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## RECENT TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN SLOVAKIA

*The authors of this study address the trends related to migration behaviour of young people in Slovak Republic and analyse the attractiveness of target countries for migration of young people. Unfavourable demographic development and migration of new generation will significantly affect workforce quality at the labour market in the future.*

*Keyword: generation Y; emigration; labour market; employment abroad; foreign language.*

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## СУЧАСНІ ТРЕНДИ МІЖНАРОДНОЇ МІГРАЦІЇ МОЛОДІ ЗІ СЛОВАЧЧИНИ

*У статті описано тренди міграційної поведінки молоді в Республіці Словаччина та проаналізовано привабливість окремих країн у вигляді напрямку міграції. Несприятливий демографічний розвиток та значна міграція молодого покоління матимуть суттєвий вплив на якість трудового ресурсу країни та ринок праці вже в найближчому майбутньому.*

*Ключові слова: покоління Y; еміграція; ринок праці; працевлаштування за кордоном; іноземна мова.*

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## СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ ТРЕНДЫ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЙ МИГРАЦИИ МОЛОДЁЖИ ИЗ СЛОВАКИИ

*В статье описаны тренды миграционного поведения молодёжи в Республике Словакия и проанализирована привлекательность отдельных стран в качестве направления миграции. Неблагоприятное демографическое развитие и значительная миграция молодого поколения окажут существенное влияние на качество трудового ресурса страны и рынок труда уже в ближайшем будущем.*

*Ключевые слова: поколение Y; эмиграция; рынок труда; трудоустройство за рубежом; иностранный язык.*

**Introduction and purpose of the study.** Higher levels of labour mobility (occupational mobility) in or out of a country (geographical mobility) help maintain strong employment and productivity levels as well as balanced and sustainable economic growth. Mobility can be viewed as a migration potential of regions. S. Vojtovic (2013) defines migration as a change of permanent residence beyond the border of a given territorial unit – the movement of a person or persons for the purpose of relocation. Thus, migration can be regarded as an inter-regional movement. Geographical mobility refers to the level of freedom that workers have in relocating to find employment. Several authors use mobility and migration as interchangeable concepts (Koltan and Machacek, 2001). In the present study, the concept of migration will be used. According to the neoclassical macroeconomic theory, the main causes for international and inter-regional labour migration include geographic differences in the supply of and demand for labour. However, the approaches to migration have been

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significantly changing lately. They include characteristics that are very different from those relating to the previous period of time. Migrants leave their home countries due to imbalances between supply and demand for labour, whereas host countries feature low birth rate and ageing population that cause labour shortage. There is a stratified demand for labour in host countries offering their skilled citizens ample employment opportunities; among the unemployed are those who lack special occupational skills and are replaced with migrants having the skills required (Massey, 1998). Neoclassical economics assumes that people move abroad permanently in order to maximize their lifetime earnings, while the new economics of labour migration assumes they leave temporarily to overcome market deficiencies in home countries. In the latter case, individuals do not only take into account their income, but also the benefits to their families (Constant and Massey, 2002; Stark and Bloom, 1985). There are 4 migrant categories (Koser, 2007):

1. Voluntary or forced migrants, the latter are those who have been forced to leave their own country because of conflict, persecution, or environmental reasons.

2. People who have been obliged to leave for political reasons (refugees) and those who move for economic reasons (labour migrants).

3. Migrants who leave their country legally or irregularly. The term "irregular migration" is used as an equivalent term for illegal migration. The latter is frequently used when talking of migrants under the conditions in Slovakia. In several foreign sources, however, "irregular migration" is used to avoid using "illegal migration" which is mostly associated with criminality.

4. Skilled or unskilled migrants. A particular type of highly skilled migrants are inter-corporate transferees (ICTs) – people who move internationally but within the same firm or corporation.

Rapid pace of technological progress brings about changes at the labour market, and these changes can be much more dramatic than expected. It is apparent that ongoing changes will mainly affect migration patterns of the new generation. Interactive technologies, from smartphones to websites and mobile applications, will play a significant role in changing labour market environment since their relatively low prices will make these technologies more available. In this relation, the so-called virtual migrants should also be taken into consideration as the new category of migrants. Virtual migrants are those who do not leave their home or place of residence and their products or services are sold and purchased at foreign markets. In the present study, trends in youth migration and employment will be addressed.

**Generation Y and migration.** The notion "generation Y", also known as "millennials", first appeared in August 1993 to describe the generation of children born between 1985 and 1995. Millennials are new workforce entering labour market, and many authors characterize them in a number of different ways than previous generations (Lyons and Lisa, 2014). The previous baby boomer generation born just after World War II have not lived an easy life. The post-war generation experienced food shortages and provision of food was one of their most urgent concerns. Nowadays, the post-war generation finds it difficult to keep up to date with new technology, while computers, Internet and social media are a routine part of each day for generation Y-ers. Many of the generation Y were raised in a single parent household due to high divorce rate among generation X. Millennials have a sound command of English, they

like to buy the newest technical gadgets and travel. On the one hand, there are no strong nationalistic feelings present among European generation Y for their own country as they consider themselves Europeans. On the other hand, terrorist attacks in Europe increased their feelings of loyalty for Europe, in spite of having more multicultural experience than the generations before them. They have lived with a deep level of uncertainty and unprecedented, constant changes. That is why a number of generation Y members do not make long-term plans and postpone marriage before they become financially secure. Generation Y, according to American historians N. Howe and W. Strauss (1997), is the generation of heroes. This is how the generation was labelled in their book "The Fourth Turning". The authors set out a fascinating theory: that generations have a cyclical nature, with 4 generational types. Generation Y children have grown in the third cycle labelled "unraveling" by the authors. The historians argue that during this cycle, individualism is at its highest, while confidence in public institutions is at its lowest. The millennial generation entered young adulthood during the crisis (the fourth cycle) as correctly predicted by the historians. Historians also say that millennials are very peer and team-oriented, and display arrogance and power at midlife. They are considered to be arrogant and self-centred by today's managers. However, companies that can make use of their potential and creativity will gain a competitive edge over rivals. Millennials are creative, unburdened by stereotypes of older generations, and much more comfortable with digital technology than generation X. Thus, labour migration patterns will be modified by differences in behaviour and attitudes of the millennial generation. The members of generation Y are willing to work and relocate abroad for better working environment and earning potential.

**Material and data.** Youth migration is becoming a major problem that is going to impact the labour market, quality as well as quantity of workforce. It is assumed that demographic developments in Slovak Republic, cheap labour, high tax wedge, inflexible business environment as well as education reform will result in increased levels of youth migration to other EU countries. Although the current trends affecting Slovak labour market cannot be avoided, motives of the Millennials to work abroad should be examined as they are vital to the workforce today. The generation Y workforce can add value to any type of organization with their incredible array of skills. Therefore, a survey using social media on views of young people on migration and their motives for leaving was conducted in November 2014. 4083 respondents participated in the survey containing 14 questions. Social media allowed students in the second year of Bachelor's program to quickly find respondents and collect responses. In this study, the selected results of the survey are dealt with and analysed. The majority of respondents have secondary education, followed by Bachelor's degree holders and Master's degree holders (Figure 1).

The next research question was whether they intend to leave Slovakia and seek employment abroad. The answers show that women with a doctorate degree and men with secondary education mostly intend to find employment abroad (Figures 2 and 3).

The respondents were also asked to rate salary levels across the EU countries. The answers demonstrate that respondents think that the highest salary levels in the European Union are in Germany (Figure 4).

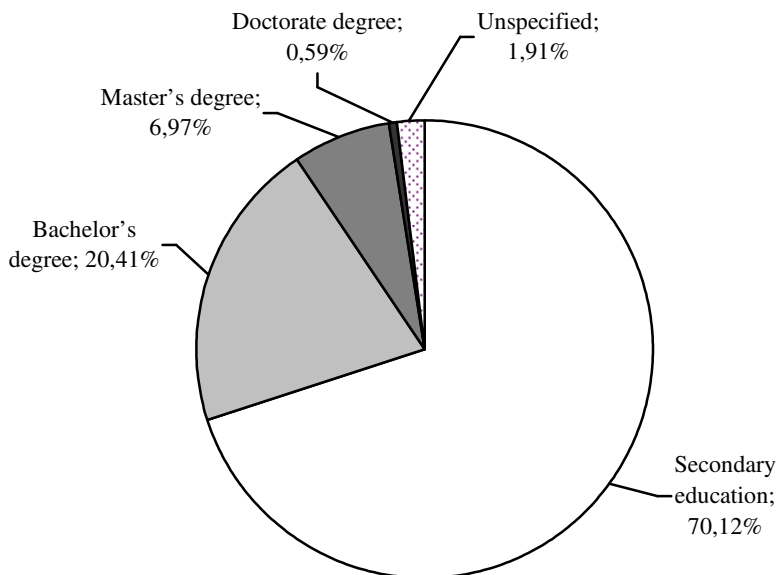


Figure 1. Respondent's education, authors'

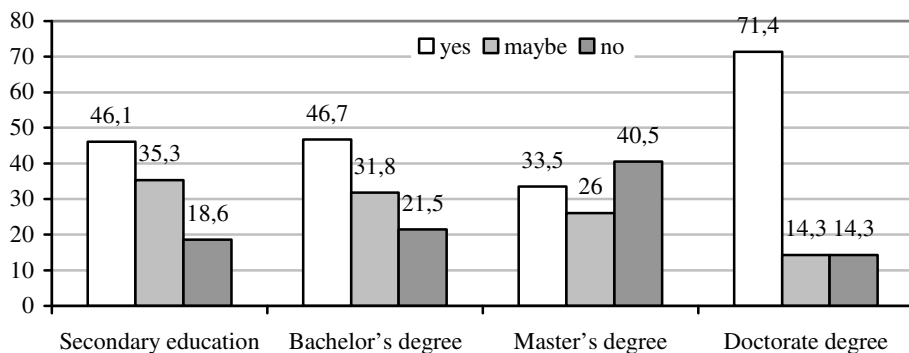


Figure 2. Percent of women planning to leave Slovakia and seek employment abroad by education groups, authors'

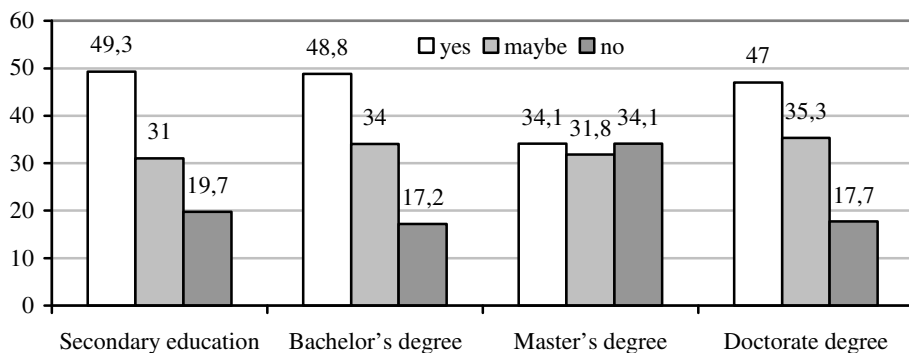


Figure 3. Percent of men planning to leave Slovakia and seek employment abroad by education groups, authors'

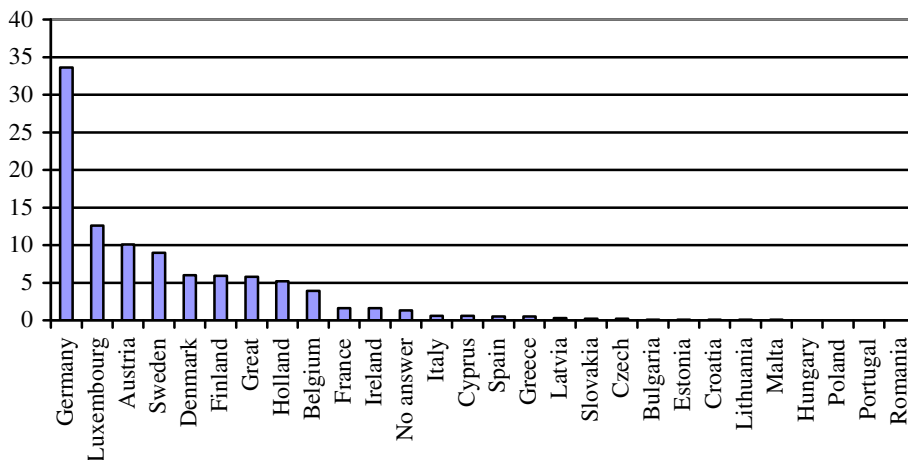


Figure 4. Opinions of the respondents on salary levels in the EU by countries, authors'

We believe that the respondents are aware of German economic conditions and many of them have experience to know how the remuneration system works in Germany. For instance, a cleaning lady or a dishwasher is each paid approximately 1,200 EUR a month in Germany – the salary being paid to university-educated workers in Slovak Republic. It is also supposed that the respondents are aware of German minimum wage which is 8.50 EUR per hour. It can therefore be expected that one can earn approximately 340 EUR for a 40-hour week. In addition, Germany’s unemployment rate has been low and stable for the past 8 years standing at 4.7%. The respondents answered that wages are substantially lower in the following EU countries: Romania, Portugal, Poland and Hungary. Only two respondents consider them to be the four high-income EU countries. It is likely that Portugal is not a destination country of labour migration for its high cost of living, low wages for foreign workers, and a preference for domestic workers. Romania, Poland and Hungary have low minimum wage, weak economy and high unemployment rates. Even though the rate of unemployment stands at 6.5% in Romania, the monthly minimum wage is 217.50 EUR which is a very low remuneration for an average European.

Germany, Great Britain and Austria were selected as the main destination countries regarding the labour market (Figure 5). Germany is selected by 892 respondents (22.09%) out of total 4,038 – 410 men (45.964%) and 482 women (54.036%). Germany is followed by Great Britain – selected by 731 (18.10%) respondents out of 4,038. Great Britain is among preferred destinations for 487 (66.621%) female respondents and 244 (33.379%) male respondents out of total 731. Austria is the third preferred country of destination for 641 respondents (15.87%) out of total 4,038. Similarly as with Great Britain, Austria is more preferred by women (429, i.e. 66.927%) than by men (212, i.e. 33.073%). Latvia, Hungary and Poland are less lucrative countries for respondents. Out of the 3 countries, Latvia is the least lucrative for respondents, preferred only by 2 respondents out of total 4,038 (0.0495%). Hungary is selected as the destination country by 3 respondents (0.0743%) – two women and one man. Finally, Poland is preferred by 4 respondents (0.0991%).

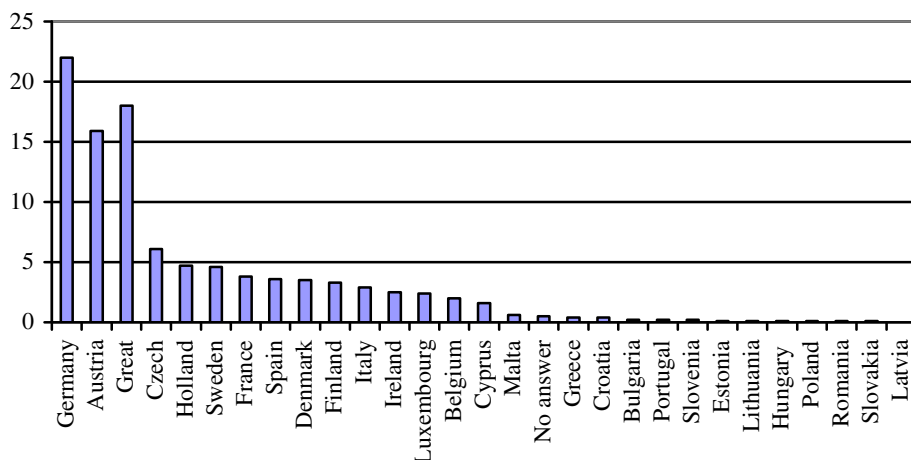


Figure 5. Preferred countries for migration, authors'

Sound language skills are necessary to find and maintain employment abroad. Regarding the command of foreign languages, 2,582 respondents master one foreign language. 1,224 respondents state they can speak two languages other than their mother tongue. 205 respondents can speak 3 languages and 43 respondents have mastered 3 or 4 foreign languages. 29 respondents did not answer this question (Figure 6).

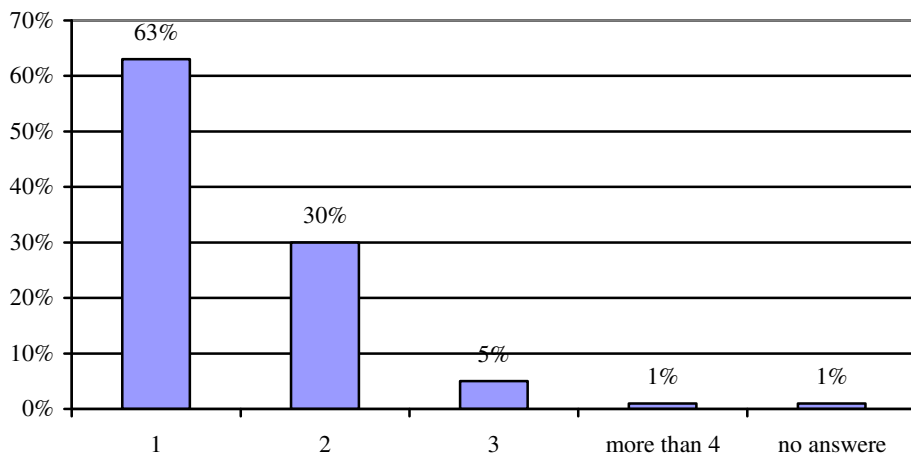


Figure 6. Foreign languages spoken by the respondents, authors'

Figure 7 shows the number of young people who moved away from Slovakia over the period 2004–2013 with an intention to change their place of residence. Figure 7 illustrates the number of all Slovak citizens emigrating as well as the proportion of men and women. It can be seen that far more men than women emigrated during this period. The highest proportion of citizens emigrated from Slovakia in 2013, and the absolute number of citizens who emigrated from Slovakia was also the highest in 2013.

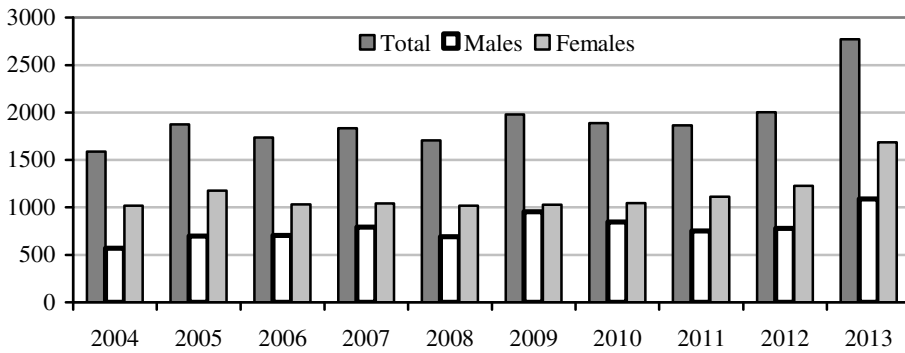


Figure 7. Emigrants from Slovak Republic by gender, authors'

**Conclusion.** International migration has become one of the global issues for the 21st century, especially in the European Union. Nowadays, there are more people on the move than ever before due to war conflicts, natural disasters and difference in the standard of living across countries. Despite the fact that today's theory on migration is more comprehensive than before and empirical studies provide broader insight into migration, economic motives remain the primary determinant for migration. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2014) states that 90% of international migration is related to seeking employment. Gaining employment abroad is in this specific period seen as a phenomenon beneficial for both sending and receiving country (Daugeliene, 2007). Also, migration as such is perceived as a proof that free movement of workers broadens the possibilities at European labour market (Habanik and Koiso, 2012; Dagiliene et al., 2014; Haviernikova and Srovnalikova, 2014). Slovak Republic has been experiencing changed migratory behaviour since the accession to the European Union in 2004 (Ivanova et al., 2015). Slovak population is ageing due to low birth rate and high levels of emigration among young people. Young people are leaving Slovakia in search for better opportunities, be it better employment prospects or high quality education. In the recent years there has been an increasing number of young people leaving, and this is likely to continue. The largest group leaving Slovakia are those with a university degree up to 35 years. On average, every third university degree holder leaves Slovakia to work abroad. Many of them work in low-level positions, just because they are better paid there than they would be in a qualified position that corresponds to their education in Slovakia. No confirmed data exist as to the number of the Slovaks abroad. Based on the data provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) of 2013, there were approximately 300,000 Slovaks working abroad. The largest proportion of Slovak workers settled in Czech Republic, followed by Great Britain, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Ireland and Italy. That is why, the issue of migration should be paid special attention and appropriate measures should be taken in order to avoid its negative consequences in the future. Adverse demography and migration will significantly alter the composition of workforce, job opportunities, population structure, traditional cultural values and many other areas having an impact on the economy overall. The higher rate of migration may not be a cause for concern as they are effective tools to regulate migration flows, both encouraging the indigenous population to remain in their country and also re-

gulating the replacement of workforce at the domestic market. As we pointed out earlier, the largest outflow in terms of education is people who have completed the third level of education. It means that the home country cannot adequately apply their education by creating matching jobs with proper value. Conversely, destination countries are very happy to receive educated workforce even though employed in lower job positions.

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