

Conference on Economic and Social Dimensions of EU Enlargement

Brussels/Belgium, 16 November 2000

Hotel Crowne Plaza, Rue Gineste 3, B-1210 Brussels



Session 2 : Potentials Spillovers between the Labour Markets of EU and of Accession Countries

Patterns of Migration in Central Europe

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Since the memorable events of 1989, international migration in the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe have undergone an historical evolution. In particular, the Central European countries of Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary became a space for new and dynamic international population movements. For almost two centuries these countries have been sending migrants to the West. This tradition of emigration continues, in new forms, as flows to the European Union. Yet the size of such East-West migration was nothing like as high as predicted in early 1990s. What is new, is that these countries have themselves become the destination for significant population flows. They attract temporary labourers, migrant traders, tourists and business people from outside the region, as well as for migrants trying to get into Western Europe. In particular, they draw people from the bordering countries of the former Soviet Union, from South-Eastern Europe and even from non-European countries as distant Vietnam, China and Sri Lanka.

Whilst East-West migration has generated a research industry, especially in Germany and Austria³, which are the main receiving countries for flows from Central Europe, the population movements inside the post-communist Central Europe have been relatively neglected.

The Central European region, has long borders to the West with Germany and Austria, some of the most prosperous European Union countries and ones where migration has played a key role in recent policies and politics. To the east, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia have borders with the former Soviet Union and Poland has borders with several former Soviet countries. Those entering the Czech Republic from the former Soviet Union tend to come through the relatively porous and recently constructed Czech-Slovak border. Hungary also borders a number of South Eastern and Balkan countries, including Romania, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Slovenia, making that country a first location for many refugees in the wars and ethnic conflicts which have taken place in the region. The focus of this book is upon the Central European post-communist states of Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia. For ease of reference, we call these the "Central European countries" because they are not yet part of the European Union, nor were they part of the Soviet Union.

The creation of this new migration space on the borders of the European Union (and in the centre of the newly developing concept of Europe) has a range of consequences. First it has various implications for the countries of the region themselves: their economies, international relations and domestic politics, including the acceptance or otherwise of migrants by their populations and for the question of national identity. Scientists and policy makers are still trying to make sense of this phenomenon so there is no firm consensus as to how to interpret what is happening. Since the response to this new and mass phenomenon has coincided with the process of political, economic and military integration with the West, the building of new migration policies, regulations and institutions has been to large extent the adoption of West European standards. Second, migration has implications

¹ Unless stated otherwise, empirical data is drawn from empirical studies, both quantitative and qualitative carried out by the author and her colleagues

² This report forms the first chapter of the book "Patterns of Migration in Central Europe" forthcoming with Macmillans, London (now Palgrave). It was co-written with Dariusz Stola

³ German research centres include: Berliner Institut für Vergleichende Sozialforschung, European Forum for Migration Studies Bamberg, Federal Institute for Population Research Wiesbaden, Humboldt University Berlin, Institute for Employment Research Nuremberg, Institut für Entwicklungsforschung Wirtschaft und Sozialplanung Saarbrücken, Institut für Wirtschaftspolitik Hamburg, Freidrich Ebert Stiftung Bonn. Austrian Research Centres include: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research Vienna, International Centre for Migration Policy Development Vienna, Institute for Urban and Regional Research Vienna, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis Laxenburg.

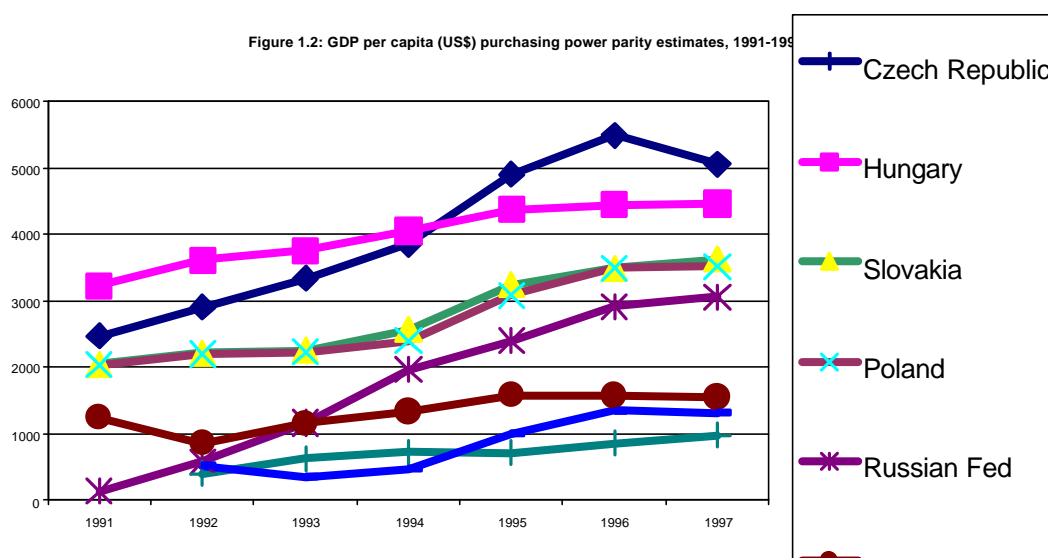
for the process of integration of these countries in the European Union. At present, when accession negotiations are entering a critical stage, it is evident that the Central European candidate countries will bring to the Union not only their economic and cultural heritage but also their own contemporary patterns of migration at the time when this is one of the most sensitive questions facing contemporary Europe in the eyes of other countries. On the other hand, Central Europeans can see more clearly what implications the EU accession will have for them, especially for their relations with their Eastern neighbours. Third, the new migratory developments pose various challenges for migration theories, which require further examination.

One should study these phenomena on a comparative basis, across the four countries with which we are concerned as well as in terms of their implications for individual countries. The recent history of these countries, with the imposition of communist regime and incorporation into the Soviet Block for more than four decades, then their release from this political domination ten years ago, means that in many ways their development and experiences during most of the twentieth century has been similar. However, there is also much diversity in conditions and deeper historical roots in this relatively small region which means that migratory developments and responses to migration differ among the countries.

The relationship between the Central European countries and the European Union is also not fully clear with the deadline for full entry into the European Union being postponed, which has implications for migration in and out of the region. Migration is likely to play an increasingly important part in these negotiations as well as in the domestic politics of Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, as they undergo a continuing processes of diversification and find their place in the new European order.

Comparative economic situation

The countries we are considering have enjoyed some of the best economic performances in the post-communist period. After an initial slump, their economies have tended to grow (See Figure 1.2). However, in the countries to the East and South, it is the case that the GDP per capita started low and has not risen very much. The disparity between the Central European belt of countries - Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia - and those countries to the East and the South has widened in the course of transition (although Slovenia, which is not included here, has the highest GDP per capita of all). Thus, in terms of crude economic statistics we can see why the Central European new migration space has been drawing in migrants from less prosperous neighbouring countries. These general statistics mask widening inequalities within each country: as some have got richer, many have become poorer and this is particularly the case in the countries of the former Soviet Union.



Source: (EBRD, 1999) Transition Report 1999

However, reforms have been won at the expense of rising unemployment which is higher than the European Union average (except in the Czech Republic although this country is rapidly catching up with the regional average), and consistently high inflation as price controls were progressively removed. Thus the Central European new migration countries have attracted migrants even in spite of having high unemployment (Figure 1.3). The unemployment figures for Belarus and Ukraine are misleading. Despite the low official figure, a recent study involving face to face interviews found many people to be unemployed in Belarus and Ukraine although few were registered as such⁴. Other analysis carried out by us would put the real unemployment rate at something like 10 times that of the official number. This means that despite the official unemployment count represented in these statistics, there is in fact a large pool of surplus labour in countries of the former Soviet Union such as Belarus and Ukraine.



Source: EBRD Transition Report, 1999

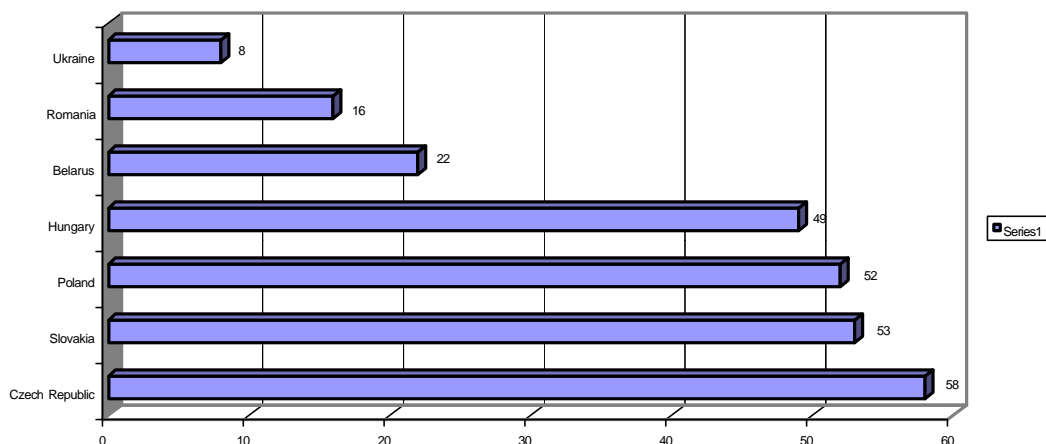
In understanding the economic well-being of the population, objective economic indicators can be misleading. GDP per capita shows only the average economic well being and as we have seen, some economic indicators are not accurate at all in some countries. We should also take into account the economic situation of the population as people perceive it. Here we find that despite the rising prosperity shown in Figure 1.4, not much more than half the population in even the most prosperous countries believe they are able to get by on their incomes (this is based on the NDB V data explained in Appendix 1).⁵ In Belarus only about one fifth are able to live from their incomes and in Romania only 16 per cent. In Ukraine this drops to only 8 per cent. Thus in Ukraine, 92 per cent of the population are not able to live on their earned incomes, often because even if they have a job they are not paid for long periods of time and the wages have fallen far behind inflation. This desperate economic situation was also reflected in qualitative interviews (Wallace et al. 1999). In Russia and in Belarus, the crash of the rouble in August 1998 plunged many people into poverty after this survey was carried out (results are for Spring 1998). This by rights should add to a strong migration "push" out of those regions plunged into poverty. However, the numbers migrating are far lower than the 92 per cent who are unable to live on their incomes and as we shall see, tend to take the form of temporary border crossing for economic activity rather than emigration. If economic fortunes and

⁴ INTAS project "Economic and Social Change in Households: Ukraine and Belarus" co-ordinated by Claire Wallace, Institute for Advanced Studies.

⁵ Exact question wording was: "Do you get enough money from your main job to buy what you really need?" Definitely enough, just enough, not quite enough, definitely not enough

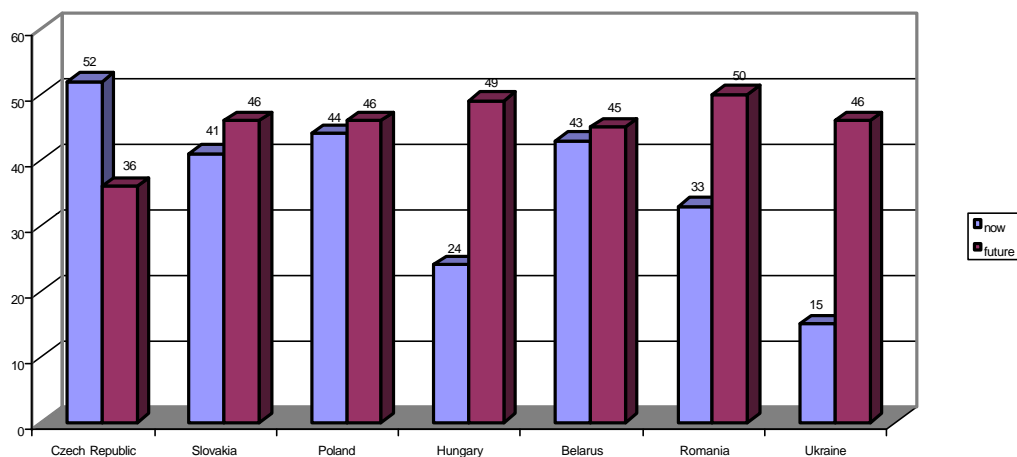
disparities were the sole determinants of migration we would expect a mass exodus, yet this has not taken place.

Figure 1.4: Subjective poverty, 1998 "Do you get enough money from your main job to buy what you really need?"



One reason that could perhaps be put forward is the people's expectations of the future. Figure 1.5 shows respondents' assessments of their economic situation at the time of the interview compared with their ideas of whether their family situation will be better in five years' time⁶. Only in the Czech Republic are the future expectations more gloomy than the present economic prospects and this could be explained by a slump in the economy in 1998 after several years of steady growth. In every other country, the expectations of the future are more optimistic than assessments of the present. In every country, people believe that things will get better. This is even the case in places such as Belarus, Ukraine and Romania where poverty rates as measured by Figure 1.4 were extremely high. This perhaps represents the victory of faith over experience but would also explain why not more people were interested in migrating and escaping from their extremely poor economic conditions.

Figure 1.5: Assessment of household economic situation now and in the future, 1998



Source: NDB V, 1998 (see Appendix 1)

⁶ Question wording was: "As for your own household, how do you rate its economic situation today? Very satisfactory, fairly satisfactory, not very satisfactory, very unsatisfactory" (the first two scores were combined to create this figure). The second question was "What do you think the economic situation of your household will be in five years? Much better, a little better, about the same, a little worse and a lot worse" The first two scores were combined to create this chart. N=7588 all countries combined.

The relatively prosperous situation of Central and East European countries mean that they can offer economic opportunities to those from the East and South where in general, economies have deteriorated.

Another reason for the attraction for migrants is that despite the considerable institutionalisation of capitalism and the market economy in these countries, there is nevertheless a substantial informal economy (Sik, 1993; Sik, 1995). This is partly a legacy from the former period including survival strategies which were necessary under communism, but have taken on new features because of the speed of economic change has not kept up with legislation to control it. Thus, liberalisation of the economy allowed small scale enterprise to flourish, but fiscal and legal frameworks followed only later, meaning that there were many uncontrolled spaces in the economy which could be exploited by nationals as well as migrants - for example in the creation of large informal markets for buying and selling consumer goods (Sik & Wallace, 1998; Czako & Sik, 1999; Sword, 1999).

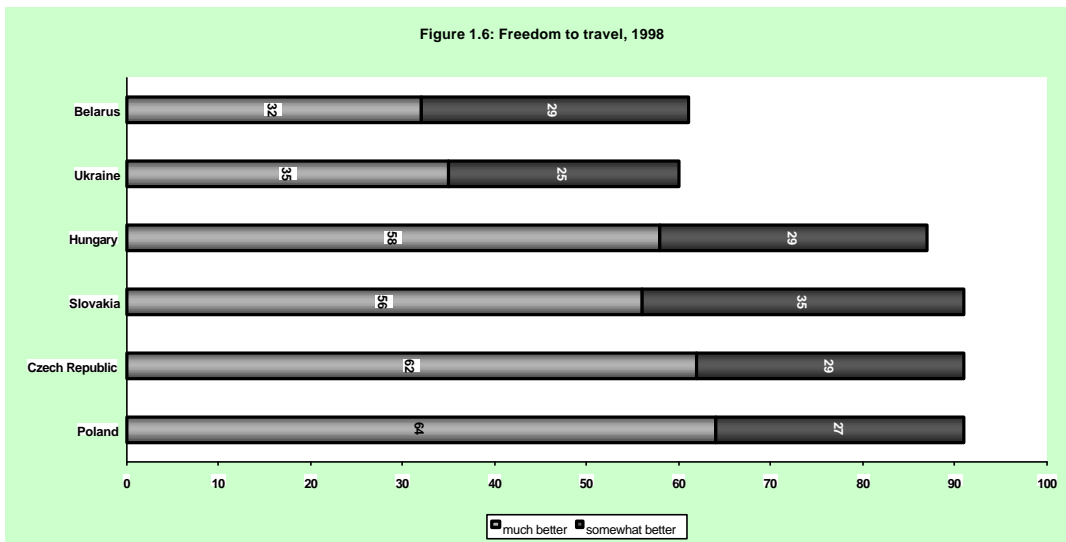
It is also the case that this legacy encouraged an attitude of beating the system, bending the rules and economic self-help as well as a tradition of corrupting officials (Morawska 1999)(Wedel, 1992). Migrants from other parts of the former Communist region perfectly understand these rules and can integrate themselves with little trouble.

Comparative political situation

The countries we are considering have also made the best progress in post-communist Europe in the reform of political institutions towards democracy and rule of law. A direct consequence of this progress in migration matters is they are recognised as "safe countries" for asylum by EU and UN standards rather than countries that may generate refugee flows - although the issue of Roma, who claim political asylum in various countries of the European Union on grounds of racist attacks, puts this into question.

In the Freedom House Index of relative freedom in different states, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovenia rated the highest among post-communist countries in Slovakia (at that time under the more authoritarian Meciar) lagged a little behind. However, other countries of the former communist block were well behind (Freedom House, 1997):26. After several rounds of elections, the democratic system is well established and human rights, freedom of the press and freedom to work or live where one wants are taken for granted. The exception to this was Slovakia, where a more authoritarian regime prevailed under the leadership of Vladimir Meciar who was roused at the last elections in 1998. Since that time Slovakia has also been incorporated into discussions about NATO and the European enlargement process and the newly elected coalition is keen to become an equal partner of Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary on the road to reform.

Indeed, freedom to travel was one of the basic freedoms which was won by the transformation from communism and is still seen as a major gain. In some countries, in particular Hungary and Poland, communist restrictions on exit were partially eroded before the regimes collapsed, but inhabitants of other countries won the actual freedom of movement only after the revolutionary changes of 1989. The overwhelming majority of post-communist citizens thought that freedom to travel had improved since the past. This freedom was rated especially highly in the Central European countries we are considering now as Figure 1.6 below shows. Nearly everyone in these countries thought the freedom to travel had improved a lot compared with the past.



Source: NDB V 1998 ⁷

The four countries have developed substantial institutional reforms over the post-communist period and were among the first to be targeted by PHARE and other EU programmes in the first waves of post-communist reforms. The result has been the depoliticisation of bureaucracies and the economy, increasing autonomy for regions and local government and harmonisation with European Union standards.

These facts are relevant for international migration because migrants coming to Central European countries often do so to escape political instability and institutional breakdown or authoritarian repression in their own countries and find peace and security in which to conduct their lives. An atmosphere of peace and security, with some protection from crime, is also necessary in order to conduct economic activity (Wallace, Chmouliar, & Bedzir, 1999){Knack & Keefer 1997 #7430}

However, as with the economic development, the political, policy and institutional developments in Central Europe have left certain gaps which can be exploited by irregular migrants. The lack of clarity over migration and residence policies for some time, the slow reform of the civil service and customs along with rapidly changing policies and a legacy of institutional corruption means that there are often administrative loopholes in which irregular activity, for example in the form of importing and exporting goods, can find a niche. The evidence is that although there is often corruption and administrative ambiguity, this is considerably lower in the Central European countries than in other countries to the East and South and this is attractive for migrants as they thus find more predictability and security (Frye, 1998; Wallace & Haerpfer, 1999; Stola, forthcoming).

Migration traditions in the region

Central Europe has had a long and rich tradition of migration. Since the mid-nineteenth century this has been mostly East-West migration. Using the former Iron Curtain as the dividing line between East and West Europe, Fassmann and Münz argue that history of the migrations can be seen in three phases {Munz & Fassmann 1995 #130} . In the first phase, lasting between 1850 and 1920, they estimate that about 30 million Central and Eastern Europeans left for the West. The majority went to North and South America, until immigration restrictions were imposed in North America (Morawska, 1995). This was following in the steps of earlier waves of Western and Northern Europeans - Germans, British and others (Moch, 1995; Nugent, 1995)(Bade, 1995). In addition, large numbers of Polish and Ukrainian workers poured into the coal, iron and steel producing regions of

⁷ Question wording: "Please think of the differences between the old system of government under communism and our present system... Please could you tell me, by comparison with communism is it much better, somewhat better, equal, somewhat worse, much worse: People can travel and live where they want."

Germany, France, and even Britain, or found seasonal employment in German agriculture (Noiriel, 1995)(Castles & Kosack, 1973). Many moved westward into big cities. Following various kinds of repression, especially in Tsarist Russia, streams of persecuted minorities, Jews in particular, but also other politically persecuted individuals or groups, became emigrants (Holmes, 1995).

In the second phase lasting until the fall of the Iron Curtain in the late 1940s, there was a massive wave of migrations, mostly going from East to West, as a result of the Second World War, deliberate policies of resettlement and forced labour displacement by the Nazi and Soviet regimes as well as border changes and transfers of ethnic minorities. This amounted to the displacement of more than 15 million people altogether. When the war ended, mass eastward migrations were prompted by the repatriation of the forced workers, prisoners of war, concentration camp inmates and other displaced persons (DPs). Several hundred thousand DPs did not return but resettled further West, mostly overseas. The largest single population movement was of 12 million ethnic Germans who fled or were deported west from the former territories of the Reich, mainly from the new provinces of Poland (7 million) and the western part of Czechoslovakia (3.2 million). Lesser numbers came from the USSR, Hungary and the former Yugoslavia. Other mass resettlements of the postwar period included about 1.5 million Poles and Polish Jews who moved from the Soviet-annexed territories of the pre-war Poland into the regions that had been newly vacated by Germans and about 115 000 Czechs, Slovaks and Hungarians resettled westward in Czechoslovakia, again often in the regions vacated by Germans. Moving in the opposite direction, more than half a million people left Poland for Soviet Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania and 50 000 Ukrainians left Czechoslovakia. During this period too, the Italian minority were expelled from Istria and Dalmatia and 315 000 Hungarians left settlements in Serbia, Romania and Slovakia (Stola, 1992)(Kay, 1995).

The third phase was the period of the Cold War division of Europe from late 1940s to 1989. The Iron Curtain divided the European migration space and East-West migration during that period meant movements from the Soviet Block to the outside. During these years, in particular in the Stalinist period before 1956, international migration was seriously restricted. Nevertheless it did not disappear and grew in periods of relative liberalization, so that between 1950 and 1992 about 14 million people according to Fassmann and Münz (1995), left for the West. This included waves of refugees after the dramatic events in Hungary in 1956, in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and in Poland 1980-81. There was also a stream of ethnic German *Aussiedler*, mainly from Poland and Romania as well as migration from East to West Germany, which in the decade before the Berlin Wall was built (1951-1961) embraced 3.5 million people, but continued right up until the 1990s. A smaller stream of Soviet Jews flew to Israel and the USA. Due to the Cold War separation, Central and Eastern Europeans did not participate in the great migrations of guestworkers recruited in millions in 1960s and early 1970s to fill gaps in the labour markets of Western Europe. This was not the case with socialist Yugoslavia, from where numerous migrants left their homes for Germany, Austria, Switzerland and other countries. In the late 1980s policies of Gorbachov's perestroika allowed the liberalisation of mobility as a way of invigorating the stagnant Soviet economy and society. This brought a gradual erosion of exit restrictions in the Soviet Union as well as in some of the other countries of the Soviet Block, which resulted in the dynamic growth of westward emigration (Karlsson, 1995).

We can perhaps identify in the period following the collapse of the communist regimes and opening of borders as a fourth phase. It is characterised by the trends that we explore in this book, including the explosion of general cross-border mobility, a high tide of international petty traders, flows of refugees and asylum seekers on account of the wars and ethnic strife (mostly in the former Yugoslavia but also elsewhere in the former communist countries such as in the Caucasus or Afghanistan), increasing numbers of labour migrants, as well as some movements continuing from the communist period, such as the migration of ethnic Germans and Jews to their titular "homelands". What characterises this latter phase of migration is a much greater diversity of migratory flows, a tendency

towards short term mobility as against long term emigration, economic activities disguised as "tourism" and migration of highly skilled as well as low skilled people (Findlay, 1995).

The disintegration of federative states – the USSR, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia - contributed to the growth in international migration, not just because it made many of the previously internal migrations into international ones. Except for the velvet divorce of Czechoslovakia, the transformation of the communist federations coincided with rising ethnic or ethnoreligious tensions, sometimes violent, and resulting involuntary displacement. These tensions were high already in the 1980s and liberalization of mobility brought unexpected consequences. For example the return of peoples deported by Stalin to their historical homelands (Chechens, Ukrainian Tartars etc.) almost inevitably sharpened ethnic tensions in local politics. Increasing republican autonomy in 1980s, the eventual disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and ethnicization of politics in former Soviet Union made many Russian (or Russian-speaking) settlers to feel unwelcome and to start to "return" home to Russia. By 1996 statistics of migration in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries listed, among others, 4.2 million repatriants, more than a million formerly deported peoples, about 900 000 refugees (or people in refugee-like situation) and more than 700 000 ecological migrants (who left due to environmental disasters or degradation) (Pilkington, 1998) (IOM, 1999). To add yet another dimension to this complex picture of population movements in countries east of Central Europe, we should mention transit migrants from Southeast Asia, Middle East and Africa who appear in the CIS countries, taking advantage of ineffective entry and residence control and corruption, along with irregular Chinese and other Eastern Asian migrants who pour into Russian Far East in numbers estimated between 300 000 and 2 millions (IOM, 1995; IOM, 1999; Polyakov & Ushkalov, 1995). Although for some of these migrants, their ultimate destination was Western Europe or the region we are considering in this book, there has not been nearly as much migration *from* the former Soviet Union as most people had anticipated in early 1990s. Despite economic collapse and ethnic tensions, most migrations are taking place *within* the territory of the former Soviet Union. The largest westward movement across the border between post-Soviet states and Central Europe appears to have been the circulation of petty traders and short-term labour migrants, who search for ways of supplementing their declining incomes by working or trading in the countries of Central Europe.

The freedom of movement introduced with the end of the communist regimes meant first of all the freedom of exit, of travel abroad - that is, the depoliticisation of passports. Citizens could apply for their own passports as a matter of right, without having to ask permission, as was the case before 1989. Moreover, West European countries abolished the visa requirement for Poles, Czechs, Hungarians and Slovaks who can travel to the European Union as tourists for up to three months (Morawska 1999). European Union citizens likewise needed no special visa or permit to visit Central Europe. At the same time, the Soviet-period visa free travel within the Communist block has continued so that people from Ukraine, Bulgaria, Russia and other countries of Eastern Europe could still travel in a relatively unrestricted way to the four Central European countries we are considering. However, at the European Union border they meet a visa barrier and cannot go so easily further. Similarly, West Europeans need visas to enter most of the former Soviet Union.

Therefore, in this most recent phase of the East and Central Europe migration history, instead of the Cold War division into two zones separated by the Iron Curtain we may distinguish three migration zones, of which the middle one – Central Europe – is the focus of this book.

For the countries of Central Europe, their geographic position, the legacies of their recent and more distant past, their trajectories of economic development since 1989 and their gradual, economic, political and military integration with the West, have made them close to both western and eastern Europe. Thus they have become a meeting place between East and West. They have received travellers from both sides without much restriction but these travellers had more difficulty (or less

interest) in going further westwards or further eastwards. This position made Central Europe into a new migration space, something which this book investigates.

Current migration trends

Border crossing

One of the most dramatic consequences of the fall of Communism was that people were free to go abroad. This was accompanied by the dismantling of the fortified border with its watchtowers, mines and tall fences - an emotionally important event for Central Europeans (Langer, 1996).

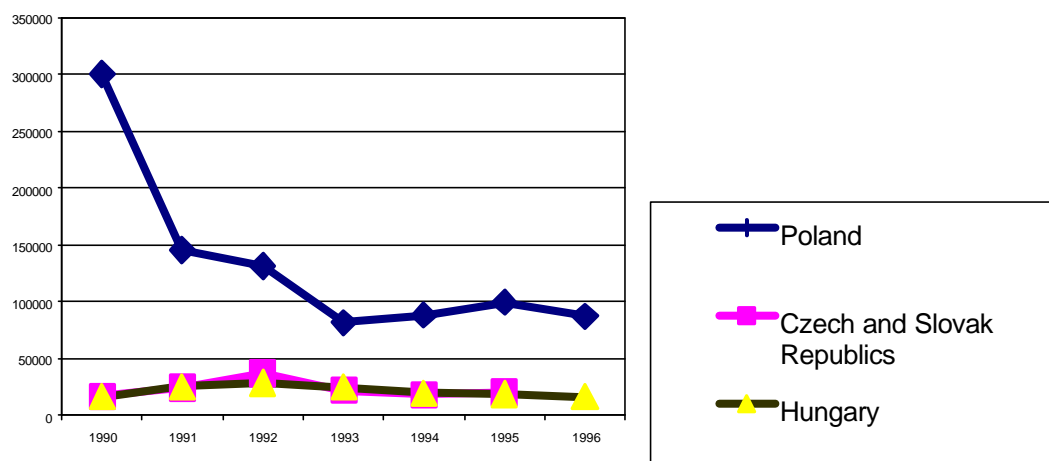
For various reasons - and not just to enjoy this new freedom - people did indeed move in great numbers. We can see an enormous increase in the numbers of border crossings in these countries since the opening of borders in late 1980s/early 1990s. To begin with, the opening of borders resulted in a large volume of people moving from East to West as well as West to East for shopping, visiting relatives, tourism, and so on. Gradually the number of border crossing points increased and new or modernized border facilities along with better means of transport enabled cross border traffic to become a mass phenomenon (Iglicka, 1999)(Kozłowski, 1999). Since the mid-1990s Poland and the Czech Republic registered more than quarter of a billion border crossings (entries and exits) and Hungary and Slovakia about a hundred million each. The conditions of border entry meant that most of the border crossers were classified as "tourists" although, as we shall see later in this book, this label was a cover for a variety of activities, most of which had little to do with sight-seeing. What is particularly interesting is that many people were crossing the border several times: in Iglicka's systematic interviews with 792 border crossers on the Eastern borders of Poland the average number of times people had crossed the border was 13.35 times. One team from St. Petersburg admitted that they were crossing for the 120th time! This has to do with the kinds of activities which travellers undertake as we shall see later (Iglicka, 1999).

Emigration and immigration

The first fear in the West when the borders opened was that there would be an enormous flood of migrants, either from the Central European countries which we are considering, or from the disintegrating former Soviet Union. Figures in millions, even tens of millions were named and these fears to some extent still inform the policies of governments in the European Union. In reality nothing even approaching this deluge of migration took place. As we can see in the following tables, the numbers of emigrants are very small. In general the tendency has been for emigration to *decrease* in the latter part of the 1990s. Figure 7 shows the trends in emigration to Germany - the main destination country for the four countries (the figures include permanent and temporary emigrations but not short term contracted labour). It can be seen that by far the highest numbers of emigrants came from Poland, as Poland has a population much larger than any of the other countries and a strong tradition of migration⁸. However, the numbers of emigrants from Poland has declined steeply over the 1990s. In Hungary and the the former Czechoslovakia (Czech and Slovak Republics) the numbers increased slightly in the early 1990s before dropping towards the latter half of the 1990s.

⁸ Population figures are as follows: Poland 38 660 000, Czech Republic: 10 315 000, Slovakia 5 387 650, Hungary 10 246 000

Figure 1.7: Emigration to Germany, 1990-1996 (including ethnic Germans)



Source: IOM/ICMPD 1999

**Table 1.1 :Permanent/long term emigration flows
Poland**

	Numbers	Percent
Germany	14 202	70,2%
U.S.A.	2 229	11%
Canada	1336	2%
Austria	631	3.1%
Sweden	268	1.3%
Total	20 222	

Source: IOM/ICMPD 1999

**Table 1.2 Permanent/long term emigration flows
Czech Republic**

	Numbers	Percent
Slovak Republic	260	32.2%
Germany	237	29.4%
Austria	59	7.3%
Switzerland	49	6.1%
U.S.A.	40	5%
Total	805	

Source: ICMPD Annual questionnaires (IOM/ICMPD 1999).

Germany remains the most important destination country for Central Europeans and this is reflected in the data on emigration flows (see tables 1.1 and 1.2), yet Poles, Czechs, Slovaks and Hungarians see an important difference between working abroad and emigrating for settlement. For working abroad, Germany was seen as the best destination country with 36 per cent of Poles, 38 per cent of Czechs, 25 per cent of Hungarians and 17 per cent of Slovaks expressing an interest in working there. However, as a place to live permanently, Germany was far less popular and the numbers dropped to 5 per cent for Poles, 6 per cent for Czechs, less than 1 per cent for Slovaks and 2 per cent for Hungarians (IOM, 1998)⁹. For permanent migration, it is the New World - the USA, Canada, Australia and New

⁹ It should be emphasised that these numbers were based upon a representative sample survey of the populations of those countries carried out in 1998 and asked people only if they were interested in going abroad. This can only provide a rough indication of the numbers who might actually leave, although other analysis on this data set showed a high correlation between actually having been abroad and expressing an interest in going abroad (Wallace 1999).

Zealand which are seen as the most attractive countries, reflecting historical patterns of migration which were discussed above. Thus, for example, in 1998 20 per cent of Poles, 14 per cent of Czechs, 7 per cent of Hungarians and 7 per cent of Slovaks showed an interest in emigrating to the USA.

Although not many people wanted to emigrate permanently, what we do see is large numbers of people who would want to work abroad temporarily. Figure 1.8 shows numbers of persons expressing an interest in going abroad for a few weeks, a few months, a few years or the rest of their lives. It is clear that the shorter the period of time, the more people were interested in going abroad and the most popular period was just for a few weeks. Around one half of people in Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary would like to go abroad for a few weeks. The numbers of people wanting to emigrate permanently were very small. Even for those wishing to adopt the classical guest worker role of going abroad for a few years to work, the numbers were low. Figure 1.9 shows the differences in living standards between Central European countries, Eastern European Countries and the European Union. We can see that GDP per capita is only between one half and one third that of Germany and Austria (and has already caught up from being ten times lower in 1993), but is not so far away from the poorer EU countries such as Greece. However, the differences between Germany and Austria and the Eastern and South Eastern post-communist countries is still very wide.

Figure 1.8: Types of migration potential by duration, 1998

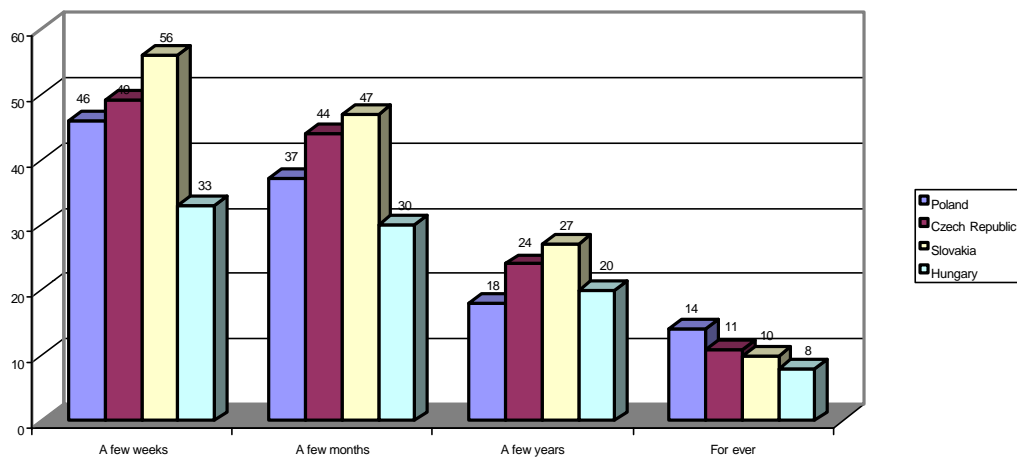
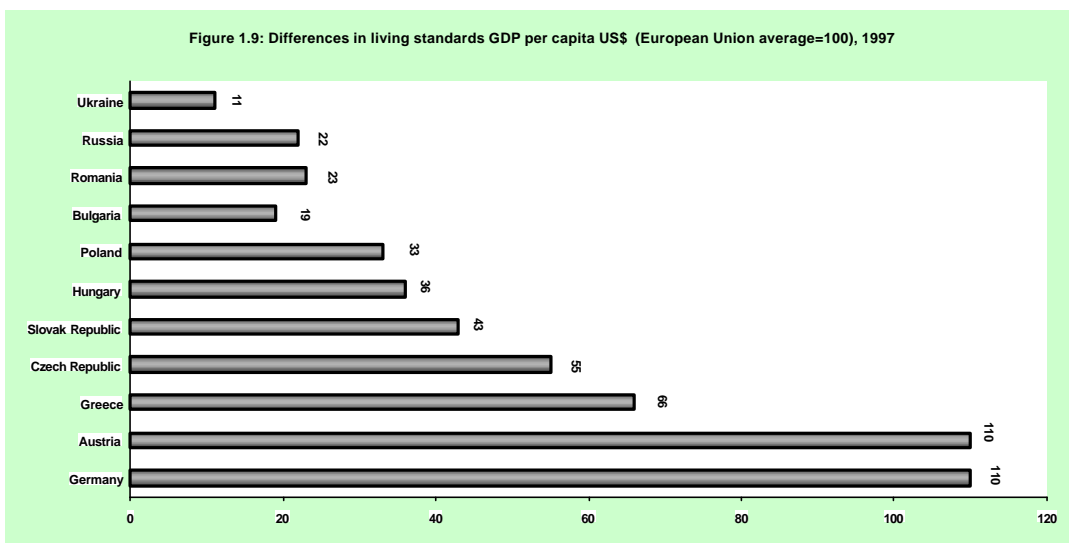


Figure 1.9: Differences in living standards GDP per capita US\$ (European Union average=100), 1997



Source: WIIW 1997

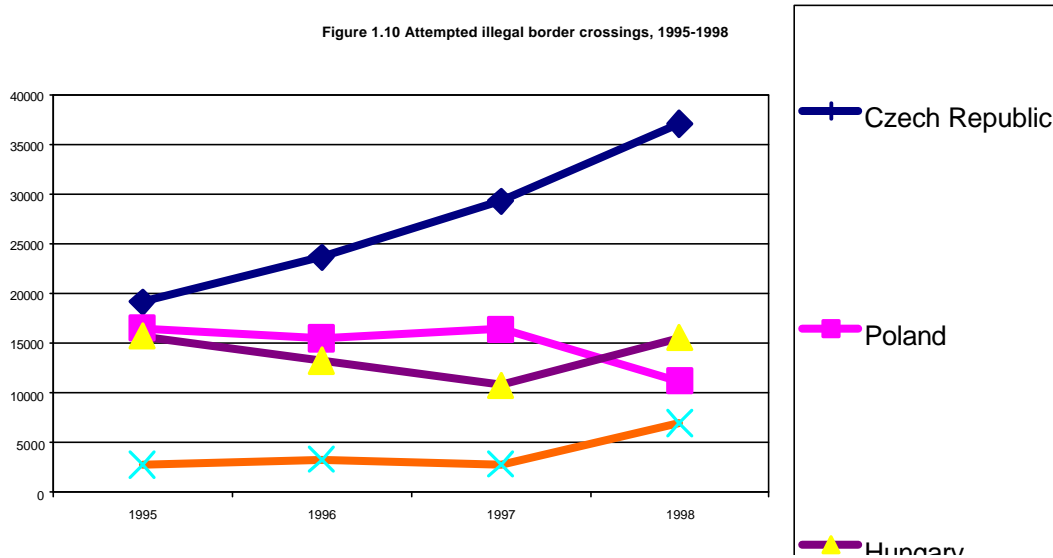
Germany and Austria have tried to regularise this tendency for labour migration by offering temporary labour programs of various kinds, partly in response to pressure from Trade Unions and other lobbies. These include contracts with Central European firms employing their own workers, but which must be paid at the same wage levels as German workers. The kinds of agreements in Germany, based upon quotas of workers, are as follows: first, they can work on project-tied work with different quotas for each sending country; second, they would work as seasonal workers, although this is restricted to particular sectors; third they can work in border areas as long as their main residence is in their own country and they do not work in Germany for more than two days per week; fourth they can go under guest-worker agreements with various restrictions and fifth there are special employment schemes for nurses (Honekopp, 1994). Besides regular employment under the above programs, numerous temporary migrants from Central Europe, mainly Poland, find their niches in the informal labour markets of Germany, Austria, Italy, Belgium, Holland and other countries.

These workers are attracted to Germany, despite the high unemployment there, by the possibilities of seasonal work especially in construction, agriculture and services, at wages much higher than they can earn at home (Rudolph, 1996). In the case of female workers, who form a large, separate category, there is a high demand for domestic services such as babysitting and domestic cleaning, as women in Western Europe are drawn in increasing numbers into the labour force. Thus we can see a kind of post-industrial migration described by Sassen whereby large western cities draw in migrants to disparate segments of the labour market: on one side, a large number of irregular migrants as low paid service workers and on the other side, the concentration of capital, international organizations, governmental administration and technology brings in highly paid experts, who also increase demand for services of the former group (Sassen, 1988). Such cities would include Vienna, Berlin and now also Prague, Warsaw and Budapest - all of them major poles of attraction for migrants. The Central European migrant workers in Germany, Austria and other European states do not resemble the Turkish migrants of previous generations of guestworkers because they are drawn to different economic sectors (not to big industrial enterprises), and they usually continue to pay social security, pension, health and other contributions in their own countries. Operating on a strictly temporary, short-term basis and outside local social security system, this new type of immigrant labour is more "extraterritorial" and therefore less inclined to settle than its predecessors.

There is evidence from the country chapters that the numbers of Central European workers in the West may be declining more recently as the wage levels in the different countries approach one another and there are more opportunities for enterprising people back home. There is also some evidence that the attractiveness of jobs they are offered is limited by the low status and ghettoisation in the informal, casual sector (IOM 1999).

If we look now at data on immigration into post-communist Central Europe (figure 1.9) we can see that it is higher and increasing in these countries: there is more immigration than emigration.

Figure 1.10 Attempted illegal border crossings, 1995-1998



Source: IOM/ICMPD 1999

A better indicator is the number of immigrants per head of population since the countries have different population sizes. According to this definition, we can see that the Czech Republic has by far the largest number of foreigners in proportion to its population and Poland the least. Even in the Czech Republic, the number of registered foreigners was only two per cent (although this could be at least doubled if we take into account the numbers of unregistered ones). In relative terms, then, the numbers of legal foreigners are very small. However, we argue, on the basis of empirical studies, that the real figure is much higher, especially in Poland.

Table 1.3 Foreigners per 100 000 of population

Country	Numbers per 100 000
Czech Republic	1928.10
Hungary	1402.3
Slovakia	412.9
Poland	99.7

We have to bear in mind, however, that these are only officially registered foreigners. For the "dark figure" of unrecorded foreigners, the estimates differ widely and there are no reliable and comprehensive estimates. There are various "guessimates" based on the number of illegal workers which are caught or the number of people caught illegally trying to cross the borders. Even these are cannot grasp whole the picture since it is relatively easy to simply outstay ones work permit, residence permit or "tourist" voucher. Some estimates would multiply the official figures by ten times. These numbers we discuss in the next section.

Forms of migration in the new migration space

Now we shall consider which types of migrants come to the countries of post-communist Central Europe.

Permanent settlers

The permanent settlers have been described already and they include people who join families, who get married or who otherwise choose to legally settle in the countries of Central Europe. However, these countries do not see themselves as countries of immigration, hence legalization of residence is cumbersome, naturalisation procedures are quite difficult and integration is not facilitated through, for example, language courses.

Each of the countries has a diaspora of its co-ethnics living abroad, partly on account of past migrations and partly on account of the changing of the borders several times this century. They often have special immigration gates into their historic homelands, which to some extent resemble the German *Aussiedler* policy. The largest group of such people are ethnic Hungarians who through the successive shrinkage of Hungarian territory found themselves as a minority in other countries, mainly Romania, Slovakia and FRY. There are 1.6 million according to the estimate of Brubaker (Brubaker, 1998) and 6 million according to the estimate of Juhasz (1997). They form the majority of migrants to Hungary seeking permanent settlement (of which 70 per cent were from Romania). This inflow peaked at 29 917 migrant in 1990 and has been declining ever since (OECD/SOPEMI Report, 1997)

In Poland, there has been a movement of ethnic Poles from Central Asia and Siberia, where many Poles had been deported under Stalin. Iglicka noted that the numbers of Poles "returning" from Kazakhstan is increasing rapidly (Iglicka, 1998). There are between 1.2 and 2 million ethnic Poles in former Soviet Union, with largest Polish communities living in Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania, where they settled in a distant past and have remained separated since the border changes after the Second World War. These ethnic Poles take part in the wider stream of circulation across the eastern Polish border, but they also are increasingly visible among foreign students, thanks to the Polish government scholarship programs.

The Czech and Slovak Republic have large numbers of each others nationals or co-ethnics living in their countries, reflecting the fact that they were one country for much of this century. Thus, for example, 30 per cent of the migrants to Slovakia in 1997 were from the Czech Republic

(ICMPD/IOM 1999). Settlements of Czechs in Volhynia (Ukraine) and Romania have also shown an interest in "returning" to the country where economic and political conditions were much more favourable for them and those from Volhynia were granted favoured immigration status as a way of escaping from the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster (Valaskova, Uherek, & Broucek, 1997).

However, there have also been people returning from the West. Most of Polish diaspora – the product of rich history of Polish emigration - live in North America and Western Europe. Some of the emigrants of more recent outflows, of which the largest one was in late 1980s, have decided to take advantage of opportunities offered by Poland's economic progress. Yet others return having failed to integrate in their immigration countries and most numerous are those who probably never intended to settle abroad in the first place. About half of the immigrants registered in Poland as "permanent" are in fact returning migrants. Also people of Polish origin, such as second or later generation emigrants in various countries, have been visible as employees of foreign companies that began to operate in Poland (Salt & Ford, 1993). Juhasz notes that 10 per cent of people naturalising as Hungarians were in fact from OECD countries, which means that many of them might also have been of Hungarian origin (Juhasz, 1997). In the Czech Republic, this return was encouraged by the possibility of (conditional) restitution of property. People who had been forced to leave for political reasons could have their citizenship restored and in each country some did indeed return.

Transit migrants

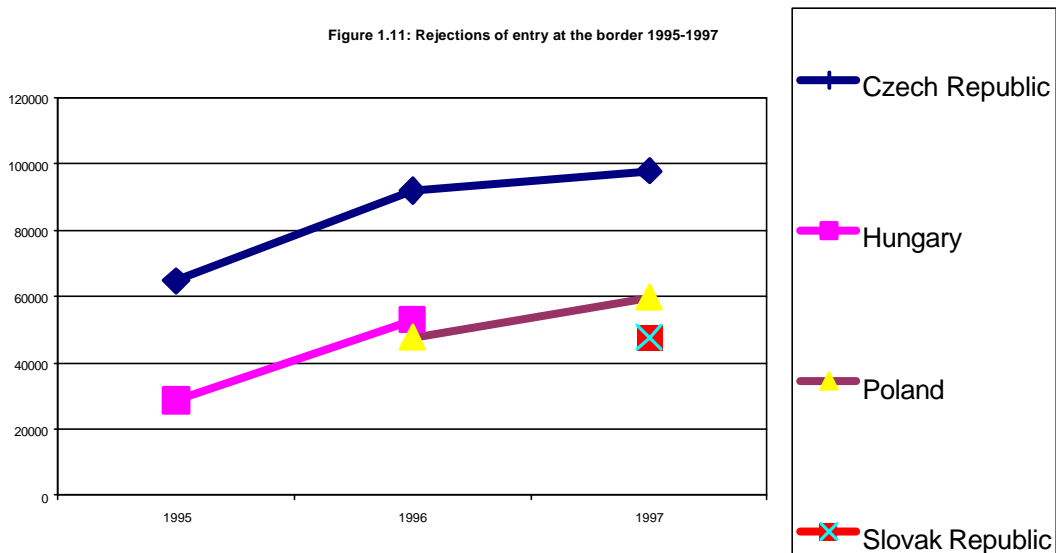
All countries of the former Communist block have experienced transit migration - that is flow of migrants who are crossing their country with the aim of getting somewhere else - usually to Western Europe or the USA. The geographical position of the region under consideration on the borders of the European Union have made it particularly attractive for these kinds of migrants.

In response to this new phenomenon and under pressure from their West European partners, the countries of the region have made significant efforts to combat and prevent illegal transit, including the modernization of the Border Guards service, the introduction of more effective regulations and international co-operation on the return of illegal migrants (see Laczko 2001). Each country of the region has developed a series of bilateral agreements on readmission, which rule that those caught illegally crossing the border (or caught within the country after crossing the border illegally) can be sent back to the last country through which they came. Since the vast majority of illegal border crossers are caught on the Eastern borders of the European Union, they are sent back to the Central European region, even if they came from Romania, Pakistan or Iraq originally. The authorities in Central European countries can try to deport them further to the countries of origin or the next transit country, although this is not always possible. Thus transit migrants often disappear into the informal economy and/or try to cross the border again.

The numbers of transit migrants are "guessimated" from the numbers of those apprehended while trying to illegally cross the borders. The numbers of illegal border crossings have generally fallen since the early 1990s which may reflect a real fall in transit migration or it may reflect the changing efficiency of the border patrols¹⁰. In Poland there has been a fall in this kind of statistics, as is the case in Hungary. In the Czech Republic, numbers have risen steadily. However, the numbers of people who have been prevented from entering the country has risen considerably in all these countries, which probably reflects strenghtening control at the borders other than these with the EU, making it more difficult for transit migrants to enter.

¹⁰ The meaning of these figures is ambiguous. A rise in the number of people caught illegally crossing the border could reflect the increased efficiency of the border patrols rather than a change in migration patterns. It might also reflect the fact that the increased efficiency of the border controls has caused illegal border crossers and traffickers to change their strategies. Thus the rise in the numbers caught at the Czech border might simply mean reflect the increased efficiency of policing at the Polish border with Germany.

Figure 1.11: Rejections of entry at the border 1995-1997



Source: ICMPD/IOM 1999

According to IOM/ICMPD 1999, there are mainly two groups of these illegal migrants. The first group were people from the poorer and less stable countries to the East and South - mainly Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia and FRY. These accounted for more than half of all those apprehended. They may be trying to escape ethnic conflict and they do not need visas to enter the Central European countries. The second group consists of non-Europeans of which people from Iraq, China and Afghanistan feature prominently. It is estimated that between 20 and 25 per cent of these transit migrants are ferried by traffickers or human smugglers. These can be large organisations spanning several continents and earning large sums of money from their clients. Trafficking has become big and highly profitable business in the most recent wave of migration to Western Europe and the post-communist countries are one of the main routes used by the smugglers (IOM/ICMPD 1999).

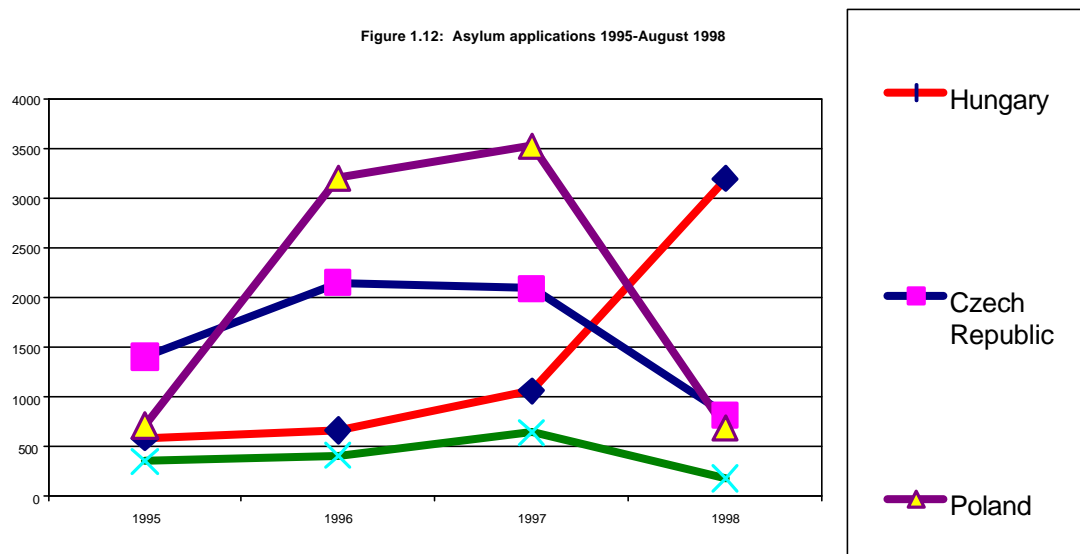
One feature of migration which has caught popular attention is the trafficking in women for purposes of sexual exploitation. Although it is very difficult to estimate their numbers, there has been a marked shift towards prostitutes from Eastern Europe within most West European countries (IOM/ICMPD). They may have had their passports removed and have been blackmailed to bullied into selling sexual services. This phenomenon is part of the general growth of crime and the activities of cross-border criminal networks since the opening of the borders. However, we can also see prostitution as one form of labour migration for female migrants subject to the same kinds of motivations as other kinds of short term labour migration. The low incomes of women in Central and Eastern European countries along with their higher propensity to be unemployed means that this represents one way in which they can supplement their incomes on a permanent or part-time basis.

Refugees and asylum seekers

The global increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers in early 1990s has been noted by many. In the 1990s there have been several waves of this kind within Europe. The largest waves resulted from the war in the early 1990s between FRY, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and then again in the late 1998-9 from the war in Kosovo. In Central Europe, Hungary received large numbers of asylum seekers in the late 1980s from Romania and in the early 1990s from the border regions of Yugoslavia. However, the majority of these went no further than the border and returned as soon as the situation at home was more peaceful (Fullerton, Sik, & Toth, 1995). These waves contributed to the tightening of asylum conditions in Western Europe, especially Germany tended to displace

potential asylum seekers to the Central European countries. Although the numbers of people seeking asylum in these countries have been still low in comparison with Western Europe, it is on the rise.

See Figure 1.13



Source: ICMPD/IOM 1999
 Figures for 1998 are only until end of August

The ratio of applications accepted to those rejected is rather low, varying between with 4 per cent in Poland, 5 per cent in the Czech Republic, 10 per cent in Slovakia and 15 per cent in Hungary in 1997 (IOM/ICMPD 1999:30). However, the fact that large numbers disappear before their asylum application is processed means that they find other strategies for migration, or are not bona fide asylum seekers (40 per cent in the Czech Republic, 89 per cent in Poland and 84 per cent in the Slovak Republic in 1997 - IOM/ICMPD 1999:134)

In Poland, these asylum seekers came mainly from Sri Lanka (24 per cent) Afghanistan (18 per cent) and Armenia (13 per cent). In the Czech Republic it was Bulgaria (34 per cent) Iraq (13 per cent) and Afghanistan (13 per cent) whilst in the Slovak Republic it was Afghanistan (49 per cent), Iraq (15 per cent) and India (9 per cent). In Hungary it was Afghanistan (34 per cent) Iraq (13 per cent) Liberia (13 per cent).

This list of nationalities does bear some resemblance to the nationalities trying to cross the border illegally and indeed one strategy of asylum seekers in the Central European countries is to try to cross into the West, or – to put it otherwise - one strategy of transit-seekers is to claim asylum in Central Europe, especially when they are apprehended. The latter is most clear in Poland, where most of those who apply for the refugee status do so in situation of having been arrested by Border Guard or police and more than 80 per cent of applicants disappear from reception centres before a decision on their case is taken (Okolski, 1999). Thus, the numbers of official asylum seekers and refugees is an overestimation of the real numbers of people in this category. On the other hand, the official numbers of asylum seekers and refugees also underestimates the real numbers of such people. In a study on migration in the Czech Republic, we found that only those people with little social capital and few resources in the Czech Republic became official asylum seekers (Wallace & Palyanitsa, 1995). Those people who had social networks and contacts as well as survival skills for living in the Czech Republic tended to not declare themselves as official asylum seekers but rather to become part of the community of foreigners, either legally or illegally, supporting themselves by trading or finding casual jobs or even starting businesses. Hence, the official statistics rather poorly represent flows of asylum seekers: they are inflated by illegal transit migrants but they do not include many real

refugees. Refugees in the broadest sense are not only people displaced directly by war or violence but the also by effects of the collapse of economies, those avoiding military service and other indirect consequences of war. Thus, in the Czech Republic, there were a number of Serbian refugees from FRY in this category, although they would not fit the official definitions of refugees. However, asylum seeking is sometimes a form of economic migration, which migrants choose as a strategy because other forms of migration have become increasingly difficult for them and this is certainly the case with many applicants in Western Europe. Whilst awaiting the outcome of asylum applications they can use other strategies for migration. Thus we can see that the statistics on asylum, like other statistics mentioned here, should be treated with scepticism.

Small scale traders

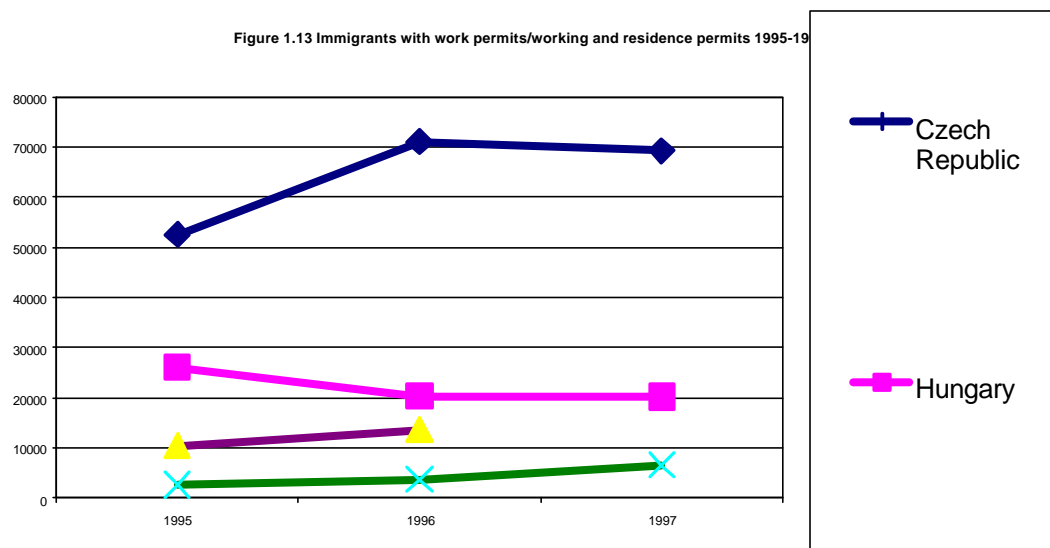
One of the main categories of migrants, but one which does not figure in the traditional migration literature is that of small scale traders. Known also as "suitcase traders" or "shuttle traders" these were visible already in the 1980s but their numbers expanded considerably in the 1990s (Hann & Hann, 1992) . Many large markets were established on the borders and in large cities for these traders to buy and sell, bringing with them usually as much as they could carry back again in a voluminous bag or suitcase. Their activities are now quite well documented (see (Iglicka, 1999; Sik & Wallace, 1998; Czako & Sik, 1999; Morawska Ewa, 1998; Stola, 1997; Thuen, 1999; Wallace et al., 1999). Whereas at first they came mainly to sell goods which could be acquired more cheaply (or liberated from warehouses) in the former Soviet Union, after 1992 they came more often to buy goods. This reflected soaring prices and the fall in production in the Ukraine, Belarus and the Russian Federation and the continuing worsening of the economy so that many families had to find additional means to supplement their incomes. This "petty", "small scale" trade is small only in terms of the scale of individual transactions and one-man businesses. When multiplied by millions of people involved and their repeated, often pendular movement, its size reaches impressive levels, estimated in billion of dollars annually. In Poland, which is the main place of international "petty" trade in the region, it accounts for 46 per cent of all registered trade to Ukraine and 138 per cent of the registered trade to Belarus. The Warsaw Stadium, one of the biggest bazaars of this kind, generates a turnover which makes it equivalent to one of the largest industries in Poland. The Warsaw Stadium maintains an estimated 60 000 jobs in businesses manufacturing for the bazaar or providing various services to its clients (Sword, 1999).

The traders sometimes come from quite far afield and this is one of the activities of Chinese, Vietnamese or Armenian immigrants as well as wandering Roma people. However, most traders come from just across the border, so that the nationalities of traders in each country tends to reflect the neighbouring ties: in Poland they come mostly from Ukraine, Russia and Belarus. In Slovakia they are from Ukraine and Romania. In Hungary they are from FRY (this was one of the means of circumventing sanctions - to buy goods on Hungarian markets and busses were organised from FRY for this purpose). In Hungary there were also many buyers and sellers from Romania and Bulgaria, but Hungary became particularly famous in the region for its Chinese market in Budapest. The establishment of a Chinese community in Hungary in the 1980s has been documented by Nyiri (Nyiri, 1995) who shows that they used Hungary as a base for expanding also into other Central European countries. Now many Slovak, Polish and Czech towns have a "Chinese warehouse" where wholesale goods such as textiles and footwear can be bought and resold by other traders.

Labour migrants

Although Poles, Czechs, Hungarians and Slovaks have been working as guest workers or temporary labour migrants in Western Europe, there are also increasing numbers of labour migrants coming to their countries. The table below shows the rise in the number of work permits granted. By far the largest number of work permits were granted in the Czech Republic.

See Figure 1.14



Source: ICMPD/IOM 1999

It may seem surprising that the numbers of workers are so high, given the high unemployment in these countries. However, the labour migrants do not for the most part directly compete in the same sectors of the labour market as the local workers. The market for foreign workers is polarised between the low paid and low skilled sectors, earning less than the local population and the highly paid, highly skilled people earning much more (Salt & Ford, 1993) (see also Wallace et al. 1998). This often coincides with different origins of the migrants: most of migrants from the East are found in the lower sector while migrants from the West locate in the upper one, which in turn influenced the ethnic composition of migrant labour. The lower segment of the labour market is much larger, so migrants from the East make up most of the total. Below we show some tables of the nationality of people given work permits. It can be seen that Ukrainians in each country except Hungary represent the majority of work permit holders.

Table 1.4 : Nationalities of those granted work permits 1996/7

Poland

1996 Poland		
Ukraine	1 910	14%
Vietnam	1 500	11%
Germany	820	6%
U.K.	540	4%
Russian Fed.	540	4%
Total	13 668	

Table 1.5: Nationalities of those granted work permits 1996/7

Czech Republic

1997 Czech Republic		
Ukraine	25 166	41.2%
Poland	13 665	22.4%
Bulgaria	3 322	5.4%
Belarus	2 469	4%
Moldova	1 929	3.1%
Germany	1 536	2.5%
USA	1 487	2.3%
Total	61 044	

Table 1.6 : Nationalities of those granted work permits 1996/7**Slovak Republic**

1996 Slovak Republic		
Ukraine	600	18%
Poland	500	15%
USA	400	12%
Others	1 800	54%
Total	3 300	

Table 1.7 : Nationalities of those granted work permits 1996/7**Hungary**

1996 Hungary		
Romania	6800	47%
Former USSR	2 200	15%
Poland	1000	7%
Other	4,400	31%
Total	14 400	

Source: OECD/SOPEMI Report 1998

In each country a significant number of persons are coming from the West - mainly from Germany, the USA and the UK - who work in the highly paid, highly skilled sector of the economy. A certain number come as representatives of multinational companies or international organisations and NGOs, as foreign language teachers or they come to set up businesses (Rudolph & Hillmann, 1998) The evidence is, however, that they stay mostly temporarily.

Men and women tend to migrate separately. For women there is a demand for sweat shop labour in the garment industry in Poland and the Czech Republic and in the footwear industry in Slovakia. They may also work as retail workers or in cafes and restaurants. A number work as domestic helpers, either cleaning, caring for children or for elderly people and the demand for them is likely to grow as a middle class develops in Central Europe. For men, there is mainly manual work in "heavy" casual labouring such as construction work.

In addition to these registered workers, there is a large number of unregistered workers, people who come as students or "tourists" and find jobs in the informal economy. For the kinds of work that many of these migrants perform, an irregular status is (surprisingly) practical. The procedure for applying for work and residence permits is quite cumbersome and time consuming and becoming more difficult as stricter regulations are imposed by the authorities (see country chapters in part 2). This discourages people from registering, especially when the bureaucratic procedures are unable to cope with casual types of work. Some migrants do not want to register in order to avoid paying tax and social security fees, and it is one reason why foreign workers are wage competitive.

Estimates of unregistered labour migrants vary. In the Czech Republic there may be about 200 000 illegal foreign workers according to official estimates - that is, as many as work permit and business authorization holders combined. Assuming the same proportion for Slovakia, there may be up to 10 000 illegal foreign workers there. In Hungary it is estimated that the illegal workers represent twice the number of work permits (altogether some 40 000) and this seemed to be confirmed when a spot check by the Hungarian authorities found that 50 per cent of foreign workers were not legally employed (IOM/ICMPD, 1999). Official estimates in Poland range between 150-200 000 migrants annually - that is ten times the number of work permit holders - but there are good reasons to believe their number is much higher. A study of migration from Ukraine to Poland allows for estimates of as many as 800 000 visits involving work annually (see Okolski this volume). The total annual flow of

unregistered labour to the region could be therefore up to a million people. This is not impossible, taken into account that these are mostly short-term migrants (or very short-term), hence their stock at any moment is much lower¹¹

What brings so many informal labour migrants into the region is a combination of five factors. First are the wage disparities – the precondition of any labour migration. Wages in Central Europe, being several times lower than in the European Union are nevertheless several times higher than in Ukraine or Romania (see figure 1.9). Jobs available to illegal foreign workers are obviously less well paid than the jobs of legally employed nationals but they are still attractive and they are available, which is often not the case in the countries of origin. As long as economic reforms in Eastern Europe do not bring visible results, the eastern neighbours of Central Europe – in particular the 50 million people Ukraine - will remain a huge pool of potential labour migrants. The second factor is liberal entry policy, that is, visa-free entry under agreements from the communist period. The third factor is proximity. Geographical proximity means low cost of travel (very important for short-term, repeated movement), but there is also cultural proximity. The similarity between slavic languages greatly facilitates communication between Ukrainians, Belorussian, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles and others as well as all those who learned some Russian during the communist period (when learning Russian was obligatory in the whole Soviet block). In Hungary a large number of labour migrants are ethnic Hungarians from Romania and Yugoslavia. The fourth factor is the significant size and accessibility of informal labour markets in the receiving countries. The fifth factor is the facilitating role of migrant networks, institutions and migrant-oriented services (such as labour brokers, cheap hotels, bus transportation, etc.), which have developed in the 1990s, thanks to the earlier wave of petty traders. When asked why had they chosen Poland as their destination, migrants made clear they would love to work in Germany or Austria, where wages are fabulous, but they knew this was almost impossible due to the difficulties of obtaining a visa, the alien language environment and customs they do not understand, the highly regulated and controlled labour market, and the lack of company from co-ethnics. Poland was thus their second-best option, less attractive but accessible and apparently more friendly, and this certainly applies to the region as a whole (Stola forthcoming).

The Institute for Social Studies research on irregular migrant workers in Poland shows that their stays do not as a rule exceed three months and many come for just a couple of weeks. Those who have already found a niche in the labour market, such as skilled construction workers, usually spend 2-3 months abroad, then they return home for several weeks and come back for another period of a similar length of time. Despite the short-term character of each visit the repeated migrations add up to more than a year of sojourn abroad during a few years of pendular movement. Still more important is the financial aspect of their migration. Even when migrants go abroad for short periods and spend most of the year at home, their earnings from abroad make a greater part, if not all their family income. Thus, they became economically dependent on work abroad (Okolski 1998).

As elsewhere, irregular foreign workers in Central Europe are concentrated in construction and agriculture, then in housekeeping, restaurants and hotels. They may be found also in small businesses in labour intensive industries. They tend to congregate in big cities, in particular in Budapest, Prague and Warsaw. Ukrainians are the most numerous group of migrants in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. They are also active in Hungary, although Romanians are the leading group in that country. In addition to other eastern neighbours, such as Belorussian and Russians, there are a large group of Vietnamese. Recruited during the communist period to work in large industries, these migrants did not return home when their labour contracts were finished but instead sought other kinds of work or started trading. Labour inspectors have noted also irregular migrants from Western Europe and America – language teachers, consultants, employees of foreign companies – who simply disregard local employment regulations. For example of 2 500 cases of illegal employment of foreigners registered by labour inspectors in Poland last year 300 migrants were from the European Union and

¹¹ See country reports in this volume and (Okolski, 1997)

36 from the USA.¹² The illegality of the labour migrants' status results from lack of an appropriate work permit rather than illegal entry or residence. Irregular labour migrants enter legally and usually respect the three-months limit for visa-free visits. They are therefore irregular as foreign workers, but not as foreign visitors.

The fact that irregular migrants make up such a large part of labour migrations to the region can hardly be over-emphasized. The economy of migrations from Eastern to Central Europe is the economy of informal markets. This means not just tax evasion but also lack of formal regulations along with the institutions to enforce them. Instead, informal institutions were developed within the space of a few years, such as informal hiring fairs, middlemen and labour agents who operate in both sending and receiving countries, migrant networks providing information and financing, transportation arrangements and so on. Studies of such institutions in Hungary and Poland have shown they are widespread and effective. For example, at an informal marketplace near Warsaw, which is just a part of a street where job-seeking migrants, local employers and middlemen come daily to find workers, negotiate conditions and agree verbal contracts, between two thirds and three quarters of the migrants find a job within a few hours. Migrants interviewed in Poland by ISS earned between US\$200 and US\$1000 per month but earned only \$US20-\$US80 at home, so even badly paid jobs for them are worthwhile (Stola 1997). The jobs are manual and usually low paid; most of them are casual jobs which last from a few hours to a few days. The migrants' irregular status is compatible with the character of such jobs. General employment regulations do not cover these kinds of jobs and their irregular character is widely taken for granted. Migrants obviously prefer more stable and better paid jobs but the casual jobs are nevertheless important because of their ready availability. This availability insures migrants against the risk of making a loss on a trip abroad if they cannot find a better job (or sell the commodity they have brought at the anticipated price). Also, there are migrants who because of family reasons, or because of their regular job in the sending country, have limited time available to stay abroad. They are ready to take short-term jobs and need to find one as quickly as possible.

The shorter and more often repeated the work cycle of the petty labour migrants is, the more important are the institutions of the informal labour market, which facilitate contacts between migrants and local employers and reduce their transaction costs. The casual hiring fairs provide them with meeting points, information about local demand, wages and with a set of rules of behaviour which facilitate the identification of potential employees/employers and negotiations between them. Recruitment agents contribute to the expansion of the migrant labour market in sending and receiving countries. In sending countries they spread knowledge about migration through advertising. A number of irregular migrants, respondents to the ISS survey in Poland, were initially drawn into migration by such agents' announcements about lucrative jobs waiting for them abroad. Others found their first jobs abroad through a broker but later continued migrations and sought employment by themselves. In the receiving country, middlemen respond to job offers in newspapers, visit construction sites and offer foreign labour to local contractors. They reduce the risk (or at least the perception of risk) on the part of employers, who would otherwise be more cautious towards the idea of illegally employing an alien in their house, farm or enterprise. Thanks to improvements in communication, migrant labour brokers and recruiters respond quickly to demand and operate internationally¹³.

The "new migration space" in Central Europe also represents an attractive location for starting both legitimate and illegitimate businesses. Therefore, this accounts for another group of migrants. In the Czech Republic, the acquisition of a business licence provided also a residence and work permit and this was used by Chinese and Caucasian as well as Russian business people. In Poland, establishing a business was the favourite way of legalizing one's residence by Vietnamese. For business people Central Europe has been a relatively accessible, stable and promising area on the borders of Western

¹² *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 4.12.98.

¹³ Antoniewski R., "Przyczynek do badań nad nieformalnym rynkiem pracy cudzoziemców", *ISS Working Papers*, Warsaw

Europe, where living expenses and capital requirements have been low. For similar reasons, the Central European "new migration space" has proved an attractive location for illicit business and criminal activities such as trafficking in people, in women as well as drugs, weapons and nuclear materials. Cross border crimes which have escalated also include car theft with many western European cars disappearing via Central European networks, to the East.

Some migrants to Central Europe do not have any serious economic purpose. Rather they come for adventure and to enhance their personal experience, although they may take up casual employment or start businesses whilst there. Such is the case with the young Americans in Prague who are wealthy, highly educated and from privileged homes but who come to a poorer country as part of a personal project which shades into leisure tourism. Their numbers are estimated between 12 000 and 30 000 (exact numbers are unclear because many work and reside illegally). Rather than sending money home, they receive money from their homes. These could therefore be termed as post-industrial or even post-modern migrants since theirs is pleasure and consumption oriented travel (see chapter 2). Many work as language teachers but others open laundries, book shops and English language newspapers which cater to the needs of other young Americans.¹⁴

Emerging themes in comparative migration

Several common themes emerge. First, it is clear that the migration statistics (many of them cited above) are not very reliable. They reflect more administrative priorities than actual migration because some migration is disguised (for example the "tourists" who are in fact undertaking economic activities in Central Europe or the asylum seekers who are in fact transit migrants or the "businesspeople" who are in fact refugees and so on) and much migration is irregular or temporary in nature. Furthermore, the collection of statistics is not entirely standardised between countries, so that they are not always comparative.

Second, in each country migration policies are only recent and still in the process of formation. Migration policies and politics do not generally have a high profile in Central European countries (unlike some western countries such as Austria) and migration policies are constructed as a result of pressure from abroad, especially the European Union, because this region will now form the borders of the Schengen zone¹⁵. In general, there is no overarching European Union migration policy, but rather local agreements and bilateral admissions policies which build up into a general framework. Understandings about migration are passed on to Central European policy makers in the range of discussions described by Nygard and Stacher. The general tendency has been to tighten up migration regulations in Central European countries.

Third, a substantial amount of migration is temporary or pendular in character rather than permanent and this issue is tackled in the overview papers which follow in part 1 of the book. This is a distinguishing feature of Central Europe as a new migration space.

In each country the opening of borders has meant the "return home" of ethnic co-nationals living abroad. In some cases they have lived abroad for only a few years (for example in the case of Poles who migrated in the 1980s under Martial Law) but in other cases they have lived for generations or

¹⁴ From a research project carried out by the students at Charles University Sociology Department and supervised by Claire Wallace in 1993-4.

¹⁵ The Schengen agreement was initially signed by France, Germany and the Benelux countries in 1985 to harmonize the migration of people within these borders. It is founded upon two conventions. First, the borders convention governs a mutual visa policy and abolition of visa requirements for non-EC members resident in one state when visiting another state for a period of not more than three months. Second, in 1990 the Dublin Convention was added to prevent the multiple application of asylum seekers and to avoid no state taking responsibility for asylum seekers. In March 1997 this was extended to seven countries. The consolidation of the Schengen agreements was delayed and disturbed by the opening of the borders to the East which created a new situation in terms of migration. Some countries, such as Great Britain, refused to join the Schengen agreements.

even centuries abroad (for example as is the case of Hungarians in Romania). Hence the idea of "returning to a homeland" is a political construct and it is not always easy for these ethnic co-nationals to assimilate. Identifying such ethnic co-nationals abroad, who are mixed with the population of the host society, is another problem. This is why there are such widely varying estimates as to how many co-nationals there really are in the potential diaspora. However, in each of the Central European countries, ethnic co-nationals are given a privileged migration status since each of these countries carries some concept of a larger national group which lies outside the territory of the state but which should belong with their "Volk" or ethnic nation. This ethnic nation is seen in Central Europe as the basis of the political nation. This is in many ways similar to the German ethnic concept of citizenship and that is why the policies resemble those constructed for the German *Aussiedler*. Thus, these new migration waves have contributed to the revival or construction of new concepts of national identity.

It is evident that the informal sector, both in terms of employment but also in terms of a range of other activities (trading, trafficking etc.) is a very important element in understanding Central Europe as a migration space. The progress in developing laws described by Nygard, Stacher and Laczko is often undermined by the lack of implementation of such laws with the connivance of the citizens.

Finally, there are also important differences between the countries we are considering here. In Poland, the issue of small scale trading with the East has been an important one because this is an important element of Polish foreign trade and a contribution to the economic boom which has taken place there. The free movement of Poles both eastwards and westwards is also an important issue because of the large numbers of Poles who live outside Poland and move back and forth. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the division of these two countries has had important implications for migration because large numbers of each nationality live in the other country. In Hungary, the issue of raising borders to the east and south has been a difficult one because of the large numbers of ethnic Hungarians living outside the border but who travel or migrate to Hungary.

Conclusions

In this overview we have tried to describe the main features in the "new migration space" which constitutes the Central European countries of Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia. In general, the numbers of in-migrants have climbed whilst the numbers of out-migrants has declined. The main groups of people coming into the country from the East and South are migrant workers, small scale traders, asylum seekers and refugees and transit migrants - people trying to get further West. The Central European region is also an attractive location for both legitimate and illegitimate business entrepreneurs and criminal networks. It is evident however, that there is an informal as well as formal side to these activities. The huge number of border crossings and vouchers granted to "tourists" disguises the fact that many are engaged in economic activities such as working, trading, smuggling or trying to cross the border into Western Europe illegally. In this chapter we have brought together the main statistics on migration patterns in Central Europe. However, we should bear in mind that these statistics are often not very accurate, partly because many migrant activities are not recorded or are recorded as something else.

Tensions generated by new forms of migration and traditional ideas and institutions

1. The tension between a mono-cultural ideal and a multi-cultural reality

The countries of Central Europe, along with many of their western European neighbours, perceive themselves as culturally homogenous. The process of ethnic sorting so that territorial boundaries should coincide with the boundaries of the national group has coloured the history of the region beginning with various national revival movements in the nineteenth century and still continues now

with the return of nationalities to their titular homelands. This is encouraged by the practice in every country of giving ethnic migrants (that is people of the same nationality but living outside the borders of the country) privileged access to residence and citizenship. This is the case in Germany with the *Aussiedler* but similar policies are discussed in each of the countries we are considering. It is not surprising therefore, that the countries of Central Europe generally think of themselves as culturally homogenous and do not see themselves as immigration countries. Hence, there are no attempts to officially recognise multi-culturalism.

Indeed, there is to some extent a xenophobic and nationalistic backlash against the idea of multi-cultural societies, although this is not as strong in terms of political movements in the CEEC countries as it has been in Austria and other European countries. Furthermore, these immigrant groups being new and being less settlers than circular migrants, have not really challenged these regimes too much. Nor have they any incentive to organise themselves as groups. Nevertheless, the resistance to the recognition of more than one culture within the state border is a potential source of tension.

2. The tension between the increased ease of travel and increased bureaucratic restrictions

On the one hand borders have become more open; on the other hand they have been partially closed again to certain categories of travellers. There are no longer the physical and political barriers to movement that there were before 1989. There are more crossing points, better roads, better airplane travel, better rail transport. The communications links between the CEEC countries and all parts of the world have expanded enormously. Migration is encouraged by the improved communications between countries including telecommunications and information flows described previously. Migration seems more and more possible for more and more people. However, the bureaucratic hurdles in the form of regulations for asylum seekers, for getting work and residence permits, visas etc. have shown a tendency to become tighter and tighter in each country as time goes on. The freedom of travel is a freedom only for some people.

3. The tension between the increased demand for migrant labour and the increasing controls on migrant workers

There is a demand for migrant workers both at the top end of the labour market in the form of temporary consultants, specialists, language teachers and so on and at the bottom end in the form of people to carry out manual labour and services. At the same time there is increasing political pressure to control the movement of these people in the belief that they take away jobs. In Germany it is often claimed that the one million unemployed could replace the one million guest workers. However, studies of the labour market tend to show that migrant workers are not doing the jobs that could be filled by indigenous workers, partly because of the need for flexibility. Migrant workers doing harvesting and occasional cleaning jobs and even casual work on building sites are not substitutable by indigenous workers unless by indigenous workers who are also in the black economy. This could mean that this tension is resolved by more and more migrants being driven underground with the connivance of employers. These migrants are then vulnerable to various kinds of exploitation, since they are not protected by any regulations and had to live in fear, hiding from the authorities as well as their own "mafias".

4. The increasing temptations of consumer culture alongside falling or low incomes

Consumer culture is pervasive in the European Union as well as in CEEC countries and has also penetrated countries to the East. The consumer society promotes the idea of happiness and fulfilment on the basis of the purchase of consumer goods and therefore creates a constantly unfulfilled desire for those goods. It is based on the idea of continually improving and upgrading ones lifestyle. It is also the source of social differentiation and distinction (Bourdieu, 1984 (Lury, 1996)). The poor quality of consumer goods in Eastern and Central Europe during the communist period created a

desire for Western consumer goods which is now to some extent substituted by local manufacture. However, in order to buy into the consumer society people in CEEC and in Eastern Europe need to find ways to supplement their incomes as well as cheap sources of consumer goods. The markets and bazaars of CEEC and Eastern Europe provide such a source and travelling across borders provides the opportunity to make some extra money. Thus, consumer culture alongside low or sinking incomes encourages migration as people try to fulfil through informal activities desires which they cannot satisfy formally (Sik & Wallace, 1998). However, it tends to encourage temporary migration because the fruits of the consumer culture can better be enjoyed at home where low incomes can stretch further and where a consumer status symbol can have the maximum impact.

5. The tension between the increased integration into the European and the global economy at the same time as newly found statehood

It is ironical that at the very moment that the countries of CEEC found their independence and national integrity, they were also integrated into a new set of supra-national structures. Since 1989 the nation states of Central Europe were able to enjoy their autonomy after years of Soviet domination. However, in the field of migration, as in other fields, their reforms are determined to a great extent by supranational bodies such as the World Bank, the IMF, the European Union and so on. This is evident in the chapters in our book which describe the way in which migration policies have been introduced to a great extent from outside, even contradicting national interests and inclinations. Thus, for example new migration policies are in danger of cutting off the Central European states from their Eastern neighbours (with whom both diplomatic and economic links are important) and from their wider diasporas.

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Policy oriented summary of Central European migration patterns

Migration as a normal phenomenon

Migration has long been a feature of European societies, and East-West economic migration in particular follows a pattern established over some centuries. Large scale migration involving the sudden movement of large numbers is an unusual phenomenon and is usually the product of war, civil war, ethnic conflict and dramatic political repression or expulsion.

Creation of a new migration zone

In this respect, the Central European countries of Poland, Hungary, Czech and Slovak Republics have emerged as a particular migration zone. From being sending countries since many centuries, they now find themselves as receiving countries with migrants coming to them from both their former-Soviet neighbouring lands and also from further afield. This is partly due to their relative economic prosperity and the presence of economies that provide "niches" for new businesses and migrant workers (in spite of high unemployment). It is also due to the fact that they form the borders with the "Schengen" region of the European Union. Hence, these countries have had to rapidly introduce migration policies, often with international assistance and under pressure from the EU, with the promise of enlargement. Freedom to travel is an important element of the kind of societies enjoyed in the West and an aspiration of the liberation struggles and revolutions in East-Central Europe. This should be borne in mind as an important principle when considering EU policies and enlargement. Some of my comments also apply to migration out of these Central European countries, since this is complementary to the migration into them.

Types of migration

In this context we can distinguish a number of different types of migration. Some are desirable and should be encouraged whilst others are less desirable and should be discouraged in terms of developing migration policies:

- a. *Refugees and asylum seekers.* It is necessary to develop harmonised policies for these even though their official numbers are few in the countries we are considering (their unofficial numbers are much higher and they therefore shade into transit migrants).
- b. *Labour migrants.* These offer additional labour power in areas of the economy where there is a labour demand partly due to the immobility and inflexibility of indigenous workers. Increasing the controls on these workers drives more of them underground. They tend to work in the casual labour market which is difficult to control in any case. The recognition and regularisation of migrant work might assist the situation of these workers, including bilateral arrangements with sending countries with regard to health insurance etc.
- c. *Small scale traders.* These bring many assets to the receiving economy as well as providing a survival strategy for large numbers of people in the sending country. There should be some provision for making their entry and exit not excessively cumbersome and in ways which will not encourage additional corruption.
- d. *Transit migrants.* The flows of irregular migrants is clearly a problem which still needs to be tackled and which the opening of borders has encouraged. It should be recognised however, that many of these are in fact refugees and asylum seekers, trying to escape. A range of bilateral agreements (rather than any migration policy) has arisen for sending them back to the last country they came from. How far does this extend? At the moment it seems that the former Soviet countries to the East may become the new "waiting room" for such migrants.
- e. *Criminalisation of migration.* The scope and ingenuity of trafficking organisations has grown, along with attempts to outwit them. Clearly trafficking of drugs, people, women etc. is highly undesirable and should be tackled, but this is perhaps an international problem which extends beyond the region which we are considering.

- f. *Migration of experts and professionals* This has also increased substantially as experts and professionals offering specific kinds of expertise travel both from West to East and from East to West. This exchange should be encouraged and facilitated and would provide one way of filling gaps in the labour market where particular kinds of (for example information technology expertise) are needed.
- g. *Homeland migration or repatriation.* This kind of migration is an important political and emotional subject in Eastern and Central Europe. We need to bear in mind that nearly every country (including EU ones) have a wider Diaspora of extra national compatriots who under present conditions may want to "return home". The reintegration of such people must also be an aspect of migration policies. However creating special categories of migrants can also create an artificial demand for migration .

Temporary not permanent migration

The contemporary patterns of East-West migration (that is following, the end of the Cold War) more often take the form of temporary movements across the borders for economic purposes - either to work, to buy and sell, to learn a language or to establish businesses. Surveys carried out by our institute indicate that this is much the preferred pattern for migration in Eastern and Central Europe. This is encouraged by the disparities in economic circumstances between the countries to the East and the countries to the West, especially those of the European Union. However, our analysis would indicate that this kind of migration will likely continue to be temporary and will even decline as living standards are harmonised. The reasons for this are as follows:

- a. Relatively small distances between destination and sending countries, making commuting possible
- b. Improved and cheaper communications (air, rail, car, bus, telephone, email etc.) making travel and staying in touch with family easier
- c. The welfare state which tends to be organised around the nation state and is regarded as important for contemporary Western and Eastern Europeans. Thus, in contrast to the 19th C patterns of migration, people often remain registered in their home welfare states for purposes of education, pension, health etc.
- d. Widespread and increasing property ownership makes people less inclined to leave permanently.
- e. The development of a household work strategy in ECE which entails one or more members of the family working abroad and supporting a stable family rooted in the national/local economy.
- f. Gendered patterns of migration (men and women having different and independent migration patterns rather than family reunion).
- g. Relative ease of entry and exit (until now) meaning that people are able to go backwards and forwards rather than leaving permanently.
- h. Economic disparities mean that migrants can enjoy a better standard of living by taking their money home with them.
- i. Widespread hope in the future of the region on the part of citizens which means that they still see their future in their own country rather than abroad
- j. Dislike of stigmatisation and discrimination in low paid and undervalued jobs abroad.

It could be argued that this kind of migration has many positive aspects, including the exchange and circulation of cultures, skills and ideas as well as peoples. It could be an important element in integrating the countries of Eastern and Central Europe into the EU. We should encourage rather than discourage this kind of migration.

Nature of the contemporary labour markets

The introduction of new types of labour intensive economic activities in the services sector (tourism, construction, entertainment, domestic work) means a constant demand for low paid, casual and

flexible workers. At the other extreme, the introduction of new kinds of professional employment and the need for certain kinds of expertise, along with the internationalisation of institutions such as NGOs, State services, companies and industries, mean that there is also a demand for highly qualified "experts" of various kinds which are also often only temporarily needed (sometimes paid by the day). This new kind of flexible employment at both ends of the labour market produces a demand for temporary (rather than permanent) migrants.

These patterns are assisted by a strong tradition of an informal labour market along with a tradition of minor corruption and rule bending. Recognising and regularising temporary migration should assist in combating this.

The new Eastern border

Based on our analysis, we would argue that the real problem is not an influx of "millions" of Eastern Europeans from Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia, as some western politicians fear. The numbers of migrants from these countries is likely to be temporary rather than permanent and to reduce rather than to increase as harmonisation continues. However, the contrast between these Central European countries and those further to the East is increasing, which means that policing the Eastern border of the accession countries will be the real problem.

On the other hand, shutting out the temporary migrants from the East causes a number of problems, namely:

- a. worsening the situation of families in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia
- b. destroying some of the economic advantages enjoyed by countries such as Poland from this trade
- c. Creating a new geo-political divide between East and West
- d. Creating a new waiting room for transit migrants
- e. Once again dividing families and cultures which for a short time were able to reintegrate

Avoiding exploitation

The main problem with the informal character of much contemporary migration in Eastern and Central Europe, is its potential for exploitation. Exploitation can take many forms and was widespread amongst the respondents that we interviewed. Hence, interventions should aim to help the situation of these migrants rather than to make life even more difficult for them.

Exploitation can be *economic* in nature as employers fail to pay wages, or agreements for payment are not kept or promised arrangements by the contractor do not appear. This is very likely in a situation of unregulated, informal work. This turned out not to be the case and they found themselves stranded without money to return home. Exploitation can also be *sexual* in the case of trafficking but also women in vulnerable positions being sexually exploited in other ways. Policies aimed at integrating labour markets should aim to avoid the situation where this kind of exploitation can take place.

Xenophobia

It is a paradox of the contemporary era that at the same time as migration has increased, so has the reaction against it. These fears of policy makers and citizens are particularly strong in a situation of economic fragility, emerging statehood, cuts in the welfare state, rising crime and rising unemployment. They are exploited by certain kinds of politicians for their own advantage, so that some of these things are sometimes blamed on immigrants. This is assisted by the fact that most countries in Europe do not see themselves as countries of immigration, even when some of them have received very large numbers of immigrants. Societies in both Eastern and Western Europe need to recognise the reality of migration, the need for migration and the challenges that this poses for the host culture and population. Perhaps there needs to be more publicity about the economic advantages and cultural enrichment that immigrants bring instead of only negative stereotyping.

Issues of citizenship

The rights and benefits as well as duties and obligations which migrants enjoy in their host country is not an issue which is entirely resolved in the European Union and in this respect the accession countries have an even more ambiguous position. Clearly, issues of taxation, welfare rights, pensions and voting are ones which the whole of the European Union needs to move forward on if there is to be a genuine freedom of movement in our common European homeland.