

ROLE OF IMMIGRANTS ON POLISH LABOUR MARKET

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ABSTRACT

In the nineties of the twentieth century, political, economical and social system changed in many countries. Restrictive controls of crossing border were removed. The East- Central European region became very diverse economically. The events freed a vast migration potential in the centre of Europe, also in Poland. Migration movements began to play a significant role in this country. At the beginning, emigration dominated in Poland. The difference of wages and life conditions between Poland and destination countries was the reason for which many people left their places of origin. Another factor pushing Polish countrymen abroad in search of work was the increase in demand for work of foreigners in destination countries. Thus, a shortage was created on Polish domestic labour market which someone had to fill. That meant it was necessary to open Poland to immigrants. Immigration to Poland is an inevitable phenomenon; it is also beneficial for the country, for example because of the adverse demographic trends.

РОЛЬ ІМІГРАНТІВ НА ПОЛЬСЬКОМУ РИНКУ ПРАЦІ

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У дев'яності роки двадцятого століття в багатьох країнах змінилася політична, економічна і соціальна система. Обмеження пересування та контроль при перетині кордонів були скасовані. Регіон економічно став дуже різноманітним. Такі зміни відкрили величезний міграційний потенціал у центрі Європи, і в Польщі зокрема. Міграційні рухи почали відігравати важливу роль у нашій країні. На початковому етапі у Польщі переважала еміграція. Різниця заробітної плати та умов життя між Польщею та країнами призначення стали причиною, через яку багато людей покидали місця свого походження. Ще одним чинником, який спонукав наших співвітчизників їхати за кордон у пошуках роботи, було збільшення попиту на працю іноземців у країнах призначення. Таким чином, на внутрішньому ринку праці виникла нестача робочої сили, яку потрібно було заповнити. Така ситуація викликала необхідність відкриття ринку для іммігрантів. Імміграція в Польщу є неминучим явищем і водночас корисна для країни, зважаючи на несприятливі демографічні тенденції.

Ключові слова: *імміграція, іммігранти, ринок праці, мобільність, нелегальні мігранти.*

Until the 1990s the region of East Central Europe was ethnically and economically uniform. Socioeconomic changes which happened in the period structurally transformed many countries of the region, including Poland. Restrictive controls of cross border traffic were removed. The changes regarded aspects of politics, economy and society. The region became very diverse economically. The events freed a vast migration potential in the centre of Europe. Poland saw such phenomena as inflation, increase of wages and earnings, new conditions of functioning on the labour market, unemployment, but simultaneously, as time went by, economic development and improvement of the socioeconomic situation became apparent. Under these conditions migration movements began to play a significant role in our country. People started to travel for tourism or seeking employment. Before the system changes, permanent, resettlement emigration dominated in our country. The scale of this form of migration decreased in time. In turn, the number of temporary, short-term labour-related departures grew. After 1989, contrary to expectations, an increase in resettlement emigration has not been felt; rather it was short-term, seasonal migration. Thus the character of migration changed from resettlement to temporary travel. Based on data from official registers (Central Statistical Office (GUS), the Labour and Social Politics Minister, the Foreigners' Office) or censuses (The National Census 1988, 1995, 2002, 2011), one may conclude that after the transformation period the number of migrants who were permanent citizens of Poland who remained abroad was relatively stable, and rose only after Poland entered the EU (Kaczmarek, 2006, p. 5).

After Poland's accession into the EU in 2004 the number of Poles remaining temporarily abroad increased, compared to the year 2003, by 20 %, and by over 50 % compared to the year 2002. Statistics (Data on the topic may be found in the studies of the Central Statistical Office (GUS). The first estimate of the number of citizens of Poland staying temporarily abroad, describing the years 2004—2006 was published in October 2007, subsequent ones were published in the years 2008—2012.) say that in the years 2004—2012 1 to 2.3 million persons remained temporarily abroad (the number includes those who departed after Poland's accession to the EU, as well as those who were already abroad before May 1, 2004, but who legalized their stay after the date). Such large intensity and scale of labour mobility may be explained by the situation on the Polish labour market. The situation worsening at the end of the 90s caused a drastic increase of the scale of mobility and changes in its structure. The difference of wages and life conditions between Poland and destination countries, i.e. the economic factor, was the reason for which many people left their places of origin. Another factor pushing our countrymen abroad in search of work was the increase in demand for work of foreigners in destination countries. Thus a shortage was created on our domestic labour market, which someone has to fill. Additionally we must mention that the demographic situation of our country is not very good, taking into account the aging of society and segmentation of the labour market (jobs requiring high qualifications — better paying, and low qualifications – low paying), it is necessary to open ourselves to immi-

grants. According to the estimates of the National Bank of Poland (NBP), as much as 5.2 million people would have to settle in our country if we do not want to see a shortage of employees. Thus, import of workforce becomes an efficient solution or even a necessity. Immigration to Poland is an inevitable phenomenon; it is also beneficial for the country, for example because of the adverse demographic trends.

The purpose of this article is to present the situation on the Polish labour market in view of escalating labour migration. The author attempts to shed light on the role the immigrants can play, if they choose to respond to the shortage of employees on the Polish labour market.

The Polish labour market underwent a major metamorphosis in the last years. It went from being an employer's market to being an employee's market. Migration tendencies strengthened. On one hand, a large wave of labour emigration is felt, mainly to European countries. Within the territory of the OECD, Poland is among the main countries supplying emigrants with higher education (professional or academic). On the other hand, immigration of workforce into our country may also be observed.

The phenomenon of emigration to Poland is relatively new. Foreigners began to visit Poland in masses only after 20 years after 1989. Before that Poland was a so-called "zero emigration" country. The inflowing numbers of foreigners into our country remain at a relatively low level. Poland is still a less attractive destination country than so-called Western European countries. Foreigners make up only 2 % of the overall number of residents of Poland, and it is the lowest percentage in all of Europe.

The scale of immigration increased only after Poland entered the European Union, and it was linked to two main factors. Firstly, Poland began to be perceived as a destination country for immigration (transit immigration dominated before that). Secondly, the opening of the European labour market to Polish workers caused them to emigrate in masses.

Now Poland is the most important country of emigration in the European Union. The main reason for this is that the average wage level is no higher than one-fourth of the average wage level in Western Europe. At the same time, Poland has the chance to become a relevant destination country for immigrants. The average wage level in neighbouring Ukraine and Belarus is around one-fourth of the level in Poland. Our country could endeavour to attract highly qualified workforce from those areas in order to maintain its economic growth. However, it would have to undertake proactive steps encouraging people to settle in Poland, because our country is still not very attractive to immigrants. To realize the vision of Poland as a destination country for educated immigrants, we first have to implement significant changes in our immigration policy.

The phenomenon of immigration, or the influx of foreigners to Poland, is relatively new. Foreigners became interested in Poland only in the last few years. The influx of foreigners is still slow. This is because Poland is still a less attractive country than traditional immigration countries of Western Europe. Making the labour market available to immigrants is still a problem. We are lacking programs encouraging these groups to find their place in the labour market. Simultaneously, growing needs of the market make employing foreign workers more and more desirable. Unfortunately, this is not always followed by social acceptance (*Zjawisko imigracji w Polsce*, <http://www.portfel.pl> (date of access 2.08.2014), p. 1.).

An impulse for changes in Polish migration policy was granting the rights to organize the Euro 2012 to Poland and Ukraine. Immigrants are needed in Poland's dynamically growing economy to fill the shortage of employees, which occurs more and more often. The suffering industries are opening themselves to employing foreigners. Thus, regulations regarding employment of foreigners are being gradually loosened. The process began in 2007, and occurred after the years 1990—2006, which saw restrictive immigration policy. Under current regulations, any foreigner who is not relieved by law of the obligation to obtain a work permit in Poland, and who wishes to begin working in Poland, must obtain an appropriate permit. The employer is the party in the administrative proceeding, which means that the employer who wishes to hire a foreigner makes the request for the permit, and not the foreigner himself. The work permit is issued for a specific term, no longer than 3 years, and may be extended.

According to the regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy from January 29, 2009 regarding the issuing of work permits for foreigners (Dz.U. 2009, nr 16, poz. 84.), there are 5 types of permits, differentiated on grounds of the type of work and employer:

Table 1. Types of work permits for foreigners, author's own elaboration according to an ordinance of the Labour and Social Politics Minister dated 29.01.2009 on issuing work permits for foreigners

Types of work permits	
Type A	Issued for foreigners who carry out work pursuant to a work contract with an employer whose seat is located in Poland.
Type B	Issued for the management board members.
Type C	Issued for foreigners who carry out work for a foreign employer and are seconded to work to Poland for a period not longer than 30 days a year.
Type D	Issued for workers seconded to render services of temporary and occasional character (export service).
Type E	Issued for workers seconded to Poland for a period exceeding 3 months within next 6 months in other objectives than mentioned in points 2-4.

The obligation to obtain a work permit does not pertain to all immigrants. The group relieved from the obligation includes persons fulfilling criteria presented in table 2.

Table 2. Exemptions from the obligation to apply for a work permit, author's own elaboration according to an ordinance of the Labour and Social Politics Minister dated 29.01.2009 on issuing work permits for foreigners

Immigrants exempt from an obligation to apply for a work permit	
1.	The EU citizens and of other countries from the European Commercial Region as well as Switzerland and Turkey.
2.	People possessing a permit to reside on the territory of Poland.
3.	People possessing a permit for a long-term resident alien of the European Community in Poland.
4.	People possessing a permit for a long-term resident alien of the European Community in other country of the EU which obtained a residence permit due to their work or due to the fact they run their own business.
5.	Refugees, people benefiting from a temporary protection or possessing permit for a tolerated residence.

Immigrants exempt from an obligation to apply for a work permit pursuant to other regulations	
1.	Foreign language teachers in educational institutions.
2.	Graduates of Polish upper secondary schools, stationary university studies, stationary Ph. D. studies on Polish universities.
3.	Scientists.
4.	Participants of culture-educational exchanges.
5.	Citizens of countries bordering with Poland with which Poland co-operates in terms of earning migration (White Russia, Moldavia, Russia, Georgia and Ukraine), who possess a declaration of their employers referring to an intention of entrusting with work execution, registered in the Municipal Labour Council - up to 6 months within 12 months.
6.	Foreigners possessing the Pole's Card.

Additional facilitations in the area of employing immigrants include: lowering the costs of work permits, abolishing the pledge for work permit, expediting the so-called labour market test or removing it completely, extending the term of work permits to 3 years. Thanks to these changes the procedure of employing foreigners in Poland is much shorter, as Polish entrepreneurs demand (Matkowska, 2012, p. 79—80).

Favourable regulations, which came into force on March 29, 2008, were created in order to smooth out the process of hiring immigrants, especially those from the other side of the eastern border who additionally are of Polish descent (the Pole Card Act — Dz. U. z 2007 r. Nr 180, poz. 1280). Under the act several privileges were instated for foreigners confirming their Polish nationality or descent. Among other matters, it entitles them to run a business and work under the same conditions as Polish citizens, to receive emergency medical aid, to use the free public education system and to enter museums free of charge. It does not relieve them of the necessity to possess a visa, necessary to cross the Polish border. Since the Pole Card Act came into force, until 2012 about 46 thousand Pole Cards were issued, 42 thousand in Belarus, 2.7 thousand in Russia, and 5 thousand in the Ukraine (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.msz.gov.pl>, (date of access 2.08.2014)). According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, our eastern neighbours are becoming more interested in Poland.

Further simplification of the rules of stay and work for foreigners, preventing illegal immigration, improving integration programs, more emphasis on the education of the children of migrants and allowing the legalization of stay of foreigners who are in the country illegally were all included in the document approved by the Council of Ministers on 31.07.2012 entitled «The Migration Policy of Poland — current state and postulated actions.— (*Polityka migracyjna Polski — stan obecny i postulowane działania*, Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, [https:// www.msw.gov.pl](https://www.msw.gov.pl), (date of access 2.08.2014)) According to the ministry's paper, specialists with needed qualifications, scientists and graduates of universities may count on preferential legal treatment regarding the legalization of stay and access to the labour market.

The document shows that the government sees the problem of the growing demand for foreign workers. And moreover that it undertakes to increase the share of foreigners on the Polish labour market according to its needs, in order to assure the competitiveness of the Polish economy.

It should be noted that contemporary migrations to Poland are not diverse geographically. Immigrants come to us mostly from neighbouring countries. Geographical proximity from the sending and destination country often means cultural proximity, which is not irrelevant in the context of employment of new arrivals on our labour market.

People come to Poland as part of labour immigration mainly from the former USSR. They are mostly citizens of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. Among sending countries Ukraine takes first place; one-fourth of all immigrants living in Poland come from there. Second and third place on the list of sending countries have for many years been taken by two other countries of the former USSR, and Poland's eastern neighbours, Russia and Belarus. As a result, one-third of foreigners living in Poland come from our eastern neighbours. Among the former republics of the USSR, Armenia, Lithuania and Kazakhstan also play important roles as sending countries. Citizens of highly developed countries, Germany, France and Great Britain, also comprise a relatively large group of immigrants.

Citizens from far regions of the world, from Asia (excluding the former USSR), the Americas, Africa or Australia and Oceania, are only a small percentage of all foreigners living in Poland. Citizens of China, India, Korea, Vietnam and the United States stand out. The presence of these immigrants in Poland contradicts the above mentioned rule that foreigners come to Poland mostly from countries which are close in terms of geography and culture. As we can see, our country is more and more open to other cultures and nations in the era of globalization, becoming friendlier to the representatives of these countries.

Documented information on the numbers of immigrants in Poland may be obtained from the Foreigners' Office. In the previous decade (2001—2010) 25 to 35 thousand requests for legalization of stay in the Republic of Poland were submitted annually. Analyzing the data, we may notice an increase in the inflow of legal immigrants. In 2001 it was 30 thousand, and by 2007 the number doubled, reaching 60 thousand. In 2010 around 55 thousand requests for permits were submitted. Most requests were for permissions for stay for a specified time. Such permits are granted individually if circumstances exist to justify inhabiting the territory of the Republic of Poland for a period longer than 3 months, but no longer than 2 years. The circumstances include:

- work permit or permit for other paid labour
- running a business
- undertaking education
- marrying a Polish citizen or a foreigner who has a permit for settlement.

In the years 2008—2010 89,880 persons received such permits (table 3). Most of them came from Ukraine (28 %), next were Belarus and Vietnam (about 8 %), China (6 %) and Russia (5 %).

We should note that immigrants remaining in Poland are well educated (36 % hold higher education degrees). They are mostly 20 to 59 years old, which is working age (80 % of immigrants). This means that we have an immigration of professionally active people. Men dominate in numbers, though not from all countries. In the case of Ukraine and other Soviet Republics women are the majority, and they find employment in the sector of care for the elderly or children or in housekeeping.

Table 3. Number of people who in 2008—2010 received residence permit for a definite period of time and most often represented citizenships, author's own elaboration according to D. Cianciara, K. Dudzik, A. Lewczuk, J. Pinkas, Liczba, charakterystyka i zdrowie imigrantów w Polsce, <http://www.phie.pl>

Citizenship	Number	Percentage
Total number of foreigners	89 880	100
In this the most represented nationality		
Ukraine	25 224	28,1
Vietnam	7 167	8,0
Belarus	7 092	7,9
China	5 404	6,0
Russia	4 212	4,7
Total	49 099	54,6

Research shows that immigrants most often choose highly industrialized and developed regions: Masovia, Lower Silesia or Lesser Poland. We must also emphasize the fact that foreigners from different parts of the world do not settle in the same regions of. Citizens of Western Europe and the USA live in Warsaw and Krakow or in the vicinity. Foreigners coming from the countries of the former USSR live mostly in eastern voivodeships or where their compatriots have previously arrived. The Masovian Voivodeship had by far the most immigrants living there (30 %). Next were: Lesser Poland, Lower Silesia and the Łódź Voivodeship. Immigrants most often chose cities and large agglomerations, where work is readily available (about 83 %). They rarely chose small towns or villages. Though we should note that if they do, they find employment in construction or agriculture.

Analyzing the occupations of the members of each nation, we can notice the forming of certain specializations. And so the citizens of the old Member States find jobs in finance and industry (the French, the Germans). Americans and Englishmen are most often employed as teachers in private language schools. Citizens of Russia and the former Soviet Republics (mostly Ukrainians and Belarusians) find work as in sectors related to commerce, education or agriculture. Employment of citizens of Belarus or Ukraine is also rising in the construction industry. Ukrainians bolster the education sector as well, often being hired in public schools. Most often they work in schools teaching foreign languages. Foreigners from Asiatic countries usually work in sectors such as commerce or catering.

Table 4. Work permits for foreigners according to selected sections of PKD in 2013 (in absolute numbers), author's own elaboration according to the Foreigners' Office

The number of permits in 2013				
Total: 39 078				
1.	Wholesale and retail trade	7164	Professional, scientific and technical	1849
2.	Architecture	5054	Agriculture, forestry, hunting, fishing	1842
3.	Households with employed persons	5014	Information and communication	758
4.	Transportation, storage	3380	Education	356
5.	Activities related to accommodation and food service	3029	Health care and social assistance	343
6.	Manufacturing	1897	Financial activities and insurance	251

Large numbers of foreigners work illegally, however. They may be divided into three groups, presented in table 5. According to estimates, members of over 100 nationalities work in Poland. Simultaneously the employment is mostly illegal. The ubiquity of the phenomenon also shows that work of citizens of other countries is in demand. The vast majority of foreigners find employment in the second segment of the labour market, where Poles usually do not want to work.

Table 5. Kinds of migrants working illegally in Poland, author's own elaboration

Types of immigrant groups working illegally in Poland			
	Seasonal workers	Immigrants residing in Poland permanently	Immigrants connected with foreign entrepreneurs who run their business in Poland
Sector	Agriculture, construction business	Services connected with household keeping such as cleaning, caring for elderly people, disabled people, etc.	Insurance companies, financial ones (departments of the mother companies from other countries), family-owned companies (commercial, gastronomic)
Citizens	Ukraine, Belarus	Mostly citizens of ex Soviet Republics	Old EU countries, the USA, Japan, citizens of some Asian countries (Vietnam, China, Armenia), Turkey
Form of employment	Mostly illegal, but with a legal residence	Most often illegal, residence often illegal as well	Often illegal, but with a legal residence
Period	Spring, summer	Permanent residence	Short-term period without a necessity to fulfill all formal obligations resulting from the Polish law

It is hard to estimate the number of foreigners working in Poland, as most work seasonally or illegally. According to the data of the Foreigners' Office, immigrants were granted 39,078 individual and contractual work permits (table 4). The number does not take into account foreigners who do not need work permits, including the majority of citizens of countries of the European Union or who work illegally. At the same time, legal employment is only a small part of labour immigration into Poland. Estimates talk about even a few hundred thousand illegally employed foreigners.

The vast majority of immigrants staying in Poland temporarily do not intend to remain here permanently. Only 18,6 % of migrants declared an intention to stay, 5 % had difficulties with specifying their intentions. The percentage of persons who are staying temporarily but intend to remain in Poland increases as the duration of the stay increases, almost 26 % of persons remaining in Poland at least a year declare the intent to remain here permanently.

As a result, our migration policy should be adjusted to the new economic conditions and the situation on the labour market. It should be meant to facilitate the legal formalities of obtaining a temporary or permanent stay permit as well as work permit. Moreover, using the experiences of other countries with a longer history of immigration, we should take advantage of the situation and draw qualified workers in, as shortages will soon be apparent and felt.

Conclusions

In the current situation, when there is a shortage of workers in the second sector due to the fact that a large percentage of the Polish qualified workforce has departed to find employment in more developed countries, a public debate on immigration has started. It is dominated by economic and political topics. One topic of discussion is the shortage of workers on the domestic market and the necessity to acquire them from abroad, another topic is the consequences of our obligations flowing from the Schengen treaty, which will surely strengthen the process of transforming Poland (as a “safe country”) from a transit state to a destination state. Facilitations for future workers from foreign countries are being developed. The mentality of our citizens is also shifting. Poland is becoming a more tolerant country towards foreigners. Poles are changing their attitudes towards «aliens» and other nations. We are becoming a nation of citizens who are open to foreigners coming to Poland, which is not irrelevant for the Polish labour market.

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РОЛЬ ИММИГРАНТОВ НА ПОЛЬСКОМ РЫНКЕ ТРУДА

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В девяностые годы двадцатого века во многих странах изменилась политическая, экономическая и социальная система. Ограничение передвижения и контроль при пересечении границ были отменены. Регион экономически стал очень разнообразным. Такие изменения открыли огромный миграционный по-

тенциал в центре Европы, и в Польше в частности. Миграционные движения начали играть важную роль в нашей стране. На начальном этапе в Польше преобладала эмиграция. Разница заработной платы и условий жизни между Польшей и странами назначения стали причиной, по которой многие люди покидали места своего происхождения. Еще одним фактором, который побудил наших соотечественников ехать за границу в поисках работы, было увеличение спроса на труд иностранцев в странах назначения. Таким образом, на внутреннем рынке труда возникла нехватка рабочей силы, которую нужно было восполнить. Такая ситуация вызвала необходимость открытия рынка для иммигрантов. Иммиграция в Польшу является неизбежным явлением и одновременно полезной для страны, учитывая неблагоприятные демографические тенденции.

Ключевые слова: *иммиграция, иммигранты, рынок труда, мобильность, нелегальные мигранты.*