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## Migrants: An opportunity or a threat for the European Union? An outline of the problem in the context of contemporary socio-economic challenges

The first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was a time when an intensified process of emigration of the citizens of the European Union from the poorer countries of Central and Eastern Europe to the richer countries of Western Europe could be observed, which was possible thanks to the successive enlargements of the Union in 2004, 2007 and 2013. So far, migration and problems associated with it have not brought their claim to the forefront of the EU forum. The situation began to change with a more and more lively ongoing debate about the adverse demographic trends in Europe and the wave of immigrants, mainly from Africa. Given the problems that the EU will have to face, I consider it worthwhile to take on the problem of migration in the context of the European employment policy. Bearing in mind the global economic and financial crisis which caused a reorientation of priorities of the EU strategy on employment, it can be assumed that the current immigration crisis will be even more fraught with consequences. It seems that the EU faces yet another big challenge. The question of whether and how it will cope with it remains open.

Keywords: migrants, European Union, financial and economic crisis, migration crisis

JEL classification: F22, J15, J60, J61, O15

### Migranci – szansa czy zagrożenie dla Unii Europejskiej? Zarys problemu w kontekście współczesnych wyzwań społeczno-gospodarczych

Pierwsza dekada XXI w. to czas, w którym można było zaobserwować zintensyfikowany proces emigracji obywateli Unii Europejskiej z uboższych krajów regionu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej do zamożniejszych krajów Europy Zachodniej, co było możliwe dzięki kolejnym rozszerzeniom Unii w roku 2004, 2007 i 2013. Dotychczas migracje i problemy z nimi powiązane nie wysuwały się na pierwszy plan na forum unijnym. Sytuacja zaczęła się zmieniać wraz z coraz żywiej toczącą się debatą na temat niekorzystnych trendów demograficznych w Europie i fali imigrantów z Afryki. Biorąc pod uwagę problemy, z jakimi przyjdzie się zmierzyć UE, sądzę, że warto podjąć problem migracji w kontekście europejskiej polityki zatrudnienia. Mając w pamięci globalny kryzys finansowo-gospodarczy, który spowodował reorientację priorytetów unijnych strategii dotyczących zatrudnienia, można przypuszczać, że obecny kryzys imigracyjny okaże się

jeszcze bardziej brzemienny w skutkach. Wydaje się, że Unia stanęła przed kolejnym, wielkim wyzwaniem. Pytanie, czy i jak sobie z nim poradzi, pozostaje otwarte.

Słowa kluczowe: migranci, Unia Europejska, kryzys finansowo-gospodarczy, kryzys migracyjny

Klasyfikacja JEL: F22, J15, J60, J61, O15

## Introduction

One of the major challenges facing the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including Europe, is the phenomenon of migration. Although it is well known to us, as it has repeatedly been the subject of research in various sciences and disciplines, the dynamic changes currently taking place on a global scale make re-analysis and re-evaluation necessary.

Historically speaking, Europe for centuries was a starting and an ending point of the 'migration of peoples'. Therefore, the question arises of why the migration movements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are referred to as a separate phenomenon? Why do they arouse such an interest on the one hand, and cause fear and amazement on the other, among both researchers and ordinary people who observe and dispute the reality surrounding them? It is because the current migration processes have a special character, as evidenced by the events of the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Today, their range is immeasurably greater than ever before in history<sup>1</sup> [UN, 2016].

The author argues that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, international migration within the EU will be subject to strong changes both in quantity and quality. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to analyse and evaluate major trends in international migration from the perspective of contemporary challenges facing the EU. Achieving this objective will be possible due to the study of national and foreign literature and statistical analysis of selected indicators of the obtained from the database of the European Statistical Office (Eurostat).

### 1. International migration: Selected theoretical aspects

A characteristic feature of the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the increasing global mobility of people. Researches such as, among others, Stephen Castles, Mark Miller and Douglas Massey wrote about this phe-

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<sup>1</sup> According to the data collected by the United Nations, over the past 15 years the number of international migrants worldwide has continued to grow rapidly from 173 million to 244 million. In 2015, nearly two thirds of all international migrants worldwide lived in Europe (76 million) and Asia. Between 2000 and 2015, Europe gained 20 million international migrants (about 1.3 million per year).

nomenon already in the 1990s. The authors of *The Age of Migration* [Castles, Miller, 1993] and *Worlds in Motion* [Massey et al., 1999] pointed out some trends in the process of international migration. According to their views, the sources of the unprecedented global growth and diversification of migration should be seen in:

- globalization and acceleration of the processes associated with it,
- geopolitical changes taking place in the world, in particular in the end of the bipolar division of the world with the fall of communism in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and the 1990s,
- development of new communication technologies,
- socio-cultural transformations of contemporary societies.

Therefore, the question arises of what factors have an impact on a decision to migrate – because the scale, intensity, and direction of migration is not a coincidence. According to Krystyna Romaniszyn [1999], the factors determining the formation or disappearance of migratory routes, and thus the activity of migration, are: geographic, cultural, economic, political, and legal. Therefore, migration is a combination influenced by lots of factors, either in a migrant's country of origin (push factors) or in the country of destination (pull factors). This model of push and pull factors is explained in a clear manner below.

Table 1. Motives of migration

| Category                 | Push factors   | Pull factors   |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| political                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– conflict, insecurity, violence</li> <li>– poor governance</li> <li>– corruption</li> <li>– human rights abuses</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– safety and security</li> <li>– political freedom</li> </ul>   |
| economic and demographic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– poverty</li> <li>– unemployment</li> <li>– low wages</li> <li>– high fertility rates</li> <li>– lack of basic health and education</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– prospects of higher wages</li> <li>– potential for improved standard of living</li> <li>– personal or professional development</li> </ul> |
| social and cultural      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, religion, etc.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– family reunification</li> <li>– ethnic (diaspora migration) homeland</li> <li>– freedom from discrimination</li> </ul>                    |

Source: [Mansoor, Quillin, 2006].

It is hard not to agree with the statement that the underlying motives of migration derive from typical features of human nature. According to Everett S. Lee, the factors which enter into the decision to migrate may be summarized under four headings: factors associated with the area of origin, factors associated with

the area of destination, intervening obstacles and personal factors. It indicates an important difference between the factors associated with the area of origin and the area of destination<sup>2</sup> which is related to the stages in a migrant's life<sup>3</sup>. Lee stresses that a simple calculation of pros and cons is not enough to motivate a decision to migrate. He explains that between every two factors there stands a set of intervening obstacles, slight in some instances and insurmountable in others. Generally, people are affected in different ways by the same set of obstacles – for some, certain things may be trivial; for others, on the contrary, they may be prohibitive. And finally, Lee emphasises that there are many personal factors which affect individual thresholds and facilitate or retard migration. Taking this into account, it is worth noting that it is not so much the actual features of the areas of origin and destination as the perception of these features which results in migration. A lot depends on the character traits of a particular migrant, and those are not universal. Therefore, the decision to migrate is never completely rational. Sometimes, the rational component is much weaker than the irrational. Also, we cannot forget that not all persons who migrate make that decision themselves – such is the case of, for example, children, partners, or married couples. This model of migration that involves sets of factors associated with the places of origin and destination, intervening obstacles and personal factors is a simple one and may be accepted as obvious [Lee, 1966].

In summary, the decision to migrate is determined by factors of objective (at the aggregate level) and subjective nature (at the individual level). Their synthetic summary is presented in Table 2. However, regardless of this, migration is nowadays considered as an investment – when deciding whether to stay in the country or go abroad, the potential migrant compares the expected benefits and costs associated with both decisions.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, people have an immediate and often long-term acquaintance with their area of origin and are usually able to make considered and unhurried judgments regarding it. Unfortunately, they cannot do the same in the case of the factors associated with the area of destination – their knowledge is incomplete, as some of its advantages and disadvantages can only be perceived from within. Therefore, their choice will be marked by some degree of uncertainty, especially in regard to their reception of the new area.

<sup>3</sup> On the one hand, many migrants spent a good part of their life in their area of origin, so they tend to overestimate the positive aspects of the environment and underestimate the negative ones. On the other hand, they come up against many difficulties in adapting to a new environment, which may cause them to formulate a reverse but equally erroneous evaluation of the positive and negative features of their chosen area of destination.

Table 2. Determinants of migration at the individual level and their impact on the determinants at the aggregate level

| Determinants at the individual level                             | Determinants at the aggregate level  |
|--|--|
| higher expected income abroad                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– wages offered to employees in the country of residence</li> <li>– expected wage in the destination country</li> <li>– unemployment and employment in the country of residence</li> <li>– unemployment and employment among people with a given level and type of qualifications in the destination country</li> </ul> |
| transaction costs  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– legal regulations that determine the possibility of undertaking legal work in the destination country</li> <li>– the distance between the country of residence and the country of destination</li> <li>– the existence of a network of contacts with relatives and friends in the destination country</li> </ul>      |
| difference in living costs                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– difference in the average living costs in the country of residence and the country of destination</li> </ul>  |
| relative deprivation   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– risk of relative deprivation in the country of residence reflected by differences in income levels in the region or social group</li> </ul>   |
| professional experience and skills                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– barriers that make it difficult to fully exploit the capital of knowledge and skills achieved in the country of origin</li> </ul>   |
| costs of breaking the social ties and adapting to new conditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– role of family and tradition vs. taste for migration in the culture of the origin country</li> <li>– population structure by age and educational status</li> <li>– general living conditions: climate, political and economic stability</li> <li>– share of homeowners, degree of urbanization</li> </ul>             |

Source: [Baranowska, Bober, Bukowski, 2007, qtd. in: Cymbranowicz, 2015].

In summary, the problems associated with the increase in migratory influx and the alarming increase in the number of migrants who come from different regions of the world (and, consequently, different communities, religions, and cultures) are felt by both origin and destination countries. They both face the serious challenge of shaping their migration policies. In this context, it should be remembered that in the recent years new types, forms and directions of migration appeared<sup>4</sup> [Kawczyńska-Butrym, 2008]. Theoretical research on international mi-

<sup>4</sup> Migrations can be classified from different points of view: 'One of the divisions takes into account the criterion of voluntary migration – whether the decision to migrate is independent or dependent on the migrant. Taking into account this criterion we divide migration in: a) the compulsory change of residence caused by the activities or pressures of a political nature [...], b) voluntary – taken with no emergency or external pressure [...]. Another division of migration takes into account its main causes. They are, so to say "inscribed" in the purposes of migration, in the gains expected by the migrants, resulting from the change of residence. According to the criterion of the causes of migration, the economic and

gration confirm this. It is true that the concept of migration<sup>5</sup> is invariably understood as a wandering or movement of the inhabitants of a country or region to a new location, but so far we were unable to create a single, coherent theory or theoretical system that would describe and explain issues related to migration processes. According to one of the greatest experts on migration, Douglas Massey, 'what we observe in the field of theoretical reflection on migrations is a largely fragmented set of theories or concepts that arose and were developed independently of each other, normally strictly subordinated to particular scientific disciplines and meant to explain only some aspects of the phenomenon' [Kaczmarczyk, Tyrowicz, 2007].

Current knowledge on migration indicates that because of its complex nature an explanation of the processes associated with it requires recourse to various theories, approaches, classifications, etc. Nevertheless, Massey [1999] argues that 'international migrations have their origin in the social, economic, cultural or political transformation that accompanies the penetration of non-market societies (premarket) by the market societies (capitalist markets)'. In this perspective, migration does not apply to communities isolated and undeveloped: 'It is not due to a lack of economic development, but on the contrary – due to this development' [Massey, 1999]. The scale and dynamics of the migration process are determined by the economic, but also social issues – Massey calls it 'cumulative causation', thus emphasizing the dynamic and complex nature of the process.

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non-economic migration are distinguished [...]. This division of migration shows that the change of place does not have to be constant – e.g. educational or economic migration. Therefore, as an additional criterion, it takes into account the duration of the migration and therefore the division determines whether migration is constant (with plans and intention to stay), periodic (long-term – no less than one year and short-term – less than one year) and seasonal (usually associated with the working season in agriculture or collection of undergrowth). Undoubtedly, depending on the duration of the migration and its individual stages, different types of profit and loss can appear and on different levels. In many cases the transparency is important – the legality of migration. According to this criterion, there are distinguished legal and illegal migrations and transitional period: seeking asylum, temporary permit for residence, employment, education. Given the fact that the legality of the stay abroad does not always correspond to the purposes declared by the departing person [...], we can distinguish three situations: first, when the stay and employment is legal, the second, when the stay is legal but the employment is not, and the third, when both the stay and employment are illegal. It is obvious that the legality or illegality of stay and/or work is connected with the privileges and benefits of migrants and/or a lack of rights, risk and/or actual exploitation, threats, and losses'.

<sup>5</sup> Migration (lat. *migratio*) includes two main processes, that is, emigration and immigration. The first one means the outflow of population from the country/region, and the second – the influx of people to the country/region in order to stay there and settle. The abandoned region is called the emigrant's place of origin while his new place of residence is referred to as settlement or destination of the emigrant.

## 2. International migration in the EU: Current status and perspectives

In the context of the earlier considerations, it is worth paying attention to the present and predicted migratory movements in the EU. In 2015, the number of its inhabitants who are not EU-28 citizens continued to increase and reached 35.1 million. An estimated 19.8 million people migrated to the EU (non-EU citizens represented 56.4% of the total foreign population), and another 15.2 million migrated to a different member state from within the EU (EU citizens made up 43.3%). In most of the EU member states the majority of foreigners are non-EU citizens. The opposite is true only for Luxembourg, Slovakia, Cyprus, Ireland, Belgium, Hungary, the Netherlands, Malta and the United Kingdom.

Table 3. Resident population in the EU-28 by broad group of citizenship, 2015 (million)

| Category       | Total resident population | Share in total resident population                     |                     |   |                                      |
|----------------|---------------------------|--|---------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
|                |                           | nationals<br>(citizens of<br>the reporting<br>country) | foreign<br>citizens | of which:                                 |                                      |
|                |                           |  |                     | citizens of<br>another EU<br>member state | non-EU<br>citizens with<br>stateless |
| EU-28          | 508,450,856               | 473,166,789  | 35,140,213          | 15,249,958                                | 19,837,930                           |
| Belgium        | 11,258,434                | 9,953,758  | 1,300,493           | 857,075                                   | 443,418                              |
| Bulgaria       | 7,202,198                 | 7,134,038  | 65,622              | 12,501                                    | 53,121                               |
| Czech Republic | 10,538,275                | 10,080,950   | 457,323             | 184,330                                   | 272,993                              |
| Denmark        | 5,659,715                 | 5,237,156  | 422,492             | 173,195                                   | 249,297                              |
| Germany        | 81,197,537                | 73,657,763   | 7,539,774           | 3,475,492                                 | 4,064,282                            |
| Estonia        | 1,313,271                 | 1,120,642  | 191,317             | 7,902                                     | 183,415                              |
| Ireland        | 4,628,949                 | 4,078,394  | 550,555             | 368,564                                   | 181,991                              |
| Greece         | 10,858,018                | 10,036,049   | 821,969             | 198,723                                   | 623,246                              |
| Spain          | 46,449,565                | 41,995,211   | 4,454,354           | 1,948,413                                 | 2,505,941                            |
| France         | 66,415,161                | 62,059,454   | 4,355,707           | 1,485,825                                 | 2,869,882                            |
| Croatia        | 4,225,316                 | 4,186,278  | 36,679              | 11,690                                    | 24,989                               |
| Italy          | 60,795,612                | 55,781,175   | 5,014,437           | 1,491,865                                 | 3,522,572                            |
| Cyprus         | 847,008                   | 694,739  | 144,599             | 106,357                                   | 38,242                               |
| Latvia         | 1,986,096                 | 1,687,663  | 298,433             | 6,805                                     | 291,628                              |
| Lithuania      | 2,921,262                 | 2,898,792  | 22,470              | 4,269                                     | 18,201                               |
| Luxembourg     | 562,958                   | 304,279  | 258,679             | 222,192                                   | 36,487                               |
| Hungary        | 9,855,571                 | 9,709,603  | 145,727             | 80,758                                    | 64,969                               |
| Malta          | 429,344                   | 401,868  | 27,476              | 14,918                                    | 12,558                               |

| Category       | Total resident population | Share in total resident population                     |                     |   |                                      |
|----------------|---------------------------|--|---------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
|                |                           | nationals<br>(citizens of<br>the reporting<br>country) | foreign<br>citizens | of which:                                 |                                      |
|                |                           |  |                     | citizens of<br>another EU<br>member state | non-EU<br>citizens with<br>stateless |
| Netherlands    | 16,900,726                | 16,053,457   | 773,288             | 430,934                                   | 342,354                              |
| Austria        | 8,576,261                 | 7,438,776  | 1,131,164           | 565,394                                   | 565,770                              |
| Poland         | 38,005,614                | 37,891,051   | 108,279             | 29,962                                    | 78,317                               |
| Portugal       | 10,374,822                | 9,979,627  | 395,195             | 100,406                                   | 294,789                              |
| Romania        | 19,870,647                | 19,781,848   | 88,771              | 33,803                                    | 54,968                               |
| Slovenia       | 2,062,874                 | 1,961,342  | 101,532             | 17,165                                    | 84,367                               |
| Slovakia       | 5,421,349                 | 5,359,583  | 61,766              | 47,202                                    | 14,564                               |
| Finland        | 5,471,753                 | 5,252,078  | 218,803             | 90,178                                    | 128,625                              |
| Sweden         | 9,747,355                 | 9,007,920  | 731,215             | 295,968                                   | 435,247                              |
| United Kingdom | 64,875,165                | 59,423,295   | 5,422,094           | 2,988,072                                 | 2,434,022                            |

Source: Own research based on: [Eurostat].

The main countries attracting migrants were Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain and France. More or less 80% of the foreigners resided in these five member states. The remaining 20% migrated mainly to Belgium, Greece and Austria, and only secondarily to other EU member states. Across the member states, the highest proportion of foreign citizens in the total resident population was recorded in Luxembourg (45.9%), where almost half of the population did not have Luxembourgish citizenship. Shares above 10% were also registered in Cyprus (17.1%), Latvia (15%), Estonia (14.6%), Austria (13.2%), Ireland (11.9%), Belgium (11.6%) and Spain (9.6%). In contrast, Poland (0.3%), Romania (0.4%), Lithuania (0.8%), Bulgaria and Croatia (both 0.9%) registered shares of foreign citizens below 1%. In total, foreign citizens made up 6.9% of the resident population of the EU-28.

In 2013, the population of the EU-28 increased by 1.7 million people. At this time, only 4.8% of the population growth came from natural increase; the remaining 95.2% was due to the net migration. This means that net migration continued to be the main determinant of population growth. The relatively low contribution of the natural increase to total population growth is the result of two factors: first, the considerable increase in net migration in the EU-28 since the mid-1980s. Secondly, the fall in the number of births and the increase in the number of deaths. Now, the forecasted extent of population decline or growth will depend on the contribution made by migration. Despite the fact that the population of the EU-28 increased during 2013, it turns out that the population growth was unevenly distributed. The population increased in 15 member states, while it fell in 13.



Table 4. Demographic balance, 2013 (thousand)

| Category       | Population<br>(January 1,<br>2013) | Live births | Deaths  | Natural<br>change | Net migra-<br>tion plus<br>statistical<br>adjustment | Total change<br>between<br>January 1,<br>2013, and<br>January 1,<br>2014 |
|----------------|------------------------------------|-------------|---------|-------------------|--|--|
| EU-28          | 505,115.0                          | 5,075.4     | 4,993.6 | 81.8              | 1,627.7  | 1,709.5  |
| Belgium        | 11,161.6                           | 125.6       | 109.3   | 16.3              | 26.1   | 42.4   |
| Bulgaria       | 7,284.6                            | 66.6        | 104.3   | -37.8             | -1.1   | -38.9  |
| Czech Republic | 10,516.1                           | 106.8       | 109.2   | -2.4              | -1.3   | -3.7   |
| Denmark        | 5,602.6                            | 55.9        | 52.5    | 3.4               | 21.2   | 24.6   |
| Germany        | 80,523.7                           | 682.1       | 893.8   | -211.8            | 455.5  | 243.7  |
| Estonia        | 1,320.2                            | 13.5        | 15.2    | -1.7              | -2.6   | -4.4   |
| Ireland        | 4,591.1                            | 68.9        | 29.4    | 39.5              | -25.1  | 14.4   |
| Greece         | 10,991.4                           | 94.1        | 111.8   | -17.7             | -70.0  | -87.7  |
| Spain          | 46,727.9                           | 424.4       | 388.6   | 35.8              | -251.5   | -215.7   |
| France         | 65,560.7                           | 812.3       | 569.4   | 243.0             | 31.9   | 274.9  |
| Croatia        | 4,262.1                            | 39.9        | 50.4    | -10.4             | -4.9   | -15.3  |
| Italy          | 59,685.2                           | 514.3       | 600.7   | -86.4             | 1,183.9  | 1,097.4  |
| Cyprus         | 865.9                              | 9.3         | 5.1     | 4.2               | -12.1  | -7.9   |
| Latvia         | 2,023.8                            | 20.6        | 28.7    | -8.1              | -14.3  | -22.4  |
| Lithuania      | 2,971.9                            | 29.9        | 41.5    | -11.6             | -16.8  | -28.4  |
| Luxembourg     | 537.0                              | 6.1         | 3.8     | 2.3               | 10.3   | 12.6   |
| Hungary        | 9,908.8                            | 89.5        | 126.7   | -37.2             | 5.7  | -31.4  |
| Malta          | 421.4                              | 4.0         | 3.2     | 0.8               | 3.2  | 4.0  |
| Netherlands    | 16,779.6                           | 171.3       | 141.2   | 30.1              | 19.6   | 49.7   |
| Austria        | 8,451.9                            | 79.3        | 79.5    | -0.2              | 55.2   | 55.0   |
| Poland         | 38,062.5                           | 396.6       | 387.3   | -17.7             | -26.9  | -44.7  |
| Portugal       | 10,487.3                           | 82.8        | 106.5   | -23.8             | -36.2  | -60.0  |
| Romania        | 20,020.1                           | 182.3       | 247.0   | -64.7             | -8.1   | -72.8  |
| Slovenia       | 2,058.8                            | 21.1        | 19.3    | 1.8               | 0.5  | 2.3  |
| Slovakia       | 5,410.8                            | 54.8        | 52.1    | 2.7               | 2.4  | 5.1  |
| Finland        | 5,426.7                            | 58.1        | 51.5    | 6.7               | 17.9   | 24.6   |
| Sweden         | 9,555.9                            | 113.6       | 90.4    | 23.2              | 65.8   | 89.0   |
| United Kingdom | 63,905.3                           | 778.4       | 574.9   | 203.4             | 199.6  | 403.0  |

Source: [EC, 2015a].

Analysing the two components of population change at national level, eight types of population change can be distinguished, by growth or decline and the relative proportion of natural change and net migration.

Table 5. Contribution of natural change and net migration (plus statistical adjustment) to population change, 2013

| Demographic drivers                   | EU member states  |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Growth due to:                        |   |
| only natural change                   | Ireland   |
| mostly natural change                 | France, Netherlands, Slovenia, Slovakia, United Kingdom |
| mostly net migration (and adjustment) | Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, Malta, Finland, Sweden    |
| only net migration (and adjustment)   | Germany, Italy, Austria                                 |
| Decline due to:                       |   |
| only natural change                   | Hungary   |
| mostly natural change                 | Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Romania              |
| mostly net migration (and adjustment) | Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal    |
| only net migration (and adjustment)   | Spain, Cyprus   |

Source: [EC, 2015a].

International migration affected not only population growth and decline, but also the age structure both in the country of emigration and immigration. Regarding the gender distribution of the migrants to the EU-28 in the recent years, the trend does not change. Based on Eurostat data, an analysis of the age structure of the population shows that the foreigners were younger than the population already resident in their country of destination. The distribution by age of foreigners presents, compared with nationals, a greater proportion of relatively young working age adults. According to the latest data from Eurostat, we can conclude that in the EU-28 the average age of the national population was 43 years, while for foreigners it was 35 years [EC, 2015a].

In 2012, the European Commission issued a document entitled *The 2012 Ageing Report: Economic and Budgetary Projections for the EU-27 Member States (2010–2060)*, in which the predictions concerning the changes of the population by the year 2060 were presented. This forecast takes into account the migration processes and estimates the scale of migration inflows necessary to keep the relation between people of working age (20–64) and the rest of the population. The table below presents such estimates for the 27 member states of the EU until 2020.

On the basis of the conducted research published in the periodic reports of the European Commission and Eurostat<sup>6</sup> [EC, 2015a], both short- and long-term forecasts regarding the economic and social challenges can be formulated.

<sup>6</sup> That last detailed prediction concerning the underlying demographic and macroeconomic assumptions and long-term projections of age-related expenditure and unemployment benefits in 2060 perspective comes from a document published May 12, 2015, entitled *The 2015 Ageing Report: Economic and Budgetary Projections for the 28 EU Member States (2013–2060)*. Current overview of demographic trends, including the complex issues of the phenomenon of migration processes is also raised in another report released that year by the European Commission and Eurostat, that is, the *Demography Report*.

Table 6. Estimation of net migration needs by 2020

| EU member state | The working-age population (as % of population from 2010) | The working-age population needed (thousand) | Additional migrants needed (thousand) | Additional migrants needed (as % of population from 2010) | Total migrants (thousand) | Total migrants (as % of population from 2010) |
|-----------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|
| EU-27           | 61  | 315,571                                      | 11,596                                | 2.3   | 24,854                    | 5,0   |
| Belgium         | 60  | 6,967  | 239                                   | 2.2   | 830                       | 7.6   |
| Bulgaria        | 63  | 4,496  | 282                                   | 3.7   | 153                       | 2,0   |
| Czech Republic  | 65  | 6,996  | 512                                   | 4.9   | 859                       | 8.2   |
| Denmark         | 59  | 3,385  | 105                                   | 1.9   | 235                       | 4.2   |
| Germany         | 61  | 48,646                                       | 969                                   | 1.2   | 1,886                     | 2.3   |
| Estonia         | 62  | 818  | 43                                    | 3.2   | 37                        | 2.7   |
| Ireland         | 61  | 2,947  | 212                                   | 4.7   | 212                       | 4.7   |
| Greece          | 62  | 7,094  | 248                                   | 2.2   | 596                       | 5.3   |
| Spain           | 63  | 30,382                                       | 1,130                                 | 2.5   | 3,022                     | 6.6   |
| France          | 59  | 39,888                                       | 2,098                                 | 3.2   | 3,027                     | 4.7   |
| Croatia         | 61  | 38,293                                       | 948                                   | 1.6   | 4,826                     | 8,0   |
| Italy           | 63  | 561  | 17                                    | 2.1   | 62                        | 7.6   |
| Cyprus          | 63  | 1,340  | 32                                    | 1.4   | 13                        | 0.6   |
| Latvia          | 62  | 1,963  | 15                                    | 0.5   | -84                       | -2.5,0  |
| Lithuania       | 63  | 360  | 2                                     | 0.4   | 57                        | 11.3  |
| Luxembourg      | 63  | 6,202  | 197                                   | 2,0   | 480                       | 4.8   |
| Hungary         | 63  | 261  | 14                                    | 3.4   | 11                        | 2.6   |
| Malta           | 61  | 10,510                                       | 504                                   | 3,0   | 748                       | 4.5   |
| Netherlands     | 62  | 5,306  | 36                                    | 0.4   | 334                       | 4,0   |
| Austria         | 65  | 24,896                                       | 1,260                                 | 3.3   | 1,457                     | 3.8   |
| Poland          | 62  | 6,605  | 130                                   | 12,0  | 432                       | 4.1   |
| Portugal        | 64  | 13,468                                       | 349                                   | 1.6   | 413                       | 1.9   |
| Romania         | 64  | 1,380  | 85                                    | 4.1   | 180                       | 8.8   |
| Slovenia        | 66  | 3,670  | 137                                   | 2.5   | 253                       | 4.6   |
| Slovakia        | 60  | 3,350  | 246                                   | 4.6   | 397                       | 7.4   |
| Finland         | 58  | 5,601  | 241                                   | 2.6   | 725                       | 7.7   |
| Sweden          | 60  | 39,737                                       | 1,397                                 | 2.2   | 3,547                     | 5.7   |

Source: Own research based on: [EC, 2012].

According to the projections outlined in a 2015 report, the age structure of the EU population will change strongly by 2060, as:

- dynamics in fertility is projected to rise from 1.59 in 2013 to 1.68 by 2030 and further to 1.76 by 2060 for the EU as a whole,

- life expectancy at birth over the projection period is expected: for males – to increase by 7.1 years, reaching from 77.6 to 84.8 in 2060; for females – to increase by 6.0 years, reaching from 83.1 to 89.1 in 2060,
- net migration inflows to the EU as a whole are projected to continue increasing from 874,000 people in 2014 to 1,364,000 by 2040 and thereafter declining to 1,037,000 by 2060 [EC, 2015b].

Therefore, it can be concluded clearly that in the coming decades the EU population will be slightly larger but much older than it is now. The EU population is projected to increase from 507.2 million in 2013 by almost 5% in 2050, when it will peak (at 525.5 million) and will thereafter decline slowly (to 522.8 million in 2060). This increase would not, however, be the case without the projected inward migration flows to the EU. More importantly, as a result of these trends among different age groups, the share of people over 65 years of age in the EU population is expected to increase from 18.4% in 2013 (93.3 million) to 28.4% in 2060 (148.5 million). This implies that in 2013 for every person aged over 65 years there were four working-age people, while in 2060 there will be only two working-age people [EC, 2015b].

These changes will have a major impact on labour market developments. The European Commission points to three distinct periods:

- 2007–2011: the working-age population is growing, but employment is sluggish as the financial and economic crisis weighs on labour prospects,
- 2012–2022: the working-age population starts to decline as the baby-boom generation enters retirement; however, the assumed reduction in unemployment rates, the projected increase in the employment rates of women and older workers cushion the impact of demographic change, and the overall number of persons employed would start to increase,
- from 2023: the projected increase in employment rates is slower, as trend increases in female employment and the impact of pension reforms will be less pronounced; hence, both the working-age population and the number of persons employed start falling over the remainder of the period [EC, 2015].

Currently, at least a couple of ways to counteract these negative trends are being considered, and migration is one of them. However, it should not be forgotten that it will not:

- mitigate the effects related to the problem of an aging population and decreasing number of people of working age (in a short-term perspective),
- solve the problem permanently, as the immigrants will also grow old and, with time, they will also need social support (in a long-term perspective).

In addition, the integration of immigrants remains an important issue, as it is often marked by social tensions resulting from cultural differences. However, it is impossible not to notice that the debate on the level of immigration into the EU is more and more visible in the public space every year.

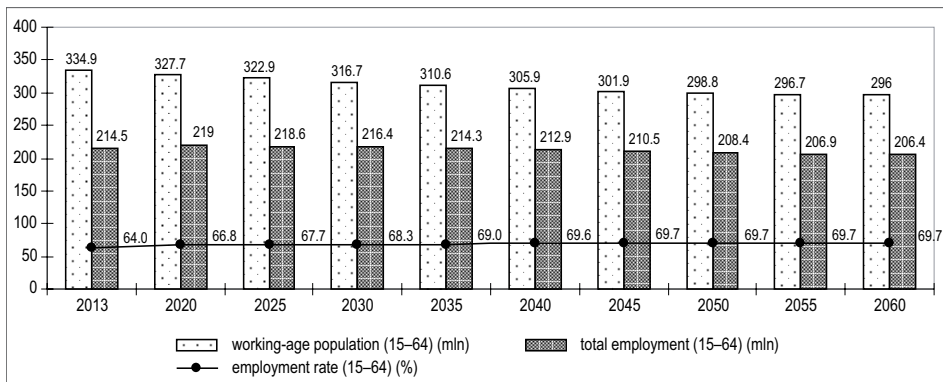


Figure 1. Population and employment development in the EU-28 by 2060

Source: [EC, 2015b].

## Conclusions

In the recent years, the EU found itself in an exceptionally difficult situation. Immediately after the financial and economic crisis, it must face another – the immigration crisis. In the face of growing (almost exponentially) numbers of legal and illegal immigrants from both the EU and outside the EU, it is obvious that without joint decisions and coordinated action at the supranational level no European country alone can meet this challenge. Therefore, it is quite natural that hitherto marginalized issues concerning migration, such as visa and asylum policies, are brought to the fore. In the context of the European demographic or employment policy, they are considered in terms of both opportunities and threats. Bearing in mind that the phenomenon of migration is inextricably linked with the history of Europe, it is important that, while making the decisions about the fate of migrants, we maximize its positive and minimize its negative effects – that we use it to accomplish the desired objectives and goals set within the strategies of socio-economic development of the EU.

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