliament, however, with substantially weaker gains than were expected on the basis of the pre-election surveys: the newly established party Siet (Network) with 5.1% and Most-Híd with 6.50% (in 2012 Most-Híd gained 6.89%). On the other hand, parliamentary KDH with 4.94% left the Parliament (in 2012 it gained 8.82%). The extra-parliamentary SMK with 4.04% of votes failed again to re-enter Parliament (in 2012 SMK gained 4.28%).

Obviously, numerous factors influenced the electoral results of individual parties, not just the way of tackling the issue of foreign migration. However, it is possible to state that with the exception of the ruling Smer-SD party the electoral mobilisation through the migration topic helped those parties whose representatives adopted a strict refusal of migration (SNS, ĽSNS, We Are Family – Boris Kollár, and to a certain extent also SaS through activities of its leader Richard Sulík). On the other hand, parties with a more moderate rhetoric or parties that rather avoided the topic of migration in their mobilisation strategies have achieved weaker results (Most-Híd, Network, KDH, SMK). The only exception among the opposition parties in this regard was OĽaNO which succeeded to double its gains compared to the 2012 elections.

In the end, the assumption was confirmed that a small number of votes can decide the overall post-electoral configuration of the political scene and the composition of the ruling coalition. Weaker results of two centre-right parties (Most-Híd and Network) and the KDH's departure from the parliament (all these three parties were characterised by a rather "soft" stance on the migration issue) made the creation of a wider centre-right coalition that would oust Smer-SD from power impossible. This was one of the serious impacts of the migration and refugee agenda on the political development of the country. The second, no less important impact, was the ushering of the right-wing extremist party into the Parliament – for the first time since 1990.

4.2. Typology of parties based on position on the issue of migration and refugees

The approach of Slovak political parties to the migration agenda can be assessed on the basis of their positions on such areas as:

- Attitude to EU proposals for tackling the refugee crisis,
- Possibilities for EU member states to co-ordinate the relocation of incoming refugees,
- Approach to the integration of migrants and refugees in Slovakia,
- Perception of a link between the arrival of refugees and the state of internal security (including risks associated with terrorism),
- Factor of religious affiliation of immigrants and refugees,
- Interpretation of causes of migration and refugee flows from the Middle East to Europe,
- Coordination of Slovakia's approach with the V-4 countries,
- Using the topic of migration in mobilisation strategies in the electoral context.

There are three distinct groups of relevant political parties dealing with the issue of migration and refugees that can be identified in Slovakia.

The first group ("rejectionists") includes parties that fuel the negative public mood against foreign migrants and refugees, highlight the risks and dangers associated with the arrival of refugees to Europe and Slovakia. They reject in principle the acceptance of refugees by Slovakia. They criticise the EU for its alleged attempts to force member states to resolve the refugee crisis against the will of their population. They use the arguments marked by open or concealed distrust to Islam, by general xenophobia and mistrust towards migrants, demonstrating various degrees of radicalism. They do not present any programme for the integration of refugees and migrants. This category of parties includes four parliamentary formations – Smer-SD, SNS, movement We Are Family – Boris Kollár, and ĽSNS. In fact, they prefer ousting foreign migrants from the country in order to preserve its alleged "original" cultural and confessional character. The humanitarian aspect in the attitudes of these parties is either absent entirely or appears in a very subtle or purely negligible form.

The productivity of using the topic of foreign migration in terms of electoral gains by these parties varied: Smer-SD has not been so successful electorally working with this topic. On the other hand, SNS, movement We Are Family – Boris Kollár and ĽSNS have greatly benefited from the anti-refugee atmosphere co-created by Smer-SD.

The second group (“inconsistent”, “sceptics”) includes those parties which, on the one hand, declare the need for (or at least do not refuse) solidarity on the refugee issue, but on the other hand demonstrate their scepticism concerning the possibility to integrate foreign migrants and refugees in Slovakia. They emphasise the cultural-civilisation aspect which, in their view, precludes or complicates full integration. In their proposals on how to tackle the refugee crisis, they mostly reach for ideas based on external solutions (it means outside of Slovakia or Europe). This group of parties includes SaS and SMK. These parties did not submit comprehensive proposals on the integration of immigrants in Slovakia and their representatives delivered often contradictory messages. The sceptical demeanour of the representatives of these parties sometimes overshadowed the voices of their individual members who emphasised the humanitarian and integration aspects of the issue.

The third category (“integrationists”, “accepters”) includes those formations which do not use the topic of migration and refugees in their mobilisation activities. They do not feed the anti-immigrant discourse and avoid taking xenophobic or anti-Islam stances. In addition to the security aspect, they highlight the humanitarian aspect of the refugee issue, emphasising the need to show solidarity and help incoming refugees as well as EU member states most affected by the arrival of immigrants. They support the idea of common approach of the EU member states on the refugee crisis. They are trying to work out more comprehensive strategies for the integration of migrants in Slovakia. These are the Most-Híd party, KDH, to a certain extent movement OĽaNO and two newly-established formations PS and SOD. Attitudes of the representatives of these formations towards incoming refugees demonstrate on the whole a hospitable approach and show that they count on refugees’ integration into society.

4.3. Parties with anti-immigrant and anti-refugee positions

4.3.1. Smer–SD

Smer – Social Democracy (Smer-SD) plays a dominant role in the country’s domestic politics and public debates, including preparation and implementation of policy measures related to the migration and refugee issue. When formulating attitudes towards migration and refugees, Smer-SD’s representatives (party has 48 MPs as of the end of 2018) employed mainly political, security and cultural-religious arguments, in particular:

- Resistance to the idea of refugee relocation on the territory of the Slovak Republic on the basis of mandatory quotas determined by the European Union, resistance to the arrival of migrants from the Middle East to Slovakia. Party leaders labelled EU policy of proportional relocation of refugees in the member states as a “dictate” toward central European countries,
- Assertion that Slovakia did not participate in creating the causes that led to migration to Europe and therefore has no obligations to deal with its consequences by participating in the implementation of the relocation programme,
- Connecting the arriving refugees with a terrorist threat,
- Emphasis on the security of country’s citizens, not on the integration of refugees,

- Assertion that refugees coming from the Middle East and North Africa are unable to integrate into the European cultural environment due to their confessional identity (Islamic belief),
- Proposals to tackle the problem of migration and refugees through a stricter protection of EU's external borders (or borders of Slovakia) and removing the causes of migration in those countries in North Africa and the Middle East from which migrants or refugees are departing to Europe.

In the pre-election document *Smer-SD: the Purpose of Participation in the Government of the Slovak Republic 2016-2020* party draws attention to the fact that "necessary stability and peace in the country for implementation of measures aimed at raising the living standard of the population can be disrupted by unmanageable migration crisis...". Smer-SD announced that it "basically rejects any attempts to force the sovereign Slovak Republic to decide to settle migrants on its territory. Smer-SD is prepared on the principle of solidarity to take financial, personnel and technical measures to protect the Schengen external borders from illegal migration" (*Ciel' účasti vo vláde...*, 2016). The quoted document did not contain any considerations (or at least their hints) about possibility to integrate refugees or migrants.

4.3.2. SNS

The Slovak National Party (SNS) belongs to political formations with an extremely negative attitude towards migrants and refugees arriving to Europe. This stance is in full accordance with SNS' profile of a political entity based on ethnic nationalism. At the end of 2018, the party was represented in the Parliament by 15 deputies.

The topic of foreign migration often appeared in the SNS' pre-election activities, based on the ideas of protecting the country from incoming migrants, declaring the need to preserve the "original" (Christian) characteristic of the country, and protecting the society from the penetration of alien (Islamic) cultural-religious elements. SNS's rhetoric was directed also against the EU, which, according to the party puts pressure on Slovakia and other small countries. SNS promotes a narrative whereby EU institutions and larger member states responsible for causes of the current immigration flows to Europe as a result of their previous policies, are forcing Slovakia to accept migrants with different cultural and religious background and using the refugee issue for usurpation of powers and subordination of national states. The motive of integration of refugees or migrants in Slovakia did not appear in the SNS programme documents or statements of its representatives at all. There were no expressions of solidarity, whether in terms of relations between EU member states or in approach to the solution of the humanitarian situation of the refugees. The party promised to ensure the "rigorous protection of Slovakia's external borders", demanded to "change the law on registration of new Churches" and to adopt legislation "preventing the wearing of burqa and construction of minarets and mosques" (*Hrdo - Odborne - Služne ...*, 2016).

4.3.3. Sme rodina – Boris Kollár

Political movement Sme rodina – Boris Kollár (We Are family – Boris Kollár), established in November 2015, shortly before the parliamentary elections (movement has 8 MPs as of the end of 2018), is a heterogeneous grouping of people of various ideological orientations. The founder of the movement, a media entrepreneur Boris Kollár, justified his entry into politics by the need to cope with external and internal threats to the country; the external threat, according to him is migration.

He referred to migration as “a controlled process of invasion to Europe that can lead to riots and civil war” (*Volby: Podnikateľ Boris Kollár ...*, 2015). The very fact that the declared reason for founding of the new party was the need to respond to immigration fully corresponded with Kollár’s personal attitude toward refugees. He has spoken out on migration often and predominantly in xenophobic, aggressive and vulgar manner – mainly through Facebook posts or video clips on Youtube. He connects refugees with terrorism, violence, crime, and attempts to change life in Europe in accordance with alien patterns. The movement did not present any ideas about the integration of refugees in Slovakia.

4.3.4. ĽSNS – Kotleba

The topic of migration and refugees is one of the key issues in the communication and mobilisation strategies of the right-wing extremist, fascist and antisemitic People’s Party Our Slovakia (ĽSNS - Kotleba). Its representatives (the party has 13 MPs as of end of 2018) not only use the atmosphere created by the arrival of refugees in Europe for strengthening their own electoral support, but also actively nurture it, disseminate alarming and misleading information about the causes, shape and possible consequences of the migration wave for Europe and for Slovakia. The ĽSNS’ positions on migration are characterised by:

- Absolute resistance against the arrival of refugees in Slovakia,
- Direct linking of refugees with crime and terrorism,
- Rejection of the idea of integration of foreigners in Slovakia,
- Excessive ethnic, racial and confessional xenophobia directed against refugees.

ĽSNS initiated a petition against the arrival of migrants to Slovakia. During the escalation of the refugee crisis, the anti-Islamic element significantly strengthened in the rhetoric of ĽSNS. It was linked with the repeating motive that the wave of migration was intentionally provoked by the EU in order to change the character of Europe and to harm small nations in Central Europe.

4.4. Parties with sceptical or inconsistent stances towards migration and refugees

4.4.1. SaS

The positions of the libertarian Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) party on migration reflect mostly its attitudes on the European Union and mechanisms of its internal functioning. SaS representatives (it has 20 MPs as of end of 2018) instrumentalised the topic of migration in the pre-election period mainly in the context of defining its positions towards the EU. The aspect of integration of migrants and refugees was only marginally presented in party’s platform. SaS representatives mentioned the principle of solidarity in the context of relations between the EU member states only when it involved autonomous and voluntary decision-making of individual member states. They emphasised in particular:

- The inappropriate EU approach to the proposals for settlement of refugees in European countries,
- The need to address problems related to migration flows directly in the countries of origin of refugees,
- The need to strengthen the EU’s external borders in order to halt the arrival of refugees,
- The responsibility of mostly big EU states for the situation in the countries of Africa and the Middle East from where refugees are arriving to Europe.

SaS manifesto for the 2016 parliamentary elections stated: "It is a right thing, and not only in Slovakia, to be human, to sympathise with the victims of wars and refugees, with their families. But on the other hand, solidarity must not be forced. Then it ceases to be solidarity and becomes a dictate and fulfilment of somebody else's orders". The position of SaS regarding the possibility of relocation of refugees on the territory of the Slovak Republic is expressed in the party's programme as follows: "Deciding about a temporary placement of war refugees as a part of Slovakia's contribution to voluntary solidarity we will take into account the will of Slovakia's citizens with emphasis on the will of inhabitants of localities where these refugees would be settled" (*Aby sa doma oplátilo ...*, 2016).

SaS leader Richard Sulík acknowledged that there would not be a problem for Slovakia to accept 800 refugees, as the European Commission suggested, but expressed his concerns that the EU would use a "salami method" and that after the first 800 refugees an even bigger number would come (SaS: *Únia by mala ...*, 2015). However, the party later admitted that Slovakia would be able to integrate three to five thousand refugees, but only those "who would qualify for asylum and at the same time would choose Slovakia as their target country" (*Politické strany odpovedajú ...*, 2016).

4.4.2. SMK

The Party of Hungarian Community (SMK), a national-conservative party (extra-parliamentary since 2010²⁶), has been relatively active in addressing the issue of migration and refugees. The party has attempted to include the topic of refugees into its mobilisation activities, thus in a specific way reflecting the peculiarity of its electorate, namely its ethnic composition and territorial distribution. SMK positions on refugees were complemented by practical steps aimed at directly involving the population of the southern regions of Slovakia in its activities (for example, through petitions).

Besides factors related to SMK's ideological, programme and value profile, the position of this party on the migration and refugees agenda was influenced by the situation in the neighbouring Hungary, which traditionally raises special attention among Slovak citizens of Hungarian ethnic origin. The fact that significant part of Hungarian population of Slovakia lives in the areas situated close to the state border and facilities for the settlement of potential migrants or refugees who could come to Slovakia are located in these areas also had its impact. According to a survey conducted by Sociological Institute of Slovak Academy of Sciences and FOCUS agency, Slovakia's inhabitants of Hungarian origin were afraid of the arrival of refugees more than ethnic Slovaks (Bahna – Klobucký, 2015).

Although SMK did not principally refuse to accept refugees on the territory of the Slovak Republic, it has defined conditions for refugees – to recognise the values of "our civilisation, i.e. the Judeo-Christian tradition enriched with the values of enlightenment". According to SMK, the experience of Western European countries shows that successful integration of larger number of immigrants over a relatively short period is only possible if migrants have "a similar civilisational background as the domestic environment" (*Politické strany odpovedajú ...*, 2016).

4.5. Parties with hospitable or friendly attitudes towards migrants and refugees

4.5.1. Most-Híd

The attitude of the civic-oriented centre-right party Bridge (Most-Híd) (it has 13 MPs as of end of 2018) to migration was significantly different from the majority of other parliamentary parties. It advocated the application of principles of solidarity to incoming refugees as well as to countries that

²⁶ In the previous parliamentary cycles, SMK (under the name of "Hungarian Coalition Party") was twice a part of the government coalitions.

have become destinations for large numbers of refugees. The party supported fairer distribution of immigrants among EU member states and stressed the humanitarian aspect of the refugee issue, the need to help those who find themselves in difficult life situation.

The party refused to interlink the refugee crisis with the threat of terrorism, and did not employ the arguments of confessional or cultural-civilisation character. Before the 2016 elections, Most-Híd presented the most critical stances towards the ruling Smer-SD party on the issue of refugees and migration. Most-Híd disagreed almost with all significant steps conducted by Smer-SD in this area. The party stressed the necessity to preserve the EU unity in addressing the current challenges. According to Most-Híd, V-4 countries' cooperation should not be aimed at critical positioning towards the EU. In response to the European Commission's proposal to re-allocate refugees among European countries on the basis of quotas, Most-Híd issued the statement declaring that Slovakia is able to accommodate 800 refugees (*Most-Híd: Slovensko dokáže ...*, 2015).

The party stood up against Fico's government's action before the European Court of Justice. It called this step "counterproductive, selfish and useless", damaging the country's reputation abroad. As a member of the new ruling coalition formed after the 2016, Most-Híd continued to present its initial approach to migration and refugees issue based on emphasising the humanitarian aspect and necessity to express solidarity with refugees, with the EU and particular EU member states.

4.5.2. OĽaNO

The movement Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (OĽaNO) is a centre-right formation (it has 16 MPs as of end of 2018), that did not use the topic of refugees and migrants in their strategies before the 2016 parliamentary elections and in the post-election period.

OĽaNO characterised the migration waves as strategic challenge for Europe, highlighting in particular the external circumstances that should play a key role in coping with the refugee crisis. These factors include an increased support for countries bordering war zones, strengthening diplomatic efforts to end armed conflicts, pressure on rich Arab countries to accept refugees, creating facilities for refugees outside the Schengen area, transfer of the asylum procedure into refugee camps outside of Europe, and improving protection of EU external borders. OĽaNO wanted to "educate and inform refugees about their obligations from the very first contact with Europe"; it wanted to "actively participate in public debate without undue populism, with an emphasis on finding functional solutions" (*Volebný program OĽaNO*, 2016).

OĽaNO stated that "a common European solution must be based on mutual solidarity". The basic approach of the movement to integration of migrants can be found in the following paragraph in the election manifesto: "Immigrants must obey social rules, customs and laws that respect the lifestyle, social balance and cultural integrity of European states. At the same time, they must understand that life in Europe, apart from great advantages, brings great responsibility" (*Ibid.*, 2016).

4.5.3. KDH

Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) is a conservative party which for the first time since 1990 found itself in a position of extra-parliamentary party after the 2016 elections. It took a balanced attitude on the refugee issue and did not use anti-immigrant rhetoric. It also did not employ the topic of migration for pre-election mobilisation of voters. It rather sought to develop a more comprehensive approach to integration of refugees in Slovakia, stressed the need to help refugees and the desirability

of common European approach to the refugee crisis. As a formation with a strong identity element based on Christian values and traditions, KDH demonstrated its willingness for a dialogue with Muslims and did not use arguments containing anti-Islamic elements in the migration debate.

KDH's electoral manifesto of 2016 included a separate "Migration" subchapter in which the party presented its views on the refugee crisis in Europe and on the integration of migrants in Slovakia. According to KDH, "the massive migration is one of the most serious challenges facing Europe today" and "Europe has a moral duty to help those who are persecuted and poor". KDH has presented a set of short and long-term measures to manage the migration of refugees, including aiding the suffering people as close as possible to their home, control of the Schengen border and combating trafficking through the Common European Border Guard, elimination of war conflicts, fair international trade, and comprehensive solution of the migration problem in cooperation between all member states of the union" (*Bezpečný domov, spokojné rodiny*, 2016).

The party criticised the government and Smer-SD for having contradicted their policies with the EU. It declared that even if it did not have a good feeling about the decision of the EU Council of the Interior Ministers to relocate 120,000 refugees from Greece and Italy it respects it. The then chairman of KDH, Ján Figel', said: "Tragedy is not this decision, but the situation of persecuted refugees" (*KDH: Smer-SD nadradzuje ...*, 2015). KDH rejected the legal complaint filed by Fico's government with the European Court of Justice, calling it harmful for the country's position in the EU (*KDH: Ostro sa ohradzuje ...*, 2015).

4.5.4. PS

Movement Progressive Slovakia (PS) is a political formation of social-liberal orientation, founded in January 2018 (at the end of 2018 it has one MP, former member of SaS). In the polls, PS was approaching the 5% threshold for parliamentary elections. It seeks to address the issue of foreign migration in a comprehensive manner, in a number of inter-related contexts. It promotes the idea of openness of the country to incoming foreigners and to their integration into Slovak society.

PS's idea of social integration of different communities is based on the concept of inclusion: "it is a moral imperative – if we are one community, no one – Roma, Hungarian, homosexual or immigrant – cannot be excluded from it. ... We want all to be proud, satisfied Slovaks, ... including people from other countries who have found their new home in Slovakia" (Filko – Dubéci, 2016).

To address migration and refugee issues, PS proposes to introduce a responsible immigration policy with simple and flexible rules for arrival and accommodation of foreigners that everyone would benefit from. This policy is to include protection of immigrants' rights (not exploitation and trafficking) and integration based on local cities and civil society (*Progresívne Slovensko. Vízia jednej krajiny*, 2018, p. 129). The competitive advantage of an inclusive society according to PS lies not only in the economic benefit of immigration in the context of the negative demographic curve, but also in the fact that cultural diversity is the best prerequisite for creative and innovative economic environment" (*Ibid.*, p. 39).

4.5.5. SOD

The party "Together" – Civic Democracy (SOD) was founded in 2017 by former members of the Network party, who disagreed with the intention of its leadership to join the ruling coalition with Smer-SD and SNS. They left Network immediately after the 2016 elections. Gradually, some former members of other

political formations (SaS, OĽaNO) also joined SOD and created a compact 6 MP group in the Parliament. SOD is a moderate centre-right civic-oriented party, with voting preferences at the end of 2018 oscillating around 4%. Regarding the migration and refugees issue, SOD backed a pro-European position, supporting common solutions and integration of incoming migrants into Slovak society. According to the party, Slovakia is not a sufficiently attractive country for refugees and migrants. Therefore, it must intensively work on its ability to successfully integrate immigrants who will bring benefits for Slovakia if integration will be successful (Beblavý – Bilčík – Roháč, 2018, p. 27).

6. Conclusions

European migration crisis was a test for the abilities of the Slovak society, state administration and political elites to handle serious challenges. Results of this test are far from positive.

The dominant part of the political scene demonstrated that it was not capable of perceiving the migration issue in the broader context – both domestic and external. It applied purely the superficial populist approach, copying the prevailing public mood. Principles of solidarity towards the refugees and EU member states remained forgotten. Political isolationism won over openness.

Views of the domestic population on refugees can be considered as an indicator of rejection of or openness to other cultures, of an ability to nourish self-centred egoism or to act on the basis of solidarity and to offer a helping hand to the victims of violence and war. From this perspective a substantial part of the Slovak public is xenophobic, overwhelmed by anxiety and fears of the “unknown” and reluctant to support common EU policies. Too many Slovaks turn a deaf ear to the experts – economists and demographers emphasising that the country is undergoing a rapid process of population ageing and its future social and economic development will depend on the country’s ability to implement a clever immigration policy and to integrate foreigners – refugees, students, workers and their families – into the Slovak society.

To accomplish such a U-turn, Slovak state officials, politicians, business leaders and media would have to abandon their populist anti-immigrant and anti-refugee rhetoric. Having in mind the findings of public opinion polls and positions of individual political actors, we can only state that it will be a demanding job to adopt such a constructive approach based on knowledge, courage and leadership. The upcoming 2019 presidential and European elections, as well as 2020 parliamentary elections could present an opportunity for responsible politicians to start coping with this challenge.

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CZECH REPUBLIC

Czech Republic: Socio-economic aspects of migration

SYLVIE BURIANOVÁ – HANA VOTRADOVCOVÁ

1. Introduction

Since the early 1990s, the Czech Republic, has transformed from a country, which was characterised by a very low immigration and a tendency to emigration, into the main immigration destination among the V4 countries. This change was related, among other things, to the successful political and economic transformation (Drbohlav – Valenta, 2014; Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 23-30; Wallace, 2002). In the past thirty years, several periods and milestones can be identified, which not only influenced the patterns of the international migration, but also the formation of the Czech migration policy. One such milestone was the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union, which brought comprehensive harmonisation processes of the Czech and European migration regulations. Another landmark could be identified in the global economic crisis of 2008 and the related economic slowdown. Last but not at least, the context of the Czech policy-making was influenced by the so-called migration crisis of 2015 (cf. Jungwirth, 2016, 2017) in spite of the fact that the Czech Republic should be in no way considered as one of the main destination countries for the refugees coming to Europe from the Middle East and North Africa.

The aim of the chapter is to summarise and discuss recent developments in migration trends on general level, the demographic and socio-economic situation and migration governance²⁷ in the period of 1989-2018. The structure is as follows: in the second part, the general socio-historical context and general characteristics of migration trends in the country are summarised. The third part deals with several periods of migration governance, which are divided by the years 1990, 1995, 2000, 2008, and 2015. Parts four to seven focus on recent developments in economic migration, emigration from the Czech Republic, irregular migration²⁸ and asylum seekers. Hereby,

27 By the term migration management, we mean management of and policies dealing with both immigration and integration (cf. Drbohlav et al., 2010, p. 69; Barša – Baršová, 2005, pp. 9-10).

28 We refer primarily to the terminology used by International Organisation for Migration (IOM 2011). However, IOM terminology differs in the use of the term referring to the (people undergoing) the movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving country from the term 'illegal migration/migrant', which is used in the Czech migration governance context. Hereby, IOM suggests using the term irregular or unauthorised migrant or migration, which may bear less negative connotations, which includes relation to organised crime and trafficking of people. We use the term illegal migration/migrant when we reference its use the documents related to Czech migration governance. Otherwise, we prefer either the term unauthorised or irregular migrant/migration; for the sake of simplicity, however, we understand the terms illegal/irregular/unauthorised migration/migrant interchangeably.

given by the character of the chapter, which aims to connect both socio-historical aspects and current trends in migration and migration governance, various kinds of literature and sources of data were used²⁹.

2. Overall migration trends in the Czech Republic: 1989–2017

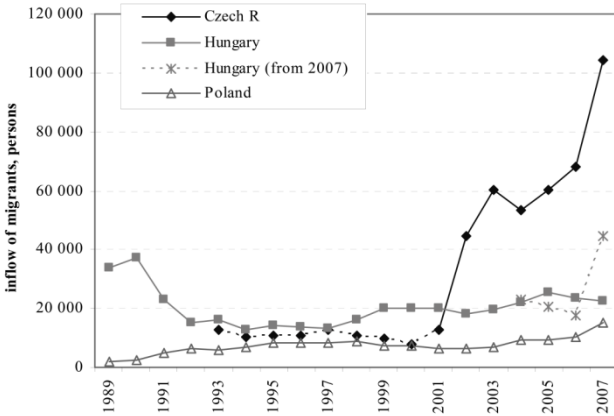
After the period of isolation by the Iron Curtain, which deprived the countries lying on its Eastern side from democratic institutions, market economy, freedom of speech and freedom of movement, the post-1989 developments meant not only from a migratory point of view a return to Europe (Wallace – Stola, 2001, pp. 3ff.). In contrast to the pre-1989 era, which was marked by emigration³⁰ and not very significant rates of immigration, which was strictly regulated by the state apparatus (Baršová – Barša, 2005, pp. 205-211; Drbohlav et al., 2010, pp. 26-30; Drbohlav – Hárs – Grabowska-Lusińska, 2009, p. 47; Wallace, 2002, pp. 603-604), migration has become one of the characteristics of the new societal dynamics. Since the early 1990s, Czechoslovakia and later the Czech Republic provided a space for transit migration from the East to the West (cf. Drbohlav et al., 2010, p. 31ff.; Wallace – Stola, 2001, pp. 25-27). The immigration flows as well as stock of foreigners have gradually increased in this period, with the largest increase in the figures of stock of foreigners as well as migrant being recorded in the early 1990s and after 2004. From the early 2000s on, the Czech Republic has been considered as the main immigration country in the V4 region, measured by the inflow of immigrants respectively by the share of foreign population residing in the territory of the state (Hárs, 2009, p. 19; Karácsonyi, 2014, pp. 213-221; cf. Drbohlav et al., 2010, pp. 38-48; Drbohlav – Valenta, 2014, pp. 48-52; Drbohlav, 2011, p. 406). The overall number of foreigners has climbed from 35,000 in 1989 over 78,000 in 1993 to 530,000 in 2017 (Czech Statistical Office, 2017).

As seen from the statistics below and in the following sections, the composition of the nationalities residing in the Czech Republic and their residence status reflects the primarily economic motivation of immigration (cf. Wallace, 2002, pp. 606-607; Drbohlav – Valenta, 2014, pp. 49-61; Drbohlav, 2003, pp. 200ff.; Drbohlav et al., 2010, p. 131). Among other specificities of the international migration in the Czech Republic related to work migration, there are other socio-cultural and socio-economic factors to consider, such as a high number of international – especially Slovak and Russian – students attending Czech universities and the presence of a particularly economically active Vietnamese minority. Compared to the major share of economically motivated migrants, refugees and asylum seekers constitute a negligible part of the migrant population (Drbohlav – Valenta 2014, pp. 61-63).

29 The period between 1989-2011 is covered predominantly by existing research in the field of migration and migration management. One of the most useful resources are based on research conducted by Andrea Baršová and Pavel Barša (2005, 2006) and Dušan Drbohlav and his team at Geographic Migration Centre (e.g. Drbohlav et al., 2009, 2010, 1994, 1996; 2003; Drbohlav – Valenta, 2014). The post-2011 period is covered by primary and secondary sources published on non-academic platforms. However, it should be noted, that the available publications and data do not provide a full picture of the issues of managed and irregular economic migration, migration policies or emigration, which is due to a rather unsystematic data collection, low interests of both researchers and practitioners in the issues of migration and migration management in the Czech Republic, but also to the intrinsic nature of the particular phenomena (cf. Drbohlav, 2003; Drbohlav et al., 2010).

30 It is estimated, that from 1948 to 1990, Czechoslovakia lost around 500,000 people due to international migration (Drbohlav, 1994, p. 90).

Graph 1. Migration flows to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, 1989–2007



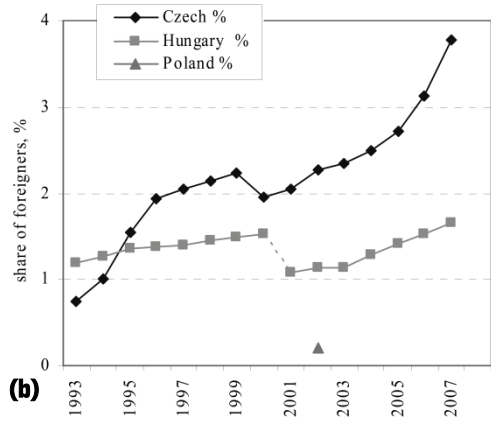
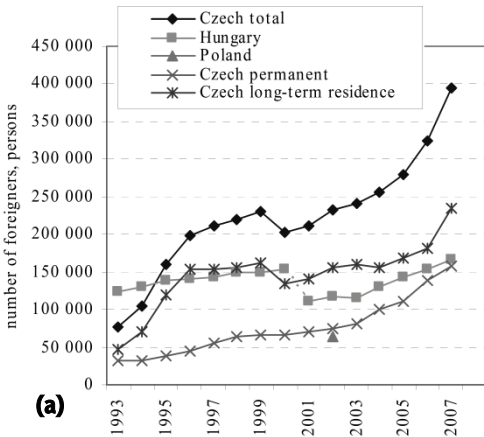
Note: Until 2000, Czech data covers national and foreigners changing permanent residence (in the case of foreigners those who got a permanent residence permit were included). From 2001 on, foreigners were counted as immigrants when entering on a permanent residence permit or after 1 year of residence (if not permanent residence permit holders). Hungary: Data include foreigners holding a long-term residence permit (valid for up to 1 year), foreigners who have been residing in the country for at least a year and who currently hold a long-term permit, data are presented by actual year

of entry (whatever the type when entering the country). For the reason of comparisons comparably data will be shown for Hungary: since mid- 2007 (half a year only!) in Hungary data based on population register includes also foreigners staying over 90 days. Poland: Number of permanent and "fixed-time" residence permits issued.

Source (data): Czech Republic: Czech Statistical Office, Hungary: Register of long-term residence permits, Ministry of the Interior and Central Statistical Office, Poland: Office for Repatriation and Aliens.

Source (graph & note): Hárs, 2009, p. 19.

Graph 2. Stock of foreigners (a), Share of foreigners in total population (b).



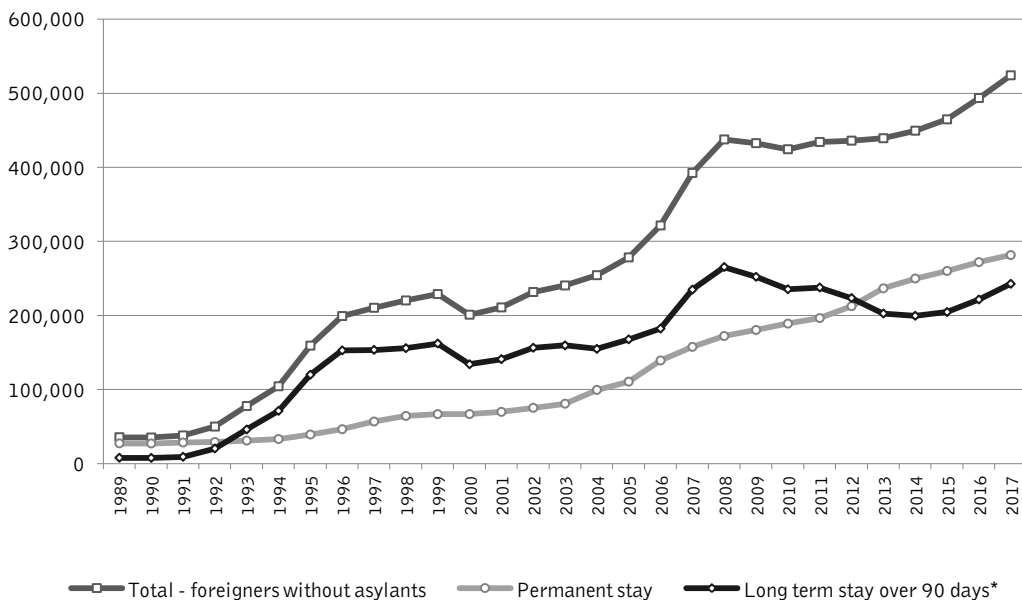
Note: Czech Republic: foreigners with permanent residence permits (until 2006: permanent residence gained after 10 years of residence, however shorter for family members; since 2006 after 5 years). Foreigners with long-term residence (prior to 2000 it means foreigners with permits for a stay longer than 180 days, since 2000 it generally means foreigners with visas for the period exceeding 90 days and with long-term residence permits - issued after 1 year). Hungary: Settlement permit: prior 2002 after 5 years, following 2002 after 3 years of stay (with residence and subsistence, shorter for family reason) and for up to 1 year (drop in Hungarian data between 2000 and 2001 due to data correction). Poland: census data of 2002 only.

Source (data): Czech Republic: Czech Statistical Office, Hungary: Register of long-term residence permits, Ministry of the Interior and Central Statistical Office, Poland: Office for Repatriation and Aliens.

Source (graph & note): Hárs, 2009, p. 19.

When looking at the latest statistics and developments, at the end of 2017, foreigners in the Czech Republic accounted roughly for 4.9% of the total population, with the majority of them staying permanently. Out of the total number of foreigners with residence permits, 53.7% foreigners (282,732) held permanent residence permits, while 46.3% had temporary residence permits³¹. The number of foreigners with permanent residence has been increasing steadily for more than a decade (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2018, pp. 68-69)³². The third-country nationals³³ represent a majority with 58.1% of all foreigners residing legally in the Czech Republic. However, the share of the EU nationals has been steadily increasing (from 32% in 2010 to 41.9% in 2017). Most of the EU nationals stay in the Czech Republic temporarily while two thirds of third-country nationals reside there permanently (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2018, p. 69).

Graph 3. The number of foreigners in the Czech Republic (1993–2017)



Source: Czech Statistical Office, Directorate of the Alien Police Service.

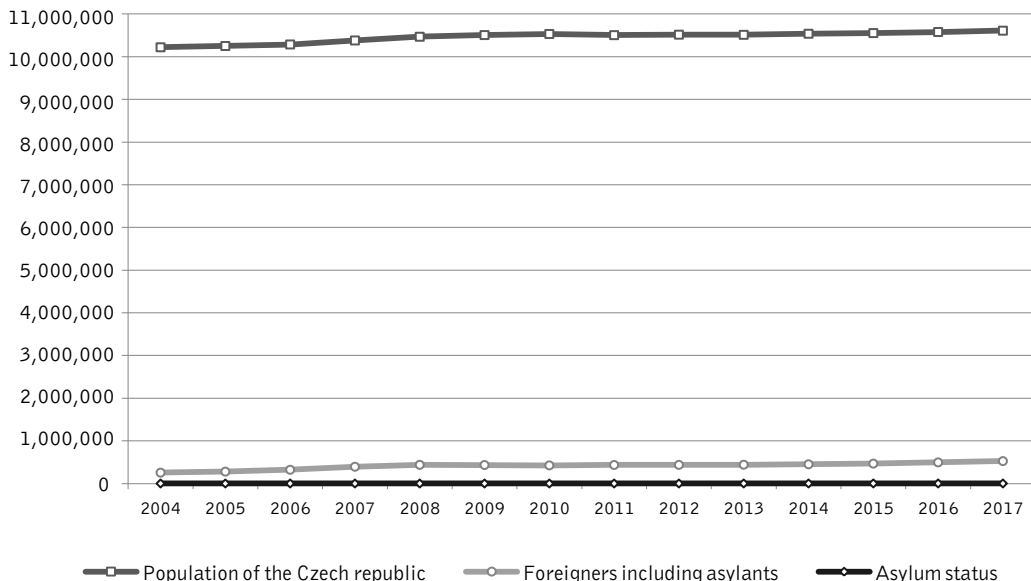
* Long term stay over 90 days: since 1985 – 1999 long-term residence, 2000 – 2003 90-days-and-over visa, since 2004 temporary EU, long-term residence and 90-days-and-over visa (long-term visa) are included.

31 A previous long-term stay of five year is the basic prerequisite for obtaining permanent residence permit.

32 In 2013, the share of foreigners with permanent residence exceeded the number of foreigners with temporary residence; the increase is mainly related to the fact that foreigners have started to fulfil to a greater extent the condition of five years of residence for moving into the category of permanent residence.

33 From the point of view of conditions and entry, the Czech Act on the Residence of Foreigners divides foreigners into two categories. The first category includes citizens of the EU Member States, citizens of the states bound by the Treaty of the European Economic Area (EEA) and citizens of Switzerland. Citizens of third countries form the second category. While the citizens of the EU, EEA and Switzerland have the right to free movement and residence guaranteed by the Treaty on the Functioning on the European Union, third-country nationals are obliged to have a visa for entry and short stay (within three months) and visa for stays of over 90 days, or a residence permit. This does not apply to foreigners with whom the visa requirement does not apply under the common EU visa policy.

Graph 4. The share of foreigners as the total population of the Czech Republic (2004–2017)



** Foreigners with valid asylum status were included in the category of foreigners with residence of 12+ months till 2007.

From an immigration point of view, the Czech Republic was quoted to become the case of David and the Goliath (Drbohlav, 2004, 2011), which may be true if compared to other V4 countries (cf. Karácsonyi, 2014, pp. 213-216). However, the relative numbers of the non-nationals in the resident population, when compared with the “old” immigration countries (cf. Fassman and Reeger, 2009; Barša – Baršová, 2005) have been rather low³⁴. By January 1st 2017, 4.9% of non-nationals were residing in the Czech Republic (of these 2.0% were citizens of EU countries, 2.9% were non-EU member nationals)³⁵.

Overall, the Czech Republic can be characterised by a relative ethnic homogeneity, which can be dated back to the post-WWII developments (cf. Drbohlav et al., 2010, pp. 23-30; Baršová – Barša, 2005, pp. 205-211). This homogeneity can be observed on the statistics of the top 10 nationalities residing in the country. In the years 2003-2013, altogether about half of the foreigners residing in the country were Slovaks (17-27%) and Ukrainians (26-31%). The foreigners residing longer than 90 days were significantly represented also by Vietnamese (12-14%), Russians (5-8%), Poles (4-7%), Germans (2-4%), Bulgarians, Moldovans, Mongolians, Americans and Chinese (each with between 1-2% of the total) (ČSÚ; cf. Drbohlav – Valenta, 2014, pp. 48-51)³⁶.

³⁴ In 2013, out of the total population of the EU, 12.7% was comprised by the V4 inhabitants; however, at the same time, only 3.4% of the foreign citizens staying in the EU lived in the V4 countries (Karácsonyi, 2014, pp. 213-216).

³⁵ In 2017, the percentage of the resident non-nationals in Austria rose to 15.2%, in Germany 11.2%, in France 6.9%, in Italy 8.3%, in Sweden 8.4%, in the United Kingdom 9.2%, and in the Netherlands 5.4%. The EU-28 average of resident non-nationals was 4.2%. Source: Eurostat; https://www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci/1-ciz_zahranici

³⁶ Český statistický úřad: Cizinci: Počet cizinců. https://www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci/4-ciz_pocet_cizincu#cr (October 28, 2018).

At the end of 2017, over half the foreigners (54.9%) staying in the Czech Republic were nationals of one of these three countries: Ukraine, Slovakia and Vietnam (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2018, p. 69)³⁷. With the total number of 117,480, Ukrainian nationals represented in 2017 the largest immigrant group in the Czech Republic. In the recent years, there was a qualitative change in the migration of Ukrainians to the Czech Republic, as Ukrainian nationals have increased their interest in permanent residence, which was mostly associated with the worsening of political situation in Ukraine and the war in Donbass. At present, the majority of the Ukrainian nationals in the Czech Republic are holders of permanent residence permit (Statistika & My, 2018; cf. Drbohlav – Jaroszewicz, 2016). The nationals of Russia and Vietnam are also major holders of permanent residence, in contrast to Slovaks and Germans, most of whom reside in the Czech Republic temporarily.

Table 1. Top 5 Immigrant Groups in the Czech Republic: 2014–2017

| Year | Type of Residence | Ukraine | Slovakia | Vietnam | Russia | Germany | Foreigners total |
|------|-------------------|---------|----------|---------|--------|---------|------------------|
| 2014 | Total | 104,388 | 96,222 | 56,666 | 34,684 | 19,687 | 451,923 |
| | Share | 23.1 % | 21.3 % | 12.5 % | 7.7 % | 4.4 % | 100 % |
| | Permanent | 74,031 | 38,972 | 45,582 | 18,770 | 4,524 | 251,342 |
| | Temporary | 30,357 | 57,250 | 11,084 | 15,914 | 15,163 | 200,581 |
| 2015 | Total | 106,019 | 101,589 | 56,958 | 39,972 | 20,464 | 467,562 |
| | Share | 22.7 % | 21.7 % | 12.2 % | 7.5 % | 4.4 % | 100 % |
| | Permanent | 77,603 | 41,739 | 47,019 | 19,703 | 4,465 | 261,553 |
| | Temporary | 28,416 | 59,850 | 9,939 | 15,269 | 15,999 | 206,009 |
| 2016 | Total | 110,245 | 107,251 | 58,080 | 35,987 | 21,216 | 496,413 |
| | Share | 22.0 % | 21.6 % | 11.7 % | 7.3 % | 4.3 % | 100 % |
| | Permanent | 81,209 | 44,799 | 48,571 | 20,763 | 4,460 | 273,399 |
| | Temporary | 29,036 | 62,452 | 9,509 | 15,224 | 16,756 | 223,014 |
| 2017 | Total | 117,480 | 111,804 | 59,808 | 36,840 | 21,261 | 526,811 |
| | Share | 22.3 % | 21.2 % | 11.4 % | 7.0 % | 4.0 % | 100 % |
| | Permanent | 83,488 | 47,519 | 50,249 | 21,319 | 4,459 | 282,732 |
| | Temporary | 33,992 | 64,285 | 9,559 | 15,521 | 16,802 | 244,079 |

Source: Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic

3. Development of the Czech migration policies: 1989–2018

The current management of international migration in the Czech Republic is subject to several legal regulations: the *Foreigners Act*, the *Refugee Act*, the *Employment Act*, the *Temporary Protection Act*, the *Border Protection Act* and their later amendments (cf. Ministry of the Interior 2017)³⁸. However, for understanding of the context of migration policies, it is important to understand its development. In the following paragraphs, we will build on existing extensive coverage of the developments of migration policies in the first two decades (1989-2008/11), which are usually divided into several phases. These phases are defined by the degree of liberality or degree of restraint of the migration policies (Baršová – Barša, 2005, 2006; cf. Drbohlav, 2009a; 2010) respectively and by the aim in integration

³⁷ We can observe a stable yet slow increase in the total numbers of nationals of Ukraine, Slovakia, Vietnam, Russia and Germany.

³⁸ Acts no. 326/1999 Coll., no. 325/1999 Coll., no. 435/2004 Coll., no. 221/2003 Coll. and no. 191/2016 Coll.

or in 'circulation' of foreigners (Kušniráková – Čižinský, 2011). The third decade (2008/11-2018) is covered on the basis of non-academic reflection of the developments in the sphere of policy-making.

The first phase of Czech, or Czech and Slovak migration policies is associated with the first half of the 1990s³⁹. Barša and Baršová (2005, pp. 221-222) characterise this period by liberal or even a libertarian "laissez faire" spirit of the post-revolutionary era, which was marked by a vital change in the political and socio-economic conditions in the country, by little experience with policy-making in general and migration management in particular. This period was marked by a non-systematic, hasty adoption and realisation of new migration policies, which would correspond to the new political direction of the country⁴⁰. Hereby, the policy-makers had to deal with the inherited centrally-directed "socialist" migration management structures (Kušniráková – Čižinský, 2011, pp. 504-505; cf. Drbohlav et al., 2010, pp. 71-72, 74, 135-136; Drbohlav et. al., 2009a, p. 48; Čaněk – Čižinský, 2011, p. 332). In general, the state had adopted a passive yet "tolerant" approach to foreigners (Baršová – Barša, 2005, p. 222). The "tolerance" was seen also in the fact that the new Aliens Act of 1992⁴¹, which replaced the 1965 norm, imposed virtually no obstacles to legal residence of foreigners. The regulation enabled them to apply for a long-term stay permit directly on the territory of the state. Illegal work was not seen as a problem during this period. However, for foreigners there was no legal possibility of permanent residence or naturalisation, except for marriage a Czech citizen, in case the foreign national did not have any previous family ties in the country (Drbohlav et. al., 2010, p. 72; Drbohlav et al., 2009a, p. 46).

The second developmental period of the Czech migration policies covers the second half of the 1990s. This period is characterised by rising restrictiveness of immigration regulations and immigration practice, but also by increased refinement and further institutionalisation of the migration policies and practice with regard to entry, residence and conditions, citizenship acquisition and integration procedures. The trend towards restriction is related to the internal conditions such as the rising number of foreigners who were working irregularly in the Czech Republic, rise in the unemployment rate and overall downturn of economic conditions since 1997–1998, but also to rising illegal migration and claims for international protection (cf. Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 65-68, 43-46; Drbohlav, 2003, pp. 198, 201ff.). On the other hand, the need to meet the requirements for the planned membership of the European Union and to harmonise the national law with the EU regulations was seen as a factor driving these developments. The adoption of two key legal regulations, which came into force on 1st January 2000: the *Foreigners Act* and the *Refugee Act* is considered a culmination of the trends characteristic of this period. The former introduced a restrictive mode for visa application and residence of foreigners, thus ending the liberal practice of the previous era⁴². The *Refugee Act* was seen as in many

39 Drbohlav et al. (2010, pp. 71-74; 2009, pp. 45-48) compared to Kušniráková and Čižinský (2011) and Baršová and Barša (2005) put the periodisation of the 1990s slightly differently. Drbohlav et. al. (2010) see the 1990s' milestones in 1990, 1992 and 1998/1999). Hereby, already in the period 1992-1998, they observe restrictions in the migration policies, e.g. the Act no. 190/1994 Coll.

40 Already in 1990, the basic norms for refugee protection shared by democratic states – the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol – were adopted. These norms were supplemented by the National Refugee Act no. 498/1990 Coll. and by programmes aimed at integration of refugees and compatriots from Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. Since 1994, a state integration programme focusing on refugees called "State Assistance Programme for Integration" has been in effect. The Employment Act no. 1/1991 Coll. and the Trade License Act, which was adopted in the same year, provided the basis for legal economic migration.

41 No. 123/1992 Coll.

42 The Foreigners Act. (no. 326/1999 Coll.) introduced two residence modes: temporary (short- or long-term) and permanent stay. Those who were concerned (e.g. citizens of Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, who have been subject to visa requirements since 2000) had to apply for visa, residence permits or their extension at Czech embassies or consulates in the country of their origin. However, after ten years of long-term residence, immigrants had an opportunity to apply for a permanent status, which theoretically meant a path to Czech citizenship. The Act has been subject of numerous amendments - already in 2001, a minor liberalising amendment (no. 140/2001 Coll.) was passed aimed at solving certain shortcomings of the 1999 version of the Act.

respects as favourable for the asylum seekers, but was followed by further restrictive measures⁴³ (Drbohlav, 2004; Čaněk – Čižinský, 2011, pp. 333-334; Baršová – Barša, 2005, pp. 223-224; Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 73-76; Drbohlav et. al., 2009, p. 48-49). A further development was observed also in integration policies. In 1999, partly as a response to the growing number of foreign citizens residing in the Czech Republic the first complex document was released focusing on foreigners' integration. The goal of the document entitled *Principles of the Concept of Immigrant Integration in the Territory of the Czech Republic* was the creation of conditions for the development of good relations between communities. In 2000, the principles-specifying document called *Concept of Immigrant Integration in the Territory of the Czech Republic* was released. Despite some of their flaws⁴⁴, these two strategic documents, as well as the following analyses of the status of foreigners, contributed - at least on a paper – to a shift of the Czech integration policies towards to a "culturally tolerant civil integration" (Barša – Baršová, 2005, pp. 233-236; cf. Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 76-77; Drbohlav et al., 2009, p. 50).

The third phase of the development of Czech migration policies can be framed by the adoption of the *Refugee and Foreigners Acts*⁴⁵ and by the global economic crisis. Particularly the first part of this period was characterised by continued aims to consolidate new directions and policies, to specify, institutionalise and strengthen rules of entry and residence in the territory of the state, and on the other hand to create a more conceptual and active approach to Czech migration policy (Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 74-78; Kušniráková – Čižinský, 2011, p. 498). This can be demonstrated on the adoption of the *Principles of the government's policies on international migration* in 2003⁴⁶ and a related *Action Plan for Combating Illegal Migration* of February 2004, aimed at minimising illegal migration and illegal economic activities of foreigners. The development towards a more conceptualised and active stance to migration policy was, however, considered as limited due to the primacy of law over politics, or the harmonisation with the EU law (Baršová – Barša, 2005, pp. 224-225; cf. Čaněk – Čižinský 2011, pp. 340-341)⁴⁷. Along with the harmonisation processes, a number of both restrictive

43 Among others, the act no. 325/1999 Coll. allowed the asylum seekers to stay outside asylum facilities, to apply for financial support up to the subsistence level, or to enter the Czech labour market without the need to apply for a work permit. The act incorporated also the Dublin Treaty provisions regarding the distinction of asylum seekers and introduced the definition of the status of unjustified asylum application. However, the act was soon followed by a restrictive amendment (no. 2/2002 Coll.) which aimed to limit the sharply growing numbers of the 'unjustified' asylum applications: the statistics reached 8,788 in 2000 and 18,094 in 2001.

44 This document, which was further updated in 2008, 2009, 2011-2014 and 2016, addressed in a more detailed way the division of competencies and implementation of programmes aimed at advocacy among both the Czech citizens and foreigners. However, the implementation of the programme saw a number of obstacles including limited funding and missing organisational basis.

45 The 1999/2000-2008 period is divided by Kušniráková and Čižinský (2011) and Drbohlav et. al. (2010, pp. 74-85; 2009, pp. 48-54) into two parts defined by the years 2000, 2004/2006 and 2008, and 1999, 2003 and 2008. As there are to be found overlaps in the developments characterising the 1999-2008 time-span, we will consider it as one extended period.

46 The Principles were considered as too general; they were not seen as able to fulfil the role of strategy on which to base immigration policies. According to Baršová and Barša, the *Principles* document does not 'even indicate the answer to the basic question of how many and what type of migrants the state is supposed to accept'. The missing vision of the Czech migration policy and overall passive approach to policy-making combined with bureaucratic migration management and related political way of communicating the issue of migration have left their mark. This was also intertwined with the aforementioned processes of harmonisation with EU law, which was prioritised by the relevant part of the state administration (Baršová – Barša, 2005, pp. 225-226; cf. Drbohlav, 2005; 2003, p. 213). Despite a recommendation for an early adoption of a more elaborate migration strategy, this was not adopted until 2015.

47 Most of the legislative acts adopted before 2004 came into force after the EU accession. The harmonisation with the EU law was realised among others via the Act no. 221/2003 Coll., which incorporated the institute of temporary protection as set by the directive 2001/55/EC, Act no. 57/2005 Coll., which incorporated the directive no. 2003/9/ES establishing minimum standards and norms for asylum seekers reception and the directive no. 2003/86/ES on the right to family reunification; the act also reflected on the Council regulation no. 343/2003 (Dublin II.), which sets the criteria and procedures for determining the member state responsible for examining an asylum application and the act no. 165/2006 Coll, which incorporated the concept of temporary protection, the qualification directive and subsidiary protection.

and liberalising amendments of both the *Refugees Act*⁴⁸ and the *Foreigners Act*⁴⁹ were adopted (Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 75-84; Drbohlav et. al., 2009, pp. 48-52). Moreover, the issue of border protection was specified in the new act on the protection of the state borders⁵⁰.

The second half of the 2000-2008 period is marked by liberalisation of the migration policies and foreign employment-enhancing programmes that can be associated with economic growth, low unemployment rates and demand for labour force. Already in 2003 a pilot project was started aimed at the recruitment of highly qualified foreign workers, who were invited to settle in the Czech Republic together with their families. In 2004 the new *Employment Act*⁵¹ further specified the conditions for foreigners' employment, with overall effects on the liberal-restrictive scale described as neutral. 2007 saw the *Green cards* project, aimed mainly at the support of short-term legal migration and work as prevention of irregular economic migration⁵² (Kušniráková – Čížinský, 2011, p. 498ff.; Drbohlav – Valenta, 2014, pp. 44-45; Drbohlav et. al. 2010, pp. 78-83; Drbohlav et al. 2009, pp. 51-52; Čaněk – Čížinský, 2011, pp. 338-339; Baršová – Barša, 2005, pp. 229-231).

The post-2004 period is also characterised by further conceptualisation of integration policies. In 2005 an updated *Concept of the Integration of Foreigners*⁵³ was introduced. The *Concept* newly defined goals and requirements for migrants' integration, including knowledge of the language, identification with socio-cultural values and requirement of economic self-sufficiency of migrants, particularly those staying in the Czech Republic for more than one year. As a part of the integration programme, activities were presented, which were to improve relations of immigrants and the Czech society in a longer term (cf. Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 83-85). However, this period already saw highly problematic practical implementation of the previous 1999 *Principles for the Concept of Immigrant Integration* as the local and regional administrative bodies, which were considered key to its success, were not significantly involved until 2008 (Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 76-77).

Since 2008 we can observe a double-track approach in Czech migration policy: on the one hand, even in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis, there were legislative and non-legislative acts discussed and adopted, aimed at inviting selected economic migrants. On the other hand, there were also restrictive steps taken, which might have contributed to the worsening of domestic economic conditions in the context of the global economic crisis (Pospíšil, 2009; cf. Čaněk – Čížinský, 2011, pp. 341-343; Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 110-117, pp. 139-147; Drbohlav et. al. 2009, pp. 60, 66; Kušniráková – Čížinský, 2011, p. 498). These restrictions had taken the form of numerous amendments

48 Besides a restrictive amendment to the Refugee Act no. 2/2002 Coll., this period also saw the adoption of the liberalising amendment no. 217/2002 Coll., which simplified the asylum procedure and provided the unsuccessful asylum seekers with a possibility to appeal to the higher instance.

49 Amendments of the Foreigners Act included the acts no. 140/2001, no. 151/2002, and no. 222/2003 Coll. The last mentioned liberalised the position of the EU, EEA and Swiss nationals, who were no longer obliged to apply for a work permit or residence permit. Further amendments included a slightly liberalising amendment no. 428/2005 Coll., which incorporated directive no. 2003/86/EC on family reunification of third countries' nationals, the Act no. 161/2006 Coll., which halved the time required to obtain a permanent residence permit to 5 years. This in practice meant shortening of the waiting period for Czech citizenship by up to ten years. The amendments to the Foreigners Law included also the restrictive Act no. 379/2007 Coll., which delimited possibilities for gaining a permanent residence of a family member of Czech or EU nationals (this was possible after at least two years of stay in the Czech Republic and at least one year in the particular family relation) and incorporated the Schengen acquis needed in the context of joining the free movement area in December 2007.

50 The Act no. 216/2002 Coll. The Act was amended via Act no. 191/2016 Coll. Since 2007 the inter-departmental coordination and cooperation of the border protection should be ensured by the Analytical Centre for Border Protection and Migration.

51 Act no. 435/2004 Coll. was later amended by the Act no. 101/2014 Coll. (cf. Ministry of the Interior, 2015).

52 This project, based on the Act no. 382/2008 Coll., started in 2009. It was aimed at supporting the short-term (in)flow of the needed labour force – both at lower and higher-skilled levels – in larger industrial factories. However, the project has had a number of conditions and limitations, which are mentioned in the referenced literature.

53 Adoption of this document accompanied a temporary transfer of the responsibilities for the integration policies from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2004) and back to the Ministry of the Interior (2008).

to the *Foreigners Act* and the *Refugee Act*, which were criticised by both non-governmental and state actors⁵⁴. When considered as an interconnected process encompassing the daily bureaucratic routines, strategic-political decisions and discursive practices of policy-makers, these steps can be considered as leading to the securitisation of migration.

When discussing the promotion of economic migration, besides *Green Cards*, the *Blue Card Project* was introduced with the goal to invite highly qualified workers from the third countries to fill specific job positions on the Czech labour market (Drbohlav – Valenta, 2014, pp. 47-48; Ministry of the Interior, 2012, pp. 70-71)⁵⁵. Among the non-legislative regulations of economic migration, a new concept of economic migration was discussed. The document was expected to have provided a basis for new legal regulation of conditions of entry, work and residence of third-state nationals on the territory of the Czech Republic (Ministry of the Interior, 2011; Ministry of the Interior, 2012, pp. 21ff., pp. 65-73 cf. Jelínková/MKC, 2011; MKC, 2011)⁵⁶. Since 2012, several *ad hoc* projects seeking to promote economic migration have been launched under the auspices of various ministries; particularly, these projects included *Fast Track* focused on recruiting qualified and highly qualified workers from Ukraine, but also those aimed at inviting workers from countries such as the Philippines and Mongolia (Ministry of Labour and Social Work, 2017; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017; Ministry of the Industry and Trade, 2018). With regard to the legal regulation of employment migration, Act no. 101/2014 Coll. was considered as one of the most important amendments of the *Act on Employment* and the *Foreigners Act* since the adoption of Green Card System in 2008. It aimed to implement the Directive no. 2011/98/EU to establish a so-called “single permit” procedure for third-country nationals to reside and work on the territory of a Member State and a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State (Čižinský, 2014; cf. Drbohlav – Valenta, 2014, p. 44; Ministry of the Interior, 2015, pp. 17-20)⁵⁷.

The restrictive amendments of the *Foreigners Act* passed in 2011 and 2017 were subject to numerous debates and criticism due to its negative impacts on foreigners staying in the country⁵⁸ (Consortium, 2011; cf. Ministry of the Interior, 2012, pp. 21ff., 65-73), 2013⁵⁹ (Čižinský – Holá, 2013;

54 As will be seen below, in the discussions on the proposed amendments between 2011 and 2018 which might well shed light on the processes of tightening of the rules for foreigners residing and working in the Czech Republic, the ambiguity of which was repeatedly pointed out, including the proposed and adopted legislative and non-legislative acts, excessive restrictiveness on the status of the nationals of the third countries, their employment, residence status and integration possibilities, but also the status of their family members.

55 The project was based on transposition of the EC directive 2009/50/EC, via the Act no. 427/2010 Coll. The impact of both, Green card and Blue card projects was in its beginnings considered as limited (Drbohlav – Valenta, 2014, p. 65)

56 This project proposal was considered as too broadly conceived and opaque; moreover, it was considered as repressive and disregarding basic needs of immigrants as well as the potential contributions of migrants and immigration in general. Particularly the aim to “manage” migration was criticised, and the overall utilitarian perspective – which was related to the proposed concept of circular migration as well as ignoring the West-European experience with limiting the rights of economic migrants. It was stated that the project had no basis in existing legislative framework and that the proposal as such could lead to further decrease in economic migration.

57 The main risks of the amendment included bureaucratic limitations of foreign employees and the constriction of the labour market as a result of its de-facto control by the administratively malfunctioning Ministry of the Interior. Criticised was also the fact that foreign workers were not allowed to work during the prolongation process for their work permit, which was solved in the 2015 amendment (cf. <https://apps.odok.cz/veklep-detail?pid=K0RNA33JQKVE>), and a trend towards moving in an anti-integrational direction via creation of categories of unemployed foreigners (cf. Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic, 2014). The 2015 amendment itself introduced new regulation of the health insurance and strengthened the role of the secret services.

58 Overall, the 2011 draft was considered as having negative impacts on the position of foreigners in the society, their integration, issue of health insurance, conditions of employment and responsibility of employers towards migrants, complexity of bureaucratic measures related to the foreigners’ stay in the country but also establishing themselves in the country and journeys to foreigners’ home countries.

59 The 2013 proposal was considered as weakening the procedural rights of foreigners, worsening the status of foreigners with permanent residence permit and unjustly differentiating between the family members of the Czech citizens and family members originating in the third countries and family members of EU nationals. Criticism was also raised against the regulation of

Consortium, 2013). The latter of which was considered by representatives of non-governmental organisations, but also by state representatives as inconsistent with the European and Czech Constitutional Law and with the internationally binding human rights agreements in that it was constraining the rights of migrants living and working in the country as well as of the Czech citizens who had foreigners as family members in an unacceptable way. Overall, the amendment was considered as imposing restrictions on migrants' access to the labour market in times of economic growth and increasing the need to increase employment in domestic companies (Consortium, 2017a; cf. Jungwirth, 2017; Sedláčková – Erhart, 2017; Sedláčková – Čihák, 2017; Ministry of the Interior, 2018, pp. 22-24). Moreover, the latest amendment of the Foreigners Act has met with criticism by non-governmental migrant-assisting organisations, which considered it as opposing integration, employment, and family life. As particularly problematic was seen the proposal of transferring the costs of integration to the foreigners, too vaguely set mechanism for setting quotas for economic migration and model of so-called "special work visa", which should be granted for one year without a possibility to prolong the stay in the Czech Republic⁶⁰ (Consortium 2018a; 2018b; Jungwirth – Chrzová, 2018).

Due to their overall restrictiveness also the 2012⁶¹ (Holá, 2012) and the 2016 amendments⁶² to the *Refugee Act* (Tatcheva – Holá, 2016) have been considered as problematic from the perspective of non-governmental organisations, immigration and asylum lawyers.

It is to be noted that migration has not become politicised either via parliamentary discussions, political party platforms or in public debate until late 2014/2015. Čaněk and Čižinský (2011, pp. 341-343) refer in this sense to the 'closed-door' policy-making. Nevertheless, this changed with the so-called migration crisis. Since 2015, migration has been one of the most controversial political issues on the Czech political scene (Jungwirth, 2016, 2017). Besides a trend to increased politicisation, we can observe also the increased political securitisation of the issue of migration via political discourse, but also via practices of the migration managing bodies. In the context of securitisation of economic migration practices of the Ministry of the Interior were discussed in particular, and criticism voice for criminalisation of economic migrants by NGOs, but also by Committee on the Rights of Foreign Nationals of the Czech Government Council for Human Rights (Government, 2017; Čaněk, 2017), particularly for introducing measures that should enhance security and public order in industrial zones, which generally come with a higher concentration of foreigners.

The trend toward securitisation, or an application of security – and marginally also human rights – perspectives of bureaucratic policy-makers was developing already since 2001 (cf. Čaněk – Čižinský, 2011, pp. 341-343). The security perspective of the bureaucratic or bureaucratic-political apparatus can be demonstrated on several strategic documents, which include the *Strategy of Migration Policies of the Czech Republic* issued in 2015 (Ministry of the Interior 2015b). This document has been first of its kind during the three decades of the Czech migration policies. However, it was criticised by the

monthly minimal means to be granted residence, and the condition of the knowledge of the Czech language. Moreover, the proposed amendment was considered as using obsolete concepts and terms and was seen as introducing an even more complex regulation of the Act.

60 Criticised was also strengthening of the rules for issuing the employment cards and incomplete or incorrect transposition of the Directive 2016/801/EU.

61 In the 2012 amendment, unsatisfactory implementation of the recast version of the qualification directive was questioned (no. 2011/95/EU), but also the practice of detention of the asylum seekers and their obligation to remain in the reception centre which might limit their basic rights.

62 The 2016 amendment was considered as overly restrictive, particularly in the length of the waiting period for the decision on the international protection and in the incomplete transposition of procedural directive (no. 2013/32/EU) and the reception directive (no. 2013/33/EU).

non-governmental organisations as based primarily on the negative and security perspective of migration⁶³ (Consortium, 2015). The *National Security Audit* (Government, 2016) is yet another document reflecting the security perspective of the bureaucratic-political apparatus, which was prepared by the government of Bohuslav Sobotka in 2016. The document mentions the security aspects of migration among the ten possible threats for the Czech Republic; hereby, it refers to the threats of illegal migration, but also to the dangers resulting from insufficient integration of legal migrants, particularly from radicalisation of members of immigrant communities and terrorism (Government 2015)⁶⁴.

4. Economic migration

Due to its geographical location and relatively mature economy, the Czech Republic has been an immigrant country for quite some time. Although no exact data are available, it can be concluded that most of the immigration to the Czech Republic has an economic background reflecting indirectly the long-term predominance of men⁶⁵ among immigrants and their age composition, most of them at the beginning of a career (Czech Statistical Office, 2016, p. 47). There is a strong demand for labour on the Czech market, especially in the areas of the secondary sector of the economy. The main determinants of pull-side of immigration are mainly economic development and demographic trends (Popovová, 2009).

In the period 1990-2010, two turning points stand out in relation to economic migration: the economic downturn following 1998; and the global economic crisis of 2008. After the rapid growth of economic activities of foreigners in the first half of the 1990s, when the numbers of economically active foreign nationals rose from approximately 52 thousand (0.98% of the total labour force) in 1993 to almost 200 thousand in 1997 (3.78% of the total labour force) (Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 42-43, cit. Horáková, 2007; cf. Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 65-67), the growth in foreigners' employment stagnated around 3% (approximately 160 thousand economically active persons). On the heels of the economic recovery, the numbers of the foreign workforce started to grow after 2000.

Since the beginning of this millennium, Czech Republic has been experiencing an unprecedented increase in labour migration, both in terms of the influx of foreign workers and also the outflow from the country. This increase was particularly supported by the country's accession to the EU in 2004. Since then, citizens of the EU/European Economic Area or Switzerland and their family members are no longer considered as foreigners by Czech law and are granted the same legal status as Czech citizens, meaning free access to the labour market in the country. Other third-country nationals can work in the Czech Republic under the condition of having been granted a work or a residence permit.

Due to the accession to the EU, major amendments have been implemented into the Czech law and as a result the policy in the mid-2000 was shifting towards a more liberal approach. The Czech economy experienced a period of growth and the unemployment rate has been gradually declining to about 5%.

63 This was demonstrated by the inclusion of security issues such as organised crime or human trafficking in the first place. Moreover, emphasis was put on the economic interests of the state and on the socio-cultural differences and downplaying of issues of basic human rights and needs of the migrants, liberal-democratic values, ethical considerations of migration and integration.

64 The document further considers unmanaged migration as one of the hybrid threats. The audit stipulates that rigorous management of migration and integration is one way to eliminate the identified migration-related threats. The document also explicitly makes a reference to the threats related to international migration defined in subsequent strategic-conceptual documents, such as the Security Strategy of the Czech Republic, which was updated in 2015.

65 Men traditionally migrate more for the purpose of economic activities, while women often follow in the process of family reunification.

In 2008, the officially registered foreign workforce exceeded 360 thousand (6.43% of the total workforce) (Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 42-43, cit. Horáková, 2007). The situation changed when the crisis hit the Czech economy in 2008.

The global economic crisis of 2008 had a considerable impact on the numbers of foreigners coming into the country; hereby, the year 2008 did mark a rapid outflow of the foreign workforce. The impact of the crisis can be highlighted by the increase in job applications between 2008 and 2009. The increase was higher for foreigners working in the Czech Republic – for third-country nationals it was about 45%, for nationals from the EU/EEA or Switzerland it was around 60% (comparing to the Czech citizens for whom the increase as was about 42% (Drbohlav, 2010, pp. 144-145). As a response to the crisis, the Czech government introduced a set of restrictive measures with the aim to limit the access of foreign labour to the Czech market and simultaneously protect the Czech labour force (Drbohlav – Valenta, 2014, pp. 44-45). One of the measures involved was introduction of return programmes which were supposed to encourage foreign workers who had lost their jobs to return to their home countries.

Overall, between 2008 and 2012 third-country nationals employed in the Czech Republic decreased rapidly. Over the four years, the number of work permits issued to third-country nationals fell by more than 70%. However, in comparison with other EU member states, it still remained relatively high. Brychta (2013) points out that this figure doesn't have to be associated with the restrictive measures but could be potentially viewed as a consequence of developments in the Czech labour market as the decrease in job vacancies in economic sectors traditionally employing third-country nationals⁶⁶ and also the rising number of jobseekers from Bulgaria and Romania as a new competition (Brychta, 2013). Despite the fact that the economic crisis was predicted to lead to outflow of the workforce, the crisis rather led to a stabilisation of the migrants coming from the third countries (Drbohlav et. al., 2010, p. 141, cit. Horáková, 2010) and to a change in strategy of participation the labour market, which often took a form of a shift from the employees' position to entrepreneurship (Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 144-145; cf. Drbohlav, 2011, pp. 405-407; cf. Drbohlav – Valenta, 2014, pp. 54-61).

After the period of coping with the crisis and the recession in 2012 and 2013, the economy started to recover and the year 2014 represented a new period of growth for the economy. High domestic demand was especially the source of the strong growth. During the years 2014-2018 unemployment in the Czech Republic dropped significantly to a historically low level⁶⁷. Furthermore, the demand for the labour force has been steadily increasing. However, the growth of the economy and demand for labour force has not been accompanied by the corresponding increase in economic immigration (Czech Statistical Office, 2016, pp. 5-7). As a result, the Czech labour market has been currently struggling with a shortage of labour, while the largest shortages are in manual labour (Vyhlídal – Jahoda – Godarová, 2017, p. 44).

The shortage of labour force is one of the most significant long-term problems of the Czech economy. This issue is closely related to the demographic trends underway in the Czech society. The Czech lands have experienced a drop in fertility rate that projected itself into a lower birth rate and decline of the natural increase since the end of the 1970s (Drbohlav, 2009b, p. 41). Even though it is generally easy to perceive immigration as a solution to low birth rates and a shift away from economically active population, it is necessary to consider the broader context of the phenomenon which is the overall demographic change in modern societies. According to the projection of the Czech Statistical Office

⁶⁶ Mainly construction and manufacturing.

⁶⁷ In 2018 the unemployment rate fell to 2.2% (Czech Statistical Office, 2018).

for the demographic development of the Czech Republic until 2100⁶⁸, a long period of population decline is expected in the future. This phenomenon is not specific only to the Czech society, as many other European countries are struggling with the same problem. As the study of the Research Institute of Labour and Social Affairs explains, the Czech Republic is entering the phase for which one of the fastest growing indicators will be the average age of the population as a result of a combination of a permanently low birth and mortality rate. Immigration can compensate to an extent for the overall population decline, but it is certainly not possible to compensate for long-term effects of population aging through migration (Vyhlídal – Jahoda – Godarová, 2017, pp. 72-73; cf. Migration Consortium, 2017b).

We can distinguish two types of economic migrants in the Czech Republic: employees and entrepreneurs. In 2017 there were 472,354 foreigners in the Czech Republic registered as employees. Of these, 70% were nationals of the EU/EEA or Switzerland with free access to the Czech labour market. Traditionally, except for the non-EU countries, the nationals of Ukraine, Russia and Vietnam have the highest representation. In 2017, a total of 87,228 entrepreneurs who were foreign citizens were registered, most of them nationals of Vietnam, Ukraine and Slovakia. These three nationalities account for more than two-thirds of all entrepreneurs who are foreigners in the Czech territory (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2018, p. 3). Among the foreigners, the number of auxiliary and unqualified applicants is significantly higher among all employed persons on the labour market in the Czech Republic, especially among foreigners from non-EU countries (Vyhlídal – Jahoda – Godarová, 2017, pp. 72-73).

5. Emigration

Despite some assumptions, the Czech Republic did not become an emigration country after 1989. The relative political stability and democratic development without dramatic economic downturns are the main reasons for the relatively insignificant rates of emigration. As such, emigration from the Czech Republic is – in contrast to the previous period – motivated primarily economically (Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 23-30; cf. Wallace 2002, pp. 604-606). Hereby, it is difficult even to estimate any precise figures on the Czechs living and working abroad due to the insufficient mechanisms of data collection and processing, shortcomings in monitoring movements of individuals and their classification on both micro and macro levels, and also due to marginal interest in these issue of the research circles (Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 31-33; Drbohlav, 2003, pp. 197-198). According to Drbohlav (2003), the outflow of Czechs abroad to the West peaked between 1991-1993. Germany was considered as the main target of temporary work migration; an increase up to 50,000 Czechs working in Germany including illegals and commuters within the border zone was estimated in 1992. In 1995, the figure decreased to 35,000–50,000 by estimate, which was due to rather restrictive measures introduced by Western European countries in the mid-1990s. The Western-European labour markets were then considered less attractive for the Czech workers (Drbohlav, 2003, p. 199; Wallace, 2002, pp. 604-606).

The emigration rate has slightly increased after the accession of the Czech Republic to the EU. People migrated for work especially to Great Britain (cf. Janurová, 2018), Ireland and Sweden, that

⁶⁸ Czech Statistical Office (2013). *Projekce obyvatelstva České republiky do roku 2100. /Projection of the population of the Czech Republic until 2100.*

is the EU member countries that did not require transitional periods for free movement of labour. However, in comparison with other CEE countries, the number of Czech nationals emigrating was still quite low. Annually, Czech citizens immigrating to the EU countries ranged from 10,000 to 13,000, with the exception of two years after joining the EU, when about 20,000 persons left the Czech Republic (Drbohlav et. al., 2010, p. 38). Working abroad is attractive for the Czech people, especially due to the wage differences in certain professions (mainly healthcare and social care). Most of the movement is however short-termed and to the neighbouring countries, namely Austria and Germany (cf. Drbohlav – Pavelková, 2018). Those individuals who move are usually from the less economically developed regions close to the borders (Czech Statistical Office, 2016, pp. 66-68).

6. Irregular migration

Presence of irregular migrants has been considered as one of the characteristics of the Czech Republic as an immigration country since the early 1990s (Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 45-48; Drbohlav, 2011). Irregular position of foreigners is closely related to economic activities and stay of the foreigners on the territory of the country; it has been pointed out that there has been a noticeable decrease in illegal crossings of the state border since the early 1990s (Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 43-48; Drbohlav, 2011, p. 407). In other words, it is presumed that in the Czech Republic, besides the relatively high numbers of economically active foreigners, a relatively high number of unauthorised workforce is active in the “grey market”. The total numbers of migrants irregularly residing in the Czech Republic or the extent of unauthorised economic activities of foreigners are hard to estimate, although as the main statistical source we can refer to the Foreign Police database. According to some estimates, the unauthorised workforce may reach the numbers of the registered workforce (Drbohlav, 2011, p. 407).

In 2007 the Czech Republic became a member of the Schengen area and since then two basic categories of illegal migration have been recognised in accordance with Czech law – illegal crossing of the external Schengen border and illegal stay on the territory of the Czech Republic⁶⁹. Right after the entry to Schengen, from 2008 a significant drop of detainees for illegally crossing the borders had been observed as the border checks were removed. Therefore, vast majority of illegal migration detected on the territory of the Czech Republic is attributed to unauthorised migrants who stay and work on the territory illegally (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2018, p. 120)⁷⁰.

The demand for cheap labour was always an incentive for the grey economy to flourish on the Czech market. The wide social tolerance for unregistered employment with its roots in the communist era as well as established lobby of intermediaries and brokers also contributed to making the Czech Republic a destination for illegal migration. Most of the irregular labour migrants on the Czech market come from economically less developed countries, namely Ukraine, Moldova, Russia and Belarus. They usually fill the posts in labour intensive, demanding and poorly paid jobs that most Czechs view as unattractive like for example construction, home-cleaning and care, agriculture/forestry, hotels and restaurants (Drbohlav, 2009b, p. 27).

In recent years, there has been an increase in illegal migration in the Czech Republic, the rate growing approximately 7-16% per year since 2011. The reasons for that are mainly the economic

⁶⁹ The category of illegal stay also includes the illegal migration of persons moving across the territory by land or via the internal Schengen border to other European countries (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2018, p. 120).

⁷⁰ Illegal crossings are still detected at international airports.

crisis hitting the Czech market in 2009 and subsequent restrictive measures of the Czech government aimed at foreigners, which caused many of them to go into illegality, as well as the intensification of irregular migration flows into Europe in the context of the war in Donbass and the so-called migration crisis. A big leap happened especially in 2015, when the rate rose sharply compared to 2014 by 77.6% (3471 persons). Of the total number of detained persons in 2015 (8563), 97.2% were detected illegally and only 2.8% were detected illegally crossing the external Schengen border in the Czech Republic. Even in the times of increased irregular flows, the Czech Republic was mainly a transit country for migrants who were heading primarily to Germany (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2016, p. 107).

After 2015 illegal migration in the Czech Republic has begun to decrease again. The largest numbers of migrants were reported in Germany, France, Greece, the United Kingdom and Spain. These five countries together accounted for 71% of all those found to be illegally present in the EU. In the overall comparison, the numbers in the Czech Republic remain relatively low.

In terms of nationality, since 2008 the nationals of Ukraine represent the biggest group of third-country nationals detected illegally staying on the territory of the Czech Republic. In 2015, amidst of the migration crisis, the nationals of Syria replaced the Ukrainians in the first position, however, after the overall decrease of irregular migration flows to the EU, Ukrainian nationals were taking first place again in 2016 (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2018, p. 161).

7. International protection

The volume of applications for international protection in the Czech Republic has been moderately stable over the years. Since 2003, there has been a trend towards a decrease in the number of applications (Drbohlav et. al., 2010, pp. 43-45; Drbohlav – Valenta, 2014, pp. 61-63). The decrease began with the accession of the Czech Republic to the EU, especially due to the introduction of the Dublin Regulation⁷¹, which sets the criteria for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection. In 2013 only 707 persons filed such an application in the Czech Republic, historically the lowest number (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2017, p. 161).

The situation changed in 2014 due to the political crisis in Ukraine, which led to a significant rise in the number of application by 63.5% in comparison to 2013. With the outbreak of the 'migration/refugee crisis' the rise continued even in 2015 by another 31.9%. However, even though, the numbers of asylum seekers were rising significantly across the whole EU at that time, overall the Czech Republic was affected only marginally by the 'refugee' crisis as the overwhelming majority of asylum seekers flows to the Czech Republic were transit migration to Germany (or elsewhere). In the end, the increase had only a limited impact on the numbers of Syrian nationals' applications for international protection in the Czech Republic. Most applications in 2015 came from nationals of Ukraine, who filed almost half of the applications (45.5%). The asylum seekers from Syria were the second largest group with 8.8% (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2016, p. 140).

71 By full name - Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person.

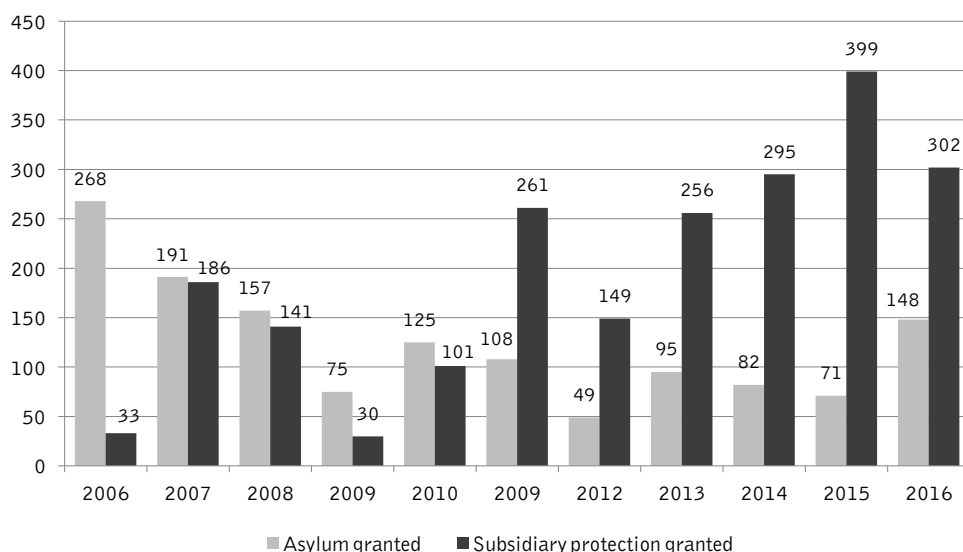
In terms of numbers of applicants, the year 2015 was exceptional for the whole EU with the highest number of filed applications for international protection since the ethnic conflict in the Balkans (1991 – 1993). The distribution of applicants for international protection has long been unbalanced and uneven across the EU countries. Compared to other Member States of the EU, the numbers of asylum seekers in the Czech Republic are still below average. The Czech Republic is not the state the asylum seekers would usually prefer to reside in and the country registers significantly less applications than neighbouring Germany, Austria and Poland. It can be assumed that part of the ‘crisis flows’ were still behaving according to the economic push and pull factors such as perception of the target country as successful from the economic and social point of view. While in the period 2008 - 2011 France was the main target country for asylum seekers in the EU, it has been replaced by Germany, where currently around one-third of all applications for international protection in the EU are registered (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2016, p. 208).

Table 2. Number of submitted applications for international protection in the Czech Republic (2006–2017)

| Year | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Number of applicants | 3,016 | 1,878 | 1,656 | 1,258 | 833 | 756 | 753 | 707 | 1,156 | 1,525 | 1,478 | 1,450 |
| Year-on-year change in % | -25.0 | -37.7 | -11.0 | -24.0 | -33.8 | -9.2 | -0.4 | -6.1 | 63.5 | 31.9 | -3.1 | -1.9 |

Source: Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2006 – 2017

Graph 5: Number of asylum granted and subsidiary protection granted 2006–2016⁷²



Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2006 – 2016.

72 In accordance with Act No. 325/1999 Sb, on Asylum, subsidiary protection is granted to a foreigner, who is not eligible to be granted asylum, but in whose case there are justified concerns regarding the return to the country of origin, where the foreigner would face a real risk of suffering serious harm.

The nationals of Ukraine represent the main and the largest group of asylum seekers in the Czech Republic since 2004. The majority of the seekers are already living in the Czech Republic (often more than 10 years) and many of them consider obtaining an asylum as a form of legalisation of their residence status. Due to the large and relatively well-established Ukrainian community in the Czech Republic, one of the main reasons of Ukrainian nationals for flocking to the country is a family member or a close acquaintance already living on the territory (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2016, p. 141). The Syrian nationals who represented the second largest group of asylum seekers in 2013, 2014 and 2015 have moved down to the fourth place in 2016 and to the fifth place in the 2017. The Czech Republic is mainly a target destination for those Syrian nationals whose close relatives came to the Czech Republic in the past, or for those applicants who have close ties to the country from the past (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2018, pp. 162-163).

In 2017 there were 1450 applications for international protection registered on the territory of the Czech Republic (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2018, p. 161). In 2017 the top countries of origin of asylum seekers were: Ukraine (30%); Armenia (8.9%); Georgia (8.9%); Azerbaijan (8.8%); Vietnam (5.7%) and Syria (5.2%). In the overall number, men are in the long run predominant applicants. Their share is 70.1% in 2017 (1016 persons) (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2018, p. 164).

8. Conclusions

Already since the early 1990s, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the Czech Republic began to shape itself as an immigration country. The country's accession into the EU, and consequently into the border free-zone, the Schengen area, particularly affected the international migration flows as major amendments have been implemented into the Czech law, one of the most significant being granting the free access to the nationals of Member States of the EU to the Czech labour market (and vice versa).

At the end of 2017, foreigners in the Czech Republic accounted roughly for 5% of the total population, below the EU average. The majority of foreigners in the country represent third-country nationals, with more than half of foreigners staying in the Czech Republic the nationals of Ukraine, Slovakia and Vietnam. Nevertheless, the share of nationals of EU Member States is steadily increasing. The composition of nationalities residing in the Czech Republic and their residence status reflects the primarily economic motivation of immigration. Most immigration has an economic background with the main determinants being strong demand pull, as the Czech market has been struggling with a shortage of labour along with the fact that the Czech Republic has been experiencing a drop in fertility rates since the 1970s. Nonetheless, it is hard to believe that a higher immigration rate could solve this issue as it principally reflects the overall demographic change in the structure of contemporary society. In 2008, Czech economy got hit by the global economic crisis which resulted in restrictive measures introduced by the government aimed at protecting the Czech labour force and limiting access of foreign labour to the Czech market. The trends characterising the current Czech migration policy, in contrast to high demand for labour force, is an increased effort to manage migration through stricter and more selective access opportunities for foreigners. In recent years, the restrictive trends in migration policies have been accompanied by explicit attempts to securitise migration in both, bureaucratic and political fields.

In recent years Europe has been dealing with intensification of irregular migration flows, mainly from the Middle East, culminating in 2015 in so-called migration crisis. Despite heated political disputes, irregular flows affected the Czech Republic rather marginally, as it served primarily as a transit area for migrants and asylum seekers heading mainly to Germany. The overall numbers remained low in the EU context and after a sharp increase in 2015 in both the detection of illegal migrants on Czech territory, as well as in number of applications for international protection, in contrast to the previous year, the numbers have been decreasing since 2016.

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Selected aspects of migrant integration in the Czech Republic

EVA ČECH VALENTOVÁ

1. Introduction

The growth in the migrant population in the 90s has created a new policy imperative to integrate these persons into the Czech economy and society. Since then, the integration policy has been gradually developing. However, considering integration has not been for long in the centre of national policy priorities nor political debates, this area remains in the realm based on non-binding recommendations and centrally governed by Ministry of the Interior, thus following the utilitarian approach and securitising discourse of the state towards migration. Recently, changes have been occurring, with a rapidly growing number of migrants and particularly in the context of the on-going politicisation of the issue of migration, as a result of which integration issues are becoming also of great importance in society-wide discourse. Nowadays, the key actors face a great challenge of substantially redesigning both the ideological and structural framework of integration policies. In particular, it is necessary to enhance involvement of all relevant actors at the local and regional levels.

Although the Czech integration policy implies varied structural shortcomings, some progress can be observed with regard to various aspects of social integration of migrants. When compared internationally, the Czech Republic is considered to take the lead in Central Europe in developing an integration policy that can respond to the needs of local communities, immigrants and their children (Migration Policy Group, 2015). However, Czech integration policies still have far to go in order to guarantee equal rights and opportunities for Czech nationals and non-EU citizens,⁷³ in particular in areas such as employment, education, healthcare, social rights, and most of all civil and political participation. On the other hand, Czech Republic is considered to take a proactive approach in integrating international protection beneficiaries through a restructured State Integration Programme as well as international protection seekers through specific integration measures under applicable law designed at the turn of the millennium.

2. Integration policy at the national level

The current integration policy has undergone a twenty-year-long development in the Czech Republic. The origins of Czech integration framework date back to 1999 when the basic principles for the progressive building of the state integration policy (Government of the Czech Republic, 1999) were intro-

73 For further information, please see *Migrant Integration Policy Index. Czech Republic. Key Findings*. Brussels 2015. Available at <http://mipex.eu/czech-republic>

duced alongside the major reform of the immigration and asylum laws⁷⁴ enacted in reaction to the growing numbers of migrants and refugees in the country (Babická, 2011). Since then, integration has been treated as an essential tool of a successful migration policy (Ministry of the Interior, 2018a) rather than a separate and consistent public policy (Valentová, 2012). As a result, the notion of integration has not yet been legally enshrined whereas the priorities and proposals for integration measures remain embedded in legally non-binding policy papers. Further development of the integration framework followed the logic that as an integral part of legal migration policy, the integration policy must also respond appropriately to the on-going developments in migration (Government of the Czech Republic, 2011). The migration-integration nexus also corresponded to the priorities of the co-ordinating body in the respective periods (Valentová, 2012).

The first *Policy for the Integration of Foreign Nationals (Policy of Integration)*, adopted by the government in 2000, had set up the basic framework of the Czech integration policy and specified further steps of the state in the area, entrusting the coordination to the Ministry of the Interior (MoI). The key element of the policy was to support annual projects financed from the state budget meant to be operated by the non-governmental non-profit organisations (NGOs) (Government of the Czech Republic, 2000). Integration was defined as a rather rigid one-way process governed by the state without any relation to local communities or municipalities, whereas contribution of migrants was seen only in the cultural enrichment for the majority. Such approach went clearly in line with parallel adoption of the new Immigration Act that radically tightened conditions for entry and stay of migrants on the Czech Republic's territory whose status thus considerably suffered compared to their previous conditions (Valentová, 2012).

In response to further economic and political developments, new trends in migration flows and needs at the labour market, the *Policy for Integration* was revised three times – in 2006, 2011 and 2016. Changes came first in connection with the necessity to implement the requirements of the EU after Czech Republic's accession to the European structures, when intensified efforts to create a coherent long-term integration framework took place, this time under the coordination of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA). Accordingly, the updated Policy of 2006 defined four priority areas of integration, which are preserved up to date: a) knowledge of the Czech language, b) economic self-sufficiency of foreigners, c) foreigners' orientation in society, and d) mutual relations between foreigners and the majority society. Emphasis was newly put on individuals, their autonomy and responsibility in the pursuit of integration, as well as on social integration of migrants and their economic contribution to the Czech society (Babická, 2011). Hence, integration was redefined as a two-way process taking into account the needs of the state as well as the qualities of individuals, into which the majority population and migrants enter and mutually participate. However, migrants are referred to only as long-term and legally residing third-country nationals in the policy paper, while it fully excludes support to EU nationals, asylum seekers and international protection holders, the two latter groups being beneficiaries of other specific integration measures (Government of the Czech Republic, 2006).

In 2008, the outbreak of economic crisis in the country required imminent changes in the management of migration. New securitisation discourse resulted in limitations of the number of migrants on the territory in order to ensure necessary protection of the domestic population suffering from increased unemployment (Kušniráková – Čížinský, 2011). Accordingly, the integration agenda was

74 Act No. 326/1999 Coll., on residence of foreigners on the territory of the Czech Republic, as amended; act No. 325/1999 Coll., on asylum, as amended.

returned back to the Ministry of the Interior to deal with multiple challenges in integrating certain groups of migrants who were suddenly facing social exclusion because of their lower employability. There was an urgent need to deepen an active integration policy to avoid social tensions, prevent the growing xenophobic moods among the majority population and provide migrants with appropriate tools and information on how to respond adequately to changes in the society (Ministry of the Interior, 2009). In this line, the updated *Policy for Integration of 2011* introduced systematic monitoring and assessment of the situation of migrants in the country, with focus put on integration measures at areas of significant concentration of foreigners, developing cooperation with regional and local authorities, and on widening the spectrum of target groups also to EU nationals in critical situation. In order to maximise the awareness of foreigners, a set of measures were designed for the pre-departure phase from the country of origin and for the newcomers (Government of the Czech Republic, 2011).

The latest update of the *Policy for Integration of 2016* called "In Mutual Respect" was mainly driven by the urgent need to redress mutual relations between migrants and majority society, which significantly deteriorated in the context of the on-going migration crisis throughout the European continent. In this respect, the Policy perceives as crucial "the mutual awareness among migrants and the majority society, about their lives, their problems and their views, which can significantly enhance mutual harmonic relations and, on the contrary, prevent feelings of insecurity and threat of the unknown, which can easily lead to mutual rejection and xenophobia as these trends have been increasing in the Czech Republic since 2015" (Government of the Czech Republic, 2016).

However, what is significant nowadays, is that the increased hostility of the social climate has encouraged the key actors to rethink the current setting of the Czech integration framework far beyond the existing policy paper. The expert debate has yet for several years focused on the importance of a properly chosen integration strategy, compared to the past when various ad-hoc integration measures have been replacing the role of a sophisticated strategy document with clear visions and goals. As of October 2018, the current amendment to the Immigration Act would create a new Title XIIIa "Integration of Foreigners", under which the first integration measures will be enacted legislatively. On one hand, the already existing regional integration centres will be brought under one roof and, on the other, migrants will be obliged to complete the one-day adaptation-integration course within one year upon their arrival to the Czech Republic. Such an adjustment, however, cannot be considered as a comprehensive solution to integration issues, as yet (Jungwirth, 2018).

3. Institutional framework

3.1. State authorities

Since its beginnings, the Czech integration policy has counted on a multi-stakeholder approach, which means a collateral involvement and cooperation of a number of state authorities with a lead position of the Ministry of the Interior (namely, its Department of Asylum and Migration Policy), which would cooperate with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and other relevant government bodies (e.g. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Health, Ministry for Local Development, or Ministry of Culture) as well as other partners, in particular, non-governmental non-profit organisations including migrant associations, social partners, etc. (Government of the Czech Republic 2000, 2006). Only later on, the cooperation was extended to regional and local authorities and other actors (Government of the Czech Republic, 2011, 2016).

However, in practice the decision-making within the integration policy remains very centralised under the governance of the Ministry of the Interior, which only recently has delegated a part of the implementation to the regional integration centres (the so-called Centres for Support of Integration of Foreigners) as its major partners at the regional level, whereas the role of civil society organisations or the whole-in-community approach are still being left behind and underestimated at the national level (Consortium, 2015). Moreover, the concentration of powers at MoI is underlined by the fact that this authority embeds a whole range of competencies in the area of migration as such (Čižinský, 2009).

NGOs have fought for long to return the integration area within the remit of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), as it had been in the period of 2004-2008, hence ensuring separation from the security policy and emphasising the social dimension of integration (Consortium, 2015). To date, the MoLSA merely administrates the redistribution of resources within the European Social Fund (ESF), which includes migrants among the supported target groups⁷⁵ while, in the past, it supported some important projects to enhance integration of migrants on the Czech labour market, such as a long-term project for facilitating arrival and settlement of the highly qualified third country nationals with their families (MoLSA, 2010)⁷⁶ and two large-scale projects of its subordinated agency, the Fund for Continuing Education (Fond dalšího vzdělávání, FDV).⁷⁷

Participation of other ministries is limited to coordination of partial aspects of integration under the scope of their responsibility for which they receive some limited funds from the state budget. In reality, several designated ministries are rather reluctant and do not contribute properly to policy making (mostly in the area of education and access of migrants to healthcare). On the other hand, the Czech Ombudsperson's Office plays an important role in the area, as it oversees the observance of migrants' rights (Dumont in: Consortium, 2018).

3.2. Civil society organisations and other actors

The non-governmental non-profit organisations (NGOs) have played an indispensable role in the implementation of integration activities through the existence of the Czech integration policy. The work of NGOs is appreciated especially because of their long-term experience in the field and direct contact with migrants and their communities. Their activities are predominantly financed from state budget in the form of subsidies from individual ministries, AMIF, ESF and other EU or EEA funds (Valentová, 2012). In order to better liaise the projects and cooperation of various NGOs on advocacy level, an umbrella organisation Consortium of Non-Governmental Organisations Working with Migrants in the Czech Republic (Consortium) was established in 2000, which today brings together 20 major Czech NGOs active in the area. The Consortium focuses on the analysis of migration policies, initiates discussion on respective changes as well as provides a range of awareness activities.⁷⁸

75 An overview of projects funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) for the migrant integration is available at www.esfcr.cz or www.cizinci.cz

76 The project of the MoLSA titled *Selection of Qualified Foreign Workers* was operated in 2003 – 2010.

77 The second project of the FDV titled *Promoting the Integration of Foreign Nationals in the Labour Market (Support for foreigners)* was implemented in the period from March 2016 to August 2018 under the support of the ESF. Further information is available at www.fdv.cz

78 For further information about the role and activities of the Consortium, please refer to their website at www.migracnikonsorcium.cz

Amongst other stakeholders, there are mainly schools that assist most often with the integration of children of immigrant background (or more precisely children with a different mother tongue) in the Czech classes and their education. Integration of labour migrants is expected to include employers or trade unions, but they usually show zero or very modest activity in this respect, mostly in the form of information leaflets. Similarly, labour offices are rather inactive despite efforts of the Fund for Continuing Education (FDV) and some NGOs to develop systemic support service to migrants within their structures. A significant motivation factor, which encourages new actors to present more interest in integration, lies in the serious shortage of workforce on the Czech labour market over the last years. Employers' unions are becoming very strong lobbyists in negotiations with the Ministry of the Interior on the increase of quotas for the number of foreign employees. The loudest among them is the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic and the Confederation of Industry and Transport (Dumont in: Consortium, 2018).

4. Integration at the regional and local level

For migrants and their successful inclusion, residence conditions through which migrants first come into contact with the state administration are especially significant. The experience of EU countries with a longer immigration history (e. g. Netherlands, Germany, or the United Kingdom) confirms that a successful integration policy must also involve municipalities, which have the potential to be the closest to citizens. Czech national integration strategy also puts increasing emphasis on the active role of regions and municipalities as an essential prerequisite for the successful integration (Government of the Czech Republic, 2016), but the reality does not match this declaration by far.

Multiple actors participate in the implementation of integration policy at the local level, nevertheless, apart from the cities of Prague, Brno, Plzen and a few other towns, integration in the regions and municipalities generally lacks any complex support system, or strategies. At the regional level, only 3 regions out of 14 have adopted strategies targeting integration of migrants on their territories. Although the position of regional coordinators for migrant integration has been established in all regions, the workload of these workers is considerable and they lack the necessary capacity and competence to execute active coordination role (Dumont in: Consortium, 2018). NGOs believe the current state of low engagement of local authorities, local communities and civil society arises from the excessive centralisation of the migration and integration agendas on the part of the Ministry of the Interior. In their opinion, such an approach contributes to the lack of awareness and limited interest of local authorities in the topic, which is usually beyond the standard remit of local administration (Consortium, 2015).

4.1. Regional integration centres

To fill the gap, the Ministry of the Interior decided to establish a network of integration centres on the basis of a long-term programme within the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). So far, 13 centres were open (the last one in Central Bohemia is expected to open in 2019), 8 of which are managed by the Refugee Facilities Administration (SUZ, an organisational unit of the Ministry of the Interior), one is operated by an NGO (in Ústí Region), one by Caritas CR (in Hradec Králové Region),

and two by regional authorities (in the South Moravian Region and in Prague).⁷⁹ Currently, the Ministry of the Interior seeks to include expenditures for operation of the centres in the state budget from 2020 (see above), which would promise better stabilisation of the centres as well as the possibility to support a wider target group of migrants compared to the AMIF requirements, under which the support of EU nationals is excluded.

The centres are expected to be the initiators of integration activities at regional level and their task is to provide foreign nationals with equal access to integration services and qualified support at a comparable level in all regions, in cooperation with regional integration actors, mainly the regional authorities and NGOs. Their activities generally range from information, social and legal advice, interpreting services, socio-cultural orientation and language courses and organising of multicultural events (Ministry of the Interior, 2018). In addition, the centres organise regional advisory platforms (regular working groups) to facilitate the cooperation of all involved actors in the region, to share information and assess the situation of migrants in each region or to identify problematic areas. However, their activities need to be further developed and deepened. Then, because established by the MoI, the civil society perceives these centres more as an instrument of government policy and less as a tool of regional policy, which would be better suited to integration (Consortium, 2015).

4.2. Integration in municipalities

Generally, local authorities in the Czech Republic started to pay attention to integration matters only after urgent situations have emerged in some municipalities that required intervention to remedy relations between the local majority society and migrants. This was in particular after the outbreak of the economic crisis, when some municipalities with a greater concentration of labour migrants had to respond to unmanageable problems resulting from collective redundancies and subsequent increasing tensions within local populations. In order to find a solution, the Ministry of the Interior provided support in the form of so-called emergency projects that offered a set of integration activities and measures (e. g. language and communication courses for migrants, officials and police, but also intervention and fieldwork, etc.) aimed to map and improve the critical situation in a given location. The projects were implemented by municipalities of Havlíčkův Brod, Teplice, several city districts of Prague (Prague 12, 13 and 14), Pardubice and Pilsen (Valentová, 2012).

Now, municipalities can apply for the so-called projects of municipalities to support migrant integration, within a grant scheme of the MoI, which had been transformed from former emergency projects. When implementing these projects, the Ministry provides methodological support to municipalities, which includes consultations or mentoring by integration coordinators operating in municipalities with a previous experience in implementing similar projects. Projects usually involve cooperation or partnership with integration centres or NGOs operating in the respective localities (Consortium, 2018).

Up to date, Prague has developed the most advanced integration strategy and pioneers in the multi-stakeholder approach. In 2014, Prague's Integration Policy was elaborated under the auspices of the Integration Centre Prague, which has been since then elaborated every year by action plans for its implementation. Thanks to these strategic documents, the development of the area is continuously

⁷⁹ Further information on activities of the centres ran by the state body Refugee Facilities Administration is available at www.integracnicentra.cz; further information of the remaining integration centre is available on their websites: www.centrumcizincu.cz, www.cizincijmk.cz, www.cizincihradec.cz a www.icpraha.com

monitored, experts regularly meet, funds for integration projects of NGOs are earmarked, and independent positions within the municipality are set up (Prague City Hall, 2018), there is support by political representation, which is rather an exceptional case in the Czech Republic. Similarly, the city of Brno strives to facilitate communication between local authorities and migrants by introducing services of intercultural workers directly in the structures of the Brno City Hall and highly qualified migrants receive extensive services through the Brno Expat Centre, run from the city's budget (Dumont in: Consortium, 2018).

In times of labour shortages, several municipalities have faced again a sharp increase of new foreign workers. Often this is happening in the vicinity of industrial zones, where the jumps in population growth is not matched with the infrastructure of small towns at all, and the coexistence between the immigrants and the local population presents a very problematic dimension. Migrants live here in larger groups in hostels, far away from civilian facilities and from their families. The most well-known example of this phenomenon is the village of Kvasiny or the whole county of Rychnovsko in Eastern Bohemia, where the degree of dissatisfaction grew to such a degree that it had to be addressed by the state authorities. With the great pressure to increase the number of newly arrived migrant workers, municipalities have to cope with the desperate lack of housing, the capacities of both practical and specialised doctors, kindergartens, schools and other services at the place of the immigrants' new residence. A similar development has been going on in recent years, for example, in the city of Pardubice (Consortium, 2018; Jungwirth, 2018).

5. Social integration

5.1. Structural limits to social integration

The Czech integration policy is still hampered by many shortcomings, particularly when it comes to the perspective of individual rights and social integration of migrants. Even though the governmental Policy for Integration provides for a stable set of integration measures in its four priorities (orientation of migrants in the Czech cultural environment, knowledge the Czech language, economic self-sufficiency and development of mutual relationships with the majority society), the goals of integration activities such as promoting non-conflictual coexistence with migrants, preventing the occurrence of negative social phenomena and ensuring the safety of all Czech citizens are strongly prioritised throughout the material (Dumont in: Consortium 2018). Moreover, it is hard to say whether these policies are effective in practice given the lack of data, robust evaluations or structural consultation with immigrants themselves (Migration Policy Group, 2015).

Due to the lack of tailored local integration policy, integration itself is applied almost exclusively as part of the national integration policy, which is connected to the immigration policy. Yet the latter, by determining the conditions for entry and residence of migrants, establishes certain adaptation limitations and legislative barriers for migrants (Consortium, 2015). A paradox emerges for the EU nationals who are, thanks to the membership of the Czech Republic in the EU, substantially privileged in terms of the requirements for entering and residing on the Czech Republic's territory, as well as in terms of the rights they are entitled to under the immigration laws.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, such assumption of equal rights resulted in the exclusion of this group of migrants from the state integration policy (see above). This

⁸⁰ Act No. 326/1999 Coll., on the Residence of Foreign Nationals on the Territory of the Czech Republic, as amended.

means that EU nationals, their family members as well as asylum seekers and undocumented migrants have no access to services provided under the integration policy, e.g. legal counselling or Czech language courses (Consortium, 2015) despite a rising concern regarding the labour rights violations of EU workers by Czech employers that often lead to serious risks of their marginalisation and social exclusion (Multicultural Centre Prague, 2016). This dichotomy has been strongly criticised by the civil society and has undergone only very modest changes limited to implementation of specific projects, e.g. a one-year support from the budget of the South Moravian Region (Jungwirth, 2018) or the City of Pilsen (IOM, 2017).

Barriers imposed on family reunification are rising gradually, such as disproportionately high fees and income requirements (Migration Policy Group, 2015), or structural discrimination against the applicants for the purpose of residence whose relationships or marriages with Czech or EU nationals are a priori considered intentional for the purpose of residence and subject to potential refusal of residence granting. Such approach of immigration authorities was contested even by the Supreme Administrative Court in its jurisprudence⁸¹ (Government of the Czech Republic, 2015).

Another important harm to legal protection and legitimate expectations of a vast majority of the third country nationals is manifested in the practice of the immigration authorities not respecting the deadlines for granting or renewing residence permits specified by the law (60 days in most of cases) and the applicants having to wait for decisions for as long as several months or even a year, thus facing serious obstacles in their everyday lives and being exposed to extensive instability of their residence status. This obstruction had resulted at its origins from the shift of the immigration agenda from the Foreign Police Service (Služba cizinecké policie) to the MoI, which introduced stricter investigations of the legitimacy of applications, anti-corruption measures and suffered material and personal shortages (Čižinský, 2009). Upon criticism and pressure put on MoI by migrants, NGOs and the Ombudsman, the MoI has adopted several remedial measures (Ombudspersons' Office, 2012, Committee for Rights of Foreigners, 2013), nevertheless, the problems remains still unresolved up to date as reported by NGO counsels.

Lately, shaping the Czech migration policy merely means creating further limitations to migrants, which would obstruct both their immigration and integration. In 2017, a widely discussed amendment to the Immigration Act aimed to introduce unjustified restrictions on the residence of non-EU family members of Czech citizens, proposed establishing significant barriers to the already hard access of foreign workers to the labour market and sought to abolish democratic judicial review over decisions of the MoI affecting the rights of migrants (Consortium, 2017a). The Government Council for Human Rights assessed that by the latter, the amendment violated the Constitution of the Czech Republic and its obligations under EU law and international law (Government of the Czech Republic, 2018).

Generally, the acquisition of rights corresponding to the length of migrants' stay in the Czech Republic's territory or their residence status has been an issue when it comes to the extent of proportionality of requirements imposed to non-EU newcomers and holders of long-term residence permits. This principle should apply especially to the gradual lifting of restrictions on employment, granting access to public health insurance to migrants with long-term residence, or to the introduction of a gradual increase in opportunities for political involvement for migrants with permanent residence (Consortium, 2015).

In fact, only migrants with permanent residence enjoy similar rights as the Czech citizens, in particular, unlimited access to the labour market and guarantee of acquiring all social rights, including

⁸¹ Cf. Judgment of the Supreme Administrative Court (Nejvyšší správní soud, No. 5 As 102/2013 as of 28 February 2014).

access to public healthcare system (Government of the Czech Republic, 2016). Presumably thanks to these privileges, the number of migrants who decided to permanently settle in the country is constantly growing. However, in order to be granted permanent residence, a set of strict conditions proving a certain level of integration into the society must be fulfilled, among others, a language test to prove a recently increased level of language proficiency to A2, in addition to economic self-sufficiency. In addition, authorities possess large discretionary powers in procedures for rejecting the applications (Migration Policy Group, 2015) as well as in procedures for withdrawing the granted status in cases of termination of the relationship/marriage should family reunification be the purpose of the migrant's stay in the country, which, however, omits protection of victims of domestic violence, for instance (Hradečná, 2016). Another weak point is that migrants cannot register their permanent residence at a local authority, and instead need to go to a special office of the MoI for immigration affairs (Consortium, 2015), which disqualifies them from participation in the governance of local public affairs (Čech Valentová in: Consortium, 2018).

In terms of access to citizenship, a significant positive shift occurred after a major citizenship reform was passed back in 2014, allowing migrants to keep their previous citizenship. As a result, the naturalisation rate of the Czech Republic, being the EU's lowest in previous years, has been boosted since then (Migration Policy Group, 2015). However, repeated refusals to grant citizenship because of unpaid social security or health insurance contributions, which were settled in the past, remain still disproportional (Consortium, 2015).

5.2. Integration into the labour market

Work is one of the basic prerequisites for self-sufficiency in the recipient country. This is why the *Czech Policy for Integration of Foreign Nationals* ranks economic self-sufficiency and integration of migrants in the labour market among the key elements of the Czech integration policy (Government of the Czech Republic, 2016). Conditions for entry of migrants into the labour market and their employment in the Czech Republic are regulated mainly by the Employment Act⁸² and the Immigration Act.⁸³

In terms of access to the labour market, the Czech Republic, like other EU member states, protects its labour market for Czech nationals and nationals of other EU and EEA member states. The latter group enjoys the right of free movement of persons for employment and business under the European law. This means that EU nationals can work without any restrictions in the Czech Republic, i.e. they have the same status as Czech citizens under the Employment Act. The same applies to their non-EU family members (typically spouse, registered partner, and children) provided they are holding a permit for temporary stay in the Czech Republic or have at least applied for it. However, free entry to the Czech labour market is not guaranteed by mere marriage (Límová in: Consortium, 2018).

On the contrary, third-country nationals have regulated access to the Czech labour market. In general, they cannot work in the Czech Republic without the consent and knowledge of the Labour Office, which may be issued in various forms, namely an employee card (dual or non-dual), a blue card (for highly qualified professions), or a work permit issued for a previously authorised stay (usually for another purpose of residence such as business, family unification, study, etc.). The procedure is such that after the employer notifies of their intent to employ a migrant, the Labour Office will carry out a

⁸² Act No. 435/2004 Coll., on Employment, as amended.

⁸³ Act No. 326/1999 Col., on Residence of Foreigners on the territory of the Czech Republic, as amended.

labour market test, and usually only after one month, the vacancy would be available for non-EU workers. There are various exceptions when third-country nationals have free access to the labour market and employers would have only notifying obligation, i.e. they must notify the Labour Office with regard to the beginning and termination of the migrant's employment. This concerns permanent residence holders, international protection holders, asylum seekers after 6 months from the opening of the international protection proceedings, students in full-time study programmes and graduates with Czech school degrees. In addition, there are numerous cases where a work permit, employee card or blue card is not required, or a work permit is issued irrespective of the situation on the labour market. This rule applies for example to clerks, university academics, art performers, some athletes, international transport workers and others. Newly, seasonal work limited to 6 months without the possibility of extension can be performed in the Czech Republic (cf. Employment Act).

Since 1989, migration to the Czech Republic has mostly been due to economic reasons, reaching about 80% of migrants on the labour market by the end of 2016 (Czech Statistical Office, 2017). Importance of labour migration for the local economy is also obvious when considering the main sectors where migrants are employed: 13% of the workforce in construction, 6% in the manufacturing sector, and 5% in commerce (Consortium, 2015). The demand for foreign workers goes hand-in-hand with the integration of the Czech economy into the global economy, increasing demands for flexibility, support for foreign investment, and an increasing number of vacancies due to an extremely low unemployment rate (Czech Statistical Office, 2017a).⁸⁴

Nevertheless, over the 30 years, Czech authorities have not managed to align the migration policy with the real demand of the domestic labour market, notwithstanding that the latter influences both the rights of the foreign workforce as well as public policies in many areas, including education, housing and social services (Consortium, 2015; Jungwirth, 2018). Curiously, the current economic growth in the country has not incited any significant changes in the labour migration management as the channels remain restricted almost to the same extent as previously. Instead, the government started to use ad-hoc programmes to regulate the entry of "special" groups of non-EU workers to the Czech Republic's territory. For example, from Ukraine, the traditional origin country, it is possible to obtain an employee card only through government projects that determine annual quotas for recruiting new workers from that country. The quotas were set at 500 persons per year for Project Ukraine (highly qualified workers) and 9,600 people a year in the Ukraine Scheme (other positions) in April 2018. The number of people interested in work in the Czech Republic, especially from this country, has long been ahead of the possibility of issuing visas. Similar projects to simplify recruitment of foreign workers were opened also for workers from other states, mainly Mongolia, the Philippines and Serbia.⁸⁵

Apart from limitations to the access to employment, migrants have also been less likely to access training or quality jobs as well as opportunities to use their qualifications, compared to immigrants in other countries (Migration Policy Group, 2015). De-qualification of migrants is strongly connected to an unresolved problem when the validation process for recognition of qualifications is extensively long and bureaucratically demanding whereas the recognition of education (nostrification) lacks any systematic framework and depends either on bilateral international agreements or on variable practices

⁸⁴ Czech Statistical Office, *Míry nezaměstnanosti k 30.9.2017*. Available at <https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/cmi/miry-zamestnanosti-nezamestnanosti-a-ekonomicke-aktivity-zari-2017>

⁸⁵ Updated information on all on-going projects is available on the website of the Ministry of Industry and Trade <https://www.mpo.cz/cz/zahranicni-obchod/ekonomicka-migrace/>

of regional authorities and competent schools (Leontiyeva – Pokorná, 2014). Consequently, migrants are scapegoats of the demand for “cheap labour” and ethnicisation of certain sectors, as a consequence of which they are satisfied with unskilled positions and the low status of their work, and thus find themselves caught in precarious jobs. In particular, low-qualified positions are mostly characterised by job insecurity, low wages, long working hours, frequent work-related injuries and overall limitations placed on their employment rights, strongly fuelled by the migration policy (Consortium, 2015; Hradečná, 2016).

For example, the transposition of the Single Permit Directive⁸⁶ introducing scheme of the so-called employment cards for migrant workers (cf. Employment Act)⁸⁷ has only slightly decreased the administrative burden for both employers and employees, but it did not bring any impact to the situation of migrant workers in terms of protection of their labour rights and protection from labour exploitation. The major shortcoming of the scheme is that the employment card is still linked to the specific employer and specific job, due to which migrants from non-EU countries cannot change their employer voluntarily and remain in a dependent position. Such dependence is underlined by the provision of the Immigration Act requiring migrants to fulfil continuously the purpose of stay, for which the permit was issued whereas the waiting period for seeking a new employment is set out for 60 days only. Furthermore, dependence on a specific employer may considerably impact the risks of falling into irregularity, encroachment on labour rights or reporting of discrimination (Hradečná, 2016). For example, the number of official discrimination complaints is still low, despite the 2009 law and the significant number of people reporting discrimination in surveys (Migration Policy Group, 2015).

From another perspective, the onset of the economic crisis after 2008 started to narrow the difference between workers from EU countries and those outside the EU to an extent when the position of certain EU citizens became vulnerable, too (Consortium, 2015). At that time, massive dismissals of temporary agencies and other auxiliary migrant workers were followed by restrictions placed on immigration policies vis-à-vis non-EU workers and ban of their employment in low-skilled positions or via agencies led to their partial replacement by EU workers. They are also often employed through an intermediary but not directly. This is not always a temporary arrangement as some workers have worked for subcontractors for several years with a limited opportunity to be transferred from indirect to core workforce (Multicultural Centre Prague, 2016). As a result, around 25% of migrant workers (111,498 persons, among which 88,111 were EU nationals) were employed through intermediary labour agencies in 2016 (Czech Statistical Office, 2017) where they have been exposed to exploitative, inhumane working conditions, and exposed to violent accidents, unpaid wages, unlawful fines and expenses deducted from the wages, and many other forms of mistreatment.

The most recent risks for migrant workers lay in massive hiring through inter-company transfers from Ukraine, which implies various forms of irregular work, combined with insufficient housing and health care in the industrial zones, as well as massive replacement of temporary agency workers from EU countries by new coming permanent workers from third countries.⁸⁸ Security of the majority population versus social exclusion and homelessness of migrant workers are becoming urgent issues for the

86 Directive of the European Parliament and Council 2011/98/EU of 13 December 2011, on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a member state and a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a member state.

87 Act No. 101/2014 Coll. amending Act on Employment (entry into force as of 24 June 2014).

88 There is a governmental campaign on this issue available at <https://www.mpo.cz/cz/zahranicni-obchod/ekonomicka-migrace/informacni-kampan-k-problematice-vysilani-obcanu-tretich-statuu-k-poskytovani-sluzeb-v-ramci-eu--237190/>

affected municipalities, which remain unprepared for similar situations and without any systematic support from the part of the state authorities or appropriate legislative changes. In the meantime, the attitudes of employers who still do not express an active interest in the long-term establishment of appropriate integration measures confirm the predominance of the utilitarian approach of the Czech Republic towards migrant workers (Consortium, 2015; Jungwirth, 2018).

5.3. Social rights

Based on international treaties and Czech legislation, social rights are understood as the right to an adequate standard of living, satisfactory working conditions, freedom of association, and social security. In the Czech Republic, social rights are not granted universally to all migrants, but selectively on the basis of their residence status. Under the equal treatment principle, EU citizens enjoy the same benefits and are subject to the same duties as Czech citizens. However, a discrepancy has existed between the obligations of third-country nationals (especially those with long-term residence) to contribute to the social security system and the support they ultimately receive in difficult situations. Discriminatory practices go hand-in-hand with the anti-immigration rhetoric in various media and unfounded stories that are circulated by public officials about migrants abusing the social security and healthcare systems (Consortium, 2015). Official statistics show that third-country nationals participate in the drawing of social benefits to the minimum extent. In June 2015, their share of the total benefits amounted to only 1.2%, but the trend is that the total amount of paid benefits to this group is slowly increasing (Government of the Czech Republic, 2016).

5.3.1 Non-insurance benefits

The most problematic is the situation of migrants from non-EU countries who live and work in the Czech Republic but do not have a permanent residence permit yet. Apart from the employed persons and their families who may claim their rights when they have a long-term residence permit, other persons are entitled to these rights in general after the lapse of 365 days of the legal stay on our territory. This applies, in particular, to some state social support benefits. On one hand, these people are obliged, just like the Czech citizens, to contribute to the social security system and the state employment policy, however, their social rights arising from their contribution to the system are limited by Czech law. For example, if they become unemployed, they cannot enter the register of job applicants and, consequently, may be deprived of their residence permit because they do not fulfil its purpose, i.e. they do not work. At the same time, they are entitled to apply for state support benefits only if they comply with the requirement to have a residence permit in the Czech territory. And they are entitled to apply for welfare benefits (apart from extraordinary immediate assistance) only if they have permanent residence. Similarly, certain groups of migrants are not entitled to claim a care allowance under the Social Services Act, which may considerably impede integration of disabled and elderly people. On the other hand, if they use welfare benefits and disability benefits excessively, they are at risk of having their permanent residence permit withdrawn, because their dependence on the social system is then considered to be a burden for the Czech Republic (Consortium, 2015; Hradečná, 2016).

5.3.2. Access to social services

Access is limited also to certain types of social services defined under the Social Services Act.⁸⁹ This law excludes from its scope in particular undocumented migrants at a full extent (except for the victims of trafficking in human beings) and partially also long-term residence holders such as students, non-EU self-employed persons and their family members, or persons with a so-called “tolerated status”). Solely social prevention services such as shelters, contact centres, crisis assistance, intervention centres, low-threshold day centres, children’s and youth facilities, dormitories and field programmes should be theoretically provided to all legally residing migrants because they provide assistance in crisis situations. However, in practice, migrants often encounter rejection only on the basis that they are migrants and regardless of their type of residence permit. On the other hand, social care services, such as relief services for people with disabilities or residential care for the elderly people remain inaccessible to many migrants. Considering that navigating the offer of social services is not easy, therefore, NGOs providing social counselling to migrants serve, among others, as the first focal points towards the offer of other institutions providing social services. Such cooperation is essential because these NGOs can offer only a fraction of the total offer (Stulíková in: Consortium, 2018).

5.3.3. Health insurance

Migrants residing in the Czech Republic have the obligation to be properly insured for the whole period of their stay in the country, either via public health insurance or the so-called commercial health insurance of foreigners, under which they are entitled to receive healthcare at a doctor or in a health care facility according to the relevant insurance contract. The choice between these types of insurance is not voluntary for migrants and depends on their status and type of residence permit (Tulupova: in Consortium, 2018). The entitlement to be included in the system of public health insurance is granted only to certain groups of migrants under the Public Health Insurance Act,⁹⁰ specifically to all persons with permanent residence permits, EU nationals and their family members, holders of international protection, international protection applicants, and legally employed migrants without permanent residence. All other migrant groups from non-EU countries, such as entrepreneurs, students, as well as family members of third-country migrants (children) who do not have any taxable income are reliant on private (commercial) health insurance.

There are serious shortcomings in the practice and legislation of compulsory commercial insurance. Although very expensive, private health insurance is not that widely accepted by practitioners and often the insurance companies are trying to find ways on how not to cover medical treatment. Consequently, migrants are forced to pay for the treatment on their own, or produce debt for the hospitals. What is worse, very often companies try to apply exceptions or claim that the illness occurred already before the contract was signed. There is no duty to insure a foreign individual for the insurance companies, which often means that disabled persons, elderly or persons in difficult medical situation do not have access to the health insurance because insurance companies reject them as uninsurable. However, failure to present health insurance leads to the loss of the residence permit (Tulupova in: Consortium, 2018).

⁸⁹ Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on Social Services, as amended.

⁹⁰ Act No. 48/1997 Coll., on Public Health Insurance, as amended.

NGOs ran a continuous campaign as long as from 2013 up to 2017, advocating for extension of the public healthcare system to the excluded groups of migrants. They also reported cases of uninsurable migrants and alleged the violation of their fundamental right to healthcare (Consortium, 2016).⁹¹ The situation was previously criticised by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The government recognised the need for amendments to existing laws and mandated the ministries of the interior, finance and health to prepare a respective draft proposal, which ended up rejected by the Parliament because of many alleged deficiencies (Ministry of the Interior, 2016). Since then, the private insurance companies continue to increase their premiums for eligible migrants (Server Infocizinci.cz, 2018).⁹² A new proposal has been recently submitted again to the legislative proceedings (Server Novinky.cz, 2018).⁹³

5.3.4. Retirement pension

The conditions for granting of pension to migrants and/or to Czech citizens with a migration background differ depending on the country of origin. The situation is very complicated especially for those migrants whose country has not entered into a bilateral agreement on social security with the Czech Republic and who are not subject to the community law either. The main problem is that the time the respective person worked outside the territory of the Czech Republic is not included in the retirement period and only the years worked in the country are taken into account. Moreover, an extensive and so far unaddressed problem is a retirement pension for asylum seekers, as it is mostly impossible to obtain information on the insured period (also due to the required personal data protection) from their country of origin. If they come to the Czech Republic at an advanced age, they have no chance to meet the necessary requirements for the granting of a pension (Hradečná, 2016). Disadvantaged are also migrants who reach the retirement age but do not meet the requirement of the length of pensionable years. To cope with the situation, they have to remain active in the labour market even at a senior age, where they often find jobs in precarious work positions due to limited job opportunities (Sokačová – Formánková, 2015). Another rather serious problem lays in an inadequate pension, insufficient for a dignified life and which results from the earlier low-qualified positions, in particular in case of migrant women. Feminisation of ageing and of poverty among the migrant population in the Czech Republic can also become a real challenge for domestic social security system soon (Hradečná, 2016).

6. Cultural integration

Migrants living in the Czech Republic are not a compact community but a group internally differentiated. With a degree of generalisation, it can be stated that migrants appreciate the most the freedom of the Czech society and the security in the country, as well as the care for the environment. On the contrary, they pay less attention to Czech culture, i.e. customs, literature, cinema, theatre, etc. Thus, the civilisational achievements of the Czech society are more important for migrants than its culture as such. Cultural differences are part of the subjectively perceived barriers to the integration of migrants

91 Brochure available at <https://migraceonline.cz/doc/KN0-zdravotni-pojisteni-cizincu-web.pdf>

92 Available at <https://infocizinci.cz/cr/zdravotni-pojisteni-cizincu-zdrazuje/>

93 Available at <https://www.novinky.cz/domaci/483244-vlada-chce-zprisnit-podminky-pro-pojisteni-cizincu-neziskovsky-jsou-proti.html>

into Czech society, among which ignorance or limited knowledge of the Czech language and access to labour market are the most considerable. A feeling of non-belonging to the Czech society often arises from the conviction or personal experience of migrants with a reluctance of majority against them. However, most migrants were trustful of the Czechs (81% in total), so it is possible to assume that migrants perceive members of the majority society rather positively (Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs, 2015).

In general, cultural differences appear the most often in the public discourse with respect to ethnic minorities in the Czech Republic as this aspect is very strongly anchored in the definition of this group of people and has much longer historical context. In political discourse, the concept of multiculturalism is rejected while the top representatives are calling for questions of national identity and citizenship. In this respect, compulsory socio-cultural courses and increasing the level of language tests that migrants have to pass successfully to demonstrate their civic integration are making it onto the scene. This includes essential elements such as knowledge and respect for national values and basic standards, principles and a way of life of the host society.

The Czech integration policy also assigns great importance to the orientation of migrants in the host society and has developed a set of measures in this regard such as adaption-integration courses for newcomers, socio-cultural courses for migrants with long-term and permanent residence statuses and pre-departure information packs for potential migrants. However, the alleged motivation for introducing these measures lays, among others, in the state's effort to limit the influence of unfair intermediaries (so-called clients) who abuse the lack of knowledge on part of the migrants and arrange their residence or employment matters for high fees and not always in accordance with the law, thus harming the rights of migrants (Government of the Czech Republic, 2016). While the pre-departure information and the socio-orientation courses for settled migrants seem to have a clear and functional basis (see below), the adaptation-integration courses for newcomers brought some controversy into expert debates due to opposing positions of the MoI and NGOs whether to keep integration voluntary or to include some compulsory elements (Government of the Czech Republic, 2016),⁹⁴ however, without turning them into sanctions towards migrants, by, for example, not renewing residence permits when they do not complete the course (Consortium, 2015). So far, participation in the adaptation courses is voluntary for migrants but shall become compulsory to all third country nationals within one year upon their arrival in the country once the respective on-going draft proposal for amendment to the Immigration Act is approved by the Parliament (Parliament of the Czech Republic, 2018).⁹⁵ The courses consist of one day-long lectures where the migrants are acquainted with their rights and obligations in the host country, with the local conditions, customs and basic values of the Czech Republic and the EU. The aim is also to help solve practical issues or to avoid an initial misunderstanding, thus, reduce the risk of losing residence permit in many cases connected to the employment (Říhová: in Consortium, 2018).⁹⁶

Growing cultural diversity within the Czech society undoubtedly brings certain challenges to the public institutions that come into contact with them. Attitude toward and treatment of migrants by

94 In 2016, 92 adaptation integration courses were attended by 1,148 migrants, which was several times more than in 2015 when 13 courses were attended by 195 migrants but still little compared to the total of migrant population (Ministry of the Interior 2016, 2017).

95 Introduction of obligatory adaptation integration courses is based on the Strategy on Migration Policy of the Czech Republic, adopted in 2015 (resolution of the Government No. 621 as of 29 July 2015).

96 Further information about these courses, contacts for centres executing the courses, including direct registration tool are available at www.vitejtevcr.cz

public officers is often discriminatory. Clients with migrant background encounter civil servants who do not speak foreign languages, often behave with disrespect and consider migrants to be a priori problematic clients whereas bureaucracy and official language of the authorities is very complex and incomprehensible to them. Hence, it is often only because of misunderstandings that the migrants commit great failures such as missing deadlines in administrative proceedings or mandatory meetings, which may sometimes lead even to the termination of residence permit. To change that, new concepts of intercultural mediation and elements of intercultural opening of institutions are being developed in the country since the turn of the millennium (Association for Intercultural Work, 2016). Since 2014, two main areas – community interpreting and intercultural work – have been identified and established. They represent new forms of follow-up services to social work with migrants, which have also found support in the strategic materials of integration policy at national and local level in recent years. Their aim is to provide professional services to help overcome language and socio-cultural barriers between the majority and migrants, to communicate effectively in an intercultural environment, while at the same time helping to break down unprofessional intermediary services for migrants who are often bordering on exploitation (Kapounová in: Consortium, 2018).

At the local level, activities based on presentations of cultural diversity or countries of origin or ethnic food are usually the starting point for most of NGOs and municipalities willing to execute some integration activities. Presentation of culture is also usually at the centre of the migrant associations' activities. These, however, do not have the effect of assembling or representing migrants to such an extent that they could be considered as representative of some specific groups, except for associations within Vietnamese and ex-Yugoslavian communities. Curiously, the most active ones are those representing very scantily represented countries of origin (e.g. Iran, Burma, Afghanistan, etc.), which are, however, perceived to have a very different cultural environment and values to those of the Czech society.

7. Integration of refugees

Specific integration regimes and measures apply to refugees in the Czech Republic. Even though the admission of refugees and awarding of the international protection constitute a permanent and topical issue at both the European and national levels, the Czech Republic, similarly to other developed countries, has elaborated a sophisticated system for the reception of refugees and for securing their basic needs during the asylum procedure. For international protection holders, there is a comprehensive integration programme to help facilitate their permanent settlement in the country (Merhauptová in: Consortium, 2018).

The focus of relevant legislation lies mainly in European and international law, namely the Geneva Convention, the New York Protocol and the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). These rules are specified by the national Asylum Act,⁹⁷ which provides for rules of the procedure for awarding the international protection, the status of asylum seekers and international protection holders and defines two possible forms of international protection granted in the Czech Republic (as well as in the EU), namely the asylum and the subsidiary protection.⁹⁸

97 For further information on the Common European Asylum System please see the European Commission's website https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum_en

98 For further information, please see also the MoI's website <https://www.mvcr.cz/migrace/clanek/nase-hlavni-temata-mezinarodni-ochrana-mezinarodni-ochrana.aspx>

7.1. Integration measures for asylum seekers

International protection is granted in proceedings for the issuance of international protection (also known as asylum procedure), regulated by the Asylum Act,⁹⁹ in which both asylum and subsidiary protection are sought jointly. The procedure is opened upon a request submitted by the refugee who undergoes at first the medical and substantial screenings in a reception centre. Once these steps are completed, asylum seekers are displaced in one of the residential centres of the MoI, operated by its organisational unit – the Refugee Facilities Administration (in Kostelec nad Orlicí and Havířov), where they can stay throughout the entire proceedings or follow the rules for accommodation at a private address specified under the Asylum Act. Besides the accommodation, asylum seekers have the right to meals (or to a subsistence allowance if they prepare their own meals) and other services (e. g. psychologist, tuition, etc.) in the refugee facility where they are registered. Refugee facilities offer children's centres, workshop and tearooms, library, playground, sports equipment and clients can participate in various cultural events and trips. Czech language courses are also organised for asylum seekers accommodated in the refugee facilities. Children are placed in local primary schools upon their arrival at the centre.

In terms of their social rights, should the asylum seekers live outside the refugee centre for more than 365 days, they become entitled to social benefits from the state social support system. Their health insurance is covered by the state within the system of public health insurance. Access to the labour market is possible only after 6 months since the submission of the application for international protection and upon granting of the work permit, which can be issued without the labour market test under the Employment Act. Applicants may also marry in the territory of the Czech Republic and apply for an exemption for the proof of documents necessary for marriage, which they cannot claim from their country of origin because of their legal status (Asylum Act, Merhautová: in Consortium, 2018).

7.2. Integration measures for international protection holders

The Czech Republic takes a proactive approach to the integration of international protection holders. There are two levels of assistance to refugees. On the systemic level, assistance involves the shaping of legislation that defines the rights and duties of international protection holders, and obliges the relevant ministries and authorities to aid in the integration of refugees. On the community level, assistance involves specific activities by local associations, NGOs, churches, communities, schools and so on. It is the sophistication of the systemic level that puts Czech Republic among the countries for which the active integration of refugees remains a firm priority, even (or especially) at a time when the mood in society is largely anti-refugee and anti-migrant (People in Need, 2017).

The State Integration Programme (SIP) is the main instrument for the integration of people to whom international protection has been granted (asylum holders and subsidiary protection holders). It was launched in 1994, and since then has gradually developed, although the key areas of support remain the same: search for employment, housing, healthcare, Czech language learning, education, or general assistance in everyday situations. Integration services also include provision of interpretation to facilitate communication with, for example, administrations, doctors or schools. All these services are provided free of charge.

⁹⁹ Act No. 325/1999 Coll., on Asylum and the amendment to Act no. 283/1991 Coll., on the Police of the Czech Republic (Zákon o azylu a o změně zákona o Policii ČR), as amended.

The current version of the programme was approved at the end of 2015 and its implementation started in early 2016. Since January 2017, Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior (SUZ) has been the general services provider for integration services. Participation in the programme is voluntary, it lasts a maximum of 12 months and takes place in two stages – staying in integration asylum centres and then settling in municipalities. SUZ currently operates four Integration Asylum Centres (IAS) for temporary accommodation and the start of the integration process. Outside these centres, the SUZ has set up five regional contact points for a state integration programme that will facilitate access to services offered to beneficiaries of international protection outside the IAS. Based on contractual relations, the SUZ also cooperates with non-governmental organisations that extend the network of service providers within the state integration programme (Government of the Czech Republic, 2018). Each beneficiary or family is assigned to a social worker, and together they draw up an individual plan. Besides that the state offers a financial aid to cover the rental costs for accommodation and basic household furnishings such as fridges, tables and beds. In 2016 under the SIP, support was provided to 319 individuals. Out of these, 125 were helped by social workers in finding accommodation, 30 gained new employment and 73 people attended language courses (People in Need, 2017).

In terms of legal status, international protection holders have the same status as Czech citizens in all regards except for right to vote, holding certain public offices or serving in the armed forces. In everyday life, they have unlimited access to healthcare and the labour market whereas in order to access welfare benefits, they have to meet the same criteria as the Czech citizens. This means, however, that only a few of them qualify for retirement pension, since most have not worked in the country for the necessary number of years.

8. Conclusions

The overview of the Czech integration policy described in this chapter is by far not exhaustive and provides only a sampled insight on how a new immigration country can tackle emerging challenges related to quite significant migrant inflows and consequent diversification of its society. On one hand, the Czech Republic took early into consideration the failures of other European countries with longer immigration history and has strived to develop integration measures since the very beginning of its immigration history, addressing migrants already from the per-departure phase. On the other hand, both, the integration strategies and local practice are missing a comprehensive systemic support, complex understanding of the issue and its multi-faceted nature, as well as the recognition of this issue for local societies.

In the future, it will become particularly necessary to reject the widespread perception of assimilation attempts within the Czech population and among the relevant authorities, as well as the notion that integration takes place only on the part of migrants, and that it is legitimate to expect them to relinquish their present identity upon arrival in the new country. Moreover, experience shows that connecting integration with the utilitarian approach to migration (i.e. reducing migrants solely to labour force), which has prevailed over the past decades in a number of Western European states, and which has some application in today's Czech context, brings a number of risks (Jungwirth, 2018). Therefore, a sustainable integration policy must necessarily take into account the individual rights and

needs of migrants as well as their shared cultural specificities and mutual acceptance. Besides the ideological redefinitions of integration, it will be indispensable to build up a solid structural framework for the respective policy area, redefine competences and enhance a proactive involvement of all relevant actors at the local and regional levels, among others, by building alliances, establishing knowledge platforms or supporting positive narratives about migration throughout the country.

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Domestic political aspects of migration in the Czech Republic

TOMÁŠ JUNGWIRTH

1. Introduction

If we should learn but one thing from the dynamic developments of the past years in relation to migration in the Czech Republic, it is that there can easily be an ocean of a difference between the migration reality on the ground and the migration politics, narratives and discourse. This ocean is in turn full of myths, fallacies, misinterpretations and political calculation. As in other countries in the region and beyond, the so-called migration crisis has been expeditiously used by various political forces ready and willing to come up with strong statements and denunciations; some had even put it at the centre of their agenda. It is little stretch to say that these developments have poisoned the public debate for years to come, fostering mistrust towards foreigners (and Muslims in particular), validating mental shortcuts (e.g. asylum-seekers = terrorists) or even conspiracy theories, undermining the credibility of traditional sources of information, enhancing political polarisation, spreading fear, justifying hate speech and generally undermining social cohesion.

In the previous chapters on the Czech Republic, authors have focused primarily on the data and policy side of things, providing a solid analytical reading of the realities, figures, trends, measures in place, interests and stakeholders involved in the migration and integration processes. Hereinafter, we attempt to dig into the politics of migration, offering both a description of what has been going on, and a critical analysis of these developments. The author of this chapter has spent the past years representing the Czech civil society in its migration advocacy efforts. This has given him access to valuable insight into intra-party debates, stakeholders' positions and the like, which he strives to make use of in this chapter, even if for obvious reasons he is at times unable to back this information with written sources, or merely with newspaper articles.

2. Migration becoming a key political issue: tracking the developments

The gradual increase of the number of residing foreigners in the Czech Republic since 1990 has been coupled with what can be best described as a slowly-growing salience of the topic among political parties. However, up until the outbreak of the European migration "crisis", the overall prominence of migration-related issues in the public arena had been limited. The fact that there had been little open deliberation on these topics and that they had been mostly dealt with in a technocratic manner behind closed doors could be deemed as an aggravating factor for the post-2015 heated and emotional public debate.

As shown by Kopeček (2004), up until mid-1990s, migration had been practically absent in party manifestos. Among the key political players, the Social Democrats (ČSSD) have only begun addressing the issue since 2002, following some important legislative changes and the surge in both asylum claims and the number of undocumented migrants working and residing on the Czech territory. Analogically, the Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL) have also only begun raising the issue since 2001. The right-wing conservative Civic Democratic Party (ODS) was hence the first to address migration in their documents, specifically pointing to migrants' criminality as soon as in 1996, and hitherto pursuing hardline policies against irregular migration. Interestingly, these are also the aspects mentioned by the Communist Party (KSČM) in that era. Nevertheless, latter Communist manifestos offered more internationalist and inclusivist perspectives.

The attitudes of political parties towards migration issues have changed rapidly in the wake of the surge in the new arrivals of asylum-seekers to Europe in 2014-16. While the Czech Republic was never a destination country for an overwhelming majority of these individuals, prior to the declared closure of the Balkan route and Hungary's shutdown of its southern border, it had found itself *en route* to Germany, which meant that tens of thousands of people had passed through, and thousands were temporarily detained (E15.cz, 2015). Still, the number of asylum claims filed during the "crisis" period has been substantially lower than back in the 2001–2003 period (see previous chapters). The September 2015 EU Council vote on the temporary relocation quotas, nearly unequivocally rejected across the domestic political spectrum, has undoubtedly led to a further hardening of the government's narrative, and to a further shift in public opinion.

As noted by Faltová (2016), the then-leading government party ČSSD had stressed the importance of border control alongside coordinated humanitarian relief in countries of conflict, coupled with voluntary solidarity measures. In addition to that, its manifesto had underscored the importance of inclusion of a variety of stakeholders in the integration process. On the other hand, as of 2015, the newly-established populist ANO 2011 party of the tycoon Andrej Babiš – ČSSD's coalition partner at the time – had no coherent vision of migration policy, even though through various statements it had clearly opted for externalisation of security, and helped establish the narrative of "helping in the countries of origin" instead of admitting asylum-seekers. KDU-ČSL, the then-junior coalition partner had based its stance in conservative thought, yet predominantly strived to seek consensus and common European solutions.

A 2015 discourse analysis conducted for the Hate Free initiative underscored the fact that 70% of the social media buzz around refugees was then produced by opposition parties and initiatives, with the ruling coalition only providing 30% (Zavoral, 2015). Presumably, much of this was attributed to the new populists who began openly playing the anti-immigration card. Throughout 2015, the Facebook-based initiative Islám v ČR nechceme (IVČRN, "We do not want Islam in the Czech Republic") had gained significant political clout and managed to become something of an agenda-setter in the political arena (see also an analysis by Šlerka, 2015). Although the whole movement-in-the-making later imploded due to power struggles and internal divisions, and while the Facebook page was eventually taken down for spreading hate speech and racism, it is safe to say that the initiative has had a substantially poisoning effect on the overall discourse and helped feed the narrative of mainstream parties. From the opposition Parliamentary parties, hardline stances based on fear-mongering have been pursued particularly by the far-right Svoboda a přímá demokracie ('Freedom and Direct Democracy' - SPD) of the Japanese-Czech businessman Tomio Okamura, and by the long-established ODS, which proposed complete securitisation of the matter (Faltová, 2016).

The crucial 2016 and early-2017 political developments pertinent to migration in the Czech Republic are summarised in Jungwirth (2017). Notably in the given period, there were politically-motivated crackdowns against migrant workers, orchestrated by the then-Interior Minister Milan Chovanec (ČSSD) who sought to give validity to his agenda of further securitisation and curbing of migrants' rights. Significant media interest was sparked by a police raid against a company, which employed a number of Ukrainian holders of Polish visas (which had no permitted them to legally work in the Czech Republic, though this interpretation was not clear from the outset). On the other hand, at this time, a programme of individualised integration schemes for recognised refugees has been launched, paving the way to somewhat progressive policies. Equally, this had been a period of right-wing extremists' internal feuds and ongoing fragmentation.

3. Public discourse and opinion

While it could be presumed that increased public hostility towards migrants and the perception of inward migration as a “problem” has been a phenomenon of the recent past directly related to the aftermath of the 2015 “crisis”, data from opinion polls collected over time by CVVM – the Public Opinion Research Centre, a Czech Academy of Sciences Institution – provides a more nuanced perspective. Specifically, it shows that as late as 2003, migration was perceived negatively by a considerable portion of the society (see Graph 1). In the years leading up to 2013, there was a mild uptrend towards more public acceptance of immigration. The tide had indeed turned with the crisis, as indicated in particular by the spike of 2015. Nevertheless, this has been followed by another swift drop, which could be regarded as “long-term normality”, hence indicating that the lasting effects on the negative attitudes of the general public towards foreigners may have been of limited nature after all.

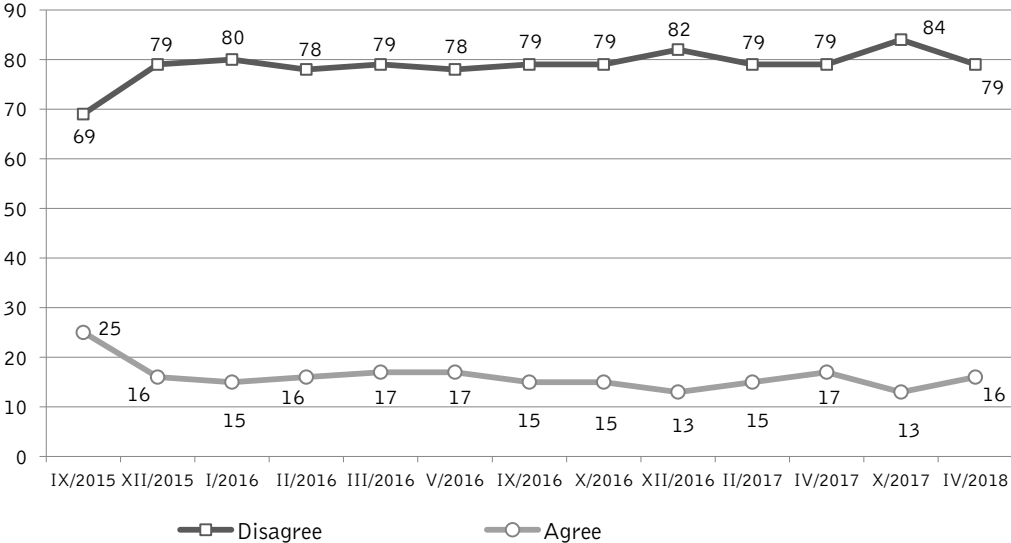
Graph 1. Share of population who consider newly-arrived foreigners a problem (in %)



Source: CVVM.

However, when specifically asked about refugees from the MENA region, the impact of the changed realities and discourse on public opinion has become apparent. As late as September 2015, there was still 25% of the population willing to admit them to the Czech Republic. In none of the polls by CVVM since then, has this share risen to over 17%.

Graph 2. Share of population willing to admit refugees from the Middle East and North Africa (in %)



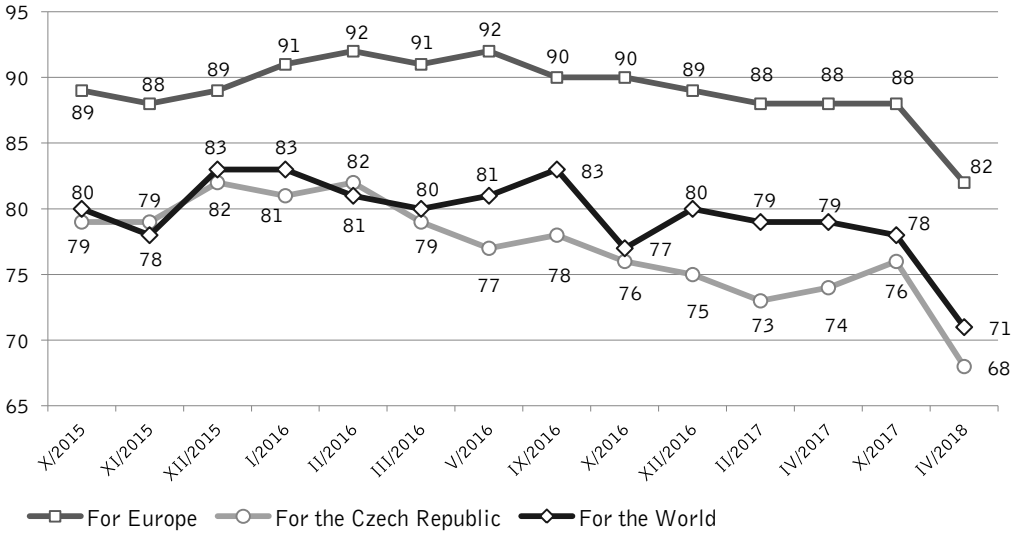
Source: CVVM.

Analysis of Czech discourse undertaken in mid-2015 by Yeseter Technologies has among other things shown that 30% of the population discussing the issue online was not at all distinguishing between people with legitimate asylum claims and those who were not eligible for international protection. The same proportion of the population had signaled a “general hatred” towards the newly-arrived, with 45% “understanding the problem but being against admitting migrants” and 25% positioning themselves categorically against xenophobia. This analysis also shows the close correlation between anti-migrant and islamophobic sentiments which had become prominent over the past years (Zavoral, 2015)¹⁰⁰.

As shown by Graph 3, there has recently been a remarkable drop of people who consider refugees as a security risk, even if the share remains generally very high. However, this might indicate that if the EU proves capable of sustaining the low numbers of arrivals (which is admittedly far from certain), the public opinion in the Czech Republic will reflect this and normalise somewhat in the longer run.

¹⁰⁰ Recently, the rather shocking level of islamophobia was further corroborated by a Pew Research Center publication, which indicated that mere 12% of Czech citizens were willing to accept Muslims as relatives, the lowest score of the surveyed 24 European states. See Pew Research Center 2018.

Graph 3: Share of population that perceives refugees as a security risk (in %)



Source: CVVM.

The aforesaid conclusions are also corroborated by the findings of the 2018 Eurobarometer survey. On one hand, the Czech respondents continued to perceive immigration as a top issue for the EU as a whole. On the other hand, when asked to identify two most important issues facing the Czech Republic at the moment, immigration (17%) was far surpassed by rising prices/inflation/costs of living (35%) and pensions (29%), and on par with health and social security (18%) and government debt (16%). In fact, the ratio of Czech respondents naming immigration as a problem was even lower than the EU-28 average (21%).

It is therefore safe to conclude that while migration-related issues will certainly carry high political salience in the years to come, as long as there is not a new spike in arrivals of asylum seekers, the public sentiment in the Czech Republic will probably tend to become less anti migrant. The question of how much long-term damage has been done by all the political polarisation, hateful rhetoric, islamophobia and racism which had occurred in the past years, remains an open one.

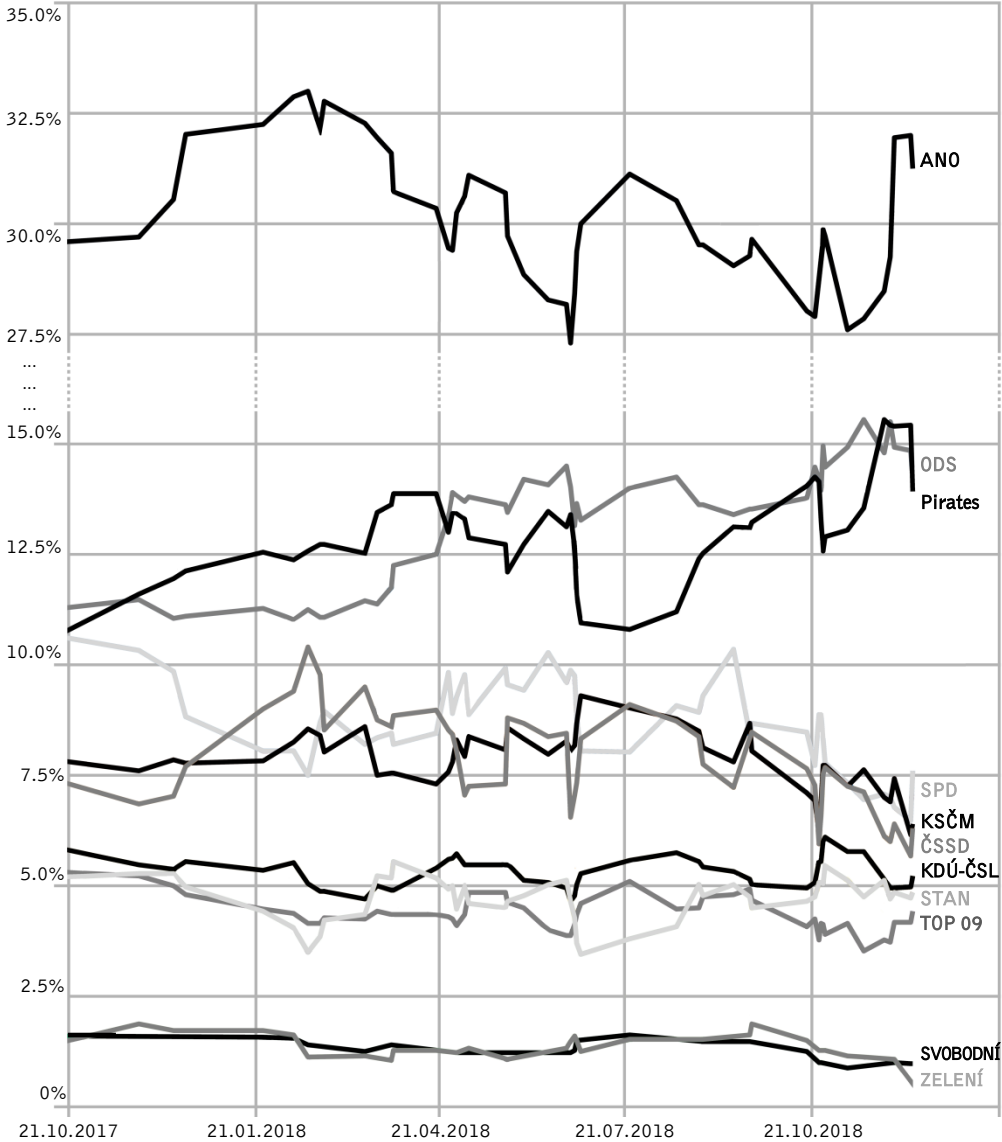
In addition to the aforesaid, it should be stressed that migration has had a substantial impact on the perception of foreign political leaders in the Czech public, and thus also indirectly on Czech foreign policy itself. For example, as shown by STEM polling agency, as of June 2018, Angela Merkel was the least popular of the surveyed political personalities (77% of the respondents claiming a 'very' or 'rather' unfavourable opinion of her). Her (commonly misinterpreted) stances on the admission of refugees certainly played a major role in her deteriorating image among the Czech public.

4. Positions of political parties as of 2018

Whereas migration had indeed turned out to be a key electoral issue ahead of the 2017 general election (won by the ANO party of Andrej Babiš by a landslide), as well as prior to the early-2018 presidential election (won by the incumbent Miloš Zeman by a narrow margin), and had at times reappeared in the run-up to the municipal and Senate elections in October 2018, it has been losing some of its edge in the course

of the past year. This can be attributed primarily to the dropping numbers of asylum-seekers arriving irregularly to Europe, and the related decline of the prevailing sense of urgency and immediate feeling of threat and endangerment among the general population. Moreover, the recent withdrawal of the relocation quota from the EU debate may have had a positive impact on the public opinion. At the same time, since migration-related issues have permanently occupied a prime spot on the political agenda in the course of the past three years, it simply turns out that there are many other issues that may have been somewhat overlooked or that have direct consequences for people's lives and which require politicians' attention.

Graph 4. Opinion polling for next Czech legislative election



Source: wikipedia.com (merging outputs from various agencies)

4.1. ANO 2011

For PM Andrej Babiš and his ruling ANO party, migration is currently a key issue in the context of EU policies. The 2017 pre-election party manifesto (ANO, 2017, pp. 14) mentions the topic exclusively in the framework of the EU and external policies, and in relation to addressing the root causes of forced migration, including by means of development assistance. Remarkably, the manifesto provides no mention of Czech migration policies, apart from stressing that any decision on admitting refugees has to be left up to the member states. No indications are given even with respect to such fundamental issues as to what is the party position on admitting an increased numbers of foreign workers and their prospective integration. Yet, based on practice it is clear that ANO and its representatives strive first and foremost to fulfill the needs of employers by attracting higher numbers of foreign workers (Brodničková, 2017), though they often show lack understanding of and interest in the broader societal repercussions.

As far as the European and foreign policy agenda is concerned, it is driven directly and nearly exclusively by PM and party chairman Babiš himself. Being an admirer of the Hungarian strongman Viktor Orbán, he had also found a liking for taking strong stances on the EU level. Not lacking any confidence, in August 2018, he boasted that Czech Republic would come up with a "solution to migration for all of Europe" (Aktuálně.cz, 2018), and in October, he even suggested he could represent Europe in its migration negotiations with Morocco (Houska, 2018). He consistently advocates for an "Australian model" for asylum policy, ignoring all the evident practical, political and legal difficulties (Babiš, 2018). When European Commission recently unveiled its plan for strengthening Frontex, he took no time to criticise it, before backing off following a swift visit to the agency's HQ (Kosová, 2018). Undeniably, migration issues will remain in the core of Czech PM's foreign policy agenda, even if his erratic behaviour and hardline positions on asylum and solidarity will continue to create tensions.

Interestingly, ANO is a member of the ALDE group in the European Parliament, and thus finds itself on the same boat with Western European liberal parties. This includes Cecilia Wikström, the outspoken Swedish MEP who led the Parliamentary effort to adopt its own proposal on Dublin reform, relying heavily on solidarity among member states including a mandatory and automatic relocation mechanism for asylum-seekers (Wikström, 2017). Though this proposal will most probably not hold in the end, it had been a blow to the face of the vehemently anti-quota Andrej Babiš. Whether and in which shape does this European political grouping survive the next election and the rise of new actors, along with its internal differences, remains to be seen.

4.2. ČSSD

As in other European states, the Czech Social Democrats are struggling to find a new narrative fit for the upcoming era. Meanwhile, their support is fast dwindling. From a hegemon of the Czech political scene that received 32% of the popular vote in 2006 and still narrowly won the ensuing 2010 and 2013 elections, they are now polling just around the 5% parliamentary threshold. At present, they are the junior coalition partner in Babiš's government, based on the results of a turbulent intra-party referendum on the matter (ČTK, 2018) with their leader Jan Hamáček becoming Minister of the Interior, and thus being formally in charge of migration, asylum and integration policy.

Due to the short history of the current government, Hamáček's track record cannot be fully evaluated as of yet. To many in the migration sector, his nomination gave rise to cautious optimism due to his perception as a "European", socially liberal social democrat. Nevertheless, he had already announced he would strive to simplify and hasten return procedures (Deník.cz, 2018). Admittedly,

Hamáček faces substantial pressure from the national-conservative (all the way to chauvinistic and xenophobic) party ranks including the first vice-chair Jiří Zimola and his predecessor as minister, the hardliner Milan Chovanec. Expectedly, future attempts of ČSSD to position itself on the domestic political scene will have an imprint on migration-related issues.

4.3. KSČM

Long-despised and ostracised for never cleansing themselves of their history, the Czech communists are currently living in something of a paradox. On one hand, their electoral results have been in steady decline, not least because of their aging and passing supporter base. On the other hand, nearly thirty years after the Velvet Revolution, they found themselves at the height of their power, trading their silent support of Andrej Babiš's government for functions and offices. Still, it appears that devoid of their core electorate which is fast ageing, in the years to come, they will struggle for survival. When it comes to migration, there is little the party presently adds to the political discourse other than repeating empty phrases and clichés. On paper, at least, the party still distances itself from xenophobia and racism, and calls for upholding the right to asylum, in line with the Geneva Convention (KSČM, 2016; KSČM, 2017). However, this is far from confirmed by party representatives' public appearances and statements. One may only recall the chairman Mr. Filip's recent outright lie about the way a Czech social democratic MEP voted on the issue of sanctions for not fulfilling the relocation quota (Dragoun, 2018).

4.4. ODS

The position of the right-wing conservative Civic Democrats on migration-related issues includes an inherent ambiguity. On one hand, profiled as party of businesses and freelancers, it can hardly ignore their ever-louder calls for increased number of foreign workers whom they so badly need. On the other hand, they present themselves as hardliners when it comes to the European migration agenda. After all, the relevant chapter of their manifesto carries the headline: "So that we would not have to fear" (ODS, 2018).

In short, ODS' way out entails keeping quiet about labour immigration (but not calling for the creation of further barriers), utilitarian approach towards migrant workers (without granting them any broader set of rights), harsh attitude on issues such as returns, and hard line in the EU and global agenda (while sometimes climbing into bed with the extremists, see Novinky, 2018). In the context of the political discussions which loom ahead, and reflecting upon ODS' rising popularity, their views can be expected to be heard loudly.

4.5. Pirates

The Pirate Party, though in existence for quite some time, has become the rising star of the Czech political scene, winning 22 seats in the 200-strong Chamber of Deputies, and recently succeeding in the municipal elections, particularly in larger cities such as Prague where it received 17% of the vote. Overall, they pride themselves on pursuing a non-ideological, data-driven policy-making agenda. On migration, the party has championed rationalisation of the debate and set out to debunk many of the myths repeated by representatives of extremist political parties and movements. Already in 2015, they published a fairly comprehensive policy proposal responding to the "refugee crisis", based on allowing asylum applications in third countries, voluntary admissions or involvement of local authorities (Piráti, 2015). At present, party representatives try to distance themselves from the "welcomers" label, which

has become the ultimate marking for people showing solidarity with refugees and migrants, yet they still honour legal commitments and humanitarian aspects of migration (Bohuslavová, 2017).

4.6. Centre-right opposition

In the 2017 general election, three moderate centre-right parties were able to narrowly make it past the 5% threshold, complicating Andrej Babiš's plans for creating a stable government. These include the Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL) with 5.8%, TOP 09 with 5.31%, and the Mayors and Independents (STAN) with 5.18%. In the context of Czech politics, all of the three generally pursue a moderate migration agenda, at times only disrupted by a strong statement by some of their more outspoken members. Indeed, people like Jan Farský (MP, STAN), Karel Schwarzenberg (MP, TOP 09) or Pavel Svoboda (MEP, KDU-ČSL) occasionally give renewed credence to the oft-lacking views based on humanity, solidarity and common cause, including at public events.

4.7. SPD

In the Czech context, the abbreviation SPD does not point to a progressive social-democratic party but instead to "Freedom and Direct Democracy", a project of the Czech-Japanese businessman Tomio Okamura.¹⁰¹ He himself can be safely marked as the single person who has been skillfully stoking hatred, islamophobia and anti-migrant sentiments in the past years to pursue his political and business goals. In reality, history suggests Okamura had not been an islamophobe or held authentically xenophobic views, rather, he is a populist *par excellence* set to succeed in the new political era. The party manifesto on migration is dubbed "zero tolerance", which says it all (SPD, 2016).

It is also Okamura's party that commonly sets the tone for parliamentary debates on migration-related issues, searching for possible targets in all directions. This spring, it was the Marrakesh Political Declaration adopted within the Rabat Process (Okamura, 2018), in September, its attention shifted towards torpedoing the UN-negotiated Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration (Novinky, 2018), which had ultimately proved successful after the PM picked up the fight. In spite of it all, SPD did not fare well in the 2018 municipal and Senate elections, often losing a half of electoral support from the preceding Parliamentary elections, which indicates a shift of public sentiments, and the limited mobilising potential of related issues. Yet, with European Parliament Elections looming ahead, Okamura may just be able to find some new steam while being the prime advocate of Czechxit.

5. Positions of other selected stakeholders

Having analysed the positions of the respective political parties and mapped out the development of the public opinion on the matter, it is now imperative to provide an insight into the positions and roles played by other stakeholders relevant to the migration/asylum agenda. Without it, the overall picture would be incomplete and distorted since it is indeed not only the parliament-level politics that matter here.

101 His first political project, Úsvit (Dawn), ended up in shambles following internal squabbles and the likely embezzlement of party funds by Okamura himself.

5.1. President Miloš Zeman

Although himself not a party-affiliated politician, Czech President Miloš Zeman (currently serving his 2nd term, being re-elected in early 2018 with just above 51% of the vote) has been perhaps the most polarising political figure in the Czech context of the past years. Scoffing at his own campaign promise of uniting the general public, he misses no opportunity to use migration issues for his own political gain. He has done so when attacking his opponent during the recent presidential contest (Novinky.cz, 2018), and again when looking for excuses not to appoint the ČSSD-nominated Miroslav Poche as foreign minister (Lidovky.cz, 2018). What is more, he felt free to use the top UN forum to make a direct link between migration and terrorism (Anýž, 2017). And while his policy impact is institutionally limited, it is safe to say that the poisoned domestic debate is to a large degree the making of Zeman and his entourage.

5.2. Ministry of the Interior

As noted in the previous chapters, it is the Ministry of the Interior and specifically, its Department of Asylum and Migration Policy (OAMP) which is the central institution dealing with everything from residence permits, via resettlement of refugees, all the way to implementing integration measures for residing foreigners. It is also a politically powerful hub, even if usually not publicly exposed.

OAMP had been established practically from scratch after 1990 and chaired over for quarter of a century by Tomáš Haišman who was commonly referred to as the “architect” of Czech migration policy (Prchal, 2017) and generally respected for his expertise. Over time, it has developed into one of the most influential departments within the Ministry, and the saying goes that it has long been Haišman who instructed the Minister which policies (and politics) to pursue, rather than the other way around. It is therefore only a slight exaggeration to dub OAMP a “state within a state”.

While for many years, Haišman pursued a relatively progressive agenda, being actively involved in the resettlement of refugees, over time, the securitisation bias of his institution began to prevail. After 2015, he had become increasingly politically outspoken, appearing at openly islamophobic and anti-migrant events, accusing European Commission of “neomarxist experiments” and denouncing the motivations of asylum-seekers arriving to Europe as “purely economic” (Hruška, 2016). This in turn deepened the rift between the Interior Ministry and rights-based organisations, with the Czech Helsinki Committee even publishing a call for Haišman’s removal (ČHV, 2016). Yet, as indicated earlier, the Social Democratic Interior Minister for the 2014–2017 period, Milan Chovanec had been a hardliner himself and had no intention of giving in to this pressure.

Eventually, Haišman was forced to leave office due to his deteriorating health in mid-2017 and passed away eight months later (Hruška, 2018). To the relief of many dealing with migration issues, he was succeeded by his long-term deputy Pavla Novotná who is championing a pragmatic agenda and strives to carefully navigate in an increasingly complex and politically toxic environment (see e.g. Zelenka, 2018). Under Novotná and with ‘crisis’ gradually receding from the headlines, OAMP has returned to being a political undercurrent, rather than an outspoken power centre. What will be the specific politics of the newly-appointed minister Jan Hamáček (ČSSD) remains yet to be seen. On one hand, he is largely regarded as representative of the liberal wing of the party (ČT24.cz, 2018), on the other hand, he will certainly face pressure to further securitise the migration agenda, particularly when it comes to the issue of migrant returns, detention and procedural safeguards.

5.3. Other ministries

Due to the fact that OAMP had worked on the migration agenda largely independently of other central government institutions, their interest in the subject matter is often rather thin, particularly at times when the topic is perceived as politically toxic. From experience, it is much more difficult to motivate the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, or the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to give particular attention to foreigners residing in the Czech Republic, and to pursue progressive integration policies. Nevertheless, in the upcoming years, issues related to education of children who do not have a good command of Czech or labour market protection of migrant workers will become ever more urgent, and the responsible ministries will have to face them.

The two of the more engaged institutions are Ministry of Industry and Trade and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The former by and large represents the interests of large corporations, and it also runs the special regimes and projects which facilitate swift employment of foreign citizens. As such, it advocates for a more flexible visa policy and effectively for more immigration (or short-term mobility) at times like these. To the contrary, the latter has a more restrained attitude due to the fact that it is the institution which processes all the visa/residence applications filed from abroad. It claims to be chronically understaffed for the task, and is apparently unable to set up a functioning appointment reservation system, which would minimise the risk of abuse or corruption (Euro, 2017). In addition, MFA is responsible for humanitarian aid and development cooperation which have as of recently began to be affected by migration conditionality. The appointment of the new minister Tomáš Petříček (ČSSD) initially gave some hope for a value-based foreign policy, attempting to mitigate potential conflicts on migration-related topics. However, much of the hope was lost in the course of his rapid U turn against the Global Compact for Migration (ČSSD, 2018).

5.4. Ombudswoman

Since its establishment, the office of the Ombudsperson in the Czech Republic has always been held by credible and genuinely engaged individuals. Following the fierce political battle of 2014, this has been the former anti-communist dissident Anna Šabatová. Even though she has made sure to address a plethora of social issues and to avoid making too much of an easy target of herself, at times, doing her job well means being outspoken on migration. This has particularly been the case at the height of the "crisis" in 2015 when she openly criticised the living conditions in the overfilled detention facilities (iRozhlas.cz, 2015). She has also stood ground against the overwhelming public opinion to defend the right of Muslim women to wear a headscarf in public. In addition, experts from her bureau regularly take part in various working meetings which shape the asylum and migration legislation, and hence exert a real policy impact in places where it matters.

5.5. Regional and local governments

It is a common understanding among civil society experts as well as ministerial officials that the active involvement of local institutions is paramount for the successful integration of migrants into Czech society. However, since neither the regions, nor the cities and villages are formally tasked with this role by law, and as migration had long been a political non-topic (only to later transform into a politically toxic one), the engagement of these structures is often very limited. In cases where problems

appear due to the high concentration of foreign workers, the mayors usually call for reinforced police presence in the streets, rather than pushing for a comprehensive approach. There are indeed exceptions, especially in large cities such as Prague or Brno. Nevertheless, making local governments aware of and working towards foreigner integration is one of the most challenging tasks ahead. As far as the main migration-related issues pertaining to the local level of government are concerned, recent findings of Czech CSOs are summarised in Jungwirth (2018).

When it comes to the asylum policy, prior to the 2018 municipal elections, both the Greens in Prague and the "Žít Brno" party-movement in the Moravian capital had called for the admission of a number of refugees on behalf of their respective municipalities (Lederer, 2018; Hloušková, 2018). Due to the electoral failure of both groupings, these calls will likely not be repeated in the near future.

5.6. Migrants' associations

It is an unfortunate characteristic of the migrant communities residing in the Czech Republic that they tend to keep a low public profile and, according to experience of CSOs, are generally difficult to persuade toward greater activity. Presumably, this is partly due to their specific cultural background, and partly because most of the foreigners had settled in the country only in the past quarter of the century. The current public atmosphere is not encouraging for such endeavours either. However, it is very likely that the second generation of immigrants (who are more often than not already holders of Czech citizenship) will come out as a more confident and publicly outspoken one. This would fill a void in the current terrain, which can hardly be filled by any other actors.

5.7. CSOs

The non-governmental sector dealing with migration and asylum issues in the Czech Republic is comparably diverse and sizeable. Unlike in other countries of the region, there is one unifying network organisation: Consortium of Migrants Assisting Organisations (est. 2003), which as of 2018 comprised 20 CSOs. Among them were both ones exclusively dealing with migration issues (such as Organisation for Aid to Refugees) and ones pursuing a broader agenda (such as People in Need). Moreover, the members include church-based organisations as well as ones focused primarily on research; bottom-up initiatives along with highly professional groupings. The Consortium uses a variety of methods to pursue a rights-based approach towards migration policy.

In 2015, the Consortium has published the *Migration Manifesto* (Consortium, 2015), a comprehensive value-based policy document summarising the core positions of the non-governmental sector. This has firstly enabled the group to clarify its positions internally, and secondly to enhance its advocacy credibility externally. The publication of the Manifesto has come at a turbulent era, which was about to impact the migration policies, politics and narratives in Europe for years to come. At around the same time, the Consortium has become actively involved in organising street manifestations in support of the refugees arriving to Europe in high numbers (Migraceonline.cz, 2014).

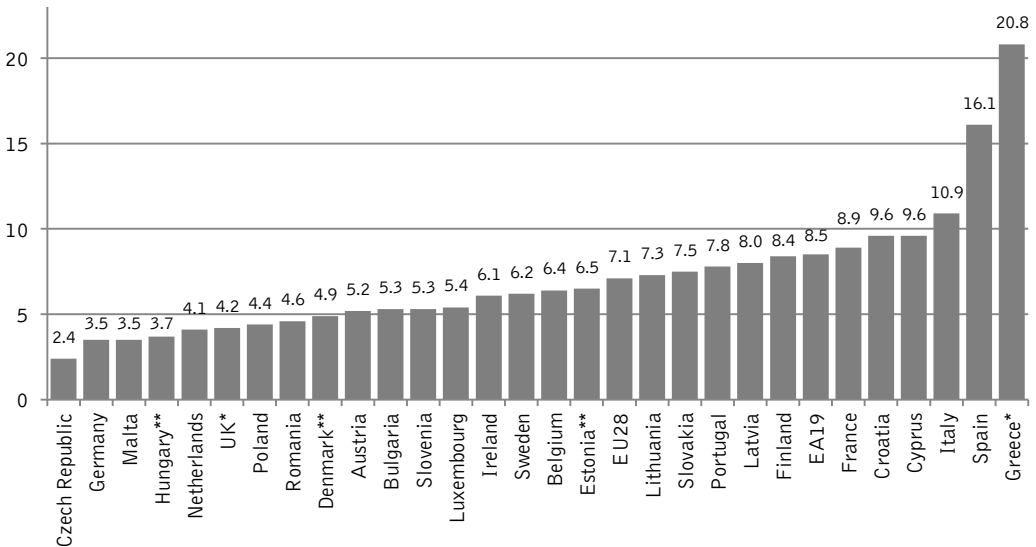
The sudden rise of the migration and asylum agenda to the top of the public discourse has inherently caught the CSOs off guard. After years of operating in what had been a largely inert environment, they did not have the necessary capacities and know-how to completely revamp their advocacy and communication strategies, and also struggled with taking the right approach towards bottom-up initiatives newly emerging around these topics. In addition, those working in migration CSOs have practically overnight become seen as enemies by certain political forces and found themselves in the frontlines of popular spite and hatred.

Nevertheless, with enhanced capacities of its secretariat, and by responding to the newly-set scene, the Consortium began presenting itself increasingly as an expert-based organisation, capable of delivering a quality analytical, whilst staying in touch with the political realities, both domestically and internationally. For instance, in late-2016, it has published a position paper on the CEAS reform (Consortium, 2016), in 2017 provided its inputs to the UN process leading to the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration, enhanced collaboration with other CSO networks such as Czech Forum for Development Cooperation, and fostered a more proactive approach to lobbying Czech MPs and other stakeholders. With all these activities, the Consortium and its member organisations strive to ensure their relevance for the years to come.

5.8. Social partners

While much of the talks and emotions are based on discussions relating to asylum-seekers and irregular migration in general, it is indeed legal labour migration that is at the very heart of the actual migration agenda. As indicated in the previous chapters, ever since the culmination of the economic crisis around 2011, the number of both EU citizens and third country nationals residing in the Czech Republic has been steadily on the rise, surpassing 500,000 in 2017¹⁰². This spike can be largely attributed to the Czech Republic’s remarkably low unemployment rate, currently standing at around 2.5%, the lowest in all EU-28 (see Graph 5), and consequently to the economy’s growing hunger for new workforce.

Graph 5: Unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted. As of February 2018 (in %)



Note: *December 2017, **January 2018.

Source: Eurostat.

102 The real number is even substantially higher due to tens of thousands of EU citizens working in the country without being formally registered as residents. This conclusion can be drawn from an analysis of employment statistics vis-a-vis residence statistics, with EU citizens showing an economic participation rate surpassing 100%.

Here, the social partners have much to say, even if the narratives of the employers and the unions stand in seemingly irreconcilable contradiction. The Czech Chamber of Commerce has been openly calling for greater flexibility in hiring foreign workers in order to meet the needs of local companies (Czech Chamber Commerce, 2017), as has been for instance the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic (Confederation of Industry, 2018).¹⁰³ This was reasserted by statements of other business entities including exporters. At the same time, bank economists fret that without a more liberal migration policy, Czech manufacturing industry will increasingly struggle to meet its contractual obligations (iRozhlas, 2017).

On the other hand, trade unions retain a reserved approach towards increased labour immigration. President of the largest and most vocal association, the Czech-Moravian Association of Trade Unions (ČMKOS) Josef Středula, while no anti-migration ideological hardliner, has been repeatedly pointing to the risk of foreign workers pushing down the salaries of Czech workers (Bican, 2016), and has opposed the enlargement of special immigration schemes (Blesk.cz 2018). At times, the Czech unions even point to immigration as a source of social dumping (Janíčko, 2013). It should be added that historically, Czech unions have not been eager to admit foreign citizens and fight for their rights; something unfathomable in many countries of Western Europe. Recent news show that at last, some progressive ones are beginning to pave the way (Odbory.info, 2018).

A February 2018 media debate between Středula and the vice-president of the Czech Chamber of Commerce Irena Bartoňová Pálková on the issue of employing Ukrainian workers has indicated that the positions of the two sides are hardly reconcilable and that clashes are set to continue (Vzorek, 2018).

6. Key battles fought at present and in the near future

The ensuing chapter concludes the aforesaid by introducing the key migration-related challenges and battlegrounds at present and in the near future in the Czech Republic. It is little stretch to say that in many respects, the country finds itself at a crossroads and that the decisions that will be taken now will have serious repercussions for years to come. Therefore, it is more important than ever for reason to prevail over emotions.

6.1. Shape and size of labour immigration

Labour market needs and the associated pressure exerted by employers for a more flexible entry and employment system lie at the core of the current migration policy debate. Here, Czech Republic should clearly learn from the past mistakes of many Western European countries and not introduce a *gastarbeiter* system which could then yield thousands of socially excluded undocumented migrants without credible integration prospects. This in turn requires a change of mindset and going beyond a purely utilitarian understanding of labour migration. Foreign workers are valued for their skills and willingness to work in jobs and under conditions which are often unacceptable for the local population.

103 In 2015, the Confederation even carried out a survey among its members, which indicated that Czech companies were prepared to immediately employ 5,000 refugees (Aktuálně.cz, 2015).

In the same vein however, their rights must be respected, their social inclusion facilitated, and they should be given a perspective of lasting settlement including family reunification.

Whether such a change of mindset really does occur remains an open question, as does whether a genuine migration governance based on data and qualified needs analysis is established in the upcoming years. The alternative is a reactive scheme derived from administrative capacities rather than real requirements and possibilities, and one that increasingly curbs the rights of third-country nationals. The next big test for the system will be the end of the present economic boom. This, of course, is a matter of 'when' not 'if'.

6.2. Integration measures

Directly related to the aforesaid is the matter of implemented integration measures. It is fair to say that the Czech Republic has had quite some experience on the matter in the past years and many important steps were taken. However, according to the MIPEX index (2015), it remains by and large below EU average when it comes to implementing migrant integration measures. It should be underlined that at present, efforts are underway to systemise the current system of governance, including a regular budgetary financing of the essential infrastructure of regional integration centres (currently financed from EU AMIF). Nevertheless, issues such as housing, access to healthcare, accessible language courses, children's inclusion in education or the active involvement of employers will become ever more urgent with the fast-growing number of foreign citizens living in the Czech Republic. The responses have often not been conceptualised and the money is rarely readily available.

In addition, since integration is not only about the policies but equally about the atmosphere and the openness of the welcoming society, it remains to be seen how much damage has already been done as a result of the hateful campaigns and omnipresent racism of the past years. Undoubtedly, foreigners – especially those of different colour of skin or of Muslim denomination – are now seen with increased suspicion and face an increased risk of being targeted by hate speech or even violent hate crime (iDnes, 2014; Migraceonline.cz, 2016). The normalisation of hatred, pursued by a large number of politicians including some "mainstream" ones, is a phenomenon that will prove very hard to reverse.

6.3. Returns and detention

Pan-European policy trends as well as the domestic need to show muscle will fuel the race to the bottom in curbing the procedural rights of migrants. In the Czech case, the 2017 attempt to scrap the judicial review of decisions revoking residence permits had been blocked by the Parliament mobilised by CSOs who dubbed it unconstitutional. However, another similar attempt is in the making and this time, it may just prove successful. Also, whereas the living conditions in detention facilities have undoubtedly improved in the past years, and while the number of inmates is at present much lower than in the crisis year of 2015, there are legitimate worries that the deprivation of personal freedom will become even more frequently used, so as to discourage potential future undocumented migrants from entering or staying on Czech territory. This naturally involves approaches marked by not working towards ending all detention of migrant children (see current status in NextGen, 2018) and not sufficiently developing community-based alternatives to detention.

6.4. Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and external policies

Ever since the introduction of the EU mandatory relocation quotas for asylum-seekers, this topic has dominated the Czech public debate. The rejection of the scheme (both the temporary one and the proposed permanent one) was unequivocal among major political parties. At present, Czech Republic faces a lawsuit before the European Court of Justice for not relocating under the temporary scheme. At the same time, it should be underlined that this toxic issue has recently receded from the agenda on the European level. If it reappears, anti-European and anti-migrant emotions will certainly flare once again, bolstered by the highest political circles.

With the relocation issue off the table for the time being, there are still other matters related to CEAS reform that are being debated on the EU level. However, few of them capture much attention of the Czech public, media and politicians, and are mostly relegated to the technical-level negotiations. The situation is different with EU external migration policies which are being constantly accentuated by the Prime Minister, especially in relation to enhanced external border control, externalisation of protection, and fight against smuggling networks. The question remains whether a European consensus on the issue will hold when it comes to more nuanced policy-making and whether the Czech preference of *status quo* in CEAS will be acceptable for other EU member states.

6.5. Space for civil society

The worsening of the societal atmosphere, finger-pointing and disregard for any help to refugees had had a substantial impact on the perception of the work of CSOs providing services to migrants or working on related topics. While for a long time, it was by and large overlooked and at times appreciated, suddenly, they found themselves on the receiving end of hatred, outrage, fake news and even threats. Although not yet facing a frontal political assault, CSOs (migration and beyond) became a popular target for extremists and populists alike. In the upcoming years, one of the crucial battles will be that of space for the work of organised civil society. There are certain tendencies to tame these entities into the position of mere service-providers and curb their advocacy potential and political relevance. The examples of Hungary and Poland are looming. Whether such tendencies will prevail or whether the civic sector will by and large defend its independence, remains to be seen.

6.6. Conquering the narrative

All in all, the paramount battle will be one of conquering the overall narrative on migration. There is no doubt that security-related aspects will play a large part. But will the radical forces succeed in stoking fears, spreading lies and mobilising the public against just about any “otherness” in the long run? Will the ruling parties continue to take on some of the extremists’ points on the agenda and hence give them legitimacy in the public domain? Will the debate on irregular migration to Europe turn into a much-needed factual debate on foreign workers arriving in the Czech Republic in increasing numbers? Will integration measures finally get into the centre of the political discourse?

Much of the result here depends not only on the political stakeholders themselves but equally on the broader turn of events. As long as the European Union proves capable of “managing” migration, the sense of urgency will decline and space for a more fact-based debate will emerge, as well as for a more humanitarian and solidarity-based approach. Once a crisis situation reappears, this will become once

again the breeding ground for more politics of fear. As of 2018, leading Czech politicians continue to move between assuring the public that things are under control, and pointing fingers in all directions to identify real or imagined threats.

7. Conclusions

There is little doubt that the position of Czech governments on the European asylum and migration agenda in the past years has been a headache to many in Brussels, capitals, and beyond. It is also a given that these times had witnessed a vicious circle of vocalised public fears and anti-migrant sentiments coupled with hate speech coming from the highest political circles. This had led to the reassertion of the long-cultivated troublemaker position of the Czech Republic in the EU, and domestically to waning solidarity and increasingly harsh environment for residing foreigners, particularly when of different creed or colour of skin.

At the same time, it is fair to admit that the change in the discourse and rise of hateful rhetoric had been encountered by each of the EU 28 member states, albeit with varying intensity. And on the European stage, the primacy of the “evil man” had been picked up with defiant pride by Victor Orbán of Hungary rather than by the Czech leader Andrej Babiš. More importantly, the Czech government has not moved towards actively making lives unbearable for foreign citizens residing on its territory or to dismantling the CSOs that provide services and consultancy to migrants. While there were cases of more stringent rules being adopted, integration measures continued to be developed, and the key institutions at least to a degree resisted a push towards an all-out securitisation. Importantly, labour immigration has continued to be a matter of economic necessity for the Czech Republic.

As a result, while clearly volatile, the migration situation in the Czech Republic cannot be described in black and white terms. Frankly, the potential for adopting and implementing sensible policies is there. The support for extremist parties is stagnating at best, and the mobilisation potential of migration seems to be decreasing. However, with global climate crisis looming on the horizon alongside demographic challenges, armed conflicts and socioeconomic struggles, one can hardly become overly optimistic that migration will remain manageable, and well managed.

And at any opportunity, politics will keep coming to the fore. Radicals will certainly retain a level of influence over the discourse and mainstream parties will tend to follow suit, fearing the wrath of the increasingly suspicious public. A case in point is the late-2018 decision of the Czech government to withdraw from the adoption process of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. This was done amidst the PM’s and the responsible ministers’ reasserting widespread myths and untruths about the document “creating a human right to migrate”, “forcing the Czech Republic to admit migrants from Africa and the Middle East” etc.

While a policy change can always be perceived as within reach, an overall transformation of narrative is much more difficult to achieve. At the time of this writing, the best-imaginable case scenario may just be one in which overall asylum and migration policies oscillate closely around the *status quo*, integration policies are systemised and better financed, local governments and employers take up increased responsibility, and CSOs are left to do their work. Only the ensuing years will hint at whether this scenario is at all feasible.

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POLAND

Socio-economic aspects of migrations in Poland (1989–2018)

OLENA BABAKOVA

1. Introduction

Suffering from mass emigration in 1990s – early 2000s, after 2014 Poland became a country that attracts a record number of short-term migrants. While Polish governments proclaimed they work on a strategy to return emigrants to their home countries, demography leaves no doubts – Polish economy needs much more working hands, even 5 million by 2030. While the local business welcomes the newcomers, Polish society is showing concerns, both of economic and cultural nature. Although the liberalisation of labour market goes on successfully, politicians pay little attention to integration policy. This negligence if not resolved could overshadow any economic benefits.

This paper reviews migration processes in Poland, both emigration and immigration from late 1980s to 2018 in the context of country's European integration, demography and labour market shifts. Also it tracks the evolution of Poland's migration policy and highlights the emigration and immigration trends that would be significant in the nearest future.

2. Economic and demographic changes in post-transition Poland

Poland's economic transition is considered as one of the most ambitious and radical reforms undertaken in the late 1980s – beginning of 1990s in Central-East Europe, which helped the country to pass from central planning to a capitalist market economy. Transition started in 1989 and reached its most strained point in 1991–1992. Being often criticised both from the left and from the right side of political spectrum, Leszek Balcerowicz's "shock therapy" led national economy to an impressive progress, and today Poland demonstrates one of the highest GDP growths in the EU, 5% in the 2nd quarter 2018. The distance between Western European countries and Poland is also closing rapidly in the last several years. But the costs of reforms included dramatic demographic changes, which today pushes Warsaw to look for millions of new workers.

Balcerowicz and his team prepared the project of 10 acts, which limited the state influence on the economy. Their implementation in 1990–93 deregulated the prices, cut state subsidies and limited internal debt. It helped to decrease the inflation from 640% to 37.6%, but as a result at least 1.1 million people lost their jobs. In 1994, the unemployment rate exceeded 15%. Although after decline in 1990–1991, the Polish economy started to grow firstly by 2% in 1992, then 4.3%, in 1993 and already 7.1% in 1997, unemployment remained a protracted problem up until the first decade of 2000s.

Poland's intensive European integration process, started at the beginning of 1990s, helped Warsaw to harmonise its legislation and receive development funds, which made the economic progress more

sustainable. The country was just partly affected by the Russian economic crisis in 1998, and the global economic crisis of 2008 wasn't so painful: GDP growth dropped from 4.9% to 1.8% in 2009, which still didn't put the country into recession but affected the labour market.

Poland's economic success is even more impressive if we look at GDP per capita: when in 1989 it stopped at 6,876 USD, in 2017 it reached 29,521 USD. And the increase from 20 thousand to almost 30 thousand had been done during less than 10 years. At the same time, Poland's demography unlike the economy doesn't give reasons to be optimistic. And if nothing would be done, the demographic problems could ruin the economic achievements.

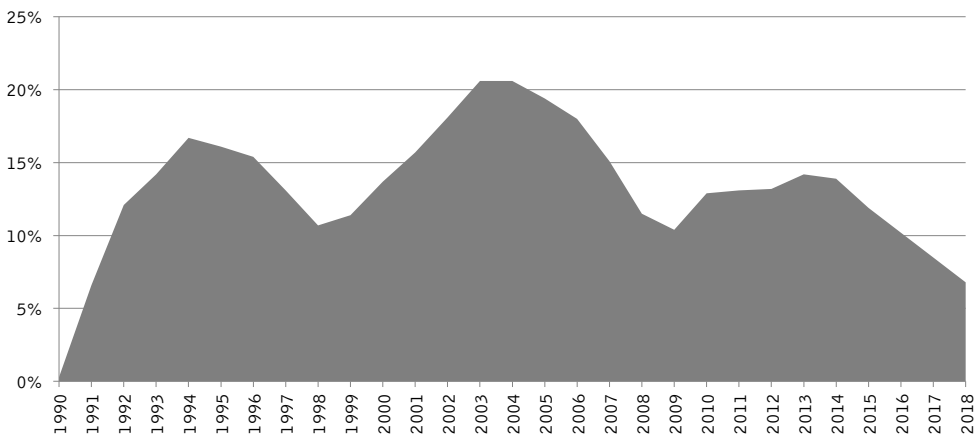
Implementing the reforms, Poland started to share the problems of Western societies, for instance the population reduction. Two trends are considered as the most troubling: low birth rates and population's ageing.

For instance, if in 1990th the European population grew by 0.77%, at the beginning of 2000s it decreased to just 0.5%. Countries such as Latvia and Lithuania lost more than 20% of their population. Poland also joined the UN list of countries the most affected by population reduction. In the 1990s Poland's population grew by 0.66%, at the beginning of 21st century a constantly negative tendency had established itself with a 0.33% average decline. In 2017 the birth rate in Poland fell to 9.5/1000 and death rate grew to 10.4/1000.

The prognosis of population growth made by General Statistics Office in 2014 predicts that if in 2015 Poland had a population of 38 million 419 thousand, by 2035 it will decline to 36 million 477 thousand. The main reason will be low fertility and high death rate – 354 thousand births in 2015, just 274 thousand in 2035, while 387 thousand and 426 thousands will die (*Prognoza ludności*, 2014).

Starting from 2000s, the number of people in productive age had constantly decreased. The baby-boomers generation (800 thousand births per year) goes to retirement, while the generation of 1990s (400 thousands birth per year) enters the labour market or emigrates. Only during 2015–2020 Polish market will lose 590 thousand working age population. By 2030 from 20 million needed to protect economic growth only 16 million will be active, which means employers will have a problem to cover every fifth vacancy. The crisis will affect the sectors of the economy demanding both high and low-skilled workers.

Graph 1. Unemployment rate in Poland, 1990–2018



Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland (data apply to the situation on January each year).

The new reality, when not the unemployment but the lack of human resources is the problem comes quickly. In 2017, 122 thousand work places in Poland were left vacant. The highest number of vacancies was in skilled agriculture, crafts and related trade workers, machine operators (*Popyt na pracę w 2017*, p. 45-46). Polish governments of the last decade try to resolve this problem and offer support for families with children. Civic Platform Party in 2015 prolonged maternity leave from 6 to 12 months, and offered more opportunities for fathers to spend parental leave with their newborns. Law and Justice Party in 2016 started a programme Family 500+, which guarantees 500 PLN (approximately 120 EUR) per month for every family with two and more children. But after 2 years of implementation, Family 500+ rather pushed women from smaller cities and villages to stay at home than to have one more child (*Aktywność zawodowa młodych kobiet spada*, 2018).

Even worth a look is the retirement reform. While Civic Platform increased the retirement age for both men and women to 67, as many of the Western European countries did, Law and Justice reverted it back to the age of 60 for women and 65 for men. This change in 2017 cost the Social Security Fund about 2.5 billion PLN (more than 600 million EUR), and 9 billion PLN in 2018 (more than 2 billion EUR). In the future this amount could grow four-fold.

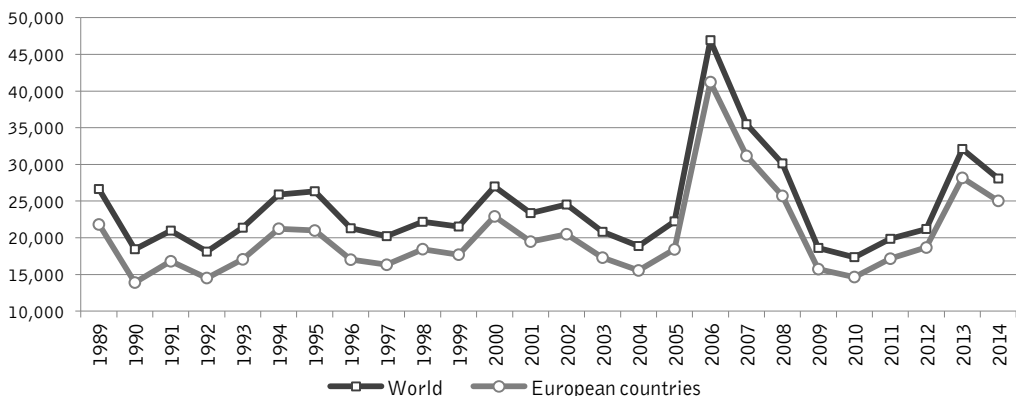
This way, emigration that in the 1990s was considered one of the instruments for fighting unemployment, has in the 2000s become the ground for worries.

3. Emigration from Poland: benefits and costs

Poland's history of emigration started long before 1989. Political elites and aristocracy left the country in XIX Century, Communist repressions caused mass emigration after WWII. Martial law introduced by Wojciech Jaruzelski in 1981 and economic decline in 1980s led 2-2.5 million Poles to emigrate from the country, mainly to Germany, the UK and the US.

Before 1989 emigration was limited by bureaucratic procedures: it was quite hard to receive a passport, not to mention an official permission to leave. All these steps, together with border-crossing cards were canceled shortly after the elections held on June 4th. Visa-free regime signed with the EU members at the beginning of 1990s facilitated short-term labour migration. Every third emigrant chose Germany (Kaczmarczyk, 2014, p. 59). In 1990s, 20 to 25 thousands Poles left the country for permanent residence every year (understood as Polish citizens who registered out of their assigned apartments and gave emigration as a reason).

Graph 2. Emigrants from Poland moved for a permanent residence, 1989–2014



Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland.

Researchers even predicted that Poland would gradually shift from being a major migration-generating country to a country of transit migration and net immigration. But the country's accession to the EU in May 2004 changed the game.

The EU membership meant the free movement of capital and labour. In May 2004, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Sweden opened their labour markets to nationals of Poland. Five more countries: Finland, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain gave the Poles rights of unlimited entry to their markets by 2006. The Netherlands did so in 2007, Belgium and Denmark – in 2009. Germany and Austria waited till mid-2011.

The dismantling of previously existing barriers, such as work permits and quotas caused the unprecedented emigration flow in Poland's modern history. More than a million short-term migrants left Poland only in 2004. In 2011 National Population Census confirmed 2 million emigrated, and in 2016 the numbers exceeded 2.5 million (understood as at least 2-month trips in 2004–2005, and at least 3-month trips in 2010–2016). It is considered that approximately 80% of Polish short-term emigrants stay abroad up to 12 months (*Informacja o rozmiarach i kierunkach czasowej emigracji z Polski w latach 2004 – 2016*, 2017).

The emigrants of a new wave were younger than before – more than 83% of productive age, and better educated – 20% with university diplomas. If in 1990s researchers tracked the existence of "islands" of emigration in Podlaskie, Opolskie or Malopolskie Voivodships, after 2004 emigration flows covered the whole country. Migration became not an extreme, but popular economic strategy. And more than 10 years later Poland remains one of the largest exporters of labour within the enlarged Union (Iglicka, 2010; Kaczmarczyk, 2014, p. 60).

If before the accession the highest number of Poles emigrated to Germany, US and Italy, by 2008 the situation changed – Polish nationals chose the UK first (30% of emigrants), Germany dropped to the second position (22%), and Ireland was placed in the third (12%). The generation born in 1970th-1980s preferred English-speaking countries, which opened their labour markets immediately after accession, while older people with emigration background chose continental Europe.

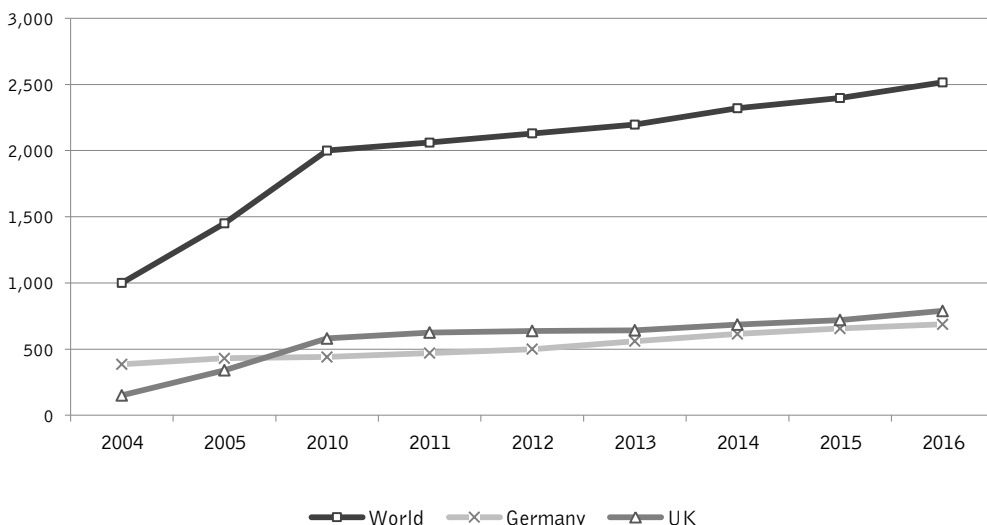
The UK offered jobs mostly in production, the construction sector and services – hotels and gastronomy. In Germany Poles worked in agriculture and production. Ireland attracted those who wanted to work in services, the Netherlands – agriculture and logistics.

Polish emigration to the UK, which today accounts for more than 800 thousands became the most important social phenomenon. "Polish statistics suggest a more 'elite' flow to the UK than to other countries. The UK census offers a picture of a maturing settled population, still tending to occupy relatively lower skilled jobs but showing evidence of upward social mobility" (Okólski, 2014). If in 2004 – 2005 Poles were mainly seasonal and short-term migrants, in 2016 20% of Polish citizens living in the UK had the permanent residence certificate, and 20% had declared a 5-year emigration history.

The strongest process of emigrants' settlement in host countries had a strong impact on Poland's economy and demography. Changes in the nature of Polish emigration could be followed by the volumes of money transfers. By 2007 remittances grew and achieved the record 5 billion EUR, but starting from 2009 permanent decrease was observed, and during the last years emigrants transferred approximately 4 billion EUR per year. In 2016 just 28.9% of Poles living in Ireland declared they transferred money home, 34.2% in the UK. In Germany and the Netherlands the share is 37.2% and 36.7%, respectively. This doesn't mean that Poles are necessarily earning less, it rather means the emigrants who were earlier sending money home hoping to come back one day decided to bring their spouses and children with them (Chmielewska, 2015, pp. 15-16).

In the short-term perspective emigration had positive effects: the number of unemployed people decreased from 3.2 to 1.8 million during the first five years after accession. But from 2010s the long-term consequences, for instance the reduction of working age population, started to be felt. Instead of being a cure for high unemployment, emigration became a threat for national economic growth.

Graph 3. Short-term emigration from Poland, 2004–2016



Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland.

Recently the National Bank of Poland asked emigrants what could persuade them to come back. The answer was – minimum regular net incomes of 5000 PLN (more than 1200 EUR) (Chmielewska, 2018, pp. 14-17). According to Eurostat, the average salary in Poland in 2014 reached 678 EUR net, which gave the country the 23rd place in the EU-28 ranking. In 2018 the country already holds 22nd position with 784 EUR net. This is 1.5 times higher than in Bulgaria with 457 EUR, but still less than in Czech Republic – 932 EUR. In neighbouring Germany average wage this year is three times higher – 2,270 EUR. Nevertheless even if the Polish economy in 2010s feels good, the difference in incomes still pushes people to leave.

At the end of 2016, 2.515 million Poles lived abroad, including 2.094 million in the EU countries, which is 118 thousand more than in 2015. The most sizeable Polish communities include the UK – 788 thousand, Germany with 687 thousand, the Netherlands – 116 thousand, and Ireland 112 thousand. In comparison to 2015, the Polish diaspora grew in all countries, excluding Southern Europe: Italy, Spain and Greece.

The direct impact of emigration on Poland's population and labour is not so harmful. Even if no Poles emigrated since 1980, the proportion of old persons in population dropped only by 1.1%. But emigration brings with it a powerful indirect effect – loss of approximately 10% of births most recently. Along with the low fertility rate, it harms the national economy strongly (Fihel, 2018). In such circumstances the Polish authorities are fated to immigration.

4. Immigration to Poland: from a marginal issue to powerful labour market factor

Even just a couple of years ago Poles didn't consider their country as a popular immigration destination. In 1990s Poland attracted a limited number of Ukrainian, Belorussian, Vietnamese short-time workers; in the 2000s short-time immigration became more intensive, immigrant community grew but didn't exceed several tens of thousands. The situation changes radically in the 2010s, when the liberalisation of migration law, new instruments of employment legalisation and economic decline in the Eastern Partnership countries boosted Poland's immigration potential. However the largest cohorts of migrants in Poland are seasonal and short-term workers, as the country is approaching a moment when immigration will catch up with emigration. Of course, if Poland's western neighbours, especially Germany will not "steal" the new inhabitants.

After 1989, the Polish government struggled with high unemployment rate, and although in the 1990s Poland had visa-free regime with more than 60 countries, labour immigration was not welcome. Warsaw did not create a quota system, but the legislation regulating the employment of foreigners made mid and long-term legal migration overcomplicated. All the restrictions were explained by security protection and European integration (*Polityka migracyjna Polski*, 1998, pp. 4-6).

Migrants who wanted to work in Poland needed to obtain working visa for maximum one year. For those who wished to stay longer the Foreigners Act 1997 introduced residence permits system. The permits were issued for maximum 2 years, but could be prolonged even for 10 years. After 3 years a holder could apply for a permanent residence permit.

The criteria for applicants were restricted: registration at the residence address, labour market tests (the need on the part of the employer to prove that there was no Polish citizen candidate for the vacancy). Applying for work and residence permit was divided into two separate procedures (Matkowska, 2011, pp. 86-88). This way, during 1998–2000 almost 37 thousands foreigners received temporary residence permits in Poland, and less than 1.5 thousand – permanent residence permits (*Dane liczbowe dotyczące złożonych w latach 1998–2000 wniosków*, 2000).

The work permit statistics also looked modest: from 1990 to 1997, Polish authorities issued only 87 thousands work permits, approximately 11 thousand per year. 17% were given to Ukrainian citizens, 14% to Belorussian, 12% to Russian, and less than 10% to Vietnamese. Symptomatically 31% of the permits were received by foreigners who applied as managers, and 29% as those who applied as physical workers. Among the last group, 30% worked in trade and gastronomy. Foreigner participation in the labour market was limited to fractions of a percent. But even these numbers were considered as a strong immigration flow (*Polityka migracyjna Polski*, 1998, pp. 10-11).

When mid-term and long-term migration was limited, even hundreds of thousands of short-term migrants could work in Poland in the 1990s. Mostly Ukrainians and Belorussians, they didn't need a visa to come to Poland, so they worked illegally for 1 to 3 months. On the one hand, neither Polish employers nor migrants were interested in signing the employment contracts, on the other – current legislation made the legalisation of such kind of short-term work impossible (*Polityka migracyjna Polski*, 1998, s. 33-34).

In the early 2000s, in order to meet the EU and Schengen zone accession criteria Polish government made short-term immigration more difficult: in 2000 Poland started to introduce visa requirements to third country nationals and since 2003 the citizens of Ukraine, Russia and Belarus were

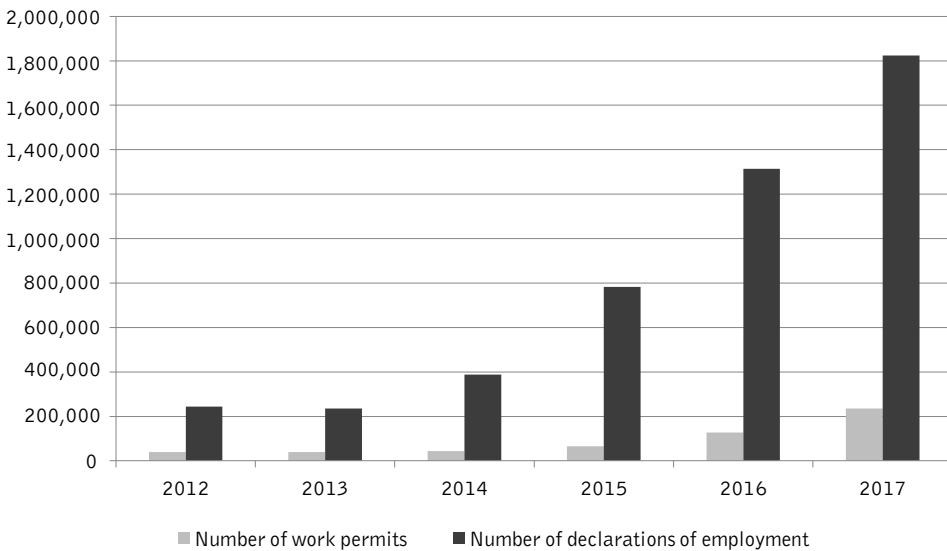
obliged to have a valid visa to cross the border. Starting from December 2007 when Poland entered the Schengen zone the visa requirements were unified with the Western European states.

The issue of non-legalised migration was salient in the 1990s and the early 2000s. Thousands of migrants, mostly from Ukraine, came to Poland using the visa-free regime, or using tourist visa after 2003, found a job and did not legalise it – firstly because of formal restrictions and low incomes, but also out of fear of deportation. To resolve this issue, Poland launched three abolition campaigns in 2003, 2007 and 2012. The last one gave the opportunity to 4.5 thousand migrants (out of 9.5 thousands who applied) to legalise their status (Grot, 2013).

The demographic consequences of EU accession began to change the minds of officials on immigration. During a couple of years Poland began to feel the lack of physical and seasonal workers: the Poles preferred to find similar jobs in Western or Northern European countries. Polish business started to lobby for open doors at least for short-term legal immigration.

The liberalisation started with the labour market. In 2011 the Polish government launched a new instrument of labour and migration policy, which cardinally changed the immigration after EU accession. Along with work permits, which were complicated to obtain, the nationals of 6 countries: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Russia received the right to work legally in Poland using employer’s declaration of intention to hire a foreigner.

Graph 4. Work permits and declarations of employment issued by Polish authorities, 2012–2017



Source: Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Policy of Poland.

Besides the list of limited countries, declarations differed from work permits in two ways: there was no process of application, the employer simply registered the declaration at a local labour office which made the declaration valid, and a declaration could be issued maximum for 6 months without an option to be prolonged.

Launching of this instrument facilitated the process of employment of seasonal and short-term workers coming from neighbouring countries that was extremely important for Polish farmers who couldn't wait for months for work permits. When Poland built the large number of sporting venues and infrastructure before Euro-2012, the construction sector started to use declarations more actively. Migrants received the legal possibility to obtain national visa of D category and sign short-term contracts. Already in 2012 the number of declarations issued exceeded 240 thousand, and in 2014 came close to 390 thousand.

Declarations enlivened Poland's labour market and limited the gray zone. Although the structure of immigration to Poland has changed in recent years, declarations remain the main form of legalisation of migrants' work. However, till 2017 declarations weren't considered as a permanent instrument of labour and migration policy – each year the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Policy prolonged the existence of this practice. Only in July 2017 declarations were included in the Employment Act as a regular instrument.

Year 2017 saw a record number of more than 1.8 million declarations issued for foreign citizens, 95% for Ukrainians. But this data should not be interpreted as an exact number of immigrants in Poland (Brunarska, 2017). Firstly, till January 1, 2018 the number of declarations issued for one foreigner was unlimited. In practice, Polish employers registered 5-6 declarations to hire one worker. Secondly, there were no sanctions for foreigners who received the declaration but didn't use it, or who received visa and then moved to another employer.

The reviewed Employment Act combats such practices: the registration of a declaration now requires more information about worker and employer, and comes in two steps – Internet application form and paper documents submission. These changes led to a decrease of the number of declarations issued by Polish authorities in 2018: 820 thousand during the first half of the year, 13% less than during the same period of 2017. But this does not mean that fewer immigrants work in Poland, it just means that the instruments of short-time immigration legalisation are more under control.

It could be said that the story of immigration to Poland is mainly the story of Ukrainian immigration. Because of intense inflow of Ukrainians in 2015–2017 the structure of immigration in Poland changed to encompass also mid and long-term groups.

Starting from 1991, Ukrainians, especially those from Galicia (historic region in the Western part of Ukraine, near the border with Poland), looked for a jobs in Western and Southern Europe. While Poland in the 1990s attracted short-time workers, Ukrainians who wished to stay and work longer moved to Italy, Spain and Portugal, often using tourist visas. While Russia was the primary country for Ukrainian migrants till 2016, the second changed from Italy to Czech Republic and – at the end of the 2000s – to Poland.

According to the survey conducted by the Ukrainian human resources company ANCOR and Robota.ua website, in April 2013 already 23% of specialists and managers were ready to come to Poland for work. In comparison, 63% wanted to go to Russia, 14% to Canada, 13% to Germany and 11% to the Czech Republic. If between 2005 and 2008 there were 118 thousands Ukrainian migrants in Poland (both mid and long-term), between 2010 and 2012 this figure had risen to 168 thousand. What's more, Ukrainian migration had a woman's face – in 2012, 11 thousands of 17 thousands residence permits held by Ukrainians belonged to women. 60% of Ukrainian migrants declared full secondary school education and 12% – higher education (Jaroszewicz, 2013).

Ukrainian migration to Poland received a new impulse in 2014 when the deterioration of economic situation triggered by the military conflict (7% GDP drop, devaluation of incomes), pushed hundreds of thousands people to look for a job abroad. And Poland became an optimal solution: geographically close, Poland was less affected by the global economic crisis, and had the reputation of a country accessible for legal migration.

Ukrainian migrants of this new wave work not only in agricultural sector and construction, but massively take jobs in services, gastronomy, and production. And they become more interested in mid and long-term migration: if in 2013 only 10,489 Ukrainian citizens applied for short-term residence permits in Poland, in 2014 these numbers increased to 23,391. In 2015 the Voivodships' Offices received 58,744 applications, in 2016 87,936, in 2017 11,2903. Until 1 September 2018, a total of 87,770 applications from Ukrainians were already registered.

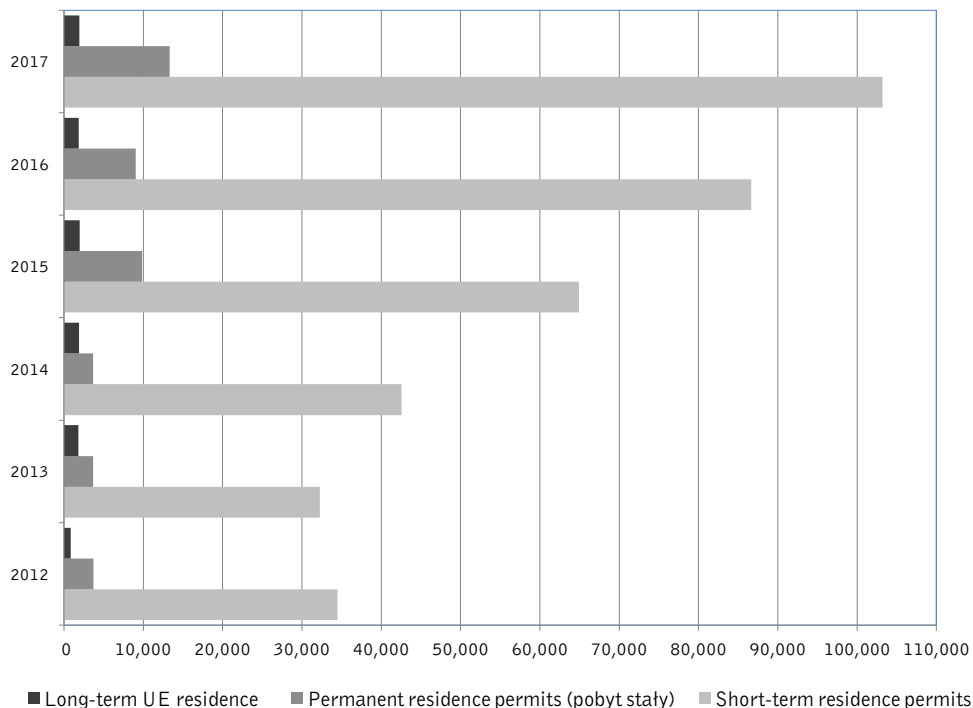
In 2017, along with 1.8 million declarations of foreigners' employment, 235 thousand of work permits were issued. Thus in 2018, 21% of Polish businessmen hired migrants from Ukraine and 8% from Belarus. In big companies, the rate of immigrants' employment was even higher – 39% (*Barometr migracji zarobkowej*, 2018, p. 21).

The introduction of visa-free regime for Ukrainian citizens launched in June 2017 was a game changer. The European Commission document granted Ukrainian holders of biometric passports the right to travel to the Schengen zone without obtaining a visa for a period of 90 days every 180 days. The purpose of the visit could be tourism, business or visits to relatives. At the same time Poland's national legislation allows all the foreigners who visit the country using visa-free regime to work legally for 90 days if obtaining a work permit or declaration of employment. In 2017 – 2018 both Polish businesses and Ukrainians have used this option intensively. As EWL Group poll had shown, about 25% of Ukrainians who worked in Poland in the summer of 2018 already used this possibility. For instance, in 2018 the number of visas issued by Polish consulates decreased, at the same time the number of Ukrainians working in Poland remains the same (*Zniesienie obowiązku wizowego wobec obywateli Ukrainy*, 2017; *Ukraińcy na polskim rynku pracy*, 2018, pp. 8-9).

This way, immigrants who previously played a marginal role in Poland's labour market became an irreplaceable part of the mainstream workforce. The high number of foreigners living in Poland which was seen as a threat by the officials 20 years ago, today becomes a goal of Polish migration policy. And based on prognosis by Polish economists, even intensive Ukrainian migration is not enough to cover the needs of the labour market. Warsaw should look for immigrants outside of Europe. In June 2018, *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna* daily referring to its sources in the Ministry of Development announced that Poland's government planned to look for workers in Vietnam and the Philippines. Officials considered inviting thousands from South East Asia to work in production and services. Actually, more visas and work permits for citizens of India, Pakistan and Nepal have already been issued (Osiecki, 2018). This means that Polish politicians de-facto abandon a conception popular during the previous years, which proclaimed "yes" to migration, but only from "culturally close countries"¹⁰⁴.

104 As of December 2018, Poland's government didn't adopt these ambitious changes. Law and Justice party decided not to accept new migration policy before 2019 parliamentary elections. The government is afraid to lose the votes to radical right political movements. At the same time, the number of work permits given to citizens of Southern and Eastern Asian countries grows constantly: in 2018 citizens of India received more work permits than citizens of Moldova, while in Masovian Voivodship immigrants from Bangladesh received as many work permits, as immigrants from Belarus (*Zezwolenia na pracę dla cudzoziemców w Polsce*, 2017; Otto, 2018).

Graph 5. Residence permits issued by Voivoda's Offices, 2012–2017



Source: The Office for Foreigners in Poland.

In total, at the beginning of November 2018, 366 thousand foreigners held valid residence permits in Poland. Almost half of them – 175 thousand – were Ukrainians. These people can be considered as mid and long-term immigrant population in Poland. The highest number of 114 thousand lived in the Masovian Voivodship, 35 thousands in Malopolska, 31 thousand in Lower Silesia. Less than 1/3 of the permits holders (140 thousand) were women. The largest age group (113 thousands) is 20-29.

Long-term migration remains crucial from the perspective of demographics. And here the numbers look rather modest. In 2017, just 11 thousand Ukrainians applied for permanent residence permit and 1.6 thousand for long-term EU residency (*Raport na temat obywateli Ukrainy, wg stanu na dzień 31.07.2018*, pp. 6-7). At the beginning of November, only 12,930 foreigners, including 4,123 Ukrainians held long-term EU residence status in Poland.

Partially, this could be explained by the fact that even people who have lived in Poland for years still couldn't apply for long-term permits because of unstable character of employment. The other explanation is that foreigners still consider Poland only as a place for better-paid temporary work, not a new home. Thus, a permanent Ukrainian diaspora in Poland remains limited.

The changes and challenges, which appeared recently made the conceptualising of Poland's migration policy more important than ever before.

5. The failure story of repatriation

While Polish authorities were skeptical towards labour immigrants in the 1990s, the repatriates were welcomed since 1989. The topic of repatriation – a state funded action of getting back home those Poles who were deported by the Soviet Union mostly to Siberia and Kazakhstan in the 1940s and 1950s arose already during the 1991 parliamentary elections campaign. In the 1990s, politicians from all parties stressed the need to take care of “Poles from the East”, because it is “a moral duty and obligation” of independent, democratic state (Lesińska, 2016, pp. 16-17). The number of ethnic Poles who could become candidates for repatriation was estimated between 200 thousand to 1.5 million.

The Principles of Repatriation Policy were adopted on May 14th, 1996, and largely explained in Repatriation Act from November 9th, 2000 (*Ustawa o repatriacji*, 2000). It was proclaimed that persons of Polish origin who permanently lived in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the Asian part of Russia before 2001 could obtain Polish citizenship via repatriation. Polish origin was understood as Polish nationality of at least one of the parents, one of the grandparents or two of the great-grandparents, and vivid links to Polishness (polskość). The Polish origin should be attested to by a consul who, following the approval from the Ministry of the Interior, could issue a special repatriation visa also for applicant’s spouse and children. The Polish government, together with local government institutions, takes responsibility and helps those repatriated to find housing and employment as well as to improve the language skills after moving to Poland.

Eventually, the high cost of the repatriation programme caused its failure. Although all successive governments had declared repatriation as a priority, only 5 thousands ethnic Poles moved to the country of their ancestors using the repatriation procedure as of the end of 2017. The reasons why the repatriation process is sluggish were thoroughly analysed by the Supreme Chamber of Control (NIK) in 2014. The repatriation process wasn’t properly financed from the budget, the responsibility for repatriates was shared between Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy¹⁰⁵. Local communities had no state support when looking for housing and job offers for new citizens. Above all, Polish consulates abroad did very little to promote the repatriation. Poland’s administration spent too much time studying every application, the waiting period for repatriation visa is over 2 years, but cases when the applicants waited for 10 years also were known. For example, in 2007 243 Poles came to the country as repatriation programme participants, and 1,476 received positive answer on repatriation visa but couldn’t come. In 2013 the Ministry of the Interior calculated that in order to bring all approved repatriates into the country 16 years are needed (NIK o repatriacji, 2014).

Furthermore, starting from 2005, the policy priorities shifted from repatriation to return migration. The Civic Platform government in 2007–2015 focused on the initiatives promoting the cooperation with Poles who moved to the EU and the US. Since the Law and Justice government, which took office in November 2015, promised to overcome the deadlock in the repatriation process, new ordinances from Foreign and Interior Ministers were issued in 2017, but they also failed to affect the situation in a significant way: when in 2016 a total of 282 persons came to Poland on repatriation visa, in 2017 these numbers grew to 525 (34 thousands people live in Kazakhstan and 47 thousands in

105 In 2018 Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Policy.

Russia with declared Polish nationality). In 2018 the situation remains the same – 2.7 thousands people are registered in the RODAK system as Poles awaiting repatriation (Kozubal, 2018).

Summing up, Polish repatriation programme was active in early 1990s, later it was in fact wound down because of high costs of the reparation process. The moral duty was overshadowed by the interests of the labour market, which needed young working hands and not the elderly keepers of tradition.

6. The success story of Pole's Card

The idea to issue the Pole's Card (Karta Polaka) – a document confirming the foreign citizen's Polish origin – appeared in the late 1990s. In 1999, the Senate issued a draft law, but the idea lost popularity because of critical evaluation by Jerzy Buzek's government and the Committee for European Integration. The second attempt made in 2007 succeeded – the Law and Justice government's project was adopted by the parliament and the Pole's Card Act came into force in March 2008 (*Ustawa o Karcie Polaka, 2007*).

The rules for Pole's Card granting remain unchanged: the applicant must be a citizen of one of 15 post-Soviet republics, declare Polish ethnicity, consider Polish as the native language, know and cultivate Polish traditions, and document Polish origin understood as Polish nationality or citizenship of one of the parents, one of the grandparents or two great-grandparents. The Card is issued by Polish consulates, where the consul cross-examines the applicant's knowledge of language and traditions. As an alternative to Polish ethnic origin, the applicant could prove his engagement in the local Polish community life during at least three years.

The Pole's Card was intended as a symbolic gratification for ethnic Poles living in the post-Soviet space, who will not become repatriates, but who want to be in touch with the Polish culture and get to know the country of their ancestors. So the basic Cardholder's entitlements were free Polish visa, discount for travel by rail, free entry to museums. Those who wanted to stay longer in the country obtained the right for free university education and the ability to work without a permit. Nevertheless immigration by Pole's Card holders wasn't encouraged: the Card didn't give any preferences when applying for residence permit or Polish citizenship. However in the 1990s about 10% of short and long-term immigrants to Poland declared Polish origin (*Polityka migracyjna Polski, 1998, p. 35*).

Until 2018, Polish consulates issued more than 200 thousand Pole's Cards, 90% of them to Ukrainian and Belorussian citizens. The highest interest in this document had been shown after its launch, and during the recent years, because currently the Pole's Card owners are privileged migrants in Poland. From the instrument of cultural policy, the Card has become an instrument of migration policy.

Firstly, in 2013 the Card holders received the right to apply for a permanent residence permit in Poland immediately upon arrival. Secondly, in 2016 those who held Pole's Card and decided to move to Poland could apply for citizenship after a year of settlement. For regular labour migrants this procedure lasts at least 8 years (*Ustawa o obywatelstwie polskim, 2009*). This way, receiving Pole's Card today has become the shortest way to obtain EU citizenship, other than using the repatriation procedure.

Last but not least, the Cardholders receive financial aid from the state for every family member during the first year of immigration. Even though the dedicated funds are not sufficient – in the Masovian Voivodship in 2017 the yearly budget was already spent by March – the offer looks more than attractive for Poland's eastern neighbours. Especially so given that after receiving a Polish pass-

port, the new citizens, who did not have the experience of deep integration could easily move to other EU member state and work there without a permit.

7. International protection: does Poland honour its commitments?

From 2015 on Poland along with Hungary has been considered as a state with the most restrictive asylum policy in the EU. When neighbouring Germany accepted more than 700 hundred thousands of refugees in 2016 and almost 300 hundred thousand in 2017, in Poland as of November 2018 only 1,365 foreigners had a refugee status. 288 more obtained tolerated residence permit, 2,000 – residence permit for humanitarian reasons and 2,020 had subsidiary protection status (*Mapy i dane statystyczne imigrantów i służb migracyjnych Polski*, 2018). When human rights defenders blame Law and Justice government for these statistics, it should be noted than even before Poland positively reviewed only 1% of foreigners' applications for refugee status.

Poland started to harmonise its asylum law with Western European practices in the early 1990s: in 1991 Warsaw signed the Geneva Convention of 1951 and the New York Protocol of 1967. These fundamental principles were incorporated into Foreigners Act of 1997 and its newest version in 2013. Any foreigner could apply for international protection at Border Guards offices when crossing Poland's border. Next the asylum-seeker would be guaranteed a transfer to a reception camp for the necessary medical tests. At this moment, the foreigner could ask for family reunion. What follows is a placement in a refugee camp, where meals, medical care are provided, along with Polish language courses. Alternatively, the refugee can opt to live out of camp. In such a case, he or she should rent a flat and cover language courses independently, using limited state financial assistance.

In the 1990s asylum seekers who came to Poland used it mostly as a transit country. Up until the mid-1990s, Polish authorities received just couple of hundreds applications per year, but the situation changed with the beginning of Chechnya war: in 1995 a total of 843 people applied for international protection, while in 1996 the numbers grew to 3,205. Applicants often didn't wait for a decision on their cases, but moved to Germany, France or the Netherlands (*Polityka migracyjna Polski*, 1998, p. 9).

The number of applicants for international protection in Poland rose still more after the EU accession. During 2007–2017, almost 106 thousand foreigners applied for international protection when crossing Polish border. The largest groups were Russian citizens, including Chechens – more than 75 thousand, with peak of 9,239 in 2007 and 12,848 in 2013. The second group were Georgian citizens with almost 13 thousands applications. Ukrainians occupied the third place with approximately 7 thousand cases, with a majority – 90% of applications registered in 2014–2016. Hence the profile of applicants: political – people who disagree with the policy of self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk "People's Republics" authorities Crimean – Tatars and Ukrainians who left the peninsula after Russian annexation; Eastern Ukrainian – people affected by Donbas war, young men who avoided military service and the so-called economic refugees (*Napływ cudzoziemców ubiegających się o objęcie ochroną międzynarodową do Polski*, 2015; *Raport na temat obywateli Ukrainy*, 2018).

Only 1,850 applicants received refugee status in 2007–2017. Additionally, 4.8 thousand received subsidiary protection, almost 6 thousand – a tolerated residence permit. This means that 9 of 10 applications were refused – one of the highest rate of rejection in the EU. Besides the low acceptance rate, a problem of long procedures persists – the average duration is 14 months instead of 6. During this time foreigners have limited access to integration initiatives, which affects negatively their adaptation to Polish society.

Up until 2015, refugees remained a marginal topic in Poland. However, the situation changed with the beginning of the EU immigration crisis. Although the main flow of asylum seekers fell on Greece, Italy and Germany, the crisis became a hot topic in the parliamentary campaign. While the Civil Platform generally agreed with the relocation programme adopted by member states in September 2015, Law and Justice decisively rejected the idea. The party of Jaroslaw Kaczynski convinced its supporters that people coming to Europe are not refugees, but economic immigrants, and that this Muslim immigration will sweep away Polish traditional values. Propaganda reached its goal: if in spring of 2015 72% of Poles were willing to accept refugees from countries affected by military conflicts, in February 2016 this figure fell to 39% (*Stosunek Polaków do uchodźców*, 2017).

Law and Justice government still refuses to take part in refugee relocation programme, even if facing the sanctions procedure initiated by European Commission. "The blood-drenched harrowing of the war, followed by post-war border shifts and ethnic cleansing, created a racially pure Poland for the first time in history – fulfilling the dreams of earlier generations of extreme nationalists. Despite being in the EU, there's little appetite in Poland to create a West-European style multi-ethnic society", – explained journalist Jan Cienski (Cienski, 2017). Polish leaders try to justify refusing to accept refugees from Middle East and North Africa by the story about "Ukrainian refugees".

In January 2016, speaking to the European Parliament, Prime Minister Beata Szydło said that Poland could not receive 10 thousand Syrians because we have already received "one million refugees from Ukraine". Szydło had essentially classified all the citizens of Ukraine who received Polish visas or residence permits over the previous year as asylum-seekers. Later other Polish politicians — Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski, Interior Minister Mariusz Blaszczak — repeated the "arguments" about "one, one and a half, or two millions of refugees from Ukraine".

Law and Justice constantly and deliberately confuses the terms of immigrant and refugee. For instance, Senator Anna Maria Anders in an opinion for The Washington Times explained her country's policy: "Poles have opened their doors to refugees nobody else in Europe wants: Ukrainians, displaced by Europe's own war. No other country has even acknowledged them. More than one million Ukrainians fleeing Russian aggression have found safety here. Poles believe it is for them to decide whom they invite, and that Europe should protect its borders" (Anders, 2018). In reality, since 2014 less than hundred Ukrainian citizens received refugee status in Poland.

Blurring of the concepts of refugee and immigrant is not harmless. Firstly, it prevents Poles from being able to assess adequately who the foreigners living next to them are. Secondly, it devalues the role of labour migrants who pay taxes and contribute to economic development. Thirdly, taking officially an anti-immigration position and at the same time inviting foreign workers to the country, Law and Justice flames far right xenophobic sentiments. The tensions could be reduced by a comprehensive migration policy. But that brings the point painfully close to home – Poland's problem with migration.

8. Undefined migration policy

Migration policy is a catalog of instruments created by state and its institutions to manage both emigration and immigration flows, including labour migration, repatriation, asylum granting. Relevant and effective migration policy requires conceptualisation. During the last 29 years Poland adopted a migration policy doctrine just once, in 2012. And even this document was canceled in 2016. This means that the Polish state has no clear vision of how to build cooperation with emi-

grants, how many and what kind of immigrants to host, and how to integrate the newcomers, including repatriates and refugees. Furthermore, the lack of official migration policy hinders public debate and civil society activities.

Poland's attitude towards migrations from 1989 to 2005 was conservative and restrictive. The academic and political debate was affected by two main factors: painful consequences of economic reforms and the timeline for European integration. First attempts to create a migration policy concept go back to late 1990s. Even the brief overview of academic papers written in those years shows that the was affected by unemployment to such a degree that the main idea of migration policy was to let go those Poles who wanted to emigrate and restrict the access of foreigners to local labour market (*Polityka migracyjna Polski*, 1998, p. 7).

Whereas migration from EU and US was considered as leading to positive results, migration from former USSR countries, Bulgaria and Romania – as leading to negative results, because of security reasons and risk of illegal employment. That is why so much attention was paid to combating illegal migration, readmission, migrant selection from "safe" and "unsafe" countries. Even a small number of foreign students who came to Polish universities and wished to stay, were considered as an unwelcome consequence.

The debate led to the new Foreigners Act adoption in 1997 (before that the law from 1963 applied). The draft law was prepared by the Ministry of the Interior. The Act set restrictive criteria for residence permit applicants, making mid and long-term labour migration more difficult. The lack of instruments left short-term labour migrants in a gray zone.

The second period of migration conceptualisation started in 2005. This time, the strategy was changed from restrictive to adaptive. Mass emigration after accession to the EU pushed the Polish government to switch the attention from the Poles living in the East to Poles who have moved to the west. In 2006 an Inter-Departmental Group on Polonia and Poles living abroad was created, and in 2007 Programme of cooperation with Poles living abroad was announced (Lesińska, 2016, p. 21). The Programme addressed just very basic needs of new emigrants, such as language teaching and consular assistance, but outlined the existing problems.

Moreover, Poland's authorities, following the demands of the business sector became more open to short-term immigration. Following the initial restrictions implemented in 2007 when Poland entered the Schengen zone, in 2011 the government made declarations to bring in more foreign workers, thus increasing the numbers of labour immigrants.

An important role in regulating Poland's immigration policy was played by Brussels, which demanded to harmonise Polish legislation according to the EU practices. A new Inter-Departmental Group on Migration was created, besides representatives of ministries for the first time including two members of NGOs working with migrants. As a result, a Migration Policy Concept was adopted by Council of Ministers on July 31, 2012. The Concept evaluated previous Poland's activities, promised the facilitation of legalisation procedures, consolidation of the institutions responsible for migration policy, clarification which categories of immigrants will have preferences for settlement in Poland, and making an emphasis on integration attempts.

The following groups were identified as the most welcomed immigrants: people of Polish origin, students, Polish university graduates, scientists, businessmen, and the citizens of other EU member states. They as well as refugees were promised large number of integration activities, with special emphasis on immigrants' children. Moreover, the Concept even hinted at the possibility that immigrants could vote in local elections.

For emigrants the Concept envisaged an information campaign on the opportunities to run a business in Poland, for those who didn't want to come back – assistance in contact with families. Warsaw also planned to combat the “Polish plumber” stereotype abroad, as well as other discrimination practices.

These promising ideas were reflected in new legislation. Foreigners Act from December 12, 2013 made Poland one of the most liberal countries in the EU in terms of granting of short-term residence and work permits. Foreigners were given the possibility to apply for residence and work permit within one procedure at Voivoda's Offices. The temporary residence permit is given to immigrants who could prove their purpose to stay in Poland for more than 3 months: work, studies or reunion with family, and could be issued for up to 3 years. The application for residence permit could be submitted even at the last day of legal stay in the country. Polish university graduates, Pole's Card holders have a right to work without permit. Moreover, a minimum amount the foreigner should earn to receive a residence permit is not linked to the average salary in concrete municipality, which is a typical challenge to non-EU migrants willing to stay in Brussels, Paris or Amsterdam.

The Act of 2013 introduced two types of permanent residence permits: permanent residence itself, which could be given to ethnic Poles, Pole's Card holders and spouses of Polish citizens, and long-term EU residence for the migrants who stayed in Poland at least during the previous 5 years, and at least during the last 3 years had legally worked. The launching of EU resident status for the first time since 1989 gave the labour migrant a possibility of long-term legalisation.

Citizenship Act of 2012 facilitated the naturalisation procedure: permanent residence permit holders could apply for a Polish passport after 2 years, EU permanent residence holders – after 3 years. Above all, Poland stopped to require from foreigners to give up their first citizenship before application.

These innovations, elaborated later in the Employment Act, had made the life of both immigrants and employers easier. But more ambitious Concept's pronouncements in the direction of opening up the society were never implemented. The initiatives of the Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Policy remained uncoordinated, and all the integration activities were made the responsibility of NGOs. Finally, just in a couple of years, the 2012 Concept was challenged by market and international affairs – the record low unemployment and war in Ukraine.

2015 marked a pivot in Poland's attitude to migration. The first time in the recent Polish history, the topic of migration turned from marginal to mainstream. The official impulse came with the EU immigration crisis, which affected Southern Europe. Although in case of Poland, no Muslims but thousands of Ukrainians, not refugees but labour migrants came that year. Regardless of the record number of foreigners coming, Minister of the Interior Mariusz Blaszczak canceled the Migration Policy Concept in October 2016.

In February 2017 the Ministry of Development announced that it would be responsible for developing a new concept. The principles of new migration policy were announced in March 2018. They weren't much different than the previous ones, but signaled the state's more active position: the labour market needs are the key, support for employers who are looking for staff abroad, benefits for the Poles living abroad and foreigners with the qualifications needed, promotion of studies in Poland and more attention to integration (*Nowe priorytety rządowej polityki migracyjnej*, 2018).

First, the Ministry declared that the full text will be announced in June, but still in November 2018 it has not been presented to a broader audience. Moreover, the coordinator of the working group, deputy-minister Pawel Chorąży was fired by Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki. The reason was right-wing politicians' reactions to Chorąży's words that Warsaw should focus on attracting new

immigrants, because repatriation and emigrants' returns are not enough to satisfy the labour market needs. This statement was considered as too liberal and misrepresenting the government's intentions.

The situation described above illustrates the fundamental change: during the last three years intensive migration discourse in Poland – firstly concentrated on Muslim refugees, next on the labour migrants from Ukraine – shaped the new reality, where the voters will constantly ask politicians what they want to do with migration.

Law and Justice government led firstly by Beata Szydło, next by Mateusz Morawiecki on the one hand has been making Eurosceptic and anti-immigrant statements, and on the other has declared the desire to invite more migrants.

“Not so long ago the same party refused to receive refugees from the Middle East and Africa, explaining that many of them are not refugees but labour migrants. Does this mean that during several months Poland switched from the country, which doesn't need foreign workers to the country, which looks for them actively? Is Law and Justice afraid to tell the truth ahead of the forthcoming elections? [...] We are facing highly dangerous paradox: on the one hand, the government opens the door for labour migrants wide, on the other uses anti-immigrant rhetoric for the newcomers from other parts of the world. And warns of... fatal consequences of migration!” – *Kultura Liberalna* Internet-magazine stressed how hard it is to grasp Law and Justice migration policy (*Polityka migracyjna PiS*, 2018).

Actually, the current government did not open the doors wider. It just kept in force the acts adopted before, following the business interests (during the amendment of Employment Act in 2017 the quota system for labour migrants was added, but the mechanism is not precise and requires additional ministerial input (*Ustawa o promocji zatrudnienia*, 2018)). The main problem seen today is that Poland's ruling party cannot communicate its migration initiatives to the electorate without the risk of losing it to the far right.

9. Challenges and prospects

Summing up, in the 1990s Poland prevented immigration, with the exception of repatriation, and treated emigration as an instrument of reducing unemployment. Next, after the 2004–2005 wave of emigration the government started to compensate the needs of labour market with short-term migrants from neighbouring countries. Finally, the economic boom accompanied by the demographic crisis and aging population pushed Poland to look for mid and long-term migrants even outside of Eastern Europe. While the governmental strategies, administrative and legislative practices had been changing, politicians still did not catch on how to formulate effective long-term migration policy, and what is more disturbing – communicate it to citizens.

During the last four years the gap between emigration and immigration in Poland is narrowing. The existing differences in incomes and level of social security protection in Poland and Western Europe suggest that the current emigration trends will continue for some time. The emigrants, especially mid and long-term do not have the financial motivation to change residency. Last but not least, Poland's demography is affected by low birth rates more than by emigration,

This situation pushes Warsaw to intensify the efforts to attract more immigrants. If ten years ago the essence of Polish migration policy was promotion of intense, but short-term migration from neighbouring countries, mainly Ukraine, today the focus changes to the promotion of mid and long-term migration from Ukraine and EaP countries, as well as from Asia: India, Pakistan, Nepal, the Philippines, Vietnam. Poland wants immigrants not just to be the source of cheap labour, which fills

the occasional gap on the labour market, but permanent workers who will shore up the Social Security Fund suffering from the aging of the local population.

Polish Entrepreneurs and Employers Union in 2016 predicted that the country needs 5 million workers by 2030 if it wants to keep the current pace of development. Inviting immigrants becomes not an act of mercy, which is how Law and Justice government often describes it, but the fulfillment of vital economic needs. In this case Poland faces two main challenges: integration of migrants who have already arrived, and migration policy of other countries.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that today Poland has no integration policy. The government's activities are limited to the liberalisation of legislation, which helps migrants to obtain residence and work permits. In case of Ukrainians, politicians stress the similarity of cultures, and that Ukrainians could easily "become Poles". But this model doesn't work already – 54% of Ukrainian migrants declare they do not know Polish language (*Ukraińcy na polskim rynku pracy*, 2018, p. 6).

Polish public authorities often confuse integration with assimilation, and treat multiculturalism as a threat. Understanding that integration is a two-way process when migrants and locals begin to get used to each other is often missing. But even the wish to assimilate those who come leads to no practical steps: the state does not even offer free or subsidised Polish language courses, while NGO programmes for migrants were cut, and the number of information points is insufficient.

While the Polish government prefers to sit on the fence, declaring that it is "for, and even against" migrants, the neighbouring countries are hungry for new labour. For instance Germany, where in 2017 1.6 million jobs were left vacant already announced the liberalisation of its immigration policy (Gibadło, 2018). The new migration laws were adopted by government in December 2018, and starting from 2020 high-qualified workers from non-EU countries will have easier access to German labour market. It would be also easier for foreigners to take a dual education internship, as well as to finalise diploma recognition procedure. In November 2018 German and Ukrainian governments signed an agreement on social security, which helps Ukrainian immigrants to receive their retirement pensions in Germany or after returning back home.

Although the proposed amendments to the German legislation remain more complicated than the Polish system, German market offers three times higher salaries and generous social security assistance. That is why Polish businesses are warning that up to 500 thousand migrants could leave the market next year. This could cost Poland 1.6% or one-third of the projected GDP growth (*Ukraińcy wyjadą z Polski do Niemiec?*, 2018). Politicians look disturbed but no steps to avoid this situation have been taken yet. The time of sticks for immigrants in Poland has passed – if the Polish government wants the economy to grow it should propose more carrots.

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Integration of migrants in Poland: Contradictions and imaginations

MARYLA KOSS-GORYSZEWSKA – MIKOŁAJ PAWLAK

1. Introduction

Poland is a country with one of the lowest percentages of people of non-native descent. After World War II, as a result of significant changes in Polish borders and resettlements of German, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Lithuanian and Polish population, Poland became a relatively homogeneous country, both culturally and ethnically. The exact number of foreigners living in Poland, however, is not known. Many foreigners aren't living in Poland permanently, and only come here temporarily to work.

In Polish history, there were several large migratory waves – some of them were forced because of political reasons, others were caused by economic factors. The last massive emigration was the outflow of Poles to Great Britain after Poland's accession to the EU in 2004. The change in economic and political situation and the general increase in prosperity in Poland in the last decade made Poland an attractive country for immigrants, especially those outside of European Union. That is why nowadays there has been a significant increase in the number of foreigners arriving to Poland. For example, in 2017 over 200,000 foreigners applied for residence permits in Poland, 22% more than in the previous year.

However, despite the growing influx of nationals from other countries to Poland, most of which in recent years have been citizens of Ukraine and Belarus, India and Vietnam, Poland remains the country with the lowest percentage of foreigners in the EU. In the National Census for 2011, only 1.55% of people declared national-ethnic affiliation other than Polish.

So-called migration crisis, which came over Europe in 2015, however, has also influenced Poland. Right-wing groups which thrive on fear of foreigners, especially those coming from Muslim countries, have a lion's share in shaping anti-immigrant and xenophobic attitudes (Jaskułowski, 2019). This sudden interest in immigration issues, however, relates only to a change in social attitudes, and not development of specific solutions in this area.

In this chapter we often use the term 'foreigners' not 'migrants' because Polish regulations and strategic documents relate to foreigners not migrants or immigrants. The latter two terms are present only in the discourse (both expert and general) on the issue of immigration. So for the sake of being in line with how the issue is perceived by Polish institutions we also use the term 'foreigners'. Of course, this usage has certain consequences, because the exact meaning of the 'foreigner' (in Polish 'cudzoziemiec') is a person from another (or even alien) land. In that sense the legal acts highlight the difference, not a potential similarity between the people.

This chapter is a review of the most important areas of integration of various categories of immigrants in Poland. We claim that there is a lot of contradictions in the interactions between immigrants and various sectors of Polish society. In some spheres of social life there are barriers to integration,

while in others there is relative openness. Yet, there is also a plethora of myths and imaginary constructs about the contacts between newcomers and hosts. Many of the myths are mimicked from the amplified and dramatised debates recurring in Western European societies in the last decades. The strongest myth informing the Polish debates about integration of immigrants in Poland is the one of cultural closeness. Policy-makers, the public at large, and many migration scholars seem to be sure that cultural closeness is a recipe for successful integration. Hence the immigration from Ukraine, perceived as culturally close, is welcomed while immigration from Asia or Africa is raising concerns.

The chapter has the following structure: We start with an overview of the integration and migration policy of the Polish state. Then we focus on the legal regulations regarding the labour market, pre-integration of forced migrants, social security, and language learning. Next, after discussing the state's policies we pay some attention to emerging local integration policies. After the review of the areas steered by policies we take the more bottom-up approach and look at the social and cultural integration. Then we move to the issue of the access to the educational system. Finally, we summarise the chapter drawing some conclusions about the contradictions in the integration of immigrants in Poland.

2. Polish integration and migration policy

Integration of newcomers is still not a particularly relevant area of political interest in the development of specific legal and political instruments regarding the inclusion of migrants into society. For this reason, there are still relatively few provisions in Polish legislation regarding the functioning and integration of foreigners. In this section we are focusing on the following policies: integration, migration and labour.

The lack of Polish tradition as a host country, systemic transformation, and generally low living standards of Poles just several years ago, affect today's problems with establishing a specific and long-term migration and integration policy in Poland. There is no definition of "integration" in Polish legislation. In the Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 9 March 2009¹⁰⁶ on granting assistance to foreigners, the integration process is mentioned, but this only concerns the implementation of the so-called individual integration programmes, referring only to people who have been granted refugee status or subsidiary protection, which will be discussed later in the text.

According to the mentioned document, integration is a process consisting of three elements: basic knowledge of the language, having a job enabling economic self-empowerment, and making contact with representatives of the local community that is conducive to participation in social, cultural and public life. Therefore this is a very narrow understanding of this term. In international documents, integration has a far broader connotation. In 2016 European Commission has adopted an Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals¹⁰⁷ which includes actions across following policy areas: pre-arrival measures to prepare both migrants and local communities for the integration process, education and language learning, employment and vocational training, access to basic services (such as housing and healthcare), social inclusion (cultural life and fighting discrimination).

106 Rozporządzenie Ministra Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dnia 9 marca 2009 r. w sprawie udzielania pomocy cudzoziemcom, którzy uzyskali w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej status uchodźcy lub ochronę uzupełniającą, Dz.U. 2009 nr 45 poz. 366.

107 Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals, COM(2016) 377 final of 7.6.2016.

Analysis of integration of foreigners in Poland should emphasise that legal provisions creating elements of integration policy refer almost exclusively to the beneficiaries of international protection. From various spheres of public policies that may affect the functioning of migrants, basically only in the field of education, integration applies to all children with migration experience, not just to refugees. Yet, some authors speak of mainstreaming by accident and point to other areas, where immigrants are included as a policy target group (Józwiak – Sánchez-Domínguez – Sorando, 2018).

In 2012, for the first time in the history of Poland, the government adopted a migration strategy. Document titled "Poland's Migration Policy – Current Status and Postulated Actions" contained directions for action as well as solutions and guidelines for public administration in the field of migration, including legislation, administrative practice, monitoring, financial planning and coordination of the activities of offices, institutions and ministries. This document also contained some elements of integration policy. "Poland's Migration Policy" was a document strongly influenced by the instruments promoted by the European Commission (Pawlak, 2013). As a result of the change on the Polish political scene, after which the anti-immigrant party 'Law and Justice' came to power, this strategy was officially cancelled. A few months later, the new government announced that it is working on a new migration strategy. However, the latest (backstage) reports say that the government may return to the cancelled strategy, with some modifications. However, the authorities do not want to make an official announcement to this effect.

The previous government undertook work on the integration strategy, but did not manage to finish this document. After the takeover of power by "Law and Justice", the work on this matter was terminated. That is why now in Poland there are no documents that regulate migration and integration policy as a whole and in the long-term. Worth mentioning is also the most recent document, which is not dedicated to migration or integration issues per se, but pays quite a lot of attention to foreigners – "National Action Plan for Employment for 2018".

This plan, developed at the national level, is by definition the starting point for creating new instruments and mechanisms for managing the labour market. The document recognises such challenges related to the current situation in the labour market as negative demographic trends related to the lack of employees. One of the proposals to solve the deficit of employees, apart from the economic activation of the unemployed and people over 50, is opening up of the labour market to foreign workers to a greater extent. The Action Plan refers to "a balanced influx of [foreign] workers", as well as the need for a properly implemented migration policy, based on the policy of labour migration.

At present, Polish labour market is characterised by a relatively large share of foreign short-term (e.g. seasonal) workers in relation to people working in Poland on a permanent basis. Therefore, one of the priorities of the future migration policy should be, according to the authors of the Action Plan, the development of mechanisms encouraging migrants "who have a stable professional situation in Poland to settle here permanently and supporting them in obtaining a status enabling indefinite stay in Poland (including obtaining the citizenship of the Republic of Poland".

Action Plan indicates also an additional objective – effective policy of labour migration and migration management, which will be achieved, among many other steps, by improving IT tools, registers, online applications, introducing new legal provisions and monitoring of laws introduced in this area, and information activities in the employment of foreigners.

The discussed document recognises the demand for foreigners to fill gaps in the labour market. All of the above, however, takes place behind the scenes of the media, far from the public. In this context, the statement of the Deputy Minister of Investment and Development, Paweł Choraży, is worth mentioning. In August 2018 he announced that maintaining economic development at the current level

requires a constant inflow of immigrants. He also added that countries that have achieved the greatest economic success and prosperity built it on migrants. This statement, which took place shortly before the local elections, was clearly contradictory to what the Polish government officially proclaimed. Soon after this speech, Mr. Choraży was dismissed from his post by the Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki. He revealed something, which is a rather obvious and “open secret” – and experts and politicians, also politicians of Law and Justice, are aware of – the difficult situation on the labour market and the need to recruit employees from outside Poland. However, the government that proclaims anti-immigrant slogans cannot officially announce such a policy. What is more, largely hidden from the public eye is the fact that work permits are issued to an increasing number of foreigners, especially citizens of Eastern European countries, and more and more often also foreigners from Asia.

Apart from the lack of strategic documents, the second shortcoming of the Polish migration and integration policy is the insufficient knowledge about foreigners in Poland. There are few statistical data on the total number of foreigners in Poland or the number of persons with a refugee status. The available data is incomplete, and because of that, there is no possibility to draw conclusions about the phenomenon of migration in Poland and to take adequate actions. For example, even though we have data on the number of persons granted refugee status, subsidiary protection or other forms of support, the problem is that a significant percentage of these people do not stay in Poland, but go further to Western Europe. Thus, the overwhelming majority of people who have applied for refugee status are still leaving before they even gain this status. Without knowing the exact data, there is no possibility to create an appropriate migration and integration policy, which (based on knowledge and facts – the so-called *evidence based policy*) would adequately address the needs of both migrants and the host society.

3. Legal regulations regarding the integration of foreigners in Poland

In Poland, the scope of the integration often depends on the status of the foreigner. Integration policy applies almost exclusively to people who have received or are seeking international protection. Apart from certain exceptions (such as in education and – to a certain extent – the labour market), there are nearly no instruments to include economic migrants into Polish society.

Integration of migrants takes place in many areas of social life. In Poland there is no official strategic document outlining migration and integration policy, but there are various other legal regulations pertaining to aspects of migrants' integration. Integration policy, understood as public policy, is therefore a set of various legal provisions regulating this area. Integration policy includes elements of social, educational or health policy. These provisions shape real policy and have a real impact on the quality of life and the functioning of foreigners in Polish society. This section will discuss the main provisions that affect the integration of migrants.

3.1. Integration of foreigners in the labour market

Regulations relating to various areas of migrant integration are included in the Polish legal order in various acts, depending on the topic they concern. For example, provisions for children with migration experience are included in the Act on Education Law, access to medical service – In the Act on Health

Care Services Financed from Public Funds, regarding social security – in the Act on Social Assistance etc. From the point of view of functioning of foreigners in Poland, the most crucial is the Act of 12 December 2013 on Foreigners¹⁰⁸ and the Act of 20 April 2014 on the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions¹⁰⁹. The regulations contained in the first of them concern, inter alia, the rules and conditions of entry of foreigners onto the territory of the Republic of Poland, as well as regulations of stay and departure. The second one regulates the rules of employing immigrants.

A foreigner who wants to take up employment in Poland must have a relevant permit (unless exempt from this obligation). On the basis of a work permit, a foreigner must have a residence permit (e.g. an appropriate visa or a temporary residence permit) with which he/she is entitled to work. In addition, there is a fairly wide range of foreigners who can work without permission in Poland. They are listed exhaustively, among others: persons with refugee status or subsidiary protection, persons with a permanent residence permit, persons possessing the status of a long-term EU resident, foreigners with a residence permit due to humanitarian reasons or tolerated stay, persons using temporary protection, citizens of EU and EEA Member States, holders of Pole's Card (Karta Polaka) and others.

As large labour deficits exist on the Polish labour market, and at the same time complicated requirements and rigidities make it difficult to employ foreigners in Poland, the former government has simplified and made the procedures for some categories of foreign workers more flexible. Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 21 April 2015 on cases in which it is permissible to entrust work to someone in the territory of the Republic of Poland without the need to obtain a work permit¹¹⁰, exempted certain persons from third countries from having to obtain a work permit. The document mentions third-country nationals who conduct training in Poland, hold professional internships, who are foreign language teachers, members of the armed forces, foreign correspondents, performers, athletes, clergymen, full-time students, research workers and, under specific conditions, posted workers and other employees. Earlier Regulation – of 20 July 2011 – introduced another important mechanism, namely the possibility of working without permission for the citizens of Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine for a period not exceeding 6 months during the next 12 months¹¹¹. In this case, the prospective employer is only required to submit a declaration of intention to entrust work to a foreigner.

Further changes facilitating the employment of foreigners were introduced by the current government on the 1st of January 2018. The amended Act on the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions introduced a new solution enabling employment of foreigners in Poland for seasonal work. Seasonal work is work performed for a period not longer than 9 months in a calendar year in the following sectors: agriculture, gardening, and tourism. Six months later, the government introduced further rules liberalising the employment of foreigners. This is the Regulation of the Family, Labour and Social Policy Directorate of 28th of June 2018 amending the ordinance on the determina-

108 Ustawa z dnia 12 grudnia 2013 r. o cudzoziemcach, Dz.U. 2013 poz. 1650.

109 Ustawa z dnia 20 kwietnia 2004 r. o promocji zatrudnienia i instytucjach rynku pracy, Dz.U. 2004 nr 99 poz. 1001 (z późn. zm.).

110 Rozporządzenie Ministra Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dnia 21 kwietnia 2015 r. w sprawie przypadków, w których powierzenie wykonywania pracy cudzoziemcowi na terytorium Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej jest dopuszczalne bez konieczności uzyskania zezwolenia na pracę, Dz.U. 2015 poz. 588.

111 Rozporządzenie Ministra Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dnia 20.07.2011 r. w sprawie przypadków, w których powierzenie wykonywania pracy cudzoziemcowi na terytorium Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej jest dopuszczalne bez konieczności uzyskania zezwolenia na pracę, Dz. U. z 2015 r. poz. 95.

tion of cases in which the work permit of a foreigner is issued irrespective of the specific conditions for issuing work permits for foreigners¹¹².

When applying for a work permit, Polish regulations require a so-called "labour market test". This means that a foreigner may obtain a work permit from a given employer only if there is no possibility of employing a Polish or EU citizen for that position. However, not every job requires a labour market test. This regulation extends the catalogue of professions for which it is not necessary to carry it out. Currently, it covers several dozen occupations, including, among others, construction jobs, the IT industry, drivers of trucks and buses, doctors and nurses, care workers for the elderly. This instrument significantly simplifies and shortens the employment procedure for foreigners.

The new law announced by the government to replace the Labour Market and Employment Promotion Act in 2019 is supposed to introduce further improvements in the employment of foreigners, including extending the period of work performed without a work permit on the basis of a statement on entrusting work to a foreigner for up to 12 months during the next 18 months and recognition of work as legal during the waiting period for a new work permit in the event of a change of position with the same employer.

Therefore, despite the officially proclaimed anti-immigration policy, the Polish authorities have introduced a number of liberalising measures in the field of employment of foreigners. Regulations regarding the employment of foreigners are still overcomplicated and too complex, foreigners complain about queues in offices, difficult legalisation procedures, long periods of waiting for decisions. At the same time, however, there is a clear tendency to gradually simplify and liberalise the rules.

3.2. Pre-integration of forced migrants

The integration process begins before the foreigner has been granted refugee status at the moment he/she is crossing the border. There are some basic instruments in the Polish law aimed at facilitating the pre-integration process of forced migrants. These and other issues concerning the rules of admission of forced migrants, granting them status and the scope of social assistance granted to them are included in the Act of 13 June 2003 on Granting Protection to Foreigners in the Territory of the Republic of Poland¹¹³. Upon arrival to Poland and submitting an application for international protection, the foreigner goes to the reception centre (there are two such centres in Poland), where he/she undergoes medical examinations. Then the person has two options. Until the status is obtained, he/she can stay in an open centre for foreigners, where he/she is provided with accommodation, food, 20 zlotys per month for the purchase of personal hygiene products (around 4.7 euros), pocket money in the amount of 50 zlotys per month (about 12 euros), and one-off amount for purchase of clothing and footwear or vouchers for their purchase.

A person who has applied for international protection may also choose to stay outside the centre. He or she can then receive a cash benefit of 25 PLN for one day (about 6 euros). The amount of the benefit is accordingly reduced for subsequent family members. In a situation where a foreigner does not have, for example, financial support from friends or family staying in Poland, this amount of money is barely above the minimum subsistence level.

112 Rozporządzenie Ministra Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dnia 28 czerwca 2018 r. zmieniające rozporządzenie w sprawie określenia przypadków, w których zezwolenie na pracę cudzoziemca jest wydawane bez względu na szczegółowe warunki wydawania zezwoleń na pracę cudzoziemców, Dz.U. 2018 poz. 1264.

113 Ustawa z dnia 13 czerwca 2003 r. o udzielaniu cudzoziemcom ochrony na terytorium Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Dz.U. 2003 nr 128 poz. 1176 (z późn. zm.).

Regardless of whether the foreigner chooses to stay in or outside of the centre, for the duration of the proceedings he/she has the possibility of free Polish language courses and access to medical care (including psychological). Pupils have access to schools and teaching resources (textbooks).

According to the regulations, the procedure for granting international protection should last up to six months. However, in practice this time is much longer and usually lasts for several months. During the first six months of the procedure, the foreigners are not permitted to work. If the procedure is prolonged – it lasts more than half a year and if it is not the fault of the foreigner – she or he gets the permission to work.

3.3. Social security – individual integration programmes for beneficiaries of international protection

For foreigners who have been granted refugee status or subsidiary protection and for their family members Individual Integration Programmes (IPIs) are available. IPI rules are indicated in the Act on Social Assistance and Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 7 April 2015 on Providing Assistance to Foreigners. IPIs are granted for a period of up to 12 months from the date of granting the refugee status or subsidiary protection, upon the recognition by social worker of the respective family situation. The aid includes money for subsistence (food costs, purchase of clothes, housing maintenance, medicine, purchase of hygiene products), covering expenses for learning Polish, health insurance with free access to health care and counselling (legal, psychological, vocational, pedagogical). The amount of IPI funds depends on the time and number of family members. During the first 6 months of the programme, it equals 1,335 PLN (approximately 317 euros) per month for a single person and is reduced for subsequent family members. Considering the cost of living in Poland, this amount is very low and may not be sufficient to cover the costs of living. Moreover, the period for granting this benefit may be too short for the migrant to be able to adapt to the new conditions. The individual integration programmes are criticised for not setting specific benchmarks, that is they last for one year no matter the improvement of the social inclusion of the migrant (Frelak – Klaus – Wiśniewski, 2007). There are even authors who claim the policy of integration of beneficiaries of international protection leads rather to their social exclusion than to the integration with society (Lukasiewicz, 2017).

3.4. Learning Polish

Free Polish language lessons are provided for all persons who have applied for international protection. After receiving refugee status or subsidiary protection, foreigners receive IPI funds to cover expenses – among others – related to learning the Polish language. Furthermore, free Polish language lessons in schools are provided for children with migration experience. In addition, there are many grassroots and ad-hoc initiatives, mainly provided by NGOs and local governments that organise Polish language courses for foreigners. Worth a mention is an interesting initiative implemented by the authorities in Wrocław called “Wrocław on World Languages”. As part of the programme, free, volunteer-based meetings are organised in pairs: Wrocławian-foreigner, during which Poles are teaching immigrants the Polish language. The programmes and activities aimed at Polish language learning are financed also from Warsaw’s local government. A few years ago, Warsaw authorities launched Multi-cultural Centre, which aims to promote diversity and counteract migrants’ marginalisation.

One of its elements is the organisation of free Polish language courses for migrants. Other mechanisms will be described further on in the text.

3.5. Legal regulations regarding integration policy – general comments

Most of the Polish legal instruments relating to migrants have emerged only recently. There is no coherent integration policy, so these rules often appear in ad-hoc and unsystematic manner. Often they are not interrelated and are only a reaction to the existing circumstances, not an element of a planned strategy. There are two basic situations in which legal provisions for foreigners are introduced. First, when there is a problem that arises in connection with the appearance of foreigners in a specific area of social life. Such problems give rise to specific needs of dealing with previously unknown situations (as, for example, there were changes in individual integration programmes that in their original form did not provide assistance for family members of persons with international protection). The second reason for changes in the integration law is Poland's membership in various international organisations and associations, of which of the greatest importance is the European Union, which imposes certain obligations.

Because the Polish state is not efficient enough and does not provide a sufficient level of social security or counselling for migrants, the situation of newcomers in Poland is to a considerable degree dependent on the activities of NGOs. Such organisations provide assistance in the field of legal counselling, career counselling, psychological counselling or social orientation. By 2015, these types of activities were financed from the EU funds – mainly AMIF. Currently, the Polish authorities have decided to suspend availability of these funds to NGOs. This resulted in a significant reduction of the offer, and some of the organisations were forced to suspend their activities.

It is worth citing the results of the Institute of Public Affairs research regarding the integration of migrants from EU member states (Renaud, 2018). These people are usually very well educated, and also well integrated into the labour market. They usually have access to private health services, have no difficulty in renting an apartment, and their children attend private schools. Therefore, they do not have basic problems encountered by migrants from third countries such as access to health care, housing or social security. For these migrants, the main obstacle hindering their full integration is the lack of opportunities to learn soft and social skills. The respondents in the interviews emphasised entry barriers to access local society, which makes it impossible to get to know the neighbourhood and local communities in which they function on a daily basis.

Results of the mentioned research are also important for the integration of citizens from non-EU countries. It is obvious that at the time of arriving in a new country the most important and basic problem is finding a job, issues of legalisation and social security, bringing the family. But integration should be understood in a holistic way, as a proper adaptation and a sense of "being at home". Thus, when making an assessment of Polish migration policy, it is necessary to take into account the lack of any instruments in Poland that on the one hand engage foreigners, and on the other hand, the host society in the integration process. Integration is about creating in foreigners a sense of connection with the host country, when the host country is much more than just a way of gaining financial benefits or escaping a direct threat in the country of origin. This element in Polish integration policy is definitely lacking.

4. Emerging local level integration policies

Poland is a centralised state and its approach to the integration is not different in this regard. The integration of beneficiaries of international protection is organised through cooperation of the state institutions and the institutions governed by the local authorities. The Individual Integration Programmes are conducted by the Family Assistance Centres – a welfare agency at the county level. Yet, local case-workers do not have much independence in running the programmes as they are defined by the ministry ordinance and the spending is audited by the regional representation of government.

Yet, in Poland we can observe also a process often called a local turn in integration (Matusz Protasiewicz, 2013). Local authorities of the largest Polish cities in the recent period became more involved in implementing their own integration policies. Warsaw, the largest Polish city where the largest number of immigrants resides, opened the Multicultural Centre (Winiarska – Wojno, 2018; Duszczuk – Pszczółkowska – Wach, 2018). The Multicultural Centre is an example of multi-level governance in action: it is supported by the city hall but managed by the consortium of non-governmental organisations, which are encouraged to apply for EU funds for the activities. Moreover, in the centre there is a possibility of applying for the residence permits to the regional representation of the state authorities.

In Warsaw within the structure of the city hall there is a small unit coordinating the actions of other departments in regards to the presence of immigrants in the city. There is also a consultation body bringing together non-governmental organisations active in the field of integration called Social Dialogue Committee of the City of Warsaw for Foreigner Issues. The Committee operates since 2012 and is mostly a platform for information exchange (Winiarska – Wojno, 2018).

Some similar actions are taken by other Polish cities. Gdańsk, Kraków and Wrocław developed their local integration strategies, while Warsaw does not have any official document stating objectives of its integration policy. The actions taken by the cities are most visible in the domain of intercultural dialogue and education. The cities are responsible for the local schools and it is their decision together with headmasters to open “preparatory classes” for immigrant pupils (see section ‘Access for foreign children to the Polish educational system’). Limited resources of the city authorities as well as their limited legal competences do not allow them to implement large-scale integration policies. For example, the Warsaw programme of the council flats available to the beneficiaries of international protection is limited to five apartments per year. Yet, the growing focus of local authorities on the issue of integration is visible. The Union of Polish Cities – organisation bringing together the 12 largest Polish cities – declared in 2017 that it will cooperate in the field of immigration and launched a team in order to exchange good practices.

5. Social integration

In this section we focus on the position and outcomes for immigrants for their participation in the labour market, housing, and healthcare (Penninx – Garcés – Mascareñas, 2016). Legal framework for access to labour market is discussed above, therefore we pay more attention to the educational system below. Additionally, in this section we discuss how the social integration is understood in the Polish legal acts.

As we discussed the legal provisions for the immigrants' participation in the labour market in the previous section 'Integration of foreigners in the labour market', here we pay attention to the actual integration in practice. Research on the position of various categories of immigrants on the Polish labour market is already quite extensive (see Bojar et. al., 2005; Fihel – Górny – Kaczmarczyk, 2008). Immigrants are present as highly qualified workers (Dolińska, 2017; Konieczna-Sałamatin, 2015) but majority of them are present on the secondary labour market using the scheme of short-term employment (so-called 'oświadczenia' or statements) (Szulecka, 2016). There is no research evidence on the labour market advancement for the foreign labour force in Poland, so we do not know if immigrants after starting their employment in secondary labour market gradually improve their position and move to better jobs. In case of jobs in construction, agriculture, and domestic jobs it probably happens rarely. Visas for short-term employment for some workers are used – according to the declared intention of policy-makers – as a legal basis for cyclical migration. In this case it is hard to talk about labour market integration, although some of the cyclical migrants operate on both labour markets (country of origin and receiving economy). Some other immigrants use visas for short-term employment as a tool for the legalisation of their residence.

The legal construction governing the residence permits based on work permits, which are granted to the employers, and not to employees, put immigrant workers in unfavourable position of dependence on their employers. Immigrants in Poland have only recently started to be a target group for trade unions (Kubisa, 2017). The measures applied by the state aim only at the integration of those beneficiaries of international protection who are eligible for various forms of support by job centres. Majority of the categories of immigrants from outside of the EU are not eligible to any services or support from the job centres. This means that they barely have any representation in the industrial relations. We observe also a growing number of immigrant entrepreneurs in Poland, yet many of them face the same problems as native small-size entrepreneurs squeezed somewhere between business activities and unconventional forms of employment on the secondary labour market (Andrejuk, 2017).

In the area of housing, the integration of immigrants in Poland is ambiguous. On the one hand, immigrants have extremely limited access to public housing, evidenced by just a few cities having a small number of special council flats allocated to the beneficiaries of international protection. Other categories of immigrants are simply not eligible for public housing (it has to be noted that for Polish citizens access to public housing is also very limited). On the other hand, we do not observe spatial segregation in Poland. Most groups of immigrants are dispersed in the cities and only in case of the Vietnamese community there is some concentration in the specific zones of Warsaw metropolitan area (Grzymała-Kazłowska – Piekut, 2007). Short-term immigrants apply typical strategies of low-rent housing and they often occupy downgraded apartments. In case of beneficiaries of international protection the problem of homelessness is a serious threat (Wysieńska, 2013). In Poland there is also a steady increase in the number of real estate purchased by immigrants: in 2017 foreigners bought 4,822 apartments in Poland while in 2016 they bought 4,648 apartments¹¹⁴.

Healthcare is the domain of immigrants' participation in social life of Poland about which relatively little is known. The issue is also of minimal concern for the policy-makers. Despite the myth of a healthy immigrant the number of foreigners using Polish healthcare is increasing proportionally to the general number of immigrants staying in Poland. Their participation in the healthcare system varies depending on their legal status in Poland and the regulations regarding health insurance of immigrants are quite complicated (Strzemieczna – Imiela, 2017). The situation of the beneficiaries of internation-

114 Reports of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration delivered annual to Polish parliament.

al protection is very well defined in the system and the costs of their healthcare is covered by the state. Other categories of immigrants are obliged to pay for their health insurance. The problem of financing the healthcare is a key one from the point of view of hospitals and clinics. Yet, for immigrants themselves navigating through the complicated system of healthcare in Poland seems to be challenging. The discussion about translation (its cost and responsibility) is in a very early stage. Such services are either provided by non-governmental organisations or very rarely organised in localities with significant immigrant community.

The only regulation mentioning the social integration of immigrants is the Ordinance of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy regarding the assistance to foreigners¹¹⁵. In this legal act regulating the individual programmes of integration targeting the beneficiaries of international protection, the social functioning is mentioned as a process in which advancement of the foreigner is to be monitored by a case worker. Social workers are expected to monitor how an immigrant – a party of the individual integration programme – establishes contacts with local environment and the degree of his or her participation in social, cultural and public life. This definition is rather vague and in reality the case workers do not pay much attention to the social functioning and focus more on the two other domains: language education and participation in the labour market.

6. Cultural integration

Cultural integration of immigrants in Poland seems to be a vague topic. We propose to analyse it on three levels resulting from the understanding of the notion of culture: (1) culture as visible traditions and folklore; (2) culture as a participation in religious practices and consumption of high/popular culture; (3) culture as a competence in social practices and vernacular. The first understanding dominates the thinking about cultural integration in Poland. It covers so-called intercultural dialogue, which is often understood as informing about the specific customs and norms of Polish society and various immigrant groups. Presentation of music, dance and other forms of 'traditional' art of immigrants is regarded as making their culture closer to Poles. Various groups of immigrants are encouraged to present their 'traditional' dances and music. It was a popular practice to support asylum seekers from Caucasus to organise traditional dance presentations at schools. Similar role is played by ethnic cuisine. Promotion of multicultural events and initiatives is often undertaken by city halls, which highlights the cosmopolitan character of their cities.

The second understanding of culture as participation in religious practices and consumption of high/popular culture is the subject of policy-makers' attention only to a very limited scope. The Greek-Orthodox church in Poland plays a role of in-group integration of Ukrainians in Poland. It is a platform for the exchange of information about jobs or housing opportunities. In case of the Muslim community in Poland the arrival of immigrants reshuffled the relations in the traditional small Polish Muslim denomination, which consisted mostly of Tatar ethnic group. Currently, Tatars even feel marginalised in the community of Muslims in Poland. The immigration to Poland of immigrants categorised as Muslims became a subject of heated debate in 2015. Mosques – in the course of increasing islamophobic attitudes – transformed from being unproblematic to objects of contention (Narkowicz – Pędzwiatr, 2017). Regarding the consumption of high or popular culture of immigrants in Poland we

115 Rozporządzenie Ministra Pracy i Pomocy Społecznej z dnia 7 kwietnia 2015 roku w sprawie udzielania pomocy cudzoziemcom (Dz.U. 2015 poz. 515 z późn. zm.).

do not have any data. Although we observe signs of the culture production in their national languages being offered: an example are movie screenings in Ukrainian which are from time to time available in commercial cinemas.

The third understanding of culture as competences in social practices and vernacular is mostly related to the teaching of the language, which we already mentioned above. Some non-governmental organisations provide social orientation courses, in which basic knowledge about getting around in Polish society is explained. Some other practices can be recently observed relating to this understanding of culture, i.e. cities extending the number of languages in which they provide the information to the recipients of their services (i.e. machines vending bus tickets in Łódź and Warsaw in Ukrainian). Similarly, City of Warsaw offers guide to its education system in various languages. Some businesses, especially financial institutions like banks or money transfer services, offer their services in languages of the major immigrant groups.

We observe that the culture in relation to the integration of immigrants is understood in an essentialised manner as a relatively stable whole which organises interactions between individuals and groups (Geertz, 1973). It is often seen through the lens of traditions, traditional art, and participation / consumption of high and mass cultural production. There is not much reflection about practices guided by cultural habits. The knowledge of Polish language is required for the residence permits, yet the state provides language courses only for the beneficiaries of international protection.

7. Access for foreign children to the Polish education system

Polish educational system, both in relation to refugee children and all other children with migration experience, is quite well designed. Access for children with migration experience to basic educational services is basically unlimited, and the offer of the education system includes the possibility of using special instruments that take into account the special needs of children with migration experience. With the inflow of immigrants to Poland, the number of foreign students in Polish schools is constantly growing. According to official data, in the school year 2012/2013, there were 7,311 pupils who were not Polish citizens, while in the school year 2017/2018 there were already 29,942 foreigners. This is more than fourfold increase in just 5 years.

Full access to education of children with migration experience is guaranteed by the law. Firstly, it is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland and further specified by the Act of 7 September 1991 on the education system¹¹⁶, the Act of 14 December 2016 – Educational Law¹¹⁷ and executive regulations, according to which children with migration experience have access to education at the primary and secondary level on the same basis as children of citizens of the Republic of Poland. As a result, after the child's arrival at the Centre for Foreigners, he or she is immediately enrolled at school and on the list of pupils.

Another example of good access to education is the lack of administrative barriers to school enrolment. There is also flexibility when it comes to placing children in specific classes – the recent abolition of the obligation of the recognition of school certificates has resulted in doing away with placing children in a class on the basis of a certificate, the number of completed classes or the age of a child.

116 Ustawa z dnia 7 września 1991 r. o systemie oświaty, Dz.U. 1991 nr 95 poz. 425 (z późn. zm.).

117 Ustawa z dnia 14 grudnia 2016 r. - Prawo oświatowe, Dz.U. 2017 poz. 59 (z późn. zm.).

Another strong point of Polish educational system is the broad range of instruments, which aim to improve the functioning of the foreign child in Polish school. These include the possibility of participation in additional free Polish language lessons, when the child doesn't communicate in Polish well enough to learn in Polish. Such children may also participate in additional compensatory lessons. The next instrument worth mentioning is the "assistant teacher", which is dedicated to those children who do not speak Polish sufficiently. Assistant teachers are obliged to know the child's native language. This kind of assistance is available for a maximum of 12 months and is conferred at the request of the school headmaster.

The last important tool for children with migration experience in Polish school is the so-called "preparatory classes" – special classes consisting of foreign children, introduced by the regulation of Minister of Education of 9 September 2016. Preparatory classes target pupils who have "adaptation difficulties related to cultural differences or educational environment change or language communication disorders caused in particular by crisis or traumatic situations, including armed conflicts, natural disasters or other humanitarian crises caused by nature or by man"¹¹⁸. The upper limit for the number of children in such class is 15, while the lower limit has not been set. Children can participate in such a class for 12 months with the possibility of extending this period by another 12 months. The stay can be shortened as well.

General assessment of the above measures is positive, however their implementation in practice may be problematic. For example, despite the special nature of the preparatory classes, they have the same, very extensive, core curriculum as "ordinary" classes. In such classes, learning the language should be the priority. This is crucial both from the perspective of further education of children with migration experience and their integration into society.

Another problem is lack of teaching materials specially adapted to the needs of children with migration experience and lack of guidance for teachers. There is no systematic training of teachers to work with foreign children – working in a preparatory class is difficult and requires teachers to possess special skills. Despite the mechanisms that allow, for example, the creation of preparatory classes, in practice this solution is rarely used. Only a few such classes are open in Poland.

Another important issue is, on one hand, the need for hard competences training for teachers and headmasters, such as basic legal provisions important for working with children with migration experience, and on the other hand – soft skills training to better understand the child's situation and problems that both child and the teacher may face.

The last noteworthy problem is unpreparedness of schools in Poland for cultural and ethnic diversity, which often results in racist and xenophobic incidents. Since 2015, there has been an obligation to conduct classes on anti-discrimination topics, as a form of fight against prejudices based on sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, origin and religion. In 2017, however, this obligation was cancelled. Cultural differences can cause various types of tensions and difficulties in running classes and managing a school. According to the results of research, there is a problem of unequal treatment in Polish schools, and cases of discrimination occur rather frequently (Gawlicz – Rudnicki – Starnawski, 2015). That is why it is important to understand specific situation of children with migratory experience, both from the perspective of teachers, students and parents.

118 Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 9 września 2016 r. w sprawie kształcenia osób niebędących obywatelami polskimi oraz osób będących obywatelami polskimi, które pobierały naukę w szkołach funkcjonujących w systemach oświaty innych państw, Dz.U. 2016 poz. 1453.

8. Conclusions

Integration of immigrants in Poland is a social process left to its own devices by the state. According to the official image Poland is not a country of immigration and integration policies target only beneficiaries of international protection. The increasing presence of immigrants in Poland is treated as a presence of a labour force, which does not require additional focus of the state. This resembles the 'gastarbeiter systems' of certain European states in the 1960s. Although we do not have any official strategic document openly declaring the integration policy, there is such policy in Poland. Yet, its reconstruction requires taking into account actions of various agencies and policies formulated across various domains.

On the level of actual social processes and actions taken by individuals, the most significant factor influencing the integration is that so far the majority of immigrants in Poland come from Ukraine: they speak relatively similar Slavic language, do not have physical features perceived as racially different to Poles, and were brought up in a society of similar cultural practices. Ukrainians are perceived as culturally close to Poles, yet this might disguise the barriers they face in the integration to the social life in Poland caused by the legal-institutional system. On the level of national policy, Polish state is interested in acquiring labour force, although it is not publicising it openly in order not to lose the electoral support of anti-immigrant voters. On the level of local policy-making, mayors of the largest cities recently launched integration strategies, yet their impact is quite limited due to the meager funds allocated. So on the level of policy, we see a contradiction: the state declares that it is not open for immigration, while it liberalises access to the labour market – local authorities declare that they are open to immigration, but their actions are mostly related to building positive image. Another paradox is the situation of non-governmental organisations active in the field of integration. When the number of immigrants in Poland was still relatively small it was quite easy for NGOs to obtain financial support from the European funds (Pawlak – Matusz-Protasiewicz, 2015). Yet, since 2015 when together with the increase in immigrants who might need the support from the NGOs, the government of Poland has also limited access of NGOs to the EU funds supporting integration (Westerby, 2018).

The number of immigrants in Poland is increasing and there is also increasing presence of them in various domains of social life. They are present both on primary and secondary labour market. Yet, we cannot say at this point if the trajectories of status attainment are open for the ones starting their careers in Poland on the secondary labour market. Quite probably it is going to be difficult for many of them to run away from the trap of employment in unstable and relatively low paid jobs. So far quite a large portion of migrant labour in Poland has been cyclical but it was made possible because of the geographical proximity of Ukraine. Immigrants from other countries of origin (i.e. increasing immigration from India) will not be able to come back so easily to their country of origin to have some of their social needs met: i.e. health treatment. It is probable that this will put more pressure on the Polish institutions in order to adjust to the ever-growing presence of immigrants.

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From politics of fear to securitisation policies? Poland in the face of migration crisis

JOANNA FOMINA – JACEK KUCHARCZYK

1. Introduction

The way Poland has experienced Europe's migration crisis has been rather paradoxical: while Poland has not been affected by the refugee crisis in terms of actual asylum-seeking arrivals, the crisis as a narrative device has been extensively and successfully exploited in the public discourse, resulting not only in an increased hostility towards refugees, but also in a general rise of xenophobia, contributing to the electoral victory of the populist right-wing Law and Justice government and, in consequence, the tightening up of Poland's until now liberal migration policy. The so-called refugee crisis, a first and foremost humanitarian catastrophe, has been framed predominately by Poland's right-wing political entrepreneurs and media as a national security crisis, both in physical as well as symbolic terms.

In the US and EU, the process of securitisation of migration is not something new, and predates the recent refugee crisis, going back at least to the 2000s. A number of scholars have looked into its possible starting points, dynamics, underlying reasons and possible triggers, including Islamic terrorism attacks (Bigo, 2002; Bigo – Guild, 2005; Ceyhan – Tsoukala, 2002; Heisler – Layton Henry, 1993; Huysmans, 1995; Huysmans, 2000). Bigo and Guild see it as a dual process. On one level, migration is seen as a matter of international security, with irregular migration, human trafficking and smuggling as threats in need of control. On the other, migration is a matter of internal security, with migrants allegedly posing a threat to economic wellbeing, public order as well as culture of the native population (2005). Since in case of Poland the process of politicisation and securitisation of migration has happened despite the lack of either large numbers of immigrants or refugees, or any events threatening the public order, the most useful understanding of securitisation comes from Walters and others who see it as a powerful narrative device: 'It is by labelling something a security issue that it becomes one' (Waever, 2004, p. 13). Significantly, the exploitation of such a narrative device has had important consequences.

Bauman's distinction between safety and security comes in handy in this discussion. He differentiated between the physical safety (protection against acts of violence, terrorism, war, theft) and security that has a more existential dimension (concerning identity and status) (Bauman, 2001). According to Zygmunt Bauman, governments reformulate anxieties, fears and insecurities related to globalisation and modernisation in terms of safety, because that is the area where they can do something.

Hence, the increased surveillance measures, restrictive migration policies, and other attempts to give the illusion of safety and thus – security. In this context, migration is transformed into a security ('safety', in Bauman's understanding) concern that calls for extraordinary measures used in the name of security (Abulof, 2014), such as suspending the relocation and resettlement process, as it has been in the Polish case.

In what follows, we are going to first discuss Poland's experience with the refugee crisis in terms of actual arrivals as well as the government's responses towards the European Commission's burden-sharing mechanisms. Next we will show how the refugee crisis has been framed in the political and media discourses, demonstrating how the refugee crisis has been constructed as a crisis of security. This will be followed by the discussion of the dynamics of the public opinion on refugees, Muslims, national minorities and foreigners. Finally, we will show how the construction of the humanitarian crisis as a crisis of security has produced some long-term effects in the form of restrictions of the migration policy in general.

2. Poland's experience with the refugee crisis

Poland has not been affected by the migration and refugee crisis in the sense that it has not been either a destination country or even a transit country for the 'new' asylum seekers from Middle East and Africa. When by the end of June 2015 the European Commission presented its plan to relocate 40 thousand refugees from Greece and Italy, many countries were unhappy about the idea of quotas. But as the situation deteriorated, the V4 countries almost exclusively opposed the quotas. Poland broke with the Visegrad solidarity and agreed to receive 2 thousand refugees, mostly from Syria and Eritrea (900 people resettled from the UN camps in the Middle East and 1.1 thousand relocated from other EU member states). In September 2015 Poland agreed to receive another 5,082 people. In this way it distanced itself from the rest of the V4.

The new Law and Justice party government that came to power as a result of October 2015 elections, initially decided that the quotas accepted by the previous government were legally binding. However, it later evoked the security clause introduced to the final documents on the Polish initiative, to annul the processes of relocation and resettlement on the grounds that many of the refugees lacked reliable personal identification documents. The Law and Justice government decided that the implementation of the decision on relocation and resettlement was impossible to carry out due to lack of the possibility to ensure security. In May 2016 the Interior Ministry informed that the process of relocation was annulled (PAP, 2016). Up to now, according to the European Commission data Poland has not received any refugees as part of the relocation and resettlement processes (EC, 2017).

The patterns of refugee applications have not considerably changed in terms of their number or country of origin. According to the official data (see Table 1) the main country of origin of asylum-seekers in Poland remains Russian Federation (the vast majority of asylum-seekers from Russia are Chechens). Russia is followed by Ukraine, starting from 2014, although the total number of asylum seekers from Ukraine after the annexation of the Crimea and military actions in Donbas is slightly more than 6 thousand. Syria, Eritrea and other Middle East and African countries are not featured among the top-five sending countries.

Table 1. The number of persons who applied for refugee status in Poland, including the top-five countries of origin.

| Country | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | Total |
|-------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| Russia | 9,239 | 7,754 | 5,726 | 4,795 | 4,305 | 6,084 | 12,849 | 4,112 | 7,989 | 8,994 | 3,550 | 71,847 |
| Georgia | 31 | 71 | 4214 | 1,082 | 1,735 | 3,234 | 1,245 | 726 | 394 | 124 | 70 | 12,856 |
| Ukraine | 55 | 40 | 36 | 45 | 67 | 74 | 46 | 2,318 | 2,305 | 1,306 | 671 | 6,292 |
| Armenia | 43 | 50 | 147 | 107 | 216 | 413 | 206 | 135 | 195 | 344 | 85 | 1,856 |
| Tajikistan | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 5 | 107 | 541 | 882 | 154 | 1,547 |
| Other | 679 | 596 | 462 | 505 | 564 | 939 | 902 | 797 | 901 | 672 | 548 | 7,017 |
| Total | 10,048 | 8,511 | 10,587 | 6,534 | 6,887 | 10,753 | 15,253 | 8,195 | 12,325 | 12,322 | 5,078 | 101,415 |

Source: Office for Foreigners Statistics, 2018.

The rate of granting international protection (refugee status, subsidiary humanitarian protection or the so-called tolerated status) is very low. Out of 48,095 persons who submitted asylum applications between 2013 and 2016, the total number of people who received some form of international protection in Poland amounts to 2,415. Out of these, 981 are Russian citizens, around 500 Syrians and around 90 Iraqis – receiving some form of international protection. Also, out of the less than 500 Syrians who received international protection in Poland, 158 people came on the initiative of the “Eстера” Foundation that allocated funds for bringing to Poland Christian Syrians (Fundacja Estera). In case of Ukrainians, 161 persons received any form of international protection, including 36 who were granted refugee status. So, it is hard to speak about Poland as really experiencing the migration crisis, either in terms of actual numbers or in terms of the dynamics of inflows or dominant countries of origin.

3. Public discourse and the politicisation of migration

Before the refugee crisis has become subject to the politicisation and securitisation processes, migration and refugee policy was never a politically salient issue in Poland. Prominent Polish migration scholars, Łodziński and Szonert even called it an “unpolitical policy” (Łodziński – Szonert, 2016). However, the (predominately right-wing) media have played a huge role in framing the essentially humanitarian crisis as a crisis of security, mainstreaming latent Islamophobia and xenophobia. Refugees as well as Muslims are present in Poland in very small numbers, most Poles have never had any contact with them (Feliksiak, 2015). Thus, Poles’ perception of either refugees or Muslims has been formed predominately through the media. Moreover, the refugee crisis has coincided with election campaigns in Poland, with presidential elections taking place in May 2015 and parliamentary elections in October 2015. Thus, the decisions about relocation and resettlement coincided in time with the parliamentary electoral campaign and have been exploited to the full by the right-wing politicians.

In her analysis of politics of fear Ruth Wodak demonstrates how the post-war boundaries of the ‘unsayable’, including open racism and antisemitism, have been breached on many occasions by European right-wing populists, and eventually made it possible to set the political agenda by provocation and scandalisation. The dictum ‘Anything goes!’, (i.e. any message or behaviour that may attract

voters is acceptable) is effective, because mainstream parties often feel pressured to include the previously rejected narratives, slogans and even policy preferences (Wodak, 2015). In other words, the far right, even if not necessarily enjoying wide public support, may be effectively setting the agenda. In the Polish case, the tone of the debate was set by the far right KORWiN party, which has never passed the parliamentary electoral threshold of 5% (although it managed, in an earlier incarnation, to send four party activists to the European parliament in 2014). The party is quite popular with young people due to its controversial and charismatic leader, Janusz Korwin-Mikke. The party's first electoral spot was an anti-refugee propaganda 'Invasion' film going viral on social media. The film employed images of dark-skinned men attacking the police, climbing high fences. As the title suggests, the arrival of refugees was framed as an invasion of savage trespassers against whom the party promised to protect Poland. Significantly, the film also featured mainstream politicians, not only the then incumbent Prime Minister, but also the then main opposition leader, Jarosław Kaczyński, as ready to succumb to the EU's 'dictate' opening the way to this 'invasion' of Poland. A newcomer to the Polish politics, former rock-star Paweł Kukiz, also relied heavily on anti-Muslim and anti-refugee messages. Finally, the Law and Justice party broadened its palette of electoral messages, previously dominated by identity politics focused mainly on the rights of women and LGBT+ (the so-called "war on gender") as well as socio-economic issues (Fomina – Kucharczyk, 2016), to include anti-refugee, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim messages. The leader of the party claimed that Poland does not want to be like Sweden where (he claimed) there are already 55 no-go districts governed by Sharia law. He also stated that Muslim refugees make toilets out of churches in Italy and refugees bring illnesses and parasites non-existent in Europe. The then Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz in her address, which was broadcast on public television, put the emphasis on distinguishing real refugees from economic migrants as well as putting Poland's security first. Poland, according to her, made receiving refugees conditional on 'separating refugees from economic migrants, securing the EU borders and full control of our [security] services over who we are receiving' (*Wiadomości*, 2015). She also appealed to other parties to stop whipping up public fears.

The harsh stance on receiving refugees is widely believed to be one of the key elements of PiS's electoral success, which in its turn gave rise to a conviction that being hard on migration is an effective strategy in attracting voters. The political discourse has not changed considerably after the elections in terms of arguments used, but anti-refugee rhetoric has become far more mainstream. To give an example, Mariusz Błaszczak, the then Minister of the Interior, commenting on the terrorist attack in Nice on July 14, 2016 said that Law and Justice, by winning the elections, has saved Poland from terrorist attacks: 'Indeed, France is in a much harder situation than Poland. Poland would have been in such a situation, if not for the change of the government.' He added: 'Newcomers from the Middle East and Africa simply do not integrate. That is a fact' (*W Sensie*, 2016).

The government's U-turn on the relocation and resettlement processes was met with strong support from the parliament. Both upper and lower chambers, the Sejm and the Senate, adopted resolutions claiming that any compulsory method of relocation of refugees is against the subsidiarity principle and infringed Poland's sovereignty to decide on such matters as security and social assistance. The resolutions were also supported by members the parliamentary opposition (Sejm, 2016).

An analysis of transcripts of the discussions during the Sejm session demonstrates that the refugee crisis has been framed in the public debate as essentially a security crisis, both in a physical as well as a symbolic sense (Sejm, *Sprawozdania stenograficzne*). These narratives are not mutually exclusive, on the contrary, they often intersect and reinforce one another. What unites them is the claim that Poland is under threat and has a moral obligation to defend itself.

- *The refugee crisis is Europe-made, and thus it is Europe's responsibility. Poland should resist yet another EU's/Germany's/liberal elite's imposition detrimental to Polish national interests.*
- *The refugee crisis is in fact a security crisis: Muslim immigrants are a physical threat (terrorism, violence, especially against women).*
- *The so-called refugee crisis is bogus, as it is not actually refugees but economic migrants coming to Europe. Thus we have no moral responsibility to receive them.*
- *The refugee crisis is a civilisational threat: the clash of civilisations is unavoidable and will bring detrimental results, affecting 'our way of life'. Poland is to serve once more as the last bastion of Christianity in Europe.*
- *Poland has been experiencing its own refugee crisis: Poland has already accepted a large number of Ukrainian refugees (from several hundred to one million), thus it does not have the capacity to receive refugees from the Middle East and Africa.*

The last narrative needs more elaboration. Despite the fact that Poland has granted international protection to less than two hundred Ukrainians fleeing Ukraine as a result of the Russian annexation of the Crimea and the military operations in Donbas, the representatives of the Polish state used a counterfactual argument that Poland has received about a million Ukrainian refugees in order to justify its refusal to participate in the relocation and resettlement processes. Responding to the question whether Poland was not showing solidarity regarding the migrant issue, the Minister said: 'Solidarity is a two-way street. You are showing solidarity and we are showing it, for example by taking in one million Ukrainian refugees, who are currently in Poland'. 'You only see these migrants flowing in from the South, and we see those coming from the East,' he added (MFA, 2016). The government representatives have on many occasions quoted the number of several hundred thousand or even a million of Ukrainian refugees in Poland. The most recent example comes from the February 2017 conference in Munich, where Minister for Foreign Affairs, Waszczykowski yet again mentioned Poland's own refugee crisis (Poland, 2017). It has been mentioned above, however, that the number of Ukrainians granted international protection is less than two hundred. There is indeed a large number of labour migrants, even though in 2017 their estimated numbers are smaller than one million (NBP, 2018; see Olena Babakova's chapter in this publication), but their presence is not in any way a useful argument in the discussion on the refugee crisis. Rather, it has been exploited as a red herring in the debate on Poland's duties vis-à-vis the humanitarian crisis.

The analysis of the discourse in the Polish press demonstrates that already before the elections the press has been significantly polarised, with left-liberal newspapers and magazines focusing on the humanitarian aspect of the crisis, and right-wing nationalist media, predictably, promulgating anti-immigrant messages. Notably, in the narratives produced by the left-liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Polityka* and the right-wing *W Sieci* the roles of protagonists and antagonists were fully reversed. In other words, victims, people looking for safety in one newspaper turned to invaders and cheats in another, while people helping the victims – turned to nation's traitors. But what is also significant, irrespective of political orientation, is that the coverage of the crisis in the newspapers was predominately emotional rather than based on factual analysis (Wasilewski et al., forthcoming). In fact, in the right-

wing press refugees have been called 'invaders', 'colonisers', 'conquerors', 'a civil army', 'a Trojan horse', or 'Islamic battering ram'. Their arrival in Europe has been termed as an 'invasion', 'siege', 'conquest', 'penetration', 'terror' (Bertram - Jędrzejczek, 2015). What is more, politicians and others expressing open-minded attitudes towards refugees, have been framed as 'traitors to the nation'. As an illustration to this claim may serve the cover of the *W Sieci* magazine after Poland agreed to participate in the resettlement and relocation process. The then Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz was pictured as a female suicide bomber and the caption read: 'Ewa Kopacz has brought hell on orders from Berlin' (*W Sieci*, 27 September 2015).

As qualitative analysis of the image of Muslims in the Polish press indicates, the metaphor of war, or jihad, has several variations: the physical, sexual and social jihads and the clash of civilisations, (Wigura et al, 2016). Much in tune with the narratives used in the political debate, Muslims were presented as potential terrorists, social care system spongers as well as those unwilling to integrate, but rather impose their own value system on the receiving society, reflecting the perceptions of realistic and symbolic threats (Stephan, W. G. – Stephan, C. W., 2000). Notably, the refugee crisis has also brought to the public forum the issue of autochthonous Muslims – the fully integrated Polish Tatars living in the country for many centuries. Some commentators questioned their loyalties and raised concerns regarding possible security threats arising from their presence in Poland. A journalist and editor of one of the main Polish broadsheet newspapers *Rzeczpospolita*, Dominik Zdort (who became the chief editor of the Polish Public Television internet service under PiS government) – supported with enthusiasm George Friedman's idea that best for Europe would be to deport all Muslims expressed in an article published in the newspaper earlier, and focused rather on the practical challenges regarding the deportation of the Polish Tatars:

'[...] Personally, I do not feel any civilisational connection with Polish Tatars. If from the end of 14th century they lived among Christians and did not convert, did not forsake Islam, maybe there is something to worry about... We are not claiming that because of that we need to set the alarm bells ringing or establish the Polish Pegida and prepare proscriptive lists. Yet, there is never enough caution. I hope that the Tatar Islam believers are taken well care of by the relevant Polish services. Because after all this is a different civilisation' (*Rzeczpospolita*, 2015).

The analysis of the media discourse also mentions the metaphor of the so-called 'ideology of multiculturalism' and the metaphor of 'Europe's suicide' (Wigura et al, 2016). In an attempt to rationalise the unwillingness to receive any Muslim refugees, according to the anti-refugee narrative, Poland is one of the few sensible countries not yet corrupted by the 'ubiquitous political correctness' and 'the ideology of multiculturalism' harmful for the well-being of any nation. It is further claimed that by refusing to accept civilisationally alien newcomers, Poland is trying to protect itself, unlike the rest of Europe that has willingly entered the path leading towards its destruction.

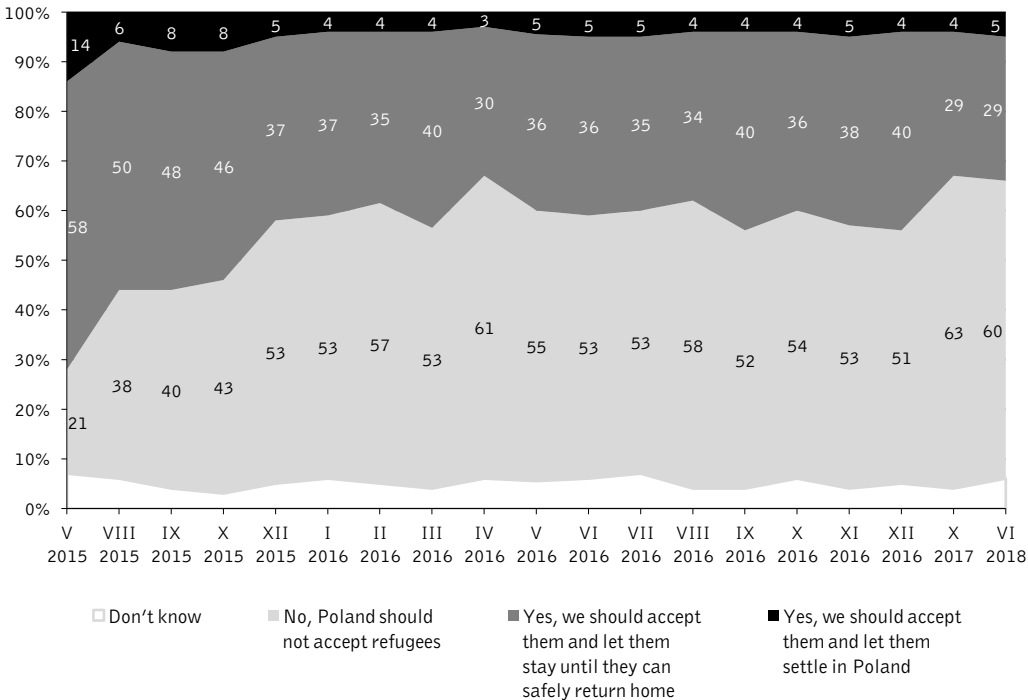
After taking power in November 2015, the Law and Justice party government has passed a new media law and installed its loyalists to head the public broadcasting channels. In 2017 Freedom House changed Poland's Press freedom status from "free" to "partly free", motivating the change by "government intolerance toward independent or critical reporting, excessive political interference in the affairs of public media, and restrictions on speech regarding Polish history and identity, which have collectively contributed to increased self-censorship and polarisation" (Freedom House, 2017). As a result, the public television discourse has become unprecedentedly biased against immigrants and

refugees, with public broadcasters featuring manipulative, sometimes openly racist scaremongering material. One of the most widely-discussed cases was the broadcasting by the 'TVPinfo' public television channel of a one-minute-long material about the mayor of Gdańsk, who established the council of immigrants, illustrated the material with many shots from refugee camps and some unknown places, featuring dark-skinned men engaged in tussle, fighting, money begging, and dramatic music in the background (Bartosik, 2016).

4. Public opinion on refugees and foreigners

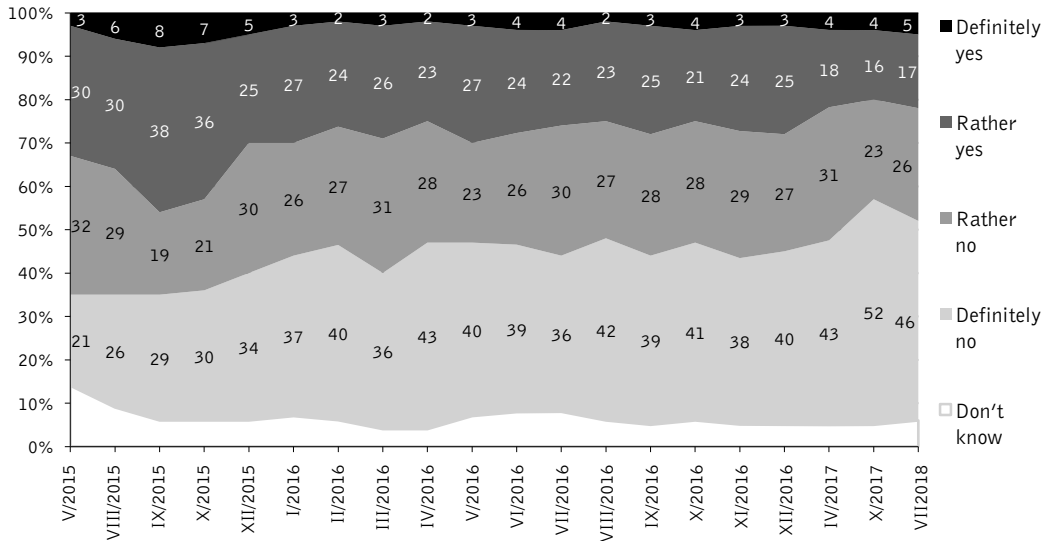
The last three years have seen a dramatic increase of public opposition towards receiving refugees: from mere 21% in May 2015 to 60% in July 2018 (see Graph 1). Poles are opposed to the relocation of refugees from other European countries more affected by the refugee crisis. Only one in five Poles agrees to such a solution (see Graph 2). Significantly, there is a clear hierarchy of refugees from different countries of origin: refugees from Ukraine (perceived as culturally close to Poland) are much more readily welcomed by Poles than refugees from the Middle East and Africa. 32% of those who claim Poland should not receive some of the refugees coming to the EU – say 'yes' to receiving Ukrainian refugees (CBOS, 2018).

Graph 1. Dynamics of support for receiving refugees from countries torn by military conflicts (Question "Should Poland accept refugees from countries torn by military conflicts?")



Source: CBOS data.

Graph 2. Changing support for relocation of refugees (Question: "Due to considerable inflow of refugees from Middle East and Africa some EU member state are not able to deal with this problem. Do you think that Poland should accept some of the refugees coming to Europe?")



Source: CBOS data.

Moreover, Poles are opposed to receiving refugees from Muslim countries even under a hypothetical threat of losing part of the EU funds. Only 16% of Poles agree to receive refugees in order to avoid such a threat, while 75% is set against it (CBOS, 2018).

Refugees from Muslim countries are strongly associated with the probability of terrorist attacks, and thus the threat to security in the most direct sense. According to the research conducted by the Pew Institute, in spring 2016 71% of Poles agreed with the statement that Muslim refugees will increase the likelihood of terrorism in Poland. Also, among the ten researched EU states, the highest support for the Donald Trump’s ban on Muslim immigration was in Poland (71%) (Pew, 2016).

Attitudes towards receiving refugees clearly go hand in hand with political party preferences. Voters of the governing Law and Justice party, of Kukiz’15 and the far-right KORWiN parties are much more likely to oppose receiving refugees than voters of the left-wing Together (Razem) party (not in the parliament) and the liberal Modern party. Just above half of the former ruling party Civic Platform voters support relocation of refugees, while 42% – oppose it.

Table 2. Support for receiving refugees, according to political preference (in %)

| | Yes, we should receive them and let them settle in Poland | Yes, we should receive them and let them stay until they can safely return home | No, Poland should not receive refugees | Don't know |
|------------------------|---|---|--|------------|
| Non-voters | 2 | 20 | 70 | 8 |
| Nowoczesna | 7 | 70 | 23 | 0 |
| Kukiz’ 15 | 0 | 35 | 56 | 9 |
| Civic Platform | 17 | 47 | 28 | 7 |
| Law and Justice | 1 | 16 | 80 | 4 |

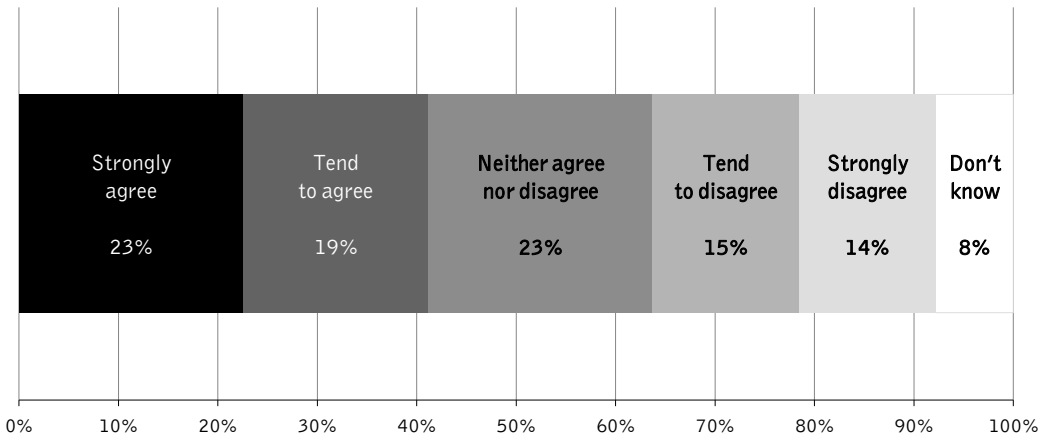
Source: CBOS data, 2018.

Table 3. Support for relocation, by party preference (in %)

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|------------------------|-----|----|------------|
| Non-voters | 14 | 76 | 10 |
| Nowoczesna | 60 | 37 | 3 |
| Kukiz' 15 | 13 | 85 | 2 |
| Civic Platform | 51 | 42 | 6 |
| Law and Justice | 5 | 92 | 3 |

Source: CBOS data, 2018.

Graph 3. "Supporters of migration from Muslim countries want to destroy traditional Polish and Christian values."



Source: Demos and IPA, 2016.

Migration, in particular from Muslim countries has become a strongly polarising issue, with a considerable share of Poles (42%) claiming that supporters of migration from Muslim countries simply aim at destroying traditional Polish and Christian values (see Graph 3).

Anti-refugee sentiments and the opposition towards relocation have not considerably translated into Euroscepticism, at least in quantitative terms. In October 2016, 84% supported EU membership, and 41% supported further EU integration (CBOS). Also, while people who support receiving refugees are much more likely to also support further European integration: 70% of those who opt for letting refugees settle in Poland also support deeper EU integration, a large share of those unwilling to receive refugees support deeper integration (37%). Qualitative data shows that there is a lot of negative sentiments towards "Europe" among people who generally support Poland's membership in the EU. The research further indicates that one of the issues that drives the criticism is the migration crisis and the perceived violation of Poland's sovereignty in an attempt to deal with the crisis by the EU (Fomina, 2017).

Interestingly enough, anti-refugee sentiments and the opposition to relocation have not considerably influenced general support for Poland's membership in the EU. The public support for Poland's EU membership has not dropped below 81% during the PiS's time in government, with 87% of Poles supporting EU membership in 2018 (CBOS, 2018b).

More strikingly, Polish youth is particularly prone to anti-refugee and anti-Muslim sentiments among different age groups (see Table 4). What is more, research shows correlation between anti-refugee and anti-migrants sentiments and Euroscepticism. Young people who oppose receiving refugees are also more likely to favour exit from the EU than other respondents. There is also a correlation between greater support for leaving the EU and the belief that immigrants are a threat to national safety. Young Poles who think that immigrants are a burden for the social welfare system and have a negative impact on the economy are, again, more likely to support leaving the EU than other respondents (Kucharczyk – Łada – Schöler, 2017).

Table 4. Support for receiving refugees from countries torn by military conflicts, by age group (in %)

| Should Poland receive refugees from countries torn by military conflicts? | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 and more |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Yes, we should receive them and let them settle here. | 5 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 6 |
| Yes, we should receive them until they can safely return home | 26 | 28 | 48 | 51 | 58 | 51 |
| No, Poland should not receive refugees | 69 | 51 | 41 | 36 | 32 | 37 |
| DK | 0 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 6 |

Source: CBOS.

Dorota Hall's qualitative research into the motivations behind hostility towards refugees among young people demonstrates that refugees from Muslim countries are perceived as in terms of a threat to security. In a more direct sense, they are associated with terrorism and violence, especially violence against women. However, this is not just about physical security. The symbolic dimension appears equally important. Muslim refugees are seen as a tool of destroying 'the world as we know it', understood in many different ways, be it the traditional Polish society, or the way Polish cities look, or the predominance of Christian religion in the public sphere (Hall, 2016). Thus, those opposing receiving of refugees may see themselves as true patriots, keen on defending their country against the 'foreign invasion'.

Further on, Hall's study participants argued that the people coming to Europe technically are not refugees, since they could find a safe haven in Turkey or other neighbouring countries. Thus, their decision to come to Europe is economically motivated. What is more, Muslim immigrants are seen as not willing to undertake paid work, but rather coming to Europe in the hope of 'milking' the generous social welfare systems, unlike e.g. Ukrainians or the Vietnamese, who are known for their hard work and generally perceived as welcome. In fact, some study participants emphasised that they have nothing against other migrants, Ukrainians or non-Muslim Asians, in a way pointing out that their hostility is not motivated by general xenophobia, but by very rational premise. Moreover, they claim that Poland does not bear any responsibility for accommodating any refugees coming from the Middle East or Africa, as the current crisis is the outcome of previous policies of the Western countries. Interestingly

enough, some also put forward an argument that Poland simply does not have the experience or the capacity to deal with culturally alien migrants, thus they would simply be better off in already culturally diverse countries like the Netherlands, France or Germany (Hall, 2016).

The attitude towards receiving refugees who are predominantly associated with Islam, should be seen in the context of Poles' attitudes towards Muslims. Generally, the attitudes towards Muslims have deteriorated in Poland in comparison to the situation ten years ago. In the beginning of 2015, 34% of Poles agreed with the opinion that a violent conflict between Islam and the West is unavoidable, in comparison to 19% in 2006. Also more people now believe that this conflict is the result of cultural and religious differences (40% in 2015 and 34% in 2006). What is more, those who believe that the conflict is of cultural and religious nature (rather than about interests and political influence) are more likely to be convinced about the unavoidable violent conflict. There is also an important gender dimension: social distance is greater towards Muslim men (22% – 55%), than Muslim women (19% – 46%). Moreover, the majority of Poles believe that Muslims are not tolerant towards traditions and values other than their own (64%). Also most respondents think that Muslims living in European countries generally do not adopt traditions and values characteristic for the majority of these countries' citizens (63%), and that Muslims accept violence against others (57%). Many Poles also believe that Islam, more than other religions, encourages violence towards representatives of other religions (51%). About 1 in 4 declared they would not mind if there were an anti-Muslim party calling for the expulsion of Muslims from Poland (Feliksiak, 2015).

Furthermore, the refugees and immigrants, in particular from Muslim countries, are seen as a threat. In addition to that Poles who claim that Poland should show solidarity with people fleeing war and persecution as well as with other EU member-states overburdened by very large numbers of asylum-seekers, are perceived by a considerable share of the society as enemies of Christian Poland, and an existential security threat.

5. From politics of fear to policy of securitisation

Migration scholars usually divide the development of the Polish migration policy into several phases, the last before the crisis being the period of stability, maturity and increasing openness of the migration policy). Predominantly under the guidance of the EU legislation, Poland simplified access to the labour market for immigrants, secured migrants rights, liberalised access to citizenship, improved asylum procedure standards, etc. However, as the authors pointed out, the current politicisation of migration and migration policy and its strong presence in the public discourse as well as the refusal to participate in the burden-sharing mechanisms proposed by the European Commission 'raise questions about the consistency of the previous paradigm of this policy' (Łodziński – Szonert, 2016, p. 33). What is more, not only the refusal to participate in the relocation and resettlement processes, but further steps taken by the Law and Justice government in the area of migration and asylum policy - point to a looming policy paradigm change. A number of policy initiatives and practices point to a changing trend in Poland's migration policy towards greater restriction and securitisation.

In terms of asylum policy, asylum seekers, predominately Chechens from the Russian Federation, but also citizens of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Georgia, have been routinely denied the right to apply for asylum at the Belarus-Poland border in the past years. While under the Polish law, the responsibility for deciding on asylum applications lies with the Office of Foreigners. However, in practice, the Border Guard Services have sequestered this function by deciding on the basis of a very brief interview who is

allowed to submit an asylum application, classifying the majority as economic migrants, despite repeated claims regarding the intention to seek asylum in Poland, and returning them to Belarus on the grounds of the lack of valid documents enabling them to enter Poland (Górczyńska – Szczepanik, 2016; HRW, 2017). Polish Minister of the Interior, Mariusz Błaszczak, commenting on the situation at the Polish-Belarusian border, has claimed: 'We are not going to succumb to the pressure from those who want to lead us to a migration crisis. Our policy is very different. Our border is sealed. There is no war in Chechnya, unlike the situation several years ago' (*Gazeta Prawna*, 2016), thus completely ignoring the on-going persecutions by the Kadyrov regime in the Republic.

Moreover, the government prepared amendments to the existing legislation regulating international protection, considerably tightening the existing provisions. These include the introduction of the lists of safe countries of origin and safe third countries; the application of border procedure to all asylum seekers not allowing them the travel documents enabling them to legally enter Poland (visas or residence permits); placing asylum seekers who submit their application at the border in closed reception centres; limiting the possibility of appeal (immediate execution of the decision), or non-issuance of travel documents to asylum-seekers located at closed reception centres, and so on. According to the legal experts some of the proposed amendments violate some of the provisions of the EU Asylum procedures Directive as well as the 1951 Refugees Convention (HFPC, 2017).

Some restrictions have also been introduced regarding labour migration, including from the countries whose citizens previously enjoyed simplified access to the labour market (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, in particular) as short-term and seasonal workers. The amendments to the legislation on promotion of employment has given the Labour Minister the possibility to introduce a maximum number of work permits, seasonal work permits as well as declarations of intent to offer a job per year. These restrictions may refer to industry sectors, regions as well as countries of origin of the potential employees. The decisions on the introduction of these caps should be taken on the basis of the analysis of 'the labour market demand, the country's security concerns and public order as well as complementarity of employment of foreigners in respect to Polish citizens' (MSWiA, 2017). In other words, it has become perfectly legal for the Ministry of Labour to set a cap on labour migrants from a given country due to concerns about security and public order.

Securitisation has also informed the government's approach to the distribution of funds for voluntary organisations working on immigrant and refugee integration, which do the bulk of integration activities for immigrants. The Ministry of the Interior overseeing the grant completions as part of the FAMI or the Fund for Asylum, Migration and Integration decided to review the Fund programme goals in the view of 'the migration crisis, the increase of terrorist activities and increasing concerns related to the impact of the current migration situation on the internal security' (MSWiA, 2016). The already announced grant competitions for non-governmental organisations (FAMI 5/2016 devoted to integration of third country nationals and FAMI 4/2016 devoted to the integration of refugees) were annulled, while in 2017 the funds were overtaken by the central administration. The grant competitions announced that the grants had a "limited" character – were opened only for Marshal's offices of voivodships, public administration entities that up until then had no experience in migrant integration, only in legalisation of residence. As a result, many non-governmental organisations for years working on migrant integration were left without the financial means and thus, their clients were left without support.

In other words, the law-makers are departing from the de-politicised approach to migration policy, caving into the emotional securitisation of public discourse and public anxieties, which are, at the same time, the product of the ruling party's and other right-wing populist parties's electoral campaign, supported by the right-wing media.

6. Concluding remarks

The public discourse on the migration crisis and the public attitudes towards receiving refugees, in particular from 'exotic' far-away Muslim countries, are not shaped in a vacuum, but embedded in a web of symbolic meanings that shape social imagination, other discourses, and understandings of the national identity. One of the elements of this web is the position of emigration, especially political emigration, exile, refugee status in the Polish national historical discourse. The image of a political refugee as a patriot in exile fighting for his country was reinforced by the Great Emigration, the works by Polish Romantic writers in exile, as well as the post-WWII political emigration. As Erdmans pointed out, emigration is perceived in moral terms (1992). Political migration has a higher moral status, than economic migration. If the former is a manifestation of laudable fight for national independence or, at least, individual freedom, the latter is an exemplification of faintheartedness, egoism (Garapich, 2007). Having this experience, the readiness to help others fighting for the freedom of their country, becomes a moral obligation. Hence, the emphasis in the public discourse in the migration crisis has so strongly been put on the argument that people coming from the Middle East, are not refugees, but economic migrants. As Garapich in a different context wrote: 'By reducing individual motivation to a moral dichotomy of ideas vs. "bread", the emigration ideology has the capability of creating a hierarchy of migrants thus legitimising the authority which has power to define who is "political" and who merely "economic"' (Garapich, 2007). Once migrants are labelled as 'economic', a whole different logic is applied in this situation: it is the function of a sovereign state to decide who may or may not enter and stay on its territory.

Other elements of this web of symbolic meanings include the ambivalence of Poland-Europe relationship and the place of Islam. Poland's integration into the EU has been accompanied by conflicting associations. The self-perception of Poland as an *ante-murale* of Christian Europe is an important constituent part of the Polish national identity (Tazbir, 2004) and has shaped the Polish identity-based Euroscepticism (Styczyńska, 2014; Fomina, 2017). While for some Poles the EU has been the epitome of the Enlightenment ideals, human rights, individualism and liberalism, for others the integration into the EU made sense only 'when it is Catholic, or at least Christian' (Góra – Mach, 2010, p. 240). This historical legacy and its significance for the national identity has made the references to 'invasion', 'siege', 'war' particularly operational. According to this narrative, Poland once again is forced to protect Europe.

This narrative fits the messianic tradition presenting Poland as the ever-suffering country for the good of Western European nations (Król, 1998; Góra – Mach, 2010). The so typical for Poles- emphasis on the incomparable suffering of Poland vis-à-vis other countries in the historical context and attributing responsibility for failures and misfortunes, purportedly inadequate position on the international stage or inadequate level of development to external factors, especially other countries has been known as "the Polish complex". Already in the study conducted among young people in 1990, one of the participants claimed: "... France, Great Britain and Germany will exploit turmoil in many countries and will make [these countries] even more dependent on them and will unscrupulously decide about the shape of Europe" (Skotnicka-Illasiewicz, 1991). This claim about the big players, especially Germany, exploiting smaller neighbours also has played prominently in the refugee crisis discourse. In our current case, it is Germany that is accused of inviting refugees either as an act of cowardice or realisation of egoistic economic interests (cheap labour force), while forcing other countries to share the burden. Thus, the anti-refugee discourse is embedded into a particular understanding of patriotism

and the perception of EU integration, where Europe dictates something to its member-states, and the knee-jerk reaction mechanism should be to defend Poland's sovereignty.

Islamophobia in Poland is also not a new phenomenon, and has many dimensions, including the historical legacy of conflict, essentialised fear of violence, or the self-inflicted mission to re-Christianise Europe (Pędzwiatr, 2015, p. 137), even though it was never considerably politicised before. After the end of the Cold War, Muslims and the broadly conceived world of Islam have taken the role of the 'Significant Other', previously held by communism (Pędzwiatr, 2015, p. 105). The clash of civilisations has become a powerful narrative explaining the developments in the world and the new dividing lines in Europe.

Anti-migration discourse conflated with anti-Muslim discourse has contributed to the electoral victory of the populist right-wing, falling on fertile ground and tapping into previously held fears, prejudices and convictions that have not been politically salient before (Fomina – Kucharczyk, 2016). As Glick Schiller points out, anti-immigrant and anti-refugee discourse is part of a nation-state building process, 'a ritual of renewal that engages its participants in defining their loyalty to a country by differentiating them from stigmatised and racialised others' (Glick Schiller, 2010, p. 50). Even though anti-refugee or anti-Muslim discourse is a very new phenomenon in the Polish public debate, it was easily adopted by the political entrepreneurs mobilising voters around the idea of a culturally, ethnically and religiously homogenous nation-state, where Muslim refugees joined the ranks of other 'enemies of the nation', including liberals, EU federalists, post-communist elites, atheists or gays and feminists.

Anti-refugee discourse tied in very comfortably with the previous discourses, including the opposition to the EU integration as the source of unwelcome policy impositions, battle with the presumably arrogant and treacherous elites as well as the cultural backlash against the changes in the social values (Norris, 2016). Migration from Muslim countries has been framed in the public discourse and reflected in the public opinion as not only a physical security threat, due to potential arrival of terrorists under the false pretences of refugees, but also as an existential threat, reinforcing the already existing anxieties, fears related to the on-going changes in the social values of which Pippa Norris speaks.

Moreover, in the response to the crisis, own security concerns have prioritised over the humanitarian needs of migrants. As Isotalo puts it: 'The politicisation of migration (or migrant transnationality) means that new security conceptualisations [...] are increasingly operationalised on behalf of state security and at the expense of migrant and refugee security' (Isotalo, 2010, p. 134). By framing the refugee crisis as a threat to 'our security', the political entrepreneurs successfully silenced the claims about the need to demonstrate solidarity with refugees by attending to their needs. This prioritisation is helped not only by the already mentioned framing of refugees as economic migrants, but also by dehumanisation of refugees and migrants in the public discourse with the use of the metaphors of natural cataclysms, such as 'flood', 'wave', and of war or referring to them as 'savages' or 'barbarians'. The electoral victory of the populist right-wing has helped to make it the dominant discourse, despite the presence of the humanitarian discourse in the Polish public sphere, and translate it into restrictive migration policy solutions.

The framing of the refugee crisis as a physical and existential security threat has also helped political entrepreneurs to silence the opposition. Once refugees are framed as 'invaders', locals who attempt to aid them are 'collaborators' or 'the fifth column', and as the data quoted above demonstrates, the narrative has appealed to a considerable share of the Polish society. By promoting soci-

etal divisions, feeding the anxieties, and keeping the state of emergency, the ruling elites attempt to preserve their power.

This is by no means to claim that the radicalisation of public discourse and public opinion is simply a top-down process. Previous research into the nature of elite-mass linkages demonstrates that this relationship is reciprocal. The elites both influence public opinion and shape their messages and policies in response to the views of their supporters – Steenbergen et al. speak of a 'dual-process model' (Steenbergen, 2007).

Finally, the refugee crisis has revealed not only the crisis of solidarity towards people in dire need, as a result of prioritising own security over humanitarian needs of others, but also the crisis of solidarity among the EU member-states. Niźnik has discussed how 'solidarity' as an organising unit of the EU discourse has been replaced with that of 'democracy', as a result, the EU is facing problems with strategic decision-making (Niźnik, 2012). What is more, the idea of the so-called democratic deficit (or the crisis of democracy) of the EU (Habermas, 2011) has been hijacked by right-wing populists in many EU member-states, not just Poland. For them, the solution to this challenge is the emphasis on sovereignty of nation-state, bringing back as many competences as possible, or, in radical scenarios, exit. The denial of solidarity on part of Poland in the context of the refugee crisis may be detrimental for Polish interests in other policy dimensions, including the cohesion policy or EU policy towards Eastern Europe, including Ukraine.

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HUNGARY

Migration trends and their socio-economic context in Hungary

BÉLA SOLTÉSZ

1. Introduction

This chapter presents the most important traits of Hungary's recent migration history. Despite the media attention and the politicisation of the issue of asylum seekers arriving from war-torn third countries, most "migrants" arriving to or departing from Hungary are moving within Europe. The majority of immigrants to Hungary are workers from neighbouring countries, and Hungarians who leave the country also do so because of work, usually heading towards Western European countries.

The following analysis therefore focuses on these two groups, as they are, by far, the most populous. The analysis approaches the migration processes to and from Hungary from two perspectives. First, a historical overview of migration and its socio-political and economic context is presented, focusing on the past three decades. Second, an analytical overview of the current situation is carried out, based on the latest available data, and focusing on the socio-economic characteristics of the immigrant and emigrant population.

In order to shortly sum up the historical trajectories, it can be said that the period of state socialism in Hungary was followed by turbulent transition and post-transition years, when socialist industrial plants and agricultural cooperatives were privatised and unemployment started to rise. Nonetheless, the economy was bailed out by foreign direct investments, creating a rather positive social ambiance. Emigration was relatively low, and immigration (of ethnic Hungarians from impoverished Romania and collapsing Yugoslavia, and also a minor inflow from China) and transit migration started to rise. Around the turn of the millennium, a period of stable economic growth was recorded, and as Hungary joined the European Union, several member states (the United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden) immediately opened their labour market for Hungarians. This triggered a growing emigration, yet a positive net migration rate was observed, as Hungary was still popular among immigrants from neighbouring countries. However, Hungary was hit hard by the 2008 financial crisis, and the low economic growth, as well as household indebtedness and the end of the 7-year derogation period for Austria and Germany (from opening their labour market for Hungarians) fueled the emigration process, while immigration started to decrease. Simplified naturalisation for ethnic Hungarians has, nonetheless, boosted the number of Hungarian citizens. Finally, in the mid-2010s a moderate economic growth was observed, which could have acted as a new draw for potential immigration. Nonetheless, the 2015 refugee crisis and a following anti-immigration campaign placed the immigration issue high on the political agenda, aiming at restrictive immigration policies. Net inflow of immigrants remained relatively low and dominated by intra-EU migration, showing some modest increase only in the last year. Emigration has been significant but not very high, and it shows circular characteristics: it is estimated that approximately half of the emigrants return

to Hungary within a couple of years. In the run-up to the 2018 elections, the refugee/asylum seeker issue was central, leading to a previously unseen intensity of openly xenophobic discourse on behalf of the ruling Fidesz party.

Concerning the latest socio-demographic and economic characteristics of Hungary's immigrant and emigrant groups, a valuable recent data source is the Microcensus carried out by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office in 2016 and published in 2018. The second half of this chapter relies mostly on the data collected via the additional questionnaire of the Microcensus on international migration, a set of questions asked to approximately 5% of all Hungarian households. Legal and social categories of the immigrant groups are very diverse in Hungary: the largest one is the ethnic Hungarians who were born in the neighbouring countries (most of them are naturalised Hungarian citizens), followed by citizens of the European Economic Area. A relatively low number of third country nationals and a negligible amount of refugees complete the immigrant landscape. Many of the immigrant groups show better socio-economic and demographic features than the host society: immigrants tend to be younger than Hungarians, and their average education attainment level is also somewhat higher. Several sectors of the labour market are attractive for immigrants, with the retail and catering sectors being the main focus of activity for immigrants from third countries. Emigrants from Hungary are also usually younger and more educated than the national average. Their absolute majority has left the country in order to work in Western Europe: the most popular destination countries are Germany, the United Kingdom and Austria. While accurate data is difficult to obtain, it can be estimated that the emigrant population is larger than the population of immigrants in Hungary (if we do not include ethnic Hungarians who were born abroad and have obtained Hungarian citizenship), therefore the country has a negative net migration rate.

2. Historical overview

2.1. Antecedents: some remarks about the state socialist period (1948-1989)

While the transition to democracy is a conventional starting point for analyses presenting current social trends in Hungary, it is worthwhile to include some remarks about the period of state socialism (1948-1989). Hungary used to be a relatively closed country during these four decades, and immigration was negligible. Nonetheless, total (both authorised and non-authorised) outward migration was significant: it is estimated at around 430,000 (Tóth, 1997). Two very different channels of emigration were opened under very different circumstances.

First, as a consequence of the revolution in 1956, the Austrian border opened for three months. During this brief period, an estimated 176,000 emigrants left Hungary: mostly young, educated males. Most of them headed towards the United States, Canada, Austria and other countries of Western Europe where they were granted asylum. The sudden emigration of that many young and skilled workers was a considerable loss to Hungary, both in demographic and economic terms (Habicsek – Illés, 2007).

Second, after a period of repressions in 1957–1963, the less turbulent phase of the so-called “Kádár era” began, and legal emigration (and immigration) could be permitted upon request in cases

of family reunification. Usually this meant the marriage of Hungarians with foreigners, followed by their departure from the country, although a limited number of immigrants also arrived from other state socialist countries as spouses of Hungarians (Gödri et al., 2014).

Following these relatively low intensity decades, and as a herald for the transition to democracy, Hungary suddenly became a destination (or transit) country for immigration a couple of years before the collapse of the Eastern Bloc. The majority of immigrants arrived from neighbouring countries. Romania was an especially important country of origin, due to the increasing repressions of the Ceaușescu regime, coupled with poverty. Most of the immigrants were ethnic Hungarians. At the same time, many members of the Hungarian minority communities in Ukraine and Yugoslavia decided to move to Hungary. The wave of this “pre-transition” immigration peaked in 1990, with 37,000 immigrants a year. After the political changes in the aforementioned countries, this number started to decrease. Also, the introduction of the right to travel abroad (in January 1988) launched a wave of Hungarian outward migration towards Western Europe (Gödri et al., 2014).

2.2. Transition years and pre-accession period (1989-2004)

The transition to market economy brought a sharp decrease in GDP, with the biggest decline recorded in 1990. Privatisation of state property did, on one hand, create the basis of a new model of development, yet on the other hand, dismantled the former production chains and opened the economic sector for international competition, which caused the collapse of many of the industrial plants and factories. Unemployment started to rise, however, a social policy model based on the forced retirement of many workers kept it on a socially acceptable level. Foreign direct investments (FDI) started to arrive, and an austerity package (in 1995) completed the economic transition. In macroeconomic terms, a relatively prosperous decade (1995-2008) began. Until 2008, a healthy economic growth rate was recorded, between 4% and 5% per year (Gödri et al., 2014).

As a consequence of this relatively prosperous economic trend, Hungary started to receive around 15–20 thousand immigrants per year, mostly from the above-mentioned Hungarian minority areas of the neighbouring countries. The main country of origin, Romania, provided 50–57% of all immigrants in the first half of the 2000s. With the unfolding of the Balkan war, however, non-ethnic Hungarian ex-Yugoslav citizens (ethnic Bosnians, Serbs and Albanians) also arrived in Hungary. Although to a much lesser extent, non-European immigrant groups appeared, most notably the Chinese and several Middle Eastern nationalities. Most of them were small entrepreneurs who took advantage of the collapsing socialist economy and founded successful new businesses, especially clothing shops and fast food buffets (Juhász, 2003).

Between 1988 and 2007, a total of approximately 200,000 foreign citizens received some form of settlement permit. Hungary started to turn from a migrant-sending to a net migrant-receiving country (Melegh, 2012), and it was estimated that in the long run, the country would become a destination country attracting a larger inflow of immigration. Indeed, many migratory channels were set up, but as citizens from the post-Soviet and Balkan countries usually wanted to move to Western Europe, they only stayed in Hungary either for family reasons, or if they were caught by the police and instead of returning to their home countries, applied for asylum (Juhász, 2003).

Emigration from Hungary was massive in the transition years, but net outflow was mainly composed by foreign citizens arriving from Romania and Yugoslavia in the previous years. By the turn of

the millennium, emigration decreased significantly, and it started to show a circular pattern, as a large share of emigrants returned to Hungary after some time spent abroad.

Table 1 summarises the development of Hungarian immigration flows and the stock of the population (please note that there were two breaks in the series due to re-adjustment of the stock data based on the Censuses of 2001 and 2011).

Table 1. Historical data of immigration to Hungary, 1993–2017

| Year | Immigration (flow) | Foreign citizens residing in Hungary (stock) | | Persons granted refugee status (flow) | Persons granted Hungarian citizenship (flow) |
|------|--------------------|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| | | number | % of total resident population | | |
| 1993 | 16,397 | 123,184 | 1.19 | 361 | 8,857 |
| 1994 | 12,752 | 130,710 | 1.27 | 239 | 9,475 |
| 1995 | 14,008 | 138,101 | 1.35 | 116 | 10,695 |
| 1996 | 13,734 | 139,954 | 1.37 | 66 | 9,913 |
| 1997 | 13,283 | 142,506 | 1.40 | 27 | 10,136 |
| 1998 | 16,052 | 148,263 | 1.46 | 362 | 6,516 |
| 1999 | 20,151 | 150,245 | 1.49 | 313 | 7,046 |
| 2000 | 20,184 | 153,125 | 1.52 | 197 | 5,446 |
| 2001 | 20,308 | 110,028 | 1.08 | 174 | 8,590 |
| 2002 | 17,972 | 116,429 | 1.14 | 104 | 3,369 |
| 2003 | 19,365 | 115,888 | 1.14 | 178 | 5,261 |
| 2004 | 22,164 | 130,109 | 1.29 | 149 | 5,432 |
| 2005 | 25,582 | 142,153 | 1.41 | 97 | 9,870 |
| 2006 | 23,569 | 154,430 | 1.53 | 99 | 6,172 |
| 2007 | 22,607 | 166,030 | 1.65 | 169 | 8,442 |
| 2008 | 35,547 | 174,697 | 1.74 | 160 | 8,104 |
| 2009 | 25,582 | 184,358 | 1.84 | 177 | 5,802 |
| 2010 | 23,884 | 197,819 | 1.98 | 83 | 6,086 |
| 2011 | 22,514 | 206,909 | 2.07 | 52 | 20,554 |
| 2012 | 20,340 | 143,361 | 1.44 | 87 | 18,379 |
| 2013 | 21,250 | 141,357 | 1.43 | 198 | 9,178 |
| 2014 | 26,004 | 140,536 | 1.42 | 240 | 8,745 |
| 2015 | 25,787 | 145,968 | 1.48 | 146 | 4,048 |
| 2016 | 23,803 | 156,606 | 1.59 | 154 | 4,315 |
| 2017 | 36,453 | 151,132 | 1.54 | 106 | 2,787 |

Note: 2001 and 2012 show a break in the series due to the adjustment to the Census results.

Source: *Demographic Yearbook of Hungary*, 2017. Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Table 8.1.1. (edited).

2.3. Between the EU-accession and the 2015 refugee crisis (2004–2015)

At the time of the Eastern Enlargement of the EU (2004 and 2007), Hungary was in the top tier of the new member countries in almost every socio-economic area. Up until 2008, economic prospects were favourable, even if structural problems of the economy became visible already before the crisis. The rate of indebtedness grew in a constant way during the 2000s (from a historical low of 52.7% of the GDP in 2001, to 81.4% in 2011), and the economic model (based on the privatisation process, pro-FDI taxation policies, foreign ownership and low wages) became unsustainable as the wage gap between Hungarian and Western European employees started to become narrower (Hárs, 2010).

At the time, however, the perception of the economic climate was positive, and Hungary did not experience a massive outward migration immediately after 2004. Contrary to citizens of other post-socialist countries such as Poland or Latvia, Hungarians did not take advantage of the newly opened labour markets of the United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden. Instead, an increase in the immigration of foreign nationals took place, and by 2005 the number of registered immigrants exceeded 25,000 per year. This increase was mainly due to a higher number of entries from Western Europe (EU15), which was almost 8,000 persons in 2005 (Gödri et al., 2014).

It has to be mentioned that in 2008, figures of immigration increased even more significantly, and approximated those experienced in 1990. This, however, was mostly due to the changes in legislation, which took place in the previous year. On the basis of the new Immigration Act (Act I of 2007), citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA, i.e. European Union and European Free Trade Area countries) with the right of free movement could enjoy a considerably easier registration process than before. Registration certificates and permanent residence cards were easy to get, which resulted in a rise in the number of registered immigrants: of the more than 35,000 immigrants recorded in 2008, around 20,000 held permissions of this kind (Gödri, 2012).

Table 2. Foreign citizens residing in Hungary, by citizenship (stock, selected countries)

| Country | 1995 | 2001 | 2005 | 2011 | 2012 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Europe | | | | | | | | | | |
| Austria | 616 | 694 | 544 | 3,926 | 3,331 | 3,917 | 3,990 | 4,007 | 4,021 | 3,743 |
| Belgium | 113 | 113 | 107 | 658 | 637 | 848 | 918 | 1,000 | 1,026 | 1,061 |
| France | 364 | 511 | 330 | 2,058 | 1,886 | 2,254 | 2,429 | 2,615 | 2,523 | 2,633 |
| Germany | 7,427 | 7,493 | 6,908 | 20,232 | 15,834 | 18,669 | 18,773 | 19,403 | 18,627 | 17,879 |
| Italy | 514 | 542 | 404 | 1,773 | 1,606 | 2,323 | 2,670 | 3,098 | 3,353 | 3,576 |
| Netherlands | 191 | 324 | 236 | 1,933 | 1,858 | 2,395 | 2,544 | 2,704 | 2,814 | 2,877 |
| Spain | 54 | 64 | 50 | 621 | 689 | 1,112 | 1,337 | 1,597 | 1,586 | 1,712 |
| Sweden | 319 | 299 | 181 | 1,017 | 901 | 994 | 967 | 994 | 977 | 1,019 |
| United Kingdom | 631 | 624 | 440 | 2,486 | 2,078 | 2,639 | 2,768 | 2,975 | 3,081 | 3,190 |
| EU-15 | 11,785 | 11,723 | 9,714 | 36,487 | 30,352 | 37,124 | 38,467 | 40,689 | 40,427 | 40,252 |
| Croatia | 305 | 917 | 837 | 953 | 676 | 650 | 831 | 1,012 | 1,064 | 1,221 |
| Poland | 4,628 | 2,279 | 2,178 | 2,734 | 1,385 | 1,863 | 1,964 | 2,129 | 2,061 | 1,928 |
| Romania | 68,439 | 41,561 | 67,529 | 76,878 | 41,596 | 30,924 | 28,641 | 29,665 | 24,040 | 22,747 |
| Slovakia | 231 | 1,576 | 1,225 | 7,297 | 6,705 | 8,275 | 8,744 | 9,393 | 9,519 | 9,652 |
| EU-28 | 87,304 | 59,812 | 82,903 | 128,017 | 82,243 | 80,817 | 80,758 | 85,143 | 79,325 | 77,997 |
| Norway | 77 | 607 | 73 | 911 | 990 | 1,010 | 1,094 | 1,137 | 1,208 | 1,226 |
| Russia | 277 | 1,893 | 2,642 | 3,483 | 2,864 | 3,657 | 4,341 | 4,935 | 4,903 | 4,790 |
| Serbia | 15,297 | 12,664 | 13,643 | 16,301 | 8,281 | 3,051 | 2,430 | 2,426 | 2,312 | 3,356 |
| Turkey | 483 | 455 | 615 | 1,691 | 1,657 | 1,741 | 1,842 | 1,912 | 2,063 | 2,327 |
| Ukraine | 3,501 | 8,947 | 13,933 | 16,537 | 11,894 | 8,317 | 6,906 | 6,749 | 5,774 | 10,503 |
| Total Europe | 122,917 | 93,197 | 122,261 | 171,916 | 110,122 | 101,538 | 100,501 | 105,825 | 99,194 | 104,254 |
| Asia | | | | | | | | | | |
| China | 3,470 | 5,819 | 6,856 | 11,829 | 10,114 | 12,716 | 16,467 | 19,811 | 19,111 | 19,905 |
| Japan | 314 | 431 | 582 | 1,232 | 1,117 | 1,161 | 1,336 | 1,507 | 1,523 | 1,604 |
| Syria | 680 | 583 | 674 | 803 | 626 | 965 | 1,158 | 1,396 | 1,519 | 1,987 |
| Vietnam | 1,276 | 1,893 | 2,521 | 3,149 | 2,612 | 3,073 | 3,078 | 3,242 | 3,256 | 3,698 |
| Total Asia | 9,635 | 12,603 | 15,121 | 26,295 | 24,733 | 28,832 | 33,868 | 39,238 | 39,937 | 44,692 |
| Americas | | | | | | | | | | |
| United States | 1,700 | 1,636 | 1,679 | 3,266 | 3,060 | 3,021 | 3,090 | 3,299 | 3,198 | 3,373 |
| Total Americas | 2,895 | 2,488 | 2,667 | 5,083 | 4,713 | 5,102 | 6,008 | 5,408 | 5,397 | 5,891 |
| Africa | | | | | | | | | | |
| Nigeria | 178 | 144 | 230 | 842 | 988 | 1,260 | 1,381 | 1,487 | 1,475 | 1,469 |
| Total Africa | 2,081 | 1,233 | 1,556 | 2,779 | 3,284 | 4,492 | 4,985 | 5,513 | 5,985 | 6,334 |
| Other and unknown | 573 | 507 | 548 | 836 | 509 | 572 | 606 | 622 | 619 | 638 |
| Total World | 138,101 | 110,028 | 142,153 | 206,909 | 143,361 | 140,536 | 145,968 | 156,606 | 151,132 | 161,809 |

Note: Countries with more than 1,000 citizens living in Hungary (as of 2018) are shown.

Note: 1 April for 1995, 1 January for the other years displayed.

Note: Break in series between 2011 and 2012, due to correction based on the Census of 2011.

Source: *Demographic Yearbook of Hungary*, 2017. Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Table 8.1.15 (edited).

The years of economic progress came to a bitter end with the global financial crisis of 2008-2009. Hungary was an open economy with high dependency on foreign capital, and the financial instability caused a recession, followed by a long period of stagnation, with the GDP growth rate staying below 1% for

several consecutive years. On one hand, this was the reason for a sudden decrease of immigration. On the other hand, the share of immigrants from neighbouring countries began to decline because of the re-direction of the emigration from Romania to Spain and Italy, countries that opened their labour markets and offered better wages to immigrants than Hungary. As a consequence, by 2011 only 40% of immigrants arrived from the four neighbouring countries (as opposed to the 70% recorded in the 1990s and early 2000s) (Gödri et al., 2014).

At the same time – although in significantly smaller numbers – immigrants from pre-2004 member states (Western Europe) also appeared in Hungary: while their share was under 10% at the turn of the millennium; by 2005 it reached 30%, and from 2009 onwards it remained continually over 20%. Almost half of this group were Germans, whose share within the total immigrant population reached 10% in recent years. The other significant group of “new” immigrants consisted of people arriving from Asia: by the end of the 2000s their number and their share exceeded that of the previous years (14–19%). Chinese citizens were the majority within this group, however, a diversification of countries of origin could be observed as time passed (Kováts, 2013).

Economic hardships were a factor for a growing outward migration, which started to rise in 2007-2008. At the same time, member states of the European Union gradually opened their labour market for Hungarian citizens (the United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden in 2004; Spain, Italy and the Netherlands in 2006/2007; Germany and Austria in 2011), acting as a strong pull factor. Short-term labour migration also became popular, especially in the border region (from Western Hungary to Austria) (Hárs, 2009).

Due to growing emigration, remittances of Hungarians abroad started to rise, from a negligible 0.4% of the GNI in 2001 to 2.7% in 2008. In a regional comparison, however, this was still a rather low value (Böröcz, 2014).

Table 3. Hungarian citizens living in selected European countries

| Country | Number of Hungarian citizens (stock) | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
| Austria | .. | 15,133 | 23,342 | 25,627 | 29,832 | 46,264 | 54,939 | 63,550 | 70,584 |
| Belgium | 1,089 | .. | 3,772 | 4,451 | 4,913 | 5,996 | 6,359 | 6,389 | 6,469 |
| Czech Rep. | 477 | 479 | 652 | 711 | 839 | 1,522 | 2,304 | 3,140 | 4,109 |
| Denmark | 406 | 527 | 1,586 | 1,867 | 2,174 | 3,311 | 3,846 | 4,343 | 4,730 |
| Finland | 597 | 634 | 1,198 | 1,315 | 1,536 | 1,784 | 1,879 | 1,968 | 1,973 |
| France | .. | 2,954 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 6,818 | 6,563 |
| Germany | 53,152 | 47,808 | 65,443 | 73,433 | 88,492 | 132,284 | 150,712 | 171,154 | 180,168 |
| Ireland | .. | .. | 8,462 | 8,292 | 8,094 | 7,765 | 7,768 | 8,164 | 9,431 |
| Italy | 2,817 | 3,734 | 5,524 | 5,741 | 6,085 | 7,483 | 7,708 | 8,034 | 8,181 |
| Luxembourg | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,548 | 1,650 |
| Netherlands | 1,385 | 2,029 | 5,294 | 6,546 | 7,775 | 10,280 | 11,223 | 12,256 | 13,123 |
| Norway | 254 | 360 | 1,020 | 1,356 | 1,724 | 2,653 | 3,144 | 3,500 | 3,677 |
| Romania | .. | 269 | .. | .. | 286 | 1,632 | 2,841 | 4,040 | 4,521 |
| Slovakia | .. | 1,526 | 4,602 | 5,341 | 9,255 | 8,134 | 8,629 | 9,185 | 9,799 |
| Spain | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sweden | 2,992 | 2,309 | 4,525 | 4,886 | 5,093 | 5,911 | 6,297 | 6,704 | 6,979 |
| Switzerland | 3,613 | 3,849 | 5,839 | 6,556 | 8,066 | 11,596 | 14,882 | 17,525 | 19,569 |
| United Kingdom | 7,133 | 5,157 | .. | .. | .. | 74,495 | 86,519 | 83,713 | 96,018 |

Note: Data taken from Eurostat and published by HCSO.

Note: Countries with more than 1,000 Hungarian citizens living there (as of 2017) are shown.

Note: No available data for Spain, although it is supposed that more than 1,000 Hungarian citizens live in the country.

Source: *Demographic Yearbook of Hungary*, 2017. Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Table 8.1.16. (edited).

2.4. The 2015 refugee crisis and its aftermath (2015–2018)

The political importance of immigration to Hungary changed dramatically in early 2015. As part of the events labelled later as the European Migration Crisis, a major flow of asylum seekers (mostly from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, but also from Eritrea and several other countries) appeared at EU's external border, between Hungary and Serbia. FRONTEX detected 1.82 million irregular entries to the EU in 2015, of which approximately 764 thousand occurred at the Western Balkan route, predominantly via Hungary but also via Croatia. In 2015, 177,135 refugees applied for asylum in Hungary, a very sharp contrast with previous years (three years earlier, in 2012, Hungary had received 2,155 asylum applications). As European heads of government could not come to an agreement, on 17 June 2015 the Hungarian government announced the construction of a fence all along the border with Serbia, which it completed on 15 September, effectively reducing irregular entries. Before this date, however, large groups of asylum seekers were camping in downtown Budapest, waiting for a possibility to apply for asylum or to move further West. Finally, almost every asylum seeker left the country and headed to Western Europe (Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2015).

The crisis was ultimately 'resolved' by the EU–Turkey agreement on 18 March 2016 which, while it did not tackle any of the root causes of forced migration from the Middle East and Africa, enabled Turkey to effectively hold back prospective immigrants from crossing its territory on their way to Europe. New migration routes were opened, but from the Hungarian perspective, the agreement with Turkey and the construction of the border fence ensured that no major inflows of asylum seekers would reach the country's territory. Those who still arrived, have been subject to a lengthy process in which around 96% of the applications were rejected (Immigration and Asylum Office, 2018).

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's ruling right-wing Fidesz party kept the immigration issue high on their political communication agenda even after March 2016. Until the elections of April 2018, the topic was treated as the highest priority issue in Hungary, stressed by the government's billboard campaigns, and by a referendum on the EU's proposal on introducing quotas for distributing refugees with a status among member states. With time, the tone and the content of this permanent campaign went way beyond a general sense of political decency. The opposition parties could not find a way to overcome this exaggerated anti-immigration propaganda, and the issue of migration – understood in a very restricted way, only as third country nationals seeking refuge in Hungary – became the central topic of the 2018 election campaign, even if actually there were only a couple thousand refugees in Hungary (Lawrynuik, 2018).

Several opposition parties tried to bring the topic of emigration of young, skilled Hungarians as a counter-narrative, stating that the real problem in Hungary was emigration, not immigration. However, they had very limited success: the fact that hundreds of thousands of Hungarians live abroad did not help the public accept, or have solidarity with immigrants (Haász, 2018). Despite the fact that only around four thousand refugees live in Hungary, public discourse on migration is ultimately tied to the issue of asylum of third country nationals in the European Union. Hence, a public discussion on intra-European migration (to and from Hungary) is almost impossible, even if

this would be way more important from the perspective of the country's demographic and economic outlook than the issue of asylum seekers.

3. Current situation: migration and its socio-economic context

3.1. Legal background and data sources

Hungarian legislation on immigration is in line with the EU regulations. The relevant *acquis communautaire*, and in particular the Council Directive 2004/38/EC was incorporated to Hungarian law. These laws (Act on the Entry and Residence of Persons with the Right of Free Movement and Residence, i.e. Act I of 2007; and Act on the Entry and Residence of Third-country Nationals, i.e. Act II of 2007) are the cornerstones of Hungarian immigration legislation, together with the Act on Asylum (Act CXXXIX of 1997), which incorporates the 1951 Geneva Convention for refugees. The latter Act established three categories: "convention refugees" (*menekült*), the "temporary protected" (*menedékes*) and the "persons granted subsidiary protection" (*oltalmazott*) (Tóth, 2009; 2012).

While the previously described legal instruments are common in the European Union, Hungary has another, parallel legal framework for ethnic Hungarians living outside Hungary. Most of them live in their ancestral land, in the neighbouring countries (two of which, Serbia and Ukraine, are not EU members). Understood as a "nation policy" or "diaspora policy" (and not as a "migration policy"), descendants of former citizens of the Kingdom of Hungary (pre-1920) with a knowledge of the Hungarian language can acquire Hungarian citizenship without moving to Hungary. Referred to as "Hungarians from the other side of the border" (*határon túli magyarok*) in Hungarian public discourse, these citizens of Romania, Serbia etc. have a Hungarian ethno-cultural identity, and majority society in Hungary also considers them as part of the Hungarian nation. Descendants of former Hungarian migrants to countries like the United States, Canada, Argentina or Australia are also usually considered as parts of the nation, although to a lesser extent (Gödri et al., 2014).

It has to be clarified, nonetheless, that there has never been an active repatriation programme of co-ethnics like in the case of Germany's *Aussiedler*, so Hungary did not explicitly create incentives for them to relocate to Hungary. Still, ethnic Hungarians living abroad have a very easy access to Hungarian citizenship. Modifying the Act on Hungarian Citizenship (Act LV of 1993), from 1 January 2011 onwards, Hungarian law contains the legal instrument of "simplified naturalisation process" (*egyszerűsített honosítási eljárás*), which has granted Hungarian citizenship to approximately 1 million foreign citizens with Hungarian ethnic background, between 2011 and 2018. While the majority of these new citizens did not move to Hungary, they can, nonetheless, vote for party lists on national elections (*Az egyszerűsített...*, 2018).

Outward migration is a hot issue in the political discourse, but it has little to do with legislative tasks, since an overwhelming majority of Hungarian emigrants remain within the European Economic Area. It is not known yet, how the status of the large Hungarian community in the United Kingdom will change after Brexit.

Based on the above, it can be stated that the data on immigration to and emigration from Hungary is somewhat contradictory, as important categories of immigrants and emigrants have the right to move back and forth without being registered at the country's borders. EEA citizens, as well as Hungarian citizens granted citizenship through the simplified naturalisation process are not properly reflected in the administrative statistics, and the same can be said of Hungarian emigrants living in EEA countries. On the other hand, immigrants from third countries are accurately registered by the Ministry of the Interior (Gárdos – Gödri, 2013).

Statistical data on immigrants and emigrants is compiled by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO), based on Act CLV of 2016 on Statistics. International migration movements are calculated according to the definitions in line with the European Regulation (EC) 862/2007. Annual calculations are based on the Census data of usual resident population (the latest Census being held in 2011), and updated on a yearly basis from administrative registers. Immigration statistics use the Foreigner Register of the Immigration and Asylum Office (with separate subregisters for EEA citizens and for third country nationals with a residence permit) and the Population Register of the Ministry of the Interior (for naturalised citizens and for persons with refugee status or under subsidiary protection) (*Demográfiai Évkönyv*, 2018). Concerning the administrative data on emigration, however, the main source is neither of the above, but the register of the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF). Since 2010, the statistical monitoring of the process uses the NHIF's social security database instead of the population and address register. Hungarian citizens have to deregister at this authority when leaving the country and establishing new insurance in other EU member state, based on Act LXXXIII of 1997 on the Benefits of Mandatory Health Insurance. Although many emigrants do not deregister upon leaving the country, this is still the most reliable data source for emigration statistics. Also, the HCSO uses the mirror statistics from other EU member states, which show how many Hungarian citizens have immigrated to the respective countries (Gárdos – Gödri, 2013).

As an addition to these 'regular' data sources, an 'extra' data source was made available for research in 2018. Data from the Microcensus, or 'small census' of 2016 is currently the most recent source for assessing Hungary's immigrant and emigrant population. The Microcensus was undertaken between 1 October and 8 November 2016, being similar to the Census in essence, but realised as a sample survey. On top of the usual census questionnaires (dwelling and personal data), several supplementary questionnaires were used, one of which was about the topic of international migration, filled by a total of 38,000 respondents (Dickmann et al., 2016). As this data source is the only recent one with substantial information about the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of Hungary's immigrant, emigrant and returning migrant population, the data presented in the remaining part of this chapter is taken from this source. Data tables were published in July 2018, together with an analytical description written by Ádám Dickmann and Anna Sára Ligeti (2018).

Considering the other available data sources, Table 4 gives a summary of relevant categories, definitions and the total (stock) number of immigrants/emigrants measured by them in the given reference year.

Table 4. Comparative characteristics of main data sources on immigration to and emigration from Hungary

| Immigration (stock) | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Category | Data source | Definition of population measured | Population measured (thousands) |
| <i>Census and large scale survey</i> | Census (2011) | Foreign citizens living in Hungary for at least 1 year | 150 |
| | Microcensus (2016) | Foreign citizens living in Hungary for at least 1 year | 143 |
| <i>Administrative</i> | Immigration and Asylum Office (2017) | Foreign citizens with a valid residence permit issued by Hungary | 216 |
| | Ministry of the Interior, Population and Address Register (2017) | Foreign citizens having a registered address in Hungary | 170 |
| Hungarian citizens born abroad, having a registered address in Hungary | | 370 | |
| <i>Statistical calculation</i> | Hungarian Central Statistical Office, yearly population data (2017) | Foreign citizens living in Hungary for at least 1 year, estimated by matching the data from the Ministry of the Interior and the Census | 151 |

| Emigration (stock) | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Category | Data source | Definition of population measured | Population measured (thousands) |
| <i>Census and large scale survey</i> | Census (2011) | Persons having a permanent residence in Hungary and at least one household member living in Hungary, but living abroad at the time of the Census | 213 |
| | LFS ad hoc module, SEEMIG project (2013) | Hungarian citizens who left the country after 1989 and who have been living abroad for at least a year | 350 |
| | Microcensus (2016) | Persons having a permanent residence in Hungary and at least one household member living in Hungary, but living abroad at the time of the Microcensus | 265 |
| <i>Administrative</i> | Health Insurance Fund (2017) | Hungarian citizens having a valid health insurance abroad | 120 |
| <i>Statistical calculation</i> | Eurostat mirror statistics (2016) | Hungarian citizens living in European countries, measured by the respective countries | 416 |
| | United Nations mirror statistics (2017) | Hungarian citizens living in all countries of the world, measured by the respective countries and/or estimated by the UN | 637 |

Source: Dickmann – Ligeti, 2018. Table compiled based on information provided on pp. 10 and 27.

3.2. Immigration to Hungary

Based on the register of the Hungarian Immigration and Asylum Office, the number of holders of valid permits for at least three-month stay in Hungary was 216,000 on 1 January 2017. In addition, the number of foreign nationals residing in Hungary with the registered address in the personal data and address register of the Ministry of the Interior is 170,000. The calculation of the Hungarian foreign population is based on these two data sources, supplemented by an estimate based on the results of the most recent Census. Accordingly, on January 1, 2017, 151,000 foreign nationals are estimated to have been living in Hungary for more than a year. The number of Hungarian citizens who were born

abroad but who live in Hungary can be determined on the basis of the personal data and address register. On 1 January 2017, there were 370,000 foreign born Hungarian citizens who had a registered address in Hungary (*Demográfiai Évkönyv*, 2018).

Hungary has a population of 9.8 million, and around 96% of this stock are Hungarian citizens born in Hungary, so it can be said that only a small portion of the population has an immigration background. 96.7% of the population are Hungarian citizens by birth, 1.9% (184,000) were born elsewhere but received Hungarian citizenship, and 1.4% (137,000) are foreign nationals residing in Hungary. The proportion of those born abroad is 3.8% (365,000), of whom two-thirds are Hungarian citizens (*Demográfiai Évkönyv*, 2018).

Although Hungary receives immigrants from practically all parts of the world (from a total of over 100 countries), the overwhelming majority comes from a few main sending countries. Between 2001 and 2007 some 80–90% of all immigrants arrived from the 10 main sending countries, but after 2008 their share began to decline continually, and by 2011 only amounted to 66%. All of this indicates the growing diversification of immigrants according to country of origin. At the same time, in a European comparison Hungary's immigration is modest in extent, both as regards the number of immigrants and their ratio per thousand inhabitants. In the 2000s, the latter indicator varied around 2 and 2.5, and very few European countries had rates lower than this (Dickmann – Ligeti, 2018).

Hereinafter, two population groups of immigration background should be clearly distinguished:

1. Foreign nationals: more than 90% of this group were born abroad, and those foreign nationals born in Hungary are usually their offsprings.
2. Hungarian nationals born abroad: this group consists of several sub-groups, most of them with Hungarian citizenship by naturalisation, while 29% of them are Hungarian nationals by birth.

The latter subgroup can be further divided: on the one hand, children of Hungarian emigrants who were born abroad and later moved to Hungary. On the other hand, Hungarian citizens born in localities that at the time used to belong to Hungary but now are outside the present territory of the country.

The number and proportion of foreign nationals living in Hungary did not change substantially, if compared with the 2011 Census (see: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2013). In 2016, 137,000 people (1.4% of the resident population) belonged to this group. The number and proportion of Hungarians born abroad has declined slightly since 2011, so as of 2016, there were 239,000 people recorded (2.5% of the resident population).

Almost half of all foreign nationals living in Hungary are citizens of the neighbouring countries plus Germany. Romania tops the list with 20,672 nationals, followed by Germany (19,398) and Slovakia (15,368). China is the largest sending country among non-European countries of origin. In the top ten, there is one more non-European country (Vietnam with 4,120 citizens), the remaining five being all European – Ukraine, Austria, Russia, United Kingdom and Poland – with around 3-4 thousand nationals each. 93% of the foreign nationals living in Hungary were born abroad.

The vast majority of Hungarian nationals born abroad (85%) come from four neighbouring countries with a considerable minority of ethnic Hungarians (Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine). Romania is the first on this list (56%), just like in the case of the foreign nationals living in Hungary, and as such, this country can be considered as the most important source of immigration to Hungary (Dickmann – Ligeti, 2018).

Most of the socio-demographic characteristics of the Hungarian immigrant population collected by the Microcensus can be seen in the table below.

Table 5. Immigrant population in Hungary, 2016 (percentages)

| | | Born in Hungary | | | Born outside Hungary | | |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| | | Hungarian citizens by birth (no immigration background) | Hungarian citizens by naturalisation | Foreign citizens | Hungarian citizens by birth | Hungarian citizens by naturalisation | Foreign citizens |
| Sex | Male | 47.6 | 50.4 | 55.4 | 43.1 | 44.2 | 51.3 |
| | Female | 52.4 | 49.6 | 44.6 | 56.9 | 55.9 | 48.7 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Age | 0–14 | 15.0 | 23.7 | 50.6 | 9.9 | 2.6 | 5.6 |
| | 15–19 | 4.8 | 8.8 | 9.0 | 2.5 | 1.8 | 2.7 |
| | 20–24 | 5.9 | 9.9 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.6 | 8.6 |
| | 25–29 | 6.3 | 5.7 | 3.1 | 4.5 | 6.7 | 9.2 |
| | 30–39 | 14.1 | 8.9 | 3.9 | 9.8 | 19.8 | 21.1 |
| | 40–49 | 15.5 | 11.5 | 6.0 | 9.4 | 25.9 | 17.8 |
| | 50–59 | 12.6 | 7.9 | 3.1 | 6.2 | 15.9 | 13.0 |
| | 60– | 25.9 | 23.6 | 21.3 | 54.8 | 23.8 | 22.1 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Education attainment | Still in school (0–16 years old) | 17.0 | 27.1 | 56.7 | 10.7 | 3.1 | 6.3 |
| | Primary or less | 20.3 | 20.6 | 9.6 | 24.7 | 13.0 | 16.4 |
| | Secondary with no high school diploma | 18.3 | 12.1 | 6.0 | 9.1 | 14.7 | 10.9 |
| | High school diploma | 27.3 | 25.8 | 14.7 | 28.9 | 36.1 | 30.3 |
| | University or college degree | 17.1 | 14.4 | 13.1 | 26.6 | 33.0 | 36.0 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Current activity | Working | 46.4 | 35.6 | 14.1 | 29.2 | 62.8 | 50.3 |
| | Studying | 18.6 | 34.0 | 48.3 | 12.4 | 5.5 | 15.5 |
| | Other | 35.0 | 30.4 | 37.5 | 58.4 | 31.7 | 34.2 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Occupation area (ISCO-08) of current workers | Managers | 5.0 | 5.4 | 11.3 | 5.3 | 5.9 | 7.4 |
| | Professionals | 18.0 | 17.5 | 25.0 | 28.4 | 25.3 | 29.4 |
| | Technicians and associate professionals | 16.6 | 15.3 | 8.9 | 16.7 | 16.2 | 12.7 |
| | Clerical support workers | 6.3 | 9.0 | 14.4 | 8.0 | 6.1 | 4.7 |
| | Service and sales Workers | 15.1 | 12.3 | 16.5 | 14.2 | 14.4 | 22.3 |
| | Skilled agricultural workers | 3.6 | 2.8 | 1.8 | 1.3 | 2.3 | 2.7 |
| | Craft and related trades workers | 14.0 | 12.6 | 10.2 | 11.1 | 13.2 | 7.8 |
| | Plant and machine operators, assemblers | 11.6 | 12.7 | 4.3 | 8.6 | 8.6 | 5.1 |
| | Other, elementary occupations | 10.0 | 12.4 | 7.6 | 6.5 | 8.1 | 8.0 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Study level (of current students) | Primary (or secondary with no high school degree) | 9.6 | 4.6 | 11.1 | 2.6 | 5.1 | 1.8 |
| | Secondary | 47.6 | 47.5 | 48.2 | 37.1 | 31.4 | 7.2 |
| | College, BA/BSc, university, MA/MSc | 41.6 | 48.0 | 40.7 | 57.5 | 58.4 | 86.1 |
| | Doctoral (PhD or DLA) | 1.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.9 | 5.1 | 4.9 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: *Microcensus*, 2016. Annex tables 2.1.

Concerning the distribution by sex, there is a slight bias. In the groups of Hungarian citizens born abroad, there are more women (57% in the case of Hungarians by birth, and 56% in the case of Hungarians by naturalisation). In contrast, the proportion of women among foreign nationals is lower (45% among foreign nationals born in Hungary, and 49% in the case of foreigners born abroad).

Significant differences can also be observed in the age composition of these population groups. The oldest are those immigrants who were born abroad, but as a Hungarian citizen. Among them, 55% are aged 60 and over, with an average age of 58 years. This is mainly due to the effects of territorial changes caused by the World Wars, and the subsequent forced displacement of certain population groups.

The youngest group of foreigners includes foreign nationals born in Hungary (i.e. to immigrant parents): over half of them are under 15, and their average age is 29 years. Those who were born in Hungary as foreign nationals but have received Hungarian citizenship in the meantime, have an average age of 39 years. The average age of those who were born abroad is slightly over the average of the majority society (45–48 years, compared with the average age of 42 years of Hungarians born in Hungary), but the oldest age group, over the age of 60, is also smaller in their case (22–24% vs. 26%).

An important feature of every group with immigration background is that their average education attainment level is higher than the average of Hungarians born in Hungary. The only exception is that of nationalised foreigners born in Hungary (usually young people born in immigrant families), as they are still pursuing their studies. The group with the highest education level is that of Hungarian citizens by naturalisation who were born outside Hungary: 69% of them have at least a high school degree.

The geographical distribution of the immigrant population is uneven – 48% of the foreign-born population, and 58% of the foreign nationals live in the NUTS 2 region of Central Hungary (Budapest and its surroundings), while this region is home only to the 31% of the Hungarians born in Hungary. The region adjacent to the Austrian border (Western Hungary) accounts for another 11% of foreign nationals. Concerning Hungarian nationals born abroad, a sizeable share of them live close to the Eastern borders of the country (Northern Great Plain and Southern Great Plain regions, 12–12%), the regions that lie close to the ethnic Hungarian areas in Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.

The reason for moving to Hungary was, in more than one third of all cases, related to family (35% of foreign citizens and 42% of Hungarian nationals born abroad had this response in the Microcensus). The second most frequent reason was work (21% and 22%, respectively), followed by studies (23% and 10%) and better life conditions in general (23% and 16%). It is worth mentioning that political, ideological reasons were mentioned by 11% of Hungarian nationals born abroad, while only 3% of foreign citizens chose this option in the answer. It is reasonable to interpret this result as connected to ethnic Hungarians who had experienced discrimination as a national minority in neighbouring countries, before moving to Hungary.

Compared to the employed Hungarian population, the occupational structure of both foreign nationals and Hungarians born abroad shows significant differences. As a consequence of their higher average education attainment, a large share of these two groups (29% and 26%, respectively) work as professionals in jobs that require higher qualifications (as opposed to Hungarians born in Hungary,

of whom only 18% have a job in this segment). Another important characteristic of foreign nationals is that a significant share of them works in the retail and services sector (22%, as opposed to the 15% of Hungarians born in Hungary). In other sectors, their share is more or less similar to the majority society.

Concerning those who are currently studying, 84% of the foreign nationals are pursuing a university or college degree, while only 58% of Hungarians born abroad, and 43% of Hungarians born in Hungary are participating in tertiary education. This shows that Hungary has become an attractive destination for international student mobility (Dickmann – Ligeti, 2018).

3.3. Emigration from Hungary

Based on the 2016 Microcensus, 2.6% of the Hungarian nationals born in Hungary had at least one year of migration experience: 242,000 people, of whom 130,000 (1.4%) migrated in or after the year 2000.

The proportion of those with at least one year spent abroad was 2.1% (198,000 people) in the 2011 Census, thus a slight increase can be observed. Another 4.1% of the population with Hungarian citizenship born in Hungary had left the country (since 2000), but after some length of stay abroad returned to Hungary. Returning migrants or returnees are therefore a significant group of the population, totaling 378,000 persons.

The most popular countries of destination for Hungarians are, and have been traditionally, three: Germany, Austria and the United Kingdom. A total of 71% of all Hungarian emigrants live in these three countries, and 57% of the returnees came back to Hungary from one of them. Another 22% of emigrants live in other countries of the European Economic Area (and 28% of the returnees came back from one of those countries). The rest of the world shows much lower figures, although it is worth mentioning that the United States accounts for 3.6% of current emigrants and 6.8% of returnees.

In general, some important differences can be identified among the groups of Hungarians living in the different countries of destination. Germany is popular among the older, male emigrants who are usually less qualified or have a technical profession, while the United Kingdom attracts younger and highly skilled Hungarians. Shorter-term migration is more frequent to Germany and Austria, while the United Kingdom and the rest of the destination countries are chosen mainly by those who stay or plan to stay for a longer period. Countries other than the three main destinations are popular among students or holders of a university or college degree (Dickmann – Ligeti, 2018).

Table 6 summarises the key characteristics of the Hungarian emigrant and returnee population recorded by the Microcensus in 2016.

Table 6. Emigration and return migration of Hungarians, 2016 (percentages)

| | | Emigrants | | | Returnees | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| | | Less than 1 year | More than 1 year | Total emigrants | Before 2000 | After 2000 | | |
| | | | | | | Less than 1 year | More than 1 year | Total |
| Sex | Male | 66.4 | 52.5 | 55.1 | 55.5 | 57.8 | 55.8 | 57.4 |
| | Female | 33.6 | 47.5 | 44.9 | 44.5 | 42.2 | 44.2 | 42.6 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Age | 16–29 | 40.1 | 30.7 | 32.7 | 18.0 | 31.7 | 25.8 | 30.5 |
| | 30–39 | 29.4 | 39.1 | 37.0 | 31.9 | 35.6 | 42.4 | 36.8 |
| | 40–64 | 30.6 | 30.2 | 30.4 | 50.1 | 32.6 | 31.8 | 32.8 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Education attainment | Less than 8 primary | 8.0 | 4.9 | 5.4 | 5.7 | 6.9 | 6.7 | 7.0 |
| | Secondary with no high school diploma | 31.6 | 22.5 | 24.1 | 17.2 | 20.1 | 17.6 | 19.8 |
| | High school diploma | 38.4 | 40.7 | 40.8 | 30.2 | 31.9 | 32.5 | 32.1 |
| | University or college degree | 22.0 | 31.9 | 29.8 | 46.9 | 41.1 | 43.2 | 41.1 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Country of emigration | Germany | 35.4 | 29.8 | 31.0 | 26.5 | 27.6 | 23.2 | 26.3 |
| | Austria | 19.2 | 12.4 | 14.0 | 8.1 | 12.6 | 8.9 | 11.7 |
| | United Kingdom | 18.1 | 27.3 | 25.7 | 18.3 | 16.8 | 24.3 | 19.2 |
| | Other EEA | 22.2 | 23.2 | 22.3 | 25.3 | 28.7 | 28.7 | 28.3 |
| | North America | 2.1 | 4.0 | 3.6 | 9.1 | 6.7 | 7.9 | 6.8 |
| | Other | 3.1 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 12.7 | 7.8 | 7.1 | 7.7 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Occupation area (ISCO-08) | Managers | 1.5 | 1.8 | 1.7 | 8.1 | 5.1 | 6.3 | 1.7 |
| | Professionals | 10.6 | 14.3 | 13.1 | 32.5 | 28.8 | 29.7 | 14.4 |
| | Technicians and associate professionals | 7.5 | 10.9 | 10.2 | 16.4 | 14.6 | 16.7 | 8.2 |
| | Clerical support workers | 3.3 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 5.7 | 5.2 | 6.1 | 3.4 |
| | Service and sales workers | 19.9 | 24.0 | 23.0 | 11.9 | 13.4 | 13.0 | 22.5 |
| | Skilled agricultural workers | 1.2 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.6 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 2.2 |
| | Craft and related trades workers | 30.5 | 18.7 | 21.1 | 12.5 | 16.7 | 14.2 | 22.4 |
| | Plant and machine operators, assemblers | 10.3 | 9.2 | 9.9 | 6.5 | 7.9 | 7.7 | 7.4 |
| | Other, elementary occupations | 15.3 | 15.9 | 15.5 | 4.7 | 6.9 | 4.9 | 17.9 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |
| Skill mismatch *) | | 51.4 | 52.7 | 52.4 | 49.3 | 54.1 | 53.5 | 54.0 |

Note: *) Share of persons working in different occupation area or lower level than that of their educational background, in total emigrants/returnees

Source: *Microcensus*, 2016. Annex tables 1.1.

Concerning the age of the population with migration experience, the proportion of people aged 16 to 39 years is higher than in the total population, but far lower for those aged 40–64 (24 percentage points less in the case of emigrants and 21 in the case of returnees). By level of education, a noteworthy difference can be observed in the group of university or college degree holders: while 22% of the total population of Hungary has a tertiary education, the rate is 30% among emigrants, and 41% among returnees.

The emigrants leave Hungary primarily for employment, with 86% of them currently working abroad, while 66% of the returnees reported to have been working while being away. 7% of the emigrants are studying, while 20% of the returnees had been doing so.

It is important to note that three-quarters of foreign workers had worked in Hungary before moving abroad, thus it is not primarily the unemployed who are leaving the country. Only 11% sought employment before taking the decision to emigrate, while 13% of them were studying. Among those who went abroad for study, 84% had been pursuing studies in Hungary until their departure, while another 11% were employed before leaving the country. Again, this means that the economically active population is more likely to move abroad.

Three of the occupational groups in the workforce of Hungarians abroad and those who had returned with foreign work experience stand out: trade and service (23% for both groups), industry and construction (21% and 22% respectively), and occupations that require no qualifications (15 and 18% respectively). These values differ significantly from the Hungarian labour market figures, whereas only 39% of the 16–64-year-old Hungarians work in these three areas, while 59% of those living abroad and 63% of the returnees reported a work experience in these areas.

The type of work taken up by Hungarians abroad was mainly influenced by their level of education. Four-fifths of workers with primary and vocational qualifications are or were employed in agriculture or industry. High school graduates work or worked in the largest share in commerce and services (22% of the current, and 32% of the former emigrants), but this ratio is also high among university or college graduates (16% and 23%, respectively). The majority of those with tertiary education (74% and 63%) hold or held a professional or office job.

Skill mismatch (the share of persons working in different occupation area or lower level than that of their educational background, in total emigrants/returnees) is high. Among Hungarians aged 16–64 living abroad, 34% reported having a job, which requires (or could be filled with) a lower level of qualification than his/her own. The share is 38% for returnees. Also, those who work in a job that requires other type of qualification (i.e. of the same level but a different), account for 51% of the emigrants and 52% of the returnees. This means that a large share of Hungarian emigrants cannot (or could not) use the skills that they had received through formal education and training: an important waste of human capital can be observed during the emigration process.

Remittances are important, however, money is not always flowing from abroad to Hungary. 32% of the emigrants do, and 31% of the returnees did at some point send money to their family members on a regular basis. However, 7% of the emigrants do, and 17% of the returnees did receive money from their family members who were living in Hungary. Around 4% in both groups do or did participate in both activities: sending and receiving money, depending on their actual financial situation.

Family-related motivation (37%) was the most common for returnees, while 27% returned to Hungary after having achieved the target that they had set when moving abroad. 22% reported financial, professional or study-related motivation, and 14% decided to return home for other reasons.

Finally, an overview of prospective emigrants completes the picture. According to the Microcensus, 8.4% of the Hungarian citizens born in Hungary in the economically active age (16 to 64 years old), about 510,000 individuals, had plans to move abroad in the next two years (as of 2016). Nonetheless, only half of them were serious about the idea or had already taken the decision. Based on this, a total of 4.2% (254,000 people) of the economically active population could be regarded as a prospective emigrant. Among them, there is a greater proportion of men, youngsters, residents of Budapest and speakers of a foreign language.

Germany is the number one destination among Hungarians seriously planning to leave the country, with one in three willing to move there. Austria (23%) and the United Kingdom (21%) follow, which means that the general geographic pattern of Hungarian emigration is not likely to change in the near future. An overwhelming majority wants to go abroad for work (89%). As for their motivation to leave, 80% mentioned financial and livelihood reasons, while 44% hoped to find better working and living conditions abroad. Contrary to a widespread belief, political-ideological motivations do not prevail among serious planners of emigration: only 6% of the respondents chose this answer (Dickmann – Ligeti, 2018).

Table 7 presents the main characteristics of Hungarians planning emigration as of 2016.

Table 7. Hungarians planning emigration, 2016 (percentages)

| | | Planned stay abroad | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| | | Less than 1 year | 1–2 years | More than 2 years (but not forever) | Forever | Total |
| Sex | Male | 12.1 | 26.5 | 33.4 | 28.0 | 100.0 |
| | Female | 13.1 | 24.4 | 32.5 | 30.0 | 100.0 |
| Age | 16–29 | 11.6 | 27.7 | 35.6 | 25.2 | 100.0 |
| | 30–39 | 10.9 | 24.3 | 33.0 | 31.8 | 100.0 |
| | 40–64 | 14.9 | 23.9 | 29.9 | 31.3 | 100.0 |
| Education attainment | Less than 8 primary | 14.2 | 28.7 | 31.2 | 25.9 | 100.0 |
| | Secondary with no high school diploma | 12.0 | 27.6 | 32.6 | 27.7 | 100.0 |
| | High school diploma | 12.4 | 25.1 | 33.8 | 28.8 | 100.0 |
| | University or college degree | 12.0 | 21.5 | 33.7 | 32.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 12.5 | 25.6 | 33.0 | 28.9 | 100.0 |

Source: *Microcensus*, 2016. Annex tables 1.2.

4. Conclusions

Based on the above described trends and characteristics, a couple of conclusions can be drawn for the possible effects of current migration processes in Hungary.

Different immigrant groups have largely different chances for integrating into the Hungarian society. Integration and naturalisation is the easiest for ethnic Hungarians born in other countries, eligible for a simplified naturalisation option, who have no language barriers. Yet, their demographic structure is not very favourable. EEA citizens who enjoy the right of free movement, are also older than the

average population. The proportion of the elderly is disproportionately high among EEA citizens, while ethnic Hungarians are also somewhat older than most third country national groups.

This means that immigration does not help in bailing out the ageing Hungarian demographic structure. Immigrants have only contributed to the increase of the population in Budapest and its surroundings, and compensated the decrease in two counties near the eastern border. Of the immigrants naturalised in Hungary, the great majority were ethnic Hungarians. Yet, despite the significant number of immigrants from Asia, only few of them (1–2%) have become Hungarian citizens. From a demographic perspective, this is rather unfavourable, as the youngest immigrants are Asian (Dickmann – Ligeti, 2018).

Immigration has had a positive effect on Hungarian labour market trends, as foreigners' employment has usually been higher, and their unemployment was lower than in the total population. The Romanian, Asian and EU15 (Western Europe) immigrants' employment rate has been particularly high. Nonetheless, worse labour market indicators of foreign women in various age groups and with various level of education could be observed for many countries of origin. Some Asian groups (Chinese, Vietnamese) are exception to this: women of these groups are also characterised by high employment rate and low unemployment (Gödri, 2012).

Concerning emigration, the increase of outflows from Hungary began somewhat late in regional comparison, and remained under the emigration level of most Central and Eastern European countries. (As compared to the size of population of origin, it was only Czech Republic and Slovenia that sent less migrant workers to Western Europe than Hungary, up until the early 2010s.) Since then, Hungarians have a higher propensity to move abroad. It is mainly the young and economically active age groups that have plans to leave the country, and the proportion of the active age population is very high among Hungarians already living abroad, which indicates that the emigrant stock is constituted by an economically active, working population. This has a demographic and a labour market effect on Hungary, both of which are rather negative (Melegh – Sárosi, 2016).

Based on available data about the Hungarian labour market, it can be seen that the emigration of qualified employees (e.g. health workers) in an active age has an especially negative effect. The dominant factors in the background of the migration of professionals are low salaries, poor working conditions and few opportunities for lifelong learning. The fact that most Hungarian qualifications are automatically recognised in Western European countries is also a strong pull factor, as well the shortage of qualified human resources in the destination countries (Hárs – Simon, 2014). Furthermore, if those who are currently planning to leave the country for a while will actually emigrate, it can cause highly harmful effects to Hungary's economy.

Besides increasing emigration, a process of returning (re-migration) can also be observed, with approximately half of the emigrants coming back to Hungary after a couple of years spent abroad. A big question for the future is whether the economic growth of the past few years will continue to the point of pushing up wages in those sectors which are now far below the European average. Unfortunately, current economic policies do not aim at raising significantly the wages in an even way across all sectors, as low wages are key for the competitiveness of manufacturing and assembly companies, crucial to Hungary's economy. Even more unfortunately, a hostile immigration policy makes it very difficult to believe that the labour supply could be expanded in the future through immigration.

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Integration of third-country nationals in Hungary in the last five years

ATTILA SZABÓ

1. Introduction

The chapter presents the most important elements which have influenced the integration of third-country nationals in Hungary in the last five years. The selected period is not arbitrary. The integration system remained basically unchanged after the Act LXXX of 2007 on Asylum entered into force. A real change took place in the beginning of 2014 when the Hungarian government established a new integration system for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. This step can be considered as a progressive one. This is due mainly because there was a fragmented integration system in place before January 2014, but then a quite structured one had replaced it.

A new era was ushered in after the summer of the migration crises in 2015. The chapter will follow the trajectory of the general Hungarian political attitudes towards migrants in a chronological order. Nevertheless, integration policy concerning refugees and other third-country nationals has followed a different path over the examined period, thus these are analysed in separate sections of the chapter.

In the first part, the chapter presents those steps and measures of the Hungarian government which might influence all third-country nationals' chances for integration. There have been communication acts and legislative steps undertaken which could increase xenophobic attitudes in the Hungarian society. There have been also steps against non-governmental organisations (NGOs) helping integration of refugees and other third-country nationals. These measures, which have concerned both refugees and other third-country nationals, could even have ruined the efficacy of a well-established integration policy. The impacts of these measures are demonstrated via interview questions for professionals working with the target group detailing their experiences.

In the second part, the chapter analyses amendments to the refugee integration policy. This part presents regulations before 2014, between 2014 and 2016 and after 2016. The chapter points out that dismantling of the system is not independent from the migration crises and the general response of the Hungarian government to these crises. The paper also touches upon the fate of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) of the European Union (EU) since it is very relevant from the point of view of refugee integration.

In the third part, the chapter analyses the integration of non-humanitarian third-country nationals.¹¹⁹ There were no specific measures taken concerning this area but the implementation of different EU legislations and amendments to AMIF programmes had affected this group as well. This section describes successful AMIF programmes, which saw the cooperation of national authorities and NGOs. Nevertheless, these programmes were abolished by the government in 2018. The numbers of arriving

119 This category includes all third-country nationals who reside in Hungary but is not based on their humanitarian situation (third-country nationals with various residence permits or settlement permits).

third-country nationals shed a light on the migration trends and thus help to draw conclusions concerning integration possibilities of the examined group. Furthermore, there is a specific issue which can be presented in this chapter as well. It is the naturalisation which is noteworthy for those third-country nationals who want to become members of the Hungarian political community.

Finally, in the last part, the trends, main statements and conclusions are collected and elaborated.

2. Political situation and integration possibilities for migrants

2.1. Fear-mongering over migration and migrants in Hungary

Migration has become a very important political topic in Hungary in the last three years.¹²⁰ It has a special reason, which stems directly from the political agenda of the Hungarian government and the governmental parties, but not from the facts and data (European Stability Initiative, 2018). Based on the latest figures from the Hungarian Immigration and Asylum Office (IAO), there were 1,781 persons who had a right to reside in Hungary as recognised refugees and 1,774 as beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (IAO, 2018). Experts agree that only a fraction of this group are actually residing in Hungary.¹²¹ The number of third-country nationals residing in Hungary by settlement permits or by residence permits has grown slightly over the years, but foreigners still form only a small proportion of the Hungarian population¹²² (KSH, 2018; EMN, 2018).

Despite the low numbers of humanitarian and non-humanitarian migrants in Hungary the Fidesz-KDNP government and the parties themselves started to put the migration into the focus of political debates. Viktor Orbán had a radio interview on 18 January 2015 in which he named the migration as a serious danger for Hungary and Europe.¹²³ That was the first occasion when the Hungarian Prime-Minister used this issue publicly to shape the political discourse.¹²⁴ Subsequently, political campaigns and intense anti-immigration campaign was launched.

In May 2015, the government conducted a so-called national consultation on immigration¹²⁵ and also launched a significant media campaign. The government presented the migration and increasing number of migrants as an extremely dangerous and negative global phenomenon which will destroy the European Christian culture.

A relevant step in this process was holding a referendum on the quota mechanism of the European Union (EKINT, 2016). Due to the low turnout, the referendum was not legally binding but it was useful for the government to keep the topic as a hot issue. Further legal, political and communication measures have been taken and these led to creating a general environment in which all migrants have become undesirable. Nóra Köves presents all important steps, milestones and reactions in her chapter in this book, thus it is not necessary to go into details. What is important from the point of view of this analysis are the consequences of these measures.

120 See Nóra Köves's chapter in this book.

121 See the online news report (Horváth, 2018).

122 See Béla Soltész's chapter in this book.

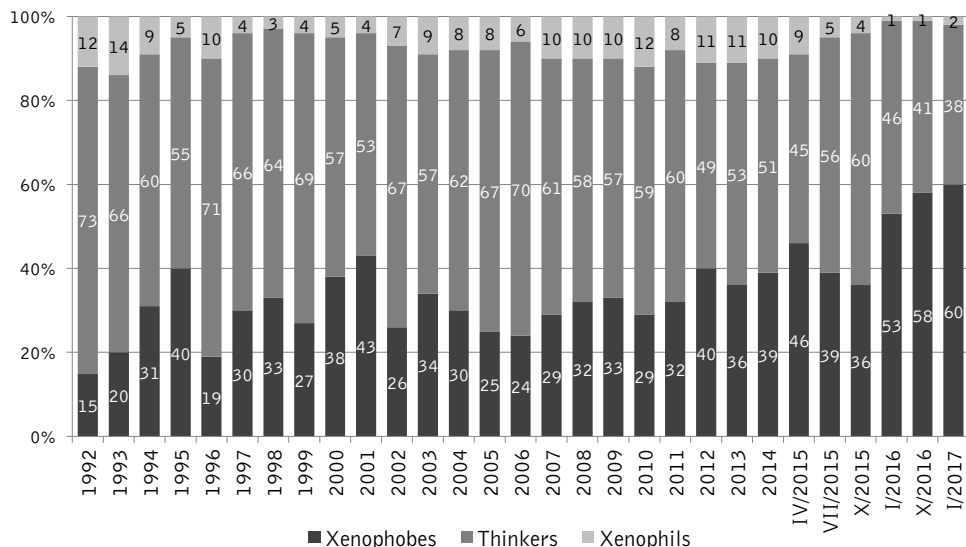
123 Orbán said: "The number of asylum-seekers in Hungary reached 42, almost 43 thousands in 2014. The earlier data doubled. Ergo, the tendency which is really troublesome. [...] So, we are talking about a set of problems which has a magnitude alarmingly growing. If Europe puts its head in the sand, these tendencies will not change" (180 Perc, 2015).

124 One can argue that the first time was 11 January, 2015 when Viktor Orbán spoke about the *Charlie Hebdo* attack but, in my view, the complex context of fear-mongering was created only in the referred radio show. There is no room to analyse and compare these speeches in this paper.

125 The material of the national consultation is available in Hungarian at http://www.kormany.hu/download/9/a3/50000/Nemzetikonzultacio_mmkornnel.docx

The TÁRKI Social Research Institute surveyed the xenophobic attitude of Hungarians. Unfortunately, researchers cannot continue their research due to the lack of funding. The last survey was conducted in January 2017.

Graph 1. Attitudes concerning foreigners in the Hungarian society¹²⁶



Source: TARKI.

Graph 1 shows that xenophobic attitudes have grown from 2015 up to the last survey. One cannot be sure that the mentioned campaigns caused this social change since the migration wave that occurred in 2015 could have contributed to it as well. Nevertheless, one can be sure that activities of the government did not have the effect of dampening the xenophobic attitudes in the Hungarian society. Thus, we can state that these conscious steps contributed to a less inclusive Hungarian society.

Vera Messing and Bence Ságvári pointed out that rejection of refugees has increased to the greatest extent in Hungary of all EU member states between 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 based on the figures from the European Social Survey. The index figure have increased by 14 points in Hungary meanwhile the second heaviest increase was measured in the Czech Republic where it has increased only by 3 points. Moreover, the rejection of refugees was the strongest in Hungary already in 2014-2015.¹²⁷

It is very relevant from the point of view of the integration of both humanitarian migrants and other third-country nationals. These individuals have less of a chance of finding a job, renting a flat or gaining the trust for making it in businesses if the society distrustful of them. It comes with a consequence for their integration potential since private social relations are the most important element of integration. As Antal Örkény points out "[...]trust is a social psychological mechanism that positively influences social

¹²⁶ This table has not been published before. I publish it thanks to the kind contribution of Bori Simonovits, the researcher in charge. It will be published in the future (Simonovits, forthcoming).

¹²⁷ Messing's and Ságvári's research was presented in a Hungarian news article (Erdélyi, 2018), the chart is available from <https://4cdn.hu/kraken/image/upload/s--QawuyutOz--/7EPXgToERrUwPmEcs.png>

behaviour and that acts as a connection between personal motivations and creeds on the one hand and desired organisational and societal goals on the other. The opposite of trust is suspicion, which distances and questions the reciprocal relationship between the individual and society (or, simply put, “others”), and which psychologically brings doubt into the meaning and success of the actor’s actions” (Örkény, 2009). This trust was killed, at least partly, by the campaign conducted by the Hungarian government.

In order to examine the connection between the communication of the government and its consequences, the most relevant NGOs and faith-based organisations working on integration of refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and partly in integration of other third-country nationals were interviewed. They were asked the following question: “The government and governmental parties have been communicating about migration as a topic since 2015. Based on your experiences, did it affect the integration chances of refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and other third-country nationals? If yes, how so?”

Their answers were as follows:

1. The heavy anti-immigration stance of the government has an undeniable negative impact on the inclusion of third-country nationals in Hungary. More and more employers and landlords are afraid, not necessarily of migrants themselves, but of condemnation and disadvantages they may face as a consequence of their connections with people coming from developing countries. Local Hungarians have become more hostile, cold-hearted and inhospitable towards third-country nationals as a result of governmental communication demonising immigrants, making inclusion harder for foreigners than ever. Under such circumstances it is extremely difficult to find safe jobs or apartments for migrants, who tend to see themselves as outcasts, desperately hoping for a better future.¹²⁸

2. The election campaign called attention to the programme, which was underway in our institution. It became uncomfortable for the Municipality of Budapest¹²⁹ and for the Ministry of the Interior [these organisations financed the institution and the project in question] [...]. We were continuously asked to meet, report and give explanations for all inquiries which were sent to the Municipality of Budapest. I wrote several letters and information materials to the municipality and they published them. Direct communication with the public about our project was not allowed.

Now the situation is such that it is not possible to talk about refugees at all. [...] I am sure that there will be no projects aimed at the integration of refugees. [...] The project was stopped abruptly, thus none of our colleagues who worked on this project could carry on their work at our organisation. Therefore, no one could pass on the collected know-how. [...] The two year-long project was not enough to achieve our goals. We just managed to arrive at a conclusion what could be done differently.¹³⁰

3. We made active contacts with different employers and individuals working in different positions (from management level to entry-level positions) since we provided a labour-market integration service. We thought that if we want to be successful, not only job seeker refugees/beneficiaries of subsidiary protection need assistance, but workplace mentoring, preliminary preparation is also a necessary prerequisite for employers.

128 The answer of an integration officer working at an NGO, which carried out projects financed by the Asylum, Migration, Integration Fund of the European Union. The answer was sent on 29 October 2018.

129 Controlled by the Fidesz.

130 The answer of an integration officer working at an NGO, which carried out projects financed by the Asylum, Migration, Integration Fund of the European Union. The answer was sent on 29 October 2018. The answer was translated and edited by the author.

Based on our experience, the negative campaign, which reached out to every inhabitant of Budapest, has caused unsubstantiated fears, anger and greater distrust than one could feel before in the otherwise already inflexible and mistrustful companies. We could feel that when a company hired a refugee it was also making a political decision.

The question for the decision makers was on which side does your company stand, what political opinion does your company agree with? On the whole, it was difficult to make a connection with companies as 80% of them refused to employ refugees. We encountered the following examples:

- *One of our partner companies backpaddled from employing our applicants because the company won a state financed project.*
- *There was a company in which the shift supervisor threatened his employer with quitting if he has to work with a refugee (although half of the employees were on sick-leave causing labour shortage).*
- *Supermarket chains do not dare open positions for refugees because they are afraid of customers' reactions.¹³¹*

4. In the last period (2015-2018), communication of the government had obviously affected the integration chances of individuals under international protection. Nevertheless, other factors beyond the "hate campaign" can influence their lives in Hungary.

We would like to emphasise some examples based on experience of clients involved and our colleagues:

- *There are more verbal aggressions against individuals who look like non-Hungarian (based on the way they dress or their skin colour, etc.). Due to this phenomenon some Muslim women take off their head scarfs [hijabs].*
- *Due to the termination of the integration system, renting a flat is almost impossible for refugees. It must be noted that totally independently from the asylum system, real-estate market has become very unfavourable for tenants.*
- *Social, education, healthcare and other institutions are proactive in furthering discrimination since they are afraid of retaliation [from higher level].*
- *Self-representation of foreigners has become undermined. Typical attitude among them is "we have things to lose therefore we withdraw". It means that they cannot stand up collectively for themselves.*
- *Significant numbers of newly recognised refugees/beneficiaries of subsidiary protection leave Hungary immediately after the asylum decision.*
- *Refugees who have been living in Hungary for an extended period are considering leaving the country, as are many Hungarian citizens.*
- *There is also a positive trend: due to labour shortage, employers are open [to employing refugees] in every segment of the labour-market and they are making efforts to keep their employees.¹³²*

It must be noted that all negative behaviours mentioned in answer No. 3 are unlawful based on Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities.

One can see that the fear-mongering campaign affected integration projects, organisations conducting these projects and even the professionals working on these projects. These consequences decreased the integration chances of third-country nationals, as well as the chances to maintain earlier projects or launch new ones. Due to these facts, third-country nationals have gotten in a worst situation from the integration point of view than before 2015.

131 Answer of a social expert working in the field. The answer was sent on 5 November 2018, translated and edited by the author.

132 Answer of a social expert working in the field. The answer was sent on 20 November 2018, translated and edited by the author.

2.2. Steps against NGOs working on integration of migrants

The Hungarian government has made not only migrants, Muslim people, African people, etc. appear as a danger for the Hungarian and European society, but also NGOs working with these individuals. The NGOs in question have put together an information material, which contains all steps made by the government against the non-governmental sector (EKINT-TI-TASZ-MHB, 2017) between 14-15 August 2014 and 2 November 2017. The gathered steps and measures have been taken by the government, its bodies, the public media controlled by the government, the governmental parties and also by media outlets controlled by businessmen close to the government (Freedom House, 2018).

Obviously, the NGOs working on the integration of refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and other third-country citizens account for only a small part of the Hungarian civil society, but these measures also affected these NGOs. The government created an environment in which it is very difficult to be critical on any political topic. It is especially true when it comes to migration-related issues.

Three measures have to be especially emphasised (out of 110 which were introduced in the examined period). One of them is labelling as 'foreign agents' those organisations which annually receive more than 7.2 million HUF in donations from abroad. One of the NGO concerned wrote that

[T]he Law violates the right to privacy and personal data protection. The Law violates freedom of association. The Law violates the general prohibition of discrimination in relation to the freedom of association. There was no public consultation during the legislative process. The Law introduces unjustified and disproportionate restrictions to the free movement of capital (MHB, 2017a).

The Hungarian Parliament accepted a bill restricting several NGOs working on integration of migrants. There is a public list containing all NGOs' names.¹³³ It must be mentioned that some NGOs are not on the list as they refused to register themselves as a foreign funded organisation and challenged the regulation in the Hungarian Constitutional Court (MHB, 2017a). Still, there are at least ten organisations on the list that are directly involved in integration of refugees or other migrants. They have been labelled thus they might seem as 'non-desirable organisations', which, of course, has been restrictive with respect to their domestic opportunities.

The other measure which must be highlighted here include a special 'tax on immigration'. The law was adopted by the Parliament on 20 July 2018.¹³⁴ The law stipulates that:

(1) The special tax on immigration must be paid after the financial support of an immigration supporting activity taking place in Hungary, or after the financial support to the operations of an organisation with a seat in Hungary that carries out activities to promote migration.

(2) An immigration supporting activity is any programme, action or activity that is directly or indirectly aimed at promoting immigration [...], and is realised as part of:

- a) carrying out media campaigns and media seminars and participating in such activities;*
- b) organising education;*
- c) building and operating networks or*
- d) propaganda activities that portray immigration in a positive light.*

133 Available in Hungarian: <http://civil.info.hu/kulfoldrol-tamogatott-civil-szervezetek>

134 It has an unofficial English translation by the Hungarian Helsinki Committee. Available at <https://www.helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/Special-immigration-tax-as-adopted-20-July-2018.pdf>

The extent of the special tax is 25% of the budget concerned. This had significant consequences for activities of several organisations working with migrants towards their integration. One can be sure that all organisations concerned have tried to avoid the risk but not all of them could do so. The Central European University announced that they are discontinuing their special education project helping recognised refugees in catching up.¹³⁵

The infamous “Stop Soros” bill¹³⁶ must also be mentioned here despite the fact that it is not directly connected to the integration of refugees or other third-country nationals. It has established a new crime, which has been defined as “facilitating illegal immigration”. Due to the vague text of this law people and NGOs should consider twice before providing any help for asylum-seekers or even information about the legal environment or Hungarian immigration procedures. Obviously, the danger of criminal sanctions loom over anybody who carries out any support activity in helping asylum-seekers or creates and distributes useful and correct information about their possibilities in Hungary (MHB, 2018).

One can also assume that these attacks and restrictions made the situation of NGOs working with integration of migrants more difficult. Not only possible financial consequences of the special tax, but the general labelling of all the mentioned steps and activities becomes relevant. These organisations have been made worse off in terms of chances of making connections with potential employers, schools, social institutions, etc. than would be the case without these measures of the government. Among these circumstances, the organisations concerned are able to help migrants less efficiently.

3. Refugee integration policy¹³⁷

In 2013, the Hungarian government prepared *The Migration Strategy and the seven-year strategic document related to Asylum and Migration Fund established by the European Union for the years 2014-20* (hereinafter: Migration Strategy).¹³⁸ It was and still is the official Hungarian migration policy document, which was created for the goal to apply and utilise European Union resources for managing every form of migration. The Migration Strategy contains several goals, which can be considered as progressive. In order to make understandable the intention of the Hungarian government concerning refugee integration, some of these goals should be highlighted here. One of the main principles of the Migration Strategy is facilitating the “integration of long-term residents: of legal migrants and beneficiaries of international protection.”¹³⁹ When the document elaborates on this goal, it states that “the assistance for the inclusion of persons granted international protection or recognised as stateless should be prioritised. Most migrants should make use of the integration services on a voluntary basis, and thus recognised refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection or stateless persons who do not yet have integration connections should have contact with the service based on a contract signed with the clients.

135 CEU Suspends Education Programs for Registered Refugees and Asylum Seekers. Available at

<https://www.ceu.edu/article/2018-08-28/ceu-suspends-education-programs-registered-refugees-and-asylum-seekers>

136 Bill No. T/333 amending certain laws relating to measures to combat illegal immigration. Unofficial English translation.

Available at <https://www.helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/T333-ENG.pdf> (Accessed 25 November, 2018)

137 Two earlier papers written by the author are used in this text (Szabó, forthcoming).

138 Available at <http://belugyalapok.hu/alapok/sites/default/files/Migration%20Strategy%20Hungary.pdf>

139 Ibid., p. 1.

An individual, tailor-made integration plan should be drawn up for persons granted international protection or recognised as stateless. The integration contract signed with the migrants is binding for both parties for a two-year period. However, after this compulsory period, refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and stateless persons may continue to use the integration services. Volunteers should assist them in their work".¹⁴⁰

The *Migration Strategy* defines quite specific goals to achieve the required objectives such as "[i]ntroducing proactive labour-market tools in order to promote the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into the labour-market", "[s]etting up and operating programmes that facilitate access for beneficiaries of international protection to housing in order to help them become self-supporting", "[p]reparing institutions that provide specialised personal care to receive migrants in need, with special attention to elderly or disabled beneficiaries of international protection, or those who are in a vulnerable condition for any other reason."¹⁴¹ It must be noted that integration of unaccompanied minors is also in the focus of the *Migration Strategy*.¹⁴² These goals point out that the Hungarian state wanted to implement a human-rights-based and effective integration system in 2013. Obviously, the *Migration Strategy* was prepared for showing a sympathetic picture to the European Commission, but the Hungarian government accepted it as its vision. One can see that this has never been carried out despite the fact that the Migration Strategy has never been withdrawn and it is still formally valid.

Although Hungary introduced a comprehensive refugee integration system on 1 January 2014 (Scharle, 2016), it was only a short-lived occurrence. The preceding system (before 1 January 2014) was not an effective and comprehensive one. It included fragmented and mostly in kind support (European Parliament, 2017). The system included the following elements. Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection were entitled to continued provision of material support, health care, reimbursement of costs of schooling and education, and support facilitating social integration, accommodation and care at a reception centre, in addition to monthly cash allowance, travel allowances, school enrolment benefit, reimbursement of costs of translation of documents, allowance facilitating final departure from the country,¹⁴³ free Hungarian language course and finally regular subsistence allowance.¹⁴⁴

It was based on an ineffective structure since every form of support had to be applied separately. Every actors (IAO, NGOs, ministries in charge) seemed motivated to change that system. The new system introduced in 2014 could be evaluated as an endeavour toward more effective refugee integration. Its concise summary states that "[t]he new policy merged the existing types of refugee benefits into a single integration contract. The two-year scheme provides refugees with roughly 300 euros per month for the first six months, which is then gradually reduced. The plan brought improvements in terms of financial support for refugees – however, as NGOs have pointed out, the new system left the provision of other forms of integration support (such as teaching Hungarian) to charities that are already overwhelmed and underfunded" (Fajth, 2015).

Indeed, the newly introduced system was not without its weaknesses. It had many elements and details which should have been improved. Nonetheless, the concept which aimed at participation of the

140 Ibid., p. 26-27.

141 Ibid., p. 29.

142 It might be an excellent case study how their integration possibilities have been reduced (MHB, 2017b).

143 It might sound strange but Hungary has supported refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection in leaving the country by financial assistance. Hungary is ready to buy a proper one-way travel ticket for this purpose.

144 Based on section 37 of Government Decree No. 301/2007 (X1.9.) on the implementation of the Act on Asylum.

person concerned, the IAO and the local family care centre was a good idea. Recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection could sign a contract with the IAO in which he or she declared his (her) intention to learn Hungarian, to find a proper job and to maintain an independent life. In exchange, the IAO provided a relatively high benefit (Szabó, 2016).

Based on this integration contract, the IAO paid financial support to the signatory person. After every six months, the financial support decreased by 25 percent of the original amount. It meant that after two years the support ended entirely. It was a way to motivate refugees and people under subsidiary protection to find jobs in medium term. The signatories had to fulfill their obligations, which also created possibilities for integration since they mainly focused on finding employment. There were also supportive provisions of the contract: appointed family care centre prepared a treatment plan for the person concerned.

The plan included an employment plan, albeit it was only a rough draft. The refugee (or person under subsidiary protection) and one of the social workers of the appointed family care centre had to meet in person on a regular basis. All scheduled appointments had to be kept. If the client was unemployed, she/he had to register as a job-seeker at the employment centre (National Employment Service, NES). The family care centre would assist with the registration. Further, the signatory person had to keep regular contact with the employment centre and had to actively participate in finding employment. In the course of counselling, the social worker and the person involved discussed employment and education opportunities, including available language courses or schools. The social worker had to strive to support the life of the person concerned but she/he had to make decisions alone. There were no Hungarian language courses organised by a national institution, but some family support centres tried to provide language courses by contributing volunteers. Beyond that, only NGOs and religious organisations provided language courses free of charge.

In the first half-year, the financial benefits could be enough to rent a modest flat in Budapest and to spend time learning Hungarian, arranging all the necessary things (looking for schools, kindergartens for children, finding a job, etc.), but after that entering the labour-market was unavoidable. The system was meant to compel activity, and it worked in a way. Obviously, this system could not solve several problems of refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. Some family care centres were not prepared to work with this special target group, the system was conducive to undeclared work, Hungarian language lessons were not guaranteed, etc. Still, this system was a promising step from the Hungarian state and from the IAO.

However, regression was to follow soon after. The general asylum policy has changed in Hungary since the migration crisis in 2015 (Nagy, 2017). The elimination of the newly introduced integration system was a part of this negative process. The government decided to eradicate the integration mechanism from the Hungarian Act on Asylum in the beginning of 2016. It meant that refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection had remained without any additional state assistance (Szabó, 2016). It can be stated that the Hungarian state made the integration much harder for refugees. A relevant question might be: what were the arguments behind it?

The bill of the amendment said that "the purpose of the restrictions is to decrease the social services to ... those granted international protection as by this measure it can be avoided that the so-called economic migrants submit asylum applications in Hungary, exclusively in hope of a better life."¹⁴⁵ It was

145 Bill T/9634 of 2016, 46. Available in Hungarian <http://www.parlament.hu/trom40/09634/09634.pdf>

the official Hungarian policy concerning recognised refugees. “[T]his is undoubtedly a deliberate, long-term deterrence policy by the Hungarian government, not the result of a mere lack of capacities or resources” (MHB, 2015). One can be convinced that Hungarian government have wanted to deter asylum-seekers to seek asylum in Hungary.

In parallel to dismantling the integration system, the new legislation also shortened the duration of stay in a reception centre for recognised refugees and the number of beneficiaries of subsidiary protection decreased relevantly. Furthermore, main reception centres at Debrecen and Bicske were closed due to local political demands (MigSzol, 2015 and 2016). Based on the Act on Asylum in force before 1 January 2014, staying in a reception centre was possible for 6 months. This duration was decreased to 60 days from 1 January 2014 and to 30 days from 1 June 2016. This is a very crucial issue from the integration point of view since first language lessons, first impressions about the Hungarian administrative systems, first encounters with Hungarian culture could happen in a safe environment of a reception centre. To decrease the duration can have a subsequent negative consequence on the integration of persons concerned.

Furthermore, real estate market of Budapest has become very unfavourable for potential renters. It is obvious that six months allotted for an apartment search from a safe accommodation in a reception centre gives more possibilities than just 30 days. It must be mentioned that it is the same period that a refugee or a beneficiary of subsidiary protection is required to find a job as well. Reducing the duration in reception centres increased the chances of entrance into the Hungarian homeless care system. The situation was problematic even between 1 January 2014 and 1 June 2016 (Szabó, 2015) but it became more worrisome after 1 June of 2016.

Furthermore, section 59 of 17/2016. (II. 10.) Governmental Decree and section 86 of 16/2016 (II.10) Governmental Decree which regulate the state aid for families purchasing or enlarging homes were amended. The new regulation entered into force on 15 March 2018. It contained a new text which expressly excluded the families of refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection from this state aid. Even though this support was available for them before this amendment, most probably only a few families could use this possibility due to the strict administrative criteria. Making this support available for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection could mean a burden of only a few million HUF on the Hungarian national budget, which is totally irrelevant thus one begins to get the impression that the decision was symbolic: there is no special help for refugee families in Hungary.

When the legislator ceased the above mentioned integration support, the main argument was that refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection can access all social benefits which are available for Hungarian citizens. After the amendment of these governmental decrees this pseudo-argument cannot be maintained. The legislator intentionally deprived refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection from a very important social benefit.

The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund¹⁴⁶ (AMIF) of the European Union is a financial mechanism which helps member states in ensuring proper services for third-country nationals in different fields. The situation was that “[i]n Hungary [and Slovakia], political decisions not only provide

146 Regulated by Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, amending Council Decision 2008/381/EC and repealing Decisions No 573/2007/EC and No 575/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Decision 2007/435/EC, OJ L 150, 20.5.2014, pp. 168-194.

any integration services means AMIF is the sole available source of funding in this area" (UNHCR-ECRE, 2018). Thus, the AMIF became the most important source of support for beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) in Hungary, but then even this resource was abolished. As is stated in UNHCR report: "On 24 January [2018], the Ministry of the Interior withdrew the calls for proposals for a range of activities to be implemented from July 2018 under the national AMIF, which will affect the quality of refugee status determination, housing programmes, legal assistance and support for unaccompanied children, and will result in NGOs and some state institutions no longer having access to AMIF funds" (UNHCR, 2018).

The Hungarian government is very consistent on this issue. It does not use the AMIF resources to finance what it does not want to finance. Nevertheless, these steps deepened the crisis of refugee integration since without AMIF resources non-governmental organisations are not able to finance their irreplaceable integration activities.

It can be stated that Hungary started to build an effective integration system in 2014 but then destroyed it within the last four years. The political environment, which was presented in the previous chapter, influenced the integration policy as well. The political position of the governmental parties necessarily led to the dismantling of every integration tools. Not only financial support and progressive projects were terminated but, through these, professional knowledge and experience gathered became useless.

The number of recognised refugees did not decrease in the last five years. A total of 476 refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection were recognised in 2015, 502 in 2015, 425 in 2016 and 1,216 in 2017. In the first 4 months of 2018, 237 applicants were recognised.¹⁴⁷ These numbers do not justify the dismantling of the integration system and integration possibilities. The numbers are not frightfully high and not insignificantly low. Effective refugee integration would be necessary and sustainable in Hungary, only the political environment has become entirely unresponsive for building up such a system.

4. Integration of other third-country nationals

The above-mentioned *Migration Strategy* deals not only with BIPs but also with other third-country nationals, people with residence permits, national settlement permits, family members of Hungarian citizens and family members of EEC nationals. The *Migration Strategy* declares the following aim concerning their integration: "Hungary has to strive to provide assistance for successful integration into society to those foreign nationals who, after having met the necessary legal criteria, wish to settle here for a long term. Efforts should also be made to ensure that foreign nationals settling here receive assistance to become productive citizens not only for Hungary, but also of the European Union, such that they are able to benefit to the greatest extent possible from the benefits of EU membership. In order to increase the effectiveness of integration, Hungary has to adopt an Integration Strategy, which requires earmarked funds for its implementation and not fragmented funding.

147 Every number stems from the statistical dataset of the IAO. Available at http://www.bmbah.hu/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=492&Itemid=1259&lang=en

The Integration Strategy should contain integration programmes for the integration of migrants with regard to the dispersion of existing migrant communities, establishing an integration network and mapping the labour market and housing possibilities of the municipalities that are suitable for integration. [...] In the framework of integration, it is an important task to provide objective information to the population of the area where migrant families are arriving, and to try to eliminate prejudice and fears. Community events should be organised to which the local population is invited along with refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and stateless persons, thereby allowing for a dialogue to begin between the two communities.”¹⁴⁸

These abstract goals were specified in some objectives such as “[p]rovide Hungarian language and inter-cultural training for third-country nationals studying in Hungarian institutes of higher education, [d]evelopment and operation of programmes in Hungarian higher education designed to help third-country national students to integrate into the labour market”, “[r]eviewing former and current programmes that provide migrants with Hungarian language training, creating and implementing language training programmes suited to the needs of migrants, [d]evelopment of job counselling reflecting the needs of the labour market, creating and operating training programmes for migrants” and “[i]ntroducing proactive labour-market tools in order to promote the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into the labour market.”¹⁴⁹ These words show that the migration and the integration of migrants was an important goal for the Hungarian government in 2013. One can find that these goals were implemented in the AMIF strategy and several AMIF projects were conducted in accordance with them.

Several NGOs and other organisations dealt with the above-mentioned objectives. They implemented different projects in order to achieve the specific aims contained in the *Migration Strategy*. Unfortunately, these AMIF projects also stopped due to the decision of the Hungarian government. Thus, it can be stated that there was a progressive intention in 2013, which started to gain real contours but when the government delivered the well-known answer to the migration crisis in 2015, its trajectory diverted. Then, the ongoing AMIF projects were ended in 2018 and meanwhile the social and political environment had become unfavourable.

However, the legal situation is somehow different regarding non-humanitarian migrants’ integration since EU legislative acts regulate which steps must be taken in this field or which aims must be achieved. Although there are minor challenges like the lack of information about social benefits/insurance on the website of IAO, the Central Administration of National Pension Insurance is not ready to inform third-country nationals about their rights in English via its website and IAO case-officers do not have relevant knowledge about social benefits/insurance, therefore they are not able to inform their clients. Despite these challenges, the EU regulations can contribute to the fact that the number of (non-humanitarian) third-country nationals has not decreased (EMN, 2018) since they created a stable legal background.

There is no better indicator to examine the situation of this target group except their numbers. Between 2014-2017, the numbers of third country nationals in possession of permits allowing for a residence in Hungary for more than three months shows the following trends (by nationalities).

148 Fn. 12., pp. 26-27.

149 *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

Table 1. The numbers of third-country nationals residing in Hungary according to non-humanitarian residence and settlement permits.

| Nationality | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Chinese | 19,230 | 25,242 | 32,431 | 37,672 |
| Ukrainian | 7,077 | 7,081 | 7,769 | 13,362 |
| Russian | 4,240 | 5,381 | 6,578 | 7,055 |
| Vietnamese | 3,167 | 3,604 | 4,147 | 4,864 |
| Iranian | 2,037 | 2,518 | 3,413 | 4,217 |
| Serbian | 2,783 | 2,446 | 2,913 | 4,171 |
| American | 3,073 | 5,660 | 4,125 | 4,147 |
| Turkish | 1,923 | 2,241 | 2,771 | 3,277 |
| Indian | 1,227 | 1,812 | 2,521 | 2,966 |
| Egyptian | 1,034 | 1,325 | 1,742 | 2,005 |
| Brazilian | 1,699 | 717 | 528 | 827 |
| Japanese | 1,428 | 1,666 | 1,983 | 1,955 |
| Nigerian | 1,411 | 1,716 | 1,934 | 1,857 |
| Others | 13,965 | 15,256 | 22,114 | 25,838 |
| Total | 62,294 | 76,665 | 94,969 | 114,168 |

Source: IAO, 2014-2017.

The tables show that the low numbers of residing non-humanitarian immigrants in 2014 have been increasing even after the start of the fear-mongering campaign. One can conclude that the campaign has not affected third-country nationals. More and more of them arrived in Hungary to reside here, with more than 20% increase happening annually on average. It might mean that they can find their place somehow in the Hungarian society. Probably it is not the result of a well-organised integration programme since there is no such a thing in practice but it might be concluded that the integration has happened without state efforts or these people can live in the Hungarian society without effective integration. If one looks at the number of issued residence permits by their aims, some background information can be uncovered.

Table 2. The number of third-country nationals residing in Hungary according to non-humanitarian residence permits.

| Purpose of stay | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| All gainful activity related purpose (including research and EU Blue card) | 8,525 | 8,476 | 9,696 | 18,494 |
| Official | 1,593 | 1,707 | 1,822 | 2,052 |
| Studies | 9,183 | 10,574 | 12,272 | 15,815 |
| Family reunification | 5,963 | 5,304 | 4,511 | 4,040 |
| Visit | 102 | 70 | 88 | 306 |
| Voluntary service | 40 | 78 | 59 | 80 |
| Long-term mobility | - | 90 | 72 | 75 |
| Medical care | 118 | 72 | 84 | 40 |
| Other purpose | 4,534 | 42,622 | 3,839 | 3,724 |
| Total | 30,058 | 30,633 | 32,721 | 44,626 |

Source: IAO, 2014-2017

The numbers have grown the most in the labour market (gainful activity related purpose) and studies. (In the first case it has more than doubled, in the second case as well.) Unfortunately, there is no reliable information on how successful these migrants' integration is but we can see that more regular migrants are arriving to Hungary than leaving it. However, it is possible that mostly international, global companies employ third-country nationals but in any case there is a relevant improvement in the numbers thus it should indicate an improvement in their integration as well. One can assume that third-country nationals would not arrive in growing numbers to Hungary if all integration possibilities were closed to them.

The situation is similar in the case of third-country national students but it must be also added that the growing numbers are partly the result of the Stipendium Hungaricum (a national financed scholarship) programme. As the official webpage expresses "[t]housands of students from all around the world apply for higher education in Hungary each year. The number of Stipendium Hungaricum applicants is continuously increasing as well as the number of available scholarship slots. In the 2018/2019 round of applications, more than 4200 scholarships were awarded. In the academic year of 2018/2019, more than 7000 students can begin their studies in Hungary in the framework of the Stipendium Hungaricum Programme."¹⁵⁰ It is obvious that the number of third-country national students is growing not only in the framework of this programme but otherwise as well. Hungary is attractive for third-country nationals in education, which indicates that these students come here for the residence, but it does not necessarily mean that they start their integrations in the Hungarian society.

Despite the dismantling of the AMIF programmes and despite the governmental fear-mongering campaign, the legal avenues to migrate to Hungary and start integration have remained open. This is true especially in the globalised labour-market and education sphere. However, there is no indicator that would confirm that this integration can be comprehensive and long-term. The only way to estimate how successful the long-term integration is, would be to examine the naturalisation procedure and numbers.

It is beyond a doubt that citizenship is the most important criteria of integration. Citizens have the right to vote and have the right to be voted for, they can also hold civil servant offices. Furthermore, Hungarian citizens count as EU citizens and therefore they can be a part of the European citizenry as well. It is also beyond dispute that citizenship is the guarantee of unconditional and indefinite stay in Hungary. Only citizens might be fully motivated and entitled to participate in the political communities of their countries (Szabó, 2018).

In some sense, the Hungarian government ensured relevant assistance in 2010 for some third-country nationals living in Hungary. That occurred by an amendment of the Act LV of 1993 on Hungarian Citizenship. New rule expresses that if the applicant has a clean criminal record and he/she is not considered to be a threat to public policy or to the national security of Hungary, upon request a non-Hungarian citizen whose ascendant was a Hungarian citizen or who is able to substantiate being of Hungarian origin may be naturalised on preferential terms. The applicant shall prove also that he/she is sufficiently proficient in the Hungarian language."¹⁵¹ It decreased the burden on those applicants who have been able to certify any Hungarian ancestor. Typically, ethnic Hungarians find their

150 See: <http://studyinhungary.hu/study-in-hungary/menu/stipendium-hungaricum-scholarship-programme>

151 Section 4 Subsection (3) of Act LV of 1993.

places easily in the Hungarian society since they speak the language perfectly.¹⁵² This target group is not obliged to live in Hungary for a certain period while other applicants have to live three, five or eight years with a permanent residence. Other applicants are also obliged to certify proper income and accommodation and take a Hungarian constitutional exam (Gyulai, 2016, p. 16.).

Without going into details, one can understand what a significant favour has been ensured for ethnic Hungarians by Gábor Gyulai's summary. "Between 2011 and 2015, over 700 000 persons – the vast majority of whom do not live in Hungary – acquired Hungarian nationality in an extremely accelerated, simplified and facilitated procedure, based on their Hungarian ancestry ("simplified naturalisation"). In the same period, 3 122 migrants living in Hungary could naturalise via a standard procedure, among whom were only 46 refugees and 38 stateless persons. The rate of positive decisions was only the half of the average rate (57%) in case of stateless persons (33%), and only one quarter of the average in case of refugees (14%). These statistics – read in conjunction with the legislative shortcomings and the experiences of individual cases – clearly indicate that the naturalisation of these two groups is in practice not facilitated, but actually rendered more difficult" (Gyulai, 2016, p. 3).

Obviously, this new procedure has not facilitated the integration of ethnically non-Hungarian foreigners' integration. Fresh numbers verify Gyulai's conclusion. 50,485 Romanian citizen have gotten the Hungarian citizenship between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2017, 1,859 Slovak citizen,¹⁵³ 4,460 Serbian citizen and 6,643 Ukrainian citizen¹⁵⁴ respectively (KSH, 2018) (These are the countries where ethnic Hungarians live.) Meanwhile, in the same period, 68,015 people have naturalised which means that 63,447 people have become Hungarian citizens from neighbouring countries and only 4,568 from other countries. It must be noted that the above-presented simplified naturalisation which can be used only by ethnic Hungarians is available for those ethnic Hungarians who live in non-neighbouring countries, therefore additional persons might be ethnic Hungarians among this group of 4,568 people too.

It seems that naturalisation, which can be considered as the top of the integration from a legal point of view, has widely been available for ethnic Hungarians. The non-simplified procedure is extremely complicated and thus not too attractive for non-Hungarian third-country nationals living in Hungary. Establishment of the applicable citizenship rules is symbolic. The full integration into the Hungarian society has to be easy for Hungarians beyond the borders even if they do not wish to move to the territory of Hungary, but has to remain a serious challenge for non-Hungarians who live in Hungary for 11 years in certain cases (Gyulai, 2018, pp. 16-17) and paying taxes and other contributions.

All in all, third-country nationals who are not under humanitarian protection have a chance to live and integrate in Hungary. The numbers show that more and more of them indeed are choosing to live in this country. Dismantling the AMIF projects certainly did not help their lives, but employment and education possibilities are more important in this sense. Due to the EU regulation, certain minimal integration criteria shall be applied concerning social and labour rights, but these are not enough to achieve a real social integration.

It is also obvious that naturalisation, in theory, is available for any foreigner but it is easy for ethnic Hungarians and complicated for everyone else. It is true that there are integration opportunities for non-Hungarians, but the state is not helping by legislative or other measures.

152 However, the situation is more complicated. Ethnic Hungarians also face difficulties even after naturalisation (Örkényi–Székely, 2010).

153 Slovakia does not allow dual citizenship therefore it is risky to apply for Hungarian citizenship for those who wish to stay in Slovakia.

154 Ukraine also does not allow dual citizenship but its control has not been comprehensive in the last years (Arunyan, 2018).

5. Conclusions

The chapter showed that integration of third-country nationals has become very difficult due to steps and measures of the Hungarian government. These steps have firstly been taken against asylum-seekers and refugees and not against better-off immigrants, but changes of social attitudes have not made the situation of the latter group easier.

The dismantling of the refugee integration system and the cancellation of the AMIF programmes has had a direct effect on the integration of refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. Further, the lack of AMIF integration and sensitising programmes had also affected the situation of non-humanitarian third-country nationals. Stopping these projects caused serious challenges. Orientation of third-country nationals is limited to the labour market and information from open-minded Hungarian citizens or organisations is almost completely missing, while only the approach of fear-mongering is available for wider echelons of the society.

Meanwhile, general economic tendencies could help the integration of all third-country nationals. Due to emigration of Hungarian workers to wealthier EU member states, there is a significant labour shortage in Hungary, which attracts more and more immigrants. As one of the social experts in this field confirmed: due to the labour shortage, employers are open [to employ refugees] in every segment of the labour-market and they make efforts to keep their employees.¹⁵⁵ It must be reiterated that this is not the result of the asylum or migration policy of the government, but the result of a general social and economic trends.

Foreigners in Hungary need to solve their integration problems in a hostile social environment and without state support. NGOs which used to be able to help them have been deprived of their resources and tools.

Growing number of persons with residence or settlement permits shows that these people might be able to overcome the mentioned difficulties. Unfortunately, many of the refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are not able to find solution despite the favourable labour-market tendencies and thus they leave the country. These people will try to begin their integration somewhere else in the European Union.

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Domestic political aspects of migration in Hungary

NÓRA KÖVES

1. Introduction

Despite the fact that the majority of foreigners who temporarily resided in Hungary have been voluntary migrants for decades, in the past years the political agenda has been directed to compulsory migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Therefore in this research I intend to show how a political crisis became a humanitarian one, and how the government in the European Union used a hate propaganda based on fear and lack of knowledge to strengthen and sustain its power, how migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, and later the NGOs and donors helping them became the absolute villain and the enemy of the state while the government presented itself as the savior of the nation. I am examining this process step by step to show the methods and the strategy that the government has used to dehumanise a group of people and to destroy their right to protection. I show how it conducted the communication hate campaigns, with the fear generated, how it justified its actions and modified legislation to demolish what remained of democracy. I briefly examine the sociological and historical background to make it more understandable how the government could be so successful with such campaigns. Besides the legislations I am analysing news reports to show the exact nature of the propaganda based on hate and fear.

2. Brief overview of the government's refugee policy before 2015

Viktor Orbán has formed his second government in 2010, and ever since he built his policy on different level of hate campaigns, but above all on the destruction of democracy. The biggest and most massive propaganda campaign which was based on fear of migrants and refugees started in 2015. However before the examination of this campaign, it is worth to look at the situation prior to 2015 in order to understand why this propaganda was so successful.

Since the system has changed in Hungary in 1989, migrants, refugees or basically anything related to them has not been on the forefront for a longer time of any government's policy actions until the second Orbán government. Moreover, Hungary has always been a transit country for people in need of protection. Usually they just either travelled through unnoticedly or they left the country during or after the asylum procedure, and went to Western-European countries. The only occasion when Hungarians had a stronger encounter with refugees was at the time of the Yugoslav wars. During that time an unusually high number of people came to Hungary. In 1991, 53,359 asylum seekers had arrived (Halmos – Németh, 2014). This was the biggest number of applicants up until 2015, when mostly Syrians and Iraqis were arriving. However, there were big differences between the perception of the Yugoslav and Syrian people and the hospitality towards them, and not just the hate propaganda. During the Yugoslav wars people were coming from pretty much the same culture, in fact many people who fled to Hungary from the surrounding countries, had Hungarian ethnicity, and spoke the same language. These individuals were closer not just by culture, but naturally geographically as well, and since

the war was happening right near our borders, it was made more personal to them, and thus they had more empathy. Also there were more people alive back then who still had personal experience from the Second World War who knew what a war looks like.

There was one more occasion when slightly more asylum seekers were arriving than usual, and it was in 1999 during the Kosovo war. Though far less people had arrived (11,499), compared to the beginning of 90s, but during that time Viktor Orbán was the Prime Minister (Halmos – Németh, 2014). In the first Orbán's government, the prime minister's behaviour somewhat resembled his attitude in 2015. Back then, he also treated these people with cynicism. While other countries' leaders stated how many refugees they will accept, Orbán said that he won't initiate a "numerus clausus" and Hungary will accept anyone who is requesting international protection (Király, 1999). In practice the government did not do anything in particular to help these individuals.

Apart from these two wars, not many asylum seekers were arriving in Hungary. Their numbers remained below 10,000 every year until 2013, when they had started to increase, it was mainly because of the Syrian war¹⁵⁶ (Halmos – Németh, 2014). Those who received refugee status were even less numerous, usually a few hundred people got international protection each year (BÁH, 2011-2013).

Compared to this, the numbers of voluntary migrants were higher, in average each year approximately 150,000 persons residing in Hungary. Most of them came from the surrounding countries, mainly from Romania and Serbia, and the majority of them had Hungarian ethnicity. The number of those who were coming with a different cultural background was significantly lower, and most of them had Chinese citizenship (KSH, 2018).

This data shows that the majority of Hungarians have not had much information and contact with refugees or migrants with different cultural background. Those people who resided here mainly settled down in Budapest, which has resulted in a kind of isolation even within the capital city (for instance, many refugees lived around Blaha Lujza square). Therefore many Hungarians were lacking any personal experience with migrants or refugees, which was one of the reasons why it was so easy for Viktor Orbán's party Fidesz to vilify these people.

Politically, the biggest question regarding voluntary migrants emerged around those persons who had Hungarian ethnicity, but were the citizens of the surrounding countries. Since this situation was the consequence of the Trianon Treaty, which redefined the Hungarian borders after World War I, this topic has been on the forefront of the agendas of parties on the right. However in 2004, during a socialist government, a referendum took place where people could decide whether Hungary should give citizenship with simplified naturalisation to trans-border Hungarians. The then government and its prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsány was at first hesitating, then campaigning against the question, while Viktor Orbán and his party Fidesz was supporting it. In fact a significant part of Fidesz's politics was built on the injustice of the Trianon Treaty and the situation of the trans-border Hungarians, which brought them support inside and outside of the country. After a heavy and emotionally exalted campaign, the referendum became invalid since the participation did not reach the necessary threshold. Fidesz considered this result shameful and this question became one of the most important topics for it with which it could win the elections in 2010.

When Orbán formed his second government in 2010, migration in general was not a priority for him at all. However the situation of trans-border Hungarians was still very important, so his government modified the Citizenship Act and initiated simplified naturalisation after the elections. According to this, a person can apply for preferential naturalisation if he/she had Hungarian citizen ascendants and is

156 According to the statistics of the Hungarian National Immigration and Asylum Office, in 2013 Hungary had 18,900 asylum seekers of which 356 received refugee status, and in 2014 there were 42,777 applicants of which 476 persons were granted international protection.

able to speak the language. Such person does not need 8 years of residence or to have a source of livelihood in Hungary and to take a so-called country exam, which are the requirements in the ordinary naturalisation process (*Act LV of 1993 on Hungarian Citizenship*). With this act Fidesz won many people's sympathies, and it definitely won itself many trans-border Hungarian voters for the following elections.

Other than that Fidesz's migration policy was not particularly visible in its politics. The demolition of the migration and refugee policy was rather noticeable politically in the context of the gradual abolishment of liberal democracy. It was clear that if civil liberties will be lost, and the rule of law or the checks and balances system would not function anymore, then migrants and refugee rights won't be protected either.

The biggest political scandal regarding this topic was around the so-called "resettlement bond" which was initiated by Antal Rogán, the leader of Fidesz's fraction. Fidesz modified the Act II of 2007 on Admission and right of residence of third country nationals. The new act came into force in 2013, and allowed people to buy Hungarian citizenship. Those who were permitted to apply included individuals whose entry and residence was desired because of national economic interest. With only 6 months of possession of a residence permit, people were able to buy citizenship for 250,000 euros (*Act CCXX of 2012 modification on the Act II of 2007*). This act was scandalous as corruption was suspected behind it since these transactions were made through private companies, which were owned by Antal Rogán, and Árpád Habony, the rather mysterious advisor to Viktor Orbán.

Between 2010 and 2015 the situation of asylum seekers was not satisfactory, but at least the legislation was more or less adjusted to the national and international law. Though in practice there were many anomalies, and there were cases when the authorities violated the law, the attitude of the authorities and the cooperation with NGOs were different before the hate propaganda had started. If we look at the policy and legislation changes from 2010 to 2015, a certain path of criminalisation is recognizable, though it was rather the result of the government's strong shift towards authoritarianism than the result of a targeted action against foreigners.

One of the biggest problems over this period (and even before 2010) was the unlawful detention of asylum seekers. Many of them were put into immigration detention with those who had crossed the border illegally, but did not request international protection, therefore awaiting expulsion in custody. Sometimes even unaccompanied minors were detained when doctors falsely declared them as adults. This practice has continued even when the European Court of Human Rights condemned these unlawful detentions, saying that the country violated the applicants' right to liberty and security (*Case of Lokpo and Touré v. Hungary*, 2011). Because of these conditions, and the risk of inhuman treatment, in 2012 the European Court of Human Rights suspended the deportation of an asylum seeker – based on Dublin Regulations – from Austria to Hungary (*Case of Mohammed v. Austria*, 2013). The situation got even worse in 2013, when the government modified the Act on Asylum and initiated the asylum detention that allowed to lawfully detain asylum seekers, even though this amendment violated inter alia the Geneva Convention¹⁵⁷. Even though immigration and asylum detention were supposed to be two separate procedures, the circumstances of the custody were really similar, and the law became highly criticised by many NGOs and even the European Commission. The most criticised part of the legislation was that even whole families were detained, and since the conditions were very similar to prison, it further traumatised children and adults who were fleeing war or persecution (Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 2014).

Besides the detention problems, one more significant change happened before the hate campaign had started in 2015. The government modified the Act on Asylum in 2010 and initiated the safe third

157 According to the Article 31 of the Geneva Convention, a person shall not be penalised for illegal entry if one is coming directly from a country where his/her freedom and life is in danger, and if he/she presents himself/herself to the authorities without delay, asking for international protection.

country concept¹⁵⁸ as criteria for the admission procedure. Serbia became a safe third country as well, and many people were returned who arrived from there. Since Serbia lies on one of the most important smuggling routes where people are coming irregularly and illegally to Europe, the majority of the asylum seekers arrived to Hungary from Serbia. So this modification affected many who could have otherwise been entitled to protection, especially in the context of the fact that in reality Serbia was not a safe country for the asylum seekers at all. According to the Hungarian Helsinki Committee's report in 2012, people were exposed to chain refoulement, which means that asylum seekers could end up even in their country of origin, where they could be tortured or killed. Moreover, the asylum system had not been working properly, evidenced by the fact that at time the authorities were not giving any refugee status to the applicants (Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 2012). Despite this, the Hungarian authorities continued the expulsions, up until 2012 when the Supreme Court published an official opinion about safe third countries. It stated that the authorities should consider the information about the third country provided by NGOs, and especially by the UNHCR, plus if the countries' asylum system is overloaded, then it should not be considered as a safe third country. Moreover, the Court also declared that just because of the mere fact that someone did not submit an asylum application in the third country, it cannot be the basis for declaring it a safe third country (Supreme Court, no. 2/2012 (XII.10.)). This opinion contributed to the withdrawal of the safe third country status of Serbia.

Even though the authorities were at times violating the existing legislation, the situation was much improved due to cooperation with NGOs. These were able to make cooperation agreements with the police, could go into detention or reception centres and monitor the conditions. They were also able to create integration programmes, or to contribute to existing ones, to mentor or help those who already received protection. The authorities, the police, the judges, and even the Ministry of the Interior were somewhat cooperative. Conferences, workshops and trainings were held with the representatives of different institutions, the opposition and civil society organisations exchanging know-how and experience, expressing their views etc. The criticisms or remarks made by NGOs were at least answered, and the sensitising trainings had started to show some success. Even the long-term migration strategy of the government, which was adopted in 2013, confirms this attitude. It acknowledges that the majority of foreign citizens who reside in Hungary are trans-border Hungarians. It also states the importance of the EU and international law, the principles of free movement, non-refoulement, integration and granting of international protection. It declares that Hungary is primarily a transit country, and even puts emphasis on cooperation with NGOs. The strategy highlights the importance of combating xenophobia, and states that even the possibility of use of misinformation regarding this topic by extremist groups should be combatted (*7 years strategic document related to Asylum and Migration Fund*, 2013).

Regarding public opinion, the population was not sufficiently informed about the case and situation of migrants and refugees, since they were not visible for the majority of the society. There was only one occasion where the public collectively raised a voice against refugees, when the government opened a reception centre in 2013 due to the increasing number of asylum seekers. This prompted people to protest against the centre, but once it was opened and they had had a personal experience with its residents, tensions had subsided. There was another event in 2012, when refugees and other recipients of subsidiary protection protested for better integration, better housing and social welfare. It was the first protest ever held by refugees in Hungary.

158 A safe third country is a place where a person's life and liberty is not threatened or a person is not exposed to serious harm, where it is possible to request and grant asylum and the principle of non-refoulement is respected. A safe third country can be the country of origin or a safe country of asylum where people have or could have requested asylum. The member states are allowed to declare a state as a safe third country, but before they do so, they should take into consideration certain criteria and the country reports by for instance the UNHCR. In practice, if someone is arriving from a safe third country, the authorities can send him/her back, even though the applicant can try to prove that the country will not be safe for them.

Other than that the coverage of migrants or refugees in the media was really rare, and mostly reduced to illegal border crossings. According to a study by the Hungarian Helsinki Committee in 2014, the migrants were basically invisible for the Hungarian people, because of the low and poor portrayal of the topic. There were only rare reports or longer and more in-depth articles, which would describe the nature or the causes of migration movements. Journalists usually wrote short news stories based on the police or other authorities' press releases. Moreover, even the journalists often did not know the basic concept and principles of migration, therefore the terms were used interchangeably, causing confusion among those who read these occasional news (Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 2014).

3. Overview of the government refugee policy since 2015

In the beginning of 2015 Viktor Orbán and his government has started a massive hate campaign against migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. The exact motivation behind this massive propaganda might never be revealed, but there are presumptions about why this campaign was chosen by Viktor Orbán and his government.

First of all, the criminalisation and discrimination of vulnerable groups were not far from Fidesz's policy adopted before. Its methods were similar - it always named a common enemy – usually a marginalised group against which it could protect the Hungarian people, or the Christian culture and values. It has been attacking these groups in various forms and further eroding their rights. In the beginning of their governance, it started with the homeless people. It initiated a new misdemeanor, the habitual vagrant sleeping, which later became a crime despite of the Constitutional Court's explicit ban of such criminalisation. Minorities were also further marginalised, especially Roma, having to face segregated schools, racism, and extremist groups, who marched in their villages, even killing some of them. LGBTQ people were also attacked, excluded from the concept of family with all its benefits as a consequence of the fourth amendment of the Fundamental Law. Moreover, modification of legislation was accompanied by different types of sporadic communication containing hate messaging. Sometimes people connected to the government spoke about the homeless or Roma crimes, and questioned the lesbian and gay people's place in the society. These campaigns were conducted on different levels and intensity, but still contributed to a political culture, which base has started to be more and more hateful and open to discrimination. One of the main reasons why these campaigns did not have the same effect as the one against refugees, is because Hungarians had personal experience with their targets in one way or another. While many did not particularly like homeless people, since they met them on the streets, they knew from previous experience that they won't rape or kill them.

Another reason why Orbán probably choose this form of propaganda is the already high level of xenophobia in Hungary. Nothing illustrates this better than the famous research made by a leading social science research institute, TÁRKI, which examined the state of xenophobia in 2007, and introduced a new, fictional nationality, the "piréz". Respondents were asked whether they would welcome different nationalities in the country, and the only ones who would enjoy their hospitality were the trans-border Hungarians. Others were not welcomed at all, even the fictional "piréz" were refused by 68% of the respondents (TÁRKI, 2007).

Besides the existing xenophobia and the increasingly violent nature of the government, which was heading towards authoritarianism, there were many other reasons why this campaign worked. One of them is the lack of knowledge regarding migrants and refugees described above, but the lack of general information also contributed to the success of the governmental hate propaganda. This was partially because of the state of the Hungarian media, where the government's interventions has already caused a lot of damage by heavily attacking the freedom of press and the buying up of newspapers and TVs all over

the country, then broadcasting pure propaganda through them. Moreover, many Hungarian citizens do not speak any foreign language - in fact Hungary has been on one of the last places in most statistics in the EU. This means that many people did not have the opportunity to check the facts in other sources in English, or research further the events or issues. Furthermore, the presentation of the Middle Eastern countries in the Hungarian media was generally in a bad light, the news focusing either on war or terrorism, which gave the impression of very dangerous countries with only criminals and terrorists.

So this was more or less the basis on which Orbán could build his hate campaign, spiced with the already running "illiberal democracy", where those democratic institutions which would have had the role of defending the society from such discriminative hate campaigns were already demolished. By 2015 Orbán damaged *inter alia* the Constitutional Court and the Ombudsman system, the rule of law was also damaged and the majority of the media was under the influence of the government.

By 2015 it was also known among experts dealing with refugees' protection that Europe will most probably face a bigger influx, since the number of asylum seekers had been rising. This had many reasons, for instance the war in Syria, the existence of the Islamic State terrorist groups, and the unbearable conditions in Middle Eastern and Balkan refugee camps. Fidesz lost many of its voters by the end of 2014 because of a growing number of corruption and other scandals and unpopular policy decisions (Horváth, 2015), therefore the government party needed an effective campaign, which would strengthen their position and bring back their voters along with many new supporters. By that time Orbán has been working for years with Arthur Finkelstein, who was infamous for his negative campaigns built around fears held by the white middle class. Possessing the knowledge of all the facts described above, they have started a campaign, which demonised and dehumanised the people fleeing from war and persecution, simply to create an enemy to protect the country from, and to rally people around the government and the party.

3.1. First stage: initiating a governmental hate campaign against migrants

The first time Orbán spoke about refugees as potential threat was on the 11th of January 2015 on the day of the international solidarity march in Paris. The protest was organised to stand up for the freedom of press and to show unity against terrorism after the terrorist attack against the *Charlie Hebdo* satirical weekly. Orbán chose this event to start his hate campaign. He gave an interview to the state television and immediately and deliberately started to mix the terms of migration. He said that "the economic migration is a bad practice in Europe and it shouldn't be looked at as a useful thing, because it only brings harm and danger to the European people, therefore migration should be stopped" (Orbán: *Gazdasági bevándorlóknak ...*, 2015). He also stated that Hungary cannot give asylum to those who are leaving their homeland because of economic reasons, and the government won't let Hungary become a target for migrants. He said that the government did not want to see a significant minority in the country who would have a different cultural background.

Ever since then, the state-owned media, news portals and newspapers connected to Fidesz (usually through its oligarchs), different politicians and officials belonging to the government have started to portray migration as the biggest threat to the nation. Moreover, the authorities, such as the Ministry of the Interior, the Police, or the National Immigration and Asylum Office have been assisting this propaganda from the very beginning. On the 16th of January 2015 the Minister of the Interior, Sándor Pintér increased the level of terror threat from the lowest A to B, which can be initiated when a NATO or EU member state is attacked and the event can have unpredictable consequences in Hungary (Erdélyi, 2015). Few days later, the Defense and Policing Enforcement Committee of the Parliament held a closed meeting about the security policy issues concerning Hungary. After that Lajos Kósa, the leader of Fidesz parliamentary fraction, gave an interview in which he stated that "migration is raising serious concerns" (Kósa, 2015).

In February 2015, Antal Rogán – the minister who established the resettlement bond – held a press conference where he spoke about the dangers of illegal migration. While he was speaking, he was distracted by activists, who made small banners stating that “Warning, xenophobia incited by the state” (*Megzavartuk Rogán Antal, 2015*).

Naturally, the *Charlie Hebdo* terrorist attack shocked many people in Hungary. Besides the obvious reasons, it resonated more because Paris was closer to Hungary geographically, many Hungarians know the city and it affected them emotionally. Since France and especially Paris has been a destination for many migrants and asylum seekers, and the city being known as a multicultural capital, the Hungarian government could easily mix terrorism with immigration. Primarily they played with the people’s fear of security threats, and not just the physical, but also the economic and cultural. The “migrants” became the absolute villain, who would not just attack, but also jeopardise the Hungarian culture, the Christian religion, and take the Hungarians’ jobs. At the same time people connected to the government often referred to them as “livelihood migrants” which is a very demeaning expression in Hungary, often used in connection with the Roma prior to this campaign. It means that these people are only coming here because of the hope of good social welfare system and aid, so basically the “migrant lifestyle” itself would secure their livelihood. Overall, all these statements initiated the feeling that migrants not only represent physical danger of committing terror attacks, but also jeopardise the lifestyle of Hungarians. They were also referred to as “illegal migrants”, implying that they are criminals who have no right to be in Hungary or in Europe. They almost never referred to the arriving people as refugees, or if they did so, they immediately divided the two terms, stating that the authorities would naturally give protection to those who are fleeing from war, but unfortunately those who are arriving now to Hungary and to Europe are not in danger, they are just coming because of economic reasons. With this communication, they could quiet down the conscience of people, but also raise their fear from the unknown and increase the impression of economic vulnerability.

The majority of the media connected to Fidesz played along with the government, using the same expressions and terms as the government, and broadcasted basically just its opinion on the issue. According to a research by Gábor Bernáth and Vera Messing, the government and other politicians and experts belonging to them had an advantageous position in the news regarding migrants, and beside theirs, all other opinions faded. Moreover, in the news they used pictures of migrants, which implied they are criminals. Their faces were rarely shown, they were handcuffed, or had to stand behind walls during inspections, while those policeman who were shown with them wore gloves and masques, suggesting that these people are not just dangerous but also contagious. The frequent interviews with representatives of different institutions confirmed and de-facto rubber-stamped the statements of politicians. Few experts supported these propaganda claims in the media, however, the organisations with real expertise and years of experience behind them did not get a chance to reach the majority of the people. They were only interviewed 8 times during the examined period, and their statements only appeared at the websites read by the opposition (Bernáth – Messing, 2015).

Meanwhile the number of asylum seekers has started to increase, in January and February 2015 mainly Kosovars came who were heading to Germany. In the first quarter of 2015, 33,542 asylum seekers were registered, and the majority of them were Kosovars, who were mainly fleeing from poverty and hopelessness instead of war and persecution (KSH, 2015). This supported the government statements about the increasing migration pressures, thus boosting the fears among the population. By April 2015, the level of xenophobia was higher than ever. TÁRKI has been measuring the level of xenophobia in the country for more than two decades. According to their poll, 46% of respondents were xenophobic, meaning that these people do not want asylum seekers to set foot in the country. The rest were uncertain as to whether they would welcome these people or not, and only 9% of the respondents were supporting asylum seekers. The highest rejection was directed at those who have Arab ethnicity, but even the fictional “piréz” people got rejected by 60% of Hungarians. According to the research, those

respondents who were the most xenophobic were also those who were in bad financial circumstances and were afraid of further deterioration of their situation (TÁRKI, 2015). In another survey by the European Commission in the spring of 2015, Hungarians specified immigration as the most important issue the EU was facing (European Commission, 2015).

In May, 2015 the government initiated a national consultation campaign to ask the population's opinion about migration and terrorism. The national consultation was a questionnaire and a propaganda tool used by Fidesz. The government sends these papers to every person above 18 years in the country asking their views about different topics. It is one of the current government parties' tools to seek 'democratic mandate' while building an authoritarian regime. The questions themselves are highly manipulated, containing many lies and disinformation usually violating human and constitutional rights, or even the Fundamental Law. The answers are also formed to serve the government's views, moreover the data processing is corrupted as well. It is never clear how many consultation papers arrived back and what are the actual answers in them. Nevertheless the government is using this tool to justify its actions, always referring to the people's opinion or desire.

The national consultation on "Immigration and Terrorism" was introduced in May 2015, containing questions like "There are some who think that mismanagement of the immigration question by Brussels may have something to do with increased terrorism. Do you agree with the view?" And the answers are: "I fully agree", "I tend to agree", "I do not agree" (*Nemzeti konzultáció...*, 2015). People were allowed to vote via internet as well, which gave even more space for frauds or the manipulation of the answers, since the system was asking only personal data which could be easily forged by just simply writing fictional names. When the government's attention was directed to this, they answered that they have trust in the people that they won't use any tricks (Lengyel, 2015).

In parallel with the national consultation campaign, the government initiated its first nation-wide billboard campaign on immigration and terrorism, which sent a message to "migrants", such as: "If you come to Hungary, you should respect our culture/laws" or "If you come to Hungary, you cannot take Hungarian jobs" (Fábián – Földes – Spirk, 2015). Since the messages were in Hungarian, it was obvious that it was made for the Hungarian audience to show strength, and point out the place of migrant in the society.

Despite the fact that the hate campaign has started to cause noticeable damage in the society (for instance, "migrant" as a word became a profanity or was used as a curse) there were many who resisted and stood up against hate and fear. Activists have started to damage and rip off the billboards spreading hatred all over the country, especially in Budapest. In one case activists voluntarily gave themselves up at the police station, saying that they were committing civic disobedience and in such circumstances as described above, ripping of the billboards is a form of political expression. The Central District Court of Pest ruled in their favour, and stated that the activists were exercising their fundamental right to freedom of expression, which is also declared in the Fundamental Law of Hungary (*Order Sze. 24735/2015./2.*). At the same time other activists who were repainting a billboard in the countryside, in Szeged, were charged with vandalism, a criminal offense. With this verdict, which violated the Fundamental Law, the judge used his powers to restrict the fundamental right to freedom of expression, thus supporting the government's hate campaign. This verdict can have a natural chilling effect, sending a message that if someone is expressing his/her opinion in this way, he/she will be punished. Therefore less people will try to damage the billboards, so the civic resistance against the government hate campaign won't be that visible (EKINT, 2018).

Besides the "vandalism" against the billboards, another civic campaign organised by an opposition satirical political formation, the Two-Tailed Dog Party, took place. It collected money from people and made a counter campaign, with billboards containing messages like "If you are the prime minister of Hungary, you have to abide by our laws". Even though the Two-Tailed Dog Party managed to collect 11 times more money than what it requested (within a few days they collected around 103,000 euro),

it could not compete with the government, which spent more than 3.1 million euro on the national consultation and the billboard campaign, spreading their message to every tiny place in the country (Index, 2015; *Mennyibe kerül nekünk...*, 2015).

What happened afterwards was also a typical method of the Fidesz government. First it raised hatred and tension with a hate campaign, broadcasted and printed everywhere. When the fear is high, the government asks the people's opinion, usually with national consultation, then uses this non-transparent propaganda tool to justify their actions, which usually involves authoritarian modifications of legislation. The same happened in the case of migration. When the tensions and fear of migrants and refugees were noticeably high because of the constant propaganda, the government started to modify legislation justifying these actions with the people's will expressed through the national consultation.

3.2. Second stage: modifying legislations to dismantle the rights of asylum seekers

In June 2015, Antal Rogán and Lajos Kósa submitted the amendment to the Act on Asylum to the Parliament, which formed the basis for the extension of the list of safe third countries. A month later the government modified the list of safe third countries with a regulation. It designated many countries as safe third countries – for instance Kosovo and Serbia, from where a huge majority of asylum seekers were arriving (*191/2015 (VII.21) Government Regulation*). With this amendment the government made the foundation for the automatic and unlawful pushbacks, and gave the opportunity to the authorities to expel basically everyone who is coming from Serbia, stating that since it is a safe third country, people should ask for asylum there. On the same day the government officially announced that they would erect a 4 meter high razor blade fence along the Serbian – Hungarian border to keep out the illegal migrants. According to them, those who would want to come in legally, will have an opportunity to do so in the transit zones.

In the meantime, more potential refugees have started to arrive in June 2015, and this influx was already visible for the people, because they wanted to travel to Western Europe, therefore they were waiting around the railways stations. Since they had nothing to eat and nowhere to stay, different volunteer groups have started to form in Budapest. The first was Let's Help the Refugees Facebook group, then two days later activists established a new one, called Migration Aid. Both groups had approximately 10,000 members who helped the people, providing them food, tents, clothes, and medical help. During the summer, they distributed supplies and basically kept them alive, although this should have been the duty of the authorities. Since it was expected that people mainly fleeing from war will arrive, authorities could have opened for instance gyms to give accommodation to them, but instead they let the people stay on the streets, so Hungarians could see that the government was right, "migrants" are really arriving.

In August 2015 the Minister of the Interior initiated the T/5983 Proposition Bill on the modification of certain legislations related to handling mass migration. Among them, they modified the Penal Code and initiated three new crimes: illegal crossing of closed borders, impairing the border fence, obstructing the progress of building border fence. With this amendment it became possible to punish those who would cross the border. The maximum punishment is 20 years of imprisonment and in all cases the expulsion and a ban from the Schengen Zone and from the territory of the European Union. Besides this, the government introduced the state of emergency due to mass migration, which in case of initiation gives the authorities and the government extra competences. For instance it can authorise the military to act on the territory of Hungary and to use live ammunition. Even though the enactment of the state of emergency has specific criteria, the law also states that it can be ordained when mass migration is directly jeopardising the public safety of a town or village. Such an emergency can be declared for six months, but the government only needs to submit a report to the Parliamentary Standing

Committee on Police to prolong the state of emergency, which is a very weak guarantee against the misuse of the law (*T/5983. Proposition Bill*).

During July and August of 2015 the asylum seekers' numbers have radically increased, 78,381 people submitted applications (BÁH, 2015). But many just went through the country without actual registration or left the territory afterwards. As at first people could freely move within the country, they were allowed to come to Budapest where many waited around the Eastern Railway station, since the trains to Austria and Germany were departing from there. At the railway station, permanent assistance teams were formed from volunteers and doctors who helped those staying there, providing everything they needed. Since they did not receive any information from the authorities and it was uncertain when they can travel to the west, people were protesting, and on the 4th of September they started a march towards the Austrian border. The march sharply resonated internationally, even car convoys were formed, helping the refugees to reach Austria. The state propaganda media was broadcasting every moment of this crisis, including the protests at the railways stations, proving that these people are dangerous. When they started to march to the west on the highway, the government made a press conference and stated that it had to protect the Hungarian people from the marching "migrants", and restore the functioning of the transportation, therefore it is sending buses and bringing them to the Austrian border (Dezső, 2015). With this move the government also sent a message to the European Union, saying that the EU was leaving Hungary alone with this problem, and that Hungary could not wait for EU or Germany, thus the government had to solve it, proving they were the only ones who dare to act.

After this, the asylum seekers were not allowed to come to Budapest, the police stopped them right at the Hungarian – Serbian border, in Röszke, where they had to stay in a corn field designated with crime scene tape. They had to wait and sleep there for days - only the volunteers were providing food, tents and blankets for them. They were not receiving any information from the authorities, moreover, the police were handling them as if they were infected - they used white gloves and masks. Therefore people did not know what is going to happen with them, so after a while they tried to break out from the field designated by the police and started to march again on the highway, which had to be closed off by the police. Since the media were broadcasting all these pictures, it increased the fears and hatred even more, and many Hungarians thought they were in danger, and only the government could protect them. This mood gave the government even more justification, when they decided to close the border at midnight on the 15th of September.

All the previously modified legislations came into force on that day, causing not just a physical, but also a legal closure of the border. This meant in practice that if a person tried to come through the fence, the police captured him/her, and put into detention, and after a trial he/she was expelled from the country and banned from the Schengen and the EU zone. If asylum seekers tried to submit their asylum application in the only two transit zones along the Serbian – Hungarian border, the huge majority of them were also expelled, with the statement that Serbia is safe third country and they should apply for asylum there. Those who were already in the country before the border closure were placed in refugee centres or asylum detention.

When this became clear for potential asylum seekers who were waiting between the border of Hungary and Croatia, also without any help of the states, they became even more hopeless. Eventually a kind of riot happened between them and the police, where the authorities used violence and strong tear gas, which was affecting children and even journalists. After that, several people were arrested, one of them, Ahmed H. a Syrian national, who threw rocks towards the police was sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment by the second instance court for committing terrorism. His case and the clash between the police and the potential asylum seekers were shown in the state media multiple times, proving that these people are terrorists who want to violate the state border and domestic laws and culture.

After this clash, the majority of asylum seekers have started to look for another route, and they either crossed the Hungarian border from Croatia, or went to Austria crossing Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia.

On 16th of October 2015 the Croatian – Hungarian border was also closed with a fence, making a complete closure along the Southern border of Hungary. After this, the asylum seekers' numbers have drastically decreased, because the news were spreading that Hungary was not welcoming them, and through the closed borders it was hard to reach their goal, the West.

In 2015, approximately 350,000 people traveled through the country, but it is hard to estimate their exact number, because of the lack of proper registration. According to the Immigration and Asylum Office, in 2015, 177,135 persons requested asylum, though many of them left before the decision and many did not receive the status. Therefore only 146 people were granted refugee protection (and 356 received subsidiary protection), which is an extremely small number, especially in the context of the massive and continuous hate campaign that the government has launched against them (BÁH, 2014-2015). There is no doubt that Fidesz's politics built on fear and hate were worth it: the government's political support has grown by 16% from May 2015 till January 2016 (TÁRKI, 2015-2016).

As it was mentioned, after the closure of the Croatian – Hungarian border, the number of the asylum seekers has drastically decreased, nevertheless the government continued its campaign. In March of 2016 it extended the state of emergency due to mass migration to the whole country, though its criteria described in the legislations were not fulfilled. This type of emergency is still ongoing, the government unlawfully kept on prolonging it every 6 months ever since, despite of the lack of mass migration. For half a year longer Fidesz's fight was ongoing just against "migrants". In order to keep up the discussion and to show continued power, the government kept dismantling the rights of asylum seekers and those who already received international protection. In May 2016 it terminated the integration contract, punishing those who were refugees even according to the authorities. It meant that everyone who received legal protection did not receive any additional help from the state, for instance help to learn the Hungarian language. The Ministry of the Interior justified this action again by claiming to care for the Hungarian people, stating that "migrants" should not be allowed to receive benefits that Hungarians cannot have (Albert, 2017; see also Attila Szabó's chapter in this publication).

In July 2016 the government initiated a new rule called "deep border control" which means that if a person is caught within 8 km of the border, he/she will be pushed back to Serbia. This has resulted in even less access to protection, since more persons had to wait to get into the two transit zones, which were accepting very few people¹⁵⁹ while thousands were waiting. Moreover, police brutality increased with legalising the pushbacks – many stories have been documented about dog bites, usage of baton and pepper spray. At the end of August 2016 the prime minister announced that government would build the second, smart fence in addition to the existing one along the Serbian – Hungarian border, since the country needed a stronger protection against the hundreds of thousands of people who were likely to come. This was already a communication preparation for the so-called "quota referendum", which connected the already demonised migrants with the government fight against the EU.

3.3. Third stage: connecting the hate campaign against refugees with the government's fight against NGOs and the EU

Since many asylum seekers were avoiding Hungary because of the unlawful treatment and the massive hate campaign, the government needed a new enemy. When it could not present too many "migrant" who would "assault" the borders, it had to attach the fear-mongering to something else, to keep up the threat level and sustain its power. First it chose the European Union, which it has attacked before, but

159 By that time, both transit zones accepted 25 people per day (so 50 altogether), as of now it has been reduced to 1 person per day per transit zone, but in practice sometimes even zero persons per day.

not as systematically as during the "quota referendum". The main message was that the government successfully protected Hungary from the "migrants" with the fence, but now the EU wants to resettle them on our territory. Its tools were again the same - it initiated a billboard campaign first in May 2016 then in the middle of June 2016, which contained statements and questions like: "We are sending a message to Brussels, therefore they will understand it too." "Did you know that Brussels wants to settle a whole city's worth of illegal immigrants in Hungary?" "Did you know that since the beginning of the immigration crisis the harassment of women has risen sharply in Europe?" "Did you know that the Parisian terror attacks were committed by immigrants?" (*Orban's anti-refugee...*, 2016).

The government used the same method again to increase fear: confusion and the lack of knowledge. They spread lies and disinformation, used really blurry expressions (for instance "whole city's worth" mentioned above) just to mislead people thus to generate more insecurity and fear. They consistently used the word "Brussels" instead of "the EU", in order to deliberately mix the terms and proceedings in the people's minds. Since people do not have much knowledge of EU institutions or how they work, the government could easily spread false information and form a question for the referendum on quotas, which itself was a lie: "Do you want the European Union to order the compulsory settlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary without the consent of the Parliament?"

This question shows perfectly how the extent of government-sponsored manipulation works. In reality there was no compulsory settlement, only a possibility emerged in the EU discussion on quotas that the EU would send 1,294 asylum seekers, the review of which would have been handled by the Hungarian authorities. Secondly, the Parliament had nothing to do with this question, the government was entitled to decide. Thirdly, the EU cannot order such things, since the Hungarian government along with the other member states participates in the decision-making. But since this was a complex explanation, and the government had such simple messages, it was impossible to compete with it, especially with its huge media predominance. So the only way to combat it was to ask the people to vote in a way to invalidate it. Such campaign was conducted by several leading NGOs and only one opposition party, Two Tailed Dog Party.

Since the propaganda against migrants and refugees has started in 2015, the opposition parties could not conduct an effective counter campaign. One of the reasons was that the opposition has been very fragmented, and could not act together to combat the war rhetoric, either during the "quota referendum" or before. In 2016, there were 7 opposition parties in the Parliament: the Hungarian Socialist Party (Magyar Szocialista Párt – MSZP), which has been the biggest left-wing opposition party, the Democratic Coalition (Demokratikus Koalíció – DK), the Dialogue for Hungary (Párbeszéd Magyarorszáért – PM), and the Hungarian Liberal Party (Magyar Liberális Párt – MLP). All together they had 38 seats in the Parliament out of 199. Besides them, there was a smaller green party called Politics Can Be Different (Lehet Más a Politika – LMP), which had 5 mandates, and the far-right party, called Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik Magyarorszáért Mozgalom – Jobbik) that had 23 seats.

From the beginning of the hate campaign, the opposition parties basically just adjusted to the government's form of communication, and very quickly started to use the same terms. The reason was that the government managed to generate such an enormous fear even on the left side that presumably the opposition parties would have lost many of their voters if they would seriously confront the basis of Orbán's actions. One more advantage that Orbán had was that since he had such simple war rhetoric, he could easily accuse the opposition parties of treason if they would accept "migrants" aka the "terrorists".

Although the leftist parties condemned the government's inhumane migration and refugee policy, they also stated that the threat is real, and it is a problem that needs to be solved.

During the government's quota campaign, the opposition actions, or rather the lack of, became visible. Jobbik, the far-right party was supporting the government with this referendum, moreover, it

was the one who initiated a similar question in 2015, when it suggested modifying the constitution regarding this question.

The other opposition parties did not have a strong position on the issue, their comments were usually quite blurry making sure that those of their voters who are afraid of the “migrants” will keep supporting them. So, most of the left-wing opposition parties only encouraged the people to boycott the referendum and to ignore the government instead of sending stronger messages and explaining the absurdity of the referendum. For instance, MSZP stated that the referendum is unnecessary, therefore people should not vote. Though, at the same time, it also declared that if the EU would truly want to forcefully resettle migrants in Hungary, they would stand beside the government and they would support them in their “quota war against the EU” (*Molnár Gyula (MSZP) sem akar...*, 2016). Smaller left-wing parties had a bit stronger statements, for instance, the parties PM and Together stated that the referendum was “stupid”, because the EU would not forcefully resettle “migrants”, however they also asked people just to boycott the referendum. Even worse was the LMP’s approach, which tried to stay neutral on the question and said that every of their supporters should vote according to their conscience. Only one party had a stronger counter position, the Two Tailed Dog Party, which did not have any seat in the Parliament. They encouraged the people along with many prominent NGOs to cast an invalid vote, so in this way they can truly express their opinion about the referendum and the government’s hate campaign. Their agreement was that if the people simply boycott the referendum, the government won’t know how many people are opposing their policy and how many just do not care about it.

After a massive campaign from the governmental side, the referendum took place on the 2nd of October 2016, however it was invalid due to absenteeism and lack of valid votes of half of all the citizens eligible to vote. Nevertheless, the government considered the result of the referendum politically valid, which was “politically binding” for them. Because those who cast a valid vote, voted in favour of the government, it presented it in such a way that it received 98% of the votes, which rarely happens in a democracy. Government carried out another billboard campaign after the referendum stating: “We sent a message to Brussels: 98% no to the compulsory settlement!” (Farkas, 2016).

The ongoing hate campaign resulted in the highest xenophobia ever measured in 2016. TÁRKI asked in its research whether Hungary should accept all the asylum seekers or none at all, or the authorities should examine whose application shall be accepted. While 53% of the people said that no one shall be given international protection, only 1% of Hungarians would have welcomed refugees and migrants, and 46% were hesitating regarding the question. According to this research, which compared the current data with the previous years, the level of xenophobia was the highest when people only heard the propaganda but did not have personal experience with refugees or migrants or simply did not see them coming.

When many asylum seekers came to the country, the xenophobia was still very high, but seeing these people’s unfortunate situation, especially seeing suffering children increased the number of those who were hesitating regarding the topic. When the asylum seekers’ numbers have drastically decreased after the Croatian – Hungarian border closed and people only heard the government’s propaganda, the xenophobia became the highest ever measured (TÁRKI has been conducting this research every year since 1992) (TÁRKI, 2016).

Seeing the xenophobia ever so high and referring to the success of the “quota referendum”, the government modified the legislation connected to asylum, migration and borders, and extended the deep border control in March of 2017 with (70/2017 (III.31.) Government Regulation). This has resulted in the complete dismantling of the right to asylum. In practice, these changes meant that people can submit their asylum application only in the two transit zones along the border, and no one can stay inside the country without granted international protection. So, for instance, if someone would cross the border from Romania, the police can push them back – to Serbia. They have to wait

there sometimes even months, until they have a chance to get in to one of the transit zones (as of now only 1 person or 0 is received per day), from where most likely they will be expelled upon examination. This treatment is considered to be a detention, moreover, they are not entitled to receive food. Families with children and unaccompanied minors above 14 years also have to stay in the transit zones, which are practically jails with barbed wires and armed guards.

After all this, government continued its fight against the EU through migration in April 2017, moreover other enemies came into focus: NGOs and George Soros, Hungarian-born billionaire and philanthropist. They have been attacked before on different levels, and with different tools, but when the government combined these attacks with the fear against "migrants", it was more successful. The logic was basically the following: "migrants" are terrorists, therefore those who attempt to help them are threat to the nation as well. Moreover, those who financially support these NGOs, for instance the EU (through funds) or George Soros (through his organisation, the Open Society Foundation) are presented as a danger too. Due to the foreign funds, the government linked these accusations with transparency, and because of the support for refugees it accused the NGOs of treason, saying that they are not keeping the country's interest in mind. Based on this conspiracy theory, the government initiated a new campaign during the spring called "Let's Stop Brussels". It made a national consultation with the same title, containing questions like: "By now it has become clear that in addition to the smugglers, certain international organisations encourage the illegal immigrants to commit illegal acts. What do you think Hungary should do? (a) Activities assisting illegal immigration such as human trafficking and the popularisation of illegal immigration must be punished. (b) Let us accept that there are international organisations which, without consequences, urge the circumvention of Hungarian laws" (Spike, 2017).

Another question was suggesting that these "foreign supported organisations" are not transparent, and their aim is to interfere in internal affairs in an opaque manner, thus they jeopardise our independence, therefore they should be required to register. The national consultation was of course conducted along with another billboard campaign, stating plainly: "Let's stop Brussels". Despite of the national and international objections and protests, a new NGO law, the Act LXXVI of 2017 on the Transparency of Organisations Receiving Foreign Funds was adopted in June 2018. The government claimed to address the alleged lack of transparency, but in reality this new NGO law was basically a copy of the Russian 'foreign agent' law. The real aim was to stigmatise those people who are critical of the government, including its migration policy and other topics connected to rule of law, or even are raising their voice against corruption. The legislation states that if an NGO is receiving more than 23,000 EUR from abroad (even from the EU) then it has to register itself as an "organisation receiving foreign funds" along with a label highlighted everywhere, including on the website. If an NGO refuses to register, it can be dissolved.

After the new law was passed, the government initiated a new national consultation with a new billboard campaign, which more systematically than ever connected migrants, the EU, NGOs and Soros. Referring to the non-transparent results of the *Let's Stop Brussels* campaign, Viktor Orbán stated that "in Hungary we have full consensus that the migration policy and the Hungarian independence should be protected against Brussels". According to him, the Hungarians also refused illegal migrants and mass integration, therefore George Soros, who is "operating a mafia network and jeopardising the future of Europe" should be stopped (*Orbán Viktor: Nem hagyjuk, hogy Soros nevesse a végén*, 2017). In June 2018, the government initiated a new billboard campaign, called "Do not let Soros laugh in the end." It was followed by a national consultation, which was officially called the Soros Plan. It was initiated in September 2018, containing questions like: "Together with officials in Brussels, George Soros is planning to dismantle border fences in EU member states, including Hungary, to open the borders for immigrants. Are you supporting this part of the Soros plan?". "Another goal of George Soros is to make sure that migrants receive milder criminal sentences for the crimes they commit" (Novák, 2017). In a description beside the question, two NGOs were named, the

Hungarian Helsinki Committee and Amnesty International, stating “George Soros is supporting such organisations with significant amounts of money, which are helping immigration and protecting immigrants committing illegitimate acts” (Erdélyi, 2017). From these examples it is clear that in addition to criminalisation of migrants and refugees, the government has started to criminalise the work of one of its hardest critics, the NGOs, in order to demolish what remained of democracy.

At the beginning of 2018, the government announced a new package of laws, called officially Stop Soros, which would have abolished the critical NGOs. This was one of the main campaign tools of the government besides its fight against migrants, refugees, and the EU in the elections in April 2018. Fidesz did not even have an election programme, it just simply continued its battle against all the mentioned “enemies” and “fight for the freedom of the country and its cultural homogeneity”. Few weeks before the elections, Viktor Orbán stated that what was at stake was no less than the existence of the country, because national and globalist forces and the immigrants wants to take it, and Fidesz is the only one, who can protect the Hungarians (*Viktor Orbán speech*, 2018).

During the election campaign, the opposition could not compete with the government on this question. Basically almost all significant opposition parties stated in their election programme or in their comments that the fence would stay, and if they would win the elections, they would just make a more humane reception system. MSZP wrote in its programme that the fence would stay “until there is fear among the Hungarian people” (MSZP, 2018). Jobbik went even further, it stated in its programme that in addition to the fence it would restore the independent border guard system, and it would not accept either poor or rich migrants (Jobbik, 2018). Though LMP and DK did not include such a question in their programme, but in articles on this topic, they both said that the fence would stay. There were only two exceptions: one was a small party, Együtt that could not even get 1% of the votes in the elections, and the other was the Kétfarkú Kutypárt (Two Tailed Dog Party), which has been conducting counter billboard campaigns every time the government made its own. Though since it was a joke party, and it rather caricatured the government autocratic steps (including the billboards), it did not have serious election programme in regards to migration (its campaign promise was to build an overpass above the country for the migrants instead of the fence).

As a result, the protection of the rights of the refugees and asylum seekers became the responsibility and task of the NGOs, which have been standing up for democratic values. Therefore it was not a surprise that after the elections in which Orbán and his party won again with 2/3 majority, the government attacked the NGOs even harder than before. Moreover, it started to individualise the enemy, forming clearly visible, flesh and bone ones, scapegoats to combat. Few days after the elections, a list was published in one of the weekly newspapers connected with the government, in which 200 names were included, who were – according to the newspaper – the people of the “speculator” (a.k.a. George Soros) who pose a national threat. Among these persons there were NGO workers, investigative journalists and professors from Central European University (CEU) which was harshly attacked by the government. A month later the government initiated a new version of the Stop Soros law package, the Bill No. T/333. It amended certain laws related to measures to combat illegal migration, which was approved by the Parliament in June 2018. Among different amendments, it modified the Penal Code and introduced a new crime called “facilitating illegal migration”. According to the new amendment, anyone, even attorneys, journalists or NGO workers who would help asylum seekers and conduct organised activities regularly, can be imprisoned up to one year. This organisational activity can include border monitoring, building or operating a network, and even just preparing or distributing information materials (*Bill No. T/333*).

Besides this modification they also amended the Fundamental Law for the seventh time, completely abolishing access to refugee protection. The new amendment, Bill T/332, which was adopted in June 2018, states: “Any non-Hungarian citizen arriving to the territory of Hungary through a country, where

he or she was not exposed to persecution or to direct risk of persecution shall not be entitled to asylum". Ever since this amendment came into force, no one received a refugee status in Hungary, except Orbán's and Putin's Macedonian ally, Nikola Gruevski, the former prime minister, who fled in November 2018 from court proceeding which was initiated by Macedonian authorities against him because of allegation of corruption. He was helped and carried by car through the Balkan by employees of Hungarian embassy in Skopje, presumably stayed at Orbán's properties and received refugee status within a week.

In July 2015, the government adopted a new Tax Law and established a new special tax on immigration. According to it, 25% of tax should be paid primarily by the donor of the immigration supporting activities, which can be, for instance, media campaigns, seminars, organising the education, building networks and even "propaganda activities that portray immigration in a positive light" (*Bill No. T/625*).

With these modifications, the government reached a point where it can completely dissolve critical NGOs, imprison its workers, and detain and deprive the rights of people fleeing from war and persecution.

4. Conclusions

In this paper the path is shown how Viktor Orbán and his party Fidesz created enemies from the migrants and refugees, how the government generated enormous hate, how it strengthened and sustained its power and attacked its opponents. The nature of such campaigns was described, including the examples from the messages, which resembles many of the hate speeches from the fascist and communist era. They created a kind of modern war rhetoric, according to which the country always has to battle with someone for its freedom, be it physical, cultural or both. According to these narratives, Hungarian people are always under attack by national (NGOs) or international (migrants and refugees, EU, Soros) forces, who want to demolish the country, to replace its citizens and to change their religion and laws. With this rhetoric Fidesz managed to unify its supporters and win more people for its cause, since people are naturally afraid of the unknown, fearing to lose their livelihood and prosperity, and afraid of wars and terrorism.

In reality, the government through its "fight for freedom" divided the country into its supporters aka those who are real Hungarians and its opponents, aka those who are traitors of the nation. With this division and hate, the government reached a point where not just the communication propaganda caused damages, but the unlawful modifications made impossible for certain groups to exercise their rights. Above all, the most frightening was the enormous hate that was generated during such a short time when the government used the majority of Hungarian media to broadcast pure propaganda. The frustration and the fear has been perceptible in the every-day life, even physical attacks happened against foreigners.

With its propaganda, the government managed to criminalise and dehumanise those people who needed protection, since most of them were fleeing war and persecution. Then the government's battle exteriorised to its real opponents, the NGOs and the EU, who have been criticising their undemocratic steps and the demolition of rule of law and constitutionalism. During the years many demonstrations took place, many national and international actors protested against the actions of the government, however, in practice their impact was rarely visible. Even though the EU institutions have initiated different investigations, infringement procedures and even triggered the Article 7 after the Sargentini report was submitted to European Parliament, the EU seems to have no effective tool against irregularities and violations so far. However, the chilling effect among the donor organisations worked: the biggest one, the Open Society Foundation, left Hungary after the Stop Soros modification was adopted by the Parliament. The opposition's role was weak during the hate campaign since it was too afraid to lose voters by picking up the fight. Meanwhile the government reached its goal: asylum

seekers are detained along the Southern border, they are not receiving refugee status anymore. Moreover, the hate against migrants and refugees and the xenophobia is soaring higher than ever.

The government successfully sustained its power in Hungary and now it is trying to conquer Europe in the European elections in 2019 with the same messages and methods. What Viktor Orbán represents, the politics of fear and hate, can be dangerous within the EU, it could increase the power of other extremist and far-right groups, whose politics is also built on racism and discrimination. Inside the country Orbán can further deteriorate the situation of NGOs and other opponents, and build up a complete autocratic regime, following his biggest role models, Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Olena Babakova is a freelance journalist and political analyst. She received her Ph.D in history at Białystok University in 2015. In 2011 – 2016 she served as an editor at Polish Radio External Service, after 2016 she is a permanent contributor to *European Pravda* (Kyiv, Ukraine), *Eastbook* and *Nasz Wybór* (Warsaw, Poland) web-portals. Her research interests include Polish-Ukrainian relations, politics of historical memory as well as Ukrainian migrations to the EU.

Dr. Vladimír Baláž is a research professor with the Institute for Forecasting of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (the Institute acts both as a research body and government think-tank for formulating economic and social policies). Since 2012 he has been a member of the Learned Society of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. He is an author and co-author of nine research monographs and over 60 scientific papers published in the Web of Science journals. His research interests focus on international migration, innovation and R&D policies and behavioural economics and finance.

Mgr. Sylvie Burianová is a Ph.D candidate at the Masaryk University, Brno. In her research, she focuses on the migration policy of the European Union, especially its external dimension and border regimes.

Dr. Zora Bútorová is a senior research fellow at the Institute for Public Affairs (IVO) in Bratislava and teaches at the Department of Sociology at Trnava University. Her major fields of study are public opinion, gender equality and ageing. She is the co-author and editor of several books, including *Democracy and Discontent in Slovakia: A Public Opinion Profile of a Country in Transition* (1998); *She and He in Slovakia. Gender and Age in the Period of Transition* (2010); *Where Are We? Mental Maps of Slovakia* (2010, in Slovak); *Active Citizenship and Nongovernmental Sector in Slovakia* (2012); *The Fourth Dimension of the Third Age* (2013, in Slovak); *Where Do We Come From and Where Are We Going. 20 Years of Independence* (2013, in Slovak); and *Fateful Eights in Historical Consciousness of Slovak Public* (2018, in Slovak).

Mgr. Eva Čech Valentová has been active in the field of migration and integration since 2005, mostly as a project coordinator at the Association for Migration and Integration (SIMI), one of the major Czech non-governmental organisations operating in this area. She focuses on migrant integration at local level, on rights of undocumented migrants, on gender and intersectionality in migration. Over the years, she has authored or edited numerous articles and studies, represented SIMI at several thematic platforms and national and European networks. Since 2017, she coordinated development of local integration strategies for the City of Prague, she led works related to one of the thematic priorities in the Prague's Migrant Integration Strategy.

Dr. Joanna Fomina is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw. She earned her Master's degree in English from Jagiellonian University, Krakow; a Master's degree in British Studies from Humboldt University, Berlin; and her Ph.D in sociology from the Polish Academy of Sciences. She worked as migration expert at the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and also coordinated the Europe without Barriers international coalition of NGOs working toward EU visa liberalisation for the Eastern Partnership countries. Her academic interests include EU integration, migration and migrant integration policies, Euroscepticism and populism, and democratisation and transformation in Central and Eastern Europe.

Dr. Miroslava Hlinčíková works as a researcher at the Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, where she received a Ph.D in 2013. In her dissertation she dealt with research focused on the social incorporation of migrants from Vietnam in Bratislava. She has participated in several research projects, addressing the issues of migration, integration, discrimination and social and cultural diversity in the urban environment. She has been a long-standing analyst at the Institute for Public Affairs (IVO). She is the author and co-author of several monographs and studies, such as *Integrating People with International Protection in Slovakia: Seeking the Starting Points*, *Migrants in the City: Present and (Not) Visible*.

Mgr. Tomáš Jungwirth is a researcher at the Association for International Affairs (AMO). In the past years, he had been working on migration, asylum and integration policies in the Czech Migration Consortium, an NGO network. On top of the national agenda, he follows the developments pertaining to the Common European Asylum System and EU external policies. As a civil society representative, he took part in the UN process leading to the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration. At present, he is Policy Leader Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence.

Dr. Katarína Karasová is a researcher with the Institute for Forecasting – Centre of Social and Psychological Sciences of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. She is also a lecturer with the Department of Statistics, Faculty of Economic Informatics at University of Economics in Bratislava. She participates in several national and international research projects on labour market and migration. Her main areas of research include migration in Europe, labour market in Slovakia and quantitative methods in socio-economic research.

Dr. Maryla Koss-Goryszewska is a doctor of social sciences in the field of sociology, and master of political science. She graduated from the University of Warsaw. In 2014 she defended her doctoral dissertation *The Social Perception of Female Victims of Human Trafficking for Prostitution: A Sociological Analysis*. She has been awarded a number of prestigious scholarships in social sciences and conducted research on the topic of criminal justice at University of Warsaw and the Institute of Justice. She is currently working at the Institute of Public Affairs in Warsaw as lead researcher of the multinational research project - National Integration Evaluation Mechanism NIEM. Her research interests include migration and integration policy, discrimination of minorities, equal treatment and gender studies.

Nóra Köves is a coordinator of the democracy programme in the region of Hungary and Croatia, at the Prague office of Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung. Working as an expert for several national and international NGOs in Hungary and other countries (USA, France, Kosovo, Turkey, Lebanon), she has acquired knowledge in the field of human rights protection. As an expert and an activist she has worked mainly with refugees and migrants. For years, she had worked in Budapest at the Eötvös Károly Policy Institute as a human rights expert. She has studied international relations with specialization of international human rights law, moreover she has degrees in communication and business communication. She frequently gives lectures at national and international conferences about Hungary with focus on the NGOs, and asylum seekers.

Dr. Jacek Kucharczyk is President of the Institute of Public Affairs, one of Poland's leading think-tanks. He received a Ph.D in sociology at the Polish Academy of Sciences. He studied at the Graduate School for Social Research in Warsaw, Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research in New York, the University of Kent at Canterbury (MA in philosophy) and Warsaw University (MA in English studies). In the 1980s he was active in independent student movement and clandestine publishing. He has authored and edited articles, reports, policy briefs and books on European affairs, democratic governance issues, populism, democracy assistance and migration policy.

Dr. Grigorij Mesežnikov is a political scientist, President of the Institute for Public Affairs (IVO). He worked at Comenius University and at the Political Science Institute at the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. He is a founding member of IVO, which he joined full-time in June 1997. In 1999, he became the Institute's president. He has published numerous expert studies on party system development and political aspects of transformation in post-communist societies, illiberal and authoritarian tendencies, populism, radicalism and nationalism in various monographs, collections and scholarly journals in Slovakia and other countries. He has edited and authored dozens of books, including the *Global Reports on Slovakia* (1995 – 2011), the comprehensive analysis of country's development in all relevant sectors of society. He was a key author of the report on Slovakia in *Nations in Transit* published by Freedom House (1998 – 2014).

Dr. Mikołaj Pawlak is assistant professor of sociology at the Institute of Social Prevention and Resocialisation, University of Warsaw, where he heads the Chair of Sociology of Norms, Deviance and Social Control. His research interests cover new institutional theory, migration studies, and sociology of knowledge. In his recent book *Tying Micro and Macro* he critically discusses the thesis on the sociological vacuum and presents it in the context of the debate on the micro- and macro-levels in sociological theory. His previous book *Organisational Response to a New Problem* (in Polish) applies the new institutional perspective in organisation studies to the problem of emerging policies of refugees' integration in Poland.

Dr. Martina Sekulová works as a scientific researcher at the Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. She focuses on issues of migration, care migration in particular, gender, human rights and integration of migrants into society. She cooperates with Slovak and international organisations active in the area of human rights, women's rights, migration and integration such as Institute for Public Affairs (IVO) since 2006, Migration Policy Group in Brussels since 2010 (European Website on Integration), International Centre for Migration and Policy Development in Vienna and other organisations. She is the author and co-author of several professional studies and publications.

Dr. Béla Soltész holds a Ph.D in International Relations (Corvinus University, Budapest). His research topic is the comparative analysis of migration and diaspora policies, with focus on Central/Eastern Europe and Latin America. He is assistant professor at the Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest, Faculty of Social Sciences, where he teaches international development, migration studies and Latin American studies. Also, he works at the Hungarian Central Statistical Office as the deputy project manager of YOUMIG, a transnational cooperation project on youth migration research and policymaking. He is the author of two travel books, a novel and a collection of short stories. His latest release is a volume of interviews *What Do We Know about Emigration?* (in Hungarian).

Attila Szabó studied social policy and law. He worked for the Menedék Hungarian Association for Migrants in different locations and positions from 2011 until 2017. He received his LL.M degree on European law in 2018 and is a Ph.D student at the University of Szeged in its Doctoral School of Law and Political Sciences. He published several articles and papers in Hungarian and English connected to migration, especially about the integration of migrants in Hungary.

Mgr. Hana Votradsocová is a Ph.D candidate at the Masaryk University, Brno. In her research, she focuses on securitisation of migration in Central-East Europe and on the issues of war and peace in the wider MENA region.

Phantom Menace

The Politics and Policies of Migration in Central Europe

Editors:

Jacek Kucharczyk, Grigorij Mesežnikov

Authors:

Olena Babakova, Vladimír Baláž, Sylvie Burianová, Zora Bútorová, Eva Čech Valentová, Joanna Fomina, Miroslava Hlinčíková, Tomáš Jungwirth, Katarína Karasová, Maryla Koss-Goryszewska, Nóra Köves, Jacek Kucharczyk, Grigorij Mesežnikov, Mikołaj Pawlak, Martina Sekulová, Béla Soltész, Attila Szabó, Hana Votradovcová

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