

POLAND'S MIGRATION PROBLEMS: A POST-COMMUNIST LEGACY

F.W. Carter*

Abstract

Poland's geographical location and the fall of communism has turned the country into a significant area for would-be migrants. This has changed the once predominant character of Poland as a "sending" migrant country into a "sending" and "receiving" one. The extra burden of additional temporary or permanent migrants from neighboring East and Central European states is, together with the expanding number of asylum seekers, placing further strains on the country's economy. It also has changed the demographic structure of the nation-state as well as the social and economic (trade) structure and traffic patterns.

Key words: migrants, migrant country, Central European states, asylum seekers, country's economy, demographic structure.

PROBLEM MIGRACIJ NA POLJSKEM: POSTKOMUNISTIČNA ZAPUŠČINA

Izvilleček

Geografski položaj Poljske in razpad komunističnega družbenega sistema postavlja državo oziroma območje v središče migracijskih tokov. Dodobra je spremenjen značaj dežele kot take: prevladujoči značaj Poljske kot emigracijske dežele je nadomestil značaj najbolj značilne migracijske in obenem emigracijske države nekdanjega socialističnega Vzhoda. Obremenitve, ki izhajajo iz začasnih in izseljenskih migracijskih tokov prebivalcev sosednjih držav Srednje Evrope, zaustavljajo ob naraščajočem številu azilantov ekonomske in socialne reforme. Podobno so migracije že spremenile demografsko podobo poprej pretežno monostrukturne nacije, pa tudi socialne in ekonomske poteze ter prometne in blagovne tokove čez državno ozemlje.

Ključne besede: migrant, migracijska dežela, države Srednje Evrope, azilant, državno gospodarstvo, demografska sestava.

Mass migration in Europe and its implications for both the eastern and western parts of the continent has been brought more sharply into focus with the demise of communist rule. [1] This is a particularly contentious issue in Poland at present, with most of its border lying adjacent to former communist states. Poland's location is

* Prof., London University, Velika Britanija.

particularly significant given the events in Europe over the past three years, and its strategic position has become an intense contact-point between Western Europe and the reforming countries of the East.

Motivation for migration from and through Poland have been enhanced by two factors; first, until recently the fairly relaxed border controls between Poland and Germany/Sweden have encouraged eastern migrants to cross the country in search of a better life and standard of living in western Europe. Secondly, in the past all Polish efforts under the former Soviet Union were centred on control of its western/northern borders from fear of attack. There has remained little organized policy regarding its southern and particularly eastern borders, where entry procedures have remained rather lax, (no visa requirements for citizens of former Soviet bloc countries) allowing easier access to enter Poland. Moreover, the duty of border control in the past has been split between the army and customs officials, allowing for the development of a rather chaotic situation, which has proved advantageous for would-be migrants.

Early intimation of the pending flood

One of the major principles of the Helsinki Accords, confirmed the right of people to leave and return to their country. With the introduction of **glasnost** several eastern bloc countries, including the former Soviet Union, Hungary and Poland, provided opportunities for freer travel outside their borders, a phenomenon which has increased sharply with the demise of communism. Easier emigration policies led to notable numbers of migrants leaving the former Soviet bloc seeking permanent and temporary entry into the west. This phenomenon became increasingly noticeable in the late 1980s. The largest flow of emigrants came from Poland, because of a combination there of an economic crisis and a relaxation of travel restrictions. (Table 1.).

For example, in 1988, 169,000 Poles moved to West Germany, nearly triple the 1987 total. Similarly, the number of immigrants to West Germany from the former Soviet Union also tripled in 1988 to 48,000, many claiming German origin, with some travelling in transit across Poland. [2] Even at this time it was becoming apparent that ethnic and nationality tensions, for long a cause of social and political dissension, were to play an ever increasing role in generating migration movement. Future migration activity from the East however, would depend on the course of liberalization in individual countries and its influence on emigration policies. No less significant would be the policies adopted by Western countries in response to such movements.

The early years of the 1990s were to bear witness to these beliefs, and reveal initial signs of Poland's transit role in this migration process. West Germany's booming economy and the disruptions in Eastern Europe were together turning it into a major migration sanctuary. According to West German figures released in January 1990, 842,227 'Aussiedlers' arrived there in 1989, of which 85 % were ethnic Germans; of

the rest nearly half (i.e. 7%) were from East Europe. Of the 377,505 non-DDR German refugees who arrived from elsewhere, two-thirds (250,340) came in from Poland, disillusioned with their low standard of living, yet many unable to speak the German language. After them the largest contingent was from the Soviet Union (98,134), twice the previous year's total, as was the case with the 23,387 refugees from Rumania [3]; in the period 1991–1993, 19,000 inhabitants from former Yugoslavia travelled through Poland, but only 100 requested a Polish passport for asylum. Most of them were richer Yugoslavs trying to avoid the conflict in their country. It is evident from these figures that many were using Poland as a transit state, a harbinger of future trends.

Table 1: Legal Border Crossings of Polish Citizens and Foreigners 1980–1992. (in '000s)

Year	Total	Legal Border Crossing			
		Polish Citizens		Foreign Citizens	
		From Poland	To Poland	To Poland	From Poland
1980	31459.4	8920.6	8636.2	7029.6	9873.0
1985	19295.8	6395.8	6185.9	3410.1	3304.0
1986	22090.1	7326.3	7197.7	3842.7	3723.4
1987	26093.4	8508.5	8267.3	4755.6	4562.0
1988	31598.2	9902.4	9364.5	6209.7	6121.6
1989	54085.8	19323.2	18541.7	8232.6	7988.3
1990	79307.8	22131.2	21116.8	18210.8	17849.0
1991	113920.3	20754.4	20213.1	36845.8	36107.0
1992	154063.8	29267.5	27906.2	49014.0	47875.1

Source: Turystyka i Wypoczynek w 1992 r., (G.U.S.), Warszawa, 1993, Table I (23), p. 155.

The continuing migration of people to West Germany, largely from Poland, the former Soviet Union and Romania, scarcely showed signs of slowing down, with 99,203 arriving there in the first three months of 1990. Thus in less than 15 months nearly a million refugees had entered West Germany, and the inevitable social problems this entailed forced its government to try and block entry. [4] Contrary to the situation prevailing in the former Soviet Union and Romania, economic emigration was generally accepted as the main cause in Poland. [5] Ironically, following German unification in October 1990, many former East Germans armed with Deutsch Marks, began enjoying shopping trips across the River Oder border in Poland; they avoided

state shops usually going to open markets in towns like Slubice (the Polish half of Frankfurt-an-der-Oder), the Poles allowing former East German citizens across without visas. [6]

Clearly towards the end of 1990 the early stage of migration from and through Poland was coming to an end. It was apparent that the movement of people from Eastern to Western Europe, as well as within Eastern Europe itself, had dramatically increased since the late 1980s. Part of the answer lay in the greater liberalization process in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, together with growing ethnic conflict, which in turn stimulated increased East–West migration motivated by socio-political and economic factors. Removal of border restrictions encouraged tourist and business travel, while shopping expeditions outside one's own country were becoming endemic. Whereas Western Europe viewed as inevitable the steady flow of illegal migrants and asylum seekers from the East, any increase in numbers would place receiving western countries under greater pressure, although many of them over several decades had pleaded for people from the East to have more freedom to migrate. The more far-sighted observers were even suggesting a greater need for international cooperation through information dissemination, research programmes, technical assistance and coordinated endeavour, [7] to alleviate potential problems arising from future migratory movements, — a lesson Poland was not to learn in the immediate future.

From flow to a flood.

Towards the end of 1990 the rapid dislocation of the Soviet Union was under way, a year after the collapse of communism. Queues — that quintessential symbol of the Soviet system — were getting longer, not only for the basics of life, but also for visas and tickets to the West. It was becoming apparent that under the onus of obsolescence, increasing indebtedness and chaos, most of the East European economies were suffering from the unequivocal collapse of the Soviet economic system.

Poland perhaps fared better than many of its counterparts. At the beginning of 1990 the zloty was made partly convertible as part of the introduction of a new economic reform programme. In support of this, the Polish Stabilization Fund of \$1 billion was set up by Western governments to bolster foreign exchange reserves. Moreover, thanks to the combined efforts of the Polish government and international community, the country signed (along with Czechoslovakia and Hungary) a co-operation agreement with EFTA. The point is that for its eastern neighbours, Poland was now perceived as a relatively prosperous destination, where there were no food shortages, cars and buses still ran, and homes were heated. In contrast, the Poles themselves saw the situation differently, as expressed by around 45,000 applications for United States visas — a country with a large Polish diaspora. [8]

There may also have been some apprehension in Polish minds about the potential Soviet mass movement (the Germans call it 'Völkerwanderung') of peoples who would pass through their country en route to the West, overshadowing numbers from their own and other East European countries heading in the same direction. By December 1989 there were already nearly three million Soviet citizens who had visited Poland that year as 'tourists' or traders, together with some 19,000 Romanians and a few thousand Bulgarians. In 1990 there was a considerable growth in the number of foreign visitors to Poland, [9] largely from Czechoslovakia (short stay/shopping trips) and the former Soviet Union. Soviet visitors had risen to 4.3 million and were predicted to reach 6.5–7.5 million by the end of 1991. This created some alarm in Poland and contingency plans were set up for converting former Soviet army barracks into refugee centres. In November 1990, border agreements were sought by the Poles with the Belorussian and Ukrainian republics; only the Ukraine complied. Both republics contained thousands of Poles who were forced to accept Soviet citizenship when borders were realigned after World War II. A special office was established in the Polish Ministry of Interior to cope with the expected flood of Soviet refugees crossing the River Bug and other sections of the poorly patrolled Soviet-Polish frontier. In addition 325,000 Romanian and about 100,000 Bulgarian visitors also entered the country.

Perhaps most striking generally was the nearly fourfold increase of visitors to Poland, (from 22 to 79 million), between 1986 and 1990. (Table 1.) In reality, as some estimates in Poland have proved, many of these 'visitors' were not authentic tourists. A considerable number of Soviet and East European visitors were sham tourists, involved in dubious resale operations, unofficial employment, organized begging, seeking a Polish marriage partner, employed in seasonal labour, or in pursuit of asylum. This latter phenomenon was a completely new factor for the Polish authorities in 1990. Paradoxically, in the past most of them would theoretically have had the right to claim asylum on political grounds; as their original countries are now democratically free, they should no longer have this right. However, since there are strict immigration restrictions on entry to Western Europe, the asylum clause remains the only card to play to achieve successful immigration. [10] In 1990 there were about 800 applications from residents of other Soviet and East European states, along with about 1000 from Africa and Asia. Most of the latter group were hoping to use asylum in Poland as a means of obtaining access to a west European country. Many asylum seekers entered Poland either illegally, or through having a false passport; others were returned to Poland (as the last transit country) whilst trying, without a valid visa, to enter some west European country, often Sweden.

Many of the eastern refugees for whom Poland is only a transit country en route to the west, fail to comply with the law of the country. They choose to avoid state registration and try to make an unlawful crossing of Polish territory en route to the West. Most aim for Germany; in 1990, over 300 foreign citizens were caught trying to illegally traverse the River Neisse which forms the southern part of the Polish-

-German border. [11] No wonder that is being called the Rio Grande of Europe after its counterpart along the U.S./Mexico frontier. Of those apprehended, 70 % were from other east European countries including 173 (82 %) from Romania. Another fifth came from Pakistan (34) and Ethiopia (28). A large proportion of the more than 450,000 asylum seekers who entered Germany in 1992 came in illegally over this "green frontier". Between January and November 1992, German border guards from Görlitz caught 3168 people illegally crossing the river, but it is estimated that this represents only about a quarter of those who managed to get over to Germany from Poland. [12] More recent data suggests some decline in the number of illegal migrants trying to cross the Polish-German border; in February, 1993 there were 3110 people, but by June this had dropped to only 1650. [13] Sweden was much less significant as a destination. Even so, already in 1989-90, the Swedish government returned several hundred illegal asylum seekers from Third World (mainly African) countries back to Poland, their last exit country. On arrival at the Baltic port of Swinoujscie (north of Szczecin), the Polish Red Cross and local authorities cared for them, supported by social benefit funds.

Immigration to Poland for permanent residence provided only a fraction of migration movements for the country in general. They number about 2500-5000 persons annually, and according to residence card data a total of about 20,000 foreigners had obtained such permission by 31.12.1993, mostly by people from the Soviet Union. Soviet Jews however used Poland more as a transit country en route to Israel, or the United States, together with Armenians seeking to be reunited with their families in the West.

Visitors from Germany totalled 9.1 million in 1990, including some families of Soviet troops stationed in the former D.D.R. Most usually came for a short period of time (shopping), often for just a few hours. In contrast, by 1990 there were then hundreds of thousands of Poles living illegally in Germany.

Each day during the summer of 1991 it was reported that hundreds of Romanians, many of them gypsies, were boarding trains bound for Poland. Some jumped tracks in Czechoslovakia to try illegally crossing the Austrian or German frontiers (a one in ten success rate), but the rest stayed on to face possible arrest by German or Polish frontier guards. Up to this time Poland had not sent a single refugee back home, although mounting pressure for them to do so was growing daily. [14] For example, during the first half of 1991, the number of unsuccessful escapes from Poland to Germany increased to 3409, but it has been suggested that this was less than half of all attempted cases.

By the end of 1991 over two million people were registered as unemployed in Poland. Even so, the Polish economy was proving attractive for some foreign workers from countries with a lower standard of living. This in itself was something of a curiosity for the Polish authorities, acclimatized as they were to the belief that their country was unattractive for employment. The official number of registered foreign employees was rather low, totalling only 1530 in August 1991; of these most came

from the former Soviet Union (610), followed by China (64), Turkey (54), West Germany (52), and Sweden (32). Yet an increasing number of foreigners were asking Polish consulates, embassies and the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, to find work for them in Poland. Among them were citizens of Mexico, France, Italy, the Arab and Asian countries, but their chances were slim; applications for such permission can only be made by firms wishing to employ foreigners. [15]

Perhaps of more relevance here were those employed in the black economy; for example, it was estimated in September 1991 that in one agricultural region of Poland alone, for the 27 Soviet citizens employed legally there were about a thousand who were working illicitly. Although no concrete evidence exists, it has been estimated that there were up to 30,000 Soviet citizens and 2000 Bulgarians employed at any one time in Poland during 1991. Most were occupied either on privately owned farms, (especially in labour intensive horticulture), or by small construction firms and artisan workshops. Since 1991, there has been a rapid increase of mass tourism to Poland. While many of those from Germany, former Czechoslovakia and Hungary have been genuine tourists, some of those from the former Soviet Union, Romania and Bulgaria have not. [16] A part of this latter group, said officially to number about 290,000 people, have tended to prolong their Polish stay in search of irregular employment, creating a form of temporary economic immigration.

Attempts to stem the flood

The growing inflow of foreign citizens to Poland who treated the country as one of temporary residence during the early 1990s, has attracted increasing attention to its migration problems from government institutions, NGOs, media etc. The state had experienced a change from its traditional role as a sending country into one which in recent years has also become a receiving one. According to border guard control, the number of aliens traversing the Polish frontier illicitly in the hope of reaching a West European country has been on the increase. Their figures of registered illegal immigrants trebled from 10,000 in 1991 to 31,000 in 1992; the number of persons not permitted to enter Poland in those years escalated from 38,000 to 54,000 respectively. [17] Meanwhile, the country's western border continues to be the most heavily used by foreigners entering the country. (Fig.1 and Fig. 2.) Many of these are Germans on short stay shopping visits, or longer tourist trips. Of all Poland's borders it has the highest number of crossings (both ways) by passport holders, reflected in the larger number of border stations (13, compared with eleven along the southern frontier.

It appears that Poland's weakest border is in the east. [18] Here there are only two border crossing stations, Trakiszki-Szestokaj trains) and the most recent at Ogrodniki-Lazdijaj en route for Kaunas in Lithuania. This frontier point was envisaged to handle up to 20,000 people annually when built in 1988, with an infrastructure to serve only those travelling to and from Poland/Lithuania. Subsequent

changes in the former Soviet Union have meant Ogdodniki had to be opened to travellers worldwide, creating long delays through passport and customs formalities. Unlike on the Lithuanian side, the Poles only allow those on diplomatic passports to cross the border without queuing. During the first six months of 1992 the number of people passing through Ogdodniki totalled 815,000 (both ways); long delays can ensue. For example, between 7 pm to 7 pm on June 17th–18th 1992 border personnel dealt with 2214 foreign nationals, 1001 Polish nationals, 795 passenger cars and 100 lorries entering Poland over the 24 hour period, and a similar number for those leaving the country. [19]

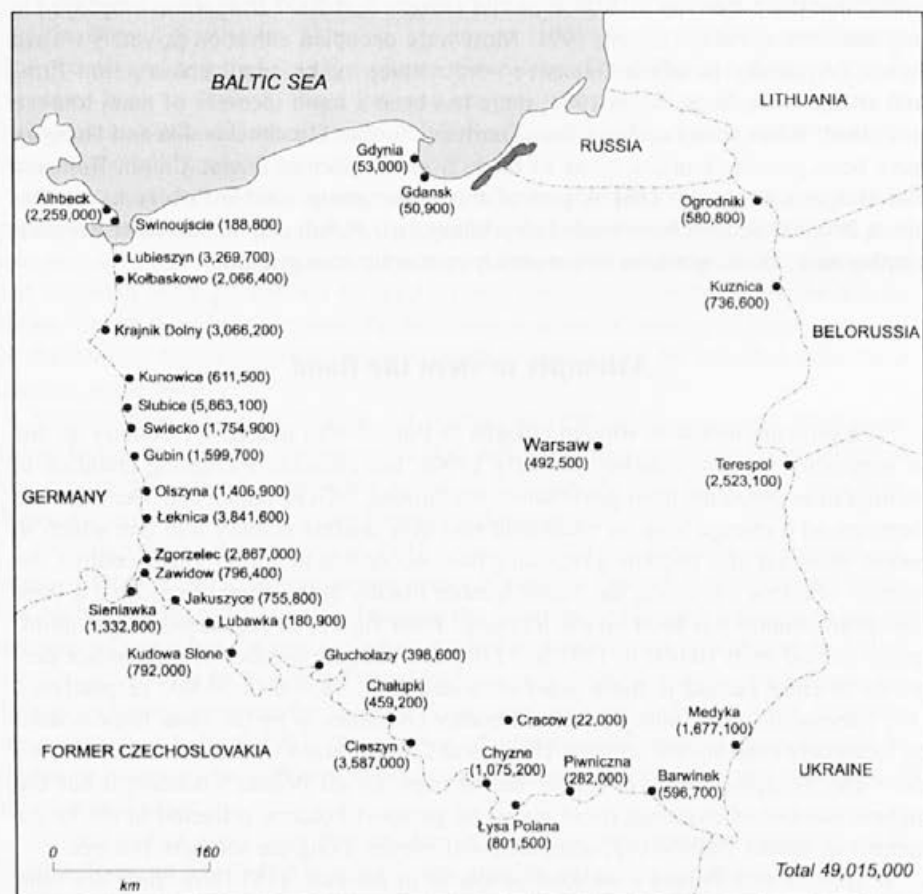


Figure 1: Poland — Legal arrival of foreigners by border crossing (road, rail, sea, air) 1992

Source: Turystyka, i wypoczynek w 1992 r. (G.U.S.), Warszawa 1993, Table 2 (24)

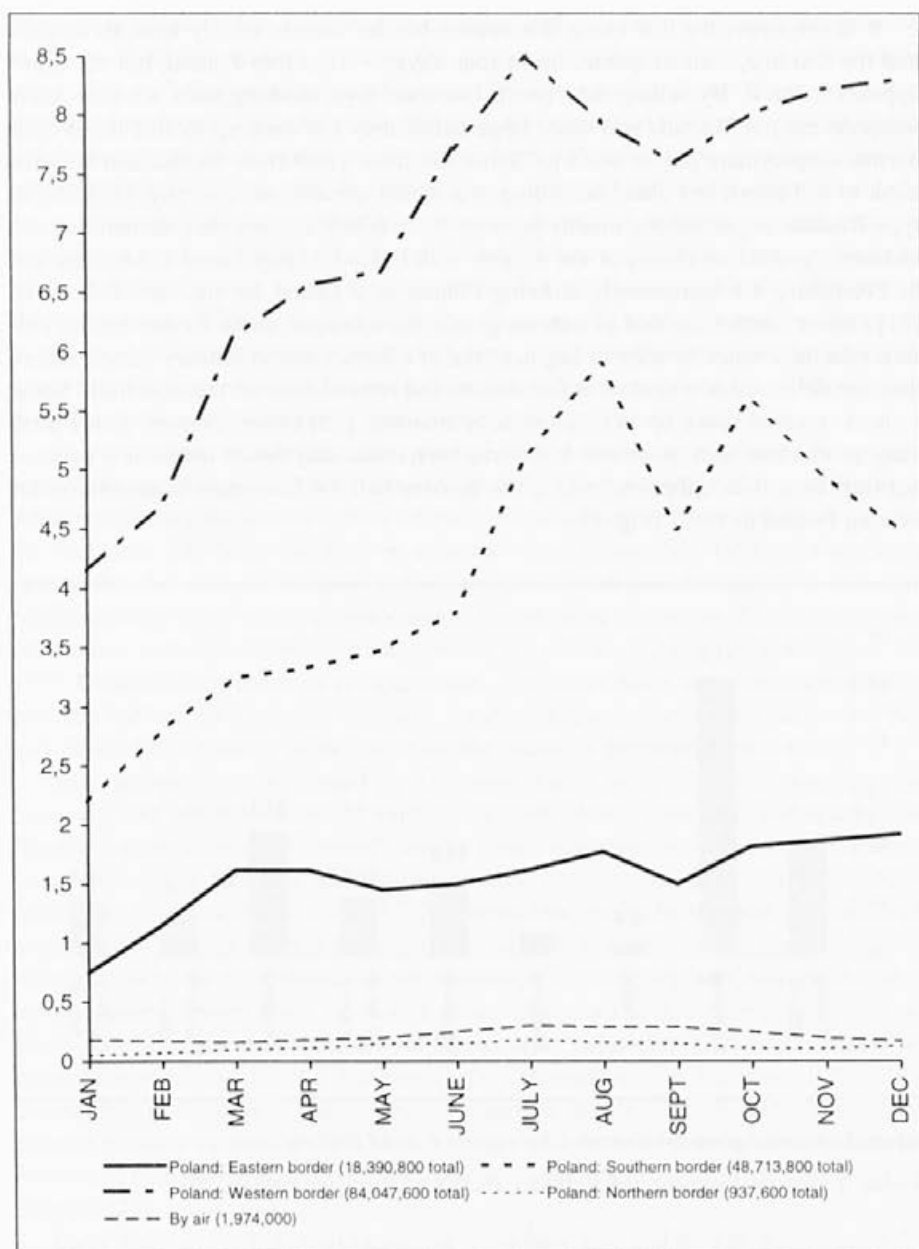


Figure 2: Poland — Monthly border crossing totals by number of passport holders, 1992

Source: Turystyka, i wypoczynek w 1992 r. (G.U.S.), Warszawa 1993, Table 2 (24)

It is not surprising that along this eastern border visitors mainly from Belorussia and the Ukraine, wait in queues up to four days to cross into Poland, but the effort appears worth it. By selling their goods (wooden toys, clothing, tools, ex-Red Army weapons etc.) in Warsaw and other large cities, they can earn up to five times their normal employment pay in one trip. Some Russians travel from Irkutsk and Novosibirsk to sell goods in Poland according to a recent questionnaire survey. [20] Mafia-type Russian organizations mainly prey on their fellow countrymen, demanding extortionate protection money at the frontier with Poland. Gangs based in Moscow and St Petersburg are increasingly utilizing Poland as a funnel for the narcotics trade. [21] Others control the sale of various goods; for example, some former Soviet citizens take their wares by train to Legnica (site of a former Soviet military camp), where they are delivered to a contact at the station, and return home on the next train. Some visitors (traders) make up to fifty journeys annually. [22] Others convert their Polish zloty profits into \$US; once 200 \$US have been made they return home. It is perhaps not surprising that "shopping" was given by over half the foreigners as the reason for visiting Poland in 1992. (Fig. 3)

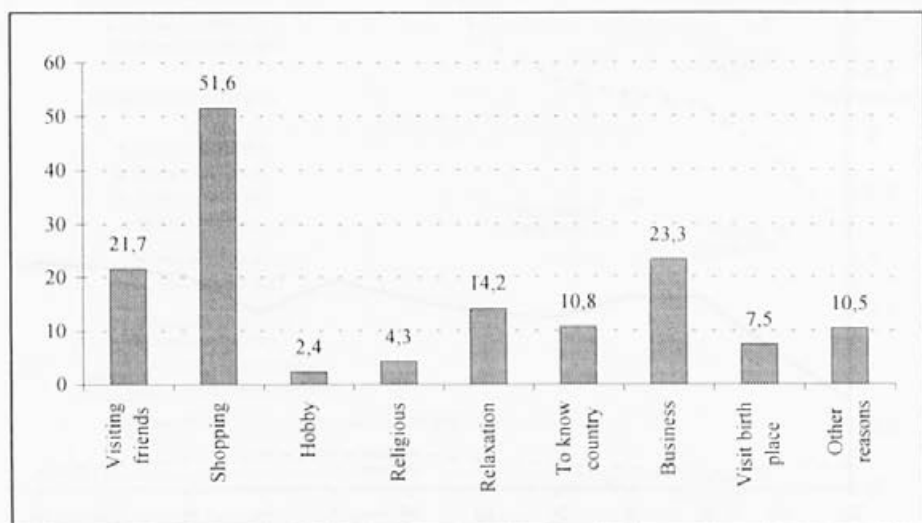


Figure 3: Reasons given by foreigners for visiting Poland 1992 (in %)

Source: Turystyka, i wypoczynek w 1992 r. (G.U.S.), Warszawa 1993, p. 167

All this activity is forcing the Poles to be pressurized by other (particularly western) European countries to put their house in order, as part of a general agreement to stem the flow of illegal migrants through eastern Europe to the west. Poland has to demon-

strate its commitment to European integration, and one way is to limit the growing numbers of asylum seekers entering the country. In February, 1993, the first steps were taken with the introduction of government immigration plans. These stated that potential immigrants from Romania, Bulgaria and almost all the former Soviet Union would have to produce a personal invitation from a Polish citizen. Previous attempts at this system (applying only to former Soviet citizens) had failed, mainly because such invitations had been unlawfully mass-produced. In order to prevent such an occurrence, the new qualifications would stipulate that any Polish sponsor wishing to invite a foreign visitor must first register his/her application with the Ministry of Interior (Home Office), and also guarantee to cover any costs incurred by the guest, including deportation. Implementation of these plans was deferred, but the advent of a newly elected government has once more led to their consideration. If this system fails then a more drastic solution would involve the introduction of visas.

There has been an administrative change with reference to migration. A governmental decree dated 2. 2. 1993 established the Office for Migration and Refugee Affairs replacing the former Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Ministry of Interior for Refugees. The latter had been in existence since November, 1990, and was only responsible for refugee welfare including medical and social support; it had also established the first Polish refugee camp at Debak, near Nadarzyn, 25 km south-west of Warsaw, created within the framework of the country's Aliens Act, based on the 1951 Geneva Convention on refugee status. The new Office now has responsibility not only for refugees but also migrants, many seen, particularly from the former Soviet Union and Romania, as the cause for the country's increasing crime wave.

Such activity was welcomed by Germany. Early in 1993 it was reported that Germany had offered Poland 55 million Deutsch Marks, specifically earmarked to finance a strengthening of Poland's border guard requirements, construction of transit camps/refugee facilities, and help for funding the deportation of rejected asylum-seekers to their country of origin. [23] Nevertheless, cynics believe that stricter immigration rules will not deter organised crime, as it will be able to buy the new invitations. Similarly, the regulations will not discourage illegal immigrants, who deliberately avoid customs border posts, such as a group of asylum seekers from Asia, who recently flew over the frontier in an old Soviet army helicopter. [24] Furthermore, representatives of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), believe that in the rush to stem economic migrants, the new Polish restrictions could prevent genuine cases of people who, through well-founded fears of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinion, are prevented from entering Europe. [25]

Early fears of the potential impact of these new laws did lead to a decline in the number of visitors across the eastern border. A recent pilot questionnaire survey on these visitors has revealed that most come from the Ukraine, many looking for temporary work or to sell/buy goods. The temporary Ukrainian workers provide cheap

labour in Poland, some even reaching Holland organized through Polish labour gangs. [26] Prior to the recent governmental elections it still remained easy for Ukrainians to cross the border into Poland, merely by showing their former Soviet passport; this situation may now change if supported by a new government decree. Whilst shopping expeditions for Polish goods are popular, prices for them at Premysl near the Ukrainian border are high; many therefore travel further inland to find cheaper Polish goods to take home. Whether buying or selling, price differential has to be large enough to cover travel costs, and bribery of Ukrainian border customs officials. For example, rail tickets for Warsaw bought in Kiev, have to be paid for in \$US; many potential visitors to Poland therefore buy tickets to the Ukrainian border in local currency, cross the border on foot and then pay for the rest of the journey in Polish zlotys.

The southern border with former Czechoslovakia is popular for an increasing number of Czechs and Slovaks who visit Poland either for short shopping trips or longer tourist sojourns. Their number increased from half a million to over 8 million between 1985–1992. It is also the border used by entrants from the Balkan countries, some wishing to enter Germany by the back door. Of particular worry for the Polish authorities is the increasing invasion of gypsies across this and the eastern border. While Poland's own gypsy population totals between 25–30,000 at present, many of the newcomers are from Romania. The latter has the second largest Romany community (after former Yugoslavia) in Europe — some 700,000, but in Romania they are denied nationality status. [27] The post-Ceausescu revolution in Romania unleashed a wave of chauvinism and nationalism by ordinary Romanians, which had its repercussions on the gypsy population. Many gypsies had managed to hoard money and gold during the Ceausescu era, and were the first to afford passports and tickets for travel abroad. Poland was one of their major destinations, believing it to be an easy 'back-door' into Germany. Unsuccessful gypsy migrants have remained in Poland, where they are now estimated to total around 60,000. Many head for the large cities; in July 1993 such a group (of 60 people, 30 of them children, some born in Poland), was reported bivouacking near the main railway station in Gdansk, and causing problems for the local authorities. [28]

In Warsaw, several groups concentrate in central city thoroughfares, many holding placards pertaining to be from "Yugoslavia", "Bosnia", or "Sarajevo", and begging for money. When the author approached them during July 1993, and spoke in Serbo-Croat he was met with confused silence! Now that the zloty is convertible into \$US at an official rate, local money obtained from such begging activities is exchanged for dollars, and sent back to relatives still residing in Romania. [29] Some experts believe that in the past there have been three gypsy invasions of Europe, and that we are now witnessing the fourth.

Polish Emigration: stopping the leak

It has been estimated that between 1981–1988 over one million Poles left their country, either officially or otherwise, not because of personal persecution (the traditional definition of a 'refugee'), but due to economic crisis. [30] Every year about 340,000 Poles take part in legal forms of employment abroad. Some however leave on "business-tourist" trips with the intention of permanent settlement abroad. Of those who failed to return home four-fifths (80.7 %) were of employable age (i.e. 18–64 years), whilst over half (54 %) were under 35 years. Also a certain number of Polish tourists undertake illegal employment. A large proportion were "tourists" who 'over-stayed' their holidays. Most went to Germany either for permanent residence or in transit for distant shores, especially North America. [31] Perhaps even more serious, between 1981–88 nearly two-thirds (64 %) of the total population increase of those in the 'working age' group left Poland. It has been noticed that since 1986 there has been a negative increase of those classified as in the working age population, largely due to the amount of emigration, [32] although since 1989 a positive total population increase occurred in Poland. Further, the most numerous emigrants were blue-collar workers and technicians, followed by engineers, economists, scientists and doctors. Their educational level was usually higher than the country's average; two-fifths of them had elementary or professional education, a third secondary education and a tenth held university degrees. Half of them were female, three-quarters aged between 18–59 years. [33] These frequently young and better than average qualified Poles work mostly in the export of building services, in agriculture and forestry, in road construction, pipelines and housing. They also work as sailors, sea fishermen, in the reconstruction of historic monuments, as doctors, engineers, teachers in schools and research workers. Recent research on about 1000 scientific centres in Poland has shown that around a quarter of its research workers were lost through a brain drain relocation in the 1980s; [34] however, of this figure only 10 % was attributed to emigration, and 15 % to professional mobility within Poland.

The major reason given by these emigrants was economic, attributable to poor living standards at home and the opportunity of making money abroad. As living conditions deteriorated in the 1980s, prospects of Poland's future development were decreasing, and concurrently, a policy of gradual passport liberalization was activated, which resulted in boosting emigration pressure. During the period 1981–1992, Poland's Central Statistical Bureau (GUS) recorded 306,100 cases of people who officially gave up their place of permanent residence in Poland with the declared intention of emigration, especially to Germany and the United States of America. Even those who justified emigration on political grounds before 1990, have not hurried to return, despite beneficial changes in the present political climate.

Economic reasons dominated a February 1990 questionnaire by the Public Opinion Polling Centre (CBOS) in Warsaw, when nearly two-thirds of the respondents

specified the chance to earn money abroad as the main motive, whilst a quarter gave tourism and a mere 0.4 % quoted political grounds. About 7 % admitted to permanent emigration; most were either urban dwellers under 24 years old, those with professional qualifications, or inhabitants of large cities who suffered from inferior living conditions. Another survey by the same organisation was carried out on the country's current problems in June 1991. Amongst other questions, those interviewed were asked what advice they would give a young person on completing education; nearly a third (31 %) suggested emigration abroad, returning only when enough money had been acquired. [35]

Unfortunately, complete statistical data since 1989 on visits abroad for a temporary stay have not yet been officially prepared. Permanent departures have been recorded although large numbers are not involved — on average according to official

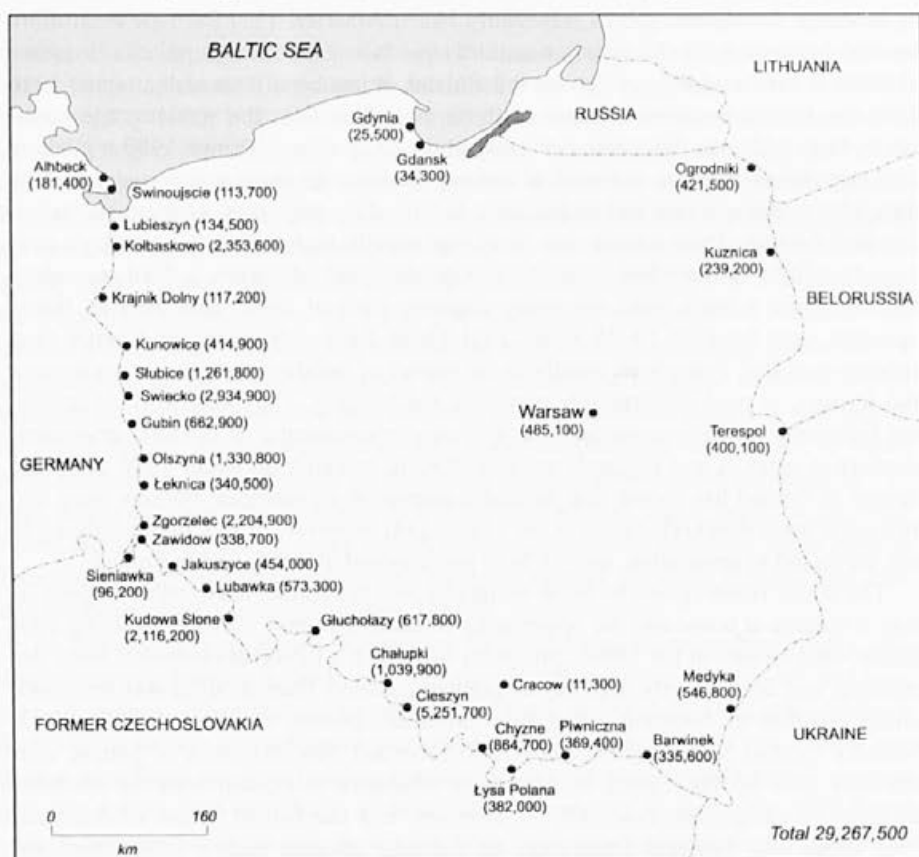


Figure 4: Poland — Legal departures of Poles by crossing (road, rail, sea, air) 1992

Source: Turystyka, i wypoczynek w 1992 r. (G.U.S.), Warszawa 1993, table 7 (29)

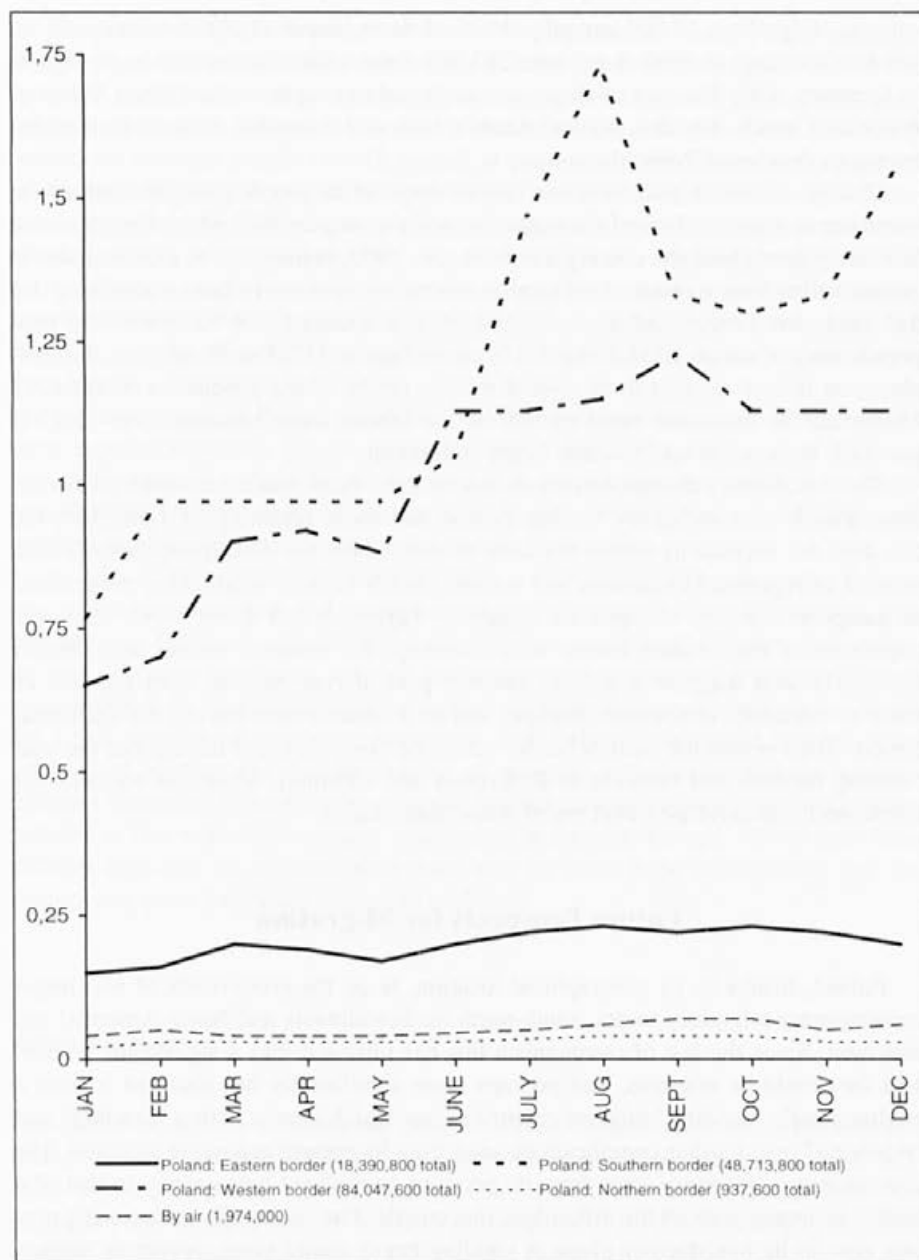


Figure 5: Poland — Official monthly departure totals of Poles by border crossing, 1992

Source: Turystyka, i wypoczynek w 1992 r. (G.U.S.), Warszawa 1993, table 7 (29)

sources, only about 20,000 annually. Most of them (about 13,900 (or nearly 70 %) left for Germany; in 1993 there were 283,553 Poles officially resident as foreigners in Germany. [36] The rest of those annual departures went to the United States of America, Canada, Sweden, France, Austria, Italy and Australia, most of them countries with developed Polish diasporas.

Clearly, if Poland is to stem this haemorrhage of its people going abroad, life at home has to improve. One of the major factors is unemployment which has increased uniformly throughout the country since January 1990, mainly due to a contraction in output, rather than a result of sectoral restructuring or massive labour shedding. By 31st December 1992, it had reached 2,509,342 (i.e. a rate of 13.6 %, or 6.5 % of total population), of which 1,338,809 (53.4 %) were female. [37] Unofficially, total unemployment is now thought to be over 3 million (15 % of the productive workforce). Moreover, the projected rapid growth of the labour force between 1995–2005 is generally believed to lead towards larger emigration.

The introductory discussion reveals that in 1992 there was a discrepancy between those Polish citizens legally leaving Poland and those returning of 1,361,300, but this does not necessarily reflect the scale of emigration; the discrepancy between the number of registered departures and arrivals mainly reflects registration procedures, as passports are only stamped on departure. Figures 4 and 5, for 1992, show the popularity of the western border with Germany; the southern border with former Czechoslovakia suggests a distinct summer peak during August, with families en route to vacations in southern Europe, and to a lesser extent during the Christmas period. Trips across the eastern border remained fairly constant throughout the year (visiting families and relatives in Belorussia and Ukraine), while the northern sea border and expensive air travel are of minor significance.

Future Prospects for Migration

Poland, thanks to its geographical location, is on the cross-roads of two major contemporary migratory routes, south-north (to Scandinavia and North America) and east-west. Since the fall of communism this has turned it into a significant 'transit' area for would-be migrants, and perhaps more significantly has changed it from a predominantly "sending" migrant country to one which is now both a "sending" and "receiving" one. Further complications arise from its present economic situation. The country is in a transitory stage from its previous centralized bureaucracy to that of a market economy with all the difficulties this entails. The economic restructuring process now in its introductory phase is yielding heavy social costs, economic stagnation and serious unemployment. Clearly the extra burden of additional migrants, whether temporary or permanent, together with an expanding number of asylum-seekers is placing further strains on the economy.

Perhaps the longer term perspectives are more optimistic. Already there are signs that the figure for people of productive age (i.e. 18–59 years for women and 18–64 years for men) is increasing, culminating in rapid growth between 1996–2005; even between 1991–95 it is expected to double that of the period 1986–1990. The rising number of younger people (15–18 years), at present involved in various stages of education, will provide greater pressure on the labour market in future years. Manpower growth up to 2010 is estimated to be high in Poland (3,500,000 employees), which in itself will contribute half the total manpower increase for central and eastern Europe (excluding former Soviet Union). This could mean that within the next two decades Poland, given its demographic structure, professional skills and mobility, may be of manufacturing interest to countries with manpower shortages. Such positive influences may act as a “pull factor” for foreign economic migrants and asylum-seekers to Poland given the country’s geographical location and comparably superior economic circumstances compared with some other central and east European states. It should be remembered that Poland does not suffer from deep-seated ethnic controversies like some of its neighbouring states, providing greater political stability devoid of abrupt and turbulent fluctuations.

In spite of these optimistic portents there is still a compelling necessity for Poland to unveil a complete and perceptive migration policy, that would establish precedence and build an administrative organization capable of effecting this policy through adequate legislation, reliable institutions and trustworthy practices. Even if accomplished, its success would also depend on wider European attempts to control the whole process of migratory movement. For Poland, this would involve some infusion of western aid, burden-sharing of refugees and asylum seekers between different countries, tighter border controls, asylum processing and overall migration policies in line with those already established in western Europe. Given that these difficult aims can be achieved then there may be some hope in believing that the country can solve its present migration problems.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the London-Warsaw Universities Geographical Exchange Scheme which enabled him to carry out research on this topic during July 1993. In Warsaw, he was greatly indebted to Dr. T.K. Kozłowski, Head, Office for Migration and Refugee Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, for freely giving of his time, and Dr. M. Jerczynski, Institute of Geography, Polish Academy of Sciences, for discussing the preliminary results from his questionnaire on the migration of former Soviet citizens to Poland. Also to Miss Louise Saunders of the Cartographic Unit, University College London who provided the illustrations.

References

1. Carter, F.W., French, R.A., Salt, J., 1993: 'International migration between East and West in Europe', *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1993, p. 467–491.
2. McCartney, R.J., 1989: 'East Europeans on the March: one time trickle is turning into a flood westward', *International New York Herald Tribune*, (1.–2. 4. 1989).
3. Murray, I., 1990: 'West Germany is top refugee haven', *Times*, (6. 1. 1990).
4. Murray, I., 1990: 'Bonn tries to stem flood of refugees', *Times*, (29. 3. 1990); O'Brien, P., 1992: "German-Polish Migration: The Elusive Search for a German Nation-State", *International Migration Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1992, p. 373–387.
5. Gwiazda, A., 1990: 'The Tide Flows On', *Voice*, Warsaw, (1. 7. 1990), p. 12.
6. Anon, 1990: 'Drang nach Osten', *The Economist*, (13. 10. 1990), p. 60.
7. Grečić, V., 1990: 'East-West Migration and its possible influence on the South-North Migration', (Document 1.5), *Ninth IOM Seminar on Migration*, (4.–6. 12. 1990), Geneva, p. 7–8.
8. Carter, F.W., 1993: "'For Bread and Freedom': Geographical Implications of the Polish Diaspora", Paper presented at the I.G.U. (Political Geography Session) on *The Diaspora Networks*, Nicosia/Larnaca, April, 1993, p. 19–20.
9. Okólski, M., 1991: 'Poland', Paper presented at the O.E.C.D. SOPEMI conference, 1991, 30 pp.
10. Widgren, J., 1992: 'East–West Migration: Economic Buffer or Security Threat?', *N.A.T.O. Colloquium*, Brussels, 1992, p. 174.
11. Rosciszewski, M., Stasiak, A., (eds.), 1992: *Pogranicze niemiecko-polskie jako problem polityki regionalnej*, I.G.P.Z. PAN, Warszawa, 1992, 38 pp.; Rosciszewski, M., 1993: (edt), 'Problematyka Zachodniego Obszaru Pogranicza' in *Podstawy rozwoju zachodnich i wschodnich obszarów przygranicznych Polski*, I.G.P.Z., (Biuletyn No. 1) Warszawa, 1993, 135 pp.
12. Lieven, A., 1993: 'Border guards play hide and seek on Europe's Rio Grande', *Times*, (5. 1. 1993).
13. Kostyrko, W., 1993: 'Szczelni Niemcy', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, (10.–11. 7. 1993).
14. Smart, V., 1991: 'Can Europe cope' *The European*, (9.–11. 8. 1991), p. 9.
15. *Dziennik Ustaw*, No. 75, 1989 on the Law of Employment; Anon, 1991: 'Demand for Experts', *Poland Today*, No. 1, Warsaw, 1991, p. 26.
16. Szonert, M., 1993: 'Migration and Refugee Problems in Poland', Paper presented at the C.S.C.E. Seminar on Migration, 20.–23. 4. 1993, Warsaw, p. 2.
17. *Ibid*, p. 4.
18. Eberhardt, P., Komornicki, T., 1993: *Problematyka Wschodniego Obszaru Pogranicza*, I.G.P.Z., PAN, (Biuletyn No. 2), Warszawa, 1993, 240 pp.
19. Custom and Excise Office (Urząd Celny), Kuznica, pers. comm.; Anon, 1992: 'Zmiany na litewskiej granicy' *Rzeczpospolita*, (7. 7. 1992), Warszawa, p. 3.

20. Jerczyński, M., pers. comm.
21. Borger, J., 1993: 'Poland erects new iron curtain to stem flood from the east', *Guardian*, (16. 2. 1993).
22. Jerczyński, M., pers. comm.
23. Binyon, M., 1993: 'Poles promised immigration cash', *Times*, (9. 2. 1993).
24. Borger, J., *op cit*.
25. Goodwin, G.S., 1993: 'Towards a Comprehensive Regional Policy Approach: The Case for Closer Inter-Agency Co-operation', Paper presented for UNHCR and IOM, *Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe*, (Human Dimension Seminar on Migration, including Refugees and Displaced Persons), Warsaw, 20–23. 4. 1993, p. 18;
Bridge, A., 1993: 'E. Europe moves to keep out refugees', *Independent*, (20. 3. 1993).
26. Jerczyński, M., pers. comm.
27. Puxon, G., 1980: *Roma: Europe's Gypsies*, Minority Rights Group, Report No. 14, (3rd Edt.), 1980, p. 12.
28. Anon, 1993: 'Rumuni w Oliwie' *Zycie Warszawy*, (12. 7. 1993).
29. Kozłowski, T.K., pers. comm.
30. Aniol, W., 1990: 'From emigration to immigration', *Refugees*, Vol. 76, 1990, p. 10.
31. Carter, F.W., "For Bread and Freedom ...", *op cit*, p. 18.
32. Szonert, M., *op cit*, p. 1.
33. Kozinska, J., 1992: 'Emigration: A Description of the Phenomenon' *Poland Today*, No. 6, 1992, Warsaw, p. 10;
Długosz, Z., 1992: 'O niektórych przestrzennych aspektach migracji zagranicznych w Polsce', *Prace Geograficzne*, Vol. 91, Kraków, 1992, p. 21–35.
34. Hryniewicz, J., Jąłowicki, B., Mync, A., 1992: 'Ucieczka mózgów ze szkolnictwa wyższego i nauki', *Studia Regionalne i Lokalne*, No. 8 (41), Europejski Instytut Rozwoju Regionalnego i Lokalnego, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Warszawa, 1992, 118 pp.
35. Kozinska, J., *op cit*, p. 9.
36. Boyes, R., 1993: 'Turks trapped in Germany's vicious circle of racism', *Times*, (2. 6. 1993).
37. *Powierzchnia i Ludność oraz Bezrobotni w Przekroju Terytorialnym: materiały i opracowania statystyczne*, G.U.S., Warszawa, 1993, Table 1, p. 17; Table 19, p. 54.
Janowska, Z., Martini-Fiwek, J., Góral, Z., 1992: *Bezrobocie Kobiet w Polsce*, Fundacja Friedricha Eberta w Polsce, Polityka ekonomiczna i społeczna, Zeszyt 18, Warszawa, 1992, 93 pp.;
Gawryszewski, A., 1993: 'Struktura przestrzenna zatrudnienia i bezrobocia w Polsce, 1990–1992', *Zeszyty*, No. 13, I.G.P.Z., PAN, Warszawa, 1993, 65 pp.

Povzetek

Vzroke za migracije na Poljskem moramo iskati v naslednjih dveh dejstvih: prvič, do nedavna precej površnem nadzoru ljudi in blaga na mejah z Nemčijo in Švedsko — kar je pol desetletja dolgo spodbujalo migrante iz Vzhodne in Osrednje Evrope, da si poiščejo boljše življenske razmere na evropskem zahodu; drugič, vse do zadnjega desetletja izrazito zaprta meja, ki so jo v času hladne vojne pojmovali kot prvo obrambno črto pred napadi iz Zahoda. Prispevek analizira dogodke v tranzicijskem obdobju poljske družbe, ko osrednjega vprašanja ki se ga članek loteva, še zdaleč niso rešili.

Na prehodu v devetdeseta leta so na Poljskem zabeležili začetek kasnejših množičnih meddržavnih migracijskih gibanj. Nemčija je privolila v priselitev večjega števila nemškega prebivalstva iz držav Vzhodne Evrope in Sovjetske zveze. V letu 1989 se je na ozemlje Zvezne republike Nemčije za stalno priselilo 842.227 oseb: 85 % jih je bilo po izvoru Nemcev, 7 % pa pripadnikov drugih narodov Vzhodne Evrope. Kar 250.340 avtohtonih Nemcev na Poljskem se je v tem letu gospodarskega razsula odločilo za selitev. Nemško so govorili le še redki.

V nadaljevanju desetletja so pričele prevladovati turistične, poslovne in ilegalne meddržavne migracije. Predvsem se je povečal pretok migrantov, ki so kasneje na Zahodu zaprosili za azil. Poljskemu gospodarstvu je takrat šlo že mnogo bolje kot marsikateri vzhodni sosed; nespornosti na Balkanu so pretok še povečali. V tem letu je Poljsko obiskalo okrog 3 milijone Sovjetov — "turistov", pravzaprav trgovcev in preprodajalcev. Pridružili so se jim prednostno Romuni. V letu 1991 je "turistični obisk" iz območij nekdanje Sovjetske zveze narasel na 7,5 milijona obiskovalcev. Pridružili so se jim "poslovneži" iz Romunije (325.000) in Bolgarije (100.000). Na Poljskem so morali preurediti bivše kasarne Rdeče armade za njihove potrebe. Na poljsko ozemlje je tega leta vstopilo štirikrat več oseb kot pet let poprej (1986: 22 milijonov, 1991: 79 milijonov obiskovalcev). Mnogi državljani sosednjih držav (45 %) in Afrike je zaprosilo za azil. V letu 1990 je bilo ugodno rešenih okrog 1800 primerov. Hkrati so se Poljaki z Ukrajino dogovorili za preselitev Poljakov, ki so morali po II. svetovni vojni sprejeti sovjetsko državljanstvo.

Vedno pogostejši so ilegalni prestopi meje. Med januarjem in novembrom leta 1992 so nemški obmejni organi prijeli 3168 oseb, ki so ilegalno prečkale državno mejo na reki Nisi (Neisse). Med njimi je bilo največ romunskih državljanov (82 %). Prepričani pa so, da je to le drobec v ilegalnem prestopanju poljsko-nemške meje. Reke Nise se je že oprijel naziv "evropski Rio Grande"! Med 450.000 azilanti na Nemškem jo je večina prečila. Posebno to velja to za romunske Cigane (Roma in Sinti), ki množično beže iz matične države.

Mejni prehodi na vzhodni državni meji z državami bivše Sovjetske zveze so najbolj obremenjeni. Malo jih je, čakalne dobe so večdnevne. Predvsem zato, ker na tak pretok ljudi in blaga nihče ni bil pripravljen. V prvih 6 mesecih je na mejnem prehodu Ogrodniki (Poljska — Litva) mejo prestopilo 815.000 oseb, v enem dnevu (od

19. ure 17. 6. do 19. ure 18. 6. 1992) so poljski mejni organi dovolili vstop 2214 tujcem, 1001 domačinom, 795 osebnim vozilom in stotim tovornjakom. Poljska je v letu 1992 prepovedala vstop 54.000 osebam s tujim državljanstvom.

Mejne prehode na zahodni poljski meji prestopi več oseb kot na vzhodni. Na tej meji je 13 mejnih prehodov, na vzhodni sta le dva. Na Poljsko vstopajo večinoma nemški turisti, ki jih na Poljskem zanimajo nakupi in kraji poprejšnje nemške poselitve.

Tudi južno mejo prestopajo v glavnem nakupovalci s Češke in Slovaške. Porast prehodov je očitna: v letu 1986 je mejo prečkalo blizu pol milijona oseb, v letu 1992 pa kar osem milijonov potnikov. Pogosti potniki na tej meji so tudi romunski državljani, predvsem Romi in državljani bivše Jugoslavije, ki se želijo pogosto skozi zadnja vrata vtihotapiti v Nemčijo. Mnogim to ne uspe. Število Romov se je na Poljskem v zadnjih nekaj letih povečalo za približno 60.000.

V letih od 1981 do 1989 je po ocenah tukajšnjih strokovnjakov zapustilo domovino okrog milijon poljskih državljanov. Letno se je v teh letih v tujini začasno zaposlilo okrog 340.000 Poljakov. Mnogi med njimi so bili t.i. poslovni turisti, ki so upali, da se bodo v tujini lahko za stalno naselili. Med tistimi, ki se niso vrnili, je bilo 80,7 % oseb v zaposlitveni dobi in 54 % oseb v starosti do 35 let. V istem obdobju je Poljsko zapustilo 64 % naravnega prirastka prebivalstva. Novo domovino so našli v Ameriki ali Nemčiji.

Prav zaradi pomanjkanja ustrezne migracijske politike, državne zakonodaje in logičnega, doslednega ukrepanja se Poljski obetajo tudi v nacionalnem in demografskem pogledu hudi časi.

Prevedel Anton Gosar