

MIGRATIONS

Nasselenie Review, Volume 38, Number 3, 2020, 393-415

ISSN 0205-0617 (Print); ISSN 2367-9174 (Online)

<http://nasselenie-review.org>; e-mail: nasselenie_review@abv.bg

MIGRATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR BULGARIA

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Abstract: *Relations and dependencies between the economic development and migration processes are the subject of this article, i.e. emigration and immigration, as well as their influence on the demographic development of the Bulgarian population in the last three decades. The ongoing processes in this area are addressed from the point of view of the system approach, migration in the world and the development of free movement of citizens in the EU, within the context of the new migration situation in the world in the recent years. Attention is paid to issues of significant influence on the nowadays migration of the population, the development of economies, demographic processes and professional careers, processes and factors that have not only a direct but also indirect influence on migration and on population and economy, respectively. A special focus in the article is given to the development and interruption of the professional trajectory and the migration of women. Processes and policies that have an indirect influence are also outlined, but in practice they have a significant effect on migration processes and the development of the population and the economy.*

Keywords: migration; economic and demographic development; emigration; immigration; free movement of workers in the EU; migration and professional career; economic; migration and demographic policies.

This article can be cited as follows:

Vladimirova, K. (2020). Migration and Economic Development: Opportunities and Challenges for Bulgaria. *Nasselenie Review*, Volume 38, Number 3, 393-415. ISSN 0205-0617 (Print); ISSN 2367-9174 (Online).

The article is published in Bulgarian in *Nasselenie Review*, Volume 37, Number 3, 2019, pp. 431-456.

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Submitted – March 2020

Revised – May 2020

Published – November 2020

The author has read and approved the final manuscript

INTRODUCTION

The development of the economy, its dynamics, structure and efficiency play an important role for the migration movements of the population, both within each country and its settlements and between countries and continents in the world. The main causes highlighted in numerous studies of migration since ancient times have been nutrition, security, better living or economic development, employment and income. Along with them are the created new opportunities for professional development and career, higher pay and higher social security, better living and working conditions, the purpose of all of these being the well-being of the family and children. This is true for the majority of contemporary migration both worldwide and across Bulgaria, i.e. work, income, security, as well as opportunities for professional development, better education and a future for children. Economic development, social security, availability of suitable work and career opportunities, prospects and opportunities for a better life for children are among the decisive factors in migration around the world. These are also some of the decisive factors influencing immigrants' decisions in the sense of departure or stay in the country, including EU citizens, specialists and skilled workers from other developed countries, countries from Eastern Europe such as Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Moldova, and from Far East Asia such as China, Vietnam and migrants and refugees from the Middle Asia and Africa, all of them seeking greater security of life for their children and other family members.

MIGRATION MOVEMENTS IN THE LAST THREE DECADES IN EUROPE: CHANGE IN POLITICAL REGIMES AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

The last decade of the last century marked the beginning of significant historical changes all over the world, and especially in Eastern Europe. The post-war political division of Europe has changed. The new political and economic choice of the Eastern European countries was related to the restoration of population movements between the countries of Western and Eastern Europe, with the possibility for travels and tourism and for other purposes such as work, longer residence, use of foreign better established social and educational systems, etc.

The new states and their governments declared their chosen paths to democratically elect political systems, a market economy and economic and political integration into the European Union.

The significant differences between the two groups of countries, mainly related to differences in living standards, pay, security, etc., provoked intense and large-scale movements of working-age population from east to west across Europe and Asia, and from south to north in the case of the Americas and Africa, etc. Among other reasons, this process has a bearing to the onset of economic crises in most Eastern European countries, provoked by processes of changing political systems and property, the loss of traditional markets and the subsequent high unemployment among working-age population, poverty and insecurity, which provoked significant external emigration

for the young people in good working capacity. These key factors for high emigration from Eastern European countries to Western European countries, the United States, South Africa, Australia and others were, among other reasons, linked to the desire for a better and higher education and a professional career, but were also a response to decades of limited travel opportunities, training and work in Western European countries. Finally yet importantly, what strongly attracted such people were the relatively profuse social policies of a number of Western European countries.

During the last three decades, Bulgarian migration has been part of contemporary global migration processes, and in particular from Eastern to Western Europe. In the case of Bulgaria, the migration over these three decades has been mainly emigration, i.e. people have been leaving the country and looking for employment and an opportunity to start a new life and work in other countries. Immigration to Bulgaria has begun to increase in recent years, with virtually a significant proportion of returning emigrants.

The assessment of the magnitude and structure of external migration needs to be made taking into account several key points. First, as is commonly known, in order to be considered a migrant, either an emigrant or an immigrant, he/she must have spent in the target nation at least one year since leaving, and respectively, since he/she has settled in in that other nation. Once this period has expired, the emigrant, if he/she returns to his country, will have the status of an immigrant, i.e. they will be part of the total number of people entering the country from other countries. It is only when examining the aggregate of immigrants by origin, nationality or citizenship that it is established that these immigrants include Bulgarian immigrants, too. Data show that the number of these has been increasing over the last few years and therefore the difference between emigrants and immigrants has experienced a process of shrinking. What deserves to be a point of focus is their demographic and professional characteristics, and the reasons for their return. It can be argued that we do not have enough research or that they remain out of the subject of public attention, including decision-makers, immigrants in the country, and so on, and the Bulgarian ones.

THE HIGH MIGRATION RATE OF THE POPULATION OF BULGARIA IN THE 1990's AS A RESULT OF PLUNGING ECONOMY AND LONG-LASTING AND INEFFICIENT REFORMS, LOOKING FOR A BETTER LIVING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT

After 1989, the emigration from Bulgaria was significant, and after joining the European Union (EU) it was transformed into internal mobility and employment became legal, with employment contracts and insurance. Over the first ten years of the period defined as transitional between the two political systems or over the years of the first census during this period, i.e. the end of 1992 (04 December) to 01/03/2011 the population of the country decreased by a little more than half a million, i.e. from 8,487,312 it plunged to 7,928,411. This is the period after the largest emigration 1989–1992 period, i.e. the great emigration to Turkey, which can be defined as political, and may be defined as part of actions on the way of chang-