

Trends in Cross-border Workforce Migration and the Free Movement of People – Effects for Bulgaria

2011

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R e p o r t

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Executive Summary

On Bulgarian migration problems at a time of crisis: things to know and things to do

- Money transfers from Bulgarian emigrants during the crisis exceed the amount of absorbed EU funds; in the conditions of decline in foreign investment, these resources contribute significantly to financial stability in Bulgaria, as well as to household security.
- Emigration from Bulgaria is high but tends to decline, while immigration to the country is still low but tends to increase steadily with a potential to transform Bulgaria, in the midterm, from a country of origin and transit into a final destination: this tendency will be promptly felt the moment when EU and Bulgaria's economy begin to grow.
- No clear tendency has been registered for the return of Bulgarian emigrants despite harsher economic conditions; it seems that they have more long-term plans in their recipient countries and are on the whole better integrated and more confident in the societies that have welcomed them, compared to a few years ago.
- Bulgaria's policies towards emigrants and immigrants must be adapted to current realities: the futile efforts and approaches so far to bring Bulgarian emigrants back and encourage the entry of qualified immigrants must be discontinued; instead, a coherent migration management policy should be adopted, based on a long-term vision and implemented by a capable and motivated administration.
- The conclusions drawn refer mainly to the current "crisis context" in Bulgaria, but since many other EU countries have now entered in a "post-crisis" period, the report also outlines tendencies and provides recommendations for Bulgaria's "post-crisis" development, which would have a different dynamic and would follow a different logic.

Migration has multiple aspects and the present report of OSI-Sofia places the center of attention on macroeconomic, political and social factors and context, along with the individual destinies and livelihood projects of Bulgarian emigrants abroad and immigrants in this country. The report seeks to bridge the different levels of discourse in order to accumulate information,

conduct analysis and draft targeted recommendations for those problem areas in the context of crisis.

A hard day's night: the dynamics of Bulgarian migrants' remittances

Currently, the amount of money sent by Bulgarian emigrants is comparable or even greater than the sum of absorbed EU funds. This is a key conclusion of the report on migration and for an outside reader this could be an indicator that individual Bulgarian citizens are much better integrated into the European Union than the state as a whole. For Bulgarians, emigration emerges as an important and often indispensable life-saving device in the time of crisis.

The total amount of financial transfers from expatriate Bulgarians to Bulgaria amounted to approximately 1.2 billion Euro in 2009. No significant decline has been registered as a result of the crisis, with decrease ranging around 15%. In this amount, transfers from Bulgarians living permanently abroad remain stable at 600–700 million Euro per year, while compensations of temporarily employed Bulgarians abroad reached 600 million Euro in 2008, reducing to 400 million Euro at the peak of the crisis in 2009. This could either mean that the crisis limits temporary employment abroad or that because of the crisis the salaries of temporarily employed persons decline.

The money sent by emigrants to their families is spent on food, bills, healthcare services, education, etc., thus mitigating deficits at the macro level of social support, public health and education systems, ultimately contributing significantly to Bulgarian economy as a whole.

The report, however, warns that any attempts to tax this money in order to reduce public budget deficit would be counterproductive and futile, since transfers would simply revert to illegal channels.

Transfers from emigrants are a powerful compensatory mechanism for declining direct foreign investment in the context of economic recession, but they are not a remedy that could substitute reforms, fiscal discipline and vigorous growth. Pre-crisis statistics clearly suggest a tendency towards decreased importance of these transfers for the economy, and it is highly likely that after the end of the crisis, such tendencies will re-emerge.

Making oneself at home: migration trends and factors

The emigration of Bulgarian citizens creates a vacuum, which must be filled one way or another. The first mechanism is the natural process of immigration of EU citizens (who are not treated as aliens under Bulgarian legislation) or of third-country nationals, or the return of Bulgarian emigrants. The second mechanism in fact involves taking control, adopting a proactive

position in order to create incentives through different policies and attract desired immigrants, while managing the process of illegal, i.e. undesired immigration.

The ratio between emigration and immigration for Bulgaria is currently as follows: emigration is far greater but with a clear tendency to decline, while immigration to the country is less significant in numbers but exhibits a stable upward trend.

There is no doubt that emigration would continue not least because of the significant difference in labor compensation: salaries in the industry and the service sector in old Member States are 14 times higher than those in Bulgaria. Expectations that crisis would bring emigrants back to the country did not justify. Even those who were affected by the crisis for the most part remain in the recipient countries because they do not expect to find better opportunities in Bulgaria.

Money however is not the only incentive for emigration. Social surveys, which provide an opportunity to get a glimpse behind the macro situation, suggest that emigrants are afraid of poverty and unemployment given the poorly functioning social protection nets in Bulgaria. Lack of security and public order, sheer survival, the need to collect money for medical treatment of a relative, expectations for better life prospects abroad are also among the reasons for emigration.

The study places special attention on the tendency towards increase in the number of Bulgarian students abroad. This tendency is clearly outlined in Eurostat data for the period 1998-2007. In the span of nine years the number of Bulgarian students, studying in the EU, has increased significantly – from 1.9% of the total number of Bulgarian students in 1998 to 8.3% in 2007. given that this is the year of Bulgaria's accession to the EU, one could presume that from this point on the percentage of Bulgarian students in the EU would increase further because of the more favorable conditions. No national policy exists to address this issue.

An offer one cannot refuse

Economy and demographic trends provide serious arguments for attracting immigrants to Bulgaria. In fact this is a major problem for the entire European Union, which wants to compete for the most highly qualified and capable immigrants in the world and needs to have the human resource potential to sustain its economy. Data for Bulgaria suggest that foreign immigrants in Bulgaria are hardworking and generally their level of employment is higher.

The report in fact captures the initial phase of Bulgaria's transformation from a country of migration origin and transit into a destination country. These are midterm expectations but when it comes to planning policies and

their implementation, the right time to begin is now. There is no doubt that if authorities are not timely and adequately prepared, they would find it very difficult to manage the immigrant wave to the country. The proposed solution is to adopt a consistent and meaningful national policy and to invest into a capable administration.

And again, the reasons for immigration are more than pragmatic and economic. Bulgarian emigrants in the United Kingdom can actually offer free advice to Bulgarian authorities and society: they claim that they like living there better because of the intercultural society, cultural diversity and tolerance as a result of immigration. This raises the question whether Bulgarian society is ready to accept differences that come with foreign citizens.

In reconstruction

With regard to migration policies, Bulgaria possesses a basic set of strategic documents and institutions. It seems however that there is a certain discrepancy between declared government policies and migration policy realities in practice. Hence, the present report provides a number of suggestions and direct recommendations to decision-makers. The existing policy to bring Bulgarian emigrants back is in the best case fragmentary, while in the worst, it is a loss of time and resources as emigrants have different reasons to leave the country that cannot be encompassed by existing approaches. The four freedoms at the foundations of the EU – the freedom of goods, capital, services, and people – make it logical to conclude that the best option to attract emigrants back is to improve conditions in Bulgaria. This would create natural incentives for making a free choice.

The intention to balance negative demographic and migration tendencies by attracting people of Bulgarian origin from neighboring countries (Macedonia, Moldova, Ukraine and others) is also rather unconvincing. Citizenship automatically provides access to the labor market and if the qualification and education of the immigrants do not correspond to labor market needs, the facilitated access to citizenship would only increase the pressure on the social support system in Bulgaria.

Attempts to manage migration in order to attract qualified immigrants from third countries have a controversial history. Shortly after Bulgaria decided to take advantage of the new circular migration policy of the EU, negotiations for concluding bilateral agreements were discontinued for opportunist reasons and are yet to be reinitiated. In the meantime, crisis in the EU is gradually subsiding, which is soon expected to happen in Bulgaria as well, the pre-crisis situation of lack of qualified staff for Bulgarian industry and service sector will again come up in the agenda.

As far as high-qualified workforce is concerned, it is rather inappropriate for Bulgaria to rely solely on the “blue card” system planned for the EU because this would put the country in competition with more wealthy old Member States and the outcome would be predetermined. In fact, observations in this area, as well as with respect to the integration of third-country nationals, suggest that the national administration is passively following the general recommendations of the EU, rather than following a well thought-out and structured strategy, based on a rationalized national interest.

Three words: education, healthcare, security

The report makes suggestions on addressing problems of emigration and immigration that affect Bulgaria. If Bulgaria desires to bring back its emigrants and invite highly qualified immigrants, then the country must become attractive to them. Several key things need to be done: continue reforms in order to increase the wealth and disposable income of citizens; complete reforms in education and healthcare, and guarantee security. These are the factors that determine people’s choices. In this sense, it is not a good idea to impose restrictive measures on either emigration or immigration, as those who want to migrate, will find a way to overcome restrictions.

The best action plan is to create a system of incentives, a regulatory framework, procedures and institutions that predict and manage the processes of emigration (including the desired return of emigrants) and immigration, so that qualified immigrants are attracted and the challenges to the integration of immigrants are adequately met.

Foreword

Background

Between 2003 and 2005, the Law Program of the Open Society Institute – Sofia undertook a number of initiatives designed to broaden and inform the nascent debate in the country on the priorities of the Bulgarian national migration policy.

The Institute assigned two large-scale studies on the macroeconomic effects and the legal framework of migration: a team of the Market Economy Institute under the leadership of Dr. Krasen Stanchev produce the report “Bulgarian Migration: Incentives and Constellations” (in English) (OSI, 2005), which included an analytical tool for migration policy evaluation, while the legal team of the Refugees and Migrants Association at the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee conducted a “Comparative Analysis of Active Legislation Regulating the Legal Status of Immigrants”.¹

The results of these studies were presented in the framework of three international conferences, hosted by the Institute in 2003, 2004 and 2005. These were among the first forums on national and European migration policy in Bulgaria, at which researchers, representatives of government institutions and civil society organization could exchange information and opinions. The conferences were co-organized with the kind assistance and expertise of the ICMPD (International Centre for Migration Policy Development, Vienna).

The involvement of the Open Society Institute – Sofia in an initiative related to migration policy, was motivated by three factors:

- The first factor has to do with the values and the mission of Institute. Upholding fundamental human rights is an important part of this mission, while the right to free movement has an essential place in the set of fundamental rights. The Institute stands for this right not only as an expression of personal freedom, but also as one of the few feasible strategies people possess in certain historical circumstances in order to ensure their personal development and survival.

¹ Both studies are available on the website of the Open Society Institute – Sofia, www.osi.bg, in the section Law Program / Publications.

- The second factor relates to the way public policies are formulated. National policy on migration, like any other public policy, could be effective only if decisions are based on reliable information, serious expert analysis of the problems at hand, as well as open public debate, in which the advantages and deficiencies of the possible political decisions are thoroughly discussed. The Institute sees its role in publicizing research studies that provide an alternative approach to understanding topical social problems and encouraging public involvement in the process of formulating the national migration policy priorities.

- The third factor has to do with the growing awareness of the need to regulate migration flows at the EU level, as well as with the slow but steady shift towards the formulation of a common European migration policy. The Institute sees its role in improving the capacity of the Bulgarian administration and civil society organizations to participate in debates at the EU level and to influence the elaboration of European policies.

In 2005, the Institute issued six recommendations on the grounds, on which the Bulgarian national migration policy should be built:

- There are serious discrepancies among the difference sources of information on migration flows to and from the country. In 2004, for instance, the total number of Bulgarian citizens living abroad was 36,000 according to the Unified Citizen Registration and Administrative Services System (ESGRAON); according to expert evaluations however, the actual number of Bulgarian emigrants for the period 1989-2004 was approximately 700,000. Systematic collection of reliable information and targeted research on migration are a prerequisite for developing an efficient national migration policy.

- The incentives for emigration arise mainly from the significant differences in workforce productivity and compensation rate between Bulgaria and the countries that traditionally accept Bulgarian immigrants. Emigration could be cut back through a general welfare reform policy aimed at increasing the disposable income of citizens. No special policies to limit emigration are necessary.

- In the short-term, no significant back migration should be expected even if special incentives are created for Bulgarians to return to their country. If reforms are accelerated and welfare improves, incentives for migration would gradually reduce but this would produce an impact on the movement of people only after a period of 5 to 10 years.

- Significant money transfers from Bulgarian emigrants enter the country, amounting in the peak periods to more than 50% of foreign investment. This has an undoubted impact on households, especially when it comes to people with low and mid income (who are the ones that usually emigrate). The transfers-to-GDP ratio is still "healthy": 1.5 to 3.5% of the GDP since 1998, unlike elsewhere, where it is much higher (above 10% for Romania). On a more

general scale, however, these cash flows could create some “false comfort” of sorts for the government, inasmuch as they solve immediate challenges that households face, thus reducing public pressure for quick reforms in the pension and social security system.

- In certain years, money transfers from emigrants to Bulgaria have reached 80% of government spending on education and healthcare. Thus, on a macroeconomic scale emigrants not only do not constitute a net loss for Bulgaria, but actually contribute much more than the state has invested in them. Therefore, emigration should not be perceived as a risk but rather as an investment. At the same time the national migration policy should take into account the huge risks sustained by individual households as a result of families being separated and children being raised in absence of one or both parents.

- Immigration has a positive impact on recipient countries: in the United Kingdom, a 1% migration-induced increase in population adds 1.25-1.5% to the GDP. Immigrants contribute to economic growth, sustain and improve the mobility of capital, bring in fresh ideas and skills, and strengthen competition. Therefore, immigration into Bulgaria should not be seen as a risk.

Tasks of the present research paper

The present research paper builds upon the study “Bulgarian Migration: Incentives and Constellations” (OSI, 2005) commissioned by OSI–Sofia and conducted by a team of the Market Economy Institute.

Its primary task is to establish whether the conclusions about migration trends and their macroeconomic impact remain accurate and to confirm the validity of issued recommendations on the principles of the national migration policy. Its second but equally important task is to outline the consequences of the global financial and economic crisis on migration flows from and to Bulgaria. At the onset of the crisis, articles in the press heralded a mass return of emigrants to their native towns, thus generating fears of further poverty and social tension. The research paper seeks to outline a more accurate and truthful picture of the effects of the crisis.

In order to complete these tasks, the research paper seeks to outline migration flows, using the same broad set of indicators as in 2005. The movement of money transfers from and to Bulgaria has been tracked primarily based on data of the Bulgarian National Bank, although other statistics have also been used such as data of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP) on work permits issued to aliens; data of the National Statistical Institute (NSI) on foreign nationals residing permanently in Bulgaria; data of the Ministry of

Interior (Mol) on foreigners with a temporary residence in the country; data of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (MEYS) on foreign students in Bulgaria, and others.

The research paper extends the structure of the 2005 study in two ways:

- it includes a separate section on immigration to Bulgaria as this phenomenon has now become more visible to the public and several studies have been conducted, which were summarized in the present paper;
- it includes a separate section with comments on the development of Bulgaria's national migration policy, which five years ago would have served no purpose.

In 2005 the research team led by Dr. Krasen Stanchev elaborated a special analytical tool (a set of interrelated indicators) to evaluate the effects of national migration policy. The present paper constitutes a first attempt to apply this tool into practice. It is important to note, however, that for the time being this can be done only partially and rather superficially because of the huge gaps and contradictions in existing data on the movement of people, which are currently being collected by various official bodies.

Research methods

The present paper consists of several independent sections, which bring together methods used by different sciences: macroeconomic analysis to outline the effects of the global financial crisis; political science analysis to express migration policy principles at the national and European level; tools employed in social sciences, psychology and anthropology to describe migration trends to and from Bulgaria, as well as the distinctive mindset of migrants. The conclusions and recommendations provided at the end of the document are necessarily a compilation of the findings established with the tools of different sciences.

The present paper is targeted to a broad, not necessarily professional audience, which comprises people who by virtue of their official capacity or role in governance, are expected to make political decisions and therefore, need to have a more comprehensive outlook on the processes as a whole.

The research focuses on cross-border labor migration (as distinguished from internal labor migration) and does not touch upon certain processes, such as provision of asylum or trafficking in and smuggling of human beings. These require a separate approach and an analysis of "benefits" and "harms", rather than revealing the real nature of these phenomena, would rather make the picture more obscure.

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- to Dr. Krasen Stanchev and his team for their original ideas and exceptional work on the analytical policy evaluation tool back in 2005,
- to those officials of the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Bulgaria to the European Union, the National Statistical Institute, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy who responded kindly and knowledgeably to our requests for access to public information and agreed to be interviewed for the purposes of the research,
- to Associate Prof. Anna Krasteva, Director of the Centre for Refugees, Migration and Ethnic Studies at the New Bulgarian University, who reviewed the present research paper and provided valuable comments and recommendations,
- to our colleague Marin Lessenski who offered an original and fresh outlook on the structure of the text and prepared its executive summary.

Georgi Angelov

Macroeconomic Context of the Analysis: the World, Europe and Bulgaria at a Time of Crisis

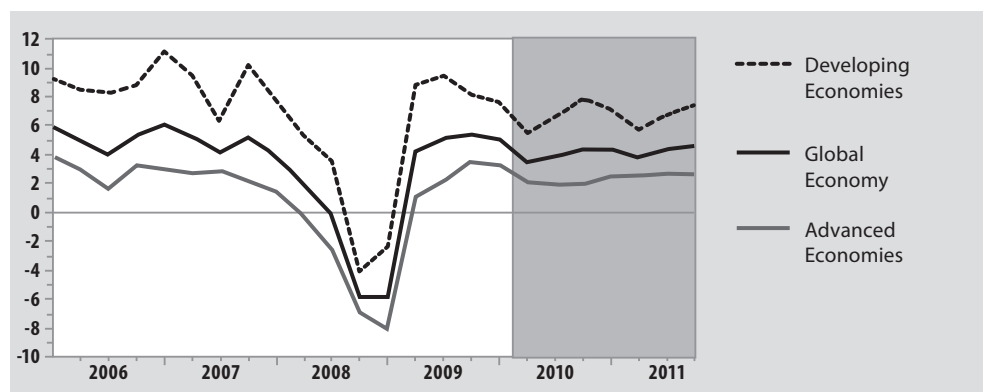
1.1. Global Trends

Since the summer of 2007 when the sub-prime mortgage crisis broke out in the United States, the global economy began to slow down. By mid 2008 developing countries entered into recession, followed a little later by the global economy. In the last quarter of 2008 and the first quarter of 2009, the global economy declined by approximately 6%, with the drop being particularly steep in developed countries, which reached a quarterly decline of 8%. The crisis spread in the entire world mainly through international trade and capital flows that decreased sharply (fig. 1.1, 1.3).

Developing countries (especially China, India and Brazil) were the last to be hit by the crisis and the first to get out of it. Moreover, they got out with a high economic growth rate similar to the pre-recession levels. Albeit with a certain delay, developed countries also got out of recession in the second half of 2009 but their growth rate was far more modest and their recovery much slower.

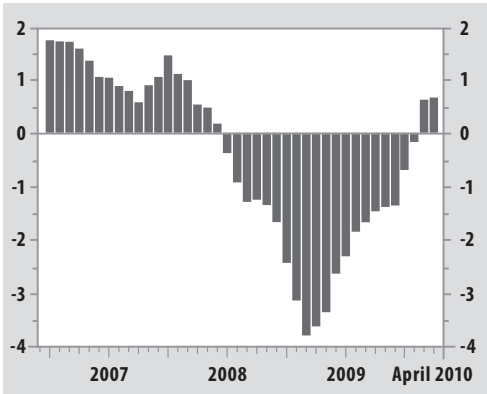
Employment in the developed countries followed the same pattern, although it lagged behind the economy. For most of 2008 and throughout 2009 employment marked a decline on a three-month moving average. The first

Fig. 1.1. Global economic growth, %



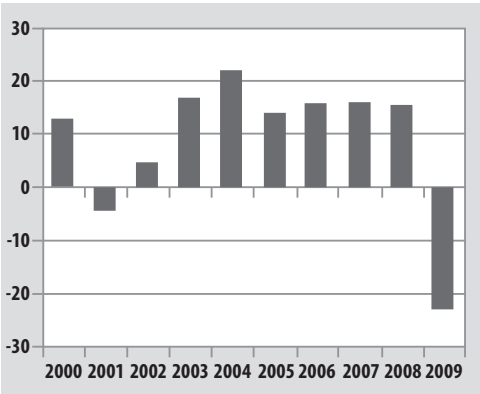
Source: IMF staff estimates

Fig. 1.2. Employment growth in advanced economies, %



Source: IMF, *World Economic Outlook Update*, July 7, 2010

Fig. 1.3. International trade, year-on-year change, %

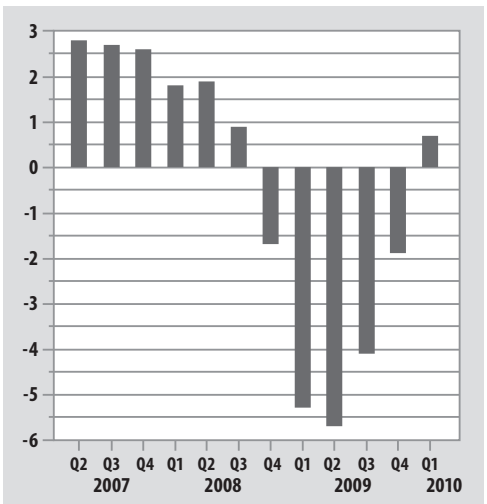


Source: World Trade Organization

signs of recovery in employment in fact became visible only in the last few months but rates still remain much lower than the pre-crisis levels (fig. 1.2).

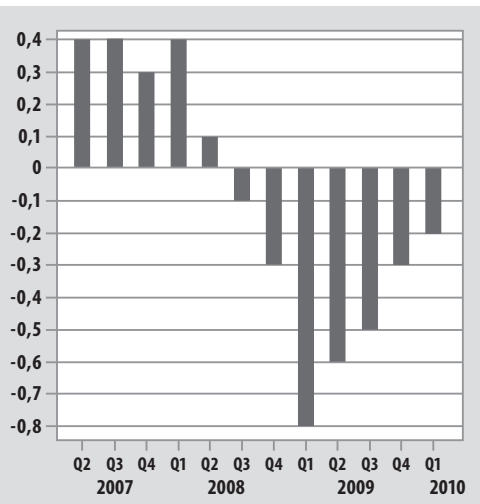
Dynamics in the European Union do not differ significantly from those in developed countries – relatively heavy and long recession coupled by a significant loss of jobs. For seven quarters now employment in the European Union has been declining on a quarterly basis, although the rate of decline has decreased considerably in the last quarters. Unemployment rose sharply – from less than 7% in the beginning of 2008 to almost 10% in the beginning of 2010. (fig. 1.4, 1.5, 1.6).

Fig. 1.4. GDP in the EU, year-on-year change, %



Source: Eurostat

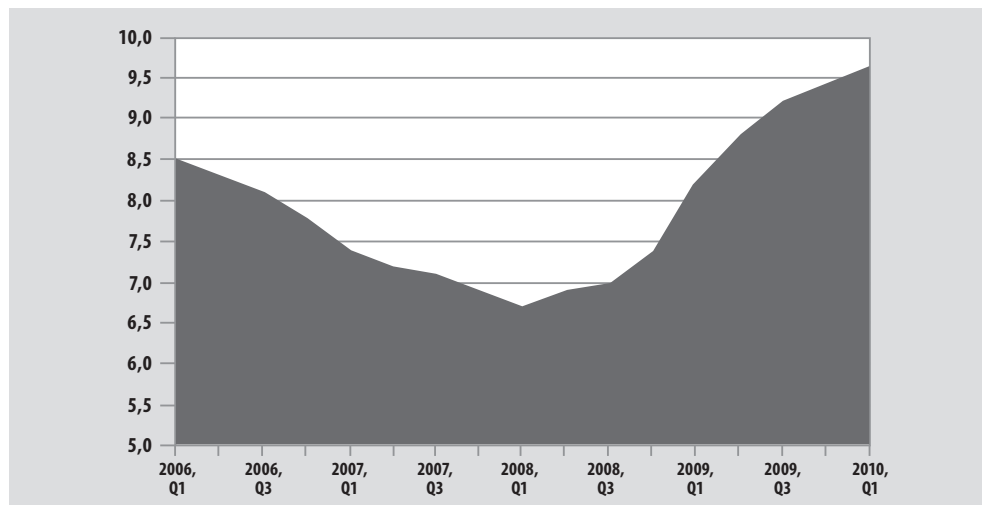
Fig. 1.5. Employment in the EU, quarter-on-quarter change, %



Source: Eurostat

Note: Q – quarter on an year-on-year basis (throughout the publication)

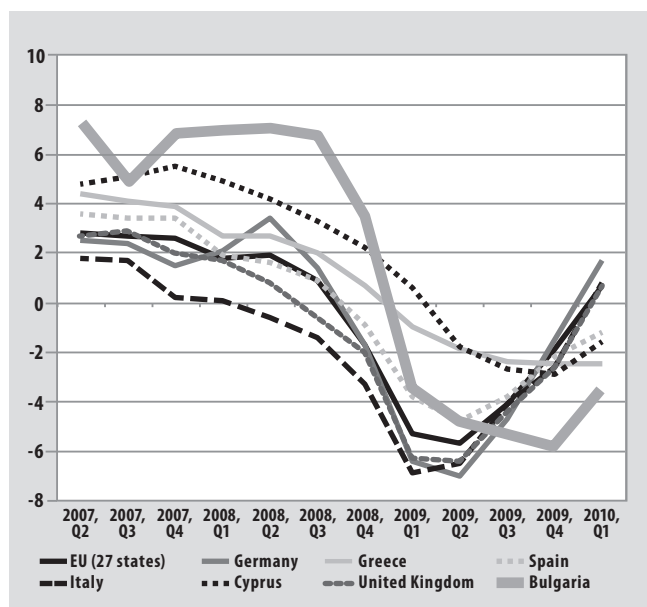
Fig. 1.6. Unemployment in the EU, %



Source: Eurostat

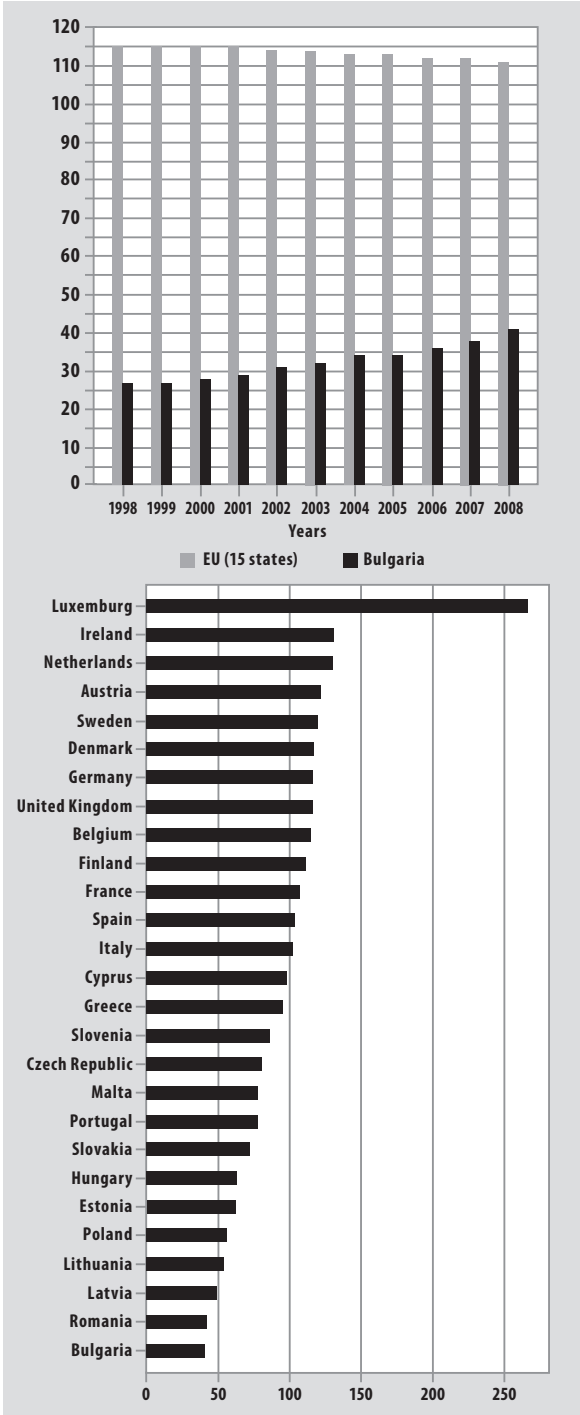
All main recipient countries for Bulgarian migrants, with no exception, have been affected by the crisis (as has Bulgaria itself). Recession began in 2008, hitting the bottom in 2009 (with a decline in GDP of approximately 5–6% on an year-on-year basis) and gradually heading towards recovery after that. Expectations for 2010 suggest a small positive economic growth. The only exception is Greece, where recession was less pronounced in the beginning but there have been no signs of recovery since the start of 2010 and most probably the country will remain in recession throughout 2010 and maybe for the most of 2011. (fig. 1.7).

Fig. 1.7. GDP, annual change in selected countries, %



Source: Eurostat

Fig. 1.8. GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Parity (EU-27 = 100)



Source: Eurostat

1.2. A Macro-economic Outlook for Bulgaria: Comparison and Conclusions

Bulgaria is the poorest country in the European Union, ranking 27th out of 27 Member States in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). Bulgaria's GDP per capita in PPP is 41 with an average for EU-27 of 100 and an average for the Eurozone of almost 110. The large difference in income between Bulgaria and old Member States is a powerful engine for the movement of migrants – from Bulgaria to more well-to-do countries.

On the other hand however, Bulgaria does not remain static. Over the last decade there has been significant improvement in GDP per capita in PPP. In 1998 Bulgaria was at a mere 23% of the EU-12 average, while in 2008 it reached 37%. This is an almost two-thirds improvement for a decade. This dynamic towards improvement gradually reduces incentives for emigration from Bulgaria (fig. 1.8).

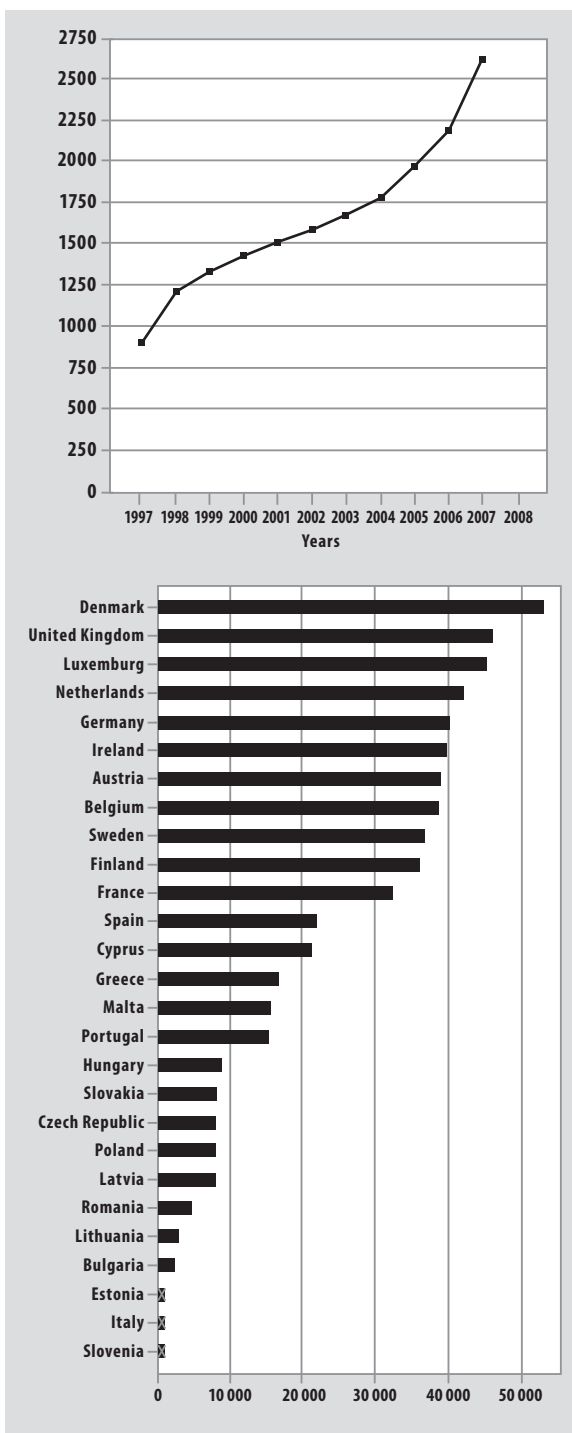
Salaries in Bulgaria are also the lowest in the EU, with a huge difference to old

Member States. According to Eurostat, salaries in the industry and the service sector in Bulgaria are 14 times lower than those in old Member States. Of course, there has been great improvement in this area as well since the end of the 1990s. In 1997 salaries in Bulgaria were 32 times lower than those in Western Europe (fig. 1.9).

In the pre-crisis decade, employment and unemployment in Bulgaria also changed noticeably. In 2000 employment in the country was below 50%, while just before the recession it reached 65%. Quite predictably, unemployment followed just the opposite pattern. From more than 20% in 2001–2002, it fell to the record low rates of almost 5% just before the onset of the global crisis in 2008. This positive development gradually reduced incentives for migration, although the situation deteriorated again as a result of the crisis (fig. 1.10).

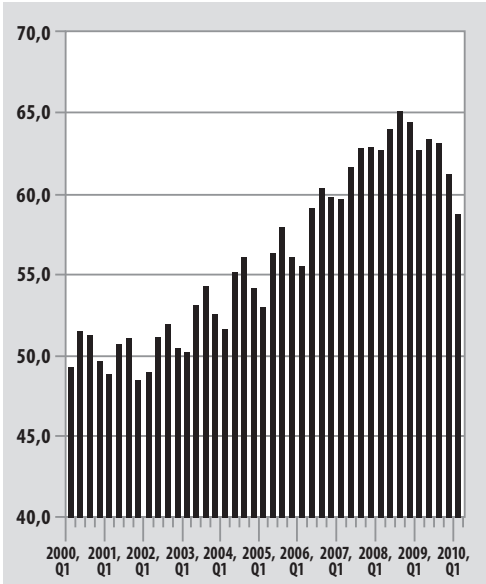
In the 1990s the inflow of capital is minimal but begins to increase in the end of the decade, peaking in 2007 when Bulgaria became a member of the EU and reduced profit tax to 10%. Since the beginning of the crisis however there has been a sharp decrease in the flow of capital to the country (fig. 1.11).

Fig. 1.9. Annual salary in Euro



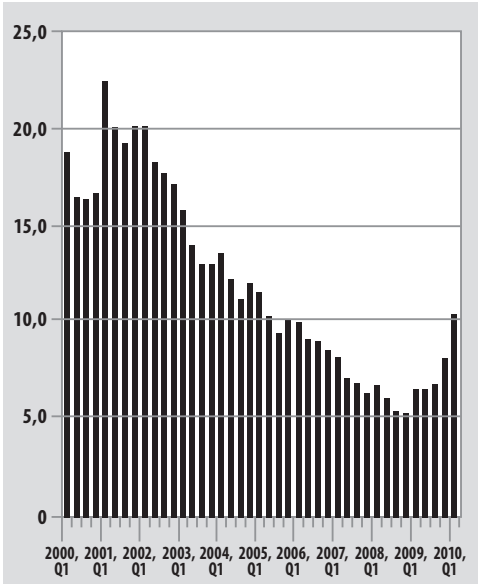
Source: Eurostat

Fig. 1.10a. Employment rate in Bulgaria, %



Source: Eurostat

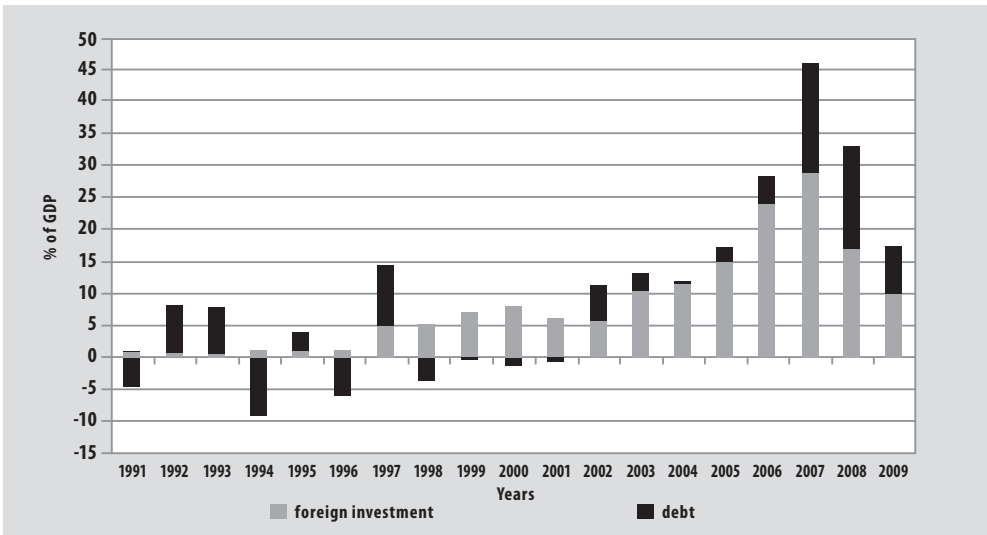
Fig. 1.10b. Unemployment rate in Bulgaria, %



Source: Eurostat

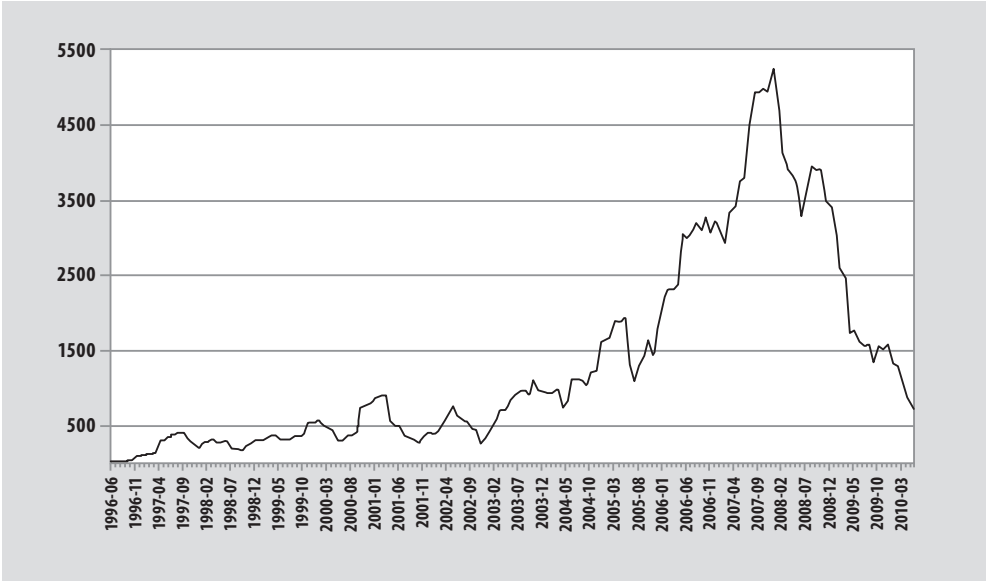
The impact of the crisis became noticeable in Bulgaria at the end of 2008. Financial markets (increase of risk premiums and interest rates), capital flow and export were the first to feel the consequences. Along these channels the crisis struck Bulgaria with a slight delay compared to the EU (fig. 1.12, 1.13).

Fig. 1.11. Flow of capital to Bulgaria



Source: Bulgarian National Bank

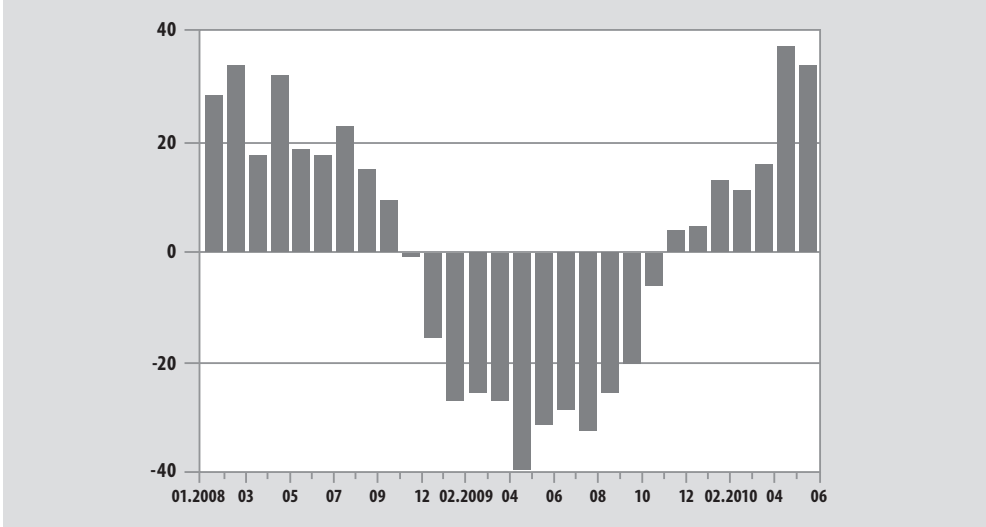
Fig. 1.12. Foreign investment in Bulgaria, million Euro for six months



Source: Bulgarian National Bank

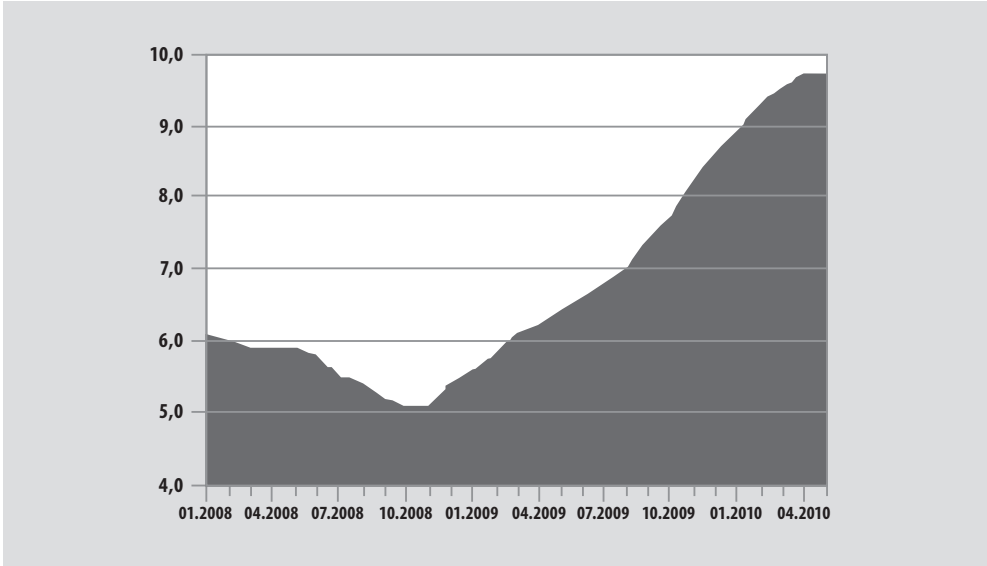
Decline in GDP in Bulgaria was comparable to that in the EU but it hit bottom with a delay of nearly two quarters. And while the EU achieved a minimal positive growth on an year-on-year basis in the first quarter of 2010, Bulgaria is still in decline. As a result of the recession unemployment in the country doubled: from approximately 5% in the fall of 2008, it reached nearly 10%

Fig. 1.13. Export, year-on-year change, %



Source: Bulgarian National Bank

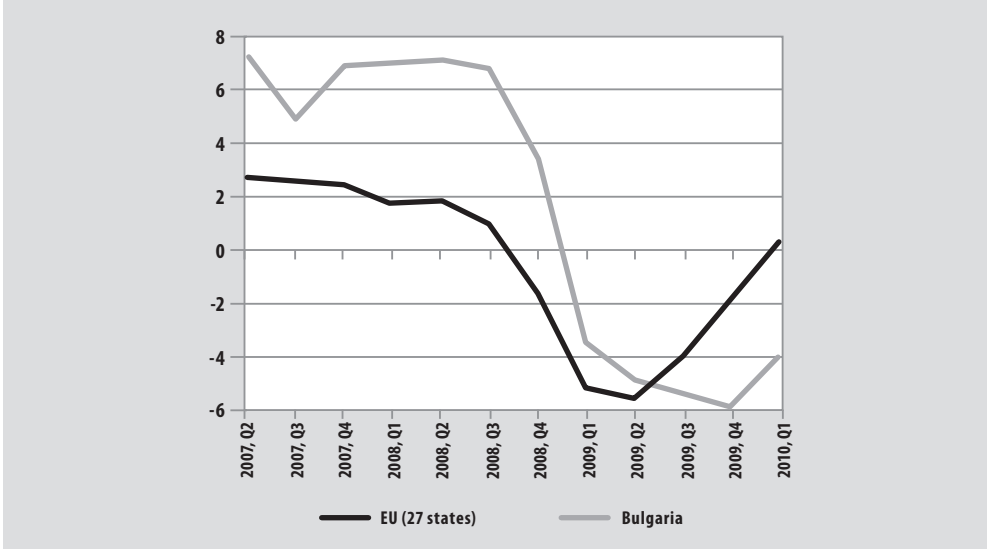
Fig. 1.14. Unemployment in Bulgaria, %, monthly



Source: Eurostat

in the beginning of 2010. As a rule this development should have increased incentives for emigration, but on the other hand, since recession exists both in Bulgaria and in the EU and advanced economies, opportunities for better employment abroad are not that promising (fig. 1.14, 1.15).

Fig. 1.15. GDP, year-on-year change, EU and Bulgaria



Source: Eurostat

Current Trends in Cross-border Workforce Migration

Georgi Angelov, Zvezda Vankova

2.1. Definition of the Phenomenon and Current Trends on a Global Scale

2.1.1. Definition

Quite often statistical data on migration trends differ radically depending on the source. Until 2007 there has been no unified definition as to who would be considered an immigrant. The United Nations define immigrants as persons residing outside their country of birth or citizenship, for a period 12 months or more. In the European Union definitions vary depending on the legislation of the different Member States. A 2006 Poulain study, for instance, suggests that for countries such as Cyprus, the United Kingdom and Austria the time criterion for the duration of stay abroad is one year, for Denmark it is from 3 to 6 months, for Slovenia – 3 months, while for Spain, Germany and Ireland there are no specific timeframes.

In the context of the currently developing Common migration and asylum policy and the recognized need for harmonized and comparable statistics at the EU level,¹ in 2005 the European Commission passed a draft Regulation on Community statistics on asylum and international protection, which was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2007.

Regulation (EC) 862/2007² establishes common rules for the collection of Community statistics on migration, not only with regard to the migration of third-country nationals to the EU, but also with regard to migration flows among Member States. The Regulation also provides unified definitions for:

- ‘immigration’ – defined as the action by which a person establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of a Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months, having previously been usually resident in another Member State or a third country; hence, ‘immigrant’ means a person undertaking an immigration;

¹ See the Justice and Home Affairs Council conclusions of May 28 and 29, 2001.

² For more information, see: <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:199:0023:0029:BG:PDF>

Repeals Council Regulation (EEC) No 311/76.

- ‘emigration’ – defined as the action by which a person, having previously been usually resident in the territory of a Member State, ceases to have his or her usual residence in that Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months; hence, ‘emigrant’ means a person undertaking an emigration;

- ‘third-country national’ – defined as any person who is not a citizen of the EU, including stateless persons.

Although many studies distinguish between mobility and free movement of people within the EU, and immigration of third-country national to the EU, the Regulations definitions will be used for the purposes of the present section.

In addition to immigration and emigration rates, the collection of migration statistics is also affected by mortality and birth rates, as well as by the acquisition of citizenship through naturalization. According to a recent Eurostat report, approximately 4,8 million foreign nationals have been granted citizenship in a EU Member State in the period 2001-2007, which has a huge impact on the statistics for the number of foreign nationals, residing in the EU or born in the country of residence of their parents.

2.1.2. Factors for migration

Before we proceed to analyzing migration tendencies at the national, European and global level, we will briefly discuss the factors determining the cross-border movement of people.

The reasons for migration are commonly related to the pursuit of better opportunities for professional development, better labor compensation, better standards of living and greater security for one’s family. Another part of migration flow results from the lack of employment in the country of origin, military conflict, natural disasters, political persecution and violation of human rights. It should be noted that in any case the factors motivating migration are complex and multifarious. Quite often however, overarching explanations can hardly reflect the complexity of personal situations and reasons for migration.³

Related bibliography offers many classifications of the factors for encouraging and discouraging migration. For the purposes of the present research, we opted for the classification proposed by the Professor of Economic Development Lant Pritchett who studies the problems of labor migration and development.

³ *International Labour Migration*. A rights-based approach. Geneva, International Labour Office, 2010, p. 18.

According to Pritchett (2006)⁴ there are five factors motivating migration:

- ***Differences in wages and employment opportunities, especially between developed and developing regions***

According to Pritchett, at the peak of labor migration flows in the 19th century, wage gaps between countries of origin and recipient countries ranged between 2 to 1 and 4 to 1. Currently these gaps are as high as 10 to 1. This is corroborated by data of the International Labor Organization (ILO), which suggest that in 1975 income in high-standard countries has been 41 times higher than that in low-standard countries. By 2005 this gap has widened to 61 times.⁵

The failure of the global economic system to generate jobs where people live creates incentives for migration.⁶ Quite often people are forced to immigrate in order to ensure the economic security of the rest of their family in the country of origin by sending their savings back in the form of money transfers.

The current economic crisis deepened these gaps even further. According to the annual ILO report on global employment trends,⁷ approximately 212 million lost their jobs in 2009, which suggests an increase of 34 million compared to 2007. The crisis has had a clearly disproportionately impact on certain social groups, particularly women, migrant workers and young people.⁸

The impact of the crisis on migrant workers depends upon both the destination country and the sector of employment. In Ireland, Spain and the United States, migrant workers have been particularly badly affected in construction, which is the sector hardest hit by the crisis, while in Japan, Malaysia and the Republic of Korea they have felt the effects most acutely in manufacturing. In contrast, a number of sectors such as healthcare, education and domestic service, have witnessed growth in employment. This is the case in Ireland and the United States, where increased numbers of jobs became available in healthcare and education, both sectors with high rates of migrant employment.⁹

⁴ World Migration Report, 2008, p. 3.

⁵ Table 1.3: Global migration, population and incomes, 1975–2005. In: *International Labour Migration. A rights-based approach*. Geneva, International Labour Office, 2010, p. 21.

⁶ *International Labour Migration. A rights-based approach*. Geneva, International Labour Office, 2010, p. 20.

⁷ For more information, see: http://www.ilocarib.org.tt/portal/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1330&Itemid=368

⁸ Global Employment Trends, ILO, 2009.

⁹ Awad, 2009. In: *International Labour Migration. A rights-based approach*. Geneva, International Labour Office, 2010, p. 14.

● **Growing demographic imbalance on a global scale**

According to 2003 UNDP data,¹⁰ the population of the world's less developed regions is increasing much more rapidly – at an annual rate of 1.5 per cent, than that of the more developed regions, which is rising by just 0.25 per cent annually. There is also a difference between the average age of the population in different regions of the world, more and less, with developed countries having ageing populations and developing countries more youthful ones. The proportion of population above 60 years of age in more developed regions is expected to grow from 21% in 2007 to 32% in 2050. Meanwhile, the number of newborns for the same regions is expected to decrease from 17% to 16%. This means that by 2050 there will be in these regions twice as many people over 60 than children.¹¹

Although population is ageing in all industrialized countries, the process has gone much further in Europe and Japan, where deaths exceed births. If present trends continue, the population of Italy, for example, is expected to drop by 22% between 2000 and 2050, that of Latvia by 44% and that of Estonia by 52%.¹²

There is no doubt that one of the mechanisms for coping quickly with this demographic problem is to facilitate workforce immigration.

● **Liberalization of the flow of goods, capital and services**

Unlike the liberalization of the flow of goods, capital and services, the cross-border movement of people and labor still remains restricted as a result of the differences in immigration legislation and policies at the national level. In the conditions of globalization, however, pressure to remove barriers to workforce mobility will increase. This is due to the fact that the development of information and communications technology (ICT) has facilitated linkages between international labor markets, while creating greater demand for high technical skills and expanding opportunities for cross-border professional realization.¹³ Opportunities for outsourcing and employment in other regions have also increased.

This expansion of the global economy has provided greater opportunities for better life to millions of people and their families, while migration has become a livelihood strategy.¹⁴

¹⁰ *International Labour Migration*. A rights-based approach. Geneva, International Labour Office, 2010, p. 21.

¹¹ UN DESA, 2007. In: *World Migration Report*, 2008, p. 3.

¹² UN PD, 2003. In: *International Labour Migration*. A rights-based approach. Geneva, International Labour Office, 2010, p. 23.

¹³ UN PD, 2003. In: *International Labour Migration*. A rights-based approach. Geneva, International Labour Office, 2010, p. 14.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

- ***Growing need for low-skilled workers in developed and mid-income developing countries***

According to Pritchett (2006) migration is also encouraged by the need for low-skilled services (for instance, home care) in developed countries coupled by increase productivity, greater access to higher education, reluctance of nationals to perform certain jobs perceived to be of lower status, ageing population and globalization of manufacturing.

Despite technological advances in automation, for instance, human resources can hardly be replaced in sectors such as hospitality services, hospital care, etc.¹⁵

- ***Decline in the availability of jobs as a result of depletion on non-renewable resource and climate changes***

Pressure for migration from certain regions to more developed countries has been increasing in the last years due to the serious decline in the demand for labor as a result of changes in climate, agriculture or available resources.

2.1.3. Global migration trends

According to UNDP data for 2009,¹⁶ the global flow of international migrants, defined as persons residing outside their country of birth or citizenship, is estimated to be 214 million in 2010. The 2008 World Migration Report estimate also exceeds 200 million. The flow of international migrants has more than doubled since 1980, when it stood at 102 million, while the break-up of the former USSR in the 1990s added about 27 million people to the total international migrant stock.¹⁷ This is one of the reasons for global migration to increase from 2.3% in 1975 to 3.1% in 2010.

It is estimated that 60% of the total number of migrants globally live in developed regions. International migrants represent between 7% and 20% of the population in most Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Almost half of international migrants are women, most of whom have migrated on their own.

It is estimated that in 2010 there are about 105.4 million¹⁸ economically active migrants across the world, representing 44% of the total migrant popu-

¹⁵ *World Migration Report*, 2008, p. 3.

¹⁶ International Labour Migration. A rights-based approach. Geneva, International Labour Office, 2010, p. 1.

¹⁷ International Labour Migration. A rights-based approach. Geneva, International Labour Office, 2010, p. 15. It should be noted that after the break-up of the former USSR, migration flow increased statistically but this for the most part does not come as a result of real migration of people but of the newly defined state borders of the former Soviet republics.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Table 2.1. Estimates of total migrant workers, by region, 2000 and 2010

Regions	Migrants				Migrant workers			
	2000		2010		2000		2010	
	million	%	million	%	million	%	million	%
Africa	16.3	9.3	19.3	9.0	7.1	8.0	8.4	8.0
Asia	49.9	28.5	61.3	28.7	25.0	29.0	30.7	29.0
Europe	56.1	32.1	69.8	32.6	28.2	33.0	35.1	33.0
Latin America and the Caribbean	5.9	3.4	7.5	3.5	2.5	3.0	3.2	3.0
North America	40.8	23.3	50.0	23.4	20.5	24.0	25.1	24.0
Oceania	5.8	3.3	6.0	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0
Total	174,8	100	213,9	100	86,2	100	105,5	100

Source: ILO, 2010

lation. These migrants and their families comprise 90% of the total number of international migrants. Approximately 7-8% of all migrants are refugees and asylum seekers, some of whom work. As shown in table 2.1, there are 35.1 million economic migrants in Europe, 30.7 million in Asia, 25.1 million in North America etc.

2.1.3.1. Effect of the crisis

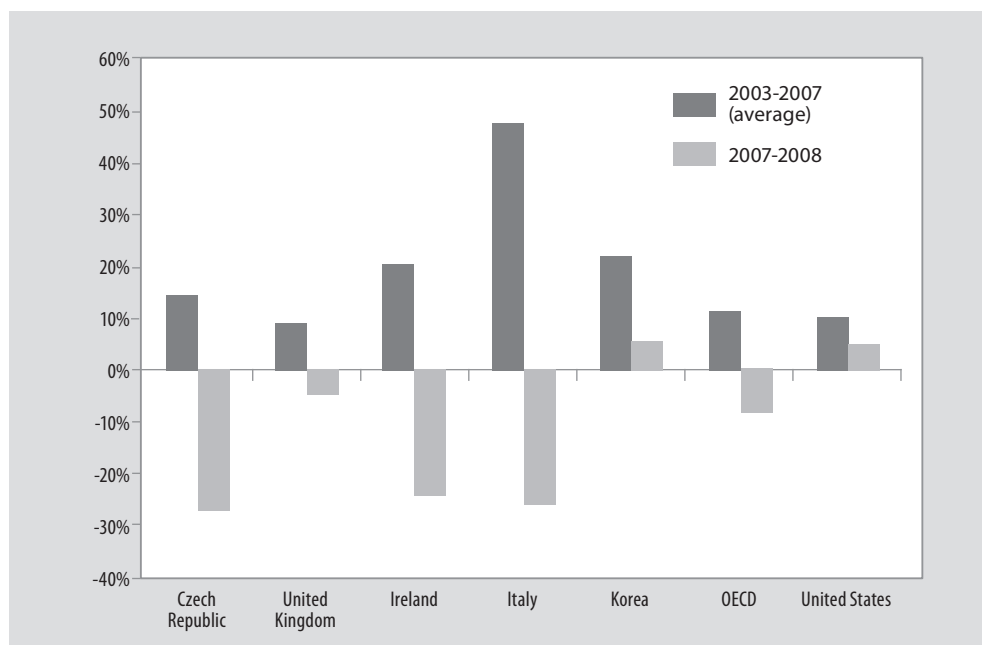
According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) data¹⁹ the crisis has had some negative impact on migration flows to developed countries. While for the five years prior to 2007 migration flow to OECD countries increased by 12% annually, for the period 2007–2008 it marked a 7% decline (fig. 2.1).

In some countries – Ireland, Italy, Czech Republic, this decline is around or more than 25% for 2007 and 2008. This is indicative of the different impact of the crisis on different countries. In countries, which were less affected by the crisis (Australia, Norway and others) migration not only did not decline but even increased.

In any case migration continues, albeit at a lower rate, while the OECD report does not register a tendency for migrants to return to their native countries as a result of the crisis.

¹⁹ OECD, International Migration Outlook, 2010, http://www.oecd.org/document/26/0,3343,en_2649_37415_45623194_1_1_1,00.html

Fig. 2.1. Change in international migrant flows for the period 2003-2008, %



Source: OECD

2.1.4. Migration flows in Europe

The political stability and relative economic prosperity of the European Union are a strong factor for attracting immigrants.²⁰

Eurostat data²¹ for the period 2003-2008 suggest that migration to the EU continues to grow but at a lower pace in the last 3 years.

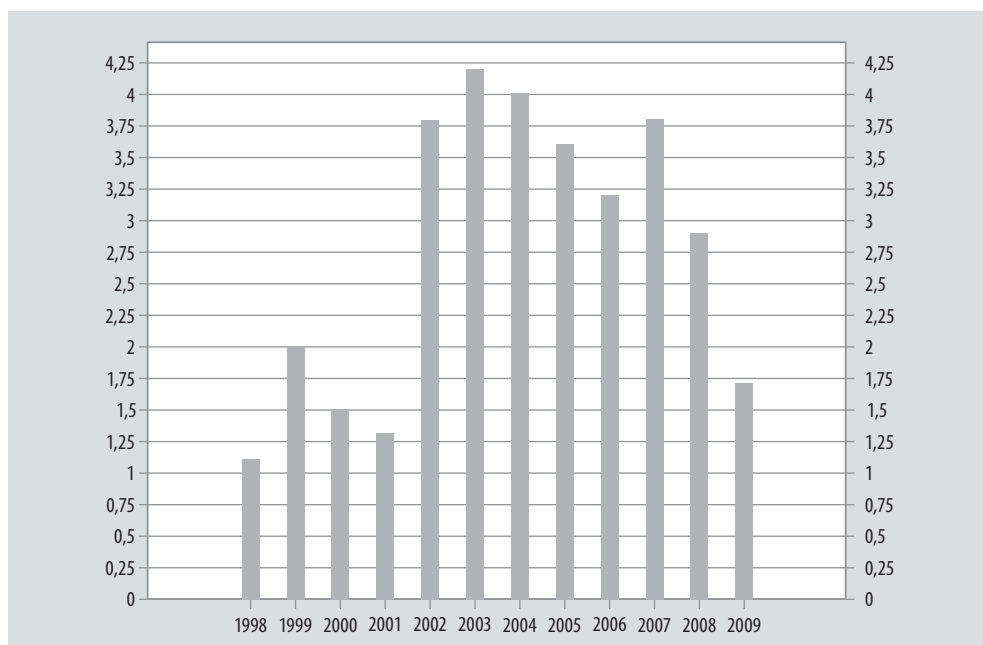
According to Eurostat, despite some fluctuations in the years between 2002 and 2007 migration flow to the EU is a little less than 4‰ annually. Data before 2002 are incomparable to those since 2002 and therefore, no long-term tendency can be outlined. However, in 2008 and 2009 the strong effect of the crisis became noticeable, with migration flow declining by half in 2009 compared to 2007 (fig. 2.2).

The greater increase in immigration for the period 2003–2008 was witnessed in Ireland and Spain. In 2006, for instance, Spain marked the highest increase in absolute values: 350,000 immigrants more than five years earlier. In the same period, in some EU countries such as Germany, Austria and Netherlands, immigration declined. Compared to 2002, in 2006 total migration to these countries dropped by 14%, 17% and 11% accordingly.

²⁰ EUROPE IN FIGURES – Eurostat yearbook 2008. In the spotlight – Demographic change: challenge or opportunity?

²¹ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-08-098/EN/KS-SF-08-098-EN.PDF

Fig. 2.2. Migration flow to the EU per 1000 population



Source: Eurostat

The greater flow of immigrants per capita of population was registered in Spain, Luxemburg, Ireland, Cyprus and Italy. The number of migrants attracted to these countries is much higher than the EU average, often exceeding 10‰ or 15‰ annually (fig. 2.3).

As a result of the crisis, migration flow to all these countries (except for Luxemburg) declined and even reversed. This tendency is most pronounced in Ireland. In 2008 the flow of migrants was almost equal to zero, while in 2009 there was an outflow of almost 10‰ for one year (fig. 2.4).

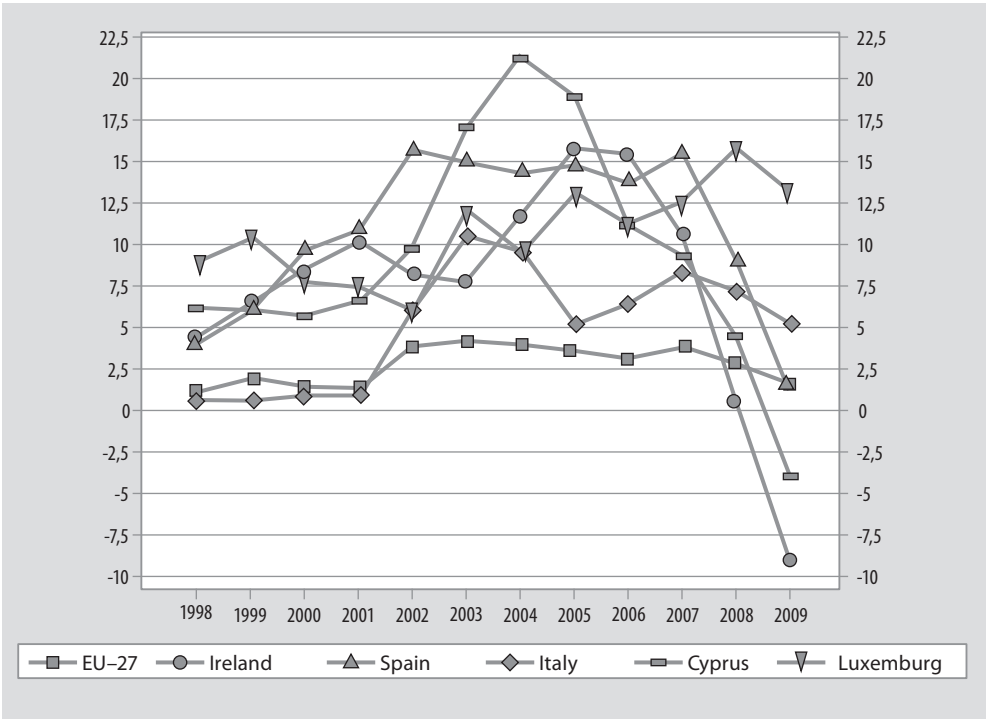
In the beginning of 2008,²² there were 30.8 million foreign nationals residing in the EU Member States, representing 6.2% of the entire EU population. More than one third of all foreign nationals²³ in the EU (11.3 million) are citizens of another EU Member State. The second largest group comprises 6 million citizens of European countries outside EU, followed by 4.7 million foreign nationals from African countries and 3.7 million from countries in Asia.

The highest number of foreign nationals in absolute value reside in Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, France and Italy. The immigrants to these

²² http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-09-094/EN/KS-SF-09-094-EN.PDF

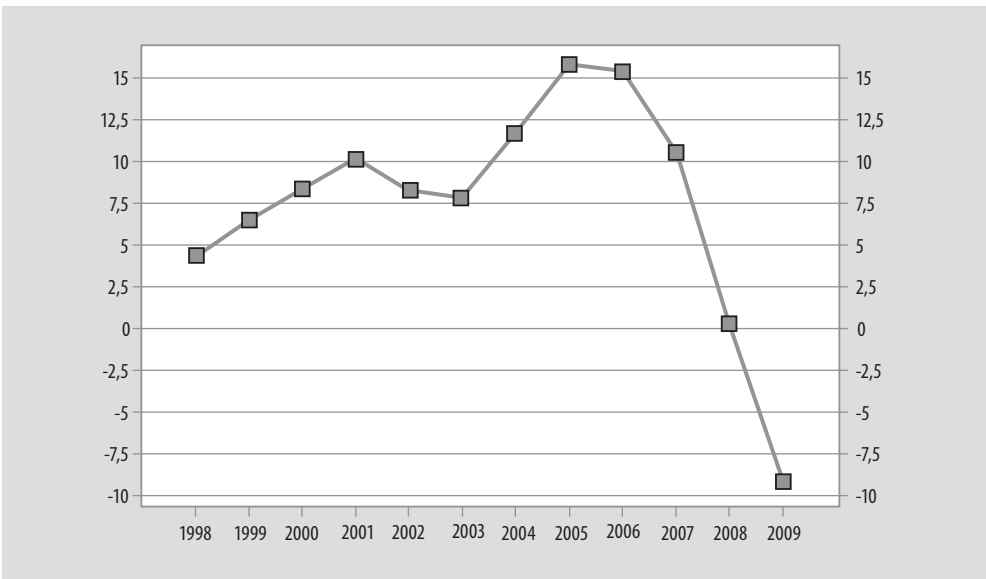
²³ 'Foreign nationals' refers here to persons whose citizenship is different than their country of residence.

Fig. 2.3. Migration flow per 1000 population



Source: Eurostat

Fig. 2.4. Ireland – inflow and outflow of migrants (per 1000 population)



Source: Eurostat

countries represent 75% of the total number of foreign nationals in the EU. The country with the highest percentage of foreign nationals is Luxemburg – 42.5%, while this share is lowest in Romania, Poland, Bulgaria and Slovakia – less than 1%.

The largest group of foreign nationals, residing in EU Member States, are citizens of Turkey – 7.9%, followed by Morocco – 5.6% and Romania (Romanians living in another EU Member State) – 5.4%.

The greatest increase is registered among Romanians residing in another EU Member State: from 0.3 million in 2001 to 1.7 million in 2008. Bulgarian citizens, residing in another EU Member State have also increased: from 0.1 to 0.3 million in the same period. As a result, in 2008 the number of foreign nationals from countries that joined the EU in 2007 exceeded that of the countries of the 2004 enlargement.

2.2. Immigrant Money Transfers and Their Impact on Bulgaria

2.2.1. Dynamic of money transfers from and to Bulgaria

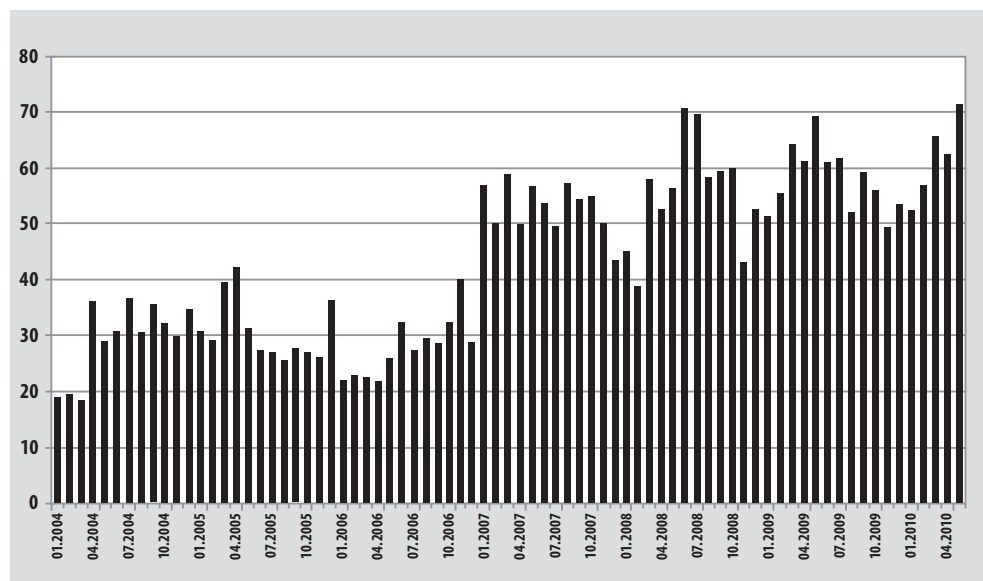
2.2.1.1. Money transfers to Bulgaria from Bulgarians, permanently living abroad

According to data on the balance of payments, published every month by the Bulgarian National Bank, Bulgarians living abroad transfer to Bulgaria an around 50-60 million Euro per month on average (after 2007). Figures for individual months vary significantly – sometimes transfers fall below 40 million Euro, while other times they exceed 60 and even 70 million Euro per month.

Since the beginning of 2007 transfers increased considerably to almost double the amount but this is rather due to a change in the data collection methodology, as a result of which statistics prior to and after January 1, 2007 are not comparable (fig. 2.5).

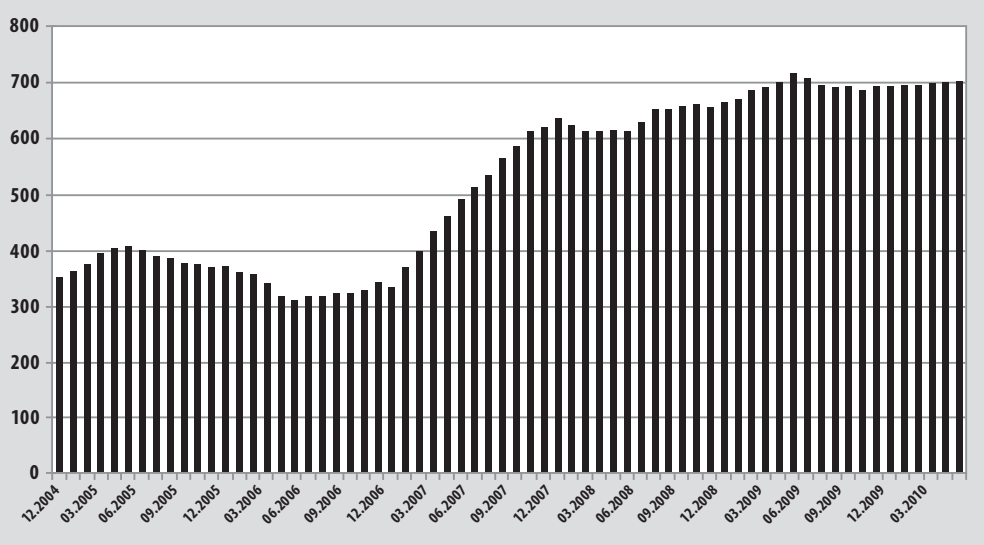
Variations are smaller on a 12-month basis, with transfers ranging between 600 and 700 million Euro, marking a slight increase in the years 2007 and 2008 and remaining stable since. These data reflect even clearer the effects of the methodology change between 2006 and 2007 (fig. 2.6).

Fig. 2.5. Money transfers from Bulgarians, permanently living abroad, in million Euro per month



Source: Bulgarian National Bank

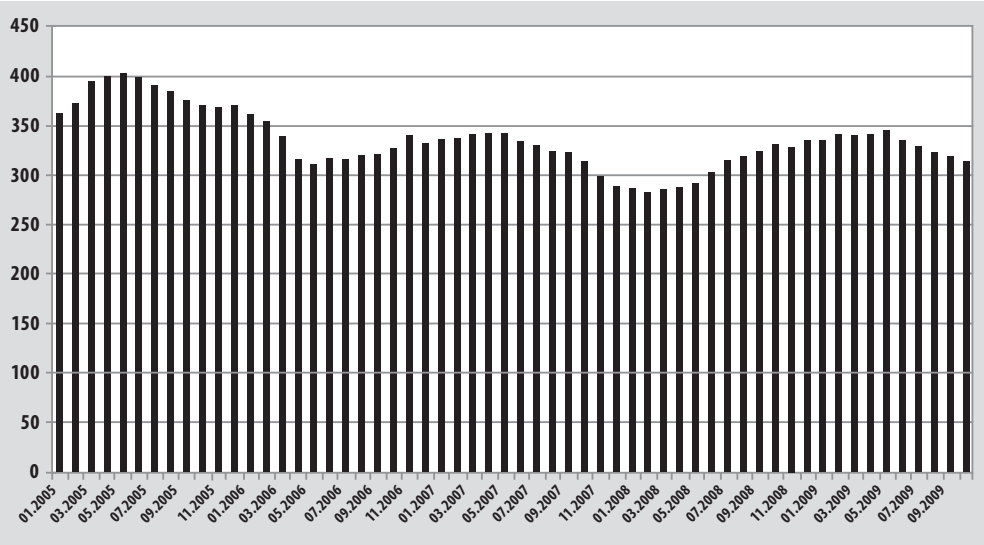
Fig. 2.6. Money transfers from Bulgarians, permanently living abroad, in million Euro for 12 months



Source: Bulgarian National Bank

The crisis did not impact significantly the amount of money transfers from Bulgarians, living permanently abroad. Virtually no change in transfers has been registered on a 12-month basis since the beginning of the crisis. To a great extent this stability can be explained with the way data are registered

Fig. 2.7. Money transfers from Bulgarians, permanently living abroad, in million Euro for 12 months (previous methodology)



Source: Bulgarian National Bank

under the new methodology. However, data structured under the previous methodology also suggest that there has been no significant change in transfers since the beginning of the crisis (fig. 2.7).

A probable explanation could be that crisis in Bulgaria in many cases has increased the need for money transfers, which leaves few options for expatriate Bulgarians. Another explanation could be found in the scope of the data collected; both the old and the new methodology cannot measure the dynamic of informal and smaller transfers. Nevertheless, if the dynamic of formal transfers is indicative of informal transfers as well, then the conclusion that there has been no change in the amount of transferred resources remains valid.

2.2.1.1.1. BNB – New methodology for estimation of transfers from Bulgarians, living permanently abroad

In the summer of 2010, the BNB revised entirely its methodology for estimation of item “Workers’ Remittances, Credit”.²⁴ Until then the BNB methodology captured only transfers above BGN 5,000 made via formal channels – banks and money transfer operators. The new methodology seeks to capture all transfers, formal, informal, large and small.

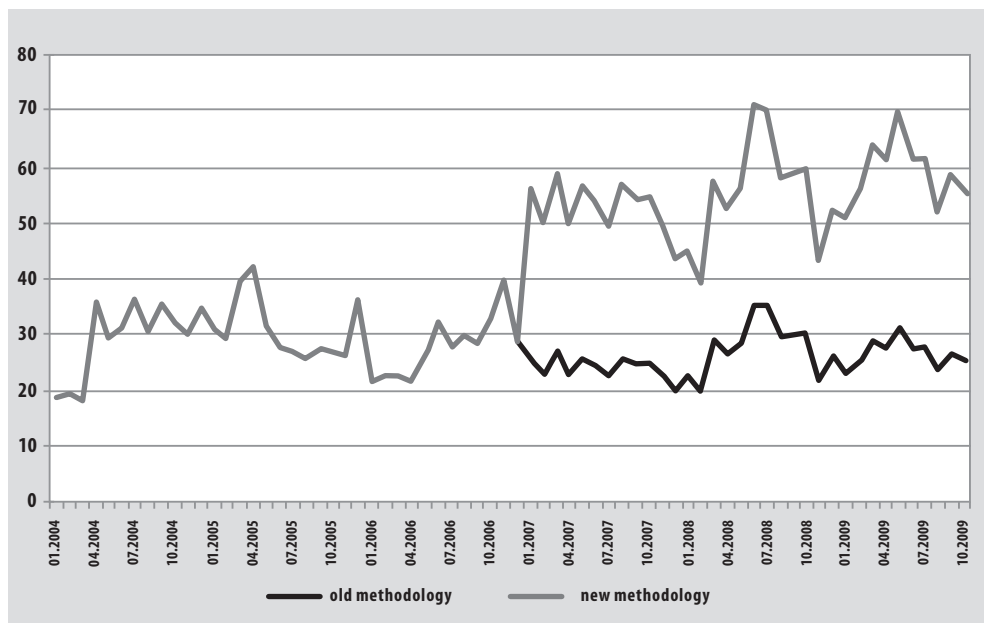
The BNB cites several reasons for the need to revise this methodology:

- Capturing small transfers – transfers below BGN 5,000, which comprise a significant share of total transfers, used to remain outside the statistics.
- Raising the reporting threshold – although after 2007 Bulgarian banks are under no obligation to report transfers above BGN 5,000, most banks still do it. Sooner or later, however, Bulgaria would have to implement the new reporting threshold for the EU, which as of the beginning of 2010 is 50,000 Euro. At such a threshold, the old methodology would have become meaningless.
- Informal channels – the previous methodology does not capture informal transfers, which are considerable.

The new methodology is based on two surveys – for the number of Bulgarian emigrants abroad and for the transfer averages via formal and informal channels. Information on the number of long-term Bulgarian emigrants abroad (by country) is based mainly on estimates made by the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad and in some cases on data from the Bulgarian Consular Services. The Agency estimates include both legal and illegal emigrants, while corrections have been made to include only the “new” emigration wave after 1989 and to exclude students and short-term emigrants. The number of long-term Bulgarian emigrants as of 2005 is estimated to be 618,430.

²⁴ Methodology for Estimation of Item “Workers’ Remittances, Credit”, Statistics Directorate, Balance of Payments and External Debt Division, BNB, March 2010.

Fig. 2.8. Money transfers from Bulgarians, permanently living abroad, in million Euro per month (old versus new methodology)



Source: Bulgarian National Bank

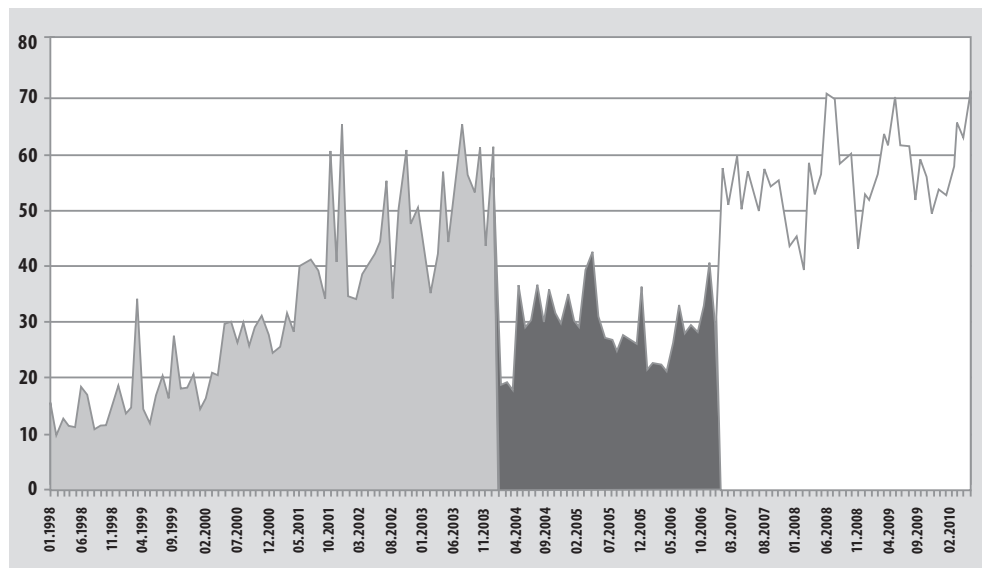
A border survey of Bulgarians returning for short-term stay in Bulgaria, helped establish the share of emigrant workers, as well as the share of those who send money to Bulgaria via formal and informal channels. Emigrant workers are 78.98%. Formal channels account for 36.9%, informal channels – for 15.4%, while 47.7% do not remit. The reference year for estimating transfer averages is 2006, while data are corrected with consumer price indexes by geographical breakdown.

As might be expected, the new methodology produced much higher estimates for the amount of money transfers by Bulgarians, living permanently abroad. Existing data were recalculated under the new methodology back to 2007 but before that statistics are still based on the old methodology (fig. 2.8).

Though interesting, a comparison with previous data under the item “Workers’ Remittances, Credit” is not possible because, as noted above, statistics prior to and after January 1, 2007 are not comparable. Moreover, the BNB began collecting data under this item in 2004, which means that comparable statistics prior to this year are not available. For this reason, even data contained in the previous survey²⁵ cannot be compared to statistics collected

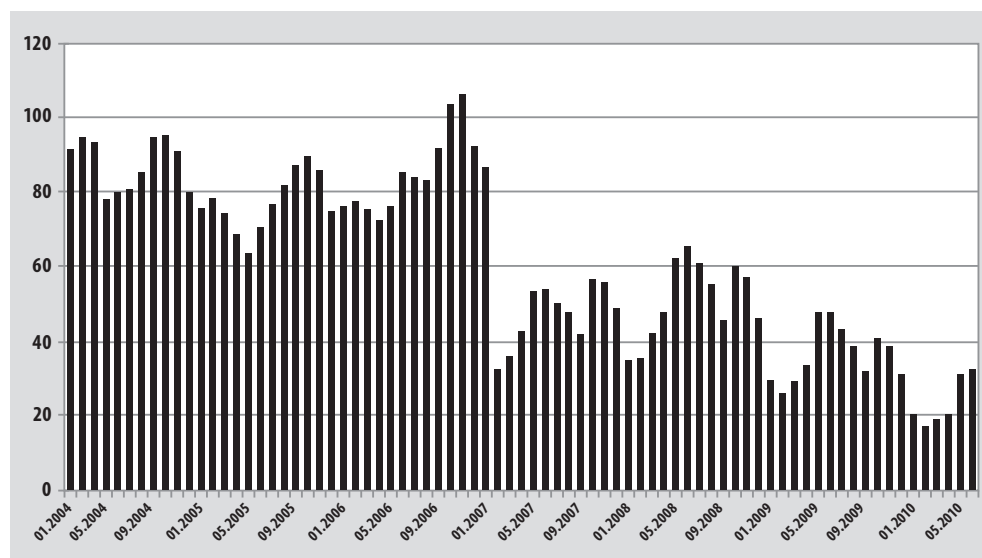
²⁵ Stanchev, K. et.al. (2005) *Bulgarian Migration: Incentives and Constellations*, Open Society Institute – Sofia.

Fig. 2.9. Comparison of three periods and three types of data, in million Euro per month



Source: Bulgarian National Bank

Fig. 2.10. Compensation of employees, in million Euro per month

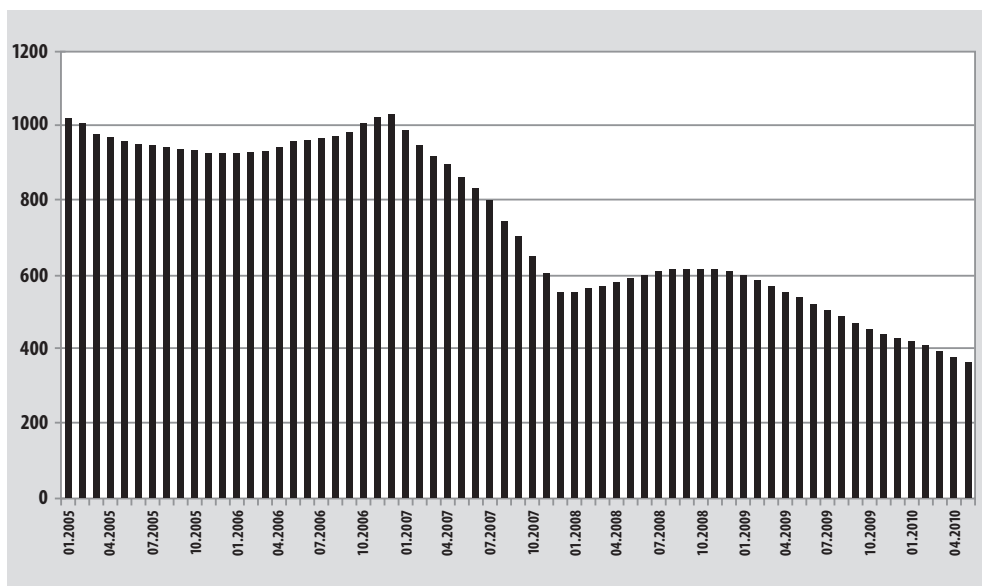


Source: Bulgarian National Bank

after 2003 (back then data for 'remittances'²⁶ were derived from the consolidated data on all private transfers to Bulgaria). Furthermore, methodological revisions will continue, since in 2014 the EU is expected to adopt the 6th Issue

²⁶ Money transfers.

Fig. 2.11. Compensation of employees, in million Euro for 12 months



Source: Bulgarian National Bank

of the Balance of Payments Manual and then the item “Workers’ Remittances, Credit” will be replaced by a new item “Personal transfers”.

Fig. 2.9 clearly illustrates data differences for the three periods – prior to 2004, prior to 2007 and since 2007. These differences should be taken into account when data on money transfers from Bulgarians abroad are analyzed.

2.2.2. Compensation of temporarily employed Bulgarians abroad (compensation of employees)

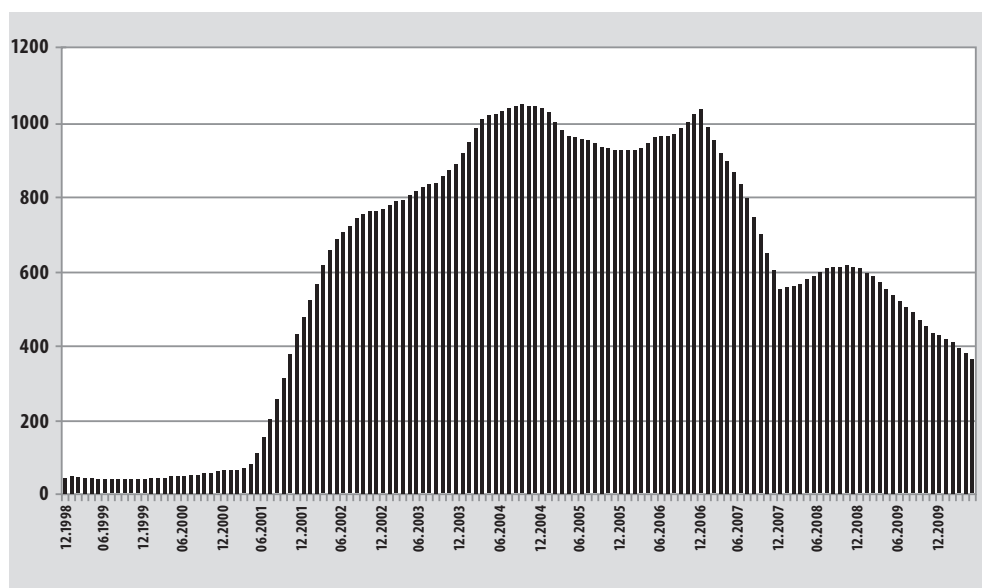
Compensation of employees covers²⁷ wages, salaries and other benefits paid to Bulgarian working abroad. This also includes income arising from illegal employment, which since the beginning of 2010 the BNB has been estimating using a special methodology, with back data revisions for 2007 onwards.²⁸ Other countries also apply similar estimation methods based on the number of residents working temporarily abroad, since data collection is a challenge not least because of the existence of informal transfers.

Reduction is more visible in the compensation of temporarily employed persons. While remaining stable and even marking some increase between

²⁷ Bulgarian National Bank (2008): Methodological Notes on the Compilation of the Balance of Payments of Bulgaria.

²⁸ Bulgarian National Bank (2006): Methodology for Estimation of Flows due to Unofficial Employment.

Fig. 2.12. Compensation of employees, in million Euro for 12 months



Source: Bulgarian National Bank

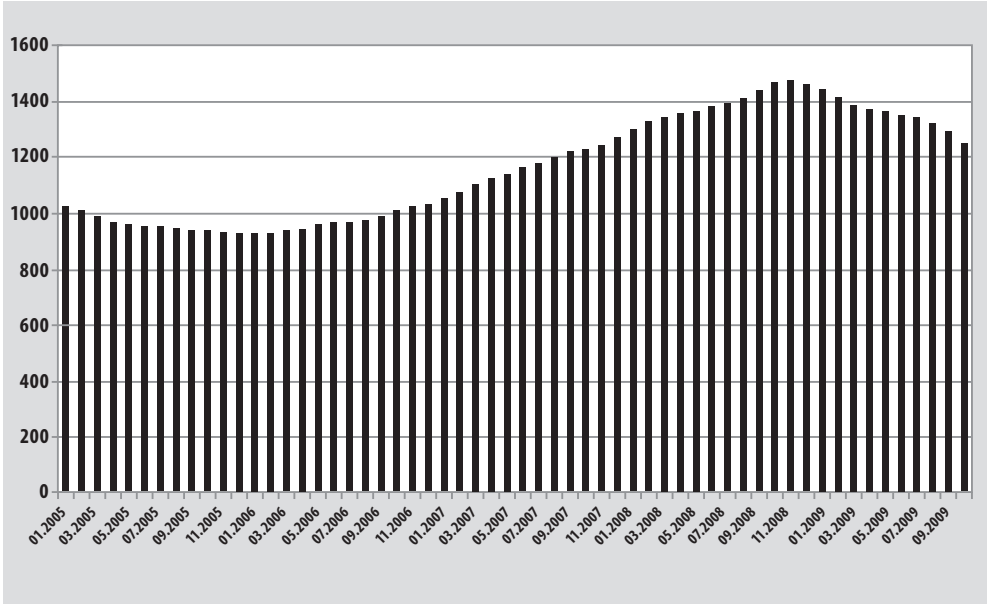
end of 2005 and end 2007, compensations decline almost by half due to revisions under the new methodology. Further decline has been registered since the onset of the crisis with transfers dropping from 600 million Euro for 12 months in the end of 2008 to 400 million Euro in the beginning of 2010. (fig. 2.10, 2.11).

The decline since the onset of the crisis is approximately 30%.

Data allow for analyzing the compensation of employees from a more long-term perspective. This item first appears in 2001 when visa restrictions for EU countries are removed and Bulgarian citizens are able to stay in any EU country for a period of three months without any formalities (which gives them the opportunity to work illegally). Compensations increase sharply until the end of 2004, marking some decline after that. Then there is again a slight increase between 2005 and end of 2006, followed by a steep drop in 2007 (when the new methodology was adopted) and a smaller decline since the onset of the crisis (fig. 2.12).

The sharp decline in 2009 is probably associated with the crisis. Probably fewer people opt for temporary employment abroad because of the crisis in Western Europe. At the same time, their income is probably lower than before. The previous methodology used by the BNB until the end of 2009, also registered a decline since the onset of the crisis, albeit a smaller one (fig. 2.13).

Fig. 2.13. Old methodology: Compensation of employees, in million Euro for 12 months



Source: Bulgarian National Bank

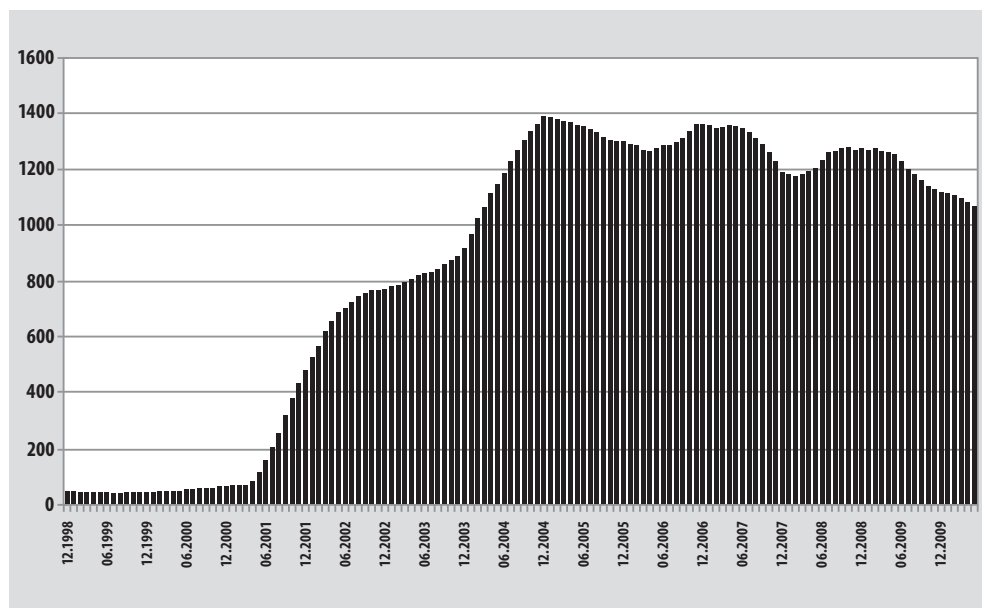
2.2.3. Total money flow from Bulgarians abroad

If we combine the two sources coming from Bulgarians residing permanently and temporarily abroad, we would get a more general picture of the money flow from migration. Since the onset of the crisis there has been a decline of about 15%, which albeit noticeable, is far more limited than the decline in foreign investment and international trade. From this perspective, money flow from emigrants are more stable to serious crises (fig. 2.14).

2.2.4. Transfers from Bulgaria to other countries

Transfers from Bulgaria are traditionally minimal, but in the two years before the crisis there has been a sharp increase (with the peak being in September 2008 with nearly 20 million Euro increase in both compensation of foreign nationals employed in Bulgaria and transfers of foreign nationals residing permanently in Bulgaria). The crisis, however, had a severe negative impact. The decline in both items has been threefold so far (fig. 2.15, 2.16). This could be due to the smaller number of foreign nationals, working or residing in the country, as well as to lower income or less secure employment.

Fig. 2.14. Total: Compensation of employees + transfers from Bulgarians living permanently abroad, in million Euro for 12 months



Source: Bulgarian National Bank

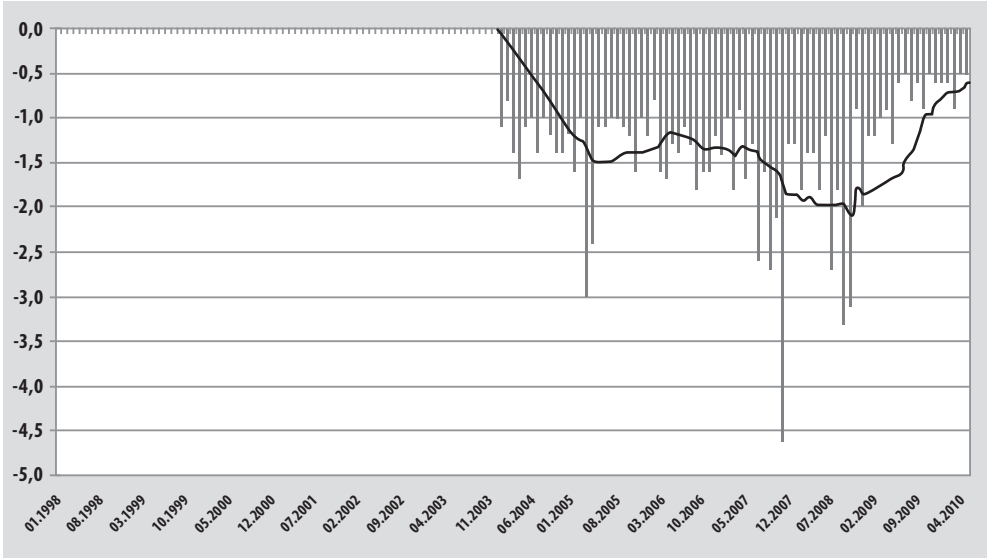
2.2.5. Comparison with other sources of finance coming from abroad

Compared to other sources of finance, coming from abroad, money transfers from Bulgarians living in other countries (either on a short-term or on a long-term basis), are extremely stable (fig. 2.17). This is not the case with direct foreign investment and foreign credits, which increased significantly when the economy was doing well but reduced drastically since the onset of the crisis. Direct investment declined more than 4 times on a 12-month basis, while foreign credits have already taken a negative value.

The stability of transfers from Bulgarians abroad has a positive impact on the overall macroeconomic stability. Other items in the balance of payments are highly volatile and are influenced to a great extent by national and international economic conditions; they drive growth up in good times, but also aggravate decline in bad times for national and global economy. Transfers from abroad, on the contrary, remain stable, thus contributing to the stability of the economic cycle, as well as the income of households.

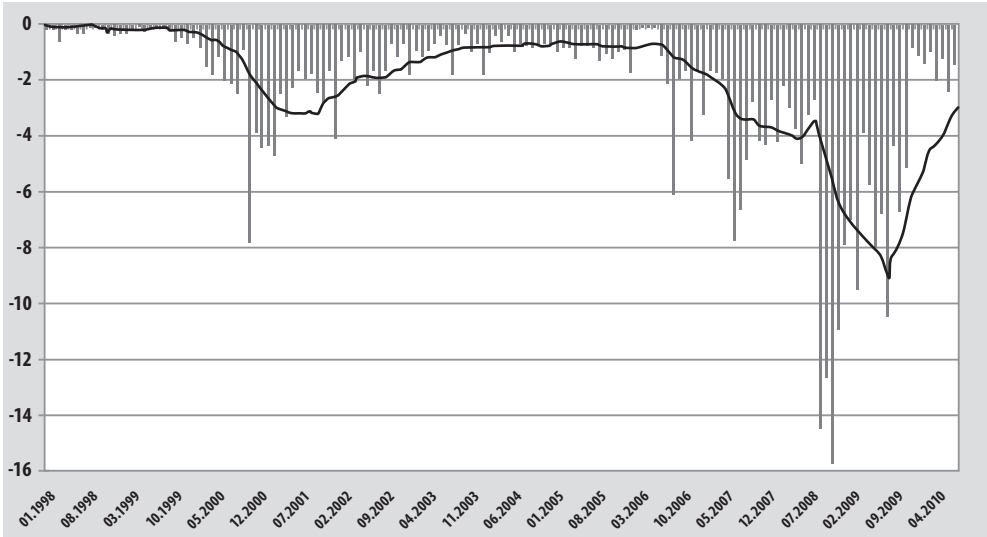
In absolute value money transfers from Bulgarians living abroad are comparable and slightly higher than the resources the country actually receives from EU funds, despite the large increase after Bulgaria's accession to the EU.

Fig. 2.15. Transfers of foreign nationals, residing permanently in Bulgaria, in million Euro per month



Source: Bulgarian National Bank

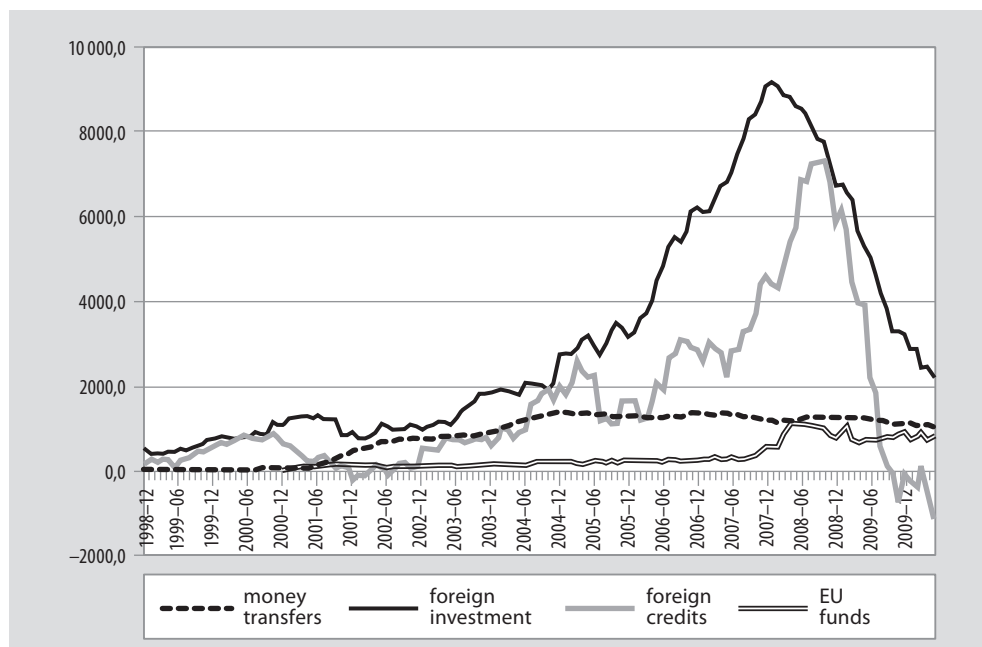
Fig. 2.16. Compensation of employees, in million Euro per month



Source: Bulgarian National Bank

Nevertheless, the relative importance of money transfers declines over time, especially in years when the economy is doing well. In the beginning of the 21st century, emigrant money transfers are comparable to foreign investment and foreign credits, while 5-6 years later they are much lower. During

Fig. 2.17. Comparison of several balance-of-payment items (data for 12 months)



Source: Bulgarian National Bank

times of crisis, their importance increases again because of the sharp decline in the inflow of money to Bulgaria from other sources but most probably this would not change trends in the long-term.

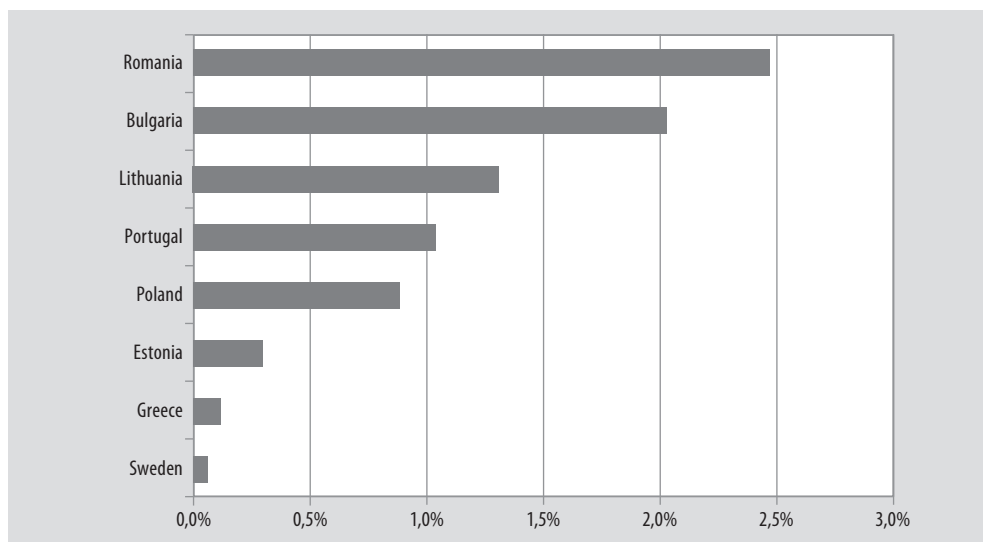
2.2.6. Comparison with money transfers from emigrants in other countries

Most EU Member States are net senders of money transfers, the exception being 8 countries: Romania, Poland, Portugal, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Greece, Sweden, Estonia.²⁹ The country receiving the largest net amount of money transfers from its nationals living abroad is Romania, followed closely by Poland, Portugal and Bulgaria. As a share of GDP, however, the order is somewhat different. The two countries with pronouncedly high inflow of transfers from nationals working abroad are Romania and Bulgaria. These figures are also high for Lithuania, Portugal and Poland, while in Estonia, Greece and Sweden the inflow is minimal as a share of the GDP (table 2.2, fig. 2.18).

The main remitting country is Italy, followed with a large difference by Germany, Spain and France.

²⁹ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-10-040/EN/KS-SF-10-040-EN.PDF

Fig. 2.18. Money transfers, % of GDP



Source: Eurostat

Table 2.2. Money transfers in the EU

Country	2009
Italy	-6550
Germany	-2996
Spain	-2311
France	-2084
Netherlands	-552
Czech Republic	-466
Austria	-463
Belgium	-342
Luxemburg	-61
Hungary	-46
Cyprus	-19
Finland	-18
Latvia	0
Slovenia	0
Estonia	39
Sweden	136
Greece	250
Lithuania	349
Bulgaria	683
Portugal	1723
Poland	2715
Romania	2852

In the EU as a whole there has been an 18% decline in the inflow of money transfers in 2009, although no decline has been registered in Bulgaria. In Romania however the decline is particularly high – more than 42% for one year.

Source: Eurostat

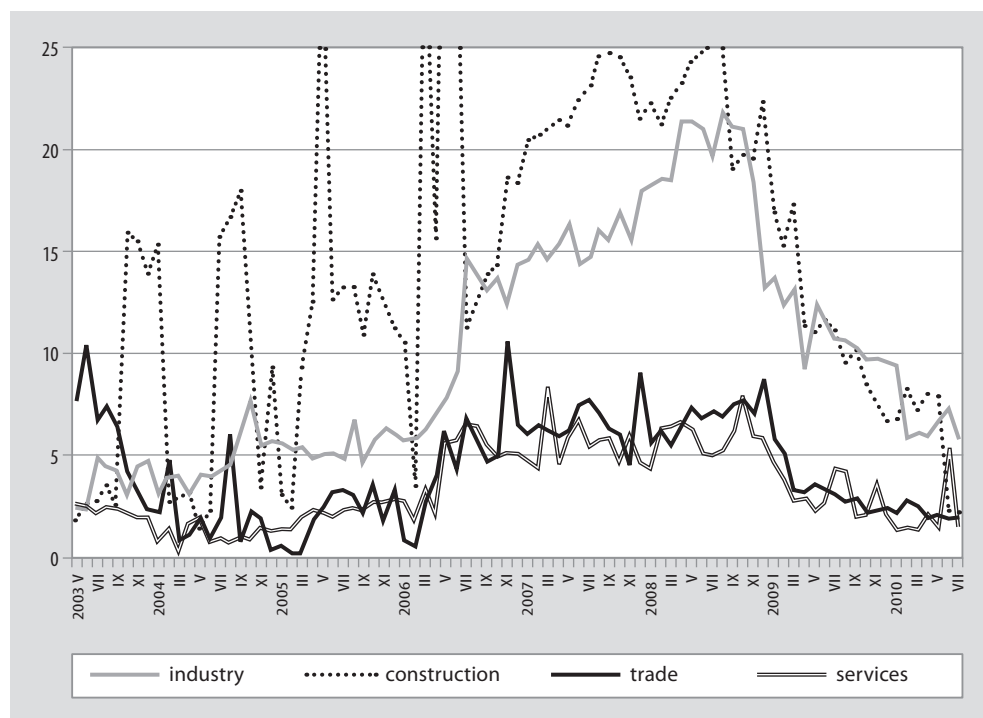
2.3. Current Trends in Cross-border Migration from and to Bulgaria According to Other Indicators

2.3.1. Immigration: future projections and impact on Bulgaria

In the years of stable economic growth, unemployment gradually reduced, while the increase in available jobs led to a problem the country had not faced before: workforce shortage. In 2007 and in 2008 in particular, the shortage of human resources hit record high rates in all sectors of the economy (the NSI collects related data from enterprises every month) (fig. 2.19).

The onset of the crisis put an end to this problem, bringing the labor market situation years behind. When the crisis subsides, however, this issue will again come up in the agenda. Given the worsening demographic indicators and the expectations for further reduction in working-age population, workforce shortages are bound to increase in the future (provided that economy resumes its upward development).

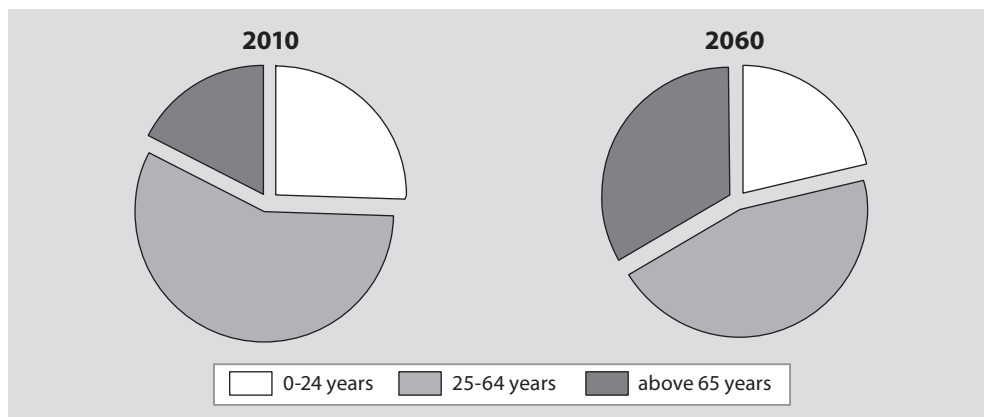
Fig. 2.19. Workforce shortage by sectors



Source: National Statistical Institute

The faster the economy grows, the more workforce, i.e. immigrants would be needed. These immigrants would not only support the development of the economy, but would be also essential for maintaining the sustainability of the pension system. According to NSI data, in 2060 Bulgaria's population would be between 5 and 6 million, while the share of working-age population would drop significantly at the expense of an increase in the share of people above 65 (fig. 2.20).

Fig. 2.20. Population structure, 2010 versus 2060



Source: NSI, *Population Estimates by Gender and Age, 2010*

Currently, the ratio between working-age persons and pensioners is already unfavorable but will deteriorate even further in time, which will have a negative impact on the sustainability of the pension system and of other systems that are affected by the ageing of the population. Accepting immigrants is a feasible solution for maintaining the financial stability of these systems by improving the ratio between employed and non-employed persons. Of course, the flow of labor immigrants to the country (including Bulgarians returning from emigration) could happen only if economic growth is stable and incomes are catching up with those in developed countries.

Influenced by these factors, immigration to Bulgaria is growing slowly but steadily. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the country is still in transition from transit to recipient country.

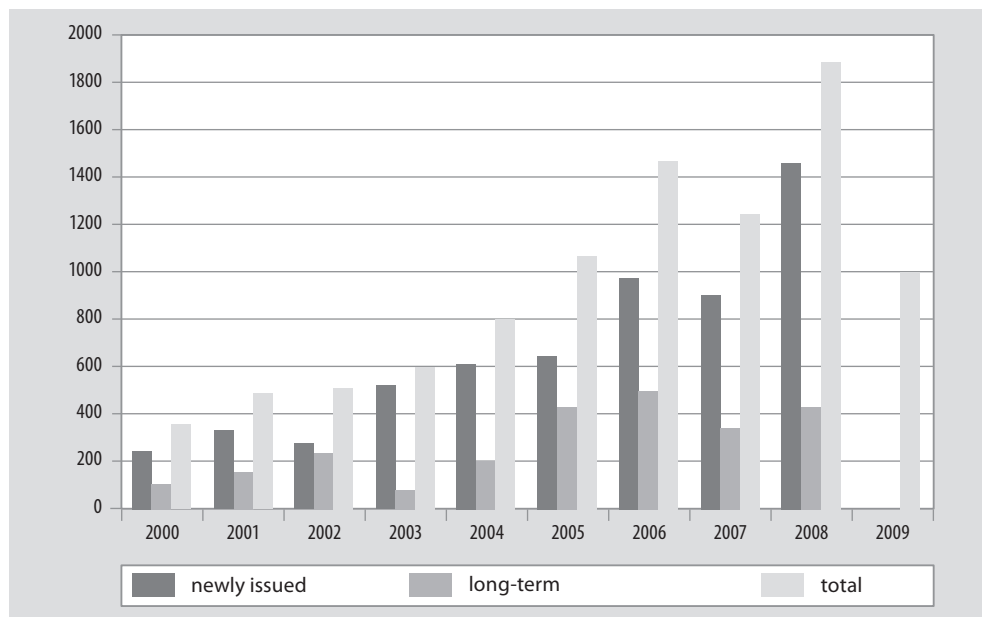
According to NSI data, the number of foreign nationals living permanently in Bulgaria has been growing steadily in the period 2004-2009 and totaled 69,423 persons by 31.12.2009 (table 2.3). The majority of foreign nationals with permanent residence in Bulgaria come from European countries outside the EU, mostly from Russia (approximately one third of the total), followed by Ukraine, Macedonia, Turkey, Moldova. The number of Asians – from China, Syria, Armenia, Vietnam and Lebanon – is also quite significant.

Table 2.3. Number of foreign nationals with permanent residence in Bulgaria, 2004-2009

Citizens	Foreign nationals with permanent residence in Bulgaria					
	As of 31.12.2004	As of 31.12.2005	As of 31.12.2006	As of 31.12.2007	As of 31.12.2008	As of 31.12.2009
Total	50,756	53,197	55,653	63,615	66,806	69,423
Europe	35,437	37,051	38,988	44,261	47,106	47,436
EU-27	5,690	5,949	6,245	6,861	6,904	6,948

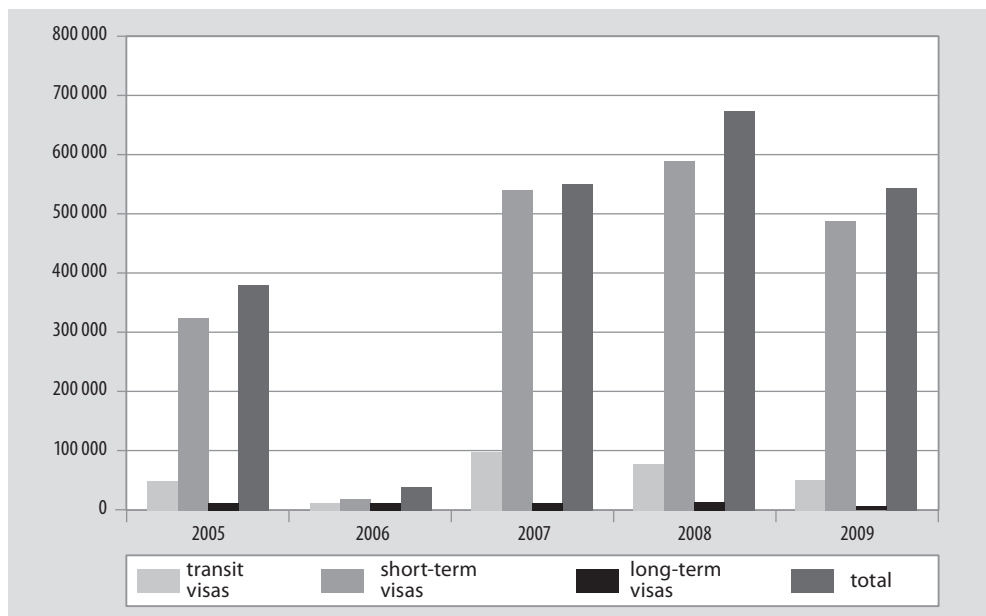
Source: NSI

Work permits issued to foreign nationals have increased significantly between 2000 and 2006, exceeding 1,400. In 2007 some decrease was registered, resulting from Bulgaria's accession to the EU after which EU citizens are no longer accounted for as 'foreigners'. In 2008, however, the number of work permits increased again, reaching a record high figure of nearly 1,900 permits. In 2009, with the first implications of the crisis, this figure dropped to only 1,000 permits (most probably this decrease also reflects a shift in the approach of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP), which restricted the access of foreign nationals to the local labor market in time of crisis) (fig. 2.21).

Fig. 2.21. Work permits issued to foreign nationals in Bulgaria

Source: Data for the period 01.01.2000-31.12.2008 have been provided by the MLSP Employment Agency under the Access to Public Information Act, while data for 2009 have been derived from the Annual Report on the activity of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy for 2009 under Art. 45, Par. 4 and Art. 63 of the Administration Act.

Fig. 2.22. Bulgarian visas issued to foreign nationals



Source: Data for the period 01.01.2005-30.09.2009, provided by the Consular Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

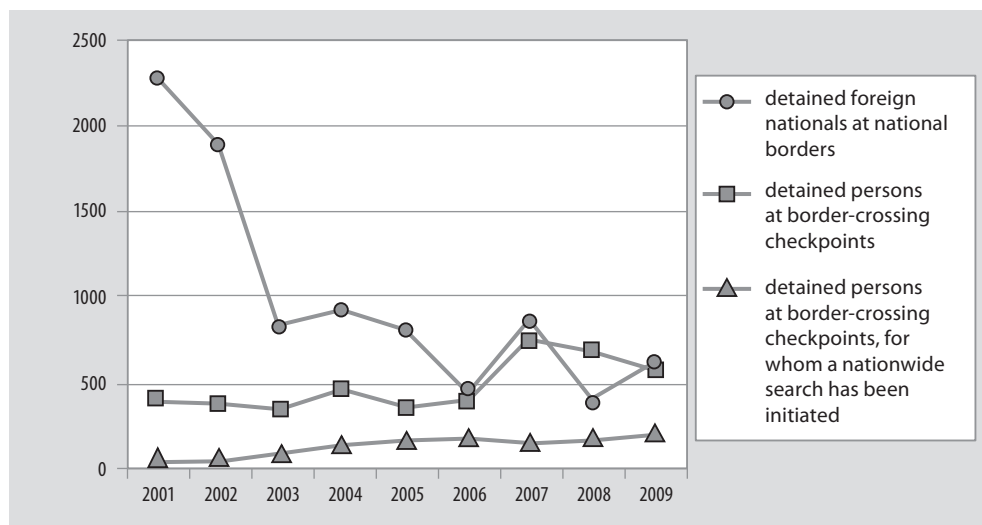
The number of foreign nationals residing permanently in Bulgaria and the number of work permits issued to foreign nationals are the key indicators for estimating immigration, used in the present research. In addition, the project team collected data from other sources, which though helpful, are less indicative of the immigration trends in Bulgaria. These data are presented in figures 2.22, 2.23, 2.24 and 2.25, and include data on the number of Bulgarian visas issued to foreign nationals (source: MFA), data on the number of foreign nationals, detained at the border or sanctioned for various violations of entry and sojourn regulations (source: Mol), and data on the number of foreign students of Bulgarian origin (source: Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, MEYS).

The number of Bulgarian visas issued to foreign nationals decreased in the first half of 2009, probably again as a result of the crisis.

The number of foreign nationals, detained at the national borders remains relatively stable in the last few years, as does the number of foreigners, who have been sanctioned for various violations of entry and sojourn regulations – judging by data provided by the Mol Migration Directorate on the administrative measures (AM) that have been taken against them.

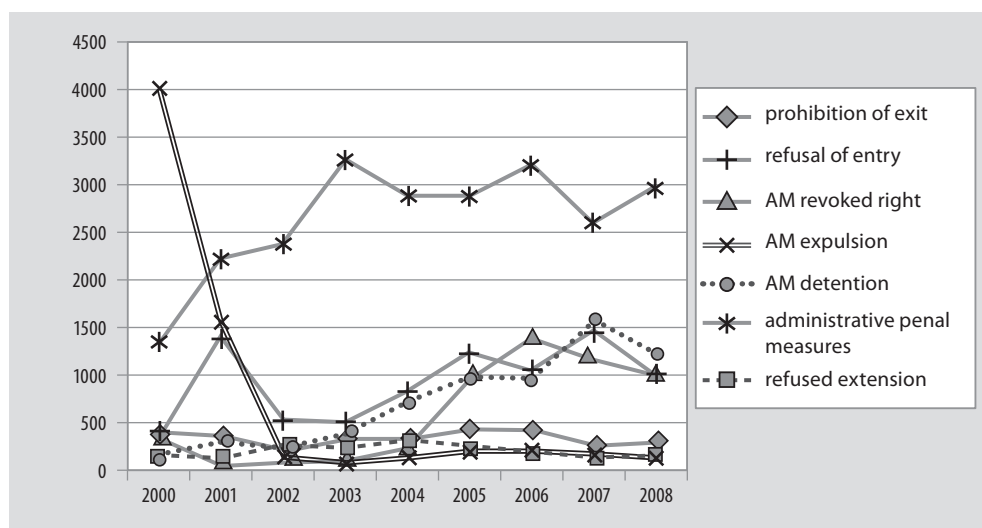
According to data, provided by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, the number of foreign students of Bulgarian origin who study at Bulgarian universities, has declined noticeably after Bulgaria's accession to the EU (2007). This clearly indicates that Bulgarian universities are not an attractive

Fig. 2.23. Detained foreign nationals



Source: Data for the period 01.01.2001-31.12.2009, provided by the Mol Coordination, Information and Analysis Directorate under the Access to Public Information Act.

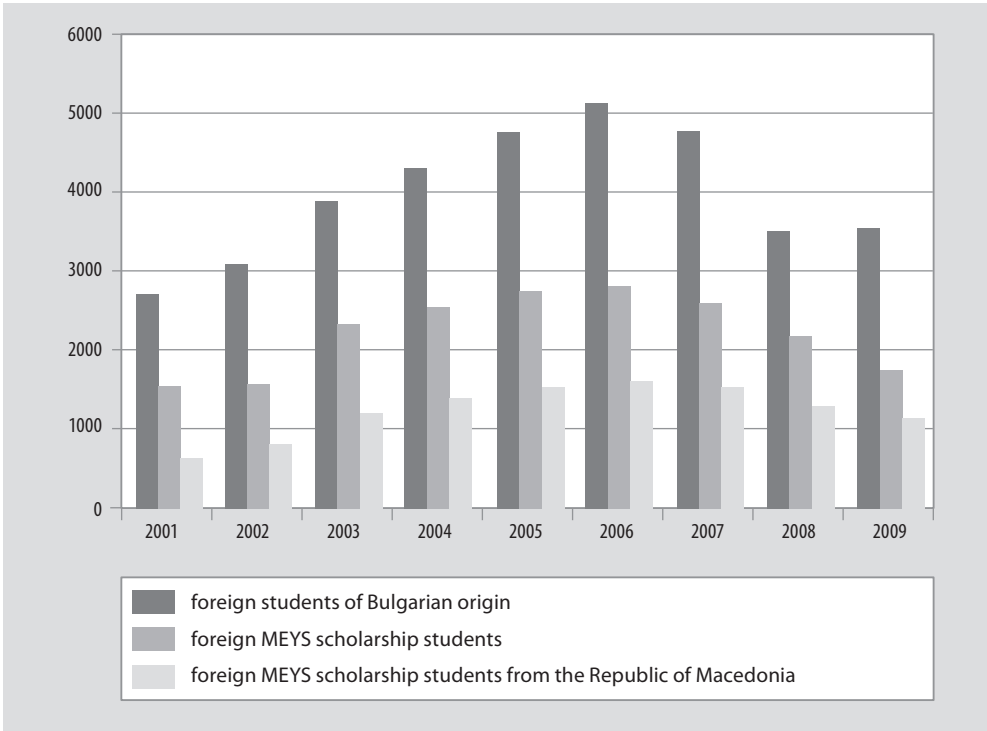
Fig. 2.24. Foreign nationals, sanctioned for various violations of entry and sojourn regulations



Source: Data for the period 01.01.2000-31.12.2008, provided by the Mol Migration Directorate.

choice for foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin. Given that encouraging immigration of foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin is a declared goal of the National Migration and Integration Strategy, the role of universities in this process should be thoroughly reconsidered.

Fig. 2.25. Foreign students of Bulgarian origin



Source: Data on the number of foreign students, provided by the MEYS Education Support Information Center for school years 2000/2001 through 2008/2009 (Bachelor and Master degree students, Doctoral candidates and research fellows). Data include foreign MEYS scholarship students of Bulgarian origin and MEYS scholarship students from the Republic of Macedonia (under Council of Ministers' Regulation 228/1997)

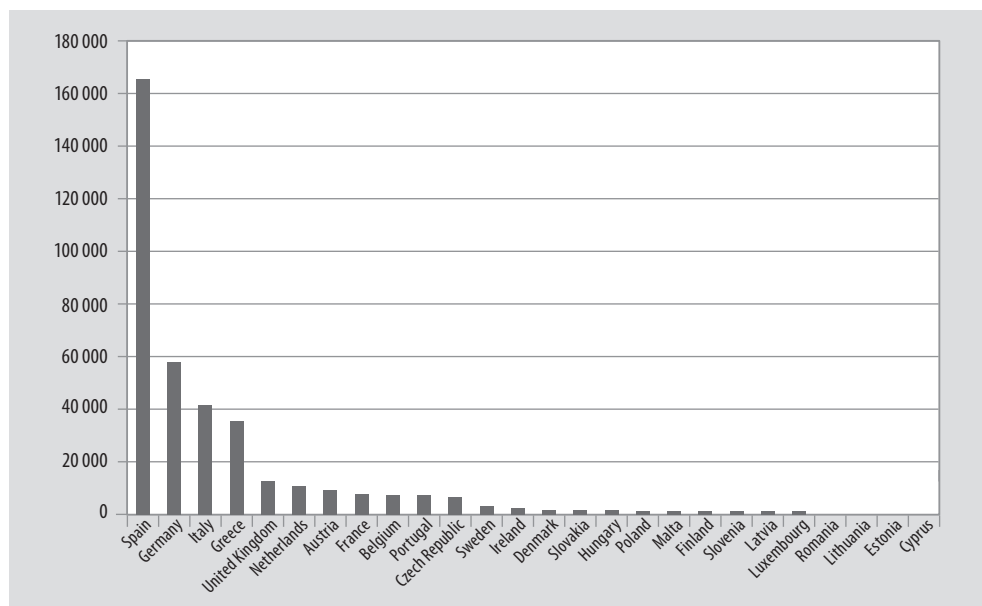
2.3.2. Emigration

The main recipient countries for Bulgarian emigrants in the EU are shown in fig. 2.26.

Although data are not comprehensive because no statistics were submitted from Cyprus, while data from Greece are for 2001, the figure gives an idea of the EU countries who traditionally accept emigrants from Bulgaria. These are Spain, Germany, Italy, Greece and United Kingdom, some of which are discussed in more detail in the last section of the research paper.

Bulgaria is the only country in the EU, which does not maintain comparable annual statistics on migration. That is why, as shown on fig. 2.27, migration seems to be almost non-existent in all the years included in the graphic, except for 2001 when a huge emigration wave of more than 25 per one thousand was registered. In fact this is the year when the latest population census was carried out. The next census is scheduled for 2011; meanwhile all identity

Fig. 2.26. Population with Bulgarian citizenship in EU Member States, 2009



Source: Eurostat

Note: Data for Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta and Belgium are for 2008, data for the United Kingdom and France are for 2005, data for Greece are for 2001, while data for Estonia are for 2000; Cyprus provided no data.

cards of Bulgarian citizens will expire and this would produce the same one-time surge in statistics.

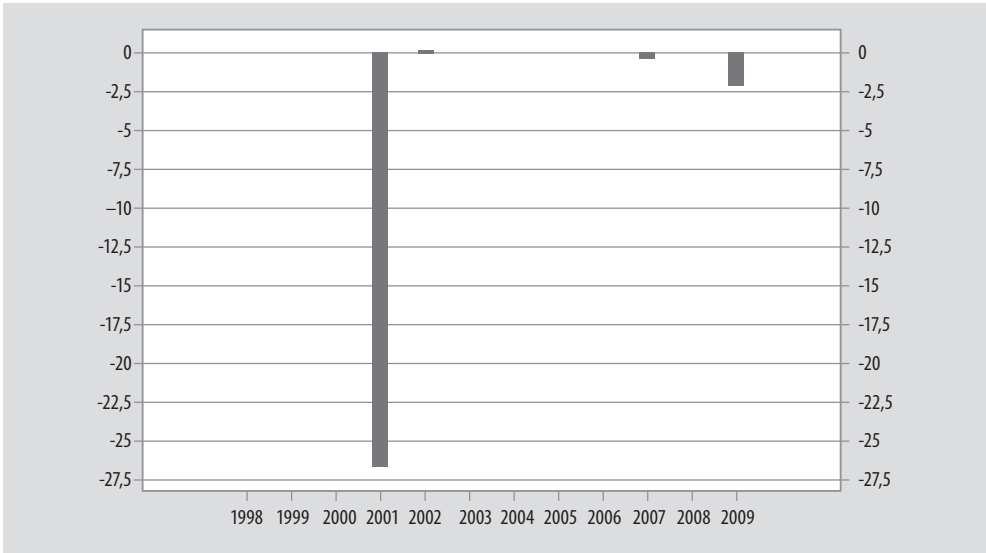
Another year when high emigration was registered, is 2009 but this again does not reflect some actual developments but results from the fact that the identity cards of many Bulgarian citizens expired in that year and upon renewal, many of them listed an permanent address abroad. These people certainly did not emigrate in 2009; they just changed their identity cards.

The National Statistical Institute wrote:³⁰

In 2009 the authorities processed 19 thousand change of current address notices from an address in Bulgaria to an address abroad and more than 3 thousand notices from an address abroad to an address in Bulgaria. Under the Bulgarian legislation, the change of current address in the country is registered in the town or village where the person resides. Bulgarian citizens who live mainly abroad declare their current address in their country of residence by submitting an application for issuing (or re-issuing) Bulgarian identification documents. Therefore, the change of current address notices from an address in Bulgaria to an address abroad, which were processed in 2009, refer to persons who have left

³⁰ <http://www.nsi.bg/EPDOCS/Population09.pdf>

Fig. 2.27. Net migration coefficient plus correction (per 1000 population)



Source: National Statistical Institute

the country both in and prior to 2009 and whose identification documents have expired in 2009; i.e. they refer to the Bulgarian emigrants (table 2.4).

In effect, data on the size of the emigration flow exist only for 2008.³¹ Since June 1, 2008 NSI has been conducting a monthly poll at eight border-crossing checkpoints, which according to Mol data, account for nearly 80% of the traffic to and from the country. Based on these polls for the period June-December 2008, NSI estimates the flow of emigrants at 10,000 people for 2008, the flow of immigrants at 4,000, and the net emigration at 6,000.

Although polls are continuing, NSI produced and published such statistics only once – for the year 2008. In the framework of the present research, the project team asked NSI why statistics are not longer published and was informed that Mol has not provided the necessary data for the number of persons who had left the country.

Table 2.4. Bulgarians, working abroad

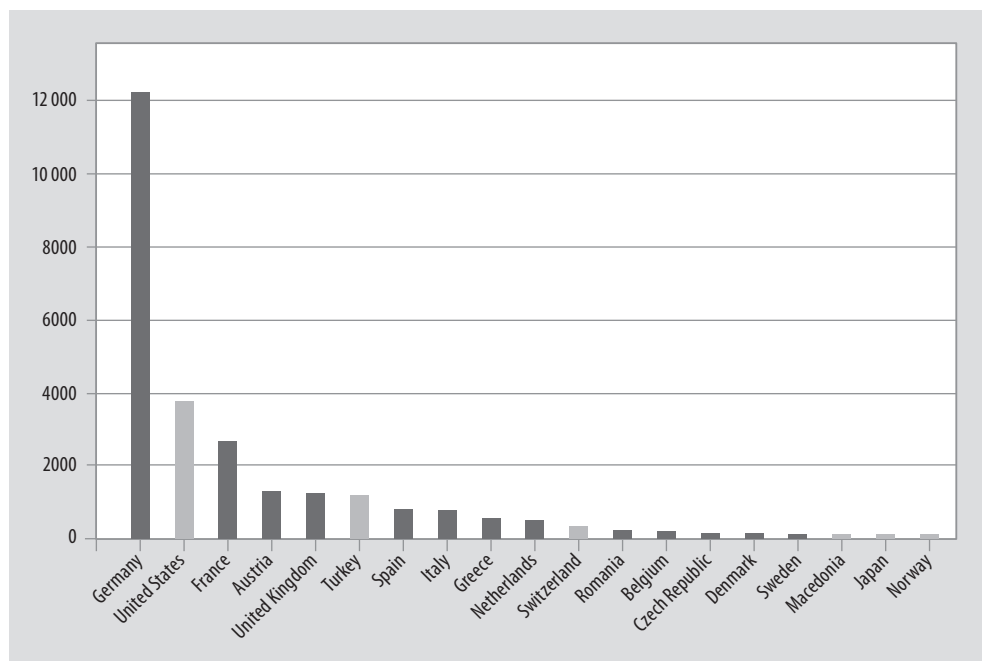
Year	Number (in thousand)
2003	12.5
2004	11.5
2005	9.3
2006	10.3
2007	15.0
2008	16.5
2009	18.7

Source: Workforce survey

Note: The workforce survey is made based on a household sample. Data refer to persons who are accounted for in the permanent population of the country but work abroad. The survey typically captures individual members of a household who work abroad.

³¹ <http://www.nsi.bg/EPDOCS/Migration08.pdf>

Fig. 2.28. Foreign students with Bulgarian citizenship by country, 2007



Source: Eurostat

Note: Data for the United States are for 2003. Only countries with at least 100 students with Bulgarian citizenship are included.

Judging by 2008 data, emigration has reduced significantly over the last few years, while immigration/return of emigrants has increased. Net migration is still negative (i.e. emigration prevails), but its value is quite low. This is probably due to the high economic growth in the period before the crisis, the inflow of investment, the creation of many new jobs and the increase in salaries, all of which reduce incentives for emigration.

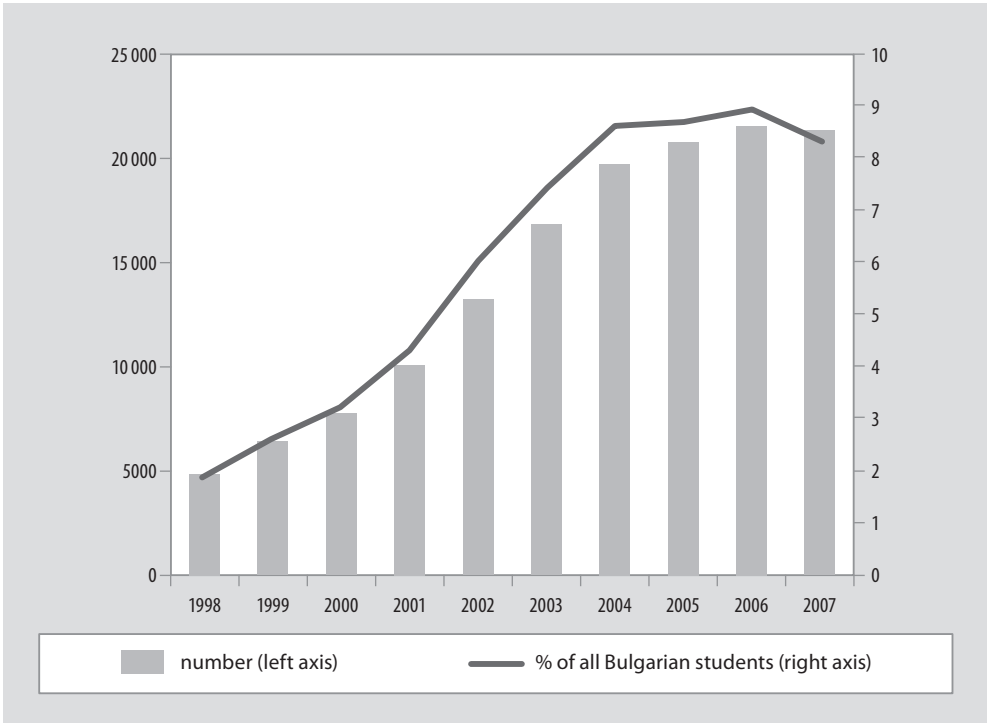
2.3.2.1. Bulgarian students abroad

The total number of Bulgarians who leave the country, gradually declines, but within the general category of 'emigrants', the number of Bulgarian students in Europe has increased significantly.

According to the above mentioned NSI poll, 15% of Bulgarian emigrants in 2008 have left the country in order to continue their education abroad. Eurostat data³² suggest that for a period of 9 years, the number of Bulgarian students in the EU has increased significantly – in 1998, 1.9% of the total number of Bulgarian students studied abroad, while in 2007, this figure is already 8.3%

³² Source: Eurostat.

Fig. 2.29. Foreign students with Bulgarian citizenship in the EU – dynamic



Source: Eurostat

for the EU alone. Since this is the year of Bulgaria’ accession to the EU, one can presume that from that point on, the percentage of Bulgarian students in the EU has increased even further, although the Eurostat system does not provide specific data.

However, data exist on the number of Bulgarian students in certain countries, which traditionally attract foreign students. Three are the countries that account for almost half of all students in the world who study abroad. These are the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany. In the academic year 2008/2009, a total of 2,889 Bulgarians studied in the United States,³³ which marks a nearly 10% decrease compared to the previous year. In the same year, Romanian students in the United States also declined by 10% (down to a total of 2,612), so the reduction could probably be explained with the accession of both countries to the EU.

One can conclude that after 2007, the preference of Bulgarian students has shifted away from the United States towards EU Member States. For the

³³ Source: Institute of International Education, Open Doors, 2009 Regional Fact Sheet – Europe.

period 2003-2008, Bulgaria is steadily among the top ten³⁴ countries, sending students to Germany, while in 2005 it even ranks second, outstripped only by China. Between 4.5% and 6% of all foreign students in Germany come from Bulgaria, which has sent far more students than much larger countries such as Russia and Ukraine, for instance (fig. 2.28, 2.29).

The total number of Bulgarian students in the United States in 2009 was greater than the total number of Romanian students. Given the far larger population of Romania, one can conclude that emigration among students is much more significant for Bulgaria, than it is Romania.

This phenomenon should be studied thoroughly. If Bulgarian students take student loans in the recipient country, it is quite likely that this would have a negative impact on their decision to return to Bulgaria upon graduation. In the long run, this could result in yet another massive “brain drain” after the one registered in the beginning of the 1990s.

Sources

Statistical data

Eurostat – <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/themes>

National Statistical Institute – <http://www.nsi.bg/>

Statistical data, provided by MLSP, the Employment Agency, Mol, MEYS, MFA.

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³⁴ Source: Institute of International Education, Atlas of Student Mobility <http://www.atlas.iienetwork.org>

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Zvezda Vankova

Specifics of Migration Management Policies

The present third part of the research paper is based on semi-structured open-ended interviews with public officials from Bulgaria's administration and the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Bulgaria to the European Union, as well as with international experts working on migration. Written sources used include official documents issued by national and EU institutions, research studies on European migration policy, and publications and presentations of the Odysseus Academic Network.¹

3.1. Highlights in the Development of EU Migration Management Policies

The 21st century continues to bring new waves of migration to EU. On one hand, this phenomenon has multiple consequences for recipient societies in a social, economic, political, and cultural aspect. On the other hand, the European Union itself is facing a dramatic economic and social change, characterized by workforce shortage and progressively ageing population. All this created a need for joint coordinated efforts at the EU level, which were first initiated in the beginning of the 1980s. The politically sensitive areas of immigration, border control and asylum, which have a bearing on the national sovereignty of EU Member States, make the formulation of a common policy a difficult and incoherent process. The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty is a turning point in the development of an EU migration policy and creates potential for a more constructive dialog between the Member States and the EU in this area.

The table below lists the key milestones in the development of the EU migration policy.

¹ The academic network conducts legal research in the areas of migration and asylum in Europe. It was created in 1998 with the financial support of the European Commission's Odysseus programme. For more information see: <http://www.ulb.ac.be/assoc/odysseus/odnetuk.html>

1987	<p>The Single European Act introduces the common market concept*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of internal borders is abolished and the citizens of the EU Member States are allowed to move freely within the Union. • Cooperation in the area of immigration begins as a compensatory instrument of internal market integration.
1993	<p>Treaty of Maastricht</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental cooperation in the area of immigration and asylum is formalized with the newly established “third pillar”. • The legislative process in this area remains slow and difficult.
1999	<p>Treaty of Amsterdam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU competence on asylum and immigration issues is introduced. • Asylum and immigration issues are transferred to the “first pillar”. • A “gradual establishment of an area of freedom, security and justice” is foreseen. • Decisions on migration and asylum are taken: on the basis of qualified majority voting and joint decision-making when it comes to measures in the area of external and internal border control, some aspects of visa policy, freedom of travel of third-country nationals, asylum and illegal immigration policies; on the basis of qualified majority voting and consultation with the European Parliament (EP) when it comes to measures related to administrative cooperation and legislation on the common visa format and the common list of countries whose nationals (do not) require visas to cross external EU borders. • The adoption of measures with regard to legal migration is decided unanimously and in consultation with the EP. • The Schengen Agreement (1985), the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement (1990), the Accession Protocols thereof and all subsequent legislation regulating the crossing of EU external borders and the access to EU territory for citizens possessing short-term visas become part of the legal system of the European Union.** • The European Council in Tampere concludes that decision-making on asylum and migration issues requires the development of a common European policy, and outlines its main elements: partnership with countries of origin, Common European Asylum System, fair treatment of third-country nationals, and management of migration flows. • The first five-year program towards the establishment of “an area of freedom, security and justice” in the EU is adopted in Tampere.

* The present table lists the year of entry into force of the European Treaties mentioned.

** Kostadinova, V., B. Stoeva (2003) Development of the European Immigration Policy. Group for European Prognoses and Research , Open Society Institute – Sofia, p. 6.

2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The European Commission (EC) issues a Communication on Immigration, Integration and Employment[*], advocating for a proactive immigration policy, as the EU increasingly needs economic migration to meet labor market needs.
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hague Program is adopted, becoming the second five-year program towards the establishment of “an area of freedom, security and justice” in the EU for the period 2005-2010, which confirms the Tampere approach.
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The European Commission issues a Green Paper on an EU approach to managing economic migration, noting that there is general support for the development of a European policy on legal migration despite differing opinions on the approach to achieving it. • The Commission publishes a Policy Plan on Legal Migration^{**} which defines a road-map for the remaining period of the Hague Program. • The European Council adopts the Global Approach to Migration, which encourages partnership with countries of origin and regional organizations outside the EU on a broad range of issues: legal and illegal migration, development, refugee protection, trafficking in human beings, as well as coordination of different EU policies – external relations, development, employment, justice and home affairs.
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EC Communication “Towards a Common Immigration Policy”^{***} adopted in December 2007, makes a review of what has been achieved so far and outlines the key elements for developing further EU’s common immigration policy over the next years. • Several funds are created within the framework program on Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows for the period 2007-2013: External Borders Fund, European Refugee Fund, European Return Fund, and European Integration Fund for third country nationals for the period.

* COM (2003) 336 final, Communication of the Commission on Immigration, Integration and Employment Communication of the Commission from 10 May 2005, http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/2004_2007/doc/com_2003_336_final.pdf

** COM (2005) 669 final, Communication from the Commission, Policy Plan on Legal Migration, eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0669en01.pdf

*** See COM (2007)780 final, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Towards a Common Immigration Policy, 5.12.2007, eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52007DC0780:EN:NOT

2008

- The EC adopts a Communication on “A Common immigration policy for Europe: principles, actions and tools”^{*} and a Policy Plan “Asylum – an integrated approach to protection across the EU” to address the remaining elements on immigration and asylum of the 2004 Hague Program.
- The European Pact on Migration and Asylum of the EU French Presidency calls for better management of immigration and enhanced coordination at EU level as required by the creation of an area of free movement without internal borders.

2009

Treaty of Lisbon

- Abolishes the division between the first and the third “pillar” in the “area of freedom, security and justice”.
- Gives EU the authority to develop a common policy and ends the 30-year-long intergovernmental cooperation in this area.
- Codifies the legal framework of the following policies:^{**} management of external borders with a clear reference to the integrated approach to managing borders; introduces new regulation on passports, residence permits and other similar documents; extends the legal basis with regard to visas.
- In the area of migration new legal bases are introduced with regard to return, integration, and trafficking in human beings, given that secondary legislation in this area already existed as a result of the broad interpretation of the Treaty of Amsterdam.^{***}
- Qualified majority voting and joint decision-making (the usual law-making procedure) cover measures related to legal migration and visas. The Council continues to act unanimously and in consultation with the European Parliament when it comes to regulations regarding passports, identity cards, residence permits and all other similar documents.
- Strengthens the role of some EU institutions and creates a Standing Committee on operational cooperation on internal security within the Council (Art. 71).
- Extends the jurisdiction of the European Court to areas related to migration and asylum policies.
- The Charter of Fundamental Rights becomes legally binding and the EU is obliged to join the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR).
- The Stockholm Program is adopted, becoming the third five-year program towards the establishment of an “area of freedom, security and justice” in the EU; it regulates the development of a Common Immigration Policy until 2014.

^{*} COM (2008) 359, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A Common Immigration Policy for Europe: Principles, actions and tools, Brussels, 17.06.2008.

^{**} Papagianni, G. (2008) *Recent Institutional and Policy Dynamics in EU Migration Law*, p. 300.

^{***} *Ibid.*

3.2. Spheres of Competence of EU Bodies and National Governments

The Treaty of Lisbon is a key milestone in migration policy development as it gives EU the authority to introduce a common policy and ends the 30-year-long intergovernmental cooperation in this area. The Treaty specifies the parameters of the future common immigration policy, which should be based on “efficient management”, “fair treatment” of third-country nationals residing legally in Member States, and enhanced measures to combat, illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings (Art. 79).² The Stockholm Program regulates the development of the Common Immigration Policy until 2014.

Nevertheless, immigration remains an area of shared competence between the EU and Member States,³ which retain their right to introduce national measures parallel to the adoption of EU legislation. Under Art. 79 of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU has competence in the following areas of migration policy:⁴

1. In the area of legal migration on issues concerning:

- the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals;
- the issue by Member States of long-term visas and residence permits, including those for the purpose of family reunification;
- the definition of the rights of third-country nationals residing legally in a Member State, including the conditions governing freedom of movement and of residence in other Member States. It should be noted, however, that Member States retain their right to determine volumes of admission of third-country nationals coming from third countries to their territory in order to seek work, whether employed or self-employed (Art. 79 (5)).

2. The integration of immigrants from third countries remains a prerogative of Member States. The EU may only establish measures “to provide incentives and support for the action of Member States with a view to promoting the integration of third-country nationals residing legally in their territories”. Art. 79 (4) excludes any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States.

² Peers, S. (2008) Legislative Update: EU Immigration and Asylum Competence and Decision-Making in the Treaty of Lisbon, p. 219-247. European Journal of Migration and Law (2008) 10, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ The legal basis of external border management and the new legislative provisions on passports are not discussed here as they fall outside the scope of the present study. For more information, see Art. 77 the Treaty of Lisbon.

3. The EU has competence with regard to illegal immigration and unauthorized residence, including removal and repatriation of persons residing without authorization.

4. The EU may also adopt measures to combat trafficking in persons, in particular women and children.

5. The Union may conclude agreements with third countries for the readmission to their countries of origin or provenance of third-country nationals who do not or who no longer fulfill the conditions for entry, presence or residence in the territory of one of the Member States.

Until the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, several legislative measures and non-legislative instruments had been adopted in the area of immigration. Given the focus of the present study, we will discuss here only those related to legal migration and integration.

3.2.1. Key instruments in the area of legal migration

In the period after the Greek Presidency of the EU, the Council adopted three important directives on legal migration:

- Council Directive 2003/86/EC, concerning the conditions of entry and residence for the exercise of the right to family reunification;
- Council Directive 2003/109/EC, concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents;
- Council Directive 2004/114/EC, concerning the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service.

As a result of the “Policy Plan on Legal Migration”,⁵ which defines a roadmap for the remaining period of the Hague Programme, the Commission commits to presenting a series of **legislative initiatives** on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of employment. **Four specific directives** are foreseen, regulating the conditions of entry and residence of certain categories of immigrants – **highly-skilled workers, seasonal workers, intra-corporate transferees, and remunerated trainees.**

Европейската комисията изработва две предложения за Директива отнThe European Commission drafted two proposals: for a Council Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment⁶ and for a Council Directive on a single application procedure for **a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a com-**

⁵ COM (2005) 669 final, Communication from the Commission, policy Plan on Legal Migration eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0669en01.pdf

⁶ COM (2007) 637, 23 October 2007.

mon set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State.⁷

The first Directive, regulating the introduction of a “Blue Card”, was adopted in 2009.⁸ Third-country nationals may apply for a “Blue Card” provided that they have higher education qualifications and at least 5 years of professional experience in the respective field. Candidates who do not possess higher education qualifications but meet the “professional experience” criterion, may also apply for a “Blue Card”. In addition, applicants must find an employer, willing to pay them “1,5 times the average gross annual salary in the Member State concerned”. The “Blue Card” guarantees equal treatment as regards working conditions, pay and dismissal, and gives the owner the right to join local trade unions, receive statutory pension in respect of old age, obtain housing, and access all administrative services.

The “Blue Card” is envisaged as a response to the US “Green Card” in the competition for attracting highly-skilled workers.⁹ According to researchers such as Martin Baldwin-Edwards “the battle” is lost before it has even started. A comparison between the “Blue Card” and its main competitor, the US “Green Card”, suggests that the European instrument falls behind in flexibility and further bureaucratizes, rather than facilitating, the access to the labor market, because different procedures and quotas at the national level remain active; the national mandate to reject an applicant remains broad, and last but not least, residence in a Member State is set to two years, which limits internal mobility. It is unclear how, under these conditions, Europe expects to attract the most highly-skilled workers, competing with traditionally immigrant countries, which provide flexible access to its labor market via different channels.

Agreement on the second proposed Directive is still to be reached. The idea behind the proposal is to simplify admission procedures of entry of third-country nationals in the EU for the purpose of work, thus contributing to a better control of immigration.¹⁰ To that effect, the proposal provides for a “one-stop-shop” system for third-country nationals wishing to live and work in a Member State. It envisages a single application procedure, thereby shortening and accelerating the process, both for employers and for migrants, as well as the provision of a single work and residence permit.

⁷ COM (2007) 638, 23 October 2007.

⁸ Council Directive 2009/50/EC of 25 May 2009 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment (“Blue Card” Directive), OJ 2009 L 155/17.

⁹ Baldwin-Edwards, M. (2008) How to cut the Gordian knot of Europe’s muddled immigration policies. *Europe’s World* –Spring 2009, p. 133.

¹⁰ <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=PRES/09/83&format=HTML&aged=0&lg=en&guiLanguage=en>

The proposed Directive stresses the importance of legally employed third-country nationals who contribute to the prosperity of the European economy in the same way as EU citizens do.¹¹ Acknowledging this, the proposal grants basic socio-economic rights on an equal footing with EU citizens. Equal treatment extends to working conditions, education, vocational training, recognition of qualifications, social security, export of pensions, etc.

According to the Action Plan Implementing the Stockholm Program,¹² by the end of 2010, the Commission would draft the other two specific Directives, regulating seasonal workers and intra-corporate transferees.¹³

With regard to the Directive concerning the intra-corporate transfer of employees, the Commission proposes the adoption of a common set of rules to accelerate procedures for entry of highly-qualified employees – managers, specialists, etc., from countries outside the EU.¹⁴ The Directive will seek to provide a simplified system for mobility of such staff within the EU, as well as equal working conditions with those guaranteed to employees in EU companies. Member States will retain their competence on decisions related to the number of transferees, while provisions are envisaged to guarantee the temporary nature of migration (up to 3 years for managers and specialists, and 1 year for qualified trainees).

The Commission also develops a series of **non-legislative instruments**, seeking to significantly improve the exchange and coordination of all available resources in the area of immigration. These measures include the creation of an EU Immigration Portal (currently under development), as well as the review and further development of the European Job Mobility Portal and the European Migration Network.

In 2005 the European Council adopted the Global Approach to Migration, which encourages partnership with countries of origin and regional organizations outside the EU on a broad range of issues: legal and illegal migration, development, refugee protection, trafficking in human beings, as well as coordination of different EU policies – external relations, development, employment, justice and home affairs.

In the context of the Global Approach to Migration, several financial and technical instruments to facilitate cooperation, which are being implemented as appropriate. One of these instruments is circular migration, which is an attempt at a more flexible labor migration management to the benefit of the

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² COM (2010) 171, 20 April 2010.

¹³ http://www.cepol.europa.eu/fileadmin/website/newsroom/newsitems/JAI_335.pdf

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/bulgaria/press_corner/news/130710-skilled_bg.htm

countries of origin, the recipient countries and the migrants themselves.¹⁵ This is a form of migration, which is managed in a way allowing some degree of legal mobility back and forth between two countries. The two main forms of circular migration, most relevant in the EU context are:

- **Circular migration of third-country nationals settled in the EU.** This category of circular migration gives people the opportunity to engage in an activity (business, professional, voluntary or other) in their country of origin while retaining their main residence in one of the Member States.

- **Circular migration of persons residing in a third country.** Circular migration could create an opportunity for persons residing in a third country to come to the EU temporarily for work, study, training or a combination of these, on the condition that, at the end of the period for which they were granted entry, they must re-establish their main residence and their main activity in their country of origin. Circularity can be enhanced by giving migrants the possibility, once they have returned, to retain some form of privileged mobility to and from the Member States where they were formerly residing, for example in the form of simplified admission/re-entry procedures.

3.2.2. Key instruments in the area of integration

A network of National Contact Points on Integration has been set up in March 2003, which is considered a key first step towards the development of a coherent integration policy at the EU level. The National Contact Points serve as a forum for the exchange of information and best practices in the area of immigrant integration and facilitate the integration policy coordination of initiatives at national and EU level.

In 2004 the Commission began presenting an Annual Report on Migration and Integration, which aims at facilitating the development of initiatives for more efficient migration and integration within the EU.

The first EU Ministerial Conference on Integration was held under the Dutch Presidency. The meeting aimed at discussing and formulating common basic principles for immigrant integration policy in the EU. Eleven Common Basic Principles on Integration were adopted as non-binding measures. Under these principles integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States.

As a result of the adoption of the Common Basic Principles on Integration, a “road-map” for their implementation at the national and EU level was developed, including the following mechanisms:

¹⁵ COM (2007) 248, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on circular migration and mobility partnerships between the European Union and third countries. - eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0248:FIN:EN:PDF

- **Handbook on Integration** – three editions of the Handbook on Integration have already been published, presenting best practices in immigrant integration policies among Member States, divided into thematic areas;

- **European Web Site on Integration** – an information database of best integration practices at the EU level and in Member States (www.integration.eu);

- **European Integration Forum**;

- **European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals** – a financial instrument of the general program on “Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows” established in 2007, which aims at supporting the integration of third-country nationals.

The Stockholm Program envisages the further development of structure and instruments for exchange of good practices and coordination with other relevant policies in areas such as employment, education and social inclusion.

The better defined competences of the EU in the area of migration, the enhanced role of European institutions, and the changes in the decision-making process in the area of legal migration (see table) as a result of the Treaty of Lisbon, have the potential to lead to the development of a more comprehensive common policy on migration and to strengthen the level of harmonization of national legislation in this area.¹⁶

¹⁶ Peers, S. (2008) Op. cit.

3.3. Competent National Institutions

The adoption of the *acquis communautaire* with respect to the free movement of people within the EU and the protection of common borders, was an important part of Bulgaria's preparation for membership. In the context of this process, a major political and administrative effort was made to adapt Bulgaria's legislation and to strengthen administrative capacity. At the same time, the foundations of a Bulgarian national migration policy were also laid.

A broad circle of government institutions participates in the process of managing the free movement of people within the EU and implementing the national migration and integration policy:

- The Migration Directorate of the Ministry of Interior (Mol) exercises administrative control with respect to the residence of third-country nationals by issuing residence permits and imposing measures of compulsion against foreign nationals residing illegally in the country. The functions of this institution are regulated by the Foreign Nationals in the Republic of Bulgaria Act.

- The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP) implements workforce migration and labor market access policies. The legal framework regulating these issues is contained in the Labor Code, the Social Security Code, and the Social Assistance Act, among others.

- The Employment Agency (EA) has the authority to issue work permits to employees willing to hire third-country nationals. These procedures are regulated by the Employment Promotion Act, and the Regulation on the Conditions and Procedures for the issuance, refusal and cancellation of work permits for foreign nationals in the Republic of Bulgaria, among others.

- The State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad (SABA) and the Minister without portfolio responsible for expatriate Bulgarians implement the government's policy towards Bulgarians abroad. Regulations concerning expatriate Bulgarians may be found in the Act on Bulgarians, living outside the Republic of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Citizenship Act, and the Act on Bulgarian Identity Documents, among others.

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is responsible for issuing visas through the diplomatic and consular offices of Bulgaria abroad. Provisions to this effect are contained in the Foreign Nationals in the Republic of Bulgaria Act.

Other state institutions involved in the implementation of Bulgaria's migration policy, which however fall beyond the scope of the present study, include the State Agency for Refugees (SAR), the General Border Police Directorate of the Mol, the Ministry of Justice (which is involved in the procedure of granting Bulgarian citizenship), the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (MEYS, prior to 2009 Ministry of Education and Science – MES), the Citizen Registration and Administrative Services General Directorate of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW) and others.

The development and implementation of the national migration policy is supported by:

- **The National Statistical Institute (NSI)**, which collects statistics on demographic trends in the country, external and internal migration, labor market, etc. Particularly useful for the efficient management of migration are the NSI surveys on border traffic, workforce dynamics, as well as Census of the Population and Housing in Bulgaria, whose pilot phase began in September 2010.

- **Information on migration trends is also provided by the Bulgarian National Bank (BNB)**, which has developed a methodology for estimating money transfers from Bulgarians abroad.

3.4. Management Instruments: National Strategy and Programs

3.4.1. Free movement of people

Bulgaria implements in full the *acquis communautaire* on freedom of movement for workers within the Community (Regulation 1612/68), which means that citizens of the EU, the European Economic Area and the Swiss Confederation do not need to obtain work permits to be employed in Bulgaria. This category of citizens also have access to registration in the Labor Bureaus.

The Act on Entering, Residing and Leaving the Republic of Bulgaria of European Union Citizens and Members of Their Families stipulates that every citizen of the Community has the right to reside in Bulgaria for a period of three months without any formal registration. Persons intending to reside for a longer period or permanently in Bulgaria are required to register with the competent office of the Mol Migration Directorate where they are issued a certificate for long-term or permanent residence.

Bulgaria has transposed all EU Directives on the free movement of workers. Nevertheless, the *acquis communautaire* in this area is still new for the country, therefore conclusions on the quality of adopted legislation could be made only after administrative practice on implementing it develops further.¹⁷

Restrictions for access of Bulgarian workers to the labor market in Member States

Although Bulgaria guarantees free access to its labor market for all EU citizens, the Treaty of Accession provided an opportunity for Member States to impose restrictions on the legal access of Bulgarian nationals to their labor markets, envisaging transitional periods in which the access to Member State labor markets may be temporarily restricted. At the first stage envisaged in the transitional provisions on the free movement of Bulgarian and Romanian workers, 15 Member States imposed restriction on the free movement of Bulgarian workers. The first stage ended on December 31, 2008. Eleven EU-25 Member States¹⁸ informed the Commission of their decision to continue to implement their national legislation on labor market access after January 1, 2009. Four Member States – Greece, Spain, Hungary and Portugal, as well as Denmark as of May 1, 2009, which previously restricted the access of Bulgarian and Romanian workers to their labor markets, decided to remove restrictions and now implement the EU legislation on the free movement of workers.

¹⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=475&langId=en>

¹⁸ Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, France, Italy, Lithuania, Austria, Malta, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Thus, currently restrictions for Bulgarians exist only to the labor markets of Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, France, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

In 2011 Member States may extend the period of restriction by 2 years at most but they have to provide enough evidence that removal of restrictions would severely disturb their labor markets. Moreover, the final decision is taken by the EC. After 2013 all restrictions will be abolished.

In July 2010 the Chairperson of the Bulgarian National Assembly, Tsetska Tsacheva called parliament spokespersons of the 10 Member States to remove restrictions,¹⁹ while a few months before that the EC issued the same recommendation to Member States.

A Commission report on transitional arrangements regarding free movement of workers,²⁰ issued at the end of 2008, concludes that freedom of movement has not led to serious disturbances on labor markets. Meanwhile, it has contributed to economic growth by satisfying labor market shortages in Member States and has had no negative impact on the wages and unemployment of local workers in the destination countries. According to the Commission lifting restrictions would decrease the incidence of undeclared work and the negative consequences associated to that.

3.4.2. National Migration and Integration Strategy, 2008-2015

3.4.2.1. Elaboration and goals of this instrument

Targeted efforts to develop a strategy in this area began in 2007 when Bulgaria became a full member of the EU. By virtue of an order by the Prime Minister, a working group was established to discuss the framework of the strategy. It was set up under the Minister of Foreign Affairs and comprised representatives of different line ministries, trade unions and employer associations. The Secretariat of the working group was placed at the MLSP. The strategy's framework was published on the website of the Council of Ministers to encourage a public debate on the issue. Comments and opinions by non-governmental organizations were collected and the relevant institutions proceeded to elaborating the text of the strategy in detail. A new working group was created involving representatives of the International Organization for Migration in Bulgaria (IOM), SABA, the academic community, the trade unions, and the Economic Initiative Union. A new discussion of the text followed in the inter-institutional working group "Migration and integration of migrant workers and their families", which was established as early as 2004 following

¹⁹ <http://dnes.dir.bg/news/rabota-evropeyski-sauz-tzetzka-tza%D1%87eva-6659260>

²⁰ http://www.igfse.pt/upload/docs/gabdoc/2008/11-Nov/MEMO-08-718_EN.pdf

a recommendation by the EU. The inter-institutional working group, which comprises experts from the administration, the academic community and the NGO sector, finalized the text of the strategy.

The development of the strategy set the grounds for the elaboration of a consistent national policy on managing migration and integration. The National Migration and Integration Strategy adopted in 2008 pursues two strategic goals:

- to attract Bulgarian citizens and foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin to return permanently or settle in Bulgaria;
- to develop and implement a modern policy on accepting third-country nationals with a view to supporting Bulgarian economy and regulating and controlling migration processes.

With respect to **the first strategic goal**, the strategy envisages two programs: the first targeted to encouraging Bulgarian emigrants abroad to return permanently to the country, and the second aimed at attracting foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin to settle permanently in Bulgaria.

Several measures are planned to encourage the return of Bulgarian emigrants. Some are related to research of the Bulgarian diaspora abroad with a special focus on young highly-qualified expatriates: studying the problems they face, analyzing their motivation to return and seek professional realization in their homeland, researching incentives for investment activities among Bulgarian emigrants abroad, etc. Other measures include field activities among the target group: initiating labor exchanges for direct negotiations between specialists from the circles of the young highly-qualified Bulgarian emigrants and representatives of Bulgarian private initiative and foreign business in Bulgaria, organizing annual forums on the problems of Bulgarian youth organizations abroad and on the problems of the communities they represent, extending the network of labor and social services²¹ provided by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in other countries, maintaining stable connections with the Bulgarian communities and their organizational structures abroad.

A key instrument to attract foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin to settle permanently in Bulgaria is the "Green Card" document, planned as a mechanism that would grant foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin equal rights to those enjoyed by Bulgarian citizens.

The second strategic goal envisages the development of mechanisms for a balanced admission of immigrants from third countries and their integration into Bulgarian society, as well as the efficient management and control of migration processes. The justification of this priority emphasizes that

²¹ In the last few years the MSLP created a network of labor and social affairs offices in the embassies of Bulgaria abroad. These services provide information on the conditions of living and employment in Bulgaria to third-country nationals.

the balanced approach will be pursued based on the EU “circular” migration instrument, i.e. the return of the immigrants in their country of origin after the expiry of their employment contract will be regulated in advance. This provision is made to prevent “brain drain” from the countries of origin.

The strategy is based on the understanding that migration policy is interconnected with other sector policies: health, educational, business, demographic, environmental, transport, policy against poverty, policy for securing healthy and safe labor conditions etc., which requires coordination of measures and inter-institutional cooperation with a view to achieving compatibility and efficiency.

With regard to the admission of immigrants from third countries, the strategy envisages measures in several areas:

- Updating legislation in this field;
- Identifying labor market needs and permanent shortages of specific categories of workers on the Bulgarian labor market;
- Regulated admission of foreign nationals – identifying mechanisms to attract and integrate third-country nationals;
- Pursuing a consistent and coherent policy towards refugees seeking asylum or protection.

The second strategic goal includes also efficient management and control of migration processes. The strategy envisages measures in the following areas:

- Efficient control of external borders;
- Effective prevention of trafficking in human beings;
- Repatriation policy.

3.4.3. Coordination of Strategy Implementation and Decision-making in the Area of Migration and Integration

The strategy envisages the creation of two structures, responsible for its coordination and implementation: the National Council for Coordination of the Issues on Migration Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria and the National Council on Labor Migration (NCLM) under the Minister of Labor and Social Policy. According to public officials interviewed for the purposes of the present study, “the high-profile working group under the Minister of Foreign Affairs is expected to evolve into a National Council for Coordination of the Issues on Migration Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria. This Council is yet to be established but the reasons are rather bureaucratic and have to do with the expected changes in political leadership in view of the 2009 elections”.

The National Council on Labor Migration is already operational as a permanent advisory body under the Minister of Labor and Social Policy, responsible for developing and implementing the government policy in the area of labor migration. The Council comprises representatives of MLSP, MFA, Mol, MEYS, the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism, MRDPW, SABA, SAR, the Executive Directors of the Employment Agency and the General Labor Inspection. The Council's Operational Regulations require that government's representatives in its composition must be at least deputy ministers to ensure political commitment to pursuing the declared goals. The Council includes an equal number of representatives of national employers' and workers' organizations and the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB). The Council meets at least once per year and may convene at irregular sessions upon the initiative of its chairperson or any of its members. The Council's functions include organizing labor market needs and shortages, proposing measures for addressing them, discussing the admission of workers from third countries, proposing amendments to the strategy and measures, etc.

A weakness of the National Strategy is that it does not envisage the creation of a single national body but rather relies on several inter-institutional structures, which puts effective coordination at risk. The creation of a single body that would act as a secretariat could facilitate the collection of statistical data, the analysis of migration situation and the cooperation with other Member States with regard to exchange of data and good practices. A similar recommendation was made by the Economic and Social Council of Bulgaria, which proposed the establishment of a Migration Agency under the Council of Ministers without appointing new administrative staff but rather by restructuring existing bodies and extending their functions and competences to achieve more efficient migration policy management.²²

The creation of a single national body would help achieve better coordination among the different government institutions and overcome the problem with the lack of consolidated statistics on the movement of Bulgarian citizens in and outside the territory of the country. The Mol still remains the main body collecting data related to migration flows to and from Bulgaria but it is unclear whether and how are these data processed. Moreover, they are not accessible to the public. Data on labor and academic migration are scattered among the Employment Agency (work permits issued), the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (professors and students), the Ministry of Health (medical staff working abroad under bilateral cooperation agreements), the Agency for Bulgarians Abroad and other institutions. This problem will become even more serious given that under the new Regulation on community

²² Opinion on the National Migration and Integration Strategy, 2008-2015 by the Economic and Social Council of Bulgaria, July 18, 2008, www.esc.bg/news.php?lang=0

statistics on migration and asylum, Bulgaria will be obliged to submit to the EU information on the migration situation in the country.

A positive development is that in the summer of 2010, the BNB revised entirely its methodology for estimation of money transfers from Bulgarians, living permanently abroad.²³ Until then the BNB methodology captured only transfers above BGN 5,000 made via formal channels – banks and money transfer operators. The new methodology seeks to capture all transfers, formal, informal, large and small, and is a key step forward in the collection of reliable information on migration flows.

3.4.4. Strategy Implementation

The implementation of the strategy is set down in detail in annual action plans. Annual reports are produced.

3.4.4.1. Instruments targeted to Bulgarians abroad

According to the Annual Report on the Implementation of the 2008 Action Plan, measures to attract Bulgarian expatriates include the creation of a database on the Bulgarian diaspora, which includes social and demographic characteristics. The database is accessible at the website of the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad and people can register online by themselves. In 2008, the network of labor and social service offices of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy was extended with the addition of two new offices at the embassies of Bulgaria in Nicosia, Cyprus and in Dublin, Ireland. Several surveys were conducted, including “Motivation of Bulgarian workers in Spain to return to Bulgaria and seek employment with Bulgarian employers”, carried out by MLSP, and “Prospects for Professional Realization in Bulgaria”, carried out by SABA. The experience of similar institutions abroad on attracting young expatriates was studied and a report was produced by MFA, MEYS, MLSP and SABA. The number of schools at the embassies of the Republic of Bulgaria increased.

Since 2008, MLSP has been organizing labor fairs and information campaigns to attract expatriate Bulgarians²⁴ living in countries such as Greece, Spain, Germany and others, which traditionally accept Bulgarian emigrants. These activities aim at facilitating direct contacts between highly-qualified Bulgarian emigrants and representatives of Bulgarian companies and international businesses in Bulgaria. According to the Annual Report on the Implementation of the 2009 Action Plan, two information events were organized

²³ Methodology for Estimation of Item “Workers’ Remittances, Credit”, Statistics Directorate, Balance of Payments and External Debt Division, BNB, March 2010.

²⁴ MLSP cooperates on this with MFA, SABA, the Employment Agency at MLSP and the network of labor and social service offices abroad.

in Germany within the reporting period, but the only indicator cited is the number of participants: 400 young Bulgarians, graduating from universities in Germany and 10 Bulgarian and international companies.

So far no data exist on the number of young specialists who have actually returned or on any other indicator that would help measure the efficiency of those instruments. According to public officials interviewed for the purposes of the present study, the processing of such data requires human resources, which the relevant structural units of MLSP do not possess due to downsizing in administration. Another reason cited was the financial crisis, which according to the respondents also undermined the full implementation of these measures.

Since the decision to emigrate is a highly personal one and has to do mainly with the welfare of a given household, even without reliable assessment on the efficiency of these measures, one could predict that it is unlikely for such activities to lead to the return of Bulgarian expatriates. The return of emigrants could be achieved only through reforms that would increase the disposable income of households.

Although measures, which have been implemented so far could hardly encourage Bulgarian emigrants to return to their homeland, they have contributed to maintaining sustainable links between the Bulgarian state administration and the Bulgarian communities and their organizational structures abroad. In this respect the efforts of MLSP and the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad to create databases, open Bulgarian schools abroad and extend the network of labor and social service offices, are certainly a positive step forward. In the long run these measures could act as a secondary factor motivating emigrants' decision to return to Bulgaria. As it was already noted however, only large scale reforms aimed at improving the welfare of households and increasing their disposable income could actually guarantee the return of Bulgarian emigrants.

3.4.4.2. Instruments targeted to attracting foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin

Green Card

According to the Annual Report on the Implementation of the 2008 Action Plan, the inter-institutional working group comprising representatives of Mol, MFA, the Ministry of Justice, MLSP, and SABA has developed a draft Bulgarian Green Card Application and Issue Mechanism, which includes, among others, principles and procedures for issuing the Green Card document; range of rights it provides; necessary legislative amendments for its implementation. Public officials interviewed for the purposes of the present study, explained that the process was suspended before legislative amendments were intro-

duced because of the rise in unemployment in Bulgaria and the onset of the financial crisis. The 2010 Action Plan envisages an assessment of the need for such mechanism in view of the current situation.

After the appointment of a special Minister without portfolio in mid 2009, several new initiatives were launched with respect to foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin. These include amendments to the Bulgarian Citizenship Act, which are expected to facilitate the procedure for obtaining Bulgarian citizenship, as well as a decision to draft a new Act on Bulgarians and Bulgarian Communities Abroad.

As far as attracting foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin is concerned however, the introduction of a Green Card in the classic application of this instrument and the measures to facilitate the procedure for obtaining Bulgarian citizenship constitute two alternative policies; the implementation of the first in fact makes the second pointless and vice versa. If foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin have easy and quick access to citizenship, it is unclear why would they apply for a Green Card.

It should be decided which of the two approaches to follow. The Green Card is definitely a better solution, as it is usually linked to labor market needs, i.e. it will give access to Bulgaria only to foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin for whom jobs exist. The facilitated procedure for granting Bulgarian citizenship does not take into account the situation on the labor market and this is a serious problem. Under this procedure foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin would enter the country easily and would have equal access to the labor market without any guarantees that vacant positions would be available for them. Under these circumstances there is a serious risk for them to remain unemployed and burden the national social assistance system, rather than contributing to the economy. This risk should be taken into account in implementing the facilitated procedure for granting Bulgarian citizenship.

Bilateral Employment Agreements

Currently the admission of third-country nationals is decided on a case-by-case basis. The strategy envisages the signing of bilateral employment agreements with third countries coupled with bilateral social security agreements, where feasible. According to the Annual Report on the Implementation of the 2008 Action Plan, a draft template for such framework agreement has already been elaborated and approved by the National Council on Labor Migration. Draft labor migration agreements, developed on the basis of the approved template, have been sent to four countries: Moldova, Macedonia, Ukraine, and Armenia, and process of consultations has been initiated. The countries have been selected in view of the priorities of the National Strategy and the goal is to attract foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin who are expected to integrate more easily into Bulgarian society. According public

officials interviewed for the purposes of the present study, no agreements have been signed so far due to the financial crisis and the political changes in some of the countries.

The selection of these countries, as well as the decision to target this instrument exclusively to foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin, are based on the conviction that this category of immigrants can integrate more easily. This conviction however is not supported by any meaningful justification or research. Until this happens, it is better not to prioritize this political goal and make decisions on the access of foreign nationals to the Bulgarian labor market only based on two considerations: labor market needs and the qualification of applying foreign nationals.

Despite these concerns, the elaboration of bilateral employment agreements is a positive step towards developing the necessary set of instruments for the implementation of the national migration policy. It is advisable however that this instrument be applied in the future to a broader circle of third countries, rather than be limited only to attracting foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin.

3.4.4.3. Instruments targeted to third-country nationals

Since its establishment, the National Council on Labor Migration has had only one session,²⁵ in the beginning of 2009, at which a mechanism was discussed to define annual sector quota for a balanced admission of workers from third countries to compensate for workforce shortages. According to public officials interviewed for the purposes of the present study, the only quota application submitted so far has been presented in the beginning of 2009 by the Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association (BICA). However, the documentation submitted was too scattered to allow for making an informed decision. By the time BICA organized and consolidated the required information, the impact of the financial crisis was already felt in Bulgaria and the enterprises no longer needed the workforce they had applied for. The public officials interviewed stressed that this experience encouraged the development of instructions on the documents that need to be submitted together with quota applications.

According to the Annual Report on the Implementation of the 2008 Action Plan, a System for Assessing and Estimating the Need for Workers with Specific Qualifications in Bulgaria is currently being developed. It would help achieve better coordination between labor demand and supply in Bulgaria by assessing, identifying and estimating the need for workers with specific qualifications in the economy. The analytical information, which would be generated as a result of this mechanism, would be used to determine sector quota for the admission of third-country nationals.

²⁵ Work on the present paper was finalized in June 2010.

Although these initiatives were not put into practice due to the economic and financial crisis, the mechanism for determining sector quota, the system for assessing and estimating workforce needs, as well as the draft bilateral agreements indicate that efforts are being made to lay the grounds of a national migration policy, which could turn in the mid- and long-term into a reliable instrument for managing migration flows.

It is important however that this instrument is used for political goals that are formulated based on a clear awareness of the needs and a sensible choice of the best solutions. Otherwise, the admission of immigrants without taking into consideration the long-term needs of the local economy and labor market, would only increase the burden on the social assistance system.

3.4.4.4. Instruments targeted to attracting highly-skilled migrants

In view of the introduction of the European “Blue Card”, a survey of applicable legislation has already been conducted and currently amendments to the Foreign Nationals in the Republic of Bulgaria Act are being discussed as a first step towards transposing the Directive. According to the public officials interviewed, the provisions related to the introduction of the “Blue Card” will also be drafted by the end of the year and approved by the government. The “Blue Card” will not affect the mainstream procedure for obtaining work permit. The market test will continue to be performed by the MLSP Employment Agency since in the first two years each Member State apply its own national regime. Within these two years “Blue Card” holders would not be able to change their employer. The card itself will be issued by Mol following approval by the Employment Agency.

The strategy implementation reports, which have been produced so far, suggest that as far as highly-skilled immigrants are concerned, policy-makers rely entirely on the European “Blue Card”. It should be borne in mind, however, that given the current economic and social situation, Bulgaria is unable to compete with other Member States in attracting the best specialists and it is advisable to consider developing a targeted national policy to encourage the entry of highly-skilled migrants.

3.4.4.5. Integration measures and management of the European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals 2007-2013

Bulgaria has launched the implementation of the European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals, which is part of the general program on “Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows”. The Annual Report on the Implementation of the 2009 Action Plan suggests that within the report-

ing period a total of 6 grant schemes were implemented – 4 under the Annual Program for 2007 and 2 under the Annual Program for 2008. As a result 20 projects were contracted and carried out; evaluation is currently under way.

The launch of the European Integration Fund in Bulgaria is an important milestone in the development of the country's migration policy. The expertise accumulated as a result of the projects carried out under the Fund and the existing European practice in this area could be used to underpin an efficient integration policy targeted to all immigrants from third countries, as well as to develop administrative capacity for effective implementation of the fundamental common principles on integration.

Currently such a targeted integration policy exists mainly with respect to foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin, refugees and asylum seekers. In the context of the growing nationalist and populist sentiments in Bulgaria, efforts should be made for the effective integration of immigrants from third countries who already live in the country in order to avoid segregation of the kind that exists for the Roma minority.²⁶ A policy needs to be developed capable of guaranteeing fundamental human rights – political, social and economic – through a set of instruments, which have already proven their efficiency: orientation and multicultural education programs, sustainable dialog with immigrant communities, information centers, etc. Much experience has already been accumulated with regard to the integration of refugees in Bulgaria, for instance in what concerns the provision of Bulgarian language courses for refugees. Such good practices could evolve into a sustainable mechanism for facilitating immigrant integration.

Several projects for developing and strengthening administrative capacity for the integration of third-country immigrants were carried out under the EIF, but capacity still remains relatively limited due to inadequate qualification and lack of specialized education on migration issues. To the best knowledge of the research team, specialized education on migration is currently offered by only one university (New Bulgarian University). For most local public officials, these issues are unknown and irrelevant, and there is no recognized need to take targeted measures for the integration of this group of immigrants.

It should be noted that in the future, immigration is expected to create a serious pressure on public institutions in Bulgaria, as certain public services would need to be provided in a language that immigrants understand. This means that funds for professional translation would have to be allocated and good practices of other Member States would need to be studied, such as for instance the experience of the Integration and Diversity Municipal Depart-

²⁶ Vankova, Z. (2009). Author of Subsection B.7: Migration. Country report: Bulgaria. "The Unfinished Business of the Fifth Enlargement", European Policies Initiative, http://eupi.osi.bg/fce/001/0070/files/01_Bulgaria_online.pdf

ment in Vienna, Austria,²⁷ where 2/3 of the staff have a migration background. They come from 14 different countries and speak 23 languages, which is an alternative to allocating additional funds for translation.

3.4.4.6. Participation in decision-making at the EU level and involvement in the formulation of the common migration policy

The development of national positions for the purpose of decision-making at EU level is carried out through a national coordination mechanism for European affairs regulated by Council of Ministers Decree No 85/2007, as amended by Council of Ministers Decree No 212 of August 27, 2009.²⁸ The two working groups that address issues related to migration, are: WG 2 “Free Movement of People” with leading institution the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, which addresses issues related to EU citizens’ rights, free movement of workers, labor migration and others, and WG 23 “Cooperation in the Area of Justice and Home Affairs” with leading institution the Ministry of Interior.

Furthermore Bulgaria participates in the information exchange networks at the EU level through the Contact Point for the European Migration Network and the national contact units for immigrant integration.

Bulgaria is part of the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership – an initiative under the Global Approach to Migration, which aims at encouraging circular migration by strengthening the administrative capacity of the Moldovan administration. This is done mainly through exchange of experience on migration and training of experts. Activities are project-based and are coordinated with interested Member States, which decide the areas in which they could contribute experience and expertise. Bulgaria participates actively in this instrument for Moldova, exchanging experience on national strategy development and management with state administration experts.

Bulgaria is also one of the Member States involved in the negotiations for the establishment of a similar partnership instrument with Georgia.

The interviews conducted for the purposes of the present study, as well as the reports on the implementation of the National Strategy suggest that Bulgaria is still implementing rather passively EU measures aimed at developing a common policy on migration and is quite reserved in contributing its own ideas and suggestions based on a clearly defined national interest.

There are three main reasons for this. On one hand, administrative capacity in migration policy management is still weak, as mentioned earlier, and on the other hand, inertia still exists from the pre-accession period when the Bulgarian administration only translated and implemented decisions that

²⁷ www.wien.gv.at/integration/

²⁸ <http://www.euaffairs.government.bg/index.php?page=home>

had been already adopted at the EU level. A very important reason however is the lack of opportunities for civic participation in the formulation of Bulgarian positions for decision-making at EU level. In migration policy in particular, draft Bulgarian positions should be publicized and coordinated with a broad circle of stakeholders, including employers, researchers, human rights activists etc.

In the short term the administration should develop capacity not only to meet EU membership requirements in the area of migration policy, but also to contribute meaningfully and actively in the formulation of national and common European migration policy priorities, while encouraging democratic and civic participation.

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Case Studies

Evelina Staykova, Tihomira Trifonova

4.1. Immigrants in Bulgaria

4.1.1. Introduction

Immigration to Bulgaria is a new phenomenon, whose roots date back to socialist times. Bilateral agreements signed by socialist Bulgaria opened the doors to international exchange.

Migration flows are neither unidirectional, from poorer to richer countries, nor incidental. Some of the poorest countries have a very small number of emigrants. It would be more adequate to say that migration flows follow relatively predictable models and are limited in time and scope. Many of these models are historically connected to economic, military, post-colonial or cultural specifics that drive, for instance, people from North Africa to France, Albanians to Italy or Georgians to Russia. International mobility is in most cases facilitated by the presence of already established immigrant communities and diasporas.

Moreover, human mobility is getting increasingly complicated. As the number of migrants grows, so does the number of legal and administrative categories that international organizations use to classify them. People who move across international borders, are qualified as permanent settlers or temporary residents, with legal or illegal status, skilled or unskilled workers, foreign students, persons reuniting with their families, transit travelers, asylum seekers or refugees. One immigrant can actually fall into two or more of these categories. The forms of migration, which people in different regions of the world choose, also differ significantly.

The present survey of migration in Bulgaria takes into account the factors that influence the characteristics and specifics of this phenomenon. Three are the main groups of factors that should be considered when assessing the current migration situation in the country – political, economic and strategic.

From a political point of view, Bulgaria as an EU Member State is increasingly becoming an attractive destination for migrants from both the EU and third countries. Immigration to the country is still limited but with a clear upward trend. The presence of persons from economically and socially less developed countries is getting ever more pronounced. As an external border

of the EU for certain groups of migrants, Bulgaria is often a transit station on their road to Central and Eastern Europe.

As far as economic factors are concerned, a key development is the global economic crisis of the last few months, which had at least three effects on migration. First, it slowed down migration processes in the entire EU; second, it triggered a wave of reverse migration, driving many migrants to return to their home countries; and third, according to many experts, it has had a particularly serious impact on immigrants in Europe.

The demographic development of the country is one of the strategic areas of the national policy. The Demographic Development Strategy of Bulgaria is the national response to the demographic changes, which confront the entire Europe and are expressed in increasingly lower birthrate, ageing population and large migration flows. A proactive migration policy aimed at attracting immigrants could prove decisive for overcoming these demographic problems.

It should be noted that statistics and information on immigrants in Bulgaria are scarce. The assessment of immigrant communities is further complicated by their different legal and social status.

In analyzing immigrants in Bulgaria, the present section also discusses refugee groups, whose residence status is quite different. For the purposes of the present analysis, immigrants are those non-Bulgarian citizens who have lived in the country for at least one year. Quite a few experts on migration make another, even subtler distinction of migration flows, referring to persons coming from Member States as migrants, and to third-country nationals as immigrants.¹ For the purposes of the present analysis, the term “immigrants” shall include both groups of foreign nationals.

4.1.2. Migration situation

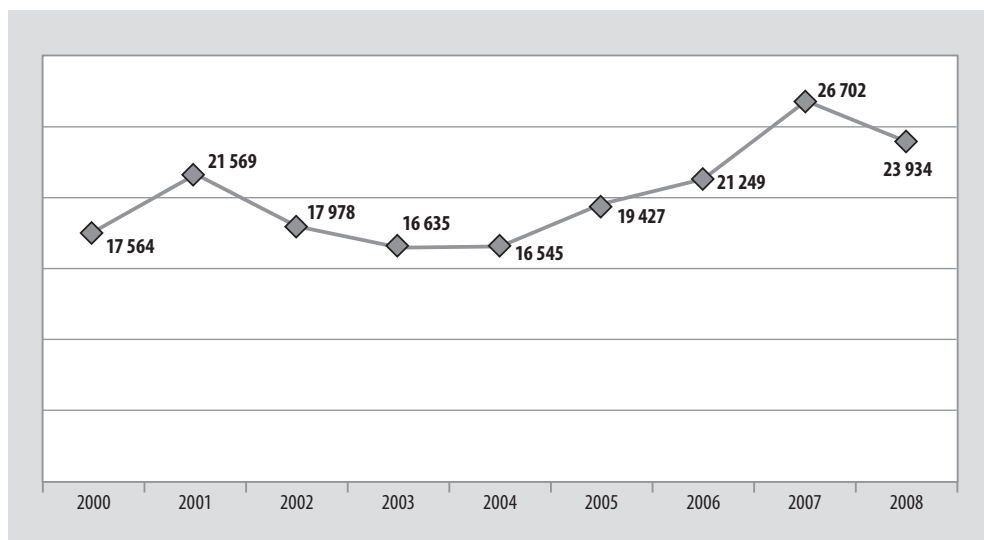
Statistical data suggest that in 2008, 23,934 persons have been granted permanent or long-term residence permits in Bulgaria. The largest group among them – 4,853 persons – are citizens of Turkey, followed by 4,647 Macedonian, 2,217 Russian, 1,505 British and 974 Ukrainian citizens.

The dynamic of the migration situation in Bulgaria is illustrated by the total number of foreign nationals, who have been granted permanent or long-term residence status in the last eight years (fig. 4.1).

The trend clearly indicates that migration flows to Bulgaria began increasing after 2004 when the country joined NATO and reached its peak in the year of Bulgaria’s accession to the EU, when 26,702 foreign nationals have been

¹ The term “third-country national” is commonly used by researchers in migration to describe “a person who is not a citizens of a EU Member State”.

Fig. 4.1. Foreign nationals who have been granted permanent or long-term residence status in the period 01.01.2000-31.12.2008



Source: Ministry of Interior statistics

granted permanent or long-term residence status.

The analysis of data publicized by government institutions allows capturing yet another specific of the migration situation in the country: there has been a steady interest among citizens of certain West European Member States to migrate to Bulgaria (fig. 4.2).

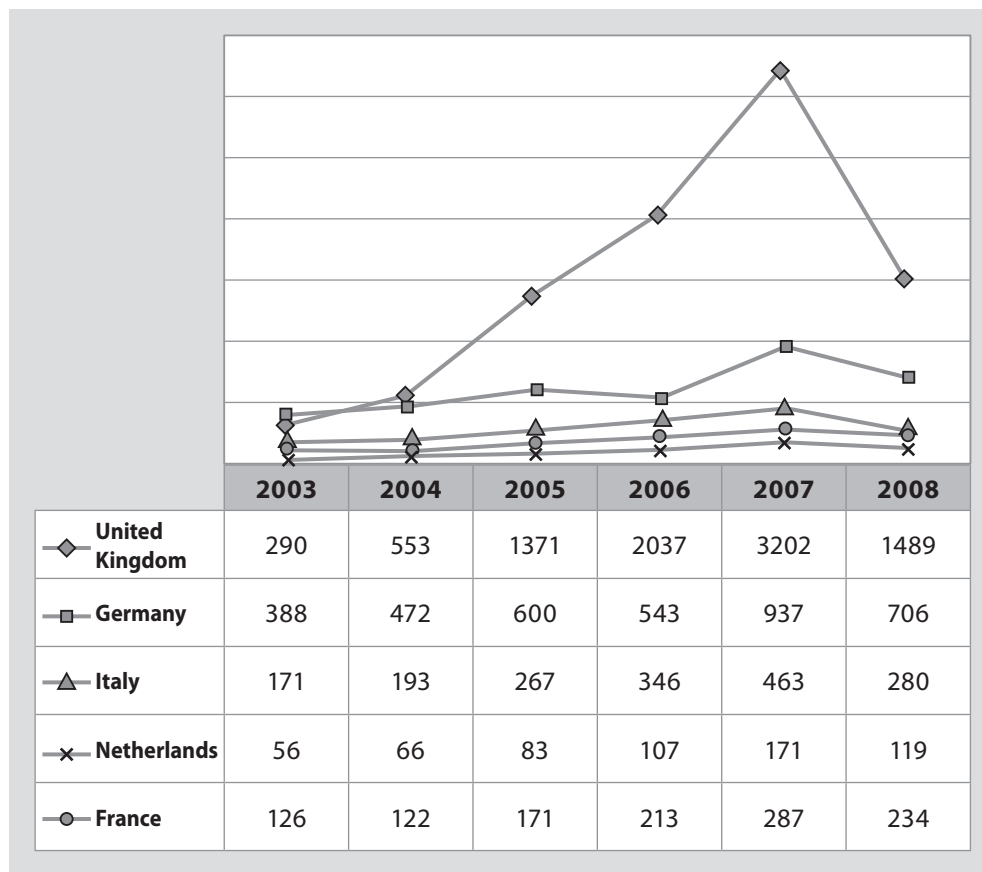
The number of British nationals, who have obtained long-term residence status, has been increasing by more than 100% each year, while the number of German nationals remained high and there has been a clearly expressed interest on behalf of persons from France and Italy to move to Bulgaria.

One of the main reasons for the decline in 2008, both with regard to the general migration flow and to the inflow of migrants from individual countries, is the slowing down of migration processes in the entire Europe as a result of the economic crisis.

Most commonly long-term residence status under the Foreign Nationals in the Republic of Bulgaria Act is granted to:

- regular university students;
- persons who carry out commercial activity in the country;
- persons who have grounds to be granted permanent residence status or have married a foreign national residing permanently in the country;
- family members of foreign nationals who have been granted long-term residence permit;

Fig. 4.2. Migration flows to Bulgaria from EU Member States in the period 01.01.2003-31.12.2008



Source: Ministry of Interior statistics

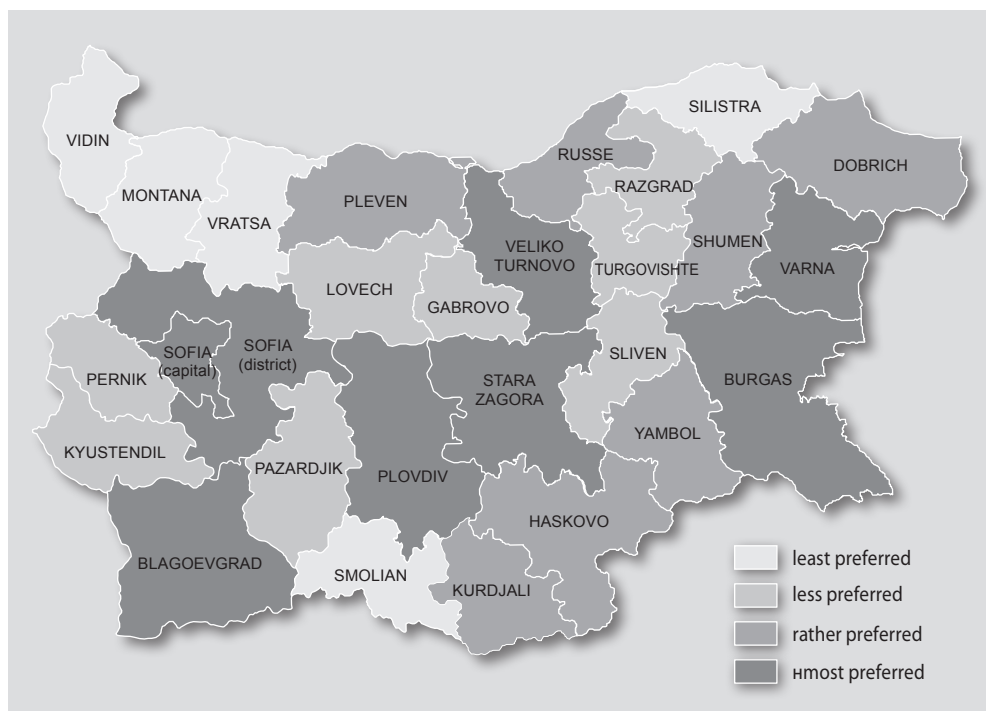
- foreign specialists residing in the country under international agreements to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a party;

Most commonly permanent residence status under the Foreign Nationals in the Republic of Bulgaria Act is granted to:

- persons who have married a Bulgarian citizen;
- persons of Bulgarian ethnic origin who have been born on the territory of Bulgaria and have lost their Bulgarian citizenship;
- minor children of Bulgarian citizens or of foreign nationals residing permanently in Bulgaria who have lived legally on the territory of the country without interruption for the last five years.

The map on fig. 4.3 shows the preferred regions for the settlement of immigrants in the country based on long-term residence permits issued by the relevant regional directorates of Mol for the period 2007-2008.

Fig. 4.3. Preferred districts for the settlement of immigrants in Bulgaria



Source: Ministry of Interior statistics

It is clear that immigrants prefer to settle in the big regional centers. The National Migration and Integration Strategy in the Republic of Bulgaria (2008-2015) gives further details on territorial distribution of immigrants: according to data from the beginning of 2007, the number of foreign nationals registered in the country was 55,684; most of them – 35%, lived in the city of Sofia, 9% lived in Plovdiv (city and district), 8% in Varna (city and district), 5% in Burgas (city and district).²

Information on the dynamic and development of immigration to Bulgaria is also available in the data collected by NSI, according to which in 2007, a total of 1,560 persons have substituted their permanent address abroad for a new permanent address in Bulgaria. Statistics register these persons as immigrants. It should be noted however that these data provide relatively accurate information only on the number of legal immigrants who have entered the country in 2007.

Illegal or unregulated immigration to the country is captured by other statistics. According to data of the Border Police Department in Svilengrad, the

² National Migration and Integration Strategy in the Republic of Bulgaria (2008-2015).

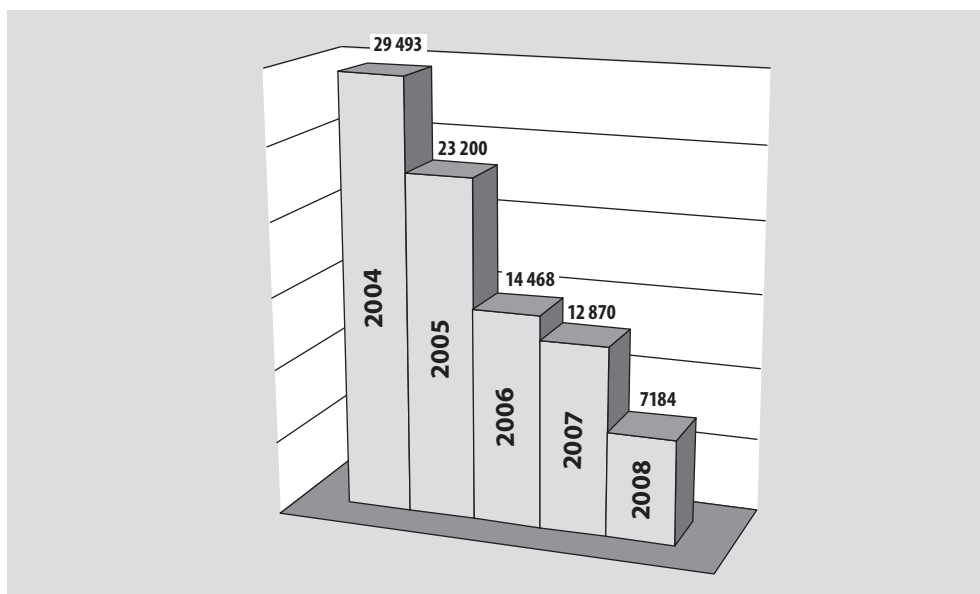
number of illegal immigrants caught in an attempt to cross the border, has increased significantly from 97 in 2006 to 767 as of December 12, 2007.

These data to some extent support the conclusion that Bulgaria is becoming increasingly attractive if not as a destination, certainly as a transit country.³

Data on submitted applications for Bulgarian citizenship at the Bulgarian Citizenship Directorate of the Ministry of Justice and the President's Office, weaken the assumption that after its accession to the EU, Bulgaria is gradually becoming a country that attracts immigrants. In 2008 a total of 7,184 applications were filed, which is 5,658 less than the previous year (fig. 4.4).

Of course, taking this information into consideration, we should not neglect the fact that quite often foreign nationals, living in Bulgaria, do not apply for citizenship, but only for long-term residence permit.⁴ Moreover, the number of foreign nationals from EU Member States who reside on a long-term basis in Bulgaria tends to increase.⁵

Fig. 4.4. Applications submitted in the Bulgarian Citizenship Directorate for the period 2004-2008



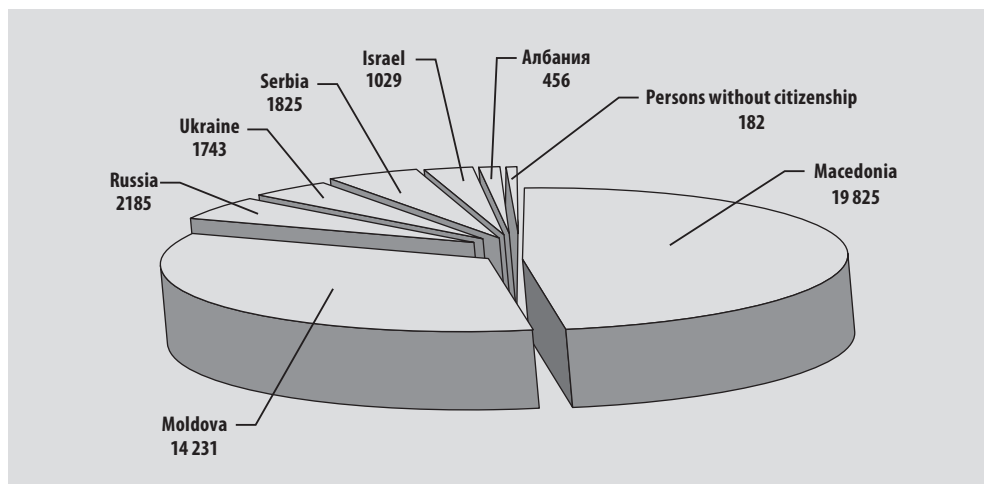
Source: Ministry of Interior statistics

³ Georgiev, Y. (2008) Immigration to Bulgaria – Preconditions and Possible Developments. In: The Implication of EU Membership on Immigration Trends and Immigrant Integration Policies for the Bulgarian Labor Market. Sofia: EIP, pp. 12-13.

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⁵ Report on the Migration Situation in the Republic of Bulgaria in 2006.

Fig. 4.5. Larger groups of persons who have obtained Bulgarian citizenship, by country of origin, for the period 22.01.2002-30.06.2009



Source: www.president.bg

Data from the official website of Bulgaria's Vice President on variations in Bulgarian citizenship applications for the period January 22, 2002 – June 30, 2009 suggest that persons willing to settle permanently in the country come mainly from neighboring countries or from countries with large groups of foreign nationals with Bulgarian origin (fig. 4.5).

The Council of Ministers' reports on the migration situation in the country provide information both on the number and type of work permits issued to foreign nationals, as well as to the market sectors they are employed in. In 2005, a total of 1.063 work permits were issued, which marks an increase of approximately 34% compared to 2004. The highest number of work permits were issued to citizens of Turkey – 223, followed by Germany – 134, Italy – 80, Greece – 73, and Russia – 54. Migrants are employed mainly in large-scale investment reconstruction and modernization projects or projects in the field of telecommunications and high technologies (examples include Maritsa East 3 Power Plant, Sofia Airport, Trakia Highway and some other plants).

Statistics show that in 2006, 530 citizens of EU Member States have been employed on the Bulgarian market. Out of a total of 1.475 foreign nationals possessing work permits, 770 were employed under labor contracts, while 705 were working on specific assignments. It should be noted that in 2006 no work permit applications were submitted by free-lance or self-employed persons.

Statistics on work permits issued to foreign nationals in 2007 suggest a slight decrease: a total of 1.247 work permits were issued throughout the year, which is 228 less than the previous year. Of course, it should be noted that after the entry into force of the Treaty of Accession of the Republic of Bulgaria

to the European Union on January 1, 2007, nationals of EU Member States can exercise their right to free movement for the purposes of employment in the Republic of Bulgaria without obtaining a work permit. That same year the highest number of work permits were issued to citizens of Turkey, Macedonia and India. Statistics for 2008 show that the greatest number of foreign nationals working on the Bulgarian market again come from these countries. The extended work permits from the previous year, however, are below 50%. According to the available data, the predominant categories of staff among foreign nationals are consultants, workers and athletes. For the last eight years only two work permits were issued to self-employed persons. Experts explain this with the fact that all foreign nationals register companies under the Act on Commerce and hence, operate as Bulgarian employers.⁶

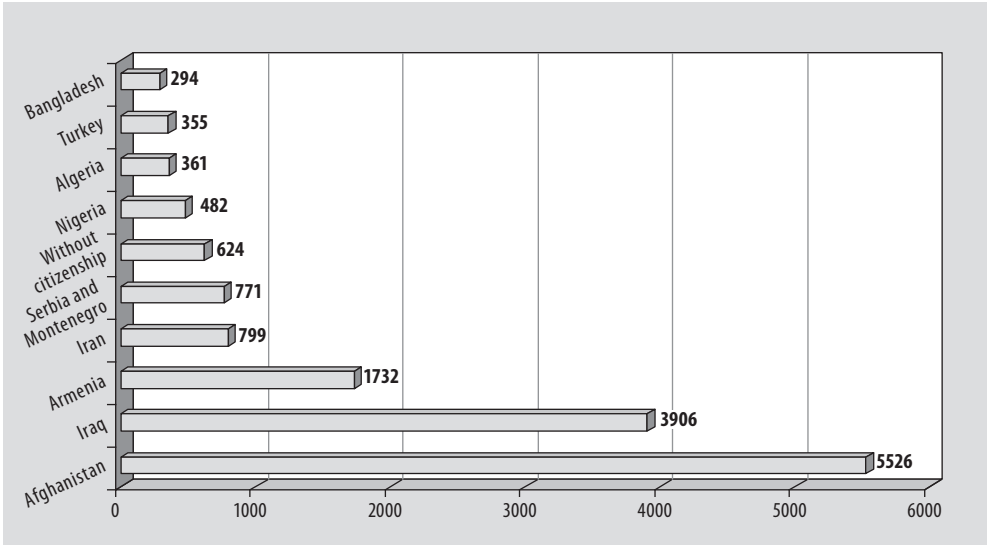
Table 4.1. Information on the number of protection seekers and the outcome of applications for the period 01.01.1993-31.07.2009

Year	Number of protection seekers	Status granted	Refusals	Humanitarian status granted	Humanitarian status extended	Discontinued proceedings	Revoked status (under the Geneva Convention and the Hague Convention)	Total number of decisions
1993	276	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1994	561	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1995	451	73	6	14	0	28	0	121
1996	283	144	28	13	0	132	8	325
1997	429	145	28	2	0	88	0	263
1998	834	87	104	7	0	235	3	436
1999	1,349	180	198	380	5	760	250	1,773
2000	1,755	267	509	421	65	996	17	2,275
2001	2,428	385	633	1,185	164	657	36	3,060
2002	2,888	75	781	646	138	1,762	9	3,411
2003	1,549	19	1,036	411	7	528	20	2,021
2004	1,127	17	335	257	2	366	12	989
2005	822	8	386	78	0	478	2	952
2006	639	12	215	83	0	284	0	594
2007	975	13	245	322	0	191	1	772
2008	746	27	381	267	0	70	0	745
2009	472	24	222	148	0	47	2	443
Total	17,584	1,476	5,107	4,234	381	6,622	360	18,180

Source: State Agency for Refugees

⁶ Statement by Liliana Stankova, State Expert at the Eurointegration-2 Division of MLSP.

Fig. 4.6. Top 10 countries of origin (number of protection seekers for the period 01.01.1993-28.02.2009)



Source: State Agency for Refugees

With regard to refugees in Bulgaria, considered a part of the immigrant community in the present analysis, information is more structured. Since 1993 when Bulgaria signed the Geneva Convention, approximately 17,000 persons have sought asylum in the country. In the beginning the number of applications increases at a relatively quick pace, reaching its peak in 2002 when 2,888 persons sought protection from the Bulgarian state. After 2003 there has been a sharp decline and by the end of July 2009, applications were submitted by 472 persons from 43 countries (table 4.1).

Refugees seeking protection in Bulgaria come mainly from the Middle East, predominantly from Afghanistan, followed by Iraq (fig. 4.6).

It should be noted that only a small percentage of the applications for asylum have actually been approved. In 2008 out of 746 asylum seekers, only 27 have been granted a refugee status, while 267 have been provided humanitarian protection.

The total number of refugees or persons under humanitarian protection registered in the Employment Bureaus, is 29, out of which 18 found jobs as early as 2008, while one person is enrolled in an adult training program.

4.1.3. Immigrant profiles

This section presents the most important immigrant groups in Bulgaria with their specific features, patterns of settlement and attitude towards life in the country and the recipient society. Information is compiled from publica-

tions by researchers who have studied different communities after 2000. It is difficult to estimate the exact number of each group or the distribution of its members based on demographic (age, gender, marital status, education level) and economic (type of employment, salary level, etc.) criteria because the official national statistic does not contain such data.

Immigrants in Bulgaria, classified by country of origin, form two main groups with similar genesis and settlement pattern: the “old” and the “new” communities. The distinguishing feature between them is the time and manner of arrival in the country, i.e. before and after 1989. “Old” communities include the Vietnamese, the Russian, the Arab and the African. “New” immigrants have come from China and Europe.

Statistics from the last few years indicate a sustainable increase in the number of citizens of Macedonia who have received permanent or long-term residence status in Bulgaria, as well as an increased immigrant flow from Russia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

4.1.3.1. Citizens of Macedonia

When visas for the Schengen Agreement countries were partially abolished for Bulgarian nationals, many citizens of Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine and Russia applied for Bulgarian citizenship on the grounds of Bulgarian origin.

Research by Dr. Nevena Dimova revealed that for some Macedonians Bulgarian citizenship is an opportunity to leave both Macedonia and Bulgaria in order to travel and work in the EU. The majority of applicants, the author notes, are young Macedonians (up to 25 years of age) who study in Bulgarian universities and come from Skopje or from other large towns in Macedonia, such as Bitola or Ohrid. The general opinion is that Bulgarian citizenship guarantees inexpensive education in Bulgaria and unrestricted visa-free movement within the European Union. “None of them likes Bulgaria; all describe our cities as grey and unwelcoming, while Bulgarians as cold and distant. They clearly state that they do not wish to settle in Bulgaria, make friends in the country or marry Bulgarians.” Given the lack of intention for permanent settlement, these people are included in the group of transit migrants, residing temporarily in Bulgaria.

Other Macedonians who study or work in Bulgaria, have relatives, friends, businesses or a significant other, quite naturally, see their stay in the country from a different perspective. They have long-term plans to find a job, buy property and settle permanently, and many of them make efforts to learn and speak Bulgarian. “Some consider themselves Macedonians with Bulgarian passports, others as Macedonians of Bulgarian origin, Macedono-Bulgarians or in some isolated cases even Bulgarians. Among the reasons for seeking Bulgarian citizenship, they cite better education, greater employment oppor-

tunities, the possibility to live in a larger country, which is a member of the EU" (Dimova 2008). The members of this group in fact have two homes and feel loyal to two countries (they express willingness to vote in both countries and follow the events and developments in both Bulgaria and Macedonia). A comprehensive in-depth study of migrant flows of Macedonian citizens to Bulgaria is pending publication.

As noted earlier, the division between the most numerous immigrant groups is the transition from centrally controlled economy to market economy. The "old" communities have emerged as a result of bilateral agreements (Arab countries), employment agreements (Vietnam) and close political links (former USSR) between Bulgaria and the countries of origin. Similarities in their development and current status arise from the fact that these relations were discontinued after the political changes that occurred in Bulgaria.

4.1.3.2. Vietnamese immigrants

At the end of the 1970s, Bulgaria and Vietnam signed an employment agreement under which a large number of workers (approximately 15,000) were sent to Bulgaria to work in manufacturing and construction. The agreement expired in 1990 and was not renewed. Since the beginning of the 1990s, a new immigration wave has been registered, whereby many of the previous workers returned to Bulgaria, this time as economic immigrants with an intention to settle permanently, mainly in Sofia. The newcomers maintain good relations with the diplomatic mission of Vietnam, since their reasons to migrate are not political.

This community is predominantly male and hence, there are many mixed marriages with Bulgarian women. This immigrant group contributes significantly to the labor market because in most cases Vietnamese women work on an equal footing with their husbands. In 1999 a Business Association was established, now numbering approximately 150 members, which suggests that new immigrants turn to entrepreneurship, rather than seeking merely employment. The Association's chairperson describes it as a trade union defending the rights of its members before the Bulgarian authorities (Mitseva 2005). It also supports them in addressing problems or resolving disputes. The economic activity of Vietnamese businesspeople is small scale and mainly concentrated in retail trade. The existence of community life is evidenced by the presence of a youth organization, which seeks ways of organizing the free time of young people by providing access to sports activities, entertainment, etc. The youth organization is actively supported by the community. Children go to Bulgarian schools and mother tongue instruction is a problem for the parents.

Vietnam has obviously retained its traditional place as a source of workforce for the Bulgarian labor market. In the last few years, there was a renewed

interest in importing workers, particularly for the needs of construction. The largest group of Vietnamese immigrants now lives in Ruse where large factories actively seek and hire workers with specific qualifications. Vietnamese workers are selected before coming to Bulgaria, so there is no need for additional training. Their starting salary is three times higher than the one they could get in their country, and they also enjoy additional social benefits.

4.1.3.3. Russian and Ukrainian immigrants

According to the 2001 census, a total of 15,595 Russian immigrants, some of whom of Ukrainian descent, live permanently in Bulgaria (mainly in Sofia, Plovdiv and Varna). Although these immigrants have come from different ethnic communities during socialist times, ethnology researchers tend to consider them as a group, referring to this period as “the period of Russian brides” (Anastasova 2005). Lacking the freedom of choosing where to settle in socialist times, these immigrants are scattered across the country. As a rule, they are well educated and prosper in society. These migrants do not organize themselves into communities. Their model of settlement creates favorable conditions for effective integration: they are traditionally well-accepted in the recipient society, face no particular difficulties or problems with their adaptation, and last but not least, show willingness to integrate.

For a variety of reasons, after 1989 the great majority of Russians living in Bulgaria, applied for Bulgarian citizenship and merged into society. According to official data of the Russian Federation on the demand for real estate in the second half of 2007, publicized by Julia Titova, Head of Foreign Real Estate Department at the company “Best Real Estate”, over the last decade, Bulgaria became one of the preferred places for Russian nationals willing to invest in real estate. Despite their pronounced presence on the real estate market however, Russian property owners do not settle permanently. Russian investors are also interested in the opportunities to do business in Bulgaria, with medium-scale investors concentrating on construction and large-scale investors targeting the energy sector. Attempts are also being made to import workers, mainly from Ukraine, but with varying success so far.

The current situation of this group of immigrants to the country has not been studied in detail and available data are too scarce to make a reliable assessment.

4.1.3.4. Immigrants from Arab countries

The Arab community is one of the oldest communities of foreign nationals who have chosen to live in Bulgaria. It has more than 40 years of history and numbers more than 10,000 people, many of whom have married Bulgarian citizens. The Arab community in Bulgaria comprises mainly immigrants from

Lebanon, Syria, the Palestinian territories, Iraq. Members of the community recall that in previous decades, 500 to 800 Syrians, Iraqis, Libyans, Lebanese and Palestinians graduated annually from Bulgarian universities upon recommendation by “progressive parties and organizations in the Arab world” (usually communist ones) or under intergovernmental agreements. This means that in the span of 30 years Bulgaria has educated no less than 15,000 students from the Arab world, many of whom remained in the country.

Unlike the new Vietnamese community, new immigrants from Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan who arrived in the country in the period 1993-1997, are not petty merchants. They are, for the most part, medium- and large-scale entrepreneurs with greater starting capital, who invest in production and exports. As of 2000, they had registered more than 1000 companies in Sofia alone, hiring a significant number of staff. Successful entrepreneurs also exist in the professional circles of medical doctors and dentists. The strong business orientation of this community has led to the establishment of sustainable social links. It could be said that economically this is the most successful immigrant group, which at the same time is least susceptible to market variations.

A characteristic feature of this community is that women seldom engage in employment. Most of them do not work, just take care of the children in the family, which is an obstacle to their social integration.

Although some social organization exists in other communities as well, the Arab community has accumulated greater social capital. Arab immigrants are organized into ethnicity-based associations, have their own private schools, support networks and mechanisms to solve internal issues and problems, as well as active community life.

In conclusion, “older” immigrant groups, which have emerged before 1989, are well-established and well-integrated; they have well-organized community support networks, in which newcomers are quickly integrated; they also aspire for full and equal participation in Bulgarian society.

“New” immigrant groups have emerged as a result of the transition and the opportunities it created. They contribute to cultural and linguistic diversity, invigorate economic initiative and bring Bulgaria closer to Europe.

4.1.3.5. Chinese immigrants

Chinese nationals in Bulgaria work mainly in the hospitality and catering, as well as in trade. A very small group is engaged in the arts. The rights of Chinese workers in Bulgaria are now being regulated by a bilateral agreement between the two countries, which is currently under development.

Chinese are among the newest immigrants to Bulgaria. According to their own estimates, they number between 4000 and 5000 people, but the community is gradually declining in number. Since they usually arrive in the coun-

try with some personal resources, they prefer to start their own businesses, rather than seeking employment. This also helps them avoid the complicated procedure for obtaining work permits as foreign nationals. Most commonly, they make their living by trading in inexpensive goods made in China or by running restaurants and delis selling products of their national cuisine.

Being closed and isolated, the Chinese community in Bulgaria gives rise to popular myths, some of which are even replicated by the press. At the same time, it is better studied and documented than other communities (Krasteva 2005a; Krasteva 2007). In the period 1992–1995, Chinese immigrants to Bulgaria came mainly from Beijing and had a higher standard of living and better education. In the years that followed there was a flow of immigrants from Southern China, who came from poorer regions and had been subject to derogatory attitude in their own country. 90% of them work at the Iliantsi Outlet Center.

Each of them had paid an average of 5,000 dollars for a passport and a travel permit to arrive to Bulgaria. As a rule, Chinese immigrants speak no Bulgarian at all and most of them make no effort to learn the language. In many cases, salespersons at Iliantsi have abandoned far more prestigious professions in their country.

Research data suggest that Chinese women in Bulgaria are almost half the number of men, the proportion being approximately 35% female to 65% male. Nevertheless, mixed marriages are rare. A common practice is for children to be left with close relatives in China. Unlike other immigrant communities, Chinese immigrants are concentrated in certain areas of Sofia – “Nadejda”, “Tolstoy” and “Svoboda” – most probably because of their proximity to the place where most Chinese work. Although at a personal level they try to remain anonymous, they prefer to run their businesses openly and legitimately. According to informants, they tend to avoid conflicts, they are not aggressive and do not engage in disputes over business matters. Their living conditions are in most cases basic, even miserable but almost all of them have bank accounts.

The Chinese community in Bulgaria has its own chairman whom immigrants address in case of problems. Although Chinese seldom appear in criminal news, they often fall victims to incidents but prefer not to lodge an official complaint. Many of them entertain the idea of moving elsewhere but are discouraged by the investment in goods they had made. The economic crisis dealt a serious blow on them as a result of declining demand and their life has become more difficult.

More than 250 Chinese companies have been registered in Bulgaria, 90% of which are owned entirely by Chinese persons. Joint ventures are less common and there are also three trade representations of China-based companies.

Albeit small, the Chinese immigrant community in Bulgaria contributes to diversity in Bulgarian society and occupies its own market niche.

4.1.3.6. Immigrants from African countries

After 1990 the number of African students in Bulgaria declined sharply because bilateral scientific and technical cooperation programs expired and scholarships were no longer available. As a result, the majority of Africans were expelled from the country. Those who still come to study in Bulgarian universities are few, while those who do business in the country are even fewer. On the other hand, the flow of refugees is somewhat greater. According to MFA data, in the 1990s several hundred Africans lived illegally in the country.

Research suggests that most African immigrants are nationals of Nigeria and Ethiopia, followed by Eritrea, Sudan and Congo. The majority are university graduates but few manage to find employment in the professional areas they have studied for. Their prospects of finding a job on the labor market are limited and hence, unemployment among them is high. African immigrants are predominantly male; women are rather an exception. Children of mixed marriages are raised as Bulgarians, while communication in the family is done mainly in French or in Bulgarian. Children are usually bilingual. It is very difficult, even impossible for these immigrants to maintain links with their native countries, while those who return to their homeland are very few. One of the traditional ways for them to reach back to their roots, get in touch with their native countries, and often make their living in Bulgaria is music.

4.1.3.7. Immigrants from EU Member States

In 2008, a total of 4,770 citizens of the European Union and the European Economic Area have been employed in Bulgaria. Most of them belonged to the category of the so-called “expats”, foreign nationals who live in the country for a long period of time. Approximately 3,200 were employed under labor contracts, the rest were self-employed. According to the Migration and Free Movement of People Department at the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, this figure is almost 10 times higher than in 2006. The largest group of EU citizens on the Bulgarian labor market came from Greece, followed by the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Poland, France, Austria, Netherlands, Romania, and the Czech Republic. Most of them are highly-qualified experts. The fact that this group of foreign nationals, residing in Bulgaria, becomes larger indicates an increase in investors’ interest towards the country. It would be theoretically inaccurate, however, to consider these people economic immigrants. They are corporate staff who have been sent on a business mission by multinational corporations or foreign companies, rather than immigrants who have arrived in Bulgaria driven by their personal economic reasons.

After Bulgaria's accession to the EU, the number of EU citizens residing in the country began to grow, reaching more than 55,000 by the end of 2006. This figure increased further with the addition of foreign nationals who bought real estate property in the country before and after January 1, 2007 and who until recently have been growing steadily in number.

The community of EU citizens residing permanently in Bulgaria is clearly dominated by British nationals, although other countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Italy are also quite well represented. A characteristic feature of this group of people is that they seldom settle in Sofia but rather prefer to buy property and live in the rural areas. The number of British nationals living in Bulgaria has doubled in 2006 (1,152 permanent residence permits were issued to British nationals in 2005). What attracts them is the low price of real estate property, which is among the cheapest in Europe. Usually entire families migrate; they renovate rundown village houses, take up organic food production and send their children to Bulgarian schools.

Quite a few of these immigrants could be described as adventurers or modern "global nomads". Among them, one can find engineers turned entrepreneurs or patrons of the arts, high-profile journalists, restoration and conservation specialists, and free-minded people. Bulgaria attracts them with its beautiful nature, mild climate, cleaner environment, and good food, which translates into better quality of life for them. Although quite a few have fallen victims to corruption, burglary, poor infrastructure or low quality of services, they are optimistic about their life in Bulgaria, as well as the country's future.

Almost all of them see far better business opportunities in Bulgaria than in their native countries. Although they are independent and well-to-do economically, many of them find their niche on the market and develop some kind of business activity. With their entrepreneurial spirit and sincere effort to integrate in the best possible way into the local community, the representatives of this immigrant group carry a strong potential for Bulgarian society.

4.1.4. Trends and Prospects

In the years after 1989, the migration situation in Bulgaria began changing. In addition to the large emigration wave, the country witnessed a new phenomenon, which did not exist before: the inflow of foreign nationals willing to live on its territory. Hence, research on immigration is still quite underdeveloped, being carried out mainly by the Centre for Refugees, Migration and Ethnic Studies at the New Bulgarian University⁷ (Krasteva 2004, 2005, 2006; Krasteva 2007, 2008, 2009). After Bulgaria's accession to the EU, the need for such research became increasingly apparent.

⁷ www.cermes.info

The general rise of migration flows towards the country could be explained by two different “local” characteristics. Western Europeans, on one hand, are attracted by Bulgaria’s beautiful nature and low cost of living. This is evidenced by the already proverbial sight of British pensioners in Bulgarian village. Another case in point are the European investors, consultants and managers who come to the country to work for local branches of international companies, joint ventures or Bulgarian companies and institutions.

The interest of people from neighboring countries, on the other hand, is most probably associated with the expected opportunities and benefits of Bulgaria’s membership in the European Union. Many citizens of Macedonia, for instance, claim that they have come to Bulgaria to receive education and accumulate experience that would be recognized in the EU.

Various data, which in most cases have been collected in the framework of private research projects, rather than as a result of national surveys, help identify the following trends among immigrants:

- Employment among immigrants having long-term or permanent residence status is higher than the average for the country. Data across EU, however, show that quite a few immigrants tend to perform undeclared jobs and occupy positions, for which they are overqualified.⁸

- A significant percentage of immigrants have no social security.

- The language barrier is a major obstacle to successful social integration. As a result, immigrants may be trapped in a vicious circle in which their access to the labor market is limited due to inadequate knowledge of the local language, while their possibility to improve their language skills is limited due to lack of employment and training opportunities. Learning the local language could be particularly important for female immigrants, because otherwise they would be isolated from their new society and would hardly be able to help their children integrate in school.⁹

- Discrimination on the grounds of race or color is not an isolated phenomenon in the everyday life of immigrants.¹⁰

- Housing is also a serious challenge. The number of immigrants and the places where they are likely to settle in order to find employment or reunite with their families, must be estimated with greater care. When immigrant

⁸ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. *Towards a Common Immigration Policy*, Brussels, 5.12.2007.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Problems of Discrimination in Employment, Education and Access to Goods and Services among Refugees, Immigrants and Other Groups of Foreign Nationals in Bulgaria*. National Representative Survey commissioned to MBMD by the Protection against Discrimination Commission, 2009.

communities remain isolated or segregated, their meaningful participation in society becomes really difficult.¹¹ In this context, it is rather alarming that the risk of future segregation and ghettoization of immigrant minorities, along the model of the Roma minority for instance, is being generally neglected. Currently, no such situation exists but immigrants tend to concentrate in certain areas of Sofia. This is the case for example with Chinese immigrants, most of whom live in “Nadejda” neighborhood.

The successful inclusion of foreign nationals in the recipient society is essential and should be prioritized. Migration flows to Bulgaria are a phenomenon, which will bring important changes to Bulgarian society as an untapped resource, rather than as a threat. The demographic situation in Bulgaria, as well as in the entire EU, creates a huge demand for young and highly-skilled workers, which is currently being satisfied by immigrants. This can happen along two channels. The first is unplanned, random immigration (both legal and illegal), which would make meaningful integration impossible and would create the risk of segregation and marginalization of immigrant communities. The second is the planned, well-managed and targeted effort to attract young and highly-skilled immigrants in response to the country’s needs.¹² This is what makes the development of adequate migration and integration policies for effective social, cultural and labor market integration of immigrants in Bulgaria so crucially important.

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4.2. Emigration of Bulgarians to the Island of Rhodes, Greece

4.2.1. Integration and Scope

The entire modern history of Greece is marked by migration movements that have impacted on its economic, social, political, and demographic development. In the last two decades, Greece moved away from a cycle of emigration and repatriation, which had lasted for nearly one century, and entered a new era of net immigration, which was triggered by the fall of communist regimes to the north of its borders and brought a large immigrant flow to the country.

After the fall of communism in 1989 in Eastern and Central Europe, increasing flows of legal and illegal migrants from these countries entered Greece in search for jobs and better living standards. According to 2001 Census data, the number of foreign born individuals in Greece was 762,191, which comprises approximately 7% of the Greek population. It is estimated that the real number of migrants exceeds one million (Zografakis et al., 2008) making up as much as 10% of the population. Almost two thirds of the foreign population are from Albania, Bulgaria and Romania. Of these, Albania accounts for 57.5% of the total, with Bulgaria coming second at 4.6%. Of them, 413,000 had come to Greece for work, corresponding to 9% of the total workforce of the country. Today the figure is believed to be somewhat higher, reaching 8% of total population and 10% of the total labour force, under conservative estimates. The economic and social impacts of such a significant migration influx have generated great interest to social scientists and policy makers in Greece and have led to a growing literature on the topic and heated policy and public debates.

Despite the large and intense migration movements, which quickly covered most parts of mainland Greece, some areas remained rather unaffected by the new immigration for a number of years since this migration wave started. The island of Rhodes was clearly one of these areas. Given its geographical position and its distance from mainland Greece and the Balkan borders, Rhodes only became the recipient of large economic migration (mainly from Albania, as everywhere else in Greece) relatively later, sometime in 1995 onwards. Approximately at the same time the first Bulgarians started arriving on the island. These were usually women sent from 'agencies' in Athens to work as elderly carers in households. Despite this, the island of Rhodes had already a significant experience with migration and notable cultural openness and interaction with non-Greek nationals. Foreigners have been visiting the island in large groups at least since the proliferation of leisure tourism in the 1950s and

1960s. Through the repatriation of old emigrants (e.g., returning from Australia, bringing back their half-Greek families and spouses) as well as through the permanent settlement of foreign nationals (mainly from the developed world), who were attracted to the island by its amenities and were able to settle there after marrying a local person, the population of Rhodes experienced not only relatively high interactions with foreign nationals but also a high degree of integration with them (See Monastiriotis, Markova, 2009).

Migration of Bulgarians to Greece has been thoroughly researched by the author of the present section in the 1990s (See Markova 2001; Markova, Sarris 1997; Markova, Sarris 2001a; Markova, Sarris 2001b). This research, however, was limited to the urban environment of Greece's capital, Athens. Little is known about the migration of Bulgarians in the rural areas, far from the capital city. The present paper is an attempt to contribute to filling this void. It studies the experience of Bulgarian migrants, who live on the island of Rhodes, paying particular attention on their characteristics, working conditions, access to public services, housing and their interaction with the local community.

To achieve this, the research strategy was targeted to:

- studying the geographical distribution of Bulgarian migrants on the island, as well as their main demographic characteristics;
- examining the sectors in which migrants are employed, as well as their occupations;
- establishing their housing conditions and the extent to which they are able to access public services available on the island;
- analyzing payment and working conditions of Bulgarian migrants on the island;
- testing the validity of some previous findings that migrants and locals compete for jobs in the informal economy, thus triggering local conflicts;
- documenting the experiences of local residents with the immigrant communities living with them on the island, with a special emphasis on Bulgarian nationals.

4.2.2. The island of Rhodes as a study locality

The island of Rhodes is located at the southeastern edge of Greece, right across the Turkish coast and some 400 km away from Athens (straight-line distance). It is the largest and most populous island in the Prefecture of the Dodecanese, which comprises of a total of 163 islands, only 26 of which are inhabited. The island hosts 10 of the 27 Local Authorities that comprise the Dodecanese Prefecture, and has over 60% of the prefecture's total population (approximately 180,000 people according to the 2001 Census).

The City of Rhodes, located at the northeastern coast of the island, is the largest in the region. It is the prefecture's capital and administrative, economic and financial centre, with some 55,000 residents (approximately 80,000 people live in the wider metropolitan area of the city of Rhodes). The main economic activity in Rhodes is tourism, accounting for about 20-25% of the total employment, followed by public sector employment (including local administration), which accounts for about 20% of the total employment in the region. Other important activities include trade (19% in the Municipality of Rhodes and 15% in the Prefecture of Dodecanese), construction (9% and 12%, respectively) and transport (9% and 8%, respectively). Manufacturing accounts for just over 6% of the total employment, which is far below the national value (13%), with the main manufacturing activity being food processing. Agriculture and fisheries are also a significant activity for the island (but not for the City of Rhodes), while real estate and financial brokerage, although not insignificant, are well below the corresponding national values.

The Dodecanese area is a major entry point for illegal migration (from the coast of Turkey). Although Rhodes island is almost unaffected by illegal flow of immigrants, probably because it is too well policed to be part of an established route for smuggling people in, perceptions about 'migrants' and attitudes towards migration in the island may well be shaped by the rather frequent (compared to national media) reports in the local media, referring to illegal migration and smuggling. Rhodes itself is a significant destination for non-economic migrants, especially 'leisure' or 'retiree' migrants from North America, North or Western Europe and Australia. While it hosts large migrant communities from former communist countries, as well as from south Asia, in relative terms these communities are smaller than in other parts of Greece (especially Athens, where most of the research has concentrated).

4.2.3. Methodology

The in-depth interviews with eight Bulgarian migrants were conducted in the framework of a broader survey of migration on the island of Rhodes, which was carried out between June 2008 and January 2009. In the same period, local residents, representatives of the local authorities, as well as trade union activists were also interviewed for the purposes of the survey.

Furthermore, in the fall of 2009, 50 Bulgarian migrants were interviewed using an abridged version of the detailed questionnaire developed for the in-depth interviews.

Most Bulgarians were interviewed on the spot, without mediation by a facilitator. Only a few of them were approached using the snowball technique (i.e. through other respondents). Some were interviewed incidentally on the street or on the beach, which was possible when the respondents were in a

group with other Bulgarians or the author was walking with other Bulgarians, and all identified each other as compatriots. This is a positive development for Bulgarians in Greece: while in the 1990s Bulgarian immigrants in Athens used to avoid contact with their fellow nationals and would turn away hearing someone speaking Bulgarian, in Rhodes they were very friendly and sought to communicate with their fellow nationals, even when they were complete strangers. The 50 Bulgarians interviewed using the abridged version of the questionnaire were incidental shoppers at food stores.

This sample formation procedure could produce a random sample of respondents but given its relatively small size, collected data could only be indicative of the Bulgarian community on the island.

The most reliable statistics on the number of Bulgarian immigrants on the island come from the 2001 census, which shows that Bulgarians are concentrated in the Municipality of Rhodes and account for approximately 5.3% of the foreign population, second only to Albanians (47%) (Monastiriotis, Markova 2009).

Migrants on the island proved very cooperative and willing to participate in the research at short notices and without much introduction by facilitators or the research team. They showed to be very trusting and quite generous. As a rule, they would not accept any financial incentives to participate in the research.

Two types of questionnaires were developed to interview Bulgarian migrants: one for the in-depth interviews with economic migrants, which was in Greek although interviews were conducted in Bulgarian, and a second one, which was an abridged version of the first. Thus, the economic migrants' questionnaire was much longer, containing 90 questions (with 35 in the abridged version). Given the length of the questionnaire, interviews with Bulgarian migrants were quite time-consuming, normally lasting for up to one hour. In contrast to practices described in some European publications,¹ immigrant respondents were not offered cash incentives to participate in the research. On rare occasions, they would accept coffee or sweets taken to their homes. However, this did not affect the success rate of the interviews.

Among the officials that were approached, it was possible to conduct full (semi-structured) interviews with the Mayor of Rhodes, the Archbishop, the Chief of the Dodecanese Police, some social workers at the Centre for Employment Support (vulnerable groups) 'Kallipatira', the Manager of the Statistical Services for North-East Aegean in Rhodes, the Director of the Rhodes Labor Centre and the Manager of the Immigration Office on the island (See Monastiriotis, Markova 2009).

¹ For an example, and a discussion of the issue, see Markova, Black 2007.

4.2.4. Profile of Bulgarian migrants according to the field research

4.2.4.1. Gender

The number of female respondents was slightly higher 57% (n = 33) against 43% (n = 25) for male respondents. Four persons from the sample in Rhodes identified themselves as Bulgarians of Turkish origin. Thorough surveys conducted by the author among Bulgarian migrants in Athens in 1996 and 1999 suggest a similar trend with women accounting for 75% (n = 75) in 1996 and 66% (n = 101) in 1999. Since the 1990s the Greek labor market – with a significant share of informal economy – has been offering more jobs for women (mainly cleaning offices and residences or taking care of elderly people or children). Bulgarian men experience strong competition by Albanians in Greece.

4.2.4.2. Age

The average age of the sample is 36.7 years; 12% (n = 7) are between 18 and 24 years, 29% (n = 17) are between 25 and 34 years, 33% (n = 19) are between 35 and 44 years, 19% (n = 11) are between 45 and 54 years and only four respondents (7%) are between 55 and 64 years of age (table 4.2). The majority of Bulgarians interviewed in Athens in 1996 and 1999 belonged to a higher age group, above 40 years (with an average of 45 years).

4.2.4.3. Education

Most of the respondents in Rhodes, 70% (n = 40), had secondary education. 12 people (21%) reported having only primary education, while only 3 respondents (5%) reported having post-secondary education (table 4.2). This repeats the findings of the interviews conducted with Bulgarians in Athens in the 1990s.

4.2.4.4. Marital status

More than one third reported that they are married and have children. The spouses and children of most of them (n = 18) live together with them in Rhodes. The rest have left their children (n = 9) in Bulgaria. Six respondents declared that they are single parents and live with their children in Rhodes.

4.2.4.5. Age of migration

Approximately 18% of the sample (n = 9) have arrived in Greece as minors, i.e. before completing 18 years of age. It is alarming that only four of them have completed their education there. These are mainly people who came to

the country at primary school age. In contrast, none of the Bulgarians interviewed in Athens in the 1990s came as a minor in Greece.

4.2.4.6. Knowledge of the Greek language

All interviewed immigrants but one reported no knowledge of the Greek language on arrival. One had only basic knowledge. At the time of the interviews, all except for two who had arrived recently, had learnt the language at a satisfactory level. Some had even learnt written Greek, although none had attended language courses. Most reported to have learnt the language watching TV, listening to the radio or communicating with local people.

4.2.4.7. Legal status

At the time of the interviews, legal status was not an issue for the respondents. As a result of their newly-acquired status of EU citizens, most Bulgarians interviewed in 2008 reported longer duration of residence permits – above two years. Some even had open-ended permits.² Most Bulgarians in Greece managed to legalize their status in the first legalization program of the Greek government in 1998, as well as in its follow-ups in 2001 and 2003. It should come as no surprise that 97% of the Bulgarians interviewed in Athens in 1996 lived and worked illegally, while in 1999 the number of illegal residents reduced (42%, n = 64).

Table 4.2 illustrates the profile of Bulgarian migrants interviewed in Rhodes (2008/2009) and in Athens (1996 and 1999).

4.2.4.8. Length of stay in Greece and on the island of Rhodes

Most of those interviewed Bulgarians in Rhodes had resided in Greece for eight years on average. Eighteen respondents (37%) had been in the country since the early 1990s. The rest had arrived after 2000. Only a few had lived elsewhere in Greece before settling in Rhodes. Most of them had previously lived in Athens or in Northern Greece (Thessaloniki, Veria). They had left the previous place of residence because their seasonal job there ended, a new job was offered to them on the island or in order to improve their quality of life by moving to a “beautiful and wealthy island” like Rhodes.

4.2.4.9. Reasons for migration on the island

Most migrants reported that the main reason for them to come to the island are “relatives or friends already living in Rhodes”. They are “old” migrants, having lived in Rhodes for an average of seven years.

² Since January 2009 labor market in Greece has been open for Bulgarians and Romanians.

Table 4.2. Profile of Bulgarian migrants

Demographic characteristics	Athens, 1996	Athens, 1999	Rhodes, 2008/2009
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	25 (25%)	52 (34%)	25 (43%)
Women	75 (75%)	101 (66%)	33 (57%)
Total	100 (100%)	153 (100%)	58 (100%)
<i>Age (years)</i>			
16	–	–	–
19-29	19 (19%)	33 (21%)	15 (26%)
30-39	32 (32%)	41 (27%)	26 (45%)
40-49	35 (35%)	58 (38%)	8 (14%)
≥50	14 (14%)	21 (14)	9 (15%)
Total	100 (100%)	153 (100%)	58 (100%)
<i>Education</i>			
Primary	7 (7%)	8 (5%)	12 (21%)
Secondary	72 (72%)	93 (61%)	41 (70%)
> Secondary	21 (21%)	45 (34%)	5 (9%)
Total	100 (100%)	153 (100%)	58 (100%)
<i>Marital status</i>			
Married	34 (34%)	64 (42%)	25(43%)
Single	17 (17%)	34 (22%)	10 (17%)
Widowed	8 (8%)	8 (5%)	–
Divorced	35 (35%)	38 (25%)	8 (14%)
Separated	6 (6%)	9 (6%)	n.a.
Cohabiting	–	–	4 (7%)
Other	–	–	2 (3%)
N/A			9 (16%)
Total	100 (100%)	153 (100%)	58 (100%)
<i>Status</i>			
Legal	3 (3%)	89 (58%)	44 (76%)
Illegal	97 (97%)	64 (42%)	–
On a tourist visa	–	–	14 (24%)*
Total	100 (100%)	153 (100%)	58 (100%)

* Working without social security while exercising their right to free movement.

Source: Results of surveys conducted in 1996 and 1999 in Athens, 2008/2009 in Rhodes.

4.2.4.10. Intentions to settle permanently on the island or return to Bulgaria

Asking migrants whether they intend to return to their native country, has proved to be quite a difficult task. Empirical research shows that they readily give a positive answer to this question, even if their return home is virtually impossible. Nevertheless, the respondents were asked this question and almost all of them (81%, $n = 47$) answered affirmatively. Interestingly, an equal number of people affected and not affected by the economic crisis responded that they would return to Bulgaria. This statement acquired a different meaning when respondents were asked when do they plan to do it. Only five of them had a clear intention to return within one year; the rest gave no definite time or said that they would do it in 10-15 years. Young families with school-age children planned to stay in Rhodes longer or at least until their children completed their education and found employment in Greece.

4.2.5. Experience on the labor market in Rhodes: empirical data

4.2.5.1. Employment participation and sectors of employment

Levels of current employment were found to be very high among the immigrants interviewed, with only two being unemployed at the time of the survey. Local residents mentioned that immigrants would always have jobs because they accepted any job on offer regardless of pay and conditions. One local resident mentioned that migrants have no problem working additional hours, something that locals had long stopped doing.

Indeed, most of the people interviewed were in low-skill jobs even after nine years of residence in Greece, which signals very low promotion/advancement opportunities as well as possibilities for skills acquisition. A Greek-American woman in her late 20s explained this with the prejudice of Greek employers: "It is still impossible for an Albanian to be promoted to a manager in a business no matter how good his or her Greek is or how skilled he or she is or how long he or she had worked for the business". She noted that some second-generation Bulgarians or Albanians who grew up in Greece and graduated from Greek schools, had better opportunities for advancement in the labor market. "They are accepted like Greeks", she said, adding that the same was valid for young and educated migrant women who married Greek men.³

Given the secondary or below-secondary level of education of the sample, as well as the fact that many people did mid- to low-skilled jobs even before migrating to Greece, no loss of skills was observed in the sample. Theoretically

³ Bulgarian respondents knew of no such cases.

this should be an evidence of relatively equal access to the local labor market. However, a self-employed Bulgarian photographer referred to discrimination, talking about the unfair treatment by local authorities when he needed various permissions for his work.

As far as sectors of employment are concerned, Bulgarian migrants in the sample were concentrated in four sectors: hospitality, cleaning, construction and trade. The incidence of self-employment was relatively low with only two respondents reporting having their own businesses – a photo studio and a convenience store selling Bulgarian goods. None of the women interviewed lived in the household of the family she worked for. Legal status and greater length of stay in Greece have significantly reduced the number of women working as housekeepers or live-in caregivers for elderly people. These jobs are usually taken by recent female immigrants from countries outside the EU who speak virtually no Greek at all and have no regular work documents. It appears that in Rhodes this practice is less prevalent than elsewhere in the country (See Lyberaki, 2008). The 1990s survey showed that many Bulgarian women worked and lived in the households of their employers, being at their disposal 24 hours a day, for fear that they might be caught by the police and returned to Bulgaria, as well as because they did not know the language and were not familiar with the situation in Greece.

Migrants in the sample found their current job mainly through Bulgarian friends or relatives, followed by “Greek friends /acquaintances”. One woman was hired prior to her arrival in Rhodes migration by an agency in Bulgaria. These job search patterns are a positive indicator for the integration of Bulgarian migrants on the island. In the early 1990s, Bulgarians interviewed in Athens used to rely on illegal agencies to find a job or just went around asking for one. It is worth noting that in the 1990s new Bulgarian immigrants in Greece (who had come after 1989) were distrustful of each other and did not act as a community. Jobs were put up for “sale” for the first time among Bulgarian female immigrants. Respondents reported that they kept away from other Bulgarians for fear that they might take their jobs. Envy was also mentioned. Ten years later the situation among Bulgarian immigrants in Rhodes is quite different – there is more confidence and people tend to rely on the support of their fellow nationals. This change could be explained by the fact that people have lived in Greece longer, as well as by the relative security with regard to employment and migration status.

Some of the local residents interviewed claimed that Bulgarians and Romanians were in a better social and economic position than immigrants from Ukraine, Moldova and Albania.

Approximately 60% of the respondents, mainly construction workers, housekeepers or office cleaners, had the feeling that fewer jobs were offered as a result of the current economic situation. Taxi drivers and coffee-shop

staff, on the other hand, felt no different in the number of jobs available or the pay offered.

4.2.5.2. Working conditions

The lack of a day off during the summer months, between May and October, was stated as a major problem for most of those interviewed. This however seems to be an issue for all employed in the seasonal industry, almost regardless of ethnicity. Those working in bars and coffee shops were satisfied with their monthly wages, ranging between €1,000-€1,500 including tips.

However, low salaries were an issue for some of the interviewed Bulgarians working at a gas station. They complained of unfair treatment by the employer who would pay neither their social security nor the actual hours worked. This is an example of discrepancy between migrants' legal status and their employment conditions. "Employers do not care if you have the right papers; they would always try to save money by paying you less", a 32-year-old Bulgarian woman said. Thirteen (23%) of the employed Bulgarians in the sample – cleaners, waitresses at coffee shops, electricians or general workers – reported that their employers did not pay the required social security for them. However, one could assume that this is not the result of discrimination alone, since most of these people work without having obtained work permits, taking advantage of their newly acquired right to free movement within the EU. Interviews also suggested that, rather than being a strictly ethnicity-based phenomenon, discrimination seemed to be related to specific jobs: in sectors with low profit margins and outside the tourism industry, employers seemed more prone to discriminate their staff or pay less. According to recent accounts in the media, this is not uncommon for most places in Greece and affects Greek nationals as well. Similarly, a research on migrant integration in the Attica region, in 2004, showed that more than one fifth of the legally employed migrants in the sample had no social insurance (see GSEE Institute of Labour and the Attica Prefecture, 2004).

Many Bulgarian migrants who have obtained permanent residence permits as a result mainly of Bulgaria's accession to the EU, reported no change in their working conditions. "Nothing has changed; even the money we are getting is still the same", mentioned a 31-year old Bulgarian man. In order to save money, some employers make unlawful deductions from workers' wages in order to cover the installments to the Social Insurance Institute (IKA). For others, change happened mainly in their thinking. "I am no longer scared to speak Bulgarian in public places", said a 28-year-old Bulgarian man. However, it became clear that legal migrants, even 10 years after they had legalized their status, still had no equal rights with local workers. Until recently, this was valid only theoretically, in the papers. One man, who had just opened a photo studio, said that in order for him to start his business, he was asked to

declare 30,000 Euro to the Tax Office, while Greek nationals had to declare only 12,000 Euro. He also mentioned that banks would require for him to find a Greek cosigner, if he applied for credit. Although unfair treatment and semi-legal working arrangements are quite prevalent among Greek nationals as well, in the case of immigrants it appears that legalization of status contributes surprisingly little to improving their conditions of work and pay.

Some migrants mentioned that in case of a problem, they would turn to local politicians as the only people who can really help them. These were migrants who were fluent in Greek and had permanent residence permits, which made them more confident.

4.2.5.3. Competition for jobs between migrants and local residents

Two of the local women interviewed complained that immigrants were taking their jobs. Most locals interviewed, however, did not feel this was an issue. On the other hand, some migrants believed that locals were not qualified for the jobs that migrants were taking, citing as an example the high level of illiteracy among Greek women in rural areas. A 30-year-old man of mixed descent (Scandinavian mother and Greek father), working at his father's business, thought that this problem existed among young Greeks in particular, who were not willing to acquire new skills. "Greeks would not try to learn something new; they are a bit lazy; want it the easy way", he said. He mentioned a friend of his who really needed money to pay his rent but refused to accept a temporary job in construction, preferring rather to sit in the coffee shop and wait for someone to offer something better.

A Bulgarian man, a photographer, spoke of the prejudice of local residents towards migrants. Whenever a local person introduced him to new clients, he or she would mention first that he is Bulgarian and would then say how good his work was. Another migrant spoke of "economic racism". He thought that locals blamed migrants for the lack of jobs because they were envious that migrants managed to run their own businesses and make more money than they do. This also emerged in an interview with a local bar-owner in his early 40s who believed that although Greece was going through hard times, migrants had no problem because they would do any job and even earned more than locals did.

One of the local people interviewed, a retired man in his 70s, thought that migrants did jobs that Greeks would not do. "Greek people, supported by trade unions, want to work less but be paid a lot", he said. Only a small percentage of migrants (15%) were estimated to work in the black market. "If employers could find locals for a job, they would not call a foreigner. Some migrants do work in the black market but this is exactly what I am doing as well, even though I am Greek", he added.

A Greek woman working as a hotel maid was certain that migrants were depriving locals, especially men, from jobs. "We have local people who still have not found jobs", she said. She believed that employers were hiring migrants for their cheap labor, adding that local women were reluctant to do certain jobs such as housekeeping because of the low pay and the hard labor required. "A migrant woman would iron clothes for 5 Euro per hour while a Greek woman would never do this for so little money", she said. There is a clear contradiction here between direct competition for jobs and displacement based on preferences. Although some of the semi-structured interviews gave local residents the possibility to state whether they believed that migrants bid down wages, this did not come across as a common answer.

Nevertheless some evidence of this was obtained. A local hotel manager in his mid-30s was convinced that there would not be as many jobs available to foreigners if it was not for the low pay they were ready to accept. "The big mistake that Greek employers make is to employ foreign workers just because they are cheap. While being cheap they are also emotionally detached from the job they are employed to do; they are not committed", he said. "Besides, foreign workers do not offer the same quality of service as Greeks do; they not only speak poor Greek but are interested in money alone. They are not motivated to represent Greece but their home countries", he added when asked if he would employ foreign receptionists in the hotel he was managing.

Generally, the survey showed a rather conservative view of the impact of migrants on local wages. Most locals believed that while initially, in the 1990s, migrant workers had indeed a dumping effect on wages, as they worked illegally and were paid much less than locals for the same jobs, this was far less common nowadays. A primary school teacher thought that immigration in fact helped rationalize pay scales and resulted in a more equal spread of wages across sectors and occupations. He recalled that in the 1980s, while a student, he was earning 200,000 drachmas per month working as a barman, when teachers' salaries were about 50,000 drachmas. "Clearly, this was not normal", he said. "Migrants brought wages down to their natural levels", he added. Others spoke of equal payment between local and migrant workers doing the same jobs. However, a coffee shop owner in his 30s emphasized the persistent wage differences in construction: an migrant without proper papers, doing paint jobs, would charge 20-25 Euro per hour while a Greek worker would ask for 40 Euro. "Greeks are lazy; foreign workers would work 10 hours a day and be happy", he added.

While it is difficult to make a reliable conclusion based on these experiences, especially given that the quite contradicting views of both locals and migrants, it is nevertheless possible to conclude that job competition and wage compression – or at least concerns about them – are not as intense as they reportedly are elsewhere in Greece. The nature of the Dodecanese labor mar-

ket, with its opportunities for unregulated income generation, unregistered or seasonal employment, and high profitability in some areas of the hospitality sector, could probably provide some explanation for this difference.

4.2.6. Access of Bulgarian migrants to public services and local perceptions of migration

4.2.6.1. Main needs of Bulgarian migrants in Rhodes

Apart from the labor market, one of the key issues in migrant integration is access to housing and the position of migrants on the housing market more generally. Despite the broadly documented evidence across the country, which suggests that some migrant groups are relatively well integrated in the property ladder, all Bulgarian immigrants interviewed in our field research, except for one, lived in rented accommodation. Only one woman in her 50s married to a Greek owned the place she lived in. However, local residents reported that some Bulgarian and Romanian families had began buying flats and houses on the island, which was not confirmed by our fieldwork. According to local residents, immigrants were spread everywhere on the island but their concentration was highest in the suburbs of the city of Rhodes, where accommodation was cheapest. Only two of the Bulgarian immigrants interviewed lived in the nearby villages.

Some of the local residents interviewed identified accommodation and language as the main needs for migrants. However, Bulgarians, as well as all other East Europeans were believed to learn spoken Greek quite quickly. Most of the interviewed Bulgarians reported satisfactory knowledge of spoken Greek. However, despite the obvious need, especially in view occupational advancement, none of them had attended language classes. They learned the language by watching TV or trying to communicate with local people and employers. "Need teaches you", said a 44-year-old Albanian man, who had just started his own business (a tavern). Yet, none of the immigrants interviewed could write in Greek – even after more than 10 years in Greece, which confirms the findings of a similar study in Attica region in 2004 (see GSEE Institute of Labor and Attica Prefecture, 2004). The lack of support for language acquisition in this case proved crucial – and its implications pervasive. Migrants need to pay lawyers for filling-in basic application forms. This is a particularly serious problem for those willing to start their own businesses. Apart from the obvious costs, which this practice entails, it also constitutes a more general problem limiting the migrants' access to various benefits and opportunities that would otherwise be available to them.

Bulgarian migrants are among the "privileged" on the island, as local authorities translate announcements to their language, which is not the case with Arab-speaking migrants.

The President of the Rhodes Labor Centre (RLC) spoke of the difficulties in organizing migrants on the island. Whereas similar difficulties were reported for locals, for migrants the lack of community organization and representation meant that they would often have to pay lawyers in order to solve a problem they experience. The trade unionist explained the difficulties in organizing migrants with the small labor market on the island. "The market is small, the community is small. If you report an employer for unfair treatment, you won't find another job; word will spread. Everybody knows everybody. People are scared. Migrants are even more scared. In Athens it's easier to organize people", he said. This is obviously an issue typical of small and self-contained (island) economies. While transparency resulting from the small size of the market may increase employment possibilities for migrants (e.g., through personal contacts), it limits their ability to secure better working conditions or employment relations. Migrants would report an exploitative employer only if exploitation (e.g., failure to pay the statutory social security contributions) threatened the renewal of their work permits. Despite the reported lack of collective representation, migrant associations do exist on the island. Bulgarians also have their association.

4.2.6.2. Service provision

Previous research in Greece recognizes the importance of the relationship between migrants and public services for their social integration (see GSEE Institute of Labor and Attica Prefecture, 2004). In our fieldwork research, migrants' opinion about the quality of services provided by local authorities depended very much on their country of origin and their respective needs. All immigrants in the sample had used public services in Rhodes when applying for their residence and work permits. They had gone to the Employment Agency (O.A.E.Δ.), the police, the hospital and the Social Security Institute (IKA).

Bulgarian migrants on the island were generally satisfied with the public services offered, probably because of their relatively stable immigration status, while immigrants from Albania, Russia, Ukraine and Moldova were more likely to assess public services as bad. One immigrant, however, who had lived more than a decade in Athens, thought that service provision in Rhodes was much better organized and waiting times were much shorter.

Some respondents suggested, however, that local services are equally inefficient for both migrants and local Greeks, so this was not always perceived as discrimination or unequal treatment.

More positive attitudes were reported by Bulgarian migrants, who seemed to be treated more favorably by the local administration. A Bulgarian couple said that they believed local institutions actually helped them stand up for their rights. "The institutions are fine but we do not do what we are supposed

to because we still do not know our rights". Although the perception of inadequate access/provision of local services is still identifiable in this statement, the responsibility is shifted more to the migrants than to the authorities. It is difficult to identify the reasons for this, but the status of Bulgaria as a EU Member State probably plays a central role.

4.2.6.3. Experiences of local residents with immigrant communities in Rhodes

Most of the surveyed locals thought that migrants were needed on the island – although, rather sadly, the main reason cited was the low pay they were willing to accept. In a rather extreme, but revealing statement, a trade unionist said that "locals love immigrants for as long as they are useful to them". None of the local residents interviewed emphasized the wider social and cultural benefits of migration, although some seemed to acknowledge them implicitly in less structured parts of the interviews.

The small percentage of local respondents who were negative about the presence of economic immigrants on the island, also seemed to think that the key problems were economic rather than socio-cultural. The main issue raised referred to the outflow of financial resources through the money transfers immigrants make. According to these respondents, economic migrants were draining money from Rhodes and sending it home, without much local spending and thus without much benefit for the local economy. One migrant mentioned that this was true for Bulgarians and Romanians but not for Albanians, who had been trying hard for a long time to settle in the island and get recognition from local people, with not much success so far.

Asked whether they send money home, approximately one third (35%) of the Bulgarians interviewed stated that they did it regularly. Transfers amounted to an average of 150 Euro per month (20% of the average income of 800 Euro). Most of the people who sent money home had children in Bulgaria. Transfers were being made along two main channels: Greek banks with offices in Bulgaria or "Western Union".

Furthermore, interviewed locals did not think that migrants had negative impact on public services. "Even if migrants are a burden for hospitals or schools, this is not their fault; it is the Greek state that has to build bigger schools, bigger hospitals. But this should be done for legal migrants only", warned a 57-year-old taxi driver. The issue boils down to equality and universality of public services, which reflects the general public perceptions in Greece about the eligibility structure of public service provision (e.g., universal health system coverage, universal access to free education at all levels, etc). For some locals, the socio-cultural impact of migrants was actually entirely positive; some respondents stated that migration to Rhodes has made locals more open to foreigners.

4.2.7. Conclusion

Given the relatively high unemployment among migrants in Rhodes, it should come as no surprise that field research indicated that perceptions about the impact of immigrants on labor market competition and wages were not as negative as found in other studies for mainland Greece. An alternative interpretation, which seems more likely, is that the impact of migration on labor market competition and wages is actually less serious than perceptions would suggest. If this was not the case, then such perceptions should be more intense in a place like Rhodes, with above-average concentration of immigrants and a relatively small and self-contained labor market, which almost necessarily implies higher visibility and transparency of labor market processes (e.g., of wage-dumping effects). Admittedly, some local residents, especially in construction and hotel industries, felt threatened by the presence of immigrants. Nevertheless, concerns about migrants more commonly had to do with the fact that they send a significant share of their income back home, rather than the fear that they might be displacing local workers. More important than displacement issues were the concerns about migrants driving down wages in some particular occupations. Interestingly, field research produced a finding, which is largely overlooked in related bibliography. It was argued that immigration facilitated a rationalization of pay scales across different activities on the island, which suggests a decline or convergence of wages in certain sectors and occupations. If this is true, it would be a development towards greater labor market fairness, in which migrant labor could play an important role, presumably substituting for the low sectoral and occupational mobility of the domestic workforce.⁴

Bulgarians, Albanians, and others were proficient in spoken Greek but could not read or write. Access to services for them, however, was facilitated by the fact that most relevant local authority announcements would be regularly available in their mother tongues. Clearly, one of the main conclusions, arising from this, is that there is a great need for language education for all immigrant groups on the island. Whereas the vast majority of respondents were relatively well integrated into the local labor market, fieldwork showed that labor market participation was not sufficient for the full integration of migrants into the local society and hence, for their full participation in social life and full use of its resources (including public services).

The migrants' country of origin and the previous experience of local residents with migration emerged as the most significant factors, influencing local perceptions about migrants. Local residents who had been migrants in other countries themselves, were generally more positive towards immigrants. Others, with no such experience, tended to show discriminatory pref-

⁴ On the extent of regional, sectoral and occupational mobility in the various regions of Greece, see Monastiriots (2009).

erences towards wealthier foreigners on the island. Nevertheless, all things considered, attitudes towards immigrants were not particularly negative. In fact, none of the was able to mention a specific example of friction he or she had personally experienced with any member of the migrant community.

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Annex

Profile of interviewed Bulgarian migrants in Rhodes

Gen-der	Age (years)	Education	Ethnicity	Occupation/sector in Bulgaria	Occupation/sector in Greece
Male	39	secondary	Bulgarian	n.a.	mini-market, retail trade
Male	49	secondary	Bulgarian	ship crew	technician
Male	20	primary	Turkish	self-employed (owned a clothes shop)	hotel staff
Female	42	secondary	Bulgarian	shop assistant	hotel staff
Male	47	secondary	Bulgarian	driver	general worker
Male	33	secondary	Bulgarian	ship crew	bakery
Female	62	primary	Bulgarian	factory worker	caregiver for elderly people
Male	60	primary	Turkish	general worker	general worker
Female	45	secondary	Bulgarian	shop assistant	hotel staff
Female	25	secondary	Bulgarian	student	hotel staff
Female	31	college	Bulgarian	n.a.	receptionist
Male	25	primary	Bulgarian	student	driver
Male	39	secondary	Bulgarian	construction worker	construction worker
Female	28	secondary	Bulgarian	housewife	n.a.
Female	52	primary	Bulgarian	factory worker	cleaner, dry cleaning
Female	22	college	Bulgarian	student	coffee shop, waitress
Male	37	primary	Bulgarian	general worker	general worker
Female	27	secondary	Turkish	shop assistant	coffee shop, waitress
Female	38	primary	Bulgarian	seamstress	seamstress
Female	53	primary	Bulgarian	factory worker	housekeeper
Male	18	secondary	Bulgarian	student	general worker
Male	51	primary	Bulgarian	driver	hardware store
Male	49	secondary	Bulgarian	technician	construction worker
Female	24	secondary	Bulgarian	shop assistant	coffee shop, waitress
Female	32	secondary	Bulgarian	farmer	cleaner
Female	40	secondary	Bulgarian	seamstress	cleaner
Male	46	secondary	Bulgarian	construction worker	construction worker
Female	37	secondary	Bulgarian	n.a.	hotel staff
Male	35	secondary	Bulgarian	self-employed	self-employed

Male	35	secondary	Turkish	manager	house painter
Male	19	secondary	Bulgarian	student	student
Female	35	secondary	Bulgarian	seamstress	cleaner
Female	36	secondary	Bulgarian	different unqualified jobs	waitress
Male	38	primary	Bulgarian	driver	driver
Female	38	secondary	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Female	32	secondary	Bulgarian	barwoman	barwoman
Male	52	secondary	Bulgarian	electrician	electrician
Male	30	secondary	Bulgarian	ship crew	taxi driver
Female	59	secondary	Bulgarian	kitchen assistant	housekeeper
Female	31	secondary	Bulgarian	n.a.	waitress
Female	22	secondary	Bulgarian	waitress	waitress
Female	35	secondary	Bulgarian	receptionist	cleaner
Male	26	secondary	Bulgarian	construction worker	construction worker
Female	32	secondary	Bulgarian	n.a.	chambermaid
Male	35	secondary	Bulgarian	n.a.	driver
Male	32	secondary	Bulgarian	high-school student	warehouse worker
Male	51	secondary	Bulgarian	shop owner	shop owner
Female	38	university	Bulgarian	n.a.	barwoman
Female	25	primary	Bulgarian	high-school student	owner of a convenience store for Bulgarian products
Female	19	secondary	Bulgarian	student	worker at a pizza parlor
Female	37	university	Bulgarian	no previous employment	barwoman
Female	58	college	Bulgarian	receptionist	housekeeper
Male	29	primary	Bulgarian	various undeclared jobs	photographer, owner of a photo studio
Female	26	secondary	Bulgarian	waitress	waitress
Male	35	secondary	Bulgarian	driver	warehouse worker
Female	31	secondary	Bulgarian	factory worker	Gas station worker
Female	47	secondary	Bulgarian	accountant	cleaner
Male	35	secondary	Bulgarian	cleaner	cleaner

4.3. Emigration of Bulgarians to the United Kingdom: London and Brighton

4.3.1. Introduction, definitions and scope

Bulgarian emigration to the UK has been relatively invisible to the press up until the country's 2007 EU accession. Nonetheless, Bulgarians, together with Romanians, briefly dominated the media in the spring of 2004 when an alleged visa scam emerged. Soon afterwards they were forgotten again only to make a dramatic re-appearance in the summer of 2006 as the two countries' EU accession approached. The media was flooded with horror stories about HIV positive migrants and criminals arriving from the two countries. At the same time, high powered studies had identified the extensive contribution to the British economy which immigrants had made after enlargement in 2004¹ – studies, which implied that an open market policy for the new accession states should be maintained. Nevertheless, the UK government decided to adopt a harder policy stance, and in October 2006 it announced rules which limited Bulgarian and Romanian nationals' access to the UK labour market once they joined the EU. Furthermore, the British government's 'Managed Migration' strategy also sought to limit immigration from other non-EU states, particularly low skilled workers, based on the assumption that nationals from accession states were likely to fill the majority of low skilled jobs for the foreseeable future.²

Only recently, the attention of the press was again provoked by Bulgarian Roma pick-pocketing in London.³

Yet, during the past 15 years or so people have been coming to the UK from non-EU East European countries in substantial numbers, both legally and illegally. For example, since 1994 Bulgarians and Romanians have been able to obtain self-employment visas under the European Community As-

¹ Ernst & Young Item Club, 2006, EU enlargement – benefits outweigh downsides for UK (at http://www.ey.com/global/Content.nsf/UK/Media-04_03_03_DC-ITEM_Club_update_03_04); Blanchflower, D., J. Saleheen, Ch. Shardforth, 2007. "The Impact of the Recent Migration from Eastern Europe on the UK Economy". IZA Discussion Paper No. 2615; Gilpin, N., Henty, M., Lemos, S., Portes, J. and C. Bullen, 2006, The Impact of Free Movement of Workers from Central and Eastern Europe on the UK Labour Market. Department for Work and Pensions, London; Iakova, D., 2007. "The Macroeconomic Effects of Migration from the New European Union Member States to the United Kingdom". IMF Working Paper WP/07/61, IMF.

² Home Office, 2006, A Points – Based System: Making Migration Work for Britain. Home Office, London.

³ Paul Cheston, Tube Pickpocket Family Sent 100,000 GBP Home to Bulgaria, Evening Standard, Wednesday, 5 May 2010.

Table 4.3. Bulgarian population in the United Kingdom, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2007–first trimester of 2009

Data from:	2001	2004	2005	2007	2008	January – March 2009*
2001 Census OECD database	5154 5350	–	–	–	–	–
SBS	no data	1,424	1,683	1,160	1,380	1,150
SAWS	no data	2,456	3,006	5,640	1,040	4,355
Accession worker cards	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,615	1,380	205
Registration certificates	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	9,170	6,265	1,310

* As of March 2009, the UK Home Office no longer publishes EU Accession Monitoring Statistics. All data refer to approved applications.

sociation Agreement (ECAA) and thousands have taken the opportunity to do so. Opportunities have also existed under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS), and from 2002, the Sector Based Scheme (SBS). In 2005 SAWS work permits were issued to 3,006 Bulgarian nationals while in the same year, 1,683 Bulgarians were issued SBS work permits. Meanwhile, it has also been possible for highly skilled people to enter the United Kingdom through the regular work permit scheme, as well as programmes such as the Highly Skilled Migration Programme (HSMP) and the Scheme for Innovators. HSMP applications approved to Bulgarians increased from just 6 in 2002 when the scheme commenced⁴ to 59 in 2005.⁵ Some 5,350 Bulgarian-born were registered living in the UK with a further 2,965 having been granted residency.

More recent estimates of the Bulgarian population in the UK are available through the Accession Monitoring Statistics (i.e., for the period 2007 to the first quarter of 2009). These reflect the number of workers authorisation documents issued to Bulgarian nationals for legal work in the country (table 4.3).

Moreover, despite the significant research attention to nationals from the 2004 EU accession countries – Poland in particular – immigrants from other Eastern European countries such as Bulgaria have remained relatively invisible and ignored by researchers, with some exceptions. Bulgarians were included

⁴ The HSMP started on 1 February 2002 and so data for 2002 are for 1 February to 31 December 2002.

⁵ Salt, J., 2006, International Migration and the United Kingdom: Report of the United Kingdom SOPEMI Correspondent to the OECD, London: UCL. Available at: http://www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/mru/docs/Sop05fin_20060627.pdf. The SAWS and SBS schemes are due to be restricted to Bulgarians and Romanians from 2008.

as a control group in a COMPAS study⁶ on the employment of Central and East European immigrants in the UK following the 2004 EU enlargement. The study highlighted the difficult circumstances of immigrants who were trapped in low-wage occupations in agriculture, construction, and the hospitality and care sectors, suffering instability at work, problematic contracts and low payment. Immigrant workers from the A8 accession countries (Poland & Lithuania) as well as Bulgaria were found to comprise about 10 percent of the workers in low wage employment in contract cleaning, hospitality and catering, home care and food processing sectors in London.⁷ In an IPPR report on the likely migration implications of the Bulgarian and Romanian accession to the EU, both nationalities were profiled working in sectors that were either unskilled or hard to fill and in which many A8 nationals were currently working.⁸

The present report is an attempt to contribute to the scarce knowledge on the Bulgarian migrant community in the UK. The focus will be on the employment, education and housing of Bulgarian immigrants living London and Brighton & Hove. Part of analysis will draw on previous research, conducted in the summer of 2005; it will also consider Bulgarian migrants' broader interaction with local communities, particularly focusing on the issue of community cohesion. A cohesive community was defined along the lines of the Home Office/DCLG's (Local Governments Department) definition of cohesion – where there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities; where the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued; where those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and where strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and in the neighbourhoods.

Community cohesion is measured in four ways: 1) by considering three key contextual factors – employment, education and housing, 2) by assessing whether migrants feel "at home" and have a sense of belonging to their neighborhood, their municipality and the UK in general, 3) by estimating the extent to which diversity is respected, and 4) by gauging migrants' expectations for the future and the extent to which they participate in community activities. These indicators "translate" into questions such as: "Do you have friends with a different ethnic background than yours?", "How often do you talk to your neighbors?", "Do you think that your neighborhood is a place where people with different social status or ethnic background live well together?".

⁶ Anderson, B., M. Ruhs, B. Rogaly, S. Spencer, 2006. Fair enough? Central and Eastern European immigrants in low-wage employment in the UK, Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report: York Publishing Services Ltd. (<http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/changingstatus/Downloads/Fair-percent20enoughpercent20paperpercent20-percent201percent20Maypercent202006.pdf>)

⁷ Evans, Y., Herbert, J., Datta, K., May, J., McIlwaine, C. and Willis, J. (2005) Making the City Work: Low Paid Employment in London. London: Queen Mary, University of London.

⁸ IPPR, 2006. EU Enlargement: Bulgaria and Romania – migration implications for the UK: an IPPR FactFile, April 2006.

4.3.2. Study localities

The study, which was carried out in the summer and fall of 2009, focused on London with the majority of the respondents coming from the Northern and Southern parts of the city, while the 2005 study was geographically restricted to Southeastern England (Brighton and Hove) and the London Boroughs of Hackney and Harrow (located east and west of London respectively).

The latter were selected as study localities as they represent three distinctive social contexts in which emerging immigrant diversity is being experienced and responded to. Perhaps the most obvious choice was the London Borough of Hackney, an inner-city borough with a population of just over 200,000 long noted for its phenomenal ethnic diversity. According to the GLA (Greater London Authority) Ethnicity Index, it is the third most diverse local authority in the UK, after Brent and Newham. Hackney has a particularly large proportion of the population in the category 'Other White', which includes the East Europeans/ Bulgarians of concern in this study – although it also includes 'White Irish' (3%), and many West Europeans, North Americans and Australasians.

In contrast, Harrow is an outer-London borough, again with just over 200,000 residents, but not so well recognized as a destination for immigrants. Yet, in recent years it too has experienced growing ethnic diversity, and the arrival of a wide range of immigrant groups. Indeed, Harrow ranks fifth nationally in terms of the proportion of non-white residents and has the second highest proportion of Indian origin residents in England (22%) after Leicester. The 2001 Census recorded that a third of all residents were born abroad, coming from 137 different countries. The two largest groups of immigrants were those born in India (12,400) and Kenya (10,250), while some 2,040 were born in Eastern Europe. According to the same census, nearly one fourth of Hackney's population identify themselves as "Black or Black British".

Meanwhile, the City of Brighton and Hove, on the Atlantic shore, was selected as a locality with a relatively low rate of ethnic diversity and predominantly white population, but in which new immigrant communities are now becoming established. There is anecdotal evidence of the growing presence of East Europeans working in the city's hotels and restaurants, and attending the city's one Orthodox Church (Greek). The city has a population of just under a quarter of a million.

4.3.3. Field methods

The study conducted in 2005 among Bulgarian migrants in the United Kingdom, is part of a larger quantitative survey covering a total of 388 immigrants from Albania, Bulgaria, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Ukraine, as well as 402 local residents, including long-term residents of foreign origin

who live with them, in Brighton and Hove and the London Boroughs of Hackney and Harrow. Out of the 85 Bulgarians interviewed in 2005, 29 lived in Brighton and Hove, 29 – in Hackney, and 27 – in Harrow. In 2009, a total of 117 Bulgarians were interviewed: 68 of them were approached in the summer and responded to an abridged version of the detailed questionnaire, which was then used in the fall to interview another 49 Bulgarians.

A snowball sample using multiple entry points was used to identify immigrants in both the 2005 and 2009 (long questionnaire) surveys. Under the circumstances, this was considered the only possible and ethically acceptable technique. Access to immigrants was facilitated through personal contacts and through introductions from key contacts in the Bulgarian community, especially through owners of Bulgarian restaurants and coffee shops. The abridged questionnaire ($n = 68$) was distributed among the people waiting in front of the Bulgarian Embassy in London to cast their vote for the Parliamentary elections on July 7, 2009. Some of the questionnaires were filled in by the respondents themselves, others – through personal interviews. The success of the former greatly depended on the willingness of the Embassy's staff to collect the questionnaires and hand it to the research team. Interviewing people while they were waiting to vote on a hot summer day in London proved quite challenging because both the respondents and the Embassy's staff were anxious and under pressure. Nevertheless, the success rate reached nearly 70%.

The abridged questionnaire contained 25 questions and required an average of 10 minutes to fill. The longer version of the questionnaire contained 76 questions and the interview was more time-consuming, requiring approximately 40 minutes. The questionnaire used in 2005 contained a total of 94 questions (74 for long-term residents), and each interview took between 30 minutes (long-term residents) and over one hour (some immigrants). Questionnaires were translated from English into Bulgarian, and were completed in face-to-face-interviews held in Bulgarian. Unlike the 2005 sample, the respondents interviewed in 2009 were not offered financial incentives to participate in the survey, which did not affect the success of the interviews. In contrast, immigrant respondents in the 2005 sample were offered cash or vouchers of 5 British pounds for food or cosmetics in recognition of their time input, a factor that greatly affected the success rate of the questionnaires, especially in the case of jobless people.

It is acknowledged that given the relatively small sample of Bulgarian migrants, the sampling procedure was unlikely to produce a random sample of responses. In order to compensate to some degree for the non-randomness of the sample, a 'tree' or a snowballing diagram was kept on the way each interviewee was recruited. The goal was to avoid respondents who know each other or are related in some way. Nonetheless, the selection of both

immigrants and long-term residents (2005 survey only) was, to some degree, related to their visibility and those who are more socially active were more likely to be selected for the interview. In the case of those interviewed on the Elections day, recruitment was affected by the respondents’ political activity and willingness to vote.

Meanwhile, in the spring of 2008, four additional in-depth interviews with Bulgarian migrants (two men and two women at an average age of 42 years) were held in the framework of a larger survey of Undocumented Workers Transitions in seven EU Member States, including the United Kingdom. These interviews aimed at studying in detail the effects of changed migration status on migrants’ employment opportunities, way of life, access to healthcare, education and police services in the place of residence; security and crime, as well as the social interaction between different ethnic and national groups. Detailed notes were taken at the end of each interview and a field diary was kept to record systemic observations, notable data and other relevant information.

4.3.4. Profile of Bulgarian migrants

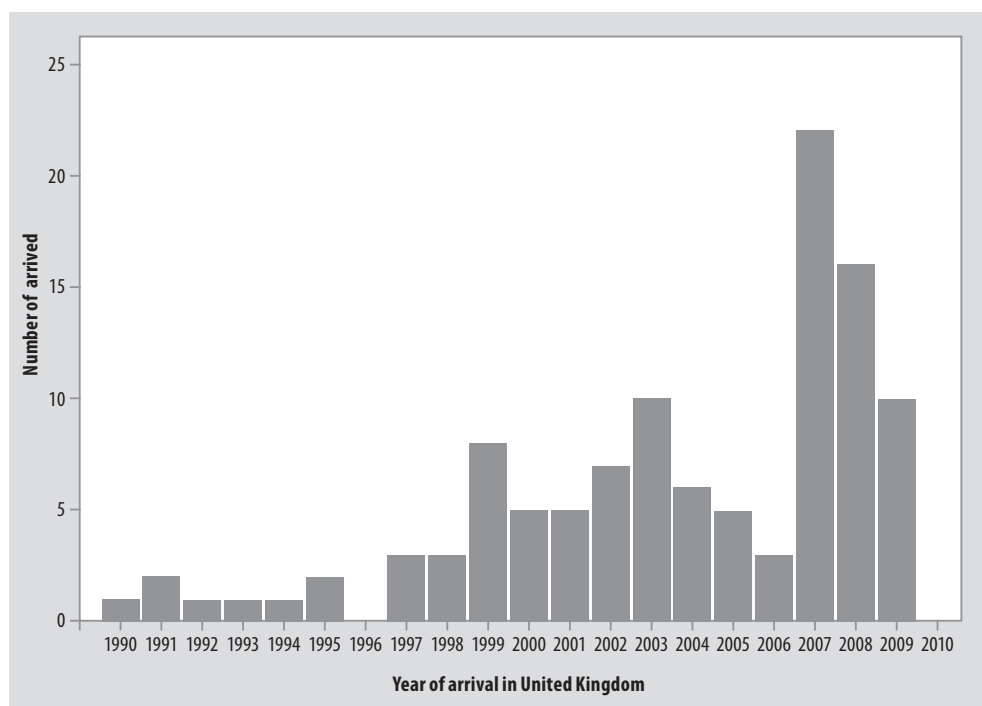
In both samples, the number of women was slightly higher – 54% (2009: n = 63; 2005: n = 46), than that of men – 46% (2009: n = 54; 2005: n = 39). The 2005 sample was somewhat younger with most respondents ranging between 20 and 29 years of age, while the persons included in the 2009 sample ranged between 30 and 39 years (the average age being 34 years) (table 4.4). None of the respondents in both samples arrived in the United Kingdom as a minor. The average age of arrival for the 2009 sample was 32 years.

Table 4.4. Age and gender of respondents included in the samples

Age (years)	2005	2009
16-19	3 (4%)	–
20-29	30 (35%)	42 (36%)
30–39	20 (24%)	47 (40%)
40–49	26 (30%)	19 (17%)
50–59	5 (6%)	5 (5%)
Above 60	1 (1%)	4 (3%)
Male	39 (46%)	54 (46%)
Female	46 (54%)	63 (54%)
Total	85 (100%)	117 (100%)

Source: Field survey, 2005 and 2009

Fig. 4.7. Year of arrival for Bulgarian immigrants in United Kingdom



Source: Field survey, 2009

More than three quarters of the immigrants interviewed in 2009 were married or had a partner; 74% of those partners lived in the United Kingdom. Only eight persons (9%) had left their spouses in Bulgaria where they also had underage children. These were mainly people who had arrived recently in the UK. The corresponding figure for the 2005 sample is a little over 20%. Almost all immigrants interviewed (95%) had Bulgarian partners. Only five respondents reported being married to persons outside their national group (British, Romanian, Slovak and Turk).

More than three quarters of the Bulgarians interviewed in 2009 (78%) had underage children. Most of them (72%) lived in the United Kingdom.

The largest group of Bulgarians in the 2009 sample (19%) had arrived in the UK in 2007, after Bulgaria's accession to the EU (fig. 4.7). The second and third largest groups arrived in 2008 and 2009 respectively. The peak year of arrival for Bulgarian immigrants included in the 2005 sample was 2003 (24% of respondents), when an increasing number of Bulgarians "bought" business plans from "expert companies" in the UK and secured visas to work as self-employed. The respondents in both samples had lived in the UK for an average of five years.

There was less variety of self-reported legal status among Bulgarians interviewed in 2009 compared to the 2005 survey. This must be the result of

Table 4.5. Current legal status of Bulgarian migrants

Status	2005	2009
Permanent residence	16.5	43.5
Temporary, with a right to work	42.4	41.0
Temporary, not working	4.7	–
Temporary, working without permission	8.2	14.0
Undocumented	4.7	0.0
Student	5.9	2.0
Dependent	17.6	–
Total	100.0	100.0
N =	85	49

Source: Field survey, 2005 and 2009

Bulgaria's accession to the EU in 2007 and the newly-acquired right to free movement. Only 49 respondents in the 2009 sample were asked to report their current legal status. Most of them (43%) were permanent residents (having UK citizenship or indefinite residence permits). They had arrived between the late 1990s and the end of 2004. Twenty Bulgarians (41%) reported having a temporary status allowing them to work (this group includes holders of registration certificates, worker's cards for persons from New Member States or work permits, as well as self-employed). Seven respondents (14%) who had arrived after 2007 exercising their right to free movement, were working in breach of their status without a proper work permit. Only one respondent (2%) had come on a student visa.⁹

Most Bulgarians interviewed in 2005 reported having a temporary status allowing them to work¹⁰ (42%, n = 36). The second largest group (18%, n = 15) includes "dependents". 14 Bulgarians reported having a permanent residence status (these had arrived in the mid 1990s), 4 reported being undocumented, while 13% had "semi-legal or illegal status". Five Bulgarians were regular students, while 4 had temporary visas allowing them no right to work and were awaiting a decision by the Home Office on their work permit applications (table 4.5). At the time of the survey, more Bulgarians held temporary visas that allowed them the right to work, consistent with the increased issuance

⁹ Students have the right to work 20 hours per week during the academic year and full-time during school breaks.

¹⁰ The group includes holders of work permits, self-employed and persons with "conditional residence permit".

of temporary visas to Bulgarians and Romanians in the run-up to the most recent EU enlargement in 2007.¹¹

4.3.4.1. Reasons for coming to the United Kingdom

Three quarters of Bulgarians interviewed in 2009 and slightly more than half (53%) of those interviewed in 2005 had left Bulgaria primarily for economic reasons, either because they were not earning enough (29%) or they saw no prospects for the economic situation in the country to improve (13%). Bulgarians who came to the UK after 2007 spoke of the deteriorating economic conditions in Bulgaria following the global economic crisis. As a middle-aged woman said “Bulgaria is no country to live in anymore!”. However, some felt disappointed to find similar conditions in the UK, with no work and continuously rising prices. None of the people interviewed in 2009 and only three of those interviewed in 2005 were unemployed before immigrating to the UK. Nevertheless, Bulgarians included in the 2009 sample spoke of delayed salaries, sometimes for more than six months, which threatened even their basic survival. It also appeared that more Bulgarian women than men had left the country because of family reasons or marriage, consistent with the notion that men had migrated first, and then their partners had followed.

Some 22 people (45%) of the 2009 sample first came to the UK as seasonal workers in agriculture, picking strawberries; they subsequently managed to extend their stay by switching to self-employment status. The remaining 26 people came to visit friends or family in the UK and stayed over. Only one person used a fake passport to enter the UK. Although the reasons for leaving Bulgaria are predominantly economic, it seems that Bulgarians from the 2005 sample came to the UK mainly because of the ease of entry (e.g. “able to obtain an entry visa”) (45%), followed by family and friends already in the UK (37%); some 8 people (10%) came to study.

Despite some publications in the media about immigration “scams” designed to allow immigrants to access welfare, it is worth mentioning that none of the Bulgarians in both samples chose to come to the UK because of welfare benefits. Recent unofficial data however suggest that an increasing number of Bulgarians are coming to the UK hoping to start receiving regular welfare benefits, most commonly for children who do not even live in the country. Unauthorized “accountants” and legitimate lawyers are often cited as masterminds and mediators of such “schemes”. When asked whether they had received any help upon arrival, some five people said that no one helped them. Some respondents however noted that Bulgarians sometimes find it difficult to admit that someone else had help them, preferring to sustain the

¹¹ EU Enlargement: Bulgaria and Romania – migration implications for the UK, an ippr FactFile, April 2006 (at www.ippr.org)

myth that they make it on their own. The remaining 44 people most often acknowledged help from Bulgarian friends already in the UK; others reported that they have been helped by family, spouse or parents. Asked about the main problems they had encountered upon arrival, most respondents noted difficulties arising from them not knowing English (36.4%), followed by difficulties with finding work (34.0%) and accommodation (23%). Two young women cited nostalgia for home and family as their main problem upon arrival in the UK; one man said that it was disappointment with friends that made his initial adjustment to life in the UK particularly hard.

4.3.5. Education

Education and housing are two key social factors that underpin community cohesion, at least in theory. Britain has a relatively well-educated workforce, and aspires to be a 'knowledge-based society' in which educational achievement is prized. At the same time, however, it has a residual section of the population with low qualifications that faces economic and social exclusion. Housing, on the other hand, has long been regarded as a key factor in social integration, with segregation of some immigrant minorities in low quality housing as well as competition for public housing between immigrants and other low-income communities.

4.3.5.1. Educational background

Bulgarian immigrants sampled in 2005 were relatively more educated than those sampled in 2009. Amongst the former, 47% had completed secondary education or college and 52% had tertiary or higher than tertiary education; just 1 person (1%) had no qualifications. The corresponding figures for those sampled in 2009 were 63% with secondary education or college and 37% with tertiary education. Both cohorts were considerably better educated than the general population in the three localities studied,¹² although this may reflect a sample bias. Most Bulgarians interviewed in 2005 had completed their education in Bulgaria, although some 12% had completed their education after arrival in the UK. Only two people in the 2009 sample had graduated from UK universities.

4.3.5.2. Language skills on arrival

Similarly to other East European immigrant groups surveyed in 2005, Bulgarians reported low levels of language competence at the time of their arrival. Nonetheless, Bulgarians interviewed in 2009 reported slightly better knowledge of English than those interviewed in 2005 (fig. 4.8 and 4.9). This

¹² Those interviewed were residing in greater London only.

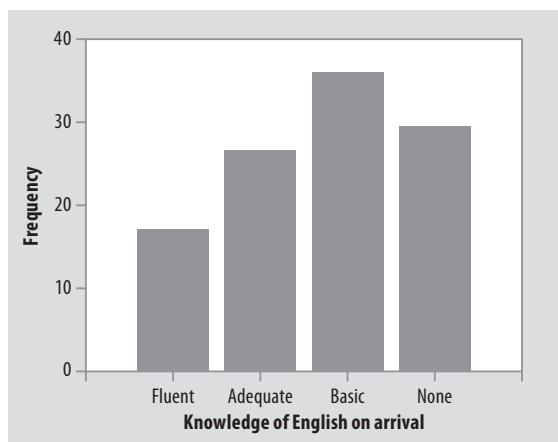
can be explained by the fact that recent migrants had been better prepared before coming to the UK; some reported that they had attended language courses in Bulgaria or studied English on their own. Thus, almost two thirds of the Bulgarians interviewed in 2005 (65%) described their knowledge of English on arrival as 'none' or 'basic' and a quarter said they did not know a word in English. In the 2009 sample, 60% (n=69) of the respondents said that their English on arrival was 'none' or 'basic'. However, a little over a quarter spoke no English at all. The lowest level of English speaking proficiency on arrival was also reported by Albanians in the 2005 sample, of whom 70% spoke no English at all.

A Ukrainian mother in her late 40s, who had lived in Brighton since the early 1990s, spoke about the difficulties immigrant children in the UK face when they start school without knowing the language. She said:

At the very beginning my son spoke no word of English at school. Kids started bullying him. He sustained a psychological trauma before adapting at school. The teacher then explained to the class that it was not that he was stupid but he just did not speak the language and it helped. They stopped bullying him. I know of other Russian and East European kids at Brighton and Hove schools who had been ruthlessly bullied by their classmates. Kids form groups at school according to the language they speak.

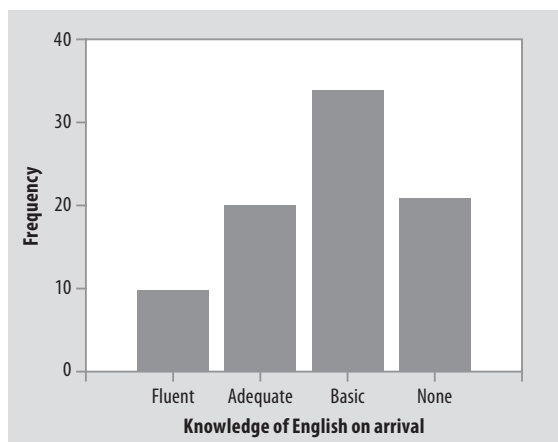
However, a remarkable improvement in English language skills was reported since arrival in both samples, with more than three quarters of Bulgarian immigrants in the samples

Fig. 4.8. Knowledge of English among Bulgarians on arrival, 2009



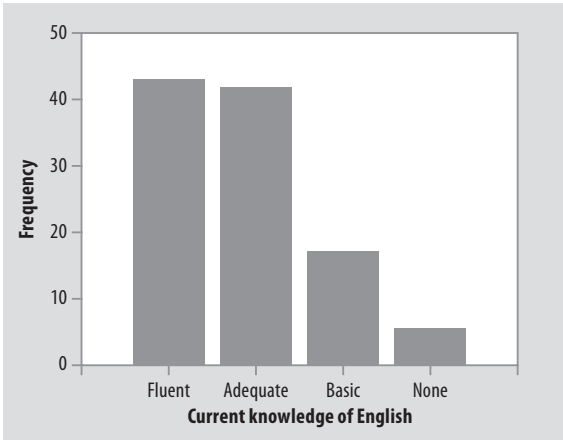
Source: Field survey, 2009

Fig. 4.9. Knowledge of English among Bulgarians on arrival, 2005



Source: Field survey, 2005

Fig. 4.10. Knowledge of English among Bulgarians at the time of the survey, 2009



Source: Field survey, 2009

describing their current level of English at the time of the survey as ‘fluent’ or ‘adequate’ (fig. 4.10 and 4.11). It should be noted that these are self-reported levels of English competence and our experience showed that they did not always reflect actual knowledge of the language.

Interestingly, slightly more Bulgarian women (46%) than men (23%) in the 2005 sample described their knowledge of English on arrival in the UK as ‘fluent’ or ‘adequate’, but this

gender gap had narrowed by the time of the survey, with 83% of Bulgarian women reporting ‘fluent’ or ‘adequate’ English, compared to 74% of men. Some Bulgarian women who came later to the UK to join their partners said that they had attended English classes at home prior to emigration. In the 2009 sample, 45% (n=28) of women and 34% (n=18) of men described their level of English on arrival as ‘fluent’ or ‘adequate’ but by the time of the interview more men, 79%, than women, 76%, reported ‘fluent’ or ‘adequate’ English. Bulgarian men, especially those employed in construction, usually work in teams with other foreigners or for British clients, which requires good knowledge of English. “You need to speak the language well in order to explain to the client what do you offer for the price you ask”, said a contractor. Almost all respondents who were fluent in English were University graduates.

4.3.6. Housing

Whilst there might be little basis for social exclusion arising from the educational status of East European immigrants, the same is not true of housing, where the dominant form of tenure was private rented housing, often associated with poorer conditions. Indeed, almost three quarters of all Bulgarian immigrants interviewed in 2005 reported living in private rented housing in all three localities, despite significant variations in housing types between these localities (table 4.6).

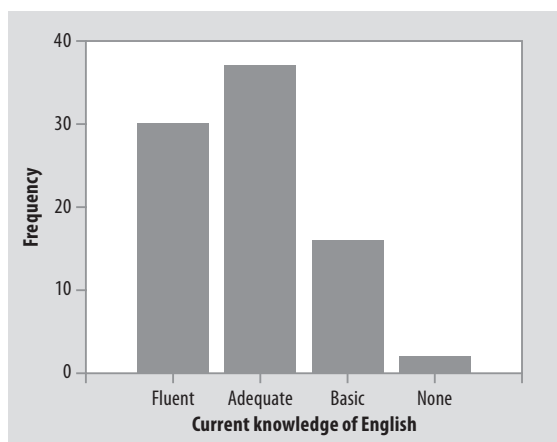
Although the interpretation of statistical data on privately rented housing is not straightforward, it is noticeable that 57% of the Bulgarians interviewed in 2005 reported living with non-family members (48 people; of them, 23 were living with one to two non-family members and another 19 with three to five non-family members, while six were living with six to 10

non-family members). This was particularly valid in London where small flats were not easily available; as a result, they were renting a room in two or three storey houses and sharing the kitchen and bathroom with other people, usually other Bulgarians. Only 12 people (38%) interviewed in 2009 reported living with non-family members. Most of them were recent arrivals. This suggests that as immigrants become established in the country, learn the language, make new contacts and find better jobs, their living conditions improve.

Respondents included in the 2005 sample reported finding their accommodation through a variety of routes, although the most common was through support or assistance from family, partners or other Bulgarians, who were not necessarily friends (44%), followed by letting agencies for privately rented accommodation (28%).

It is interesting to note that 12% (10 people) in the 2005 sample and 38% (12 people) in the 2009 sample were owner-occupiers and most of them had resided in the UK between 5 and 10 years. Only one Bulgarian interviewed in

Fig. 4.11. Knowledge of English among Bulgarians at the time of the survey, 2005



Source: Field survey, 2005

Table 4.6. Housing tenure by immigrant group, %

Housing	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	Total
Owner occupied	8.6	11.8	17.1	23.0	10.1	13.7
Council or other social rented	33.3	1.2	13.4	26.2	7.6	15.7
Private rented from landlord	38.3	50.6	26.8	19.7	55.7	39.2
Private rented from letting agent	9.9	23.5	23.2	16.4	17.7	18.3
Family or friend provided accommodation	9.9	9.4	15.9	9.8	7.6	10.6
Employer provided accommodation	0.0	3.5	3.7	4.9	1.3	2.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	81.0	85.0	82.0	61.0	79.0	388.0

Source: Field survey, 2005

2005 resided in Council accommodation in the London Borough of Hackney; another eight Bulgarians were living in accommodation provided by family or friends at the time of the interview and almost all of these people were living in London. Bulgarians in London, unlike those in Brighton and Hove more often tend to live together, in the same neighborhood or the same street. Hence, coherence among Bulgarians in the big city, along class lines, is more pronounced. At the same time this could be an indicator of greater segregation and less need for integration.

4.3.7. Labor market performance of Bulgarian migrants

Social factors such as education and housing have an important impact on patterns of immigrant integration and community cohesion, but of critical concern, both to researchers and policy-makers, is the economic experience of immigrants.

4.3.7.1. Employment prior to arrival in the United Kingdom

More than one third (38%) of Bulgarians who were employed prior to leaving their country, reported being in a managerial, professional or associate professional position, followed by those employed in education. Not all Bulgarian immigrants surveyed in 2005 had been employed before arriving to the UK: just over a quarter had been students (28%), while 4% (3 people) were unemployed (table 4.7).

Meanwhile, of those who had worked prior to coming to the UK – the clear majority – the highest proportion were occupied in wholesale or retail trade (21%), followed by those in business activities of one kind or another (19%); while 10 people (18%) were employed in the health services (mainly nurses and obstetricians).

Almost one quarter (24%) of Bulgarians in both samples reported that they had also worked in another foreign country before arriving to the UK. Germany, Greece and Spain were the main destinations. Other countries included Belgium, Cyprus, Hungary, Italy, Russia, the Czech Republic, Libya, Tunisia and Turkey.

4.3.7.2. First employment in the United Kingdom

When they first arrived in the UK, respondents in both samples found work in a range of sectors, the most significant being construction (for men), personal services (for women) and the hospitality sector (for both men and women). For those included in the 2009 sample, agriculture was another important entry sector. Some eight people had come as seasonal workers in agriculture,

Table 4.7. Employment category in country of origin, by immigrant group, %

Employment category	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	Total
Managers, professionals and associate professionals	24.7	37.6	53.7	36.1	36.7	37.9
Administrative and skilled trades	13.6	7.1	11.0	3.3	12.7	9.8
Personal services and sales	4.9	11.8	6.1	8.2	11.4	8.5
Processing industry, production and non-skilled work	4.9	11.8	4.9	3.3	7.6	6.7
Education	30.9	28.2	13.4	39.3	16.5	25.0
Unemployed	21.0	3.5	11.0	9.8	15.2	12.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N=	81.0	85.0	82.0	61.0	79.0	388.0

Source: Field survey, 2005

picking strawberries, and then remained in the country usually as self-employed in cleaning. This may reflect the periods in which Bulgarians came to the UK and the legal entry routes available. For example, those who had arrived in 2004-2005, came to the UK in a period of critical labor shortages in the construction industry and many of them obtained ECAA self-employment visas specifically for the construction sector, hence were employed according to the visa they had. Only 9 people in the 2005 sample (11%) said they had not worked since their arrival, with women twice more likely to stay at home, than men. These are women who take care of their children. All interviewed in 2009 had worked in the UK. Two people in the recent sample were first employed as an administrator or an accountant in a Bulgarian company.

4.3.7.3. Current employment

Levels of current employment were found to be higher among Bulgarians interviewed in 2005 compared to those interviewed in 2009, with one and four people respectively being unemployed and looking for work. The average unemployment period was a month and most often the current economic situation was to blame. As a result, less cleaning and construction jobs had been available in the last two years. The majority of those who were working, were employed in full-time jobs, although more men than women were full-time employees. Expensive or unavailable childcare was keeping more women in flexible and part-time employment.

Table 4.8. Current employment category, by immigrant group, %

Current employment category	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	Total
Managers, professionals and associate professionals	19.6	19.7	27.3	42.2	17.9	24.1
Administrative and skilled trades	30.4	15.8	16.4	26.7	6.0	18.1
Personal services and sales	17.9	14.5	29.1	11.1	29.9	20.7
Process, plant and elementary	32.1	50.0	27.3	15.6	46.3	36.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	56.0	76.0	55.0	43.0	67.0	299.0

Source: Field survey, 2005

Some 15 of the working Bulgarians (20%) in the 2005 sample were self-employed and four worked for an agency, which was common practice for recent arrivals, who had poor knowledge of English and weak connections with the Bulgarian community. Only three people in the 2009 sample reported having their own business, in cleaning, construction and childcare, respectively.

The majority of respondents in both samples were working legally but four admitted working illegally (three in agriculture and one in construction, 2005 sample), while seven were working in breach of their immigration status (one in health, three in personal services, one in construction and two in the hospitality sector, 2009 sample). Indeed, those with unstable legal status (undocumented, or with temporary residence permits) were more likely to be working than those with permanent residence status, and were also more likely to be employed full-time. This should come as no surprise given that people with unstable immigrant status have less choices and as a rule tend to accept any work offered. Six people in the 2009 sample were working illegally (i.e. visitors who work without authorization); two were cleaning houses, another two were cleaning hotels, one was a porter and one was a sales assistant in an ethnic shop; one was working in agriculture without permission but with a national insurance number registration (i.e. semi-compliant).

Overall, those working in the 2005 sample were employed in a wide range of skill levels, from management and professional occupations to unskilled jobs (table 4.8). Half were employed in processing, production and unskilled occupations; some 20% said they were in managerial or professional positions, followed by 16% (12 people) in administrative and skilled trades and personal services (15% or 11 people).

Bulgarians in the 2005 sample were concentrated mainly in construction (22%), personal services (21%), hospitality (18%), and real estate, renting or other business activities (15%).

4.3.7.4. Finding and shifting jobs

Both samples reported heavy reliance on Bulgarian networks for finding work. One third of those interviewed in 2005 and three quarters of those interviewed in 2009 had found their first job in the UK through family, other relatives or Bulgarian friends in the country. Other significant ways of finding work were “an agency in the UK” (26%, n=20, 2005 sample) and “an agency in Bulgaria” (11%, n=5, 2009 sample; 9%, n=7, 2005 sample) (table 4.9). Similar responses were received with respondents included in the 2005 sample were asked how they found their current or most recent employment, which confirmed to some extent the notion that Bulgarians, like other East European immigrants, may be ‘trapped’ in ethnic employment ghettos. However, this was not the case in the 2009 sample, where almost half of the respondents had found their last job through friends from other ethnic groups or by themselves. Women who were cleaning houses were advertising their services by distributing leaflets they themselves had made; others were recommended by former employers or clients; Internet was used by three people only. An interesting phenomenon emerged, reminiscent of experiences of the Bulgar-

Table 4.9. How immigrants found their first job in UK, %

Job search patterns	Albanians	Bulgarians	Russians	Serbians	Ukrainians	Total
People from my ethnic group	48.5	32.5	25.4	24.5	36.0	33.8
Newspaper, internet, notice board	6.1	13.5	22.4	32.7	21.3	18.4
Agency in the UK	16.7	28.8	13.4	10.2	5.3	15.4
Went myself, asking different employers	18.2	5.0	10.4	14.3	16.0	12.5
British friends	3.0	2.5	9.0	4.1	4.0	4.5
Agency at home	0.0	8.8	3.0	2.0	0.0	3.0
Other	7.6	8.8	16.4	12.2	17.3	12.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	66.0	80.0	67.0	49.0	75.0	337.0

Source: Field survey, 2005

Note: The table excludes those who have never worked in the UK.

ians working in Greece in the 1990s. One woman said that she “bought” the houses she was cleaning or the clients by another woman who returned to Bulgaria. Anecdotal evidence suggests that “trading” clients, houses to clean, children/elderly people to care for, was a popular practice among East Europeans in Europe.

Nevertheless, two thirds (66%, N=50) of the working Bulgarian immigrants interviewed in 2005 had a White British employer at their current or most recent job, a slight increase in the proportion of those whose first employer was White British, and very similar to the proportion of long-term residents who reported having a White British employer. Another 11% (N=8) were working for a Southern European Employer (Turk, Greek or Cypriot), especially in Hackney. Turks in Hackney often employed Bulgarian Turks and Pomaks, while 9% (n=7) were working for a Bulgarian employer. Only half of those interviewed in 2009 were working for a White British employer, while the rest were working either for a Bulgarian employer (in construction) or for employers of other ethnic origin. Four people were self-employed in cleaning and construction.

Asked about problems at work, eight Bulgarian women in the 2009 sample, who were cleaning houses in different parts of London talked about feeling tired and stressed of the long distances in London, the change of transport and the long working hours. For others, feeling stressed was related to difficulties communicating with employers and clients because of poor knowledge of English.

4.3.7.5. Wages

Information on wages was collected where possible. Thus, 58 Bulgarians included in the 2005 sample, reported their gross hourly wage rate, while 74 estimated their monthly income.¹³ In addition, information was also collected on non-wage benefits. A total of 15 Bulgarians, 7 women and 8 men, (24% of those employed) reported earning less than £5 per hour, which as a rule is below the National Minimum Wage.¹⁴ Moreover, no Bulgarian men were working for less than £4 an hour, while 2 women reported working at this rate. Very low wages among Bulgarians appeared to be more prevalent in Hackney, and less so in Brighton and Hove. This has to do more with tougher competition for jobs in London. In the 2009 sample, only eight people reported their gross hourly earnings and another eight estimated their monthly wages. Three of

¹³ Although some respondents reported both hourly and monthly wages, it was not possible to make a simple conversion from one to the other, since the number of hours worked each month makes a difference.

¹⁴ As of October 2005, the National Minimum Wage was £5.05 an hour. However, it is worth noting that some respondents may have interpreted our questions about wages as referring to net rather than gross wage rates, which would have had the effect of lowering reported hourly wages.

Table 4.10. Monthly wages of Bulgarian migrants, %

Monthly wages	2005	2009
Less than £600	6.8	8.3
£601 – £1,000	24.3	27.1
£1,001 – £1,500	45.9	39.6
Over £1,501	23.0	25.0
Total	100.0	100.0
N =	74.0	48.0

Source: Field survey, 2005 and 2009

them were earning exactly at the National Minimum Wage (NMW) at the time of the interview;¹⁵ they were cleaning hotels. Those earning significantly more than the NMW were employed in construction (they were earning an average of £15 per hour) or cleaning houses in wealthier regions of London (earning an average of £7 per hour).

Turning to monthly incomes, slightly higher levels of income were reported compared to what might be expected from hourly earnings, which reflects the fact that respondents often worked long hours. On the whole, compared to other immigrant groups, Bulgarians, were least likely to be trapped in jobs with very low monthly incomes, below £600 per month in 2005; the corresponding figure was £750 in 2009. Bulgarians in the 2009 sample were earning an average of £776 per month (table 4.10).

A range of fringe benefits were reported by the Bulgarian immigrants in both samples, including meals received at the workplace, paid leaves and bonuses. However, these can be interpreted as characteristic of the type of employment undertaken by immigrants: the ‘bonuses’ received are probably compensations for piecework in agriculture, than bonuses of the kind received by very wealthy workers in the City of London. This assumption is reinforced by the fact that some 37% of working Bulgarians in the 2005 sample and almost three quarters of those interviewed in 2009 reported receiving no fringe benefits at all, not even paid leaves.

It is not unreasonable to assume that immigrant wages are affected by their legal status – in other words, undocumented immigrants, or those with no right to work are likely to earn less. Some evidence of this is found in the fact that all undocumented immigrants in the 2005 sample were earning on average £500 less than legally residing Bulgarians.

Most respondents interviewed in 2009 reported working with other East Europeans, mainly Poles. A greater number of Bulgarians in the 2009 sam-

¹⁵ The interviews were conducted between September and December 2009; the National Minimum Wage was £5.73 until 30 September 2009 and £5.80 as of 1 October 2009.

ple were working with British people compared to those in the 2005 sample. Some explained this with the economic crisis that pushed more British people into jobs they would not previously do.

4.3.7.6. Working hours

As noted in the previous section, one strategy adopted by immigrant workers is to work long hours in order to translate low hourly wages into reasonable monthly incomes. Bulgarian immigrants interviewed in 2005 were somewhat more likely than other immigrant groups in the study to be working over 45 hours per week (53%, $n=33$), with this being particularly true for Bulgarian women ($n=18$) than for men ($n=16$). Interestingly, Bulgarians with permanent residence were more likely to work longer hours. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that new immigrants are often likely to hold more than one job at the same time, again in order to maximize incomes. However, only 8% of economically active Bulgarians in the 2005 survey were indeed found to be doing more than one job. The same pattern emerged among those interviewed in 2009 – most were working on average nine hours a day and about 45 hours per week on average, while taking an average of six days off per month. Given the insecurity of jobs in construction, men would rest only after completing a site. The same was valid for women in cleaning jobs who would not turn down a job offer any day of the week. Bulgarians in the 2009 sample were asked whether they have had on-the-job training; only two people – one working for an investment company and the other one for an IT firm – completed such training; they were also offered promotion in their jobs.

4.3.7.7. Membership in trade unions

Bulgarians were the only immigrant group in the 2005 survey with not a single trade union member. All of other immigrant groups interviewed included a few trade union members, with Serbians and Ukrainians being the most active (9% and 6% respectively). Some respondents explained this low rate of trade union participation with the fact that they had been organized for too long during the communist era in their home countries, and so had lost interest in joining any type of organizations. This might also partially explain the lack of strong immigrant organizations amongst these groups. The same results were confirmed by the 2009 sample. None of the respondent were involved in a trade union neither in Bulgaria nor in the UK. Only one respondent reported being a member of the student union. Many thought that membership in organizations is “a useless waste of time”. A woman said that she worked too much to make time for her family, let alone for participating in organizations”.

4.3.7.8. Money transfers

Most Bulgarians included in the 2009 sample reported that they sent money to Bulgaria but only occasionally, when and if their help was needed. Those who were remitting more regularly were sending the money to elderly parents and children left behind. The main use of the money was for necessities such as food, utilities and medicines. One person mentioned sending money for cigarettes. Three people were investing in new buildings.

4.3.8. Cohesion in diverse communities¹⁶

4.3.8.1. Sense of belonging

Asked whether they felt that they belonged to their neighborhood, only 3% of Bulgarian immigrants (N=2) responded that they felt 'very strongly' connected to their neighborhood, and another 30% felt they belonged 'fairly strongly' to it; some 10 Bulgarians said they 'did not know' how they felt about their neighborhood. This appears to reflect a real lack of identification among Bulgarians and other new immigrant groups surveyed, with the neighborhoods in which they live. To some extent, this could be explained by the frequent change of immigrants' place of residence, as well as the lack of friends or connections in the new neighborhood. The sense of belonging was often interpreted as feeling "at home" in the recipient country, having security and being happy living in it.

However, when Bulgarians were asked specifically if they felt they belonged to the UK, a much higher proportion said they did, either strongly or fairly strongly (57%, of whom 41% said they belonged 'fairly strongly'). Only two people said that they did not know how they felt about Britain. Bulgarians who lived in Brighton and Hove felt a weaker sense of belonging to Britain compared to those in Hackney and Harrow in London. Eighteen Bulgarians in Brighton said they did not feel they belonged to Britain compared to only seven in Hackney and 10 in Harrow.

A number of factors might explain why immigrants were less likely to express a sense of belonging to their neighborhoods. Most obviously, immigrants might be expected to identify closely to their country of origin. When Bulgarians were asked about their feelings of belonging to Bulgaria, 95% (n=81) said they belonged to their home country and 69% (n=59) said they belonged 'very strongly'. Only three people said they felt 'not very strongly' connected to Bulgaria and only one person said 'not at all strongly'. Interestingly, the latter were all recent arrivals to the UK. None of the Bulgarians in the 2005 sample was uncertain about their feelings of belonging to Bulgaria unlike the other immigrant groups in the survey. Bulgarians in Brighton expressed a slightly weaker sense of belonging to Bulgaria compared to their

¹⁶ Questions related to community cohesion were mainly explored in the 2005 survey.

counterparts in London: 55% (n=16) in Brighton said they belonged 'very strongly' to Bulgaria compared to 69% (n=20) in Hackney and 85% (n=23) in Harrow. Interestingly, similarly to other immigrants in the survey, Bulgarians also reported a higher sense of belonging to the borough, in which they lived, than their neighborhood. This suggests that the problem of lack of belonging is one that exists at a neighborhood level, rather than more generally. Almost half (47%, n=40) of the Bulgarians in the sample said they belonged to their Borough, while six did not know how they felt about it.

Another possible explanation is that Bulgarian immigrants, like other immigrant groups in the sample, live in more deprived neighborhoods. Yet, this is not consistent with the fact that long-term residents living in the same neighborhoods had a much greater sense of belonging and that the reported sense of belonging to the neighborhood was lowest in Brighton and Hove, which was the least deprived of the three localities (only two Bulgarians said they belonged 'fairly strongly' to the City, compared to 11 people in Hackney and 12 in Harrow). Indeed, in the UK as a whole, the level of deprivation of a neighborhood does not seem to affect people's sense of belonging to it. It is social contacts that matter. Half of the Bulgarians in Brighton chose the city because of employment opportunities, while half of those in Hackney and 85% of those in Harrow went there because of family and friends. Most Bulgarians interviewed in 2009 had come directly to London upon their arrival and their choice of place was determined by three main 'pull' factors: presence of friends (25%), employment opportunities ("there was job for me there") (20%) and presence of family (17%). Some people mentioned that they were attracted to London for its cultural diversity (8%) and educational infrastructure (8%). Another 11 people said that they 'just felt good in the city'. The latter is more an emotion felt at the time of the interview and experienced after sometime of residence in the city, rather than a motive for initial settlement. It was expressed by people with who had lived for over five years in London and felt relatively secure in their jobs and circle of friends.

Rather clearer evidence is available to suggest that immigrants' sense of belonging – whether to their neighborhood, borough, or to the UK – increases over time. This is an expected and natural development, as people improve their knowledge of English, get to know their new place better and find their way more easily (where to seek employment or housing, how to open a bank account, how to send money to Bulgaria, where to shop cheaper, etc.). Thus, those who felt they belonged 'very strongly' to their neighborhood had lived in that neighborhood an average of 18 months longer than those who felt they did not belong to the neighborhood at all, while those who felt they belonged 'very strongly' to the UK, had been in the country an average of three years longer than those who felt they did not belong in the UK at all.

In contrast, immigrants' sense of belonging to their home countries was not affected by the time they had spent in the UK. It is highly likely, however, that the reported sense of belonging reflects only provisional (temporary) feelings, related to current circumstances. Thus, any change in these circumstances (for instance, loss of employment) may produce entirely different results.

Some other factors were found to be associated with a higher sense of belonging to the neighborhood, notably whether immigrants planned to return to Bulgaria soon (only 15% of those planning to return in the next three years said they belonged, compared to 57% of those who had no such plans); whether individuals had children with them in the UK (46% expressed a strong sense of belonging, compared to 30% for those without children, or whose children were living elsewhere); the type of accommodation (owner occupiers had a stronger sense of belonging than private tenants); education (only 31% of university-educated immigrants expressed a sense of belonging, compared to 38% of those without university education); and gender (40% of men, compared to 30% of women expressed a sense of belonging). Meanwhile, a number of other factors were not associated with the immigrants' sense of belonging to their neighborhood, including age, education, language ability, occupation, and legal status.

4.3.8.2. Attitudes towards ethnic diversity

Community cohesion is not only about individual sense of belonging; it is also about whether people from diverse backgrounds get on with each other well and whether diversity is valued and appreciated. For example, a white British respondent in Brighton, who had previously lived in London, talked about the lack of ethnic diversity in the city; he missed the diversity that existed in some areas of South London, such as Lewisham and Brixton. When he first moved to Brighton in 1990, he said he was shocked that all his British colleagues and neighbors were white. Hence, his pool of friends was much less diverse than before. Most of his non-British friends were from London. Such concerns were not expressed by the Bulgarians and even less so by other immigrant groups. They tend to prefer mainly white neighborhoods and would rather have white uniformity than ethnic diversity.

Bulgarians, as well as Russians and Ukrainians, were more likely to identify neighbors, supervisors and landlords in racial terms such as "monkey", "blackie", "the one with the turban". These attitudes would often influence their choice of a desired place to live. However, price of accommodation was the determining factor and many Bulgarians are now living in ethnically mixed areas of London (east and south-east of London), attracted by cheaper accommodation.

Three initial measures were used to explore whether diversity was valued: first, whether individuals believed that their neighborhoods were places where people get on together well; second, whether they felt that their neighborhoods were places where people help each other; and third, the frequency with which people reported talking to their neighbors, including those from other ethnic or national backgrounds. It should be noted here that “talking” is often interpreted as a mere greeting.

Bulgarian immigrants agreed that the neighborhoods they lived in were places where different people got on together well, with 81% of them agreeing definitely or tending to agree with this proposition. In other immigrant groups covered by the survey, this figure is much lower. Bulgarians in London were more likely to agree with this proposition than those in Brighton. This confirms the assumption that, at least when it comes to Bulgarians, larger cities, in which risks are potentially higher, tend to bring people together. In contrast, in smaller cities, especially wealthier ones, such as Brighton, where there is a greater sense of security, people are more likely to alienate from each other and keep to themselves. This explains why Bulgarians in London tend to live closer to one another, while those in Brighton are scattered around the city. For example, in Hackney, around 83% of Bulgarians agreed that people in their neighborhood got on together well, while in Brighton this figure fell to only 69%. Compared to other immigrant groups included in the survey, Bulgarians were most positive, with one in three agreeing that the climate in their neighborhood was definitely friendly (27%, n=23). Nearly half of Bulgarians felt it was a ‘mixture’ of ‘help each other’ and ‘going their own way’, with this view held most strongly in Harrow (table 4.11).

On the whole, Bulgarians, as well as Russians included in the 2005 sample, were less likely than Albanians, Serbians and Ukrainians to report that

Table 4.11. “The neighborhood is a place where people help each other”, %

Opinion	Albanians	Bulgarians	Russians	Serbians	Ukrainians	Immigrants	Long-term residents
Help each other	12.3	27.1	18.3	11.5	11.4	16.5	22.1
Go own way	74.1	8.2	50.0	32.8	68.4	46.9	36.6
Mixture	11.1	47.1	25.6	42.6	16.5	28.1	38.6
Don't know	2.5	17.6	6.1	13.1	3.8	8.5	2.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	81.0	85.0	82.0	61.0	79.0	388.0	402.0

Source: Field survey, 2005

they talked to their neighbors frequently, with 17 Bulgarians (20%) stating that they never talked to their neighbors. Those Bulgarian immigrants with children who live with them were also more likely to talk to their neighbors at least once a week compared to those without children.

Findings suggest that Bulgarian immigrants in London, who had spent an average of two to three years in the UK, did not know their neighbors and did not communicate with them. This was partly explained by the lack of English language skills and the immigrants' way of life, which reflects the 'quick saver' strategy, at least at the beginning. Some talked about doing more than one job, leaving early in the morning and coming back late. They would make little or no investment in learning the language. Some complained that when they passed by their English neighbors on the street, they would not say even 'hello', let alone stop and start a conversation. Some added that the most they would do is nod (table 4.12).

Parents with children presented a different pattern of interaction with local residents. For instance, young parents with children who had lived in the UK for an average of five years reported more frequent interactions with neighbors, especially when children's parties were organized on their street. People who had established closer contacts even help each other in taking care of the children.

At the far end of the level of interaction between immigrants and long-term residents is the possibility of marriage or co-habitation. Over half of Bulgarians (84%, n=48) were married to or co-habited with another Bulgarian,

Table 4.12. Frequency of talking to neighbors, %

Frequency of talking	Albanians	Bulgarians	Russians	Serbians	Ukrainians	Immigrants	Long-term residents
On most days	30.9	18.8	15.9	21.3	25.3	22.4	39.1
Once or twice a week	27.2	25.9	29.3	34.4	22.8	27.6	29.1
Once or twice a month	13.6	23.5	14.6	21.3	12.7	17.0	13.9
Less often than once a month	13.6	5.9	23.2	11.5	12.7	13.4	8.5
Never	12.3	20.0	15.9	8.2	26.6	17.0	8.0
Don't know	2.5	5.9	1.2	3.3	0.0	2.6	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N=	81.0	85.0	82.0	61.0	79.0	388.0	402.0

Source: Field survey, 2005

only four (7%) reported having a relationship with a British person and the rest were married to a person from the former USSR or the Balkans (Greek, Latvian, Polish, Serbian) (n=5, 9%), which suggests a very small degree of 'intermixing' between Bulgarians and other nationalities, including native British population, which is not the case with Russians, Ukrainians and Serbians. However, quite high levels of mixing among people from different ethnic or national backgrounds were revealed when it came to friendships, with around 75% of Bulgarians (n=64) interviewed saying they had friends from a different ethnic group, usually from the former socialist countries. Only a fraction of Bulgarians in the 2009 sample said they had friends outside their ethnic group; these were mainly people in higher skilled jobs and with good English skills who work with people of different nationalities.

Social networks are important for a number of reasons, not least because they provide a source of support to individuals and families when they are in difficulties. However, when respondents were asked who they would turn to in case of a personal problem, 54% of the Bulgarians interviewed in 2005 (n=46) said they would turn first to their spouse, followed by an equal share that would turn to other household members or to Bulgarian friends, 12% (n=10). Some three Bulgarians said that they would prefer not to ask for help or that there was nobody to help them, while 8 people (9%) would turn to other relatives.

Similar responses were received when Bulgarians asked who would they turn to if they were seriously ill, with 52% (n=44) of them saying their spouse, although the answers to both questions may simply reflect the fact that 67% of Bulgarians reported having a partner. Around 4% (n=3) of Bulgarian respondents had no one to ask for help in such case.

Levels of cooperation with colleagues were also quite high. When asked whether people at their workplace respected each other, only around 5% (n=3) of Bulgarians said they did not. The figure excludes those that said they did not know, those who worked alone, and those whose colleagues were all Bulgarians. Some 11% of Bulgarians (n=8) said they were working with other Bulgarians only, while 71% (n=54) were working with people from other ethnic groups; 12% (n=9) said they were working alone and another 7% (n=5) did not responded.

On the other hand, almost two-thirds (64%, n=54) of Bulgarians reported that they had friends from work. The 'friendliest' sectors for Bulgarians were construction (94%, n=16) and health and social work (86%, n=6). However, when asked whom they could turn to if they had a problem at work, most Bulgarians said they would turn to their employer (43%, n=33) or to other Bulgarians (22%, n=17) or relatives (16%, n=12).

4.3.8.3. Expectations for future life opportunities

Age, family status, educational background, length of stay in the country and intentions for repatriation were all significant factors, shaping immigrants' expectations for future life opportunities in Britain. What surfaced as most important during the in-depth interviews was a stable job that would pay enough for a decent life. Young people also often wanted to get good education and improve their English language skills. Having a 'quiet' life was most often mentioned in the in-depth interviews with Bulgarians.

"Quiet life, good relations with neighbors and other people, normal life". (30-year-old Bulgarian woman, Harrow)

"To be healthy; to live a nice life in the UK, that's why I chose to live here. I want a quiet life and the possibility to travel with my family around the world. I want whatever each normal person wishes to achieve". (28-year-old Bulgarian man, Hackney)

Asking immigrants whether they intend to return to their native country, has proved to be notoriously difficult. Evidence suggests that they overwhelmingly respond that they do intend to return, even if this is very unlikely. Nevertheless, the respondents were asked this question and around three quarters (73%, n=63) of them reported that they intended to return to their home country at some stage. This intention has been rather higher among Bulgarians (73%) and Ukrainians (57%) than in the other three groups (approximately 40% in all). Bulgarians living in Brighton were more likely to wish to return (strangely they had the weakest sense of belonging to Bulgaria) than their compatriots in London; they were also the ones feeling the weakest sense of belonging to the UK, their neighborhood and their city.

Yet, any view that return is imminent needs to be qualified. For example, many people with young children and partners in the UK reported that they plan to settle more permanently in the UK or at least until their children graduated from school and found jobs. Meanwhile, few of the Bulgarians who reported that they do intend to return, felt that this return was imminent. Only two respondents in both samples had already fixed a date, while another five in the 2005 sample and four in the 2009 sample expected to return within the next year, 10 people in the 2005 sample and 13 people in the 2009 sample planned to return in the next two to three years, whereas more than half in both samples said they did not know when, and another 13% (n=8) in the 2005 sample and 18% (n=17) in the 2009 sample anticipated that they would not return until they retired. Ukrainians interviewed in the 2005 survey, were most likely to have a definite plan to return. Some of the respondents interviewed in 2009 described their intention to return to Bulgaria in terms such as: *I am staying because of partner, otherwise I don't like it here. I would return to Bulgaria only if I don't have other choice. Only if things get really bad here. When the children graduate from school. When life in Bulgaria improves.*

Among those Bulgarians who planned to return, earning enough money in the UK was the most significant reason given by those interviewed in 2005 to justify this intention (44%, n=28), while for Bulgarians interviewed in 2009 the most important reason was the improved economic situation in Bulgaria (46%, n=45). Family and personal reasons also influenced return plans in both samples. Those who had been in the UK for up to 3 years, had come for economic reasons, and were working in low-skilled occupations were more likely to have a concrete plan of return. Half of the Bulgarians in the 2005 sample (52%, N=13) and only 16 people (18%) in the 2009 sample who had been in the UK between 5 and 10 years were certain they would not return. Similarly, all Bulgarians in both samples who had come for education to the UK, either did not know when they would return or were certain they would not return. Those with a concrete plan of return were also more likely to say they did not feel they belonged to the neighborhood, borough, or the UK.

4.3.8.4. Community participation

Another element of community cohesion is whether people feel they can influence decisions at local level, as well as their participation in local life. Asked if they agreed that they could influence decisions affecting their local area, just over a quarter (28%) of Bulgarians interviewed in 2005 said they definitely agreed, or tended to agree, while Albanians were most positive and Serbians most negative.

Meanwhile, around 24% (n=20) of the Bulgarians in the same sample had attempted to solve a local problem in the last 12 months and, of these, slightly more than a half (n=11) had contacted the appropriate organization to deal with the problem, five had contacted a local counselor or MP, two had contacted a local radio station, and one had attended a tenants' or local residence group meeting. Length of stay in the UK and legal status appeared not to impact immigrants' perceptions of their ability to local decisions, or the likelihood of them taking action to do so, although those immigrants who were owner occupiers were slightly more likely to have taken actions such as contacting a newspaper, organizing a petition or attending a meeting.

It is also striking that immigrants in the 2005 sample, including Bulgarians, were only half as likely as long-term residents to have volunteered (formally or informally) in the last 12 months, or to have given money to charity. Thus, only three Bulgarians (4%) said they had volunteered in the last 12 months, compared to 31% of Ukrainians, 30% of Serbians, 27% of Russians and 26% of Albanians. Those three Bulgarians said they had provided transportation, organized or helped organizing a local event. One said: *Britain is not a socialist country, is it? Why should one volunteer then?* (table 4.13).

Table 4.13. Volunteer work in the last 12 months, %

Community participation	Albanians	Bulgarians	Russians	Serbians	Ukrainians	Immigrants	Long-term residents
Volunteered	25.9	3.5	26.8	29.5	30.4	22.7	52.0
Did not volunteer	74.1	96.5	73.2	70.5	69.6	77.3	48.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	81.0	85.0	82.0	61.0	79.0	388.0	402.0

Source: Field survey, 2005

Bulgarians did not seem to be involved in many community or voluntary activities and, unlike Serbians, Russians and Ukrainians, were not related to their Church either. Some Albanians reported active voluntary participation in their communities.

Despite the relatively low levels of community involvement, it is worth noting that around 55% (N=47) of the Bulgarian immigrants interviewed in 2005 said that they were involved in some sort of a group, club or organization. Almost half of them (47%, n=22) reported being involved in sports clubs. None of the Bulgarians was a member of a political party, religious group, environmental group or trade union in the UK, unlike Russians or Albanians in the study. However, Bulgarians together with Russians were more likely to be members of an ethnic community organization. Some 17 Bulgarians (N=8) said they were members of a Bulgarian community group. However, this was not the case with the Bulgarians interviewed in 2009; none of them was a member of a group, club or association.

4.3.9. Conclusion

This report has explored the experience of Bulgarian immigrants during two time periods: 2005 and 2009. Those interviewed in 2005 were living in the London Boroughs of Hackney and Harrow, and in the City of Brighton and Hove. Bulgarians interviewed in 2009 were living in greater London. The focus of the surveys was on the immigrants' personal characteristics, employment and housing in the UK and their expectations for the future. Bulgarian migrants' perspectives on community cohesion and their interactions with long-term residents were mainly explored in the 2005 survey. Although these were not representative samples in the statistical sense, they are larger than

previous studies on Bulgarians in the UK. Moreover, the 2005 study is the first to systematically compare the experiences of the Bulgarians in the UK with those of other non-EU East Europeans.

The study showed that 2007 was the peak year of arrival to the UK for the Bulgarians in the 2009 sample. A significant proportion of them came to the country to work and have been quite successful in finding employment, albeit in low-skilled, low-paid sectors, with little upward mobility to date. However, their employment opportunities have already decreased as a result of the current economic situation.

The experience of Bulgarians with community cohesion appears more mixed: on one hand, high levels of interactions were reported between Bulgarians in the 2005 sample and long-term residents, while both groups agreed that diversity was respected in their neighborhoods and workplaces. Yet, in terms of their sense of belonging to the neighborhood, the level of community participation and the extent they believed they could influence local affairs through their own actions, Bulgarians seemed much more negative to life in the UK, compared to the other immigrant groups in the 2005 study and to long-term residents.

Nevertheless, sense of belonging to the neighborhood did appear to depend somewhat on the individual character of the neighborhoods in which Bulgarians lived. Those living in London exhibited a stronger sense of belonging to their neighborhoods compared to those living in Brighton and Hove. The time immigrants had spent in a neighborhood also mattered; the longer they had lived in a neighborhood, more likely they were to express a sense of belonging. Moreover, it is the neighborhood rather than the UK as a whole that immigrants feel they do not belong to, which suggests that place-specific policy responses are required to improve people's sense of belonging. This is not surprising, given the propensity of many Bulgarians, as well as Russians and Ukrainians, to settle in 'white' neighborhoods and form 'pockets' there, confining their interactions within these 'pockets'.

Bulgarians interviewed in 2009 seemed more willing to return to Bulgaria compared to those interviewed in 2005. State response could address this by advertising job vacancies in national newspapers in London or through activities of the Bulgarian Embassy in London.

From the UK perspective, another important issue is whether government and civil society should pay more attention to the new Member States of Bulgaria and Romania. This is certainly a timely question, particularly given the changed circumstances of the second round of EU enlargement in January 2007, the ongoing negotiations towards possible EU entry for other countries from the region, the deepening economic crisis, and the tightened immigration rules endorsed by the new coalition government.

In this context, the most obvious way in which the UK government, and the UK press in particular, is paying attention to East European migration is by highlighting its illegal nature and, by implication, the threats to border control and the rule of law associated with such illegal movements. Moreover, as noted above, steps have also been taken to limit labor market access of Bulgarians and Romanians. Yet relatively few of the respondents in the 2009 sample included in this study, had broken immigration rules by working in breach of the terms of their Treaty-endorsed right to free movement. Meanwhile, the study hardly shows heavy competition for jobs among immigrant groups in the 2005 survey, or between them and long-term residents. However, it seems that workforce shortages still exist, with Bulgarian immigrants reporting very low levels of unemployment since arrival, and long-term residents reporting little hostility towards them.

4.4. The Vurshets Case in “the Economy of Suffering”: Migration of Women from Northwestern Bulgaria to Italy

4.4.1. The Vurshets Case

For almost ten years now, the women of Vurshets have been working in Italy, mainly in Tuscany, as “badante”, i.e. caregivers for elderly people. Their exact number cannot be established for lack of statistics or registration. The municipality collects no such data, however anecdotal evidence suggests that at least one woman in every family in Vurshets is currently working or has worked in Italy.

This results in significant human shifts, which involve families being separated and children being raised away from their parents – a process that impacts the region economically, psychologically and socially without being seriously addressed or studied. The process has not been registered in the economic and other development strategies of the municipality, being only mentioned in passing with the phrase “intensive outward migration of young people and skilled workforce from the municipal centre to larger cities in the country and abroad”. The Municipal Development Strategy for the period until 2013 provides for “promising and sustainable development of the Municipality of Vurshets as a leading tourist, recreational and spa destination of national and international importance”. Emigration abroad is mentioned as one of the risks for the fulfillment of future plans but is listed last among the evaluation criteria.

Another problem is that few studies in Bulgaria tend to consider migration not merely as an economic phenomenon, but above all as a psychological process, which shatters completely one’s identity.¹ The present paper does not claim to make an in-depth analysis of the problem but the need for such an analysis is more than obvious.

Interviews and conversations held in the context of the present case study, suggest that deeply traumatic processes are underway, most of which are still not perceived as such but accumulate anger, hurt and resentment, and could hence lead to unpredictable consequences.

4.4.2. Context of the problem

Bulgarian migration to Italy, and the “badante” job in particular, are part of the global wave of “outsourcing suffering” or the global “economy of suf-

¹ See: *Migration und Psyche. Aufbrueche und Erschuetterungen*, ed. Sigrid Scheifele, Psycho-sozial Verlag, 2008.

fering", which has been witnessed in Western Europe and the wealthy and developed western world as a whole. Care for the elderly and the dying has been left in the hands of cheap workforce from Eastern Europe, women in particular. The case of Vurshets is not a unique one. However, placing the focus on Northwestern Bulgaria helps identify deep processes and tendencies, put them into historical perspective and outline specific persons, facts, stories, issues.

4.4.3. Research methodology

A quality research has been made. Field work was carried out in Italy, in the span of ten days in July 2009, using a field journal and conducting semi-structured open interviews. Respondents were encouraged to talk freely about their family, the change in their lives as a result of emigration: what did this change involve, how do they cope with it, has it modified their attitude towards themselves or their families, have they suffered any trauma, in what respect, do they feel helpless or they have the feeling that they are managing the situation, do they intend or wish to return home, who are those who wish or would be willing to return, who are those who do return or who remain in Italy, how has the labor market since the economic crisis.

A total of six interviews were conducted in 2009 with women from Vurshets and Montana (held in Pisa, Pontedera, Florence and Siena) and three interviews with women who had temporarily returned from Italy (held in Vurshets). Field work also included two group interviews with women from different parts of Bulgaria, conducted in Pisa and Siena. Evidence was also collected from conversations with Vurshets men whose wives work in Italy, interviews with representatives of the local government, as well as conversations held by the film director Stefan Komandarev in preparation of the documentary "Vurshets: The Town of the Badante Women". All statistical and general data on Vurshets were derived from the Municipal Development Plan, 2007-2013, published by the Vurshets Municipality.

The 2009 study continues a previous research effort carried out in 2007, in cooperation with the Capital Weekly.²

4.4.4. Vurshets: short profile

A popular holiday destination in the past, with a history in the recreational industry dating back to 1910, Vurshets is a town located in Northwestern Bulgaria, in the region of Montana, 90 km northwest of Sofia and 30 km away from Montana. It was proclaimed a national resort in 1950 and received town

² The text of the 2007 study (in Bulgarian) is available at <http://www.capital.bg/show.php?storyid=456812>

status in 1964. Until 1989 tourism was the main source of income for its residents. After 1989 the resort lost popularity and the town depopulated. Currently, income per capita of population is below 80% of the national average, unemployment, at 20%, is above average. Employment opportunities exist mainly in seasonal jobs, in the two fruit and vegetable processing factories, in forestry and lumbering. 60% of the viable economy is concentrated in the service sector: 44% in retail trade, repair and other services, 16% in hospitality services. Several small enterprises operate in the town, the largest being the throttle plant "Electrostart" (which is the oldest enterprise in the town, established in 1967 and currently employs approximately 200 people). Other enterprises include tailoring establishments, bakeries, a soft drink factory and a concrete mixing plant.

The total active age population is estimated at 3767 in 2005; official unemployment is estimated to be approximately 20%, but hidden unemployment and lack of opportunities force many people to migrate to neighboring municipalities and towns or abroad.

The development of Vurshets in the last few years follows the general trend towards demographic decline. According to the 2001 census, the population of Vurshets totals 7271 people. Based on current address registration, 6937 people lived in the town in 2005. Historically, the population of Vurshets grew from 4407 people in 1946 (when it was still a village) to 7635 people in the period 1965-1992.

Active age population is 41.2% of the total, with elderly people exceeding twice the young. Natural population growth in the last research period 2001-2005 has been negative each reported year.

4.4.5. Profile of interviewed women in Italy and Vurshets

The women interviewed in the present study were between 25 and 60 years of age. Before coming to Italy, they had different professions: a German language teacher, a sanatorium assistant, a lab technicians, a seamstress, an economist, a shop assistant, a general worker. Most women had secondary vocational education; those with university degrees were fewer. Only one woman working in Italy was single and had no children; the rest had children in Bulgaria that were raised by a mother-in-law, a grandmother or a husband, or were grown up and were living alone. The general opinion was: *Since she's here, she has no real family... Women here do not talk much, they tend to hide but at the end they would let something slip out and you would know that there is something wrong in the family* (Temenujka, Pisa).

4.4.6. Migration patterns and mechanisms for finding employment in Italy

People began seeking employment abroad after the changes in 1989. No research has been made for Vurshets municipality in particular, but this assumption is confirmed by both the interviews held in the survey, and the data provided in the municipal strategy. Former Yugoslavia, Greece and Cyprus are the main destinations, mostly for agricultural work or “suitcase” trade. Italy emerged as an opportunity more than 10 years ago, during the big crisis in 1996-1997. Apart from Italy, people from Vurshets tend to work in Greece, Spain, and France, usually taking seasonal jobs in the summer, in agriculture or in construction. Italy, however, is the first country, which became a permanent destination for the women of Vurshets and divided many families with women migrating abroad and men staying behind with the children – an arrangement unknown until then. Valeri, a man from Vratsa married to a woman from Vurshets, who had emigrated to Italy some years earlier and never returned to Bulgaria for fear of being prosecuted for petty crimes (or so the story goes), began finding work for Bulgarian women willing to take care of elderly people in their homes, the so-called “badante”. At first, women worked illegally, paying Valeri a commission that ranged between 250 and 500 Euro; transportation to Italy was provided with the help of a driver from Vurshets who made the trip every Thursday at the price of 100 Euro.

This arrangement has remained more or less unchanged, the only difference being that women no longer work illegally or pay a commission to Valeri, since the mediators have multiplied, including in some cases women who had managed to learn Italian and accommodate to the local conditions.

I came with a friend of mine. Through a company in Vratsa; I don't know if it still exists. We paid the guy 500 leva and he sends us to Calabria (...) Then we went to Rome and a Bulgarian acquaintance of ours, Valeri. He got us off the street and we spent some time in his place. My friend found some job as soon as the first week and off she went. Then she found some part-time work but I preferred to be in a house cause it's less stressful and more secure. I'm not that brave and confident to go out in the market for another job; I'm not worried that I'll end up in the streets, but it's a foreign country, something may happen to you, you know no one. I spent almost a month at Valeri's place and each time they call him for work, the guy says I'm 37 (I was 37 back then) and they say 'she's too young, can't take her'. I tell him "Valeri, 37 is too old for Cyprus and too young for Italy. Where are we supposed to work, man? We don't know where to go anymore... (Lilly, Pontedera).

Plamen is a treasure. He always stops on the road and says 'come on, smokers, get off'; you can go to the toilet, we drink coffee. He's a great guy. They envy him, you know. What's there to envy about? He's literally killing himself. Rests

only two days; try doing so many kilometers... He used to stop for a while before, now since we came back, he hasn't stopped not for a day. He's killing himself, I tell you. And works very hard to earn what he earns... There is nothing to envy him about. People like him who are honest and work hard should not be envied for what they have (Rilka, Vurshets).

4.4.7. Working in Italy – a trauma or a bout of good luck

At the beginning, working as “badante” seemed like a very attractive option for the Vurshets women. Compared to the physical work in the fields of Cyprus in the summer, it seemed almost no job at all: you sit in some house, you pay nothing for accommodation or food, you live in nice conditions and you take care of someone – “something, which I do anyway in Bulgaria, without being paid for it ” (Rumiana, Pontedera, 2008). Thus, many women are attracted by the opportunity to save and send money to their families in Bulgaria. Getting their families out of the crisis, is the major reason and justification for the decision of these women to seek work in Italy.

My son's health got better only because I sent all my salary to Bulgaria; I used to send him 600-700 Euro each month, even more, so that he can pay his rent and not care about the price of the products when he enters the supermarket, but only if they are okay for his diet. I paid for his medicines, for his heating because he shouldn't be cold, for everything. I used to send my entire salary. For one whole year. Before that, for two years in a row, I was sending all my salary, so that we can repay our debts in Bulgaria, and I used to live with only 50 Euro here. Per month.

...

I send them money, so that they can live as normal people. I bought cars to both of them, so that they can drive them around after work. They're not expensive cars but I know that a car is a convenience nowadays. Still I bought them cars that won't need to be repaired every second day. And that would serve them every day. That's it. And I don't regret coming to Italy. (Temenujka, Pisa)

Work however is hard, unexpectedly hard sometimes.

You're alone all the time. Alone in this house and on standby night and day. I have no problems with them. I mean they don't harass me physically or mentally, they don't yell at me. But you're a servant. (Lilly, Pontedera).

4.4.8. What kind of women work in Italy?

According to Temenujka, work in Italy is for “averagely intelligent people”:

People who are not small-minded. Who can adapt quickly. Because if you get too picky, no job is ideal, neither here nor in Bulgaria; there will always be something that doesn't go well. Also people who find it hard to live away from their families should realize that it is better for their families for them to be here than in Bulgaria.

Here are some excerpts from the field journal, recorded in a flat rented by Bulgarian women in Pisa:

In the evening I'm at Elena's place. She is a medical nurse from Varna, single, in her mid 40s, with no children. I meet all the other women and we talk and have dinner together. I'll spend the night there in a room with four other women. They ask me about the elections, about Bulgaria, they tell stories. They bring out a bottle of rakia to my honor, then begin singing "Hubava si, moya goro".

Jana is from Pleven, 48 years old, a lab assistant. She has been here for 5 years and rents the flat together with Elena; the others pay 7 Euro per night to stay. She has worked as badante and still cannot overcome the humiliation, which badante women face. "They are neither intelligent, nor know anything about Bulgaria, they insult us..." She now works in a lab. She is divorced and has a 23-year-old daughter in Bulgaria.

Galia is from Varna, in her mid 50s. She has been in Italy for 5 years. She used to be a medical nurse. She is divorced and has a 23-year-old daughter in Varna.

Boyka is from Bregovo, the District of Vidin. A young girl in her mid 20s; her husband is in England; she has two children: a 3-year-old boy and a 4,5-year-old girl. They are raised by her mother in Bulgaria. She has no intentions of changing the way she lives. She works in Florence and has come to Pisa to visit.

Polly is from Plovdiv, 40-year old, divorced, mother of a 20-year old daughter who lives in Bulgaria. She's been working abroad for the last 10 years – first in Greece, then in Italy. I record her words: "It is here that I understood the dignity of being a woman. We are in no way inferior". She is a devout Catholic, raised in a Catholic family.

Galia says that Italians are very envious of other people; all they think about is food, rest, watching TV and having a nice time somewhere; they care about nothing else.

Valia, 60-years-old, a lab technician from Lovech, is very eager to learn about the elections in Bulgaria. She is looking for a job but has found nothing in the last two weeks. She says that this has never happened before.

Later in the evening, after dinner, we drink beer at the riverside bar with Polly and Boyka. "The life of a badante is monotonous and boring", they say. "All we

talk about is illnesses, your granny, my granny, nothing else. And our lives are passing by; we're so fed up with this".

4.4.9. Why women leave Vurshets and Bulgaria?

The story of their migration abroad is traumatic for most women. It has to do with lack of money, illness in the family, desperation. "Poverty brought us here", most of them say. "We had no choice".

The stories about the first days in emigration are sad and long. One of the women, Elena, said that she had not a single penny in Bulgaria; then she slept in train stations in Italy, having run away from a house where she was expected to do everything and was not given a moment of peace; then some Romanians gave her shelter secretly in a luxurious train, which had been parked at the station and only maneuvered from time to time...

For most women, traumatic experiences are related with the change in 1989 and the 1997–1998 crisis in particular.

If I had I weaker spirit, I might have gone crazy. Many people in Bulgaria died because of that. Many people passed away, couldn't cope with the change. They had no where to work, they had no way to earn money for their living. In the building where I lived, those who were weaker and had a low income just died. Those who were living alone also. When there were two or three people in the household, they somehow managed to make ends meet, helped each other for heating, for everything. A 40-year-old man in my building died; it was not his time to go.

I managed to survive only because I had some additional income from private students. Had I not have them, I would have not made it. Or I should have gone out begging (Temenujka).

Temenujka clearly remembers the day she decided to abandon her teaching profession:

I woke one morning and had only three leva in my purse. Salary was one week away. And there was no one to borrow money from. Everyone was in the same situation. There was no money at all...

Valia's traumatic year was 1998:

I would kill Kostov if I could. This is when my husband was sacked (her husband used to be the director of a state-owned transportation company); he had a stroke, then my father died; everything happened in 1998; it was terrifying... The worst one can live. I've been in Italy since 2003. Italy saved me, I repaid my debts, I helped my son...

Lilly's story begins shortly after 1989:

I left the country because our children were still in the kindergarten and my husband and I were both sacked...

I used to work in a tailoring establishment; he worked in construction. He first repaired electrical appliances and then moved to construction because this was what he had studied for. We were both sacked. The only people that were left on the job were those who had only a few years to retirement. We were struggling for an year and a half, with small children, no child support at all because of some problem with the employers' books. We lost child support, we lost everything. We lived on the edge for one whole year. My husband's brother and his wife were in Cyprus; they talked to some guy there and in 1996 he took us. We left together; my husband stayed only three months, I remained.

4.4.10. Why do men stay behind in Vurshets?

There is no work for men here. No one would let a man in their house (Temenujka).

It's not that they cannot cope with the stress. But as a rule Bulgarian men do not easily accept to be bossed around, to have someone tell them what to do and how to do it, to have someone yell at them, while women... what can you do? You just force yourself to do the job, you pass everything over in silence just to make some money and raise your children. My mother took care of my children for five years, while I was abroad... (Lilly, Pontedera).

Men in Vurshets are either unemployed or work in the local economy, as much as it exists, or take up seasonal jobs abroad – picking fruits or working on the fields in the summer or in construction in Greece, Spain or France. Most commonly however men do not work at all, deterred by the low payment, and it is women who support the family. In one of the families in the Vurshets neighborhood of Zanojene, the father, a 40-year-old electrician in the throttle plant, lived alone with his two children: a girl in the 11th grade and a boy in the 9th grade. His wife had been in Italy for 8 years and had returned only once. They never went to visit her because there was “no money”. Their link with the mother was maintained only through the money she kept sending every month. The husband admitted that he would not be able to support the family without this money. The same pattern exists in many other cases and deserves attention as it is interesting how families where members do not see each other and the wife has not returned for years, maintain this financial link among them (i.e. the woman never stops sending money to her husband, children or elderly relatives).

4.4.11. What happens with the families?

"When she set to leave, I never asked her what would happen with us", says one of the characters in Stefan Komandarev's documentary "The Town of the Badante Women".

Families are deeply shattered. There are many cases as the one above where the wife has not returned home for more than seven years, and the family still exists, at least legally.

Other families are breaking down.

In the summer of 2009, a woman from Vurshets came for the first time to her home town with her Italian partner (her husband had passed away). Nevertheless, the fate of the family and the possibility of some new relationship in the recipient country is still discussed rather secretly, as a rumor. "It is only natural", Plamen the driver said in the car on our way to Italy. "People might say whatever they want to, but it is virtually impossible for a woman to live and work alone somewhere and never look around for someone to be with. Men also get around looking when they remain alone..."

Many women such as Lilly however claim that work drains them out and there is no time or place for personal life:

You lose the feeling of being a woman. You live with these people, you start adapting your way of life to theirs and you lose desire or will for anything else. You just try to make money, so that you can send it to your children and family. Your own life gradually vanishes away, while having a personal life seems like an absurdity. Personal life boils down to taking a walk on your free day, meet up with other women and talk to them for a while...

Temenujka, on the other hand, has a different opinion. Only when she came to Italy, she began paying attention to herself and receive attention from men, different from what she had been used to in Bulgaria:

You can get an invitation for something else here. As long as you like the man and you feel that you would like the something else with him as well, you can have it. Moreover, they are decent people. They ask. They always ask first. If you say no, that's it. He'll never ask again. But he'll never do it also. If you've said no, he'll never push you. Then again, men are different here from what I've seen. Maybe the ones I have met are different... But anyway, they say like this: "I'm going out with you, so I must buy you a present. But I don't know what is it that you would like. You may want to go to a restaurant and have a pizza or you may want something else. I just don't know. You may want to have a new blouse, I don't know what color you would like. I could buy you very pretty and expensive blouse that would mean nothing to you. Because with this money you may want to get something else. So here is the deal, I'll give you the money, and you'll chose something on my behalf. Or you may want to send the money to your son, it's up to you." This is what I like; they're sincere and tell you eve-

rything directly, without beating around the bush or anything. And I also like that he had thought that I may need the money. While in Bulgaria men often think that they can have everything for free.

...

It is here that I learned how normal people live. How they take care of themselves. And it struck me that I can also take some care of myself. I can start living a little bit, rather than merely exist. In Bulgaria, I just existed, that's it. Nothing more. This is the change I see in myself. It struck me, for instance, that since I'm getting into age, I could buy some face cream for myself. Well, it's a little late now, because I do have some wrinkles already but anyway.

...

If I stayed in Bulgaria, my husband would have made me work in the fields... And you should know that everything changes in time; only respect remains.

4.4.12. How do women change when they come to Italy?

The issue of personal change is complicated and quite interesting because it has many different aspects and implications. Changes happen at different levels – in the short-term or the long-term; they are subjective or objective.

A major change for all women is the confidence that financial stability brings them. For most of them this is a new feeling, which they had never had before or associate with previous periods in their life, with communist times, with the time before 1989.

Another important change is emancipation, the feeling of being able to cope alone, learn a language, manage in a given situation.

Emigration and life in a different culture open up new prospects and new perspectives to one's own past. This often results in a strong idealization of previous life in Bulgaria:

It's peaceful here like it was in Bulgaria during communism. No one steals or anything. (Temenujka)

Italy only takes from us; Italians have no idea what it means to have fun, they know nothing about the world, they know nothing about anything, hypocrites... (Lilly)

There are also indications of a more thorough reflection of the personal past and one's personal history:

I realized that I had done many things the wrong way in Bulgaria.

I see that people here tend to care about themselves, rather than other people. I have been giving my heart and soul to so many people, some of whom never even thanked me for it. And I realize that I shouldn't have done that. That life

is easier when you only care about yourself and your family, rather than trying to be there for other people...

Probably I have underestimated my profession in Bulgaria. When I came here, I realized that people value the status of their profession. (Temenujka)

When it comes to labor relations, women quickly acquire some basic legal education and begin to stand up for their rights, participate in trade unions, be more brave and take the risk of changing their job.

Another thing I like here is that you can quit if you don't like your job. In Bulgaria you put up with everything for fear that you may be fired and find no other job. This ain't a minor thing. I changed so many jobs here until I found something that suits me. While in Bulgaria I had one and only job, which I was afraid to lose, because if I lost it, I would have had no pension ... (Temenujka).

Bulgarian women are part of an international labor market, which involves women from other former communist countries – Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Poland, Moldova... They watch how they react in different situations and learn from them. A very often commented issue during field work was the Russian trade union “Petrushka”, which was created by Russian women working as badante to protect their labor rights: negotiate minimum wages, additional payment for work on holidays, overtime, paid leaves, thirteenth salary, etc. There were already attempts to establish a similar trade union for Bulgarian women. In the beginning when they did not know the language, worked illegally, were afraid for their jobs, knew nothing about the new places they were living in, and were still coping with the shock of the entire “traffic” from Bulgaria to Italy, which involved bribing officials at the borders, Bulgarian women were happy to work for 500 Euro per month and never complain about anything. In time, however, they understood that they were being manipulated, that their work cost much more, and they could ask more money for it. All respondents included in the present survey already had regular documents and were working legally, they spoke Italian quite well and followed the developments in labor legislation. For most of them, such attitude to work was entirely new and they experienced it for the first time in their lives.

Alienation, psychological strain and stress are problems, which are still perceived as a trauma, caused by the external world alone, by the state, either Bulgaria or Italy. Emigration is seen as a sacrifice that had been imposed from the outside. This, in turn, provokes much anger and resentment with Bulgaria, but also with Italy. Many women still see no connection between the trauma they had gone through and their internal subjective world. In case of psychological problems, fears, insomnia, depression, women very often turn to traditional ‘remedies’, such as reading cards or coffee, casting spells etc. Respondents in Pisa told an interesting story about a man from the village of Stubel in North-western Bulgaria who used to tell the future by casting mercury in water. The

immigrant women in Italy were so impressed by his abilities that they made arrangements for him to come to the country and even found some temporary job for him, so that he could tell their future.

Some women also turn to religion and start going to the church regularly. In one of the rented flats, there were many New Age books, including best-sellers such as "The Secret".

4.4.13. The "badante" profession in Italy: future trends

The number of foreign women working as badante in Italy exceeds 5 million. This is almost a half of the foreign workforce in Italy. The problem has been seriously discussed on many occasions. A particular area of concern was how to make this profession attractive for Italian women who tend to avoid it, in order to reduce the immigrant flow. Italian decision-makers are currently drafting a law to regulate the "badante" profession, a new word and a new phenomenon in the Italian reality, which emerged only in the last 15 years. The law is expected to regulate the number of working hours (something, which currently depends entirely on the good will of each employer, with badante women being available on a 24-hour basis, as they live in their employers' households), the number of days off, the health insurance of working women, etc.

The economic crisis did affect the market for such services and although there is no tendency for women to come back unable to get a job, finding an employer at the first attempt has become increasingly difficult. Women who already have a job would probably remain in Italy but no second wave should be expected. The transportation service from Vurshets to Italy still runs but passengers are mainly women who come back on a leave and then return to Italy. There are virtually no women who emigrate for the first time. Those who have already done so, have no intentions of returning home.

The women who work in Italy have predominantly secondary and higher education and had been employed as mid-level professionals in Bulgaria. They see no prospects for them in their home towns in the near future. In one of the conversations about the elections in Bulgaria, amidst the general enthusiasm that "things may improve now", a woman from Pleven said: "Even if they improve, they won't improve for people like us. When would an ordinary woman be getting 800 Euro per month? Never. So let's just stay where we are".

As a rule, the children of the women working in Italy remain in Bulgaria and in Vurshets. Some of the women interviewed said that they would not want their children to come to Italy ("this is no place for young people"). This provokes mixed feelings back in Vurshets. The headmaster of the secondary school in the Vurshets neighborhood of Zanojene, Kaloyan Assenov (a 40-year-old married man with two sons, 8 and 13-year-old), said that he was angry with these women who had left their children at the care of grandparents. He remembered a student of

his, a 16-year-old boy, whose mother brought him to Italy after she had spent 7 years there. The boy stayed for 3 months, could not adapt to the new place and returned to his grandmother. Kaloyan Assenov said: "We tend to forget all about these women because they never come back. Recently, I was talking about a boy from 10th grade and we suddenly remembered that he had a mother who had been in Italy for 8 years; we had forgotten about it altogether".

4.4.14. Prospects for Vurshets

Some investment is coming to the town and this is evident by the new hotels, private inns and hostels (this year the first 4-star spa hotel opened in the town; several new smaller private hotels also began operating), as well as by the newly refurbished and renovated houses.

The first savings of the women who work in Italy are spent in three main ways:

- to repay older debts;
- to renovate the family's house or buy new property;
- to buy a car.

Much of the remaining savings are spent on clothes and everyday goods.

There is an obvious paradox: conditions in the town improve and this is quite visible; at the same time people abandon it and dream about living elsewhere.

There is a trauma, which tends to deepen but has never been discussed or addressed. The trauma of having one's life put to a halt, as many interpret the change in 1989, has produced other traumas, which are even more difficult to admit or address:

- the notion of the family is not longer what it used to be; there is a general agreement among women that if one loves their family, it is better for them to leave it and this is good for the family;

- male identity is undergoing a crisis – many men have accepted that their wives would not return home for years and never ask questions; others are being supported by their wives for years on end and never seek employment; social isolation and ghettoization are growing;

- children who grow without their mothers from an early age also undergo a crisis – raised by grandmothers and grandfathers, they adopt the values of a more conservative generation (this model existed in the past as well, but mothers used to work in the nearby town or somewhere in the area and the children were able to see them on a daily basis, rather than once or twice a year as is the case now);

- people do not see their future in Vurshets; the town improves and develops but the active population abandons it;

- the population of the entire Northwestern Bulgaria is ageing.

The director of the local community center in Vurshets, Rumen Alexandrov, a man in his mid 50s, said that all amateur groups (a choir, an folkloric ensemble, an orchestra) are ageing and have not been renewed in the last 7–8 years; the average age of their members is above 64 years. According to him, if there are no new jobs, outward migration will continue and the town will depopulate even more. He sees no tendency towards overcoming unemployment. The new hotels do not provide enough new jobs, while the crisis drives potential clients away. But if things improve, everyone will come back, he said. His conversations with people working in Italy seem to suggest that most of them suffer but stay abroad only because they have no way to earn their living in Vurshets.

Meanwhile, it is difficult to make any reliable predictions about Vurshets or the entire Northwestern region for that matter, as both have hidden potentials which have not been tapped: pristine, well preserved nature, opportunities for production of ecological products.

Each cultural shock brings old perceptions down and opens up new opportunities.

The women of Northwestern Bulgaria have a history in struggling against the realities of life and seeking new opportunities. Older people still remember the peasants' protests against land collectivization in the 1950s, which were among the strongest in the country and were led entirely by women.

The most important change however happens in the families, in the relations between partners, in the shattering of family links.

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Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

5.1.1. Conclusions regarding migration trends and the effects of the crisis

1. Emigration from Bulgaria has reduced significantly over the last few years, while immigration has increased. Net migration is still negative (i.e. emigration prevails), but its value is quite low. This is probably due to the high economic growth in the period before the crisis, the inflow of investment, the creation of many new jobs and the increase in salaries, all of which reduce incentives for emigration.
2. Data from official sources, collected in the course of the present study, do not contain clear-cut evidence for a large-scale return of Bulgarian emigrants back to the country as a result of the global financial and economic crisis. This can be explained by the fact that Bulgaria is also affected by the crisis and provides no opportunities for better employment conditions or higher income. Reports in the media suggesting a mass return of emigrants are exaggerated and should not be used as a basis for adopting policy decisions.
3. A major factor for emigration remains the big difference in salaries between Bulgaria and recipient countries. Currently, according to Eurostat, salaries in the industry and the service sector in Bulgaria are 14 times lower than those in old Member States.
4. Additional incentives for emigration include permanent deficits in the social support and public service provision systems in Bulgaria, as well as personal circumstances such as fear of poverty or unemployment, illness in the family that requires money to be treated adequately, threats to physical survival (due to delayed salaries for instance), lack of opportunities for the future, lack of security and order, accumulation of debts.
5. Since the onset of the crisis money transfers from emigrants to Bulgaria have marked a decline of about 15%, which albeit noticeable, is far more limited than the decline in foreign investment and international trade. From this perspective, it seems that remittances from migrants are more sustainable to serious crises. By helping households meet their daily

needs, money transfers have in fact a positive impact on the overall macroeconomic stability in the country.

6. Virtually no change has been registered in the money transfers by Bulgarians who live permanently abroad.
7. The crisis had an impact on the money transfers made by temporarily employed Bulgarians abroad, which declined from 600 million Euro for 12 months at the end of 2008, to 400 million Euro at the beginning of 2010. This could either mean that the crisis limited opportunities for temporary employment abroad or that because of the crisis the salaries of temporarily employed persons declined.
8. In absolute value, the money transfers from Bulgarians abroad are comparable or even slightly higher than the sum of absorbed EU funds per year, although absorption increased significantly after the country's accession to the EU.
9. However, the relative importance of money transfers declines over time, especially in years when the economy is doing well. In the beginning of the 21st century, emigrant money transfers were comparable to foreign investment and foreign credits, while 5-6 years later they are much lower. During times of crisis, their importance increased again because of the sharp decline in the inflow of money to Bulgaria from other sources but most probably this would not change long-term tendency towards decline in the macroeconomic importance of money transfers from emigrants.
10. The crisis had a severe negative impact on transfers from Bulgaria to other countries, which have declined three times so far. At the same time, the number of foreign nationals in the country marks a steady, albeit slow increase.

5.1.2. Conclusions regarding Bulgarian emigration

1. The number of Bulgarian emigrants who reside legally in EU Member States has increased.
2. The impact of Old Member States' decision to impose temporary restrictions on the access of Bulgarians to their national labor markets has not been thoroughly researched but it is safe to assume that these restrictions do not impact emigration from Bulgaria. The large emigration flows happened before the country's accession to the EU and for most Bulgarian emigrants restrictions simply mean that they would continue to work illegally for a little longer.
3. The economic crisis made labor markets more competitive and reduced both employment opportunities and salaries in the recipient countries; nevertheless, the great majority of Bulgarian emigrants interviewed were

still employed. Some worked two jobs to compensate for the reduction in wages as a result of the crisis.

4. The share of entire families emigrating abroad has increased, while their integration in the recipient counties has improved; 78% of Bulgarians in the United Kingdom, for example, have emigrated with their children.
5. Bulgarian emigrants work mainly in four sectors: hospitality, cleaning services, construction and trade. For those interviewed in 2009 in the UK, an important entry sector was also agriculture.
6. A relatively small percentage of Bulgarians in the three countries surveyed – United Kingdom, Greece and Italy, work as self-employed.
7. The share of women emigrants remains higher, consistent with global tendencies. However, there has been a significant decrease in the number of women working as live-in house maids or caregivers for elderly people (Greece).
8. The effects of emigration on women need to be further researched but some evidence suggests that women emigrants have become more confident in themselves, manage to cope in their new environment and have been emancipated.
9. Compared to 2004-2005 data, cohesion, mutual trust and self-help in the Bulgarian emigrant communities in Greece and the UK have increased. This could be explained with the fact that these communities are already well-established.

5.1.3. Conclusions regarding immigration to Bulgaria

1. Immigration to Bulgaria is growing slowly but steadily. The country is still in transition from transit to recipient country but despite the temporary effect of the crisis, in the mid-term it is highly likely that this transition would be completed.
2. Bulgaria would continue to need immigrants. The economic crisis put an end to workforce shortages in some key sectors of the economy. When the crisis subsides, however, in a few years this issue will again come up in the agenda. Given the worsening demographic indicators and the expectations for further reduction in working-age population, workforce shortages are bound to increase in the future (provided that economy resumes its upward development) and immigration would be one of the possible quick solutions to this problem.
3. Employment among immigrants who have a long-term or permanent residence status in Bulgaria is higher than the nationwide average. Data on the EU as a whole suggest that currently many immigrants tend to work

undeclared jobs or jobs that are below their qualification. A significant percentage of immigrants in Bulgaria have no social security.

4. The language barrier is a major obstacle to successful social integration. As a result, immigrants may be trapped in a vicious circle in which their access to the labor market is limited due to inadequate knowledge of the local language, while their possibility to improve their language skills is limited due to lack of employment and training opportunities. Learning the local language could be particularly important for female immigrants, because otherwise they would be isolated from their new society and would hardly be able to help their children integrate in school.
5. Discrimination on the grounds of race or color is not an isolated phenomenon in the everyday life of immigrants in Bulgaria.

5.1.4. Conclusions regarding migration management policies and instruments

1. Bulgaria has laid the foundations of a competent administration and a national migration policy, which could turn in the mid- and long-term into a reliable instrument for managing migration flows.
2. Information deficit on migration flows remains a problem. On one hand, government institutions have only partial and often contradicting information on the ongoing processes; on the other hand, there is no central unit to coordinate and analyze available information and no public resources exist to finance research on migration. This is a serious obstacle to the development of the national migration policy. Very soon information deficits would prevent the country from fulfilling its obligations as a member of the EU, since under the new Regulation on community statistics on migration and asylum, Bulgaria will be obliged to submit to the EU information on the migration situation in the country.
3. The financial crisis has placed the competent administration on migration policy issues at a serious risk because of downsizing and budget reduction. This undermines the effective implementation of migration policies not only at the national but also at the European level and may limit the absorption of the European Integration Fund.
4. Apart from the crisis, administrative capacity still remains relatively limited due to inadequate qualification and lack of specialized education on migration issues. Specialized education on migration is currently offered by only one university (New Bulgarian University).
5. The two milestones in the formulation of the national migration policy are the adoption of the National Migration and Integration Strategy of Bul-

garia, 2008-2015 and the launch of the implementation of the European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals (2007-2013). This suggests that the driving force behind the formulation of Bulgaria's migration policy are the efforts of the administration to ensure effective integration into the EU, rather than a rationalized and clearly defined national interest with regard to migration management.

6. The National Migration and Integration Strategy pursues two major priorities: first, attract foreign nationals of Bulgarian origin and other third-country nationals to meet labor market needs, and second, encourage the return of Bulgarian emigrants. The implementation of the first priority seems to stagnate due to the sharp changes in the national labor market as a result of the crisis. In implementing the second priority, MLSP took a variety of measures, which include mainly creating a network of labor and social services in countries, which traditionally accept Bulgarian emigrants and organizing labor fairs and information campaigns to advertise employment opportunities in Bulgaria (2008-2009). It is unlikely that these measures alone would motivate the return of Bulgarian emigrants. The decision to emigrate depends on factors, which have to do mainly with the welfare and prospects of a given household. If the return of Bulgarian expatriates is a political goal, measures to achieve it should include sustainable reforms to increase the welfare/disposable income of households, rather than international work fairs. If such measures are not planned and implemented, the political goal of bringing Bulgarian emigrants back can hardly be achieved.
7. Nevertheless, the efforts of MLSP and the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad to provide certain services to emigrants should be positively assessed, as they contribute to strengthening emigrants' links to Bulgaria and in the long run could act as a secondary factor motivating their decision to return.
8. The National Strategy focuses on attracting low-skilled immigrants of Bulgarian origin by introducing the "Green Card" instrument in an effort to address labor market needs in sectors such as tourism, agriculture and construction. However, attracting immigrants without taking into consideration the long-term needs of the local economy and labor market, would only increase the burden on the social assistance system.
9. On the other hand, no targeted policy exists to attract highly-skilled migrants. The government relies on the European "Blue Card" instrument without taking into account that Bulgaria cannot compete economically and socially with other Member States in the competition for the best professionals.
10. In the future, immigration is expected to create a serious pressure on public institutions in Bulgaria, as certain public services would need to

be provided in a language that immigrants understand. In areas such as investigation of crimes and pursuit of criminal charges against foreign nationals, the Bulgarian state is obliged under the European Convention of Human Rights to translate the main documents on the case into a language that the foreign national involved understands, so that his or her right to defense in the criminal proceedings may be guaranteed. In other countries such as Germany and the United Kingdom, the fulfillment of this obligation has led to exponential increase in the legal aid and translation budgets of the prosecution and the police, as well as to many logistical problems such as the access to qualified interpreters and translators to/from rare languages. Bulgaria could also face similar challenges in the mid and long-term.

5.2. Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Workforce migration to the country and the return of Bulgarian emigrants could happen only if Bulgaria's economy marks a stable increase and income in Bulgaria catches up that in developed countries. While this gap in labor compensation between Bulgaria and recipient countries remains large, it would be unreasonable to invest public funds in a national policy targeted to bringing Bulgarian emigrants back, as it is rather unlikely for it to succeed.

Recommendation 2. Furthermore, given the gap in labor compensation between Bulgaria and recipient countries, decision-makers would be ill advised to plan specific measures to limit emigration, as they would produce no effect at all. Potential emigrants would find a way to overcome or evade any administrative barrier to leaving the country.

Recommendation 3. Money transfers from emigrants to Bulgaria have a stabilizing effect on the country's macroeconomic indicators, as well as on the individual household budgets. However, they should not be perceived as a means to cope with budget deficit. If measures to tax this money are taken, emigrant transfers would revert to illegal channels and their stabilizing effect would be compromised.

Recommendation 4. The importance of conducting thorough reforms to improve education, healthcare and security in Bulgaria should not be underestimated as a factor for limiting emigration. People never emigrate for economic reasons alone.

Recommendation 5. In the short-term the administration should develop capacity not only to meet the requirements of EU membership in the area of migration policy, but also to make a meaningful and active contribution to formulating the priorities of the national and common European migration policy.

Recommendation 6. It is important to overcome the deficits and discrepancies in available statistical data on migration flows. More specifically:

- The NSI should collect and publish regular data on migration flows; the survey conducted in 2008 should become periodic;
- The publication of annual reports on the migration situation in the country should be renewed;
- A fund for scientific research on migration should be created;
- All proposals for legislative amendments affecting migration policy should be subject to public discussion and pre-adoption impact assessment;
- The impact of the National Strategy on Migration and Integration and the projects financed under the European Integration Fund should be assessed regularly and assessment results should be made publicly available.

Recommendation 7. Decision-makers should implement the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council of Bulgaria for the establishment of a Migration Agency under the Council of Ministers without appointing new administrative staff but rather by restructuring existing bodies and extending their functions and competences to achieve more efficient migration policy management.

Recommendation 8. The National Strategy on Migration and Integration should be updated to reflect the effects of the economic crisis. The revision should include measures at the national level, targeted to attracting highly-skilled immigrants and introducing a comprehensive integration policy, which would guarantee high standards of human rights protection of immigrants Bulgaria.

Recommendation 9. The experience of SAR, MEYS and MLSP in organizing Bulgarian language courses for refugees should be publicized and replicated, while the provision of such courses should become a permanent measure for the integration of immigrants.

Recommendation 10. Future immigration would put a certain pressure on Bulgarian public institutions, inasmuch as they would be expected to provide foreign nationals with access to basic public services in the country. In planning the priorities, staff and budget of the Mol, the Prosecution Service, the courts, the healthcare and education system, decision-makers should allocate funds for translation/interpretation and find appropriate logistical solutions to secure translators/interpreters to/from rare languages.

Recommendation 11. Money transfers from Bulgarian emigrants abroad to their families in Bulgaria are comparable to the amount of absorbed EU funds per year and have a stabilizing effect in times of economic crisis; therefore, the relative public importance of migration policy is almost equal to the social significance of EU funds. Yet, the administration, responsible for managing EU funds, is much larger and benefits from much more resources in compensations and special qualification, than the administration, which deals with migration policy management issues. This disproportion should be overcome by increasing investment in qualification and raising the salaries of the administrative staff, responsible for managing migration policy.

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MIGRATION

Since 1999, the Law Programme of the Open Society Institute – Sofia has been committed to upholding the principles of the rule of law and human rights protection in Bulgaria. The Programme supports the implementation of the judicial reform in areas that are directly relevant to modernisation of criminal procedure, facilitation of Bulgarian citizens' access to justice, and adoption of the *acquis communautaire*.

Now that Bulgaria is already an EU member state, the Law Programme aims to guarantee the continuation and irreversibility of reforms in the judicial system and emphasizes on improving transparency and accountability in the work of the judicial and law-enforcement institutions. The Programme is conducting surveys, civil-society monitoring of the operation of institutions, evaluation of the effectiveness of the application of newly adopted legislative amendments, and promotion and adaptation of successful foreign practices for effective management in the judiciary and law enforcement.

The Law Programme has established successful partnerships with a wide network of national non-governmental organisations specialised in providing legal aid to vulnerable social groups and in protecting fundamental human rights, as well as with a number of institutions, such as Bulgaria's Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice and Supreme Judicial Council.