

MIGRATION PROFILES OF THE RECEIVING (VISEGRAD) COUNTRIES

3.1 Czechia: the main immigration country in the V4

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3.1.1 Introduction

Czechia is a country within CEE which has undergone fundamental changes in virtually all areas of human life since the collapse of the communist bloc at the very beginning of the 1990s (HAMPL M. 1999). The rapid and dynamic transition processes can be partly interpreted as a reversion from the distorted economic and social patterns of the communist era and partly as the result of the shift from modern to post-modern economies and society. The shift and transition to democracy and market economies often increased unemployment and socio-economic hardships. At the same time, CEE countries have undertaken different development trajectories and socio-economic differences have significantly increased among them. This resulted in the emergence and further progress of extremely complex migration patterns, especially within the CEE region; the pace of the change was exceptional (OKÓLSKI M. 2004). Western economies also experienced a rapid temporary increase in the number of predominantly economic and also ethnic immigrants from the CEE region, especially throughout the 1990s.

Such economically more advanced countries in the CEE region as Czechia subsequently became immigration lands. A significant milestone affecting international migration patterns and regulations was the accession of the eight CEE states into the European Union in the middle of 2004 (CASTLES S., MILLER M. J. 2009). So far the latest marker was the economic downturn, having an impact on the international migration reality since the middle of 2008 in Czechia.

3.1.2 General Social, Economic, Political and Demographic Trends and International Migration

Ignoring here all discussions as to how the post-communist transformation is interpreted, despite many problems, Czechia has gone through the whole complicated transition rather successfully (as compared to many other post-communist countries of the region). Because of the relatively stable political (with the exception of more recent developments) and economic (with the exception of the ongoing global crisis) settings, during the phase of the robust political and economic transition Czechia became a country of immigration

in a short time (CASTLES S., MILLER M. J. 2009); emigration (although statistically more difficult to grasp) has never become a prevailing migration movement. In absolute numbers and via net migration, Czechia has consequently taken the highest position among all CEE countries; even in recent years, just before the global economic crisis started, Czechia had become one of the most attractive countries of immigration within the whole EU (DRBOHLAV D. 2011). There is no doubt that economic reasons, such as employment and entrepreneurship, dominate over other migratory motives for immigration to Czechia.

The broader framework for international migration was created by a concurrence of specific developments of major political, social and economic trends:

- Czechia experienced a relatively stable political and economic setting during the phase of the political and economic transition (along with similar conditions in other CEE countries). This favourable climate created a so-called buffer-zone and, to some extent, prevented a massive migratory influx to western European countries from the CEE region. This positive climate resulted in a significant increase in the number of international migrants in Czechia (DRBOHLAV 2003).
- Demographic changes with their impact on the Czech labour market also played a significant part. Since the 1970s, there has been a decrease in the birth rate, resulting in a decrease in natural growth. This pace of development was further accelerated during the 1990s, with the first sign of an increase to be observed only after 2005. The demographic situation thus resulted in a natural decrease in the Czech population between 1994 and 2005 and a continuing overall ageing of the population. As far as the pool of population in a productive age (i.e. 15-64 years) is concerned, the size (in absolute numbers) was increasing during this period, especially in the 1990s.
- The demand-side of the labour market can be characterized by the development of the GDP. Its growth during the first half of the 1990s was replaced by stagnation in the second half of the decade (with a decrease in 1997 and 1998). The GDP did not significantly grow until 2005 and then decreased again in 2008, when the global crisis hit the Czech economy. The trend was more or less the same in terms of unemployment, too. In summary, the labour market increasingly demanded foreign workers during the first half of the 1990s as well as after 2005 until 2008 (DRBOHLAV D. 2010).
- The migration reality in Czechia was also influenced by the nature of the migration policy. During periods of economic growth, the policy was rather liberal, resulting in an easy recruitment of foreign workers. For example, due to a very liberal or rather non-existent migration policy and with, de facto, no restrictions limiting the movements of people, the number of foreign citizens grew substantially in Czechia after 1989 (BARŠOVÁ A., BARŠA P. 2006) (see also Chapter 5 below). In times of economic stagnation and decline, a number of restrictive measures were taken aiming to protect the Czech labour force from a competition coming from abroad.
- When explaining the attractiveness of Czechia for foreign labour, one cannot ignore another important factor. Besides strong “pulls” on the side of the Czech society/economy, there were important “pushes” in other, economically weaker post-Soviet countries. Thus, in Czechia the “pushes” and “pulls” coincided (see also e.g. OKÓLSKI M. 2012).

The main trends briefly described above formed a basis for the specific character and development of the migration reality in Czechia. In terms of numbers, the number of foreign citizens grew through the entire period (1989 – 2008) until the start of the economic crisis. Throughout the period, the dominant economic factors of international migration seem to have gradually lost some of their significance, as especially family motives grew in importance. Czechia was also facing the long-term problem of illegal/irregular and transit migration. Due to historical circumstances as well as new migratory patterns, three types of international migrants can currently be distinguished in Czechia (DRBOHLAV D. 1997), see a very simplified picture below:

- “Eastern” immigrants, migrating to Czechia from less advanced countries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics. They are characterized by a higher proportion of men, and they tend to be less educated. Even if highly educated, Eastern migrants tend to be economically active in manual jobs, especially in the construction industry and some other industries.
- “Western” immigrants, coming to Czechia from advanced countries of Western Europe and North America. In comparison with the former group, Western migrants tend to be more heterogeneous in terms of gender, age as well as the purpose of stay. They are generally highly qualified and often work in knowledge-intensive professions.
- Asian immigrants (mostly from Vietnam, China and Mongolia), active in specific economic segments, especially retail, business and food services.

Regarding the geographical distribution of immigrants in Czechia, the main characteristics are the following (e.g. VALENTA O. 2006):

- The migrants are distributed along an east-west gradient, i.e. the numbers and shares of immigrants grow when moving from eastern to western regions of Czechia.
- The metropolitan area of Prague proves to be the most significant destination of international migrants, where approximately between 30% and 50% of the immigrants are concentrated depending on individual migratory statuses.
- Higher proportions of ethnic and immigration groups can be found in regions sharing borders with the “mother” countries. This is the case with German, Slovak and Polish minority groups.

As in any other immigration country, Czechia also faces and struggles with irregular migration. The presence of irregular migrants in Czechia is caused by several reasons. As mentioned further, the demanding process of obtaining employment permits in combination with a constant demand for cheap and flexible labour are some of the fundamental causes. To some extent, this is also caused by an inefficient state policy regarding the legal recruitment of foreign labour. Irregular economic activities gain different forms (STRIELKOWSKI W. 2012).

The irregular economic practices within the employment of foreigners are thought to go on spreading further due to the impacts of the economic crisis. The first group of employees who were made redundant by their employers, employment agencies or unions

were foreign workers, who, in turn, were to leave Czechia if they did not manage to find a new job in two months. In combination with the introduction of restrictive measures taken by the state administration regarding immigration and foreign employment, one of the survival strategies of foreign workers was to gain a different economic status (e.g. to obtain a trade licence), to enter the informal sector and undertake irregular economic practices (e.g. via fictitious membership in cooperatives or management of limited liability companies), or – if qualified – to apply for a permanent residence permit.

3.1.3 Legislative Context of International Migration

The current legislation on international migration and foreign employment in Czechia is based on several acts. The legislation towards foreign workers has been so far based on the distinction of residence permits and employment permits. However, the two permits are closely related to each other, especially in the case of third country nationals. The employment agreement is a necessary precondition upon which the residence permit is granted. Thus, when an economic migrant loses his job, his residence permit may expire after a certain time-period (usually two months), if the migrant does not manage to find new employment.

Nevertheless, a new approach based on the transposition of the EU Directive 2011/98/EU is soon to be introduced into Czech migratory legislation, which unifies the residence and employment permits into a single document.

The changes in the legislative framework have undergone through major milestones since the beginning of the 21st century. Major amendments to the Act were implemented in the context of accession of Czechia to the European Union in 2004 as well as the Schengen Area in 2007 (CIZINCI 2004) and have been in force until today (see below section 3.3.1). At the same time, a more conceptual approach to migration policy began to be implemented, resulting in the formulation of six basic principles as a basis of a complex national migration policy. However, these principles have been of rather declarative and symbolic value (DRBOHLAV et al. 2010).

A more pro-active approach by the state administration in the area of migration policy and management was represented also by launching a pilot project “Selection of Qualified Foreign Workers”, aimed at attracting qualified foreign professionals to settle in Czechia. The selection of the professionals was based on score evaluation and the number of participants was limited by annual quotas and the scope of eligible citizenships. However, although the conditions of eligibility were gradually modified, e.g. by the extension of the eligible citizenships, the project did not manage to attract a sufficient number of foreign workers and was terminated in 2010. The state administration then launched other pro-active measures (e.g. Green cards or Blue cards), which are described in more detail in section 3.3.2.

In general, besides the beginning of a more pro-active approach by the state towards international migration, the migration legislation in the mid-2000s can also be characterized as shifting towards a more liberal approach, mainly due to the rapid economic growth which Czechia experienced at that time period. The Act on Employment was amended,

defining the conditions of foreign employment more precisely and in a more liberal manner. In 2006, the time limit for foreign residents to apply for a permanent residence was reduced from 10 to 5 years, representing a more liberal approach to the process of acquiring the Czech citizenship, too, which is to be obtained after 5 years of permanent residence in Czechia. In 2008, the notion of the “preference period” was introduced. Its aim was to provide foreign workers with a 60-day protection period in case of loss of employment, so that they can continue to reside in Czechia and in this way have some time to find a new job. On the other hand, more restrictive measures were implemented in relation to the conditions of family reunions (DRBOHLAV et al. 2010).

The economic downturn began to have an impact on Czech economy during 2009. The state administration introduced a set of restrictive measures, targeted both at foreign citizens in general, and at economically active foreign workers in particular. The primary aim of the measures was to protect the Czech labour force and thus limit the access of foreign labour to the Czech labour market. The most important measures were as follows (DRBOHLAV et al. 2010):

- The issue of visas to citizens from certain important source countries was temporarily halted. These countries were Mongolia, Ukraine, Moldova, Vietnam and Thailand. Consequently, the issue of visas and residence permits has been restricted to a limited number.
- The Employment services (Labour offices) were instructed to watch the situation carefully at regional labour markets and to issue the employment permits to foreign citizens with “special caution”. At the same time, the number of labour inspections of employers and recruiting agencies increased.
- A project of “Voluntary returns” was introduced, with the aim of encouraging foreign workers who had lost their jobs to return to their home countries. They received assistance with e.g. flight arrangements, or purchase of travel tickets. The project’s duration was 8 months (MINISTRY 2010) and some 2,300 foreign workers took part, 70% of which were from Mongolia (DRBOHLAV et al. 2010).

3.1.4 Legislation on Residence

The current legislation on international migration to Czechia is principally based on Act no. 326/1999 Coll., as amended, on Residence of Foreign Nationals in the Territory of Czechia. The Act sets up the conditions and requirements for several types of residence, based on the duration and purpose of the stay.

According to Act no. 226/1999, the basic division of international migrants is as follows (MINISTRY 2013a):

- European Union (EU) citizens
 - Temporary residence – granted to migrants with a residence exceeding 3 months;
 - Permanent residence – granted to migrants after 5 years of continuous residence in Czechia; in case of family reunification, there is an opportunity to apply for this status after 2 years of continuous residence.

- Third country nationals
 - Visa with a validity up to 90 days;
 - Long-term visa (over 90 days), with a maximum duration of 1 year for specific purposes (employment, business, study, scientific research, or family reunification);
 - Long-term residence – issued in case of residence exceeding 6 months for one of the specific purposes mentioned above;
 - Permanent residence – usually after 5 years of continuous residence in Czechia, a foreign national can apply for permanent residence.

3.1.5 Legislation on Economic Activities

The conditions and practices of employment for foreign citizens in Czechia are defined in Act no. 435/2004 Coll. on employment. The legal conditions of economic activities in the form of entrepreneurship are covered in Act no. 455/1991 on licence trades. International economic migrants are thus of two types, as described below.

3.1.5.1 Employment

The Czech accession to the EU created two distinct groups of foreign citizens also in relation to their employment. According to the Act on employment,

- EU and EEA citizens and their family members are not regarded as foreigners, thus they possess the same legal status as Czech citizens, resulting in a free access to the Czech labour market. No employment permit is required; the employers of EU/EEA citizens only have to inform the regional Public Employment Service (job centre) about the employment.
- Third country citizens (i.e. non EU/EEA country citizens) are only eligible to work if an employment permit (based on the employment contract), and a long-term visa or a long-term residence permit for purposes of employment are acquired. These are issued by the state authorities (residence permits by the Ministry of the Interior, employment permits by the regional Public Employment Service). The employment permits are issued with respect to the situation on the local/regional labour market (CIZINCI 2012).

The Act on employment also defines the conditions when the issue of an employment permit is not required for third country citizens and the employment procedures are very similar to those for EU/EEA citizens. This applies to third country citizens who are predominantly (MINISTRY 2013a):

- Asylum holders;
- Permanent residence holders;
- Long-term residence holders for the purpose of family reunification with an EU citizen, asylum holder or permanent residence holder;

- Secondary and tertiary graduates of Czech educational institutions;
- Performers, members of educational staff, academics in an institution of higher education, pupils or students (until the age of 26), sportsmen/sportswomen, media-credited staff, military personnel, etc.

If these “special types” of international migrants are employed, the employer – according to the Act on employment – has no obligation to inform the Public Employment Service; these migrants are therefore not registered in any database regarding the economic activity of foreign citizens.

3.1.5.2 Entrepreneurship

As for entrepreneurs, the Act on licence trade does not distinguish between an EU/EEA citizen and a third country citizen as regards the requirements in the procedure of obtaining a trade licence (MINISTRY 2013a). Nevertheless, the procedures of getting a residence permit remain different for the two respective groups of citizens. According to the Act, the trades are classified as:

- Notifiable trades, which may be carried on once they have been notified, provided that the conditions described in the Act are met. These can be further divided into:
 - Vocational trades;
 - Professional trades;
 - Unqualified trades.
- Permitted trades, which may be carried on pursuant to a concession issued when specifically defined conditions are met.

Vocational and professional trade licences can be obtained mainly through certified educational and professional competences. Unqualified trade licences are under no such obligation and are therefore obtained more easily. It is, therefore, no surprise that about 80% of the trade licences issued to foreign citizens are in the unqualified trade category. This figure has, nevertheless, to be viewed with caution (see section on statistical data evaluation). It is also possible to carry out a business on the basis of more than one trade licence (ČERMÁKOVÁ D., SCHOVÁNKOVÁ S., FIEDLEROVÁ K. 2011).

3.1.5.3 Green Cards

Besides the types of residence described above, there is also a special long-term residence permit for employment purposes in Czechia called Green Card, which can be issued to citizens from certain third countries (MINISTRY 2005). This measure was introduced in 2009 with the main aim of enhancing the immigration of economic migrants with the qualifications needed to fill certain job openings in the Czech labour market. The Green Card also simplifies the entry to the job market by combining a residence permit and an employment permit into one document.

Three types of Green Card can be issued:

- Type A: for skilled personnel who attained higher education and key personnel

- Type B: for workers occupying jobs for which an apprenticeship certificate is required as a minimum
- Type C: for other workers

The Green Card can be issued by the Ministry of Interior for a maximum period of 2 years, with the possibility of extension (this does not apply to Type C).

3.1.5.4 Blue Cards

According to the transposition of EC Directive 2009/50/EC into the Czech legislation, a new measure was introduced in order to attract highly qualified workers from all third countries to potentially fill specific job positions in the Czech labour market. Foreign citizens eligible for the Blue Card are required to have completed a tertiary education course (Master or Bachelor graduates) (MINISTRY 2013b).

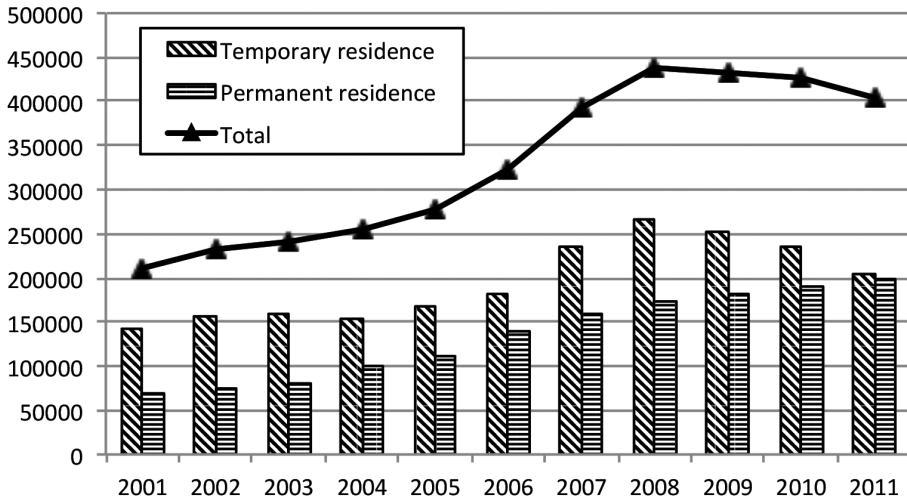
3.1.6 Figures on International Migration

From 2001, the number of international migrants continued to grow and doubled from 210,794 to 438,301 in 2008 (Graph 1). The economic crisis hit Czechia in 2009, which resulted in the decrease in the number of registered migrants from 2008 to 2011, however, only in the case of migrants with temporary (long-term) residence permits. According to the data of the Alien Information System presented in Graph 1, the number of foreign citizens holding a permanent residence permit was gradually growing also throughout the period of the economic crisis, and in 2011 it nearly equalled the number of temporary residence holders. At the end of 2011, the number of registered foreign citizens was 403,709, which accounted for about 3.8 % of the total population.

On the other hand, there was a remarkable drop in the number of foreigners officially employed in the country – this number declined from 361,709 in 2008 to 310,921 in 2011 (as of December 31) (HORÁKOVÁ M. 2012). For example, the respective number of Ukrainians decreased from 102,285 to 68,950 (HORÁKOVÁ M. 2012).

However, the data referring to the change in the number of foreign citizens have to be considered with caution as they partially fail to reflect the reality. This, to some extent, is due to methodological adjustments in the process of data gathering and processing. For example, the decline between 2010 and 2011 was partly caused by the statistics not including such foreign citizens with a terminated residence permit who found themselves in the process of acquiring a new permit. There are also suggestions that the number of foreign citizens did not actually decline after 2008; the migrants affected by the economic crisis may have just changed their formal or legal status: they may have either become entrepreneurs, permanent residents, or they may have become irregular migrants (ROZUMEK M. 2012).

The largest group of immigrants in Czechia was Ukrainians by citizenship (Table 1, 2). Their prevailing residence status is of a temporary residence, which is connected largely with the economic purposes of their stay. Nevertheless, the ratio of the temporary



Graph 1. Changes in the Number of Foreign Citizens in Czechia, 2001-2011

Table 1. Top 5 Immigrant Groups in Czechia

Year	Type of residence	Ukraine	Slovakia	Vietnam	Russia	Poland	Total	Share on total no. of foreign citizens
2008	temporary	91 291	50 626	25 463	15 038	10 573	192 991	72,70%
	permanent	40 674	25 408	34 795	12 138	11 137	124 152	71,80%
	Total	131 965	76 034	60 258	27 176	21 710	317 143	72,40%
2009	temporary	88 250	46 712	25 347	17 416	8 277	186 002	73,80%
	permanent	43 727	26 734	35 779	12 977	10 996	130 213	71,90%
	Total	131 977	73 446	61 126	30 393	19 273	316 215	73,00%
2010	temporary	77 499	42 707	23 667	18 319	7 283	169 475	72,00%
	permanent	46 840	29 073	36 634	13 620	10 959	137 126	72,20%
	Total	124 339	71 780	60 301	31 939	18 242	306 601	72,10%
2011	temporary	53 811	50 178	17 430	12 418	8 198	142 035	69,30%
	permanent	50 368	31 067	37 576	14 290	10 855	144 156	72,60%
	Total	104 179	81 245	55 006	26 708	19 053	286 191	70,90%
	Share¹	25,80%	20,10%	13,60%	6,60%	4,70%		

Source: Zpráva 2012

Note: the figures are of 31 December of the respective year

¹ Share on total number of foreign citizens

and permanent residence holders among Ukrainians became gradually balanced. Slovaks form the second largest immigrant group with more than 81,000 registered migrants in 2011. The prevalence of temporary residences held by Slovaks is even more evident and

the two types of residences did not level off. On the other hand, Vietnamese, and also Polish citizens were characterized by a higher proportion of permanent residence permits, connected closely with family reasons/family based migration.

Among the top 5 groups of immigrants, one can also observe some common trends. The first one is the gradual increase in the ratio of permanent residences. The second one is the decline in the ratio of these immigrant groups relative to the total number of immigrants in Czechia (with the exception of 2009), indicating a growing diversification of immigrant backgrounds. The third, partial trend is that the number of immigrants was stagnating or even declining from 2008 to 2011. This trend does not seem to apply to Slovaks and Poles as their numbers were increasing from 2010 to 2011, even in the case of temporary residences. One of the explanations can be that Slovaks and Poles are established as “historical immigrant groups” in Czechia and, therefore, are more embedded in the Czech institutional setting as well as in the labour market.

The following table (Table 2) shows the number of foreign citizens from V4 and EaP countries. In comparison to the previous table, there is a slight difference in the methodological approach, resulting in a somewhat higher number of foreign citizens, although they come from the same source (CIS). The numbers, however, are suitable for the purpose of describing general volumes of foreigners with their specific citizenships being our focus. Moldovans represent quite a numerous immigrant group; the majority of Moldovans are temporary economic migrants. Belarusians reached almost 5,000 in 2011, while Hungarians and Georgians are the least numerous among the presented citizen groups. Unlike the Moldovans, the three latter mentioned immigrant groups show – an even rate of temporary and permanent residents.

The number of foreign citizens coming from V4 and EaP countries over time is shown at Graphs 2 and 3. The countries were split into two groups, presented, in fact, in two

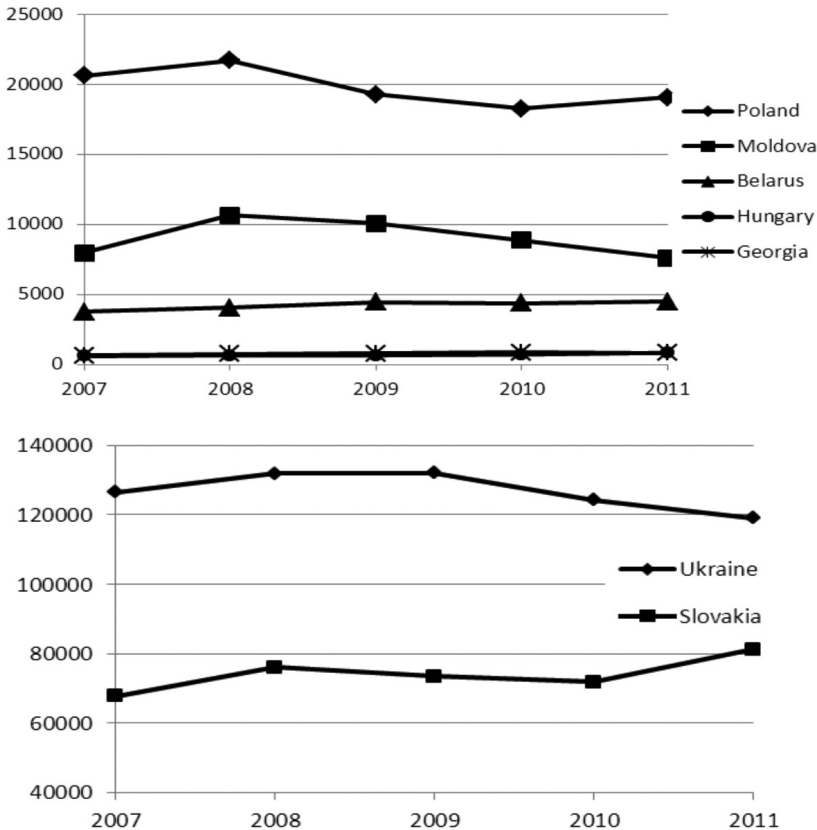
Table 2. Number of Foreign Citizens from V4 and EaP Countries as of 31st December 2011

Citizenship	Total number	Share ¹	Type of residence			
			temporary	permanent	temporary	permanent
			Numbers	Numbers	Percentage	Percentage
Ukraine	119 025	27,30%	68 809	50 216	57,80%	42,20%
Slovakia	81 253	18,60%	50 182	31 071	61,80%	38,20%
Poland	19 058	4,40%	8 203	10 855	43,00%	57,00%
Moldova	7 608	1,70%	4 752	2 856	62,50%	37,50%
Belarus	4 498	1,00%	1 849	2 649	41,10%	58,90%
Hungary	839	0,20%	439	400	52,30%	47,70%
Georgia	836	0,20%	489	347	58,50%	41,50%
Total no. of foreign citizens	436 389	53,10%	238 338	198 051	54,60%	45,40%

Source: Policie 2013

¹ Share on total number of foreign citizens in Czechia

separate graphs due to the large differences in the number of immigrants from the given countries. The graph shows the changes since 2007; and, in general, the figures correspond to the development of the overall number of immigrants presented in Graph 1. This is the case with Ukrainians, Moldovans and partly Poles, in particular. On the other hand, the number of Slovaks and Belarusians increased despite the economic downturn which hit Czechia during 2009.



Graph 2 and 3. Changes in the Number of Foreign Citizens from V4 and EaP Countries

The explanation for the divergent developments between the given immigrant groups is that the economic downturn affected primarily economic migrants, i.e. groups with prevalent temporary residences (Ukrainians, Moldovans). The case of Slovaks seems to be more complex and has already been explained above.

As noted above, the dominant reasons for immigration into Czechia were economic; and they materialized mostly in the form of employment (see Table 3). The ratio of economic reasons was, nevertheless, declining (at least until 2007 – no data on the reason for immigration have been available from public databases since then), while other reasons

gained more significance. This is the case especially with family reunification purposes and settlement. A steady increase in the number of immigrants with study and training purposes is also notable.

Publicly available statistical data on the purpose of residence of V4 and EaP citizens are limited only to four countries: Ukraine, Slovakia, Poland and Moldova (Table 4). Again, the latest available data are from 2007.

Table 3. Purposes of Residence in Czechia

Purposes of residence	2000	2005	2006	2007
Economic purposes	55,40%	56,00%	47,70%	49,70%
Entrepreneurship	25,40%	11,20%	8,30%	16,70%
Participation in legal person	10,90%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%
Employment	19,00%	39,30%	39,30%	32,90%
Other economic activities	0,10%	0,10%	0,10%	0,10%
Family reunification	26,20%	28,00%	31,30%	28,20%
Settlement (permanent residence permit)	14,10%	10,30%	16,20%	16,10%
Study and training	1,40%	2,10%	2,20%	2,20%
Refugees	0,30%	0,60%	0,60%	0,60%
Humanitarian status, temporary protection	0,00%	0,10%	0,10%	0,10%
Others	2,60%	5,70%	4,80%	6,00%

Note: the categories of purposes or residence are based on international taxonomy
Source: Drbohlav D. 2004, Cizinci 2006, Cizinci 2007, Cizinci 2008

Table 4. Purposes of Residence of Selected Countries as of 31st December 2007

Purposes of residence	Ukraine	Slovakia	Poland	Moldova
Economic purposes	68,80%	57,50%	44,20%	73,60%
Entrepreneurship	28,90%	3,70%	0,80%	30,30%
Participation in legal person	–	–	–	–
Employment	39,90%	53,80%	43,40%	43,40%
Other economic activities	0,00%	0,10%	0,00%	0,00%
Family reunification	16,10%	28,20%	45,80%	13,80%
Settlement (permanent residence permit)	14,10%	10,40%	9,40%	11,30%
Study and training	0,50%	2,00%	0,10%	0,90%
Refugees	0,10%	–	–	0,10%
Humanitarian status, temporary protection	0,00%	–	0,00%	0,00%
Others	0,30%	1,80%	0,60%	0,20%

Source: Cizinci 2008

According to the table, Ukrainians and Moldovans migrate to Czechia predominantly for economic purposes – both nationalities produce the highest numbers in both the employment and entrepreneurship group. Also Slovaks are frequently employed in Czechia; they also reach relatively high shares in family reunifications and also study and training purposes, partly because of the special policy to Slovaks in relation to education. Poles reached the highest ratio in family reunification purposes as well as employment in 2007.

The gender distribution of immigrants from the selected countries is presented in Table 5. Generally, immigrant males accounted for about 57% of all immigrants in Czechia in 2011. The ratio of males is even higher among temporary residents; the proportion of immigrant women is growing among permanent residents, but still does not form a majority.

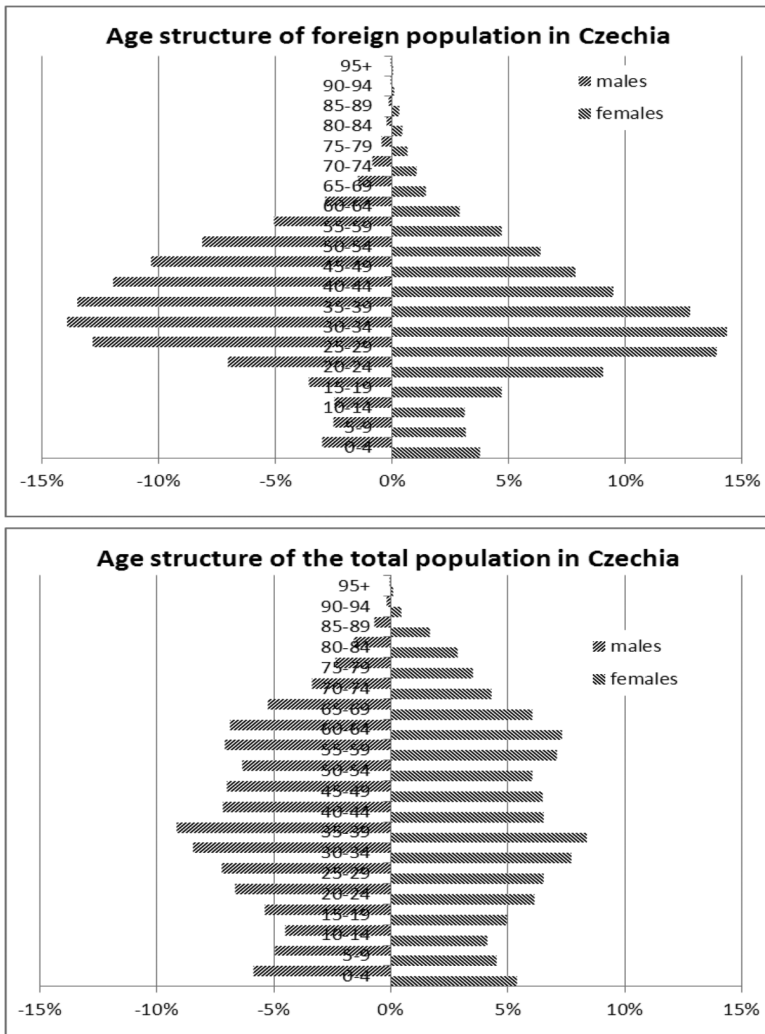
Table 5. Gender Balance of Foreign Citizens from Selected Countries as of 31st December 2011

Citizenship	Share of females		
	Share on total	Type of residence	
		temporary	permanent
Ukraine	43,70%	38,60%	50,00%
Slovakia	45,20%	41,20%	51,70%
Poland	51,20%	27,80%	69,50%
Moldova	40,60%	37,60%	43,80%
Belarus	58,40%	44,80%	62,80%
Hungary	39,50%	41,20%	37,50%
Georgia	44,10%	34,20%	45,10%
Total number	42,70%	36,00%	47,30%

Source: Cizinci 2012

A significantly higher proportion of men can be found also among temporary residents arriving from the selected countries (with the exception of Hungarian immigrants). In general, women outnumber men in case of Poles and Belarusians; this fact is connected to the prevailing share of permanent residents among these nationalities. The lowest proportion of women is typically among Moldovans and Ukrainians (being predominantly temporary economic migrants), and also Hungarians.

The comparison of Graph 4 and 5 shows (not surprisingly) some differences in the age distribution between the foreign population and the total population in Czechia. The age pyramid of foreign citizens shows that the dominant age group is between 25-39 years. Men reach the highest proportions in the age groups of 30-34 and 35-39, while women are dominant in slightly younger ages (30-34 and 25-29). Figures on the age distribution by individual citizenships are not publicly available.



Graph 4 and 5. Age Distribution of Foreigners Relative to the Total Population in Czechia
Source: Cizinci 2012

3.1.7 Economic Migration

As described above, economic migrants are basically of two types: employees and entrepreneurs. The statistics on the number of economic migrants in Czechia can never be complete due to both “objective” and “operational” reasons described in the section dedicated to data evaluation. Nevertheless, if one wants to show patterns of economic activities of migrants, one has to proceed from what is available. In case of economic activities, one

has to rely on databases managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs focusing on immigrant-employees and those of the Ministry of Industry and Trade on trade licences. These two databases are “integrated” in the annual bulletin called “International Labour Migration in Czechia” (HORÁKOVÁ M. 2012), issued by the Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs. Therefore, data from this bulletin will be predominantly used in this section of the country report.

The latest general figures on economically active foreign citizens divided by gender in Czechia are presented in Table 6. The table indicates that there is a higher ratio of men among economically active foreign citizens, compared to the gender distribution of all foreign citizens. The majority of economically active foreign citizens find themselves in the position of employees, registered by labour offices. In 2011, the number of entrepreneurs reached 93,059; there is, however, a legitimate suspicion, described more thoroughly in Chapter 2.2, that a certain proportion of these entrepreneurs actually work as employees as well.

Table 6. Economic Activities of Foreign Citizens as of 31st December 2011

Economic activities of foreign citizens	Total number	Males	Females	Share of women
Total number of foreign citizens registered by labour offices	217 862	141 352	76 510	35,10%
Employment permits	36 640	23 638	13 002	35,50%
EU/EEA citizens registered by labour offices	154 560	104 162	50 398	32,60%
Foreigners from third countries who need no work permit	26 510	13 456	13 055	49,20%
Green Cards	148 ¹	93	55	37,20%
Blue Cards	4 ²	4	0	0,00%
Entrepreneurs – Foreign citizens holding trade licences	93 059	64 231	28 828	31,00%
Total number of economically active foreign citizens	310 921	205 583	105 338	33,90%

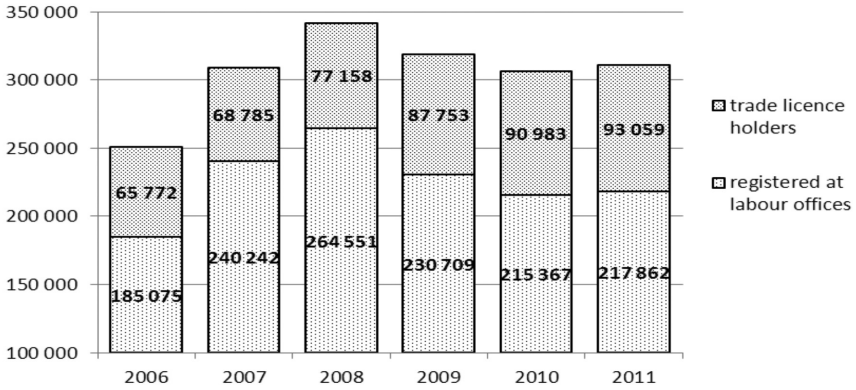
Source: Zpráva 2012

¹ Up to 31 December 2012, 415 Green Cards were issued

² Up to 31 December 2012, 92 Blue Cards were issued

Graph 6 shows the changes in the number and ratio of foreign employees and entrepreneurs, covering also the period when the global economic crisis started. As it is shown on the graph, a steady increase in the number of economically active foreign citizens was broken in 2009, when the effects of the economic downturn began to influence the Czech economy. Since then, the number of employees declined considerably, since the first group of employees who were made redundant by their employers, employment agencies or unions were foreign workers, who in turn had to leave Czechia if they had not mana-

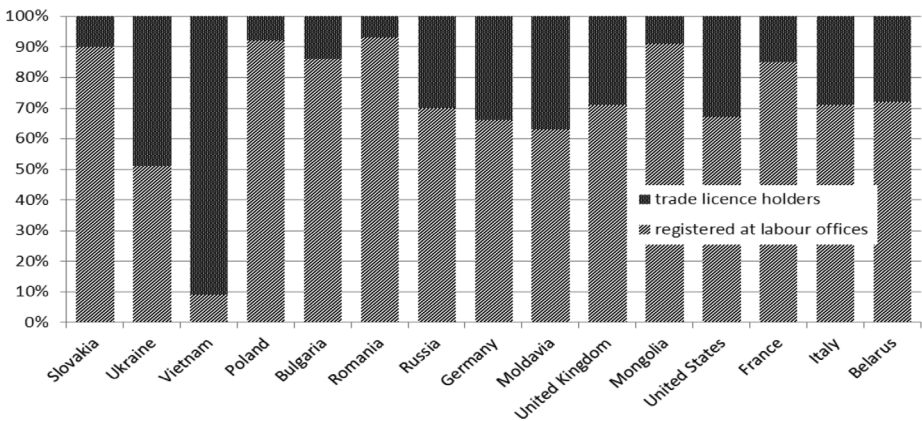
ged to find a new job in two months (STRIELKOWSKI W. 2012). On the other hand, the number of entrepreneurs continued to grow. The explanation is that gaining a different economic status (e.g. obtaining a trade licence) became one of the survival strategies for foreign employees. Other options were entering the informal sector and undertaking irregular economic practices (e.g. fictitious membership in cooperatives or management of limited liability companies), or, if qualified, applying for a permanent residence permit.



Graph 6. Numbers of Economically Active Foreign Citizens (2006-2011)

Source: ČSÚ 2012

Graph 7 shows the ratio of entrepreneurs and those registered at the labour offices (i.e. employees) within the 15 most populous immigrant groups. In total, there is no general trend when comparing “Eastern” and “Western” migrants in terms of their economic activity or entrepreneurship (Graph 7). Instead, one has to take into account the specific



Graph 7. Ratio of Entrepreneurs and Employees within the Top 15 Foreign Citizenships as of 31 December 2011

Source: ČSÚ 2012

nature of each foreign citizen and the characteristics of his/her community (ČERMÁKOVÁ D., SCHOVÁNKOVÁ S., FIEDLEROVÁ K. 2011). The majority of economically active immigrants have an ‘employee’ status in case of nearly all of the examined citizenships. The only exception is Vietnamese immigrants; 91% of the economically active Vietnamese hold a trade licence –which is due to the character of their economic activity in combination with strong intra-community ties and social networks. On the other hand, economically active Polish immigrants are predominantly employees. A possible reason for that may be the fact that Poles today follow a traditional within the Polish labour force, being employed mainly in the mining industry (DRBOHLAV D. et al. 2010).

According to citizenship (Table 7), Ukrainians form the largest group in terms of general figures. However, due to the unrestricted access of EU/EEA citizens to the Czech labour market, Slovaks outnumber the largest immigrant group (Ukrainians) regarding the number of economically active immigrants. Moreover, the geographical proximity of Slovakia results in higher numbers of economically active Slovaks in the Czech labour market. This number is even higher than the number of Slovak residents in Czechia. Similarly, this is also the case with Polish workers.

Table 7. Structure of Economic Activities of Immigrants from Major Source Countries as of 2011

Citizenship	Employment permits	Employees who need no work permit		Entrepreneurs	Total number of economically active foreign citizens	Total number of residence permits
	Blue Cards	EU/EEA citizens	Third country citizens			
Ukraine	22 441	–	12 809	33 700	68 590	119 025
Slovakia	0	106 425	–	11 406	117 831	81 253
Vietnam	922	–	1 854	29 369	32 145	58 265
Russia	1 460	2 471	–	1 713	5 644	32 708
Poland	0	19 718	–	1 712	21 430	19 058
Germany	0	3 194	–	1 636	4 830	15 763

Source: Horáková 2012

Table 7 does not include two immigrant groups which are less populous in terms of the total number of residents, but exceed Russians and Germans in the number of economically active foreign citizens; these are Bulgarians (8,148 economically active immigrants), and Romanians (6,871) (HORÁKOVÁ M. 2012), taking advantage of their unrestricted access to the Czech labour market as EU citizens.

The situation of Hungarians is also notable (Table 9); according to the data, 99.3% of all the Hungarian immigrants in Czechia are “employees” – registered in labour offices.

Ukrainians and Moldovans seem to be “typical” groups of economic migrants – in their case the ratio of economically active immigrants relative to the total number of resi-

dents reaches nearly 60%. Ukrainians, in comparison to Moldovans, seem to work under the scheme of trade licences to a larger extent, perhaps due to the fact that it is much easier to obtain a trade licence than a work permit.

In line with the prevailing permanent residents among Russians (Table 8) and Belarusians (Table 9) there is their lower ratio of employees and the higher proportion of those who do not need to have a work permit – this may indicate frequent family reunification purposes for their residence in Czechia. The proportion of economically active persons is the lowest in case of Georgians – their dominant scheme is that of trade licence, similarly to Ukrainians.

Table 8. Structure of Economic Activities of Immigrants from V4 and EaP Countries as of 2011

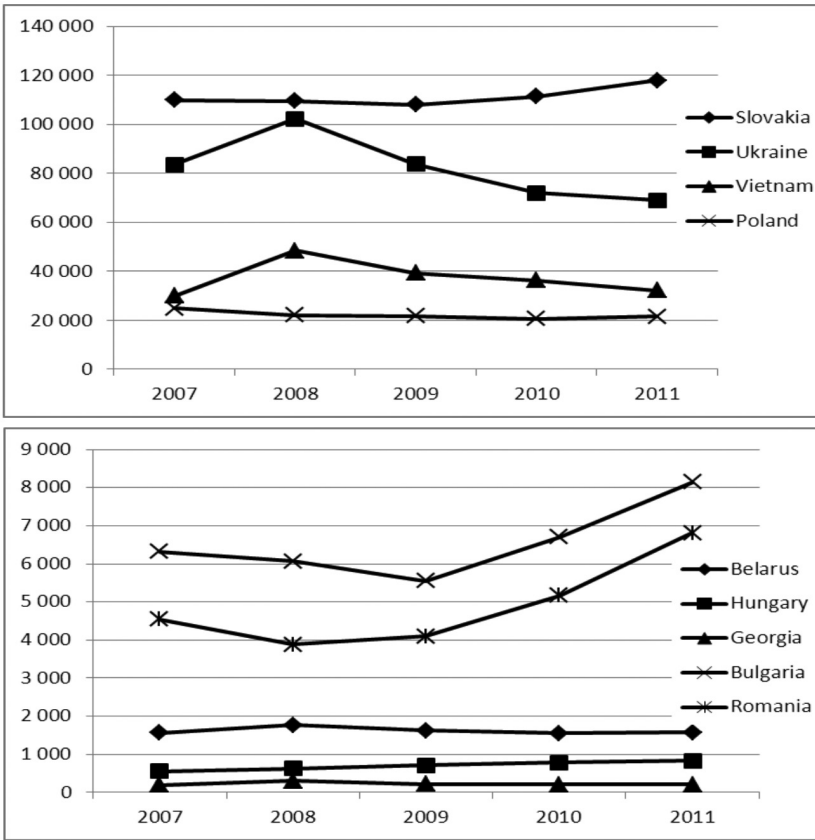
	Employment permits	Employees who need no work permit		Entrepreneurs	Total no. of economically active foreign citizens of residence permits	Total number	Share ¹
	Green Cards	EU/EEA citizens	Third country citizens				
Ukraine	22 441	–	12 809	33 700	68 590	119 025	57,60%
Slovakia	0	106 425	–	11 406	117 831	81 253	145,00%
Poland	0	19 718	–	1 712	21 430	19 058	112,40%
Moldova	1 757	–	886	1 585	4 428	7 608	58,20%
Belarus	330	–	799	441	1 570	4 498	34,90%
Hungary	0	709	–	124	833	839	99,30%
Georgia	58	–	66	84	208	836	24,90%
Total	36 792	181 070		93 059	310 921	436 389	71,20%

Source: Horáková 2012

¹ Share of economically active immigrants on total number of immigrant residents

The changes in the number of economically active foreign citizens are shown in Graphs 8 and 9. The impact of the economic downturn, which is apparent from the frequent breaks in the trends presented in the graphs, resulted in basically two different pathways. The figures show that foreign citizens from EU countries were less intensively affected by the crisis than citizens from third countries, basically due to uneven legal conditions and rights as to employment and residence are concerned. The number of economically active Slovaks, Romanians, Bulgarians and Hungarians managed to grow steadily since 2007. On the other hand, the number of Ukrainians, Vietnamese, Belarusians and Georgians fell since the economic crisis hit Czechia in 2009.

When examining the distribution of economic sectors and industries in which foreign employees work, the division of the foreign employees into those coming from EU countries and those from third countries is apparent and, indeed, logical. As seen in Graph 10, there are significant differences in the distribution of employment between the two groups of foreign employees themselves and the Czech population.



Graph 8, 9. Numbers of Economically Active Foreign Citizens
Source: Horáková M. 2012

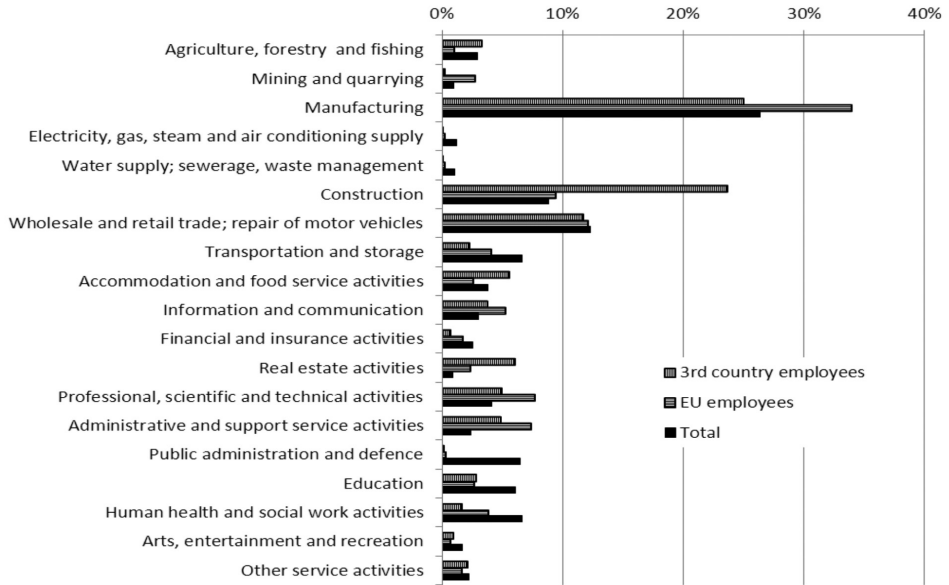
However, it has to be noted that both third countries and EU member states represent by themselves a highly heterogeneous group of countries; that is, a third country might be the United States of America as well as Ukraine; an EU member state might be Germany as well as Bulgaria. This fact makes any interpretation of the distribution of foreign employment at this level rather difficult.

The most striking differences can be detected in the construction sector, which seems to be heavily dependent on foreign employees, especially those from third countries (particularly from Ukraine). Foreign employees are overrepresented also in the information and communication sector, real estate, administrative and support service activities.

The comparison of the occupational distribution of non-EU immigrants to the general picture in Czechia (Graph 11) provides evidence for a significant “waste of immigrants’ human capital”. In line with other authors (e.g. LEONTIYEVA Y. 2012), it suggests that well-educated foreign employees are not always better off in the labour market. This is particularly true when a foreign employee starts at the bottom rung of the career ladder in the

Czech labour market, which is shown in Graph 11 – a significant ratio of both EU and third country employees hold, regardless of their educational status, elementary occupations.

When taking a closer look at the employees from Visegrad and Eastern Partnership countries, it is no surprise that the highest proportion of immigrants from the majority of these countries find employment on the lower rungs of the occupational ladder. Almost



Graph 10. Economic Activities of Foreign Employees in Economic Sectors as of 31st December 2011. Source: Internal data of MLSA



Graph 11. Distribution of the Employment Status of Foreign Workers according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) as of December 2011 Source: Internal data of MLSA

Table 9. Structure of Status Employment (ISCO) of Foreign Workers from Visegrad and EaP Countries as of December 2011

	Ukraine	Slovakia	Poland	Moldova	Belarus	Hungary	Georgia
Managers	1,60%	3,80%	1,40%	0,90%	4,70%	2,30%	6,10%
Professionals	4,80%	18,30%	11,10%	4,20%	16,50%	18,20%	30,60%
Technicians and associate professionals	5,00%	17,10%	10,60%	6,20%	12,60%	18,20%	16,30%
Clerical support workers	4,10%	5,70%	4,90%	3,30%	5,50%	11,40%	6,10%
Service and sales workers	13,40%	12,20%	13,20%	11,70%	10,00%	11,40%	18,40%
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	3,20%	0,30%	0,30%	2,30%	0,60%	0,00%	0,00%
Craft and related trades workers	20,60%	13,40%	15,90%	23,90%	15,60%	13,60%	10,20%
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	19,80%	18,50%	23,30%	25,40%	22,50%	20,50%	4,10%
Elementary occupations	27,40%	10,80%	19,40%	21,80%	11,80%	4,50%	8,20%
Armed forces occupations	0,10%	0,00%	0,00%	0,30%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%

Source: internal data of MLSA

70% of Ukrainians are to be found on the three lowest levels of occupations. The same applies to Poles and Moldovans. As stated above, these minorities represent the “classical” economic group of immigrants. On the other hand, even if sharing similar characteristics, Slovaks, Hungarians and also Belarusians tend to be employed more in professional positions. A special category is formed by Georgians with specific employment categorization, perhaps due to the limited size of this immigrant group in Czechia.

3.1.8 Specific Characteristics of International Migration in Czechia

As described above, the nature of social, economic and political development directs Czechia to catch up with the advanced economies of Western Europe. Along with this progress, international migration patterns, formulating within a changing institutional and legislative environment, also resemble those in economically advanced countries. Nevertheless, in Czechia we can also identify some distinct features or characteristics regarding the international migration reality. These are as follows:

3.1.8.1 International Students

Czechia has become an attractive destination for foreign university students, due to the traditionally high quality of academic education and the historical ties connecting her to the relevant countries. In 2012, almost 40,000 international students attended courses at

Czech universities. The number of international students has been gradually increasing since the beginning of the 21st century.

The majority of the international students at Czech universities are Slovaks (Graph 12). The main reason for this is the affinity of Czech and Slovak languages, allowing Slovak students to take regular courses in Czech language and thus having no obligation to pay for studying in another (predominantly English) language. Russian students form the second most numerous group of foreign students.

As for the regional distribution of international students, the highest concentration is in Prague (ca 50%) and its universities, both public and private ones. Universities in Brno take about 17% of the total number of international students.

3.1.8.2 Vietnamese Minority

For a long time immigrants from Vietnam represented a particular minority group in Czechia. Vietnamese migrants started moving to Czechoslovakia in the late 1950s on the basis of international agreements. The first migrants were predominantly Vietnamese children affected by the Vietnam War. In the late 1960s, about 2,500 Vietnamese workers, students and interns moved to Czechoslovakia. Their number gradually increased to approximately 30,000 at the beginning of the 1980s (BROUČEK S. 2003); then, through arrangements and agreements, this number decreased to about 3,500 in 1992 (ČERMÁKOVÁ D. 2002). After that the number of Vietnamese immigrants in Czechia increased up to about 62,000 (official figures) in 2008 (ZPRÁVA 2012). Due to the impact of the economic crisis, the number of Vietnamese migrants officially decreased and in 2013, the Ministry of the Interior registered roughly 58,000 Vietnamese residents in Czechia (MINISTRY 2013a).

The migration of Vietnamese people into Czechia has thus been in place for a long time. Their migration is predominantly economic, but family reasons play an increasingly high role. Unlike the other major minorities, the Vietnamese have a higher ratio of permanent residents in Czechia, and almost 90% of the economically active Vietnamese hold a trade licence (see section 3.4 above). This is connected to the overall economic and social constitution of the Vietnamese population in Czechia. Although relatively dispersed throughout the territory of Czechia at the level of municipalities, the Vietnamese generally create rather isolated communities which provide self-supporting services to fellow members: the communities have their own translators and interpreters, advisory and intermediary services, etc. A significant proportion of Vietnamese migrants work in wholesale and retail (MARTÍNKOVÁ Š. 2003).

3.1.8.3 Marginal Role of Refugees

Compared to the total number of predominantly economic migrants in Czechia, asylum seekers and refugees form a negligible part. The principal reason is geographic: Czechia does not lie on the border of either the European Union or the Schengen area and therefore does not act as a “buffer-zone” to receive an influx of asylum seekers or refugees. The secondary reason might be linked to the fact that the Czech administration has never allowed any organized immigration of a massive number of refugees from countries or

regions affected by armed conflict or other catastrophic events. The third reason is the demanding nature of the procedure to obtain asylum, as the Czech administration experienced numerous attempts by illegal economic migrants to take advantage of the asylum status. Although the legislation on asylum (Act no. 325/1999 Coll. on Asylum) is harmonized with the respective EU regulations, the status of a person applying for asylum (or international protection) is insecure and legally very “bound” (for example the applicant is not allowed to work).

From 2006, asylum was granted to almost 1,000 applicants. The most frequent citizenship was Belarus, followed by Russia. Asylum holders from Asia actually constituted a majority of the asylum holders in Czechia (ca 43%), though their proportion is decreasing. Recently, a considerable increase was recorded in the number of asylum applicants arriving from European countries (around 42% in 2012) (CIZINCI 2013).

3.1.9 International Migration Policy Review

Czechia has been receiving immigrants for more than two decades; and during that time period, it has been facing the challenge to define its approach towards international migration and the integration of foreign citizens, institutionalized in a coherent migration policy. The actual formation of an international migration policy after the collapse of the communist bloc can be dated back to the early 1990s. It can be regarded as a constant shift from a passive to a more active and systematic engagement from the part of the state administration. However, so far the international migration policy-making process has not been based on a systematic provision of comprehensive and detailed socio-economic analyses of trends and issues occurring in the Czech labour market. At the same time, there is a permanent lack of suitable and available characteristics that would effectively map the development of the integration of immigrants in various spheres of Czech society (DRBOHLAV et al. 2010).

There are three types of institutions which are considered to be key policy stakeholders influencing the final design of the international migration policy in Czechia. Firstly, it is the European Union, applying its influence through transposition of Community regulations in certain aspects of international migration. EU determines the conditions of immigration and residence of EU citizens and their family members, permanent residents, asylum seekers and holders and immigration in the sphere of science and research (KUŠNIRÁKOVÁ T. 2013). It can be stated that the influence of EU regulations enhances the rights of immigrants in general.

The bodies of the Czech state administration represent the second type of institutions, having a decisive influence on the design of the migration policy (mainly the economic aspects of this policy) towards e.g. foreigners from third countries, the conditions of acquisition of Czech citizenship as well as the integration policy. There are altogether three ministries whose competences interfere with international migration: the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Industry and Trade, all with different approaches and interests as to international migration.

- Nearly all the competences as to the formation and implementation of a national policy for foreign migration (both immigration and integration policy) are the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior, more specifically the Department for Asylum and Migration Policy. The decision-making processes and activities connected to the international migration policy are therefore considered to be highly centralized in Czechia. The general aim of the Ministry of the Interior is to control international migration as it is seen principally from the point of view of national security. The Ministry therefore favours a restrictive type of international migration policy (KUŠNIRÁKOVÁ T., ČIŽINSKÝ P. 2010).
- The Ministry of Labour And Social Affairs applies its competences in the area of the employment of international migrants. During the last decade, the Ministry enforced several pro-active measures attracting foreign workers in a selective way. The Ministry's primary aim is, however, to protect the Czech labour market by giving employment priority to Czech citizens. Of course, during the global economic crisis it led to the implementation of restrictive rather than pro-active measures.
- The Ministry of Industry and Trade generally calls for a liberal approach to international policy with unrestricted entrepreneurship activities and easy recruitment of foreign labour in vision. The Ministry's standpoint is to a large extent a reflection of the interests of the Czech industry.

The third type of institutions is represented by both governmental and non-governmental bodies, accentuating the dimension of ethics and human rights within the international migration issues. From the governmental organizations the following institutions are the most influential: Institute of The Public Defender of Rights, Government Council for Human Rights and Department of Office of Government for Human Rights and Equal Opportunities. The non-governmental organizations include e.g. Multicultural Centre Prague, Counselling Centre for Integration, Association for Migration and Integration, and Society of Citizens Assisting Immigrants (see e.g. ČIŽINSKÝ P. 2009).

The Czech migration policy is primarily framed by the above described position of Czechia in the broader global development process. Also institutional constraints play a substantial role; Czechia as a member of EU adopts a large proportion of Community regulations in relation to managing international migration movements; it is also to observe the international standards of human rights. Still, there are various aspects of the migration reality which Czechia can manage within its national competences (see above). Among them in particular is a policy affecting temporary (thus predominantly economic) third-country residents, integration policy and naturalization (KUŠNIRÁKOVÁ T., ČIŽINSKÝ P. 2011, KUŠNIRÁKOVÁ T. 2013).

3.1.10 Development of the international migration policy in Czechia

As implicitly noted above, the international migration policy is generally divided into a policy aiming at the regulation of entry and residence of foreign citizens (i.e. immigration

policy), and integration (and naturalization) policy, with the aim of managing the legal, social, economic and cultural aspects of residing foreign citizens.

The Czech accession into the European Union in 2004 is considered to be one of the major events influencing the migration policy of Czechia. The EU membership created two major groups of foreign citizens as for their legal status: citizens of EU countries, the European Economic Area and Switzerland in one group, and third-country citizens in the other (JANSKÁ E., DRBOHLAV D. 2008). Citizens of EU, EEA and Switzerland no longer had the obligation to apply for a residence or work permit; after a one-year residence in Czechia, EU citizens were entitled to receive a long-term residence permit.

In 2005, a novel concept of integration was introduced, which represented a gradual shift towards a “civic approach” to the integration of foreign residents. This approach is in harmony with changes in many other developed European countries receiving immigrants. The main principle is that the focus should be on an individual migrant as a member of the society. This approach favours an integration policy where individual migrants “are obliged to learn the language and to respect the values and norms of the receiving country without the necessity to lose their ethnical culture” (LACHMANOVÁ L. 2007). The target group of the policy were foreign citizens from third countries residing for more than one year in Czechia (MLSA 2006).

Czechia itself started playing a more pro-active role also in migration management; a pilot project called “Selection of qualified foreign workers” was launched in 2003, with the aim of attracting foreign professionals and highly qualified workers (and their family members) from selected countries to settle in Czechia. The project, however, did not offer any interest-worthy benefits (it was rather difficult to meet all the criteria which were to be met) and the number of applicants remained rather low at the time the project was terminated (2010).

Other pro-active measures attracting foreign workers were introduced in 2009; it was primarily an initiative by the Ministry of Industry and Trade: the so-called Green Cards program (section 3.3.2). At EU level, a Blue Card initiative was implemented into the Czech migration legislation, too. The main benefit for the applicants in both initiatives is the easier process of acquiring the necessary permits and, in that way, less administrative burden. The problem is that both card schemes were launched during the global economic crisis, at a time when, in fact, the economic opportunities in the Czech labour market including those for immigrants significantly shrank. Therefore, it is no wonder that the impact of the Green and Blue card programs is very limited (for example, until 2012, 415 applicants were registered within the Green Card scheme and the Blue Card program registered 92 applicants between 2011 and 2012).

In 2008, a partial readjustment of the integration policy took place taking effect from 2009, with an updated set of targets which can be summarized as the prevention of the formation of closed ethnic communities as well as the social exclusion of immigrants. The definition of the target group was extended and so it also included newly arriving immigrants. Nevertheless, the citizens from EU countries are excluded from the target group, as the policy is exclusively aimed at third-country citizens. The four principal objectives of the integration policy remained unchanged in comparison with the concept of MLSA:

- Knowledge of Czech language: enhancing the knowledge of Czech among migrants and their descendants, introduction of certified Czech language courses;
- economic self-sufficiency: enhancing the economic self-sufficiency of migrants by restraining the administrative burden connected with their economic activities;
- orientation of migrants in the host society: supporting the awareness and knowledge of Czech society, values and institutions among migrants;
- relations between migrants and host society members: supporting the building of relationships between foreign residents and members of the host society and raising public awareness as to the presence of foreign citizens (MLSA 2006).

In order to achieve the above defined objectives, the Ministry of the Interior as the main management body of the integration policy proposed a set of measures and initiatives, giving an active role to regional and municipal authorities; special offices were established providing consultancy and information services as well as language and socio-cultural courses. The resources for funding various social and cultural projects at local and regional levels predominantly come from the European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals 2017-2013, the European Social Fund and the state budget. Various non-governmental organizations have also been intensively involved in the main tasks (ZPRÁVA 2011).

3.1.11 Conclusions and Recommendations

The picture and characteristics of international migration in Czechia has been a reflection of overall economic and (geo)political progress of both Czechia itself, and the international (mainly European) context as well. Czechia quickly became a country of immigration within CEE region and comparing to the other countries of the Visegrad region, it hosts the majority of international migrants in the region. The immigration into Czechia is predominantly economic; yet, throughout the pace of time, the migration becomes more family-based, and immigrants tend to settle in Czechia for a longer period of time too. The major immigrant groups are Ukrainians, Slovaks and Vietnamese.

With increasing number and complexity of migrants and migration flows, Czech administration – with a certain time-delay – started to consider international migration from a more systematic and conceptual perspective. Despite unquestionable progress in this area, the migration reality in Czechia is still subject to significant deficiencies, especially at the level of management of international migration and integration.

Generally, vis-à-vis some other social phenomena the state (represented by governmental structures) still pays little attention to international migration and migrants' integration issues. Despite some positive shifts over time from more passive and reactive approaches to more pro-active and more systematically organized ones, there is still a need to establish more coherent and comprehensive migration/integration policy framework with related sub-policies (and practices). Thus, a vision should be defined and, consequently, a long-term strategy should be applied when coping with international migration and migrants' integration issues. After formulating a general strategy, making specific decisions

regarding economic, demographic, cultural, and social aspects of diversity should follow. This basic task is related to other issues, which call for improvement:

The limited attention of bodies of state administration results in rather limited coordination between, on one hand, migration and integration policy, and, on the other hand, migration/integration and other social policies (namely social, health, economic, and development). There is a need to harmonize policies as to “prevent contradictions” as much as possible (while supporting synergy effects). Similarly, there is a need to improve cooperation among (and within) state bodies, NGOs, and international organizations that are responsible for dealing with migration/integration issues.

The whole management of migratory and integration issues is not sufficiently open and too much centralized in hands of the Ministry of the Interior. The responsibilities should be partly decentralized and, for example, responsibilities for economic migration should be retaken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Moreover, there is a strong need for a higher involvement of social partners (employers, labour unions, employment services) into the process of economic integration of foreign workers, including the foreign workers themselves. As for the policy towards the most important inflow – that of labour migrants – more pro-immigrant rather than anti-immigrant activities should be launched. The policy (and practice) should be concentrated upon how to attract mainly skilled/educated foreign labour force and/or short-term/temporary economic migrants to saturate, in a highly flexible way, particular (targeted) deficits on the labour market. This must be done while leaning on sophisticated analyses and assessment of the Czech labour market (its development, needs, shortcomings, advantages etc.). Probably, the key issue is to identify and then “harmonize” domestic labour force demand with foreign supply.

As for the migrants’ integration, local and regional administration bodies have so far played rather a limited role. Therefore, it is necessary to define their competencies in terms of migrants’ integration in legislative framework, support them with relevant institutional framework and adequate financial means. Furthermore, EU migrants should not be excluded from projects and any other kinds of support but they should become recipients of possible assistance within the integration policy too.

The Czech migratory administration puts an excessive administrative burden on foreign citizens applying for both residence and employment permit, and maintains them in rather insecure position in Czechia. There is a need to increase a transparency and rapidity of the administrative system of obtaining various visas and permits (including their extension)

Besides the deficiencies at the level of state administration, also the public is not well informed about international migration and migrants’ integration processes and their impacts upon Czech society. It is a must to initiate broad discussions in migration/integration issues and to systematically provide the public with objective information on migration/integration issues.

A special focus is placed on recommendations as regards statistics on international migration. The existing statistics has many shortcomings. The primary need is to establish a system of monitoring and data collection, which would be more sophisticated, detailed, and capable to reflect the reality to a higher degree (e.g. to differentiate between number

of permits and number of real persons, to “combine data” coming from more data sets etc.). This general recommendation is valid both for statistics of international migration, and statistics of integration. Necessary is also a closer cooperation of the main institutions that keep databases focused on particular aspects of migrants’ lives in Czechia.

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