

THE INTEGRATION OF EASTERN EUROPEAN MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE BRITISH LABOUR MARKET

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Key UK policies affecting migration

1990s: Highly Skilled Workers Programme (latest version 2006)

UK immigration category for entry to the UK for successful people with sought-after skills, obtaining points for qualifications, experience, age, previous earnings. It is in some ways similar to the skilled migration programs for entry to Australia and Canada.

1999 Immigration and Asylum Act
Developed by New Labour, this act significantly transformed UK asylum regime. It governs and restricts the entry of asylum seekers. Fiercely criticised on several grounds.

Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme
Scheme, which allows seasonal agricultural workers from other countries to come and work in the UK for a limited period of time, particularly during the planting and harvesting seasons.

2002 White Paper "Secure Borders, Safe Haven"
Focus on integration in diverse Britain, recognition that migration brings "huge benefits" (p.9). The paper has "pro-migration" attitude, helps speeding up the process of citizenship, introduced new route to UK employment through "Highly Skilled Migrant Programme".

Sector Based Schemes
(Currently only applies to Romania and Bulgaria)
The sectors based scheme only covers the Food Manufacturing Industry.

2004 Worker Registration Scheme
Specifically designed for Central and Eastern European nationals who joined EU in 2004 and were obliged to register with Home Office. This scheme allowed government to see development in the Labour Market and how much it has changed since the enlargement.

2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act
Has made provision about nationality and immigration, developed strategies in connection with international traffic in prostitution, asylums and others.

2005-2010 Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill
Five-year strategy on immigration and asylum, includes measures on illegal working, appeals and border agencies' information.

2005-2010 Controlling Our Borders: Making Migration Work for Britain
Building upon already successful policies and papers and further developing the approach to immigration and its restrictions; five-year plan.

2004-2008 Confident Communities in a Secure Britain
Home Office's strategic plan 2004-08 to create united vision of enforcement services (the police, prison, immigration and probation) and to promote active citizenship and cohesive communities

Migration in context

Trends in EU migration

- migration is relatively new trend in Europe
- mass emigration from Europe in 19th century (over 50 mil people)
- Europe became a destination for migrants after 1950s (post-war labour recruitment needs, colonial past) *
- Southern countries became "receiving" countries during the 1990s and Central and Eastern Europe are currently both source and origin of migrants

Types of migration

- labour migration, including short- and long-term migrants, seasonal workers and students
- family-linked migration (accompanying family members and family unification)
- asylum seekers
- illegal migrants

Key drivers of migration flows

- assumption that migrants try to maximise the net gains from migration
- the higher is the wage in the destination country and the lower the source country wage, the more likely is an individual to migrate
- recent trends show that migration decisions are taken in a household context rather than individual*

* European Economy: Labour Migration Patterns in Europe: Recent Trends, Future Challenges, 2006



Brief facts about Eastern European migrants: Qualitative Method

Arrival

8 out of 9 respondents arrived after the enlargement in May 2004. Main reason for coming in the UK seemed to be predominantly earning money and, as a secondary outcome, learning the language. Interestingly no one mentioned finding out about culture or traveling.

The intended time of stay was generally between 6-12 months and generally have prolonged. 4 interviewees are planning to either go back to the home country or relocate to another country, 5 interviewees expressed the wish to stay here "forever".

The change in their minds was generally explained through "the good standard of life here" or through "the need to keep learning English".

Half of respondents arrived because they "knew someone in the UK" and another half arrived with their friends and/or boyfriends/girlfriends. This seems to be an important fact for future integration as majority of the sample relied on those people to help them find a job and accommodation.

"I'd never planned to go to England but I split up with boyfriend and my friend, married to an English guy, told me: "Come to England, you'll see new country, meet new people, improve your English and it will change your life"

"Sometimes it's difficult. You're going somewhere and English people judge you (Oh you're Polish!). But I like it here, I feel like at home."

Most people who come from Poland come without accommodation or job so it's difficult for them to register anywhere. They usually go through agency but that takes money. People just trust that they will find it all here."

Integration

No one from the sample had known about UK public services before they arrived. The majority of sample has agreed that there isn't enough information available in appropriate form and language to educate incoming workers. Therefore information is mostly collected through friends and outside agencies, leaving large gap for error or misuse.

The difficulties in accessing the available information were partly solved by using Internet provided by public libraries as free. This service was rated as "very useful" by 4 respondents.

Language is very much felt as a barrier, especially for new workers, whose knowledge of English is poor or very poor. This was particularly difficult during telephone conversations when registering for the National Insurance number.

"I live better life in England cleaning English houses than as Master without work in Poland"

Labour Market Experience

Sectors in which respondents' were employed varied from food industry, through manufacturing to office jobs; generally lower graded jobs.

Disappointment with Labour Market experience in respondents' home country played a key role in choosing the UK as their destination, where jobs are perceived to be "easily found".

Language skills were cited as the key reason for not applying for a job, which would be adequate to respondent's knowledge and skills. However once higher graded job is found, respondent's language skills improved dramatically.

2 respondents mentioned some work-related discrimination, based on either their nationality or gender. Majority of respondents haven't experienced any difficulties and were mainly satisfied with their work environment and work colleagues.

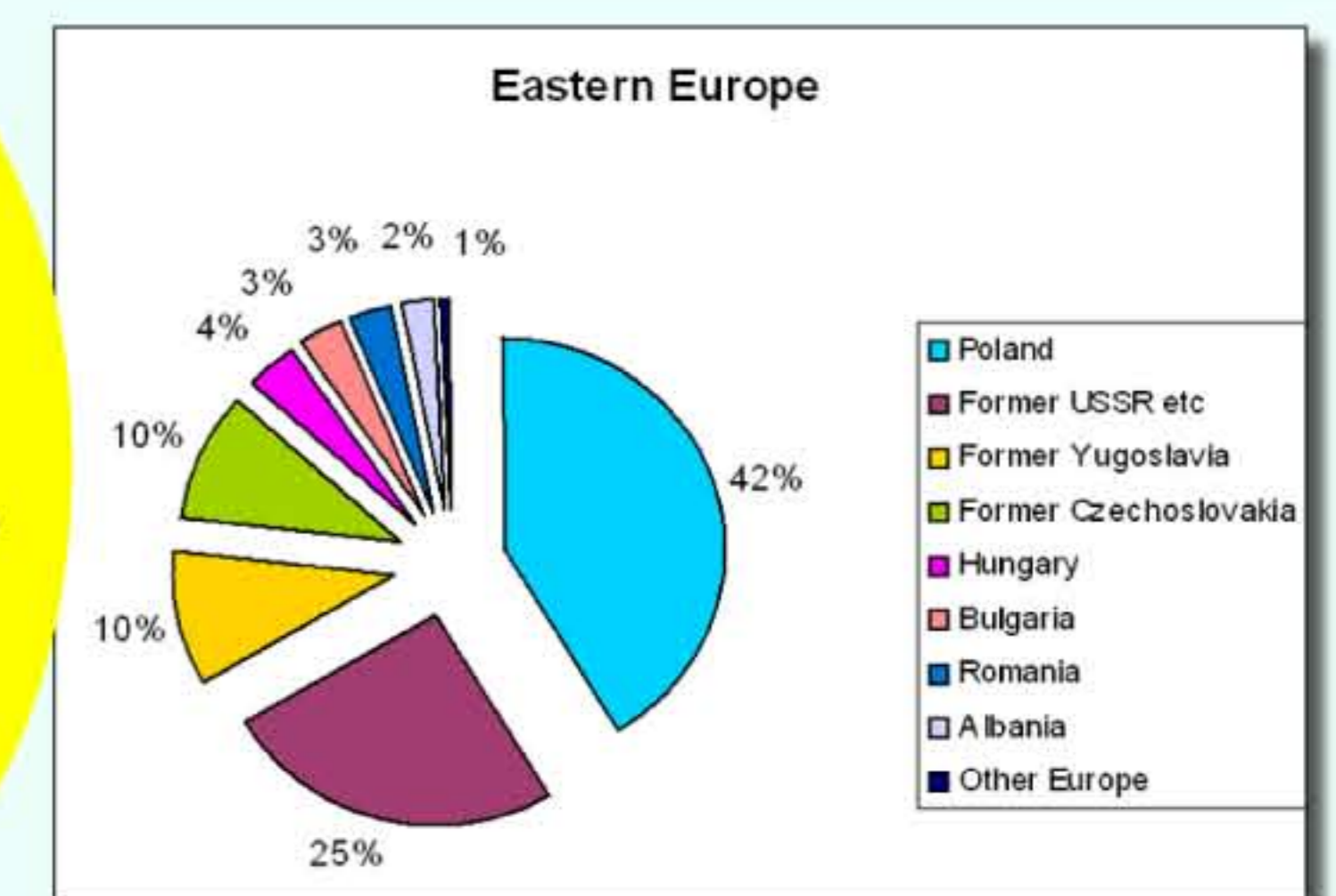
Brief facts about Eastern European nationalities in the UK: Quantitative Method

Total population in the UK

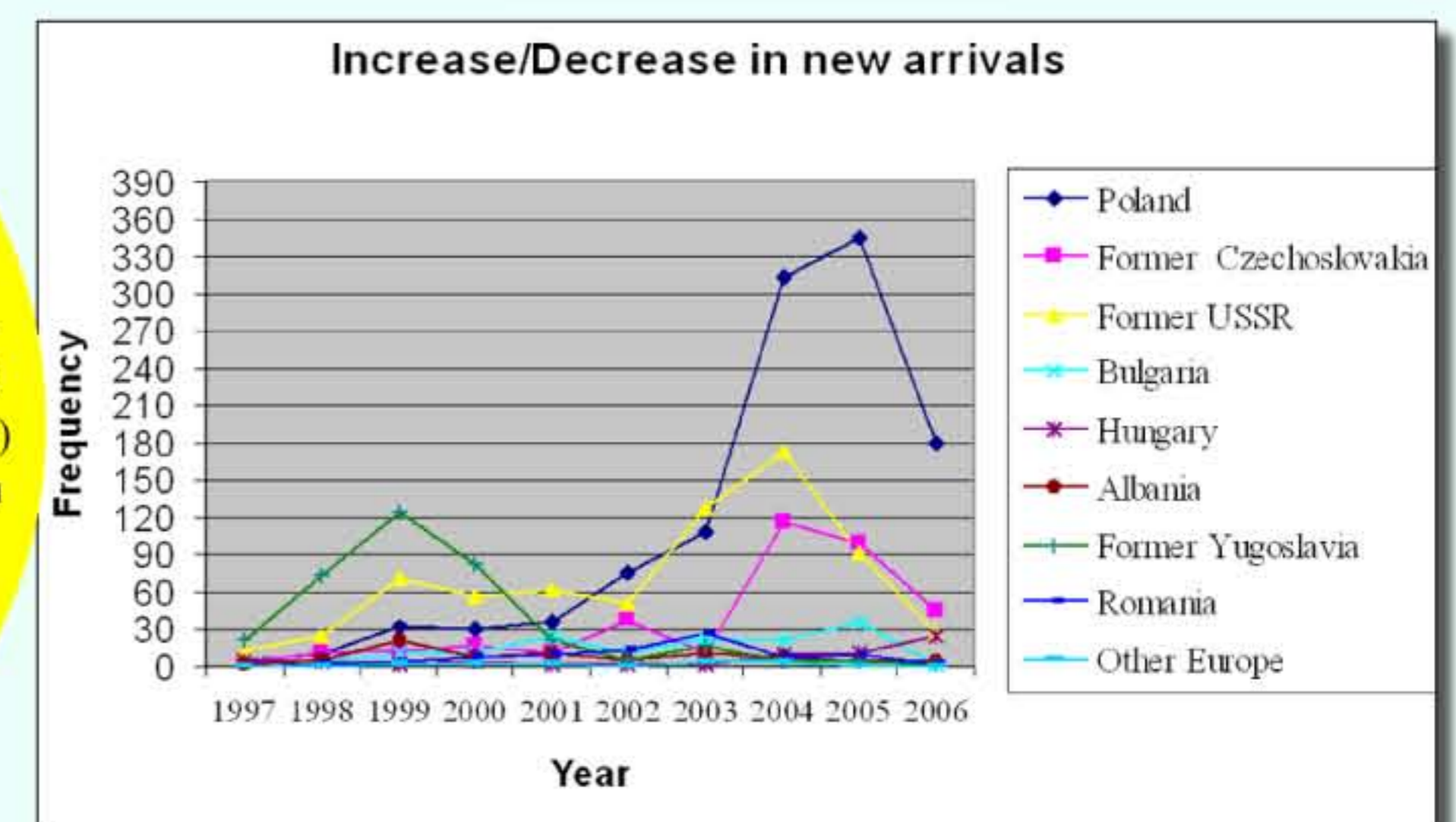
	Frequency	Percent
Western Europe	8 238	2,2
Central and Eastern Europe	2 696	0,7
Black Caribbean	1 532	0,4
Central and South America	537	0,1
Black Africa	5 796	1,5
South Asia & Middle East	6 971	1,9
Asia	3 200	0,9
Rest of the World	9	0,0
UK	334 281	89,1
Australia	654	0,2
New Zealand	324	0,1
Other Commonwealth	69	0,0
Canada	458	0,1
USA	953	0,3
No answer	75	0,0
Does not apply	9 591	2,6
Total	375 384	100,0

Eastern European Nationalities make up only 0,7% of the total UK population, compared to 1,9% of South Asia & Middle East or 1,5% of Black Africa nationalities.

Detailed percentage of Eastern European Nationalities



Year of arrival in the UK



There has been an increase in a number of Eastern Europeans in the UK after the EU enlargement in May 2004. However notice dramatic drop in 2006. In 2004 only 3 countries (UK, Ireland and Sweden) decided not to apply restrictions on access to their labour markets by EU 8 nationals, however during 2006 other countries have lifted the restrictions.

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
16-24	1 312	1 384	2 696

According to the LFS statistics it seems that there is an equal number of men and women, aged between 26-45 and mainly employed in elementary or machine operative jobs.

	Poland	Former Czechoslovakia	Former Yugoslavia	Romania	Hungary	Bulgaria	Albania
1 Managers and Senior Officials	25	2	16	3	0	4	3
2 Professional occupations	49	7	1	6	4	4	0
3 Associate Professional and Technical	27	10	11	2	3	11	0
4 Administrative and Secretarial	28	18	1	5	3	11	1
5 Skilled Trades Occupations	193	18	18	21	1	41	2
6 Personal Service Occupations	64	31	1	8	11	14	1
7 Sales and Customer Service Occupations	39	5	5	0	2	8	1
8 Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	114	48	23	4	13	2	2
9 Elementary Occupations	331	94	37	18	15	13	5

Concluding points

- Increased number of migrants who arrived after 2004 had dropped after 2006 as a consequence of opening other EU labour markets
- Migrants are predominantly working age (26-45), employed in low-skilled and low-wage jobs
- Number of migrants come to the UK with an idea of "golden dream", i.e. well paid job, easy living however they are often disappointed
- Lack of language and lack of information in accessible form are the main barriers in accessing the public services properly (e.g. registering with Home Office)
- The above problem make migrants prone to be vulnerable to agencies who can misuse their trust in finding them a job and/or accommodation
- Therefore many migrants rely on friends' advices and help, which are often unreliable and ineffective
- Respondents in low-skilled jobs quoted language skills as the key reason for not applying for better job, however once they had applied, their language skills and social status improved dramatically