

3.3 Poland: on the way towards becoming a country of immigration

Magdalena Lesińska

3.3.1 Introduction

Poland, although still being a net emigration country, is becoming more and more attractive as a destination for foreigners. Since the accession of Poland to the EU in 2004, an increasing inflow of foreigners has been noticeable. The economic growth in the post-accession period and the boom of foreign investments entailed the rising demand for labour force. At the same time, a massive outflow of Polish citizens took place. Emigration reached its peak in 2007 when more than 2.3 million Poles (6.6% of the total population) were registered as temporary residents in other EU states (Fihel 2011:25). As a result of mass emigration on the one hand, and intensive economic development on the other, in some sectors of economy (especially agriculture and construction) labour shortages were identified. It brought about a state response in the form of gradual liberalization of the rules regarding the access of foreigners to the Polish labour market (with the growth of labour immigration as a consequence).

The migration profile of Poland is determined by a few important external and internal factors. Among the external ones the geopolitical position as an EU member and an EU border country should be mentioned in the first place. The EU membership determines the fact that Poland (together with other V4 countries) became an integral part of the EU migration regime. It meant the adoption of the legal framework of the EU migration policy together with the basic rule of freedom of movement for persons, workers and services (which allowed thousands of Poles to move and take up employment in other EU countries. At the same time, however, being a member state of the EU (and from 2007, of the Schengen zone) involved also the implementation of the external dimension of the EU common policy, including the introduction of visa procedures and strict border controls for third country nationals. These instruments were also applicable to citizens coming from Poland's neighbouring states in the East (Ukraine, Belarus and Russia), which remain the top source countries, and these steps proved to be a serious obstacle for the traditional trans-border flows between these countries and Poland.

There are also a few internal factors determining the migration profile of Poland. First of all, the economy and the labour market have a crucial role as a driver (or breaker) of foreigners' inflows. The economic competitiveness of Poland in comparison to other EU countries is still very limited, especially taking the level of wages and welfare systems into

account. On the other hand, Poland has been an attractive country for short term (seasonal) workers in some sectors where there is a growing demand for foreign workforce, especially since the simplification of the rules regarding access to the labour market in 2007. In the case of neighbouring countries, the geographical, cultural and linguistic proximity of Poland and Polish society is a key advantage. An additional powerful pulling factor is the migration networks, which are especially strong in the case of Ukrainians. Therefore, the dominant type of migration into Poland from the Eastern countries can be described as temporary, (circular, seasonal) not settlement, personal (not family), and labour-oriented. The prevailing personal strategy of immigrants is “earn here-spend there”, which means that foreigners are ready to work hard for a short period of time to maximize their earnings, which are then transferred to their family left in the country to pay for daily expenses or to cover household costs.

When analyzing its migration profile, Poland’s migration policy is particularly interesting. The latest steps such as the announcement of an official government decision considered to be a state migration strategy, or the liberalization of foreigners’ access to the labour market can be described as a slow and controlled open-up process of Poland towards immigration. However, this process is limited to a specific type of inflow, as authorities are interested first and foremost in encouraging short-term labour migration (not settlement).

The main aim of this study is to give a general overview of the migration profile of Poland. It consists of a few sections, the introductory one focusing on the main trends and the scale of emigration and immigration flows. Later on, we move on to the statistical sources and the critical review of accessible databases. In the next section, the main migration corridors are described, with special attention to labour mobility and the role of Eastern neighbours as source countries. To complete the picture, the state migration policy and its recent developments are presented, as a factor influencing the inflows of foreigners to Poland. The final section concentrates on some additional processes, namely return migration, ethnic and asylum seekers flows.

3.3.2 General overview of demographic and migration trends in Poland

Poland is a country with a negative migration balance. Nevertheless, since 2006, registered immigration has been increasing, firstly due to the inflow of foreigners, and secondly, due to the return migration of Poles (those who left the country in the period after Poland’s accession to the EU, in particular).

Predominantly, Poland is and has always been a country of emigration, and its history has been marked by successive waves of emigrations. There are many estimates about the number of Poles living abroad. Data from the Central Statistics Office suggest that there are ca. 2 million Polish emigrants (Poles living temporarily abroad). The latest wave of emigration, the so called post-accession wave, is a really significant phenomenon in the post-war history of Poland, incomparable to previous ones because of its magnitude, dynamics and new directions. With the accession, Poles became citizens of the EU and were

granted the right of free movement and employment in other member states. It was a mass outflow of unexpected dynamics, unforeseen by both Polish authorities and society, and the receiving countries. In absolute numbers, Poles form the largest group among migrants from the eight CEE countries which accessed the EU in 2004. This is partly due to Poland having the largest demographic potential resulting from the size of its population, and partly the traditions and culturally rooted patterns of migration.

The post-accession emigration chose different destinations from the previous waves. Until then, the main receiving countries had been Germany, the US, Canada, and Italy. However, since 2004, the UK and Ireland, which were the first to open their labour markets to citizens of the new member states, have become the main destinations of the 'new Polish diaspora' (see figure 1). This group is young (the average age of post-accession migrants was 31.4 years), predominantly male (64.7 per cent) and better educated than their predecessors.

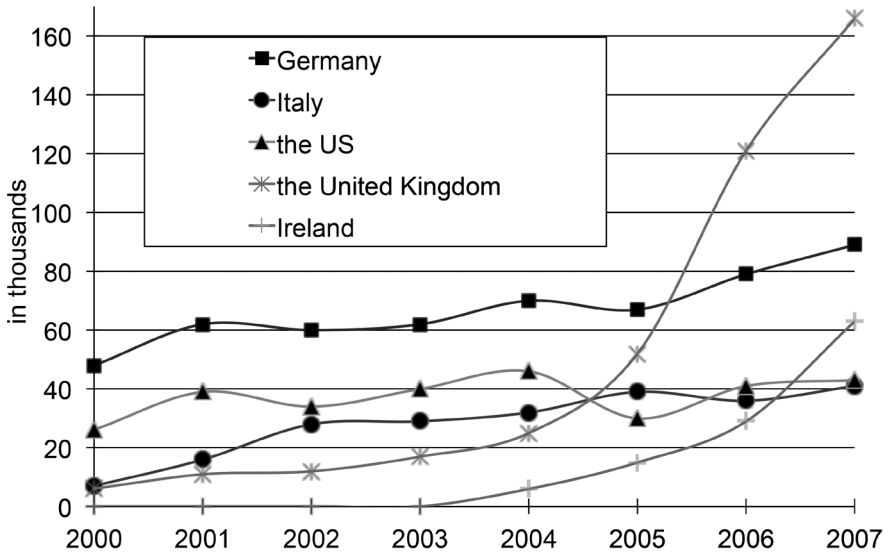


Figure 1. The outflow from Poland to main destination countries in 2000-2007 (in thousands)
Source: Central Statistical Office

Compared to the migration in the transition period, post-accession migration was characterised not only by a higher intensity, but also a greater diversity of migrant strategies. A certain part of post-accession emigrants seem to be more likely to return after some time spent abroad, some others seem to be regular long-term and permanently settled migrants (they are often accompanied by their whole families). Therefore, the intensive, long-term and permanently settled migration in the post-accession period is expected to lead to serious and permanent changes in the socio-demographic structure of the Polish society.

Statistics for the past two decades show small numbers of registered, long-term immigrants living in Poland. The most up-to-date source, namely the latest National Population and Housing Census (2011) shows that among the permanent residents of Poland, 99.7% are people having Polish citizenship, which means that the population of Poland is one of the most homogenized in terms of ethnic and national diversity. The number of foreigners with a permit for a fixed period or for settlement in Poland is still small (63 thousand). In the 2011 census, foreign-born residents were asked to indicate their country of birth. According to these figures, 674.9 thousand of the permanent residents in Poland were born abroad (1.8%). The major groups of foreign-born residents originate from today's Ukraine (227.5 thousand), Germany (84 thousand), Belarus (83.6 thousand) and Lithuania (55.6 thousand), all of which are neighbouring countries of Poland (SOPEMI Report 2012:32-33). The great majority of these people are now over 60 years old, which suggests that they are Polish citizens who were born either in pre-war Poland or abroad, and were relocated or displaced during or after World War II.

According to the last census, from the 38.5 thousand inhabitants 36.1 thousand (94%) held a single Polish citizenship, 327.4 thousand (0.9%) held dual (Polish and foreign citizenship), and 55.4 thousand (0.1%) were citizens of other countries. From the latter group, 13.4 thousand were the citizens of Ukraine (24%), 5.2 thousand citizens of Germany (9%), 4.2 thousand citizens of Russia (8%), 3.8 thousand citizens of Belarus (7%), and 2.6 thousand citizens of Vietnam (4.7%). The category of "foreign citizens" used in the census does not include temporary migrants. Therefore, the total number of immigrants in Poland is larger than registered in the census.

It is worth noting that in 2013 (on 31 December) almost 121 thousand foreign citizens held some kind of valid residence permit in Poland (see table 1).

Table 1. Number of foreigners with a valid residence permit in Poland (as of 31 December 2012) acc. to different residence statuses (selected countries only)

Country of origin	Complementary Protection	Long term residence permit	Long term stay permit of EU residents	Tolerated stay	Refugee status	Residence on fixed term	Total
Ukraine	7	17 959	2 198	142	1	17 372	37 679
Vietnam	1	4 340	1 947	368	4	6 744	13 404
Russia	2 243	4 813	425	610	530	4 024	12 645
Belarus	15	7 077	367	38	92	3 570	11 159
China	4	514	259	16	-	4 223	5 016
...
Moldova	-	338	71	11	1	455	876
Georgia	2	199	31	101	-	302	635
All nationalities	2 446	51 027	7 490	1 838	888	57 529	121 218

Source: Office for Foreigners

Similarly to previous years, they were mostly permits for a fixed period (57.5 thousand, 47%). Among the most important nationalities were: the citizens of Ukraine (37.6 thousand), Vietnam (13.4 thousand), Russia (12 thousand), and Belarus (11.1 thousand). Around half of the foreigners holding valid residence permits can be described as settled immigrants (those who possess a long term residence permit or a permit as an EU resident).

The information on temporary migrants can be obtained from the Central Population Register. The numbers presented in table 2 concern people (both foreigners and Polish nationals) who arrived from abroad and registered in Poland for a temporary stay of over 3 months. This is an important note because these data do not only include immigrants, but also Polish nationals (the PESEL register does not distinguish between nationals of Poland and foreigners). In 2011 (data from 2012 are not available yet) almost 66 thousand people were registered for a temporary stay (see table 2). The main countries of origin included Ukraine (18.2 thousand, 27% of all), Germany (5.5 thousand), Belarus (4.3 thousand), Vietnam (3.2 thousand), Russian Federation (2.2 thousand), and China (2.7 thousand).

Table 2. Polish and foreign nationals who arrived from abroad and who registered for temporary stay above three months since 2006 by sex and nationality. Poland 2006-2009, 2011 (as of December 31).

Continents and countries	2006	2007	2008	2009	2011	<i>Of which women:</i>		
						2008	2009	2011
Total	40 695	46 778	57 560	59 233	65 943	23 985	25 241	28 082
Polish nationals	3 061	3 915	4 721	5 648	:	2 286	2 693	:
Foreign nationals	37 585	42 824	52 804	53 552	:	21 687	22 540	:
Of which from:								
Europe	26 821	30 128	36 327	36 322	46 085	16 071	16 678	20 717
Albania	100	:	167	175	97	40	37	20
Austria	317	361	438	427	752	155	152	300
Belarus	3 107	3 306	4 103	4 007	4 317	2 055	2 158	2235
Belgium	222	262	323	289	338	86	62	88
Bulgaria	670	846	870	1029	1 209	311	409	482
Croatia	84	:	71	74	106	17	20	29
Czechia	191	:	313	307	497	155	148	237
Denmark	236	299	339	293	292	99	81	84
France	1 142	1 210	1 311	1 174	1 365	385	332	439
Germany	2 900	3 345	3 483	3 247	5 506	799	746	1813
Greece	75	:	121	130	193	19	20	36
Hungary	94	:	145	142	217	63	49	73
Ireland	66	:	115	138	261	21	28	71

Continents and countries	2006	2007	2008	2009	2011	<i>Of which women:</i>		
						2008	2009	2011
Italy	661	851	1 104	1 202	1 572	110	116	238
Lithuania	285	344	430	417	466	288	277	288
Moldova	394	748	769	472	520	249	206	215
Netherlands	561	726	942	679	769	185	109	167
Norway	68	:	117	127	148	19	26	47
Portugal	80	:	184	206	249	41	38	37
Romania	198	:	261	386	547	120	169	206
Russian Federation	1 909	1 804	2 342	2 579	2 289	1 362	1 519	1380
Serbia and Montenegro	162	:	160	176	134	43	50	45
Slovak Republic	186	261	335	343	485	187	14	219
Spain	200	:	326	319	554	104	93	147
Sweden	327	341	416	380	517	147	143	218
Turkey	765	971	1 439	1 654	1 901	271	350	456
Ukraine	10 660	11 370	13 885	14 206	18 216	8 235	8 702	10326
United Kingdom	785	995	1 193	1 143	1 789	285	234	535
Other	283	2 088	507	507	629	136	283	178
Africa	1 305	1 553	1 904	2 144	2 180	287	293	333
Algeria	84	:	122	126	158	6	5	15
Cameroon	73	:	99	117	94	24	16	12
Egypt	154	:	247	316	387	10	10	18
Kenya	71	:	48	48	54	21	25	32
Morocco	70	:	127	152	135	9	11	12
Nigeria	257	385	455	475	443	52	49	44
South Africa	65	:	88	87	89	29	26	29
Tunisia	182	:	275	341	380	21	22	30
Other	349	1 168	443	482	440	115	129	141
America	1 912	1 926	2 001	1 972	2 685	739	670	986
Brazil	284	158	169	209	202	66	72	74
Canada	180	221	184	176	313	74	63	119
United States	1 109	1 164	1 219	1 079	1 565	452	355	581
Other	339	383	429	508	605	147	180	212
Asia	7 458	9 112	12 431	12 996	14 791	4 547	4 857	5978
Armenia	1 205	1 364	1 650	1 501	1 520	815	772	781
Azerbaijan	66	:	86	78	70	36	35	23
China	665	953	1 826	2 170	2 776	654	800	1133

MIGRATION PROFILES OF THE RECEIVING (VISEGRAD) COUNTRIES

Continents and countries	2006	2007	2008	2009	2011	<i>Of which women:</i>		
						2008	2009	2011
Georgia	107	:	214	215	204	70	92	93
India	661	1 066	1 278	1 270	1 236	272	325	321
Iraq	99	:	122	176	241	29	46	74
Israel	110	:	144	147	191	50	50	72
Japan	485	601	734	697	668	295	265	283
Lebanon	63	:	52	50	66	3	4	18
Mongolia	303	322	392	403	368	215	222	203
Nepal	82	:	271	405	315	44	35	75
Pakistan	100	:	141	134	140	11	10	11
Philippines	72	:	147	239	195	88	97	120
South Korea	548	:	839	860	947	347	360	392
Syria	144	:	156	166	182	25	36	44
Taiwan	91	:	167	202	225	61	72	91
Uzbekistan	96	:	284	224	277	62	65	56
Vietnam	1 645	1 800	2 596	2 523	3 226	982	1001	1368
Other	585	2 728	1 035	1 233	1 547	284	358	564
Oceania	45	105	141	118	191	43	42	191
Stateless	23	26	26	28	:	9	7	:
Unknown	26	13	9	5	11	3	1	5

(:) no data available

Source: SOPEMI Report 2013 (based on Central Population Register PESEL).

According to data collected by the authors of the SOPEMI Report (2013), regarding the age and sex distribution of immigrants arriving in Poland, the temporary immigrants are more often men (57%) and they are relatively young (61% aged 20-44); (see table 3). Moreover, they are concentrated mostly in urban areas (82%), particularly in the central region of Poland (Mazowieckie voivodship with the capital city of Warsaw). As the main reason for coming to Poland, immigrants predominantly named work, followed by family related reasons and education (SOPEMI Report 2013:36).

It is worth mentioning that the age and education structure of foreigners staying temporarily in Poland is a very favourable characteristic, particularly if the quickly ageing Polish population is taken into account (SOPEMI Report 2013: 33-34). Approximately 1/3 of immigrants are people with secondary education (33% in case of males and 30% of females). Taking people with post-secondary and tertiary education into one category, the ratio is almost the same (29% for men and 30% for women). Only around 11% of migrants had only primary education, however, it has to be added that in case of 1/5 – 1/4 of all immigrants, the level of education was not specified.

Table 3. Polish and foreign nationals who arrived to Poland from abroad and who registered for temporary stay above three months by sex and age (as of 31 December 2011).

Age group	Total	2011	
		Men	Women
Total	65 943	37 861	28 082
0-4	2 422	1 263	1 159
5-9	1 801	935	866
10-14	1 659	821	838
15-19	4 325	2 008	2 317
20-24	8 142	4 253	3 889
25-29	9 881	5 843	4 038
30-34	8 853	5 375	3 478
35-39	7 294	4 402	2 892
40-44	5 959	3 736	2 223
45-49	4 625	2 838	1 787
50-54	3 625	2 102	1 523
55-59	2 489	1 441	1 048
60-64	1 874	1 099	775
65-69	1 251	813	438
70-74	877	512	365
75-79	401	205	196
80+	465	215	250

(:) no data available

Source: SOPEMI Report 2013

3.3.3 Main statistical sources and available data regarding migration flows in Poland

The key institution involved in the collection of data relevant for research on migration and foreigners' integration in Poland is the Central Statistical Office (CSO), which is the main body responsible for producing official statistics, collecting, storing and analyzing statistical data, as well as for their disseminating. Publications of the Central Statistical Office constitute the main source of aggregate statistics. Some data are collected and analyzed by the appropriate ministerial bodies, such as the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, the National Health Fund, the Social Insurance Institution and the National Labour Inspectorate (see table 4.).

Among the most reliable and relevant sources of statistics related to migration are: 1) the National Population and Housing Census (carried out every ten years, the latest one in 2011), 2) population registers (such as PESEL, Electronic System of Population Registration existing since 1979), and 3) sample surveys such as Labour Force Survey (LFS) (Kaczmarczyk 2011:15). The CSO is responsible for carrying out all of them. One of the most important characteristics (and weaknesses) of public statistics in Poland related to the population lies in the definitions applied: immigrants are defined as people who have arrived from abroad and have been registered as permanent residents of Poland; emigrants are defined as people who moved out of the country with the intention of settling down abroad and who deregistered themselves from their permanent place of residence in Poland. As a result, there is a difference between the population of Poland *de iure* (the number of people officially registered as residents in Poland) and *de facto* (the number of people actually residing in the territory of Poland). The difference between these two can be significant due to the fact that Poles commonly avoid the duty of deregistration of residence while living temporarily or permanently abroad. In practice, it means that there are a sizeable number of people who are counted to be permanent residents of Poland in official statistics even if, *de facto*, they have left Poland (i.e. who are *de iure* residents and *de facto* migrants) (Kaczmarczyk 2011:14-15).

Besides the national census, the most important sources from the point of view of migration research and analyses are the following:

- data related to registration and deregistration of permanent residence (flow data);
- datasets on people registered for temporary stay and temporarily absence because of staying abroad (stock data as of 31 December, collected by the CSO once a year from all local and regional communities);
- Labour Force Survey, including the datasets on people abroad (prepared quarterly);
- datasets on births, marriages, divorces and separations;
- datasets on primary and secondary schools and on tertiary education institutions (Kupiszewska 2009:4).

The availability of data on migration and integration in Poland is generally considered to be very poor (Kupiszewska 2009:25). One of the reasons for this is that official data only refer to permanent migration, and the data available on the characteristics of migrants are very limited. For example, there is no reliable information regarding foreigners on the employment rate, their housing conditions or access to healthcare. Immigration flow data capture mainly Polish return migrants and foreigners who arrive for a long-term stay, but not those coming for a temporary stay. While the LFS is an important source of information on emigration trends, the emigration of entire households is not captured in this survey and due to the scarcity of households with emigrants in the sample, the results should be treated with care (Anacka 2008; Kaczmarczyk 2011). Nevertheless, the LFS is probably the only source that can be currently used to investigate basic characteristics of emigrants (Kupiszewska 2009:26).

Regarding foreigners in Poland, the scope of data is also rather limited. The number of foreigners is calculated on the basis of data from the PESEL register. It is a population

Table 4. Key datasets relevant to migration research in Poland

Responsible institution	Dataset/ Database system
Central Statistical Office	Dataset on births Dataset on marriages Registration/deregistration of permanent residence Dataset on persons registered for temporary stay over 3 months (as of 31 December) Dataset on persons temporarily absent due to stay abroad above 3 months (as of 31 December) National Population and Housing Census (every ten years, including Long-term migration survey and Female fertility survey) Labour Force Survey Labour Force Survey – Dataset on persons abroad Datasets on primary and secondary schools and on tertiary education institutions
Ministry of Interior	PESEL (population register) “System Pobyt” – set of registers concerning foreigners; includes datasets concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Residence permits for third-country nationals – EU citizens and their families – Refugees – Acquisition of citizenship – Repatriation – Irregular migration Border Guard datasets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Persons stopped by the Border Guard for crossing or attempting to cross the national border illegally – Persons readmitted and expelled
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	Datasets on work permits Datasets on registered cases of illegal work and on illegally working foreigners (historical data) Labour market statistics Social help benefits Statistics on Poles working abroad within bilateral intergovernmental agreements (historical data)
Ministry of National Education	Information System on Education
Social Insurance Institution*	Central Register of Insured Persons Central Register of Contribution Payers Pensions Payout Systems
Ministry of Finance*	National Register of Taxpayers Database on PIT (Personal Income Tax) payers

* None of the registers maintained by this institution is accessible for researchers
 Source: Kupiszewska 2009:5-6

register in which all residents in Poland should be registered (both Polish nationals and foreigners). The population register is not an appropriate source, although the other data-

set called “System Pobyt” (which is a tele-informatic system composed of a number of registers concerning all types of foreigners’ residence permits, including EU citizens and third country nationals) is of good quality. However, only selected statistics based on this system are published. Data on foreign workers employed in Poland are also very limited and the scale of foreign workforce is generally thought to be underestimated. The availability of data on foreigners in other administrative sources is very limited. The number of foreigners in Poland is very small and surveys such as the Labour Force Survey are not designed to capture them, therefore the annual figures produced in sample surveys are not suitable for drawing general conclusions about the size of the foreign population. To conclude, there are serious gaps and weaknesses in the availability of proper and reliable data needed for research on migration processes. Apart from the regular publications of the Central Statistical Office on the population of Poland (such as the Demographic Yearbook of Poland published annually), and occasional reports on various subjects related to migration and foreigners, a compilation of the most important aggregate statistics in the field of migration out- and inflows can be found in SOPEMI Reports prepared annually for OECD by the Centre for Migration Research University of Warsaw.

3.3.4 Legal and political framework as a factor influencing immigration processes in Poland

As it was mentioned at the beginning of this study, Poland’s membership in the EU migration regime practically determined the development of the national migration policy in terms of institutional structure, harmonizing the legal framework and practical tools. To some extent, as several authors suggested the migration policy in Poland has become a top-down process characterized by a highly bureaucratic style (Kicinger 2005; Lesińska 2010; Weiner 2006). Immigration is not yet a topic of any serious and wider-scale debate in the public or political realm, it is absent from the programmes and struggles of political parties, which is – at least in the eyes of decision makers – a positive fact which allows in practice a more efficient implementation of the state policy.

Resulting from the extensive and thorough analysis of documents and policy makers’ statements, a normative essence of the immigration policy in Poland can be formulated as a set of normative assumptions (Duszczyk, Lesińska 2010:61). The first one is of key importance; the subsequent ones are all its offshoots: 1) The growing immigration into Poland is perceived as an inevitable phenomenon that may eventually constitute a threat to social cohesion; it can be gleaned from the experience in Western Europe that this is mostly due to irregular migrant inflows and to problems with the integration of immigrants. 2) It is the duty and primary responsibility of the state to control its borders and to regulate the residence and employment of foreign nationals. 3) With regard to economic immigration, the free flow of labour is a key priority within the EU, though immigrants from third countries, especially from neighbouring ones in the east, are generally accepted within the confines of short-term (seasonal, contract) immigration schemes and not for permanent settlement. 4) Long-term or settlement inflows are encouraged only in the

case of ethnic Poles, where ethnicity, not economic usefulness, seems to be the major concern (Duszczuk, Lesińska 2010).

This set of statements can be considered the normative basis of the state's approach towards immigration. Recently, however, the need to encourage labour migrants from Eastern countries (more precisely, Eastern Partnership states and Russia) has been strongly underlined by the authorities and in the official documents. The inflow of foreign workers has been regarded as an inevitable occurrence, but settlement migration, especially of migrants of non-European origin, is perceived as problematic – or even undesirable. The experience of Western European countries, especially related to problems with migrant integration, constitute the primary reference points for Polish authorities.

The slow and controlled opening up is mainly related to and derived from the growing labour market demand, which is a direct consequence of the processes already mentioned in the introduction – mass emigration of Poles, modernization and economic growth (marked by a more than 5% annual GDP growth in the years 2005-2008). As a response by the state, a, one could experience dynamic progress of the migration policy in Poland over the last years. To have a more complete picture of the current developments, besides the already mentioned legal changes related to the simplified access of foreigners to the Polish labour market based on the employers' declaration in particular, there are a few others worth mentioning. The most important appear to be (in chronological order):

3.3.4.1 Regularization programme in 2012

In the first half of the year 2012, the third regularization (status legalisation/abolition) programme was implemented in Poland (following two similar programmes in 2003 and 2007), and it was definitely the most extensive one. As requirements were reduced in comparison to previous programmes, more than 9.5 thousand people took this opportunity to apply for the legalization of their stay, of whom around 4.5 thousand succeeded. The successful applicants could gain a permission to stay in the country for two years. In the list of the nationalities who applied for regularization, citizens of Vietnam (23% of all applications) and Ukraine (21%) were on top (Ministry of Interior 2012b:35).

3.3.4.2 Liberalization of naturalization rules

In 2012, the new Act of Polish Citizenship came into force. Among the changes implemented in the new naturalization law, the most important were the shortening of the qualifying period of residence from five to three years (or two years in the case of privileged categories of foreigners, such as spouses of Polish citizens, stateless persons, refugees and persons possessing a permit to settle down obtained in connection with their Polish origin), and allowing dual or multiple citizenship. The waving of the former requirement to renounce citizenship of another country may induce more immigrants to naturalize in Poland. On the other hand, the new law introduced the requirement for foreigners seeking naturalisation to have a certain command of the Polish language. This follows a trend observed in other European states for migrants to demonstrate their socio-cultural integration before being naturalized.

3.3.4.3 Changes in the state migration strategy

In July 2012, the Council of Ministers adopted the document entitled ‘Polish Migration Policy – the Current State of Play and Proposed Actions’ (Ministry of Interior 2012). It includes an overview of the present migration policy and a normative basis for further policy development, as well as practical recommendations related to law, institutions and practical issues of immigration and integration policies. The growing immigration to Poland is perceived by the authorities as an inevitable phenomenon due to global processes taking place in Europe and worldwide, as well as to the growing need for foreign workforce as a result of mass emigration and negative demographic trends. Immigration is, however, also perceived as a possible threat to social cohesion mostly due to irregular migrant inflows and to problems with immigrants’ integration – a lesson drawn from the experience of more mature ‘immigration countries’ of Western Europe.

3.3.4.4 Slight progress in integration policy

In 2013, the Working Group on Integration of Foreigners was established within the Department of Aid and Social Integration (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs). The main aim of the group is to prepare the document “Polish integration policy of foreigners – assumptions and guidelines”, which, at present, is in the process of being discussed with non-governmental partners. However small it is, it is still a step forward in the area of integration policy in Poland, taking into account the fact that the issue of the integration of foreigners has been of little interest to the policy makers over the last few decades. Until 2005 for example, there was no official document dealing with the issue of integration and its scope other than simple, general statements. In the ‘Proposals of Actions Aimed at Establishing a Comprehensive Immigrant Integration Policy in Poland’ issued in 2005 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (officially responsible for integration policy) it is clearly confirmed that ‘at present, integrative measures in Poland, within special individual integration programmes, only focus on one group of people, namely those having refugee status’. Since then, the scope of the beneficiaries of state integration programmes has not changed. In practice, the NGOs sector is a partial substitute for the state when it comes to the implementation of the integration policy. The interest in the implementation of projects aimed at migrants and supporting their integration is strictly related to the opportunity to apply for financial support from the EU (e.g. EIF – European Fund on Third Country Nationals Integration), which has been present in Poland since 2007.

3.3.5 Labour mobility and foreigners in the Polish labour market

Important information related to the scale and characteristics of immigration flows to Poland is gained from data on foreigners present in the labour market. The number of work permits granted constantly increased from 2007 and exceeded 38 thousand in 2012. Also the number of work visas issued (on the basis of a simplified procedure described in detail in the next section) reached 243 thousand in 2012.

Overall, it can be assumed that there are around 100 thousand foreigners in Poland, and half of them can be described as settled migrants. Additionally, the number of foreign seasonal workers is around 250 thousand a year. From this, the conclusion can be drawn that at present the temporary (seasonal) inflows constitute a predominant type of immigration to Poland.

The scale of foreign workforce in Poland is estimated by the Labour Force Survey to be less than 1% of the total number of employed (Górny et al. 2010:95). It has been too marginal in scale to influence the labour market as a whole. Moreover, the presence of foreigners in the Polish labour market is generally of a complementary character.

As it was already mentioned, the general approach to the presence of foreign workers in the labour market in Poland started to change after the country's accession to the EU. A growing demand for workforce in sectors which are traditionally popular among foreigners, such as agriculture and construction, led to significant changes and the simplification of admission rules and employment procedures addressed to foreigners. The authorities decided to gradually liberalize the legislation on the employment of third country nationals, which is manifested in the facilitation of work permit regulations on the one hand, and in the extension of the catalogue of foreign groups allowed to take up employment in Poland without the need of a work permit, on the other.

There are two main formal schemes enabling foreigners to take up legal employment in Poland: a work permit system and a simplified scheme addressed to short term workers (so called employers' declaration scheme). Both of them will be briefly presented below.

The data related to work permits (which is the major instrument applied by the state to regulate the access of foreigners to the national labour market) clearly show that the overall number of work permits issued in Poland grows dynamically year by year (see table 5). In 2004, the number of work permits issued was 12.3 thousand, while since 2011 it went up to 40 thousand permits a year (which means an almost fourfold growth in the period of a few years).

The citizens of Eastern Partnership countries prevail in the statistics regarding work permit recipients as more than half of all work permits are issued for them every year. A steady growth of nationals from the Balkan states and Asia (mainly from China) is noticeable over the last years. As far as the number of permits issued is concerned, the leader position belonged to Ukrainians for a long time. In 2011 the largest number of permits (almost 30%) was issued to Chinese workers and this growth was related to the several infrastructural investments of Chinese companies in Poland. In 2012 Ukrainians regained the first place among the work permit recipients (Duszczuk et al. 2013:20).

It is also important to note that the statistics on foreign employment in Poland clearly indicate that the global economic crisis did not affect the inflow of foreign workers. When analyzing the data related to the number of work permits issued to foreigners in the consecutive years, a steep growth can be noticed since 2009 (over 60% rise compared to the previous year), with a gradual, but rather stable growth in the following years.

In 2007 a complementary scheme to the work permit system was introduced to support and foster short-term circular labour migration. The simplified scheme is based on employers' declaration of intent to employ a foreigner and it allows citizens of six coun-

Table 5. Work permits issued to citizens of the Eastern Partnership countries, years 2007-2012

Year	Country					
	Ukraine	Belarus	Moldova	Georgia	Azerbaijan	Armenia
2007	3 851	855	971	62	21	304
2008	5 400	1 325	1 218	109	19	441
2009	9 504	1 669	601	143	37	619
2010	13 150	1 958	682	95	45	452
2011	18 523	1 385	1 042	173	53	465
2012	19 357	1 723	609	171	70	433
2013	21 252	2 061	726	245	105	503

Source: Own elaboration based on the data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

tries to perform work in Poland for up to six months within twelve consecutive months without a work permit. Initially the employers' declaration scheme was intended to be a pilot programme addressed to citizens of neighbouring countries (Ukraine, Russia and Belarus). Since then, it was extended also to Moldavians and Georgians (in 2009) and Armenians (in 2014). The procedure to employ foreigners in this simplified scheme is simple, fast and inexpensive. The employer wishing to offer temporary seasonal employment is obliged to submit the declaration of intent to employ a foreigner to the local employment agency. The process of registration does not entail any costs. After registration, the declaration has to be given over to the person to whom it was issued and with this declaration he/she can apply for a visa and take up employment in Poland. The complete procedure from the registration at the local employment agency to getting the visa shall not take more than a month.

The aim of this system was to encourage employers to employ foreigners on a regular basis, and lead immigrants to use a legal option when working in Poland. Since then, the scheme has evolved into statistically the most significant form of employment of foreigners in Poland and become one of the most popular corridors for short-term (usually seasonal) foreign workers. The number of declarations of intent to employ a foreigner registered at the local employment agencies has been growing gradually since the introduction of the scheme. A visible growth was noticed in 2011 when more than 259 thousand declarations were submitted (it means approximately a 44% increase relative to the previous year). In the following years, the number of declarations became stabilized (243 thousand in 2012, and 235 thousand in 2013). Ukrainians constituted the vast majority of foreigners using this scheme (more than 90% of all declarations are issued for them every year), followed by citizens of Moldova and Belarus. The number of Russians and Georgians has remained very moderate.

The data shown in figure 2 reflect the rising popularity of this simplified procedure. Just within 2-3 years, this opportunity became the entry gate for thousands of immigrants. The data presented below indicate that the employers' declaration scheme proved to be an efficient migration corridor and it allows irregular immigration to be channelled into legal forms.

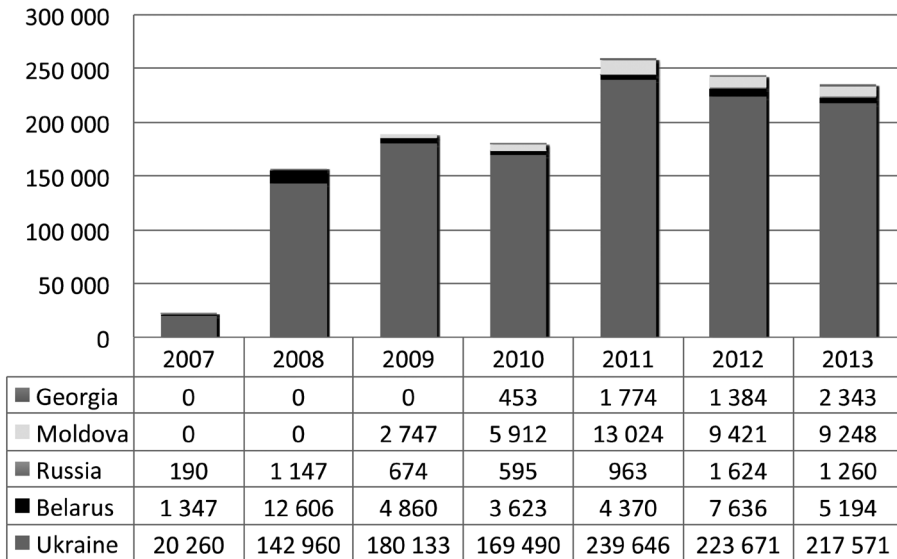


Figure 2. The distribution of employers' declarations of intent to employ a foreigner by country of origin (years 2007-2013)

Source: Own elaboration based on the data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

The statistical data related to the employers' declaration scheme show that foreigners taking up temporary employment in Poland are concentrated particularly in the agricultural, construction and service sectors (around 2/3 of all declarations are issued for employers representing the first two of these sectors).

The Eastern Partnership countries and Russia are, and will most probably be in the future, the main source countries of labour migrants. Poland (together with Sweden) initiated and advocated the idea of the Eastern Partnership with one of the aims being the liberalization of the rules of movement of people between those states and the EU (visa-free regime included).

3.3.6 Specific issues related to migration processes in Poland at present

In this section a few important issues will be briefly discussed to draw the attention to the present dynamics in the trends related to migration processes. In recent years, return migration became a highly relevant topic in time of the global economic crisis and the negative demographic prognosis for Poland. Similarly to the massive emigration in the post-accession period, which was a subject of political and public debate at the time, also return migration became a matter of common concern and were present in political campaigns. The problem of repatriation, especially the ethnic inflows based on the 'Card of the Pole' scheme together with the recent increase in asylum seekers arriving in Poland, were also interesting issues related to migration processes recently.

3.3.6.1 Return migration of Poles in the post-accession period

As Ravenstein noticed in 1885, each main wave of migration produces a compensating counter-current, which means that any mass outflow of people generates a return wave later. It also applied to Polish post-accession migrants who left the country after 2004. Some of them decided to return, however, despite prior expectations, a mass return of Polish citizens during the global downturn did not happen. Those who returned home were reportedly doing it for different reasons (e.g. family) and they often declared that their stay in Poland has a temporary character. It confirmed the theory of a “fluid” type of migration, where return to homeland is often perceived as a recurring temporary phase in a multi-stage process of migration (Grabowska-Lusińska, Okólski 2011; Lesińska 2013b). The economic situation in destination countries, however, did lead to a shift in the preferred direction of labour migration – Ireland and the UK (the main destination countries for post-accession Polish emigrants) became less popular, and the Netherlands, Germany and Norway became new favourites. It is very difficult to estimate the scale of returns, but some authors calculated the number of returnees to be 580 thousand in 2008 (based mainly on LFS – Labour Force Survey) (Anacka, Fihel 2012:148).

The Polish government neither stimulates nor restricts the international movement of Poles. As it is written in the government strategy on migration policy, the Polish state accepts the fact that there is no legal or political instrument available to encourage or discourage the labour emigration of Poles, and moreover, the most important factor influencing the decision to return is the economic and social situation of Poland (Ministry of Interior 2012a: 18). It means that the government officially accepted the fact that emigration is an inevitable social process and the state has limited power to prevent it or restrict its scale.

As a result of such approach, there are no special programmes addressed to potential Polish migrants (those who are planning to emigrate) or real ones (those already residing abroad). As for the potential migrants, the existing activities are mainly aimed at providing them with information on the working and living conditions in the EU countries, including the potential risks involved, in order to protect Poles abroad against threats occurring because of the often unprepared labour emigration. The information campaigns and advisory services are the main responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs via the network of Polish consulates abroad, whose number significantly increased in the new destination countries in particular. Some measures were taken in order to minimize the possible negative consequences of emigration, too. They were mostly targeted at Poles considering the possibility of return to their mother country. A special manual for returnees called *Powrotnik* (‘The Returner’) was distributed among Poles abroad via the network of consulates and Polish organizations. Additionally, an official website (www.powroty.gov.pl) was created with the main objective to provide detailed information about the most relevant issues for returnees regarding taxes, the social security and social benefit system, the education of children, starting own businesses, recognition of diplomas and many others. This online tool is aimed at providing potential returnees with practical information, which might facilitate their possible return to Poland and their successful reintegration into the labour market. The problems with employment after return, which could result in a higher unemployment rate and increasing burdens for the social system,

are perceived as the most challenging effects (in negative terms) for the Polish labour market and the economy in general. In 2011, the website was incorporated as an integral part of a special service called 'Green Line', set up by the Polish Public Employment Service as an official online information and consultation centre for employers and individuals searching for a job. The website provides an opportunity for the public to submit any questions and receive a reliable official response online within 14 days (Lesińska 2013a:86).

3.3.6.2 Ethnic inflows and the Card of Pole

There is a long-lasting tradition of repatriation schemes implemented by the state authorities for Polish nationals and individuals of Polish origin who are willing to resettle in Poland. Until now there have been several waves of repatriation since the early years after World War II. It means that the Polish state has some experience in stimulating and facilitating return flows. However, the latest one, which started in the early 1990s, is very specific and, therefore, difficult to compare with the return migration taking place in the past. The recent data show that the interest in the repatriation scheme is marginal. The main reason for that is the low interest among Polish nationals on the one hand, and the financial constraints related to repatriation, on the other. The local authorities willing to invite repatriates are obliged to provide proper accommodation and job offers and the costs can be partly reimbursed later from the state budget. Thus, after a certain peak in the period 2000-2002, the number of repatriation visas issued dropped significantly. Since 2009 fewer than 200 repatriation visas have been issued every year, for example in 2012 the number was only 120 (see table 7). The largest group of incoming repatriates returned from four countries: Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Belarus.

Due to problems with the financing of the repatriation scheme and its limited effectiveness, another procedure was implemented in 2007, addressed to foreigners of Polish origin. The Card of the Pole (*Karta Polaka*) is addressed directly to ethnic Poles who are citizens of the former states of the Soviet Union (its geographical scope is limited to 15 countries). The main necessary condition to obtain the Card of the Pole is to prove one's Polish origin and a living relationship with Polishness by the fact that one has at least a basic knowledge of the Polish language, and by proving that at least one of the parents or grandparents or two great grandparents were of Polish nationality or had Polish citizenship, and finally an active involvement in Polish linguistic and cultural activities within the Polish community of their region for at least the past three years. The Card of the Pole entitles its holder to apply for a visa of multiple entrances to Poland (the visa costs can be reimbursed by the Polish state). It provides also a set of practical rights to its holders, such as exemption from the obligation to have a work permit, a right to set up a company on the same basis as citizens of Poland, a right to study, and participate in other forms of education. In practice, this card eliminates the most difficult legal obstacles, such as the obligation to have a work permit and frequent visa application procedures, and therefore can serve as a pull factor to come and work in Poland.

Certain states put forward a strong reaction to the implementation of the Card of the Pole. The Belarusian authorities heavily protested against this institution as being contradictory to Belarusian national interests. Some restrictions were introduced to diminish

Table 6. The number of employers' declarations of intent to employ a foreigner, by nationality of worker, years 2007-2012

Category	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Repatriation visas issued	316	281	278	662	804	613	301	269
Persons who arrived within repatriation	267	399	362	944	1	832	455	372
Selected countries of previous residence								
Belarus	–	10	15	45	140	127	43	39
Georgia	–	–	–	–	–	1	3	–
Kazakhstan	316	245	172	361	216	194	156	122
Moldova	–	1	2	10	9	5	2	–
Russian Federation	–	7	8	10	36	31	11	35
Ukraine	–	15	69	210	381	245	77	56

Category	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Repatriation visas issued	252	239	248	204	164	139	178	120
Persons who arrived within repatriation	335	327	281	260	214	175	229	139
Selected countries of previous residence								
Belarus	30	25	18	13	5	8	18	14
Georgia	3	3	3	–	8	4	3	1
Kazakhstan	155	125	161	143	90	84	92	60
Moldova	2	1	–	–	–	–	1	–
Russian Federation	32	40	38	25	32	23	31	26
Ukraine	23	27	16	8	13	15	20	13

Source: Own elaboration based on the data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

its potential influence. Since 2013 possessing the Card of the Pole has been prohibited for civil servants, and very recently this prohibition has also been imposed upon the people working in state institutions such as the army and internal affairs. Unlike Belarusian authorities, the Belarusian society has received the Card of the Pole very positively, as it enables people to freely visit their Western neighbour (Chubrik, Kazlou 2012:67).

The Card of the Pole became more and more popular among people of Polish decent willing to arrive and live in Poland. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from 2008 till the end of 2012 more than 100 thousand cards were issued, including 46 thousand to Ukrainian citizens and 42 thousand to Belarusians. Approximately 90% of the applications are submitted by these two nationalities, far fewer by Lithuanians, Russians and others. The majority of applicants are young, often students, descendants of Polish nationals who use the card as a tool simplifying the procedures related to arrive, stay and study in Poland (Fihel 2011:36).

The inflow of asylum seekers to Poland

The number of foreigners seeking asylum in Poland is small: 5.1 thousand people having some form of protection or a valid stay permit were registered at the end of 2013 (including 888 refugees, 2446 with the status of tolerated stay, and 1838 with the status of complemen-

tary protection). In the last two years a significant increase in the number of applications for refugee status was noticeable (from 6.8 thousand in 2011 to 14.9 thousand in 2013). Similarly to previous years, the Russian Federation constituted the main country sending asylum seekers to Poland (almost 85% of all applications), followed by Georgia (8%), Syria (2%), Armenia (1%) and Kazakhstan (1%) (see table 7). Among those with Russian citizenship the largest group was the ones who claimed to be of Chechen nationality.

Table 7. Repatriation visas issued in Poland and selected countries of previous residence of repatriates in years 1997-2012

Nationality	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total	10 587	6 534	6 887	10 753	14 981
Afghanistan	14	25	36	103	49
Algeria	11	4	6	2	3
Armenia	147	107	216	413	205
Azerbaijan	10	10	2	5	3
Bangladesh	13	18	10	21	25
Belarus	37	46	81	69	38
Cameroon	12	11	13	5	3
China	16	9	7	1	2
Egypt	-	11	8	102	5
Ethiopia	1	1	0	0	0
Georgia	4 214	1 082	1 735	3 234	1212
India	16	17	9	8	7
Iran	5	7	11	17	15
Iraq	21	27	28	25	29
Kazakhstan	5	11	26	121	91
Kyrgyzstan	13	37	43	41	59
Moldova	6	5	5	5	8
Mongolia	15	19	10	14	7
Nepal	14	17	29	8	6
Nigeria	23	19	15	18	7
Pakistan	19	27	20	43	34
Russian Federation	5 726	4 795	4 305	6 084	12 659
Sierra Leone	3	1	1	0	0
Somalia	2	5	9	7	25
Sri Lanka	11	6	6	3	5
Sudan	1	1	2	1	2
Syria	7	8	12	107	248
Turkey	11	19	17	9	15
Ukraine	36	45	67	72	41
Uzbekistan	19	14	6	18	15
Vietnam	67	47	31	57	40
Stateless	19	21	23	41	34

Source: Office for Foreigners

Most applications are denied as manifestly unfounded. In 2013 only 200 people were granted refugee status in Poland according to the Geneva Convention (87 in 2012 and 153 in 2011). It means that only fewer than 1% of applicants were successful in 2013 in being granted refugee status according to the Geneva Convention (additionally, 1.5% of applicants were granted the status of tolerated stay and 0.5% – complementary protection). 85% of all decisions were denied as unjustified and/or the proceedings were discontinued. They were mostly citizens of Russia and Belarus, some of the Georgian citizens were granted a refugee status in the last two years. In 2013 only 131 foreigners got supplementary protection (140 in 2012), whereas 392 foreigners were allowed to stay in Poland on the basis of tolerated status (292 in 2012); again, the vast majority of these were the citizens of Russia. According to Office for Foreigners data, 2013 seems to be a record year in terms of the number of applications for refugee status. It is important to note that the vast majority of the applications were submitted by first time applicants.

3.3.7 Conclusions

The present dynamic of migration flows in Poland is a direct consequence of Poland's accession to the EU in 2004. It was a turning point which still has a powerful impact on many areas of life and significantly shaped the recent economic situation of the country. The early years after the EU expansion witnessed a spectacular – in terms of scale and dynamics – increase in the international mobility of Poles. On the other hand, the period of economic downturn noticeable in Europe since 2008 seriously influenced the situation in key destination countries (particularly in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Spain) and shaped the scale and structure of outflows from Poland as well as the return migration of those who either achieved their expectations abroad or were forced to return due to the economic situation in the other country. The number of Poles staying (temporarily) abroad, which reached 2.3 million in 2007, still remained relatively high despite the economic crisis and recession, which suggests that the outflows have stabilized and Poland has already entered into a “mature” phase of emigration processes.

Poland is still a country of net-emigration, however, it is increasingly important in terms of incoming flows of foreigners. The statistical data show that the number of foreigners arriving in Poland increases every year and the geographical scope of source countries has widened. Nevertheless, immigration has a rather short-term, circular character (not settlement) and Poland is an attractive destination mostly to its neighbours, such as Ukrainians and Belarusians. This situation can change in the future, however, because of the fact that firstly, the economic growth and demand for foreign workforce will continue, and secondly, more open and encouraging legislation and political measures related to foreigners will be implemented.

It is particularly interesting to observe the migration dynamics taking place in Poland at present. It is influenced by various internal and external factors originated in vital geo-political and socio-economic processes taking place across the continent. An intensive internal EU mobility, a growing demand and competition for professionals and

highly-skilled foreign workers, slow economic progress after the recent recession period, a negative demographic prognosis in most European countries – these are the common features of the Visegrad Group and Eastern Partnership countries – just to mention a few of the key background processes having an impact on international human flows taking place currently at the Eastern edge of the EU.

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