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CENTRE FOR EASTERN STUDIES

OSRODEK STUDIÓW WSCHODNICH im. Marka Karpia

Forecasting migration between the EU/V4 and Eastern Europe. Main project's results

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June 2014

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Forecasting migration between the EU, V4 and Eastern Europe: impact of visa abolition

- **Financed by:** International Visegrad Fund, www.visegradfund.org
- **Co-financed by:** Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW), International Renaissance Foundation
- **Implemented by:** Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)
- **Project's partners:** Geographic Migration Centre of Faculty of Science, Charles University (Prague), Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (Bratislava), Hungarian Institute of International Affairs (Budapest), Centre of Migration Research Foundation (Warsaw), Institute for Economic Research and Political Consulting (Kyiv), Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies (Minsk), Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) „Viitorul” (Chisinau).

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Forecasting migration between the EU, V4 and Eastern Europe: impact of visa abolition

- **www:** <http://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/forecasting-migration-between-eu-v4-and-eastern-europe-impact-visa-abolition>
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Forecasting migration between the EU, V4 and Eastern Europe: impact of visa abolition. Final Report



Forecasting migration between the EU, V4 and Eastern Europe: impact of visa abolition

- **Main research areas, questions:**
- **Visegrad Group growing attractiveness** for the Eastern European migrants but still 'defeated' by the old EU MS in terms of wages
- **Continued emigration from Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus** but the role of V4 destination so far has been studied rather marginally
- **The intra-state political, social and cultural relations between V4 countries and their Eastern neighbours remain strong;** how they influence migration?
- The role **of Russia** in migration from Eastern Europe. Are there any changes?
- And finally, **what existence of short-term visas (for travel up to 90 days) means for migration?** What could be the consequences of visa liberalisation for citizens of Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus in terms of their migration to the EU/V4?

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- **Research methods:**
- Critical examination of existing data and literature; desk research
- **Delphi survey on migration trends between EU/V4 and Eastern Europe** (expert panel research) among around 120 migration experts with different professional backgrounds (governmental representatives, researchers, NGO workers, and representatives of international organisations in seven states)

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- **Research methods 2:**
- **Econometric model** based on demographic and economic data (human capital approach) to obtain projections for the future development of migrant stocks from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in the EU
- A study that examined the **previous waves of visa liberalisation between the EU MS and their neighbours** and then attempted to extrapolate these results for Eastern Europe

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- **Defintion caveatas and project's assumptions:**
- Focus on **Visegrad versus Eastern European perspective**; it was therefore impossible to distinguish migration inflows inside the V4 from those inside the EU
- We understand **Eastern Europe as Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova (without Russia)**. In some cases, those three states may be referred to in the text as EaP (Eastern Partnership) states, in the understanding that this term does not encompass the Southern Caucasus



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- **Defintion caveatas and project's assumptions:**
- **Forecasts specify what may happen but they do not necessarily have to come true;** The impact of protracted political crises (like Ukrainian one) on migration patterns is in particular difficult to forecast.
- We present **the most reliable qualitative and quantitative forecasts of future migration developments between V4/EU and Eastern European countries** based on present knowledge and some demographic, economic and institutional projections for the future



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- **Defintion caveatas and project's assumptions :**
- Severe **statistical shortcomings**; some time key paraments are missing, not harmonised data sets
- Existence of non-registered **irregular migration**
- Absence of labour-market needs monitoring in V4 states and comprehensive reaserch on the real 'loses' from Eastern European emigration



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- **Main results:**
- Current Eastern European migrant stock in the EU may be assessed at around **1 million individuals** in the case of Ukrainian nationals, **100,000-150,000 individuals** in the case of Belarusian nationals and around **200,000-300,000** in the case of Moldovan nationals.
- The estimated numbers in Visegrad states are smaller: around **250,000-300,000 individuals** in total including Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan nationals
- (irregular migration taken into account only partially).



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- **Main results:**
- **Russia remains** the primary destination for Ukrainian, Belarusian (over 90%) and Moldovan migrants. The total number of migrants from those three states in Russia (**around 2.0-2.5 million individuals**) is higher than in the EU as a whole.
- Russia probably has higher proportion of irregular migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in the overall stock of migrants from those states than does the EU.
- In the case of Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan nationals in the Visegrad states, it can be estimated, however very roughly, that irregular migrants account for between **20% and 40%**

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- **Main results:**

- Two out of four V4 states are key destination countries for Eastern European migrants, **Poland and Czechia**. Poland appears to be the most important destination state in the EU for both Ukrainian and Belarusian migrants.
- The role of Czechia in the case of Ukrainian nationals is also of the highest significance, though it has lost its previous major position due to the global economic crisis.
- **Hungary** attracts only Ukrainian nationals of Hungarian origin (70,000 citizenships granted to Ukr nationals in 2011-2014), while **Slovakia** receives insignificant numbers of Eastern European migrants.

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- **Main results:**

- **No massive inflow of labour migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova to the EU should be expected after the visa regime for short-term travel for up to 90 days is abolished.**
- **Probable:** moderate growth in inflows of labour migrants to V4 and the EU, more long-term settlement migration, regularisation of already present migrants, family reunification, and possible growth in undeclared employment



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- **Main results:**
- Projections based on the econometric model point to a **circa 50,000 increase in the number of Belarusians and Moldovans (counted separately) and around a 200,000-300,000 increase in the number of Ukrainian residents in the EU** in a year perspective following the introduction of free movement of people (proxy for visa liberalisation)



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- **Main results:**
- Visa liberalisation has had little or no effect on the number of first-time residence permits, or on immigration flows from Central Europe and Western Balkans to EU MS.
- In case of visa liberalisation for Western Balkans in 2009-2010 the **overall number of residence permits issued to nationals of these countries decreased rather than increased**; the analysis of the available immigration flow data showed declining trends



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- **Main results:**

- When visa liberalisation occurred (Western Balkans), **the growth of the number of residents from these countries in EU MS did not accelerate – in fact it slowed down.**
- The only clearly positive relationship between visa liberalisation and migration was shown in the areas of **asylum and, to a smaller degree, irregular stay.**
- If the effects of abolishing visa requirements were the same as in earlier cases, then **we could expect the number of residence permits issued to nationals of these countries and overall immigration flows towards the EU to decrease, the number of nationals of these countries living in the EU to increase more slowly than before, and the number of asylum seekers to rise**



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- **Main results:**

- **In the medium-term perspective,** even if EU MS decide to lift the restrictions on access to their labour market, **a rather moderate rise in the number of Eastern European migrants in the V4 and EU may occur. Only in the case of Ukraine,** particularly if it is accompanied by severe economic crisis in the country, may a higher increase be expected
- If the political unrest in Ukraine continues and is accompanied by economic crisis, **growth in migration flows from Ukraine may be expected. In particular, circular migration may increase, but also more Ukrainians may decide on settlement migration (family reunifications, more migration for educational purposes).**

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- **Main results:**

- Neither public opinion nor the politicians in both the Visegrad states and Eastern Europe, are in favour of continuous migration from Eastern Europe to V4/EU. While V4 states do not want to face any non-EU migration or any changes within their rather homogenous societies, Eastern European states are preoccupied with the perception of their fellow labour migrants as victims of exploitation and trafficking.
- Nevertheless, **the majority of interviewed Delhi experts from all seven researched states called for greater liberalisation of V4/EU migration and visa policies, and improvements in migrants rights and job opportunities in the V4 labour markets.**

Thank you for your attention

Marta Jaroszewicz

June 2014