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Reports & Analyses

17/06

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***Highly skilled migration from Poland  
and other CEE countries – myths and reality***

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The Report has been published in cooperation with the German Marshall Fund of the United States within the project 'Transatlantic Security Challenges and Dilemmas for the European Migration Policy'.

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## **Highly skilled migration from Poland and other CEE countries – myths and reality**

Paweł Kaczmarczyk<sup>1</sup>

### **1. Introduction**

Poland is usually perceived and described as a typical emigration country. International migration does in fact play a significant role in the contemporary history of Poland and in the process of its socio-economic development. However, until the late 1990s migration-related issues were almost absent in public debate with a few exceptions, such as post-1968 migration resulting from the anti-Zionist campaign, migration of “ethnic Germans” in the 1950s and 1970s, or politically-driven migration in the 1980s. The debate on the causes and consequences of migration started yet again prior to Poland’s accession to the European Union as part of a general discussion on the potential consequences of the accession of Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries to the EU, and then continued due to the spectacular increase in the scale of the mobility of Poles in the post-accession period. Paradoxically, in contrast to migration debates prior to EU enlargement, when numerous hazards were voiced as to what would be the impact of the expected inflow of people on EU residents. In current debate, the issue of the consequences of outflow for Polish economy and society plays the most prominent role. Commonly expressed threats include labour shortages on the Polish market and the so-called brain drain understood as outflow of highly skilled persons.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the mobility of the highly skilled in the broader context of recent trends in international migration. Particularly, questions pertaining to the extent to which migration of people of high human capital is a statistically significant phenomenon and the possible consequences of recent outflow will be raised. The main emphasis will be put on Poland as the most important sending country in the region. However, the analysis will be complemented by data from other CEE countries.

### **2. Migration trends in the EU8 countries – a general overview**

The major problem with assessment of migration trends in most CEE countries is related to methodological and statistical issues. In the communist period, a uniform and particular migration registration system was introduced. The system was based on a specific definition of a migrant, closely connected to documented permanent residence in the country. As a consequence, in the majority of CEE countries an emigrant is (still) defined as a person who has declared an intention to leave for another country (left with an intention to settle abroad) by de-registering him- or herself from their permanent place of residence. In no way does such a concept of a migrant relate to the duration (neither actual nor declared) of stay in the destination country. According to Okólski (1997), this makes migration statistics in the EU8 countries incompatible with the respective statistics in the overwhelming majority of other countries, which causes serious problems when assessing the scale of and trends in migration.

The restrictive entry and exit rules, efficient border control, and strict passport policy provided for reasonably accurate statistics in the pre-transition period. However, one of the side effects of the introduction of democratic rules and liberalization of migration policy was that such system ceased

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to be a source of reliable statistics, especially with regard to emigration. During the next decade or so, the EU8 countries attempted to develop alternative sources of data related to international migration. Those sources, however, are hardly uniform, and they generate statistics of various coverage and quality. As an extreme case is demonstrated by Hungary where practically no information on emigration is available. Important data sources in EU8 that could be used in the present analysis of flows from the EU8 countries include: central population registers (still bound to the concept of permanent residence), population censuses (carried out, depending on country, in 2000-2002) and labour force surveys (LFS). One possible solution is to resort to the data on inflows and stocks collected by destination countries, but in this case the major problem results from international differences in the ways immigrants are defined and recorded. Moreover, the data from sending and receiving countries are hardly comparable (see Bijak et al. 2004).

In general, the socio-economic transition also entailed significant changes with respect to international mobility in the EU8 countries. In the pre-transition period, the region experienced a large variety of outflows and a few inflows. Despite strict administrative restrictions, outflow was the predominant type of migration and in a few cases, particularly in that of Poland, occurred on a very large scale. In a few countries, mainly in the Baltic states, an ethnically-driven migration took place on a mass scale. The situation changed radically after 1989 – since then the outflow has become much lower and less diversified than before, while inflows have begun to rise and become greatly differentiated. The only countries continually sending considerable quantities of people to other countries remained Poland and the Baltic states, particularly Lithuania.

This observation is borne out by official statistical data, although it reflects the real scale of migration only to a very small extent. For instance, in the first half of the 1990s, official emigration from Lithuania was recorded at the level of 3,000 people annually, in Poland between 20,000 and 25,000 annually. For other countries of the region, the officially registered migrations were even smaller: the Czech data indicate the outflow of 1,000 citizens annually in the years 2001-2004, while almost 2,000 returnees were recorded on the annual basis, in the years 1998-2005 the annual number of emigrants from Slovakia did not exceed 2,000 persons. In the period 1997-2001 less than 1,500 Slovene citizens emigrated each year (Lubyova 2005; OECD 2005; Zavratic Zimic 2003).

The real outflow was much higher. Migration from Lithuania estimated on the basis of the population censuses consisted of as many as 22,000 persons annually. According to the 2002 population census in Poland, the official emigration figures for 1989-2000 should have been more than tripled to give realistic estimates. The picture changes also upon deeper analysis of the statistics on temporary mobility. At least two types of migration are worth noting: seasonal migration (regulated predominantly by bilateral agreements between East and West European governments) and cross-border mobility. As far as **seasonal migration** is concerned, the main destination countries are Germany, France, Spain and the United Kingdom, but Germany receives by far the largest numbers of seasonal workers. In 2004 over 330,000 persons from Eastern Europe were temporarily employed there, over 90 per cent of whom were from the EU8 countries. Since the very beginning of the programme the structure of migrants according to their citizenship has remained more or less constant: Poles constitute the vast majority of seasonal workers (86 per cent to 91 per cent)<sup>2</sup>. The seasonal flow of over a quarter million persons a year from Poland alone is currently the largest individual flow in the region (or was prior to mass migration to the UK and Ireland). With regard to **cross-border movements**, the most significant flows take place on the 'old' borders of West and East European countries. For instance, in the beginning of the 1990s the

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<sup>2</sup> See Kaczmarczyk and Łukowski 2004.

number of Czechs commuting to Germany and employed mainly as irregular workers was as high as 50,000 persons<sup>3</sup>. Another meaningful instance are cross-border movements of people from Slovenia to Austria and Italy. In 2000, the number of Slovenians crossing borders to work on daily commuter basis has been estimated at almost 13,000 (Zavratnic Zimic 2003). Additionally, a hardly estimateable number of persons engage in semi-legal or illegal migration.

All in all, the key observation in the context of this paper is that in terms of the size of migration flows, Poland is by all means the most important country in the region. Thus, the analysis provided will concentrate on the migration of Poles, with some reference to other CEE countries, particularly the Baltic states and Hungary.

### **3. Polish migration prior to and after May 2004 – what do we and do not know?**

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Poland has been playing an ever more significant role in the global migration system as one of the chief sending countries. However, apart from mass movements of population caused by the redrawing of state borders and related international agreements, migration from Poland after the Second World War was seriously limited. Similarly to other countries in the region, a very low scale of mobility was a consequence of the restrictive migration policy imposed by the communist regime. The increase in migration was associated first with the political “thaw” in the mid-1950s, and then with the liberalisation in cross-border movements and the normalisation of Polish-German relations in the 1970s. Migration to the West constituted the most numerous flow prior to 1989. A range of push factors of political and economic nature were decisive in the formation of migratory phenomena at that time. Simultaneously, the Western European (and North American) labour market absorbed migrants easily, and additionally the declaration of an “open door” policy for political migrants from Central and Eastern Europe allowed for their easier functioning within host countries. According to official statistics, annual emigration figures in the 1970s ranged between 20,000 and 35,000 but the number of short-term flows mainly formed by ‘false’ tourists was much higher. The total number of long-term emigrants from Poland in the 1980s is estimated between 1.1 and 1.3 million people (3 per cent of the total population). Over a million people who spent more than three and less than twelve months abroad should also be taken into account (Okólski 2006; Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2002).

The comparison of pre-transition and transition trends is hardly plausible. Contrary to the situation in the 1980s, there are no unambiguous nor exhaustive data on migration from Poland in the 1990s and early 2000s<sup>4</sup>. The few existing sources of data capture only a part of the phenomenon, they are to some extent complementary but should be interpreted with caution. In the following part, the description of current trends in migration from Poland will be based on the following data sources: 1) data compiled by the Central Statistical Office on the basis of the Central Population Register; 2) data from the 2002 National Census; 3) Labour Force Survey data; 4) data compiled by the Polish Ministry of Labour on seasonal migration to Germany, and 5) data on Polish migrants registered in the Workers Registration Scheme in the United Kingdom and in the Personal Public Service system in Ireland.

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<sup>3</sup> Then, due to restrictions introduced by German labour administration dropped to 30,000-35,000 in 1995 (Drbohlav 2004).

<sup>4</sup> A very good source of information of Poles international mobility in previous decades was police register of cross border movements. However, this register was eliminated in late 1980s.

Official statistics data gathered by the Central Statistical Office are based on the Central Population Register (so-called PESEL) which records permanent residents of Poland. As stated earlier, according to the adopted definition, the population of emigrants includes only those permanent residents of Poland who left Poland in order to settle abroad, having registered their departure with an administrative unit. Therefore, the official data on migration portrays only a small fraction of the phenomenon, i.e. departures recorded as a permanent change of residence. The data shows a clear stabilization in the number of departures associated with the declared change in place of residence at 20,000 - 25,000 annually. In total, in the light of official statistics over 216,000 people left Poland between 1990 and 1999 with the intention to settle abroad. Most recent data for 2004 reveal that 18,877 people emigrated from Poland, while almost 9,500 immigrated to the country. Emigration from Poland thus reached the lowest level since the mid-1980s, but at the same time the volume of migrants increased in the first half of 2005 by 20 per cent as compared to the same period in the previous year. In 2004 three traditionally most important destination countries (Germany, the United States and Canada) were continuously losing their importance (a decrease by 16 per cent in the case of Germany), while the increase in numbers of persons migrating to such countries as the United Kingdom (93 per cent increase as compared to previous year), Spain (45 per cent) or Sweden (49 per cent) was recorded (Kepinska 2006).

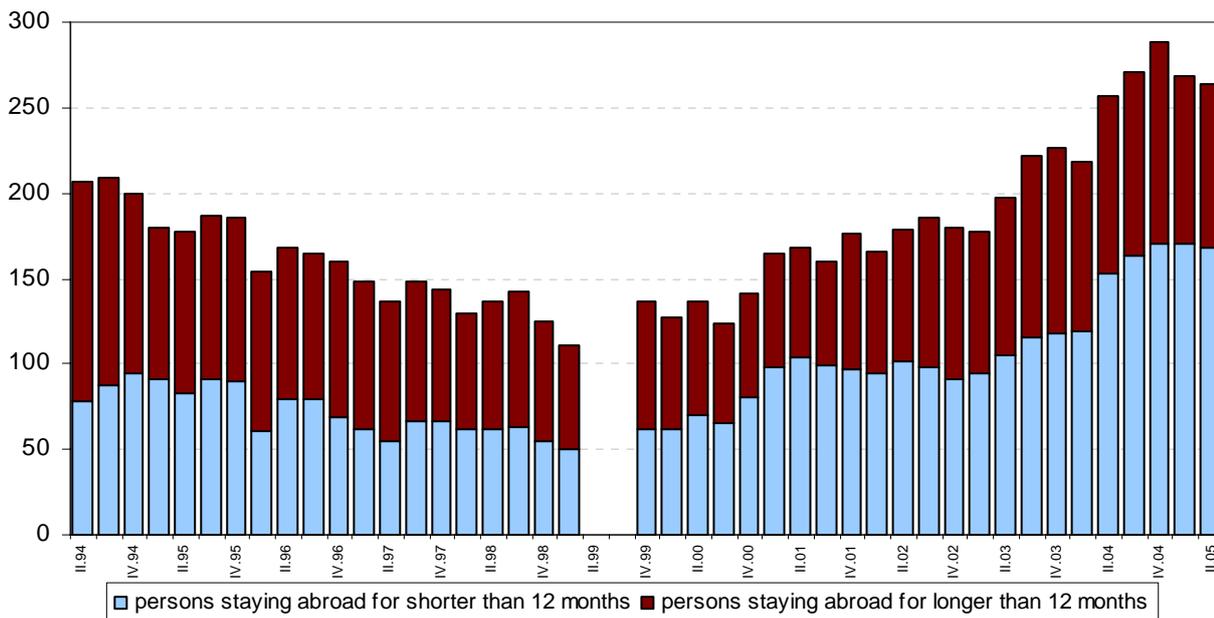
More reliable data concerning migrants staying abroad in the 1990s and early 2000s may be obtained from registries and surveys. The 1995 Microcensus showed that about 900,000 permanent residents of Poland had temporarily (i.e. for over two months) stayed abroad, which amounts to about 2 per cent of the total population. According to the 2002 National Census, as many as 786,100 Polish citizens, counted as members of households in Poland, were staying abroad for longer than 2 months (1.8 per cent of the population) at the time of the survey. From the data on the year of departure it follows that the number of migrants who went abroad in 1989-1990 was approximately 50,000 per year, then it dropped to 20,000-25,000 in the years 1993-1996, and started to rise again in 1997. Based on this data source the annual number of emigrants reached 61,000 in 2000 and 80,000 in 2001 (Kepinska 2006).

The best source to monitor intertemporal changes in Poles' mobility is the quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS) which since 1994 has recorded Polish citizens staying abroad. These data pertain only to adult persons who at the time of the survey have been abroad for longer than 2 months and, at the same time, who had at least one household member still living in Poland<sup>5</sup>. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) indicates that 130,000-290,000 adults were staying abroad in each year between 1994 and 2005 (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter) – cf. Figure 1.

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<sup>5</sup> It is necessary to note that Labour Force Data has serious limitations with regard to migration analysis. First of all, it was gathered primarily for the purpose of the labour market analysis. As a consequence, the sample is not adapted to the needs of international mobility analyses. The Central Statistical Office cannot assure the representativeness of the data and therefore they are not presented as official statistics. However, I decided to use this data since it is the only data set showing the dynamics of Poles' international mobility prior to and after EU accession (as a proxy of the trend rather than of the size of migration).

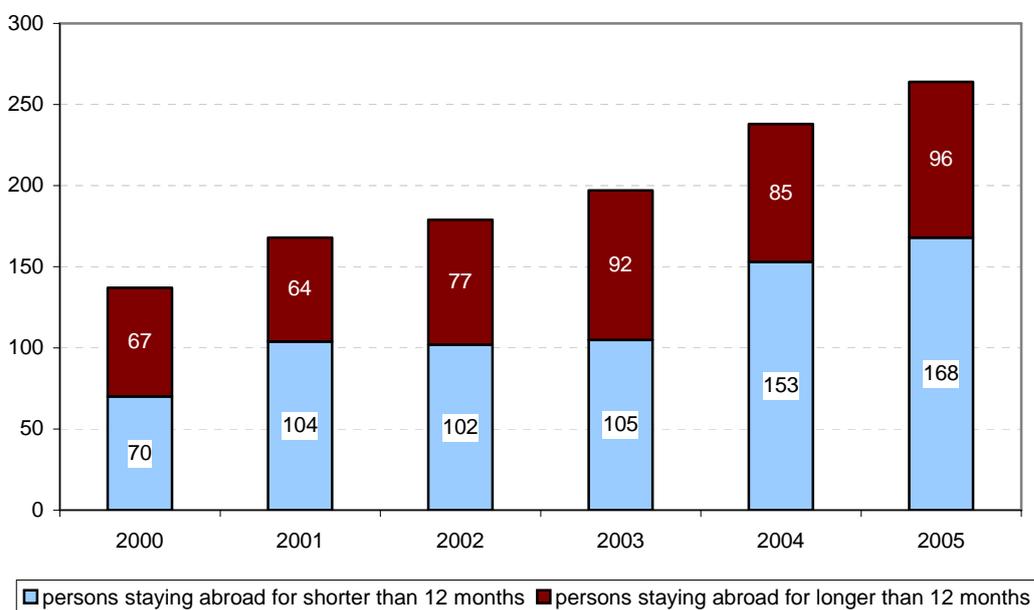
**Figure 1. Polish migrants by length of their stay abroad, 1994-2005 (in thous.)**



Source: Author's elaboration based on the Labour Force Survey data

According to LFS data, there is a steady increase in the number of Polish migrants observed since 1998. This trend continued after Poland's accession into the EU: in 2004 on average 250,000 Poles stayed abroad for at least two months and this figure constituted an over 20 per cent increase in comparison to 2003. Additionally, in each of the first two quarters of 2005, the number of migrants was higher than in the corresponding quarters of 2004.

Two important features of contemporary migration from Poland are obvious while analyzing the LFS data. The first one is the predominance of labour migration. LFS has proven that between 70 and 80 percent of migrants undertake work during their stay abroad and the share of migrant workers in the 1990s and 2000s is relatively stable. Secondly, the predominance of short-term migration is becoming more and more evident: a significant part of all temporary migrants (60-70 per cent) stayed abroad for shorter than 12 months (cf. Figure 1). The number of such persons increased considerably, particularly in the late 1990s and early 2000s. To compare: short-term migrants (staying abroad for longer than 2 months but shorter than 12 months) amounted to 60 per cent in 2004, 53 per cent in 2003, and 48 per cent in 1995. This phenomenon is clearly identified by Figure 2 presenting migration trends with the exclusion of seasonal fluctuations.

**Figure 2. Polish migrants by length of their stay abroad, 2000-2005, 2nd quarters (in thous.)**

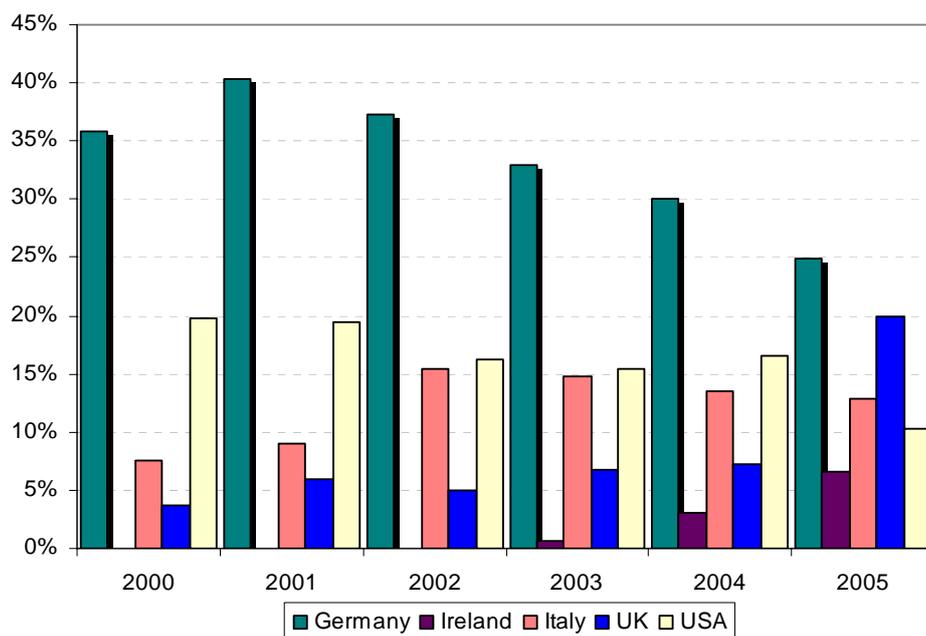
*Source: Author's elaboration based on the Labour Force Survey data*

From the presented data it follows that in the early 2000s the increase in migration was almost exclusively a result of raising short-term mobility: the number of migrants who were staying abroad for shorter than 12 months more than doubled between 2000 and 2005. At the same time the number of persons staying abroad for longer than 12 months remained relatively stable. If we take into consideration the fact that the Labour Force Survey data does not include seasonal workers who usually stay abroad for less than 2 months, we can conclude that temporary mobility has become an important feature of contemporary Polish migration.

As follows from the LFS data (cf. Figure 3), the distribution of major destination countries did not change dramatically after May 2004. Germany remained the major receiving country of Polish migrants<sup>6</sup>. In the case of all second quarters of the years 2000-2005 migrants to Germany dominated among all migrants from Poland. However, their share is gradually decreasing: from 35 per cent in 2000 to 25 per cent in 2005 (among all migrants and migrant workers). Since Poland's accession to the EU, migrants to Germany have still accounted for approximately one-fourth of the total, but the most striking feature is the large increase in the number of migrants to the United Kingdom and Ireland, i.e. the countries which decided to open their labour markets for migrants from Poland and other accession countries.

<sup>6</sup> Even if the data on Polish seasonal workers is not considered.

**Figure 3. Polish labour migrants by country of destination, 2000-2005, 2nd quarters (in per cent of all migrant workers)**



*Source: Author's elaboration based on the Labour Force Survey data*

In the second quarter of 2005, the UK and Ireland registered the largest increase in migration in comparison to the second quarter of 2004: 221 per cent and 150 per cent, respectively. Consequently, in the second quarter of 2005 the share of migrants to the UK in the total number of temporary migrants from Poland reached 20 per cent (in 2000 – 4 per cent), and in the case of Ireland – 6 per cent (0 per cent in 2000). Figure 3 clearly shows that since the early 2000s, the destinations of Polish migrants have gradually diversified, with a more and more important role played by such countries as Italy, Spain or Belgium (except from the above mentioned, i.e. Germany, the UK and Ireland).

Due to the fact that LFS data encompass only those migrants who are staying abroad for longer than 2 months, it is necessary to add about 300,000-350,000 Poles who each year find legal employment abroad on the basis of bilateral international agreements to the above presented numbers. An overwhelming majority of these are seasonal workers and, significantly, more than half are employed in Germany. According to the 1990 Bilateral Agreement on labour migration between the Polish and German government, Polish workers are allowed to take up legal work in selected sectors<sup>7</sup> of the German economy. Soon after the Agreement came into force, a dynamic inflow of seasonal labour migrants from Poland occurred. Already in 1991 approximately 78,600 seasonal Polish workers entered Germany, while in 1992 - 137,000 arrived. Since 1994 a steady increase has been observed – in consequence, in 2002 the immigration of Polish seasonal workers reached over 300,000, and in 2005 over 320,000 workers were registered.

Following May 1<sup>st</sup> 2004, the above presented data sets can be supplemented by immigration-related data from those countries which decided to open their labour markets for workers from the CEE countries. The accession into the EU has to a great extent intensified visits of EU8 citizens to

<sup>7</sup> Polish workers were allowed to take up jobs in such sectors as agriculture, construction and exhibitions. In 1993 due to the German labour market conditions construction has been excluded from the sectors available for the Polish seasonal workers.

the UK. The International Passenger Survey (IPS) records all visits to the UK and may serve as a proxy of labour mobility, though obviously it includes all entries into the UK, and not only those of persons arriving with an intention to undertake work.

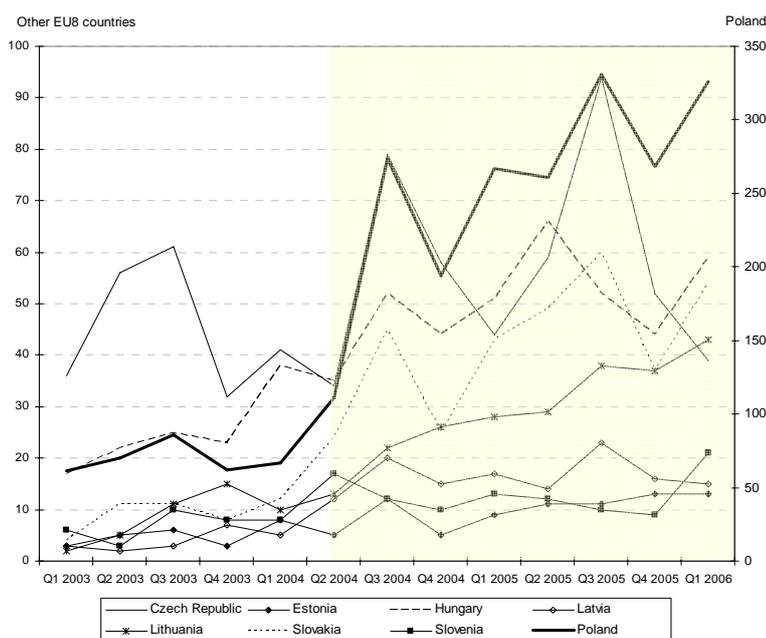
**Table 1. Number of visits to the UK by the nationals of the selected EU 15 and the Accession countries, 2003-2005 (in thousands)**

Country	2003	2004	2005	2005/2003 (in per cent)
France	2 845	3 149	3 224	113,32%
Germany	2 490	2 573	2 674	107,39%
Ireland	2 206	2 147	2 388	108,25%
Spain	855	1 047	1 163	136,02%
<b>EU 15</b>	<b>13 346</b>	<b>14 522</b>	<b>14 996</b>	<b>112,36%</b>
Czech Republic	185	212	249	134,59%
Estonia	17	30	44	258,82%
Hungary	87	169	213	244,83%
Latvia	14	53	72	514,29%
Lithuania	34	70	133	391,18%
Poland	278	646	1 127	405,40%
Slovakia	34	106	189	555,88%
Slovenia	27	47	45	166,67%
<b>EU8 countries</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>1 334</b>	<b>2 071</b>	<b>305,91%</b>

Source: Fihel, Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2006.

From the data presented in table 1 it follows that the dynamics of visits to the UK by the nationals of selected EU8 countries was 3-5 times higher than EU15 average – the data shows also the spectacular dynamics of most recent mobility of the CEE countries' residents. The highest increase was recorded in case of citizens of Slovakia, Latvia, Poland and Lithuania. Over 1.1 million Poles visited the UK in 2005 only (as compared to less than 300 thousand in 2003). The dynamics of visits to the UK is also shown below:

**Figure 4. Number of visits to the UK by the nationals of the Accession countries, 2003-2006 (in thousands)**



Source: Fihel, Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2006.

Obviously, the above presented data should not be used to analyze labour migration from the new accession countries, but shows the spectacular dynamics of post-accession mobility. With regard to labour migration, in case of the UK and Ireland the data on labour migration are provided by specific registers applied after opening their labour markets. WRS is the register of all migrants from the EU8 countries wishing to take up employment in the United Kingdom. It was set up on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004 in order to provide at least basic information on post-accession migration flows. The data are far from being perfect as only applications/applicants are recorded and not migrants in general, and there is no possibility of checking whether the applicant is still staying in the United Kingdom<sup>8</sup>. Nevertheless, WRS allows for tracing migration trends and at least estimating the scale of migration from EU8 countries.

The WRS data – published regularly by the Home Office - shows that the total number of workers from the A8 countries registered in the UK between May 2004 and June 2006 amounted to 427,000 (447,000 applicants and 558,000 approved applications, incl. 101,000 of applications to re-register lodged by those workers who had changed employers)<sup>9</sup>. Migrants from Poland constituted 62 per cent of the above presented numbers, making it thus the most important sending country – as of June 2006 the number of applicants from Poland was 264,500. This data should not be used as a direct measure of the inflow of workers into the UK. In fact, in May 2004, when the British labour market was opened to new EU countries, thousands of Czechs, Slovaks and Poles had already been working in the British Islands. According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) carried out in the United Kingdom, in 2003, i.e. before the accession to the European Union, as many as 21,000 immigrants from the Czech Republic and Slovakia and 34,000 from Poland lived in the country, and the trend was clearly rising, especially in the case of Poland (Salt 2005). For most of them applying to the WRS was the only way to legitimize their employment in the United Kingdom. In May 2004, almost 6,000 applications were made but only one in four by the newly arrived EU8 citizens (Portes and French 2005). In two months' time, however, newly arrived migrants dominated the group of applicants.

If we assume that the number and structure of applications to the WRS may serve as a proxy of “real” migration to the country – which does seem reasonable to some extent – the data provided by the Home Office allows building quite a precise picture of contemporary migration to the UK. The data reveals that migrants to the UK are predominantly young persons, more than 80 per cent being aged 18 to 34, and males. Only 7 per cent of the registered workers moved with their dependants which, in fact, may suggest that this is short-term migration only. Migrant workers from the “new” member countries tend to concentrate in some sectors, namely in administration, business and management (34 per cent), hospitality and catering (21 per cent), agriculture (12 per cent), manufacturing (7 per cent) and agriculture-related sectors (5 per cent)<sup>10</sup>. A sharp increase was recorded particularly in the case of administration, business and management sector: the proportion of workers who had applied for work in this sector increased from 17 per cent (last quarter of 2004) to 44 per cent (last quarter of 2005) (see the analysis in part 5).

Ireland, another EU15 country that opened its labour market to the citizens of new accession countries on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004, has been relatively open to the inflow from those countries already

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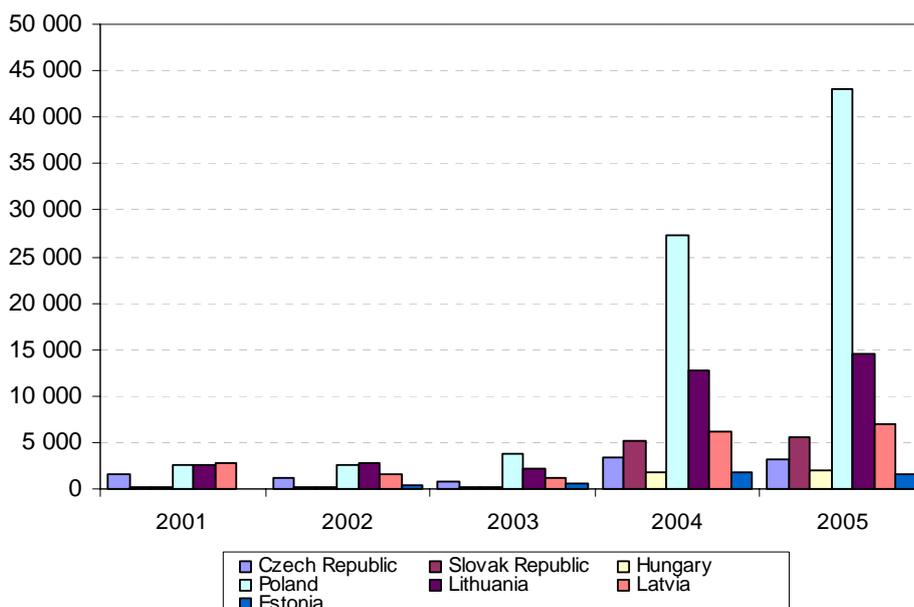
<sup>8</sup> In addition, an application costs 50 pounds, which might be a disincentive to register.

<sup>9</sup> The German Economic Institute (DIW) made an evaluation of the above presented data and reached the conclusion that in fact in the period May 2004 – April 2005 only 50,000 instead 175,000 migrations were recorded. The difference is due to the fact that each registration represents one workplace and not necessarily one migrant and that according to the estimates of Home Office more than 40 per cent of registered migrants were present in the UK prior to the accession and simply used the opportunity to legalize their stay abroad (Traser 2005). However, based on the Labour Force survey data Portes and French (2005) showed that the WRS depicts the migration phenomenon quite precisely although they suggest that many of the newcomers left the country after a few months.

<sup>10</sup> Due to the very nature of work, employment in agriculture is strictly seasonal – in the summertime the share of employment in this sector was higher than 20 per cent.

since 2001. The scale of immigration to Ireland is reflected by the data on Personal Public Service numbers (PPS) to be acquired by every migrant worker (Figure 5). The total of PPS numbers issued to the EU8 nationals increased from 10,000 in 2001 to 75,000 in 2005 (in the period 2001-2005, 162,000 PPS numbers were issued to EU8 citizens). In 2001 the shares of PPS numbers issued to Poles, Lithuanians and Latvians were almost equal to 27 per cent in case of each group. In the following years, the relative share of Polish migrants has been rapidly increasing reaching up to 47 per cent in 2004 and 57 per cent in 2005.

**Figure 5. PPS numbers issued to labour migrants in Ireland, by year and country of citizenship**



Source: Skills

needs in the Irish economy... 2006

Similarly to the evidence from Britain, also in Ireland Poles proved to be by far the most highly prone to migrate for work of all EU8 nationals (43,000 workers registered in 2005). The number of Lithuanian workers in 2005 (15,000) was only one-third of that of Poles (43,000), and of Latvians (7,500) only one-sixth. The number of Slovaks, Czechs, Hungarians and Estonians varied between 1,000 and 5,000 whereas the number of Slovenians was below 100. Unlike in the case of Britain, in Ireland migrant workers from EU8 are employed in considerable proportions both in low-skilled sectors (construction industry, tourism, agriculture and food processing) and high-skilled sectors (finance, information and communication technology, healthcare).

The prevalence of Polish nationals in the group of migrants from the EU8 countries is also marked in Scandinavian countries, especially in Norway. In the period from May 2004 to August 2005 the number of first-time work permits issued to Polish citizens was as high as 8,900 in Norway, 3,800 in Sweden and 1,700 in Denmark. Out of all 29,000 migrants from the EU8 countries who were granted permission to work in this period in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, 61 per cent came from Poland.

From the above presented data it follows that it would be hardly possible to draw a comprehensive and reliable picture of contemporary migration from Poland or other CEE countries. The quoted data sources are marked by serious shortcomings. There is no reliable data on illegal migration to

such countries as Germany, the UK or Ireland<sup>11</sup>. One has to remember that irregularity was one of the most important features of Polish migration in the 1990s. The British example shows clearly how complicated it is to forecast migration in a dynamically changing environment. Prior to the decision on opening its labour market, the British government attempted to estimate the potential post-enlargement labour flows. The outcome was rather low – the number of annual inflow from all accession countries was estimated at 5,000 – 13,000, which constitutes less than 10 per cent of recorded registrations with the WRS. This difference is partly due to methodological problems with the data base – e.g. we do not know how many applicants had been staying in the UK prior to the accession and how many decided to leave after completion of the registry – yet the major argument relates to the very fact that only three countries decided to open their labour markets for citizens of “new” member countries and quantitative scenarios were prepared based on different assumptions.

However, a number of important features of contemporary migration from Poland can be pinpointed upon analysis of the existing data on migration. The first two have already been stated: the prevalence of labour migration, and an increasingly evident predominance of short-term migration. Thirdly, despite institutional changes and selective opening of labour markets in the “old” EU member states, the composition of destination countries has not changed significantly. That is particularly true if we take into consideration seasonal migration to Germany, to mention this fact once again. However, the portfolio of destination countries is changing slowly with Germany losing its top position and the UK and Ireland gaining position in the light of the latest migration from Poland. In general, and this holds true for Poland as well as other CEE countries, migration from the EU8 countries to Western Europe did not begin on May 1st, 2004. A large scale of the flow which was recorded afterwards, particularly in case of the UK and Ireland, seems to result, at least partially, from the registration (legalization) of undocumented migrants who arrived in these countries prior to May 1st, 2004. From the existing statistical data it follows that – contrary to public perception – the opening of a number of labour markets in the ‘old’ European Union did not bring about mass migration from new member states. The migration potential has been triggered off only in Poland, followed by Lithuania, and to a lesser extent by Slovakia and Latvia, with the remaining EU8 countries being almost unaffected.

#### **4. The mobility of highly skilled persons**

Due to the limited availability and problematic quality of migration data, the analysis of international mobility of people is a complex and difficult task. This is particularly true in analysis of the situation of particular groups, as in case of highly skilled persons. Additional complications appear when attempting to assess the most recent migration trends, i.e. mobility since the accession of 8 CEE countries to the EU. The available data are fragmentary only thus enabling to draw conclusions about general tendencies rather than a detailed picture of the phenomenon.

Traditionally, considerable role in Poles’ mobility was ascribed to the emigration of highly skilled persons. Similarly to other less developed countries, this process was described and interpreted in the categories of brain drain. However, upon analysis of data on international migration, this thesis seems to be rather questionable with reference to almost the whole post-war period. With an exception of an episode of (partially) forced migration of persons of Jewish descent (1968-1971), when over 13,000 of mostly highly educated persons left Poland, the share of persons with tertiary

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<sup>11</sup> In the late 1990s various studies estimated the scale of irregular employment of Polish migrants in Western host countries at a minimum of 150,000-200,000 annually.

education among all migrants did not differ significantly from that of the total population<sup>12</sup>. However, the situation changed in the late 1970s and 1980s. The brain drain thesis is particularly true in the case of massive outflow in the 1980s. Calculations based on the policy register's data show that of almost 700,000 emigrants who left Poland between April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1981 and December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1988, 15 per cent had a higher degree and 31 per cent had secondary education. If we consider that for the whole population the share of university graduates was ca. 7 per cent, the quoted data show that there was a considerable overrepresentation of emigrants of high quality human capital in relation to the whole population of Poland (Sakson 2002). The scale of the emigration of high-class specialists in the 1980s was so large that the number of emigrants in this category each year (15,000) constituted approximately one fourth of Polish university graduates of all higher education institutions (Okólski 1997).

As follows from various data sources, the situation has much changed during transformation. Using the official data, we can assume that since 1990, the share of individuals with the lowest level of education has been increasing, while the share of individuals with the highest level of educational attainment has been decreasing. At the threshold of transformation in 1988, persons who had elementary or lower than elementary education constituted 37 per cent of emigrants aged 15+ (with a known level of education), and people with a higher degree – 9 per cent, whereas in 2003, there were 55 per cent in the former group, and 4 per cent in the latter. These observations were proved by the majority of studies conducted both in Poland and in the receiving countries. CMR research in the years 1994-1999 indicated that the claim about the brain drain can be upheld only in relation to big urban centres. More importantly in quantitative terms, migration from the peripheral regions was dominated by individuals with no more than secondary educational attainment, of poor human capital, taking up employment almost exclusively in the secondary sectors of labour markets in the host countries (cf. Figure 6)<sup>13</sup>.

Similar results were provided by studies conducted both in Poland and in the receiving countries. Each of these studies supported the observation that a greater propensity to migrate was typical for people with low cultural competencies and no knowledge of foreign languages who encountered problems with finding their feet in the new post-communist reality, particularly on the labour market. These people were almost fully dependent on the employment offer addressed to unskilled workers, willing to start work any time and for any period of time (usually on an extremely short-term basis). Exceptions to the case – such as Ireland or the Scandinavian countries – only confirmed the general rule (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2005).

The thesis of structural change in Polish migration since 1990 was supported by a few studies on highly skilled migration from Poland, particularly in the case of scientists. The factors pushing the scientists to go abroad were actually parallel in all CEE countries: low income and worse labour conditions, low prestige and social status of science and education, poorly equipped study rooms and laboratories, restricted access to the literature, lack of research funds, limited opportunities for contacting broader scientific circles. A massive migration abroad could have been expected as the education in many states of the region was of top quality.

Such a prognosis only came true to a certain extent, as can be clearly seen from the results of an in-depth survey that covered 1,003 scientific institutions hiring roughly 45 per cent of all the scientific workers in Poland and covered the period from 1980 to 1996 (Hryniewicz, Jałowicki, Mync 1992; 1994; 1997). In 1981-1991 all the scientific centres under survey (with the total staff of 28 500 academic and research workers) lost over one fourth of the staff (as compared to the final

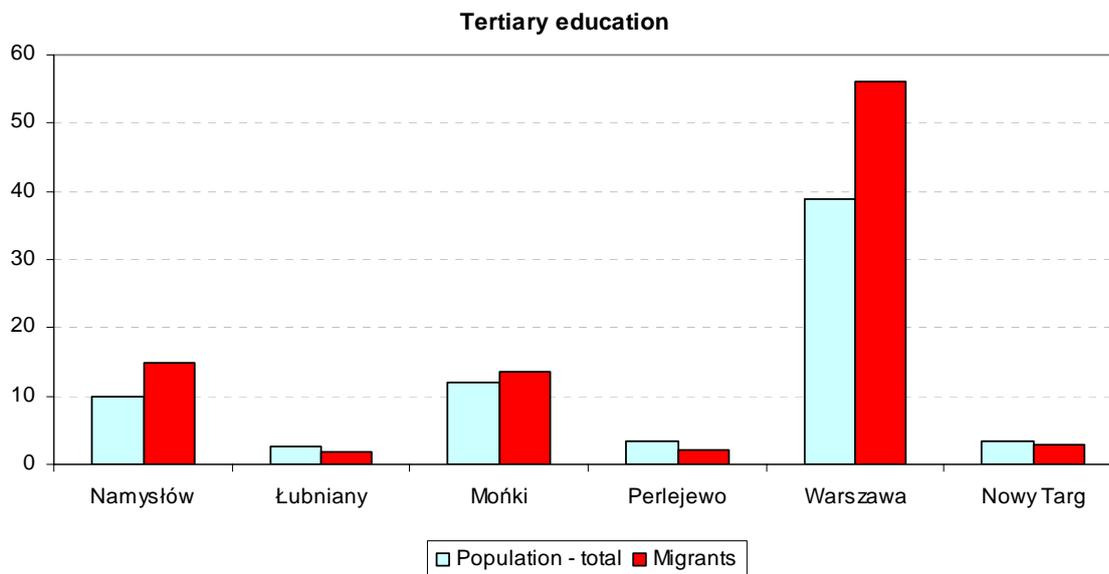
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<sup>12</sup> In case of emigrating Poles of Jewish descent this share was over 8 times higher than in the total population.

<sup>13</sup> Namysłów, Mońki, Nowy Targ and Warszawa are examples of town communities; Lubniany, Perlejewo – of village communities.

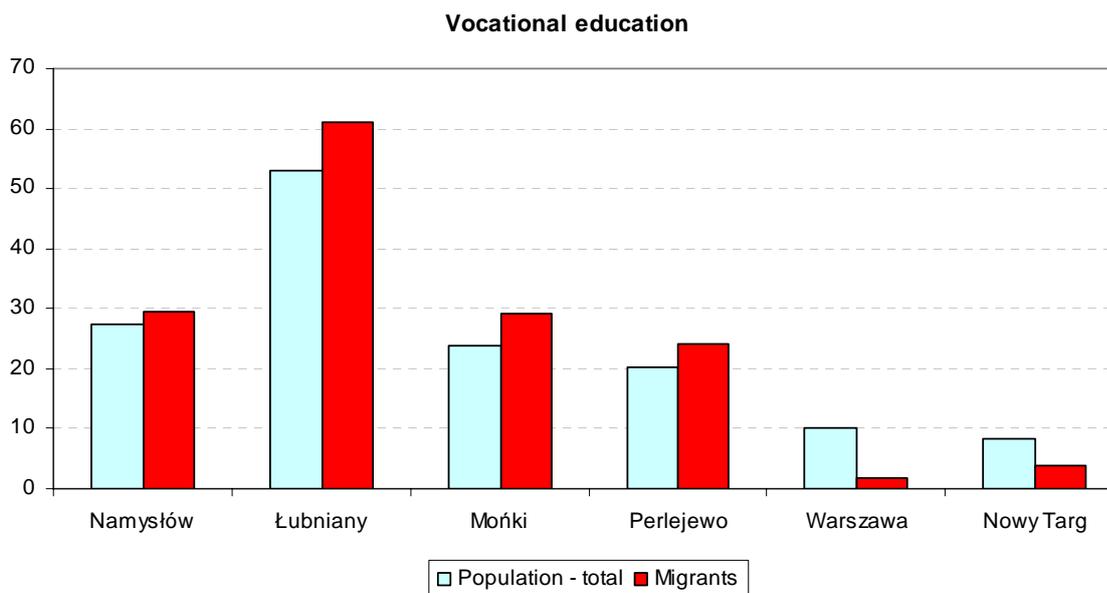
date of that period) due to termination of contracts. Emigration constituted “only” 9.5 per cent of the staff in 1991, while the scientists’ total outflow reaching 15.1 per cent resulted from so-called internal brain drain, i.e. taking up other posts across Poland (such that typically brought about higher profits or better career opportunities). This proves that this migration stream originated mostly from lack of opportunities for effective application of human resources in Poland, and should be described rather in terms of brain overflow than brain drain.

**Figure 6. Migrants with vocational and tertiary education in selected Polish communities<sup>14</sup>**



	Namysłów	Łubniany	Mońki	Perlejewo	Warszawa	Nowy Targ
Migration selectivity index*	1,48	0,68	1,14	0,59	1,44	0,85

\* share of the migrants with tertiary education in relation to the share of this group in the total population

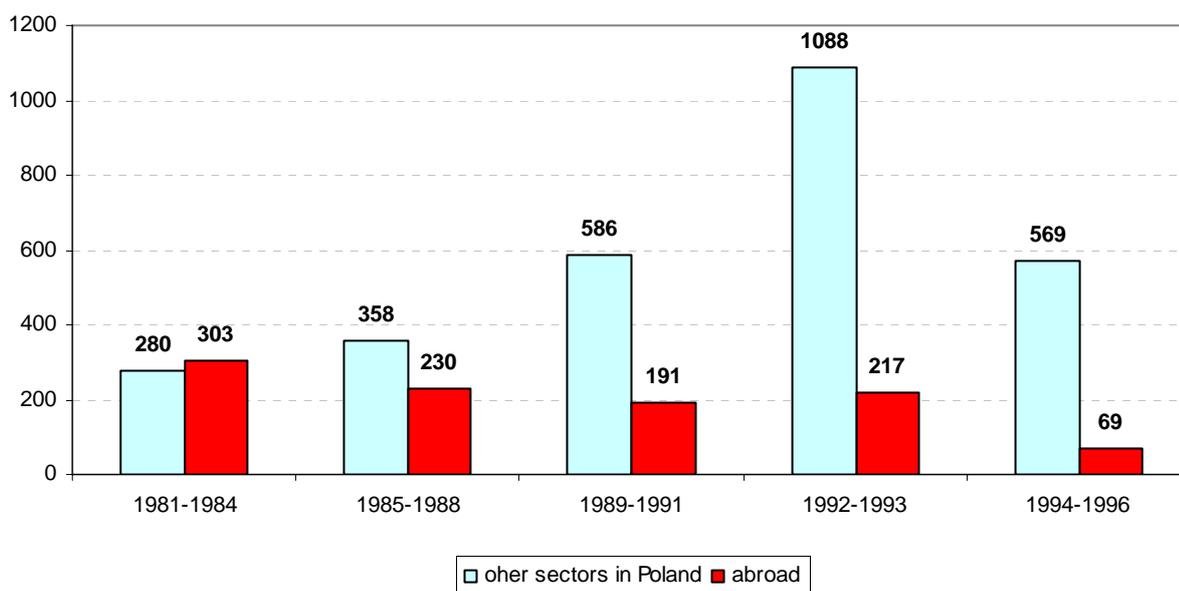


Source: Author’s elaboration based on the CMR survey data

<sup>14</sup> See also Jazwińska and Okólski 2001.

Taking into account the outflow of scientists from the institutions under survey in the long-term, i.e. 1981-1996 (Figure 7) the one remarkable phenomenon is an enormous increase in the number of persons who left up to in the years 1992-1993, with a radical reverse trend in 1994-1996. The reason behind this phenomenon is easy to pinpoint: such interdependence was determined by resignations that were not connected with emigration. Up to the early years of the transition period an increasing number of people was giving up scientific activities in order to take up positions in other industries; in the years 1981-1988 annual resignations of scientists amounted to 1 per cent, in 1989-1991 – 2 per cent, in 1992-1993 – as much as 4 per cent. Later, in 1994-1996 this tendency diminished; at that time the annual percentage of academic or research staff deciding to resign equalled 2 per cent.

**Figure 7. Average annual number of scientists leaving the R&D sector in Poland, 1981-1996**



Source: Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2005, based on Hryniewicz, Jałowiecki, Mync 1997.

In comparison with this phenomenon of a certainly structural profile, emigration of scientists seemed rather insignificant; in the longer run it proved to be almost marginal. This is demonstrated by its share in the total outflow of scientific workers in subsequent periods, which diminished from 52 per cent (1981-1984) to 11 per cent (1994-1996). Following 1993, the number of emigrating scientists constituted barely 0.2 per cent of the total staff while, e.g. in 1981-1984 it was as high as 11 per cent. Only some emigrants continued working in the scientific field after they had settled abroad (51 per cent of the total), thus human capital should not be considered as transferred but rather as partially lost (this also applies to the case of those scientists who left for other positions within Poland).

However, in the second half of the 1990s the trend reversed once again. The structure of migrants had changed as a consequence of the educational breakthrough on the one hand and economic crisis on the other, particularly the deteriorating situation on the Polish labour market. Such a picture emerges from the population census data. According to the Polish census of 2002, among the 576,000 permanent residents aged 15 years or more who had been living abroad for at least 12 months at the time of the census<sup>15</sup>, 0.7 per cent held a doctoral degree, 10.1 per cent a

<sup>15</sup> That was 1.8 per cent of the total number of permanent residents of Poland aged 15 or more years.

university diploma (i.e. MA) and 3.2 per cent other tertiary education diplomas (BA), whereas among the general population the figures were 0.3 per cent, 7.4 per cent, and 2.7 per cent, respectively. Altogether the educational level of migrants was much better than that of sending population (14.0 per cent vs. 10.4 per cent).

**Table 2. Permanent citizens of Poland (aged 15 and more) staying abroad for longer than 12 months by the level of education (in per cent) and year of departure (in per cent)**

Year of departure	Level of education		
	tertiary	secondary	other
Total	<b>14,0</b>	<b>35,0</b>	<b>51,0</b>
Including:			
1988 and before	15,6	34,6	49,8
1989-1991	11,8	33,4	54,9
1992-1994	13,4	36,3	50,2
1995-1997	13,4	36,4	50,2
1998-2001	15,2	35,6	49,2

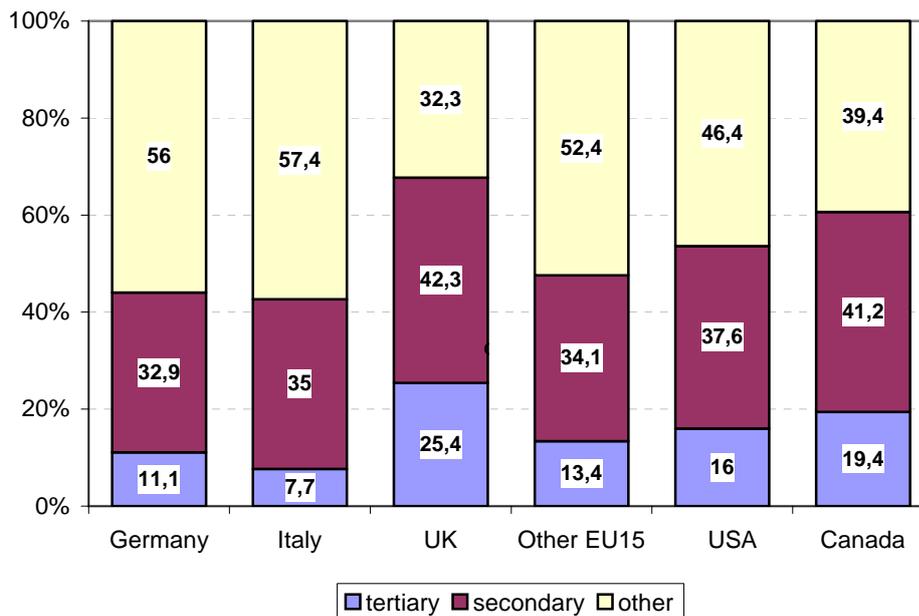
*Source: Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2005, based on the unpublished census data*

Table 2 shows that the share of highly educated migrants was the highest before the beginning of the transition (15.6 per cent), then became relatively low in the years 1989-1991 (11.8 per cent), only to rise again in the following years. The same conclusion can be drawn on the basis of the LFS data which demonstrates that since the late 1990s the share of migrants with tertiary education has increased significantly (cf. Figure 10 in the annex).

The educational structure of Polish migrants is closely related characteristics of given migration process. The highly educated were under-represented among those migrating to Germany and Italy, and over-represented among those migrating to other countries, especially to the United Kingdom (cf. Figure 8)<sup>16</sup>. Educational structure is closely connected to the type of migration, e.g. seasonal migrants are relatively worse educated. On the other hand, the most recent migration to English-speaking countries is the domain of young and relatively well-educated persons.

<sup>16</sup> A very similar picture may be drawn on the basis of the LFS data (cf. Figure 11 in annex).

**Figure 8. Permanent citizens of Poland (aged 15 and more) staying abroad for longer than 12 months by the level of education (in percentages) and the country of destination**



Source: Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2005, based on the unpublished census data

One of the most controversial issues in current public debate is the migration of medical professionals. This is above all a consequence of the permanent demand for this type of migrants in highly developed states. In the light of unfavourable demographic trends as well as fluctuations on the labour markets, the majority of Western European states are facing significant deficiencies in the number of medical staff. In addition, this field represents a typical example of intangible services, that is, the human flow cannot be easily substituted with mobility of goods and services. In effect, potential immigrants may expect highly beneficial financial and social conditions, integration support and, in at least several receiving countries, simplified immigration procedures. Work offers targeted at healthcare workers in Central and Eastern European states are incomparably better than the opportunities created by local labour markets<sup>17</sup>. As a consequence, high migration propensity among this group should be expected.

In the case of Poland, some indication of the scale of potential migration of medical professionals is provided by the issuing of certificates confirming qualifications and professional experience required by employers in Western European states. The number of issued certificates – 5,114 (as of the end of June 2006) amounted to 4.3 per cent of the total number of medical doctors in Poland (118,475). When talking about dentists, as of the end of June 2006, the above mentioned certificate was issued to 1,565 persons. This constitutes 5.1 per cent of the total number of dentists in Poland. Some data on semi-skilled medical staff has also been collected (for 2005): 2,830 certificates issued to nurses compared to the 240,128 nurses registered in Poland, which amounts to 1.2 per cent of this professional group in Poland. Only 195 documents certifying qualification were issued to midwives compared to the 33,385 registered nationally, which amounts to 0.6 per cent among the professionally active (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2005, Polish Ministry of Health data).

<sup>17</sup> For example, in Poland a 'resident' (i.e. a graduate of a medical university with a permanent job secured by the government) can earn a gross salary of PLN 1,637 while he/she can earn 20 times more abroad (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2005).

**Table 3. Certificates issued to medical professionals – specialties with the highest number of certificates issued and the highest share in total number of active specialists (May 2004 – June 2006)**

Specialty	No. of economically active doctors	No. of certificates issued	Share of certificates in the total no. of specialists
<b>Specialties with the highest number of certificates issued</b>			
Anaesthesiology	3 984	625	15.6
Surgery	5 395	334	6.1
Orthopedics	2 261	168	7.4
Internal diseases*	11 792	163	1.38
Radiology	1 993	154	7.7
<b>Specialties with the highest relation of certificates issued to the number of active specialists</b>			
Anaesthesiology	3 984	625	15.6
Plastic surgery	142	21	14.7
Chest surgery	218	28	12.8
Radiology	1 993	154	7.7
Orthopedics	2 261	168	7.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>81 346</b>	<b>3 074</b>	<b>3.7</b>

\* data for end of June 2005

Source: Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2005, based on the Ministry of Health data.

It would be hard to consider the scale of migration estimated this way alarming and this is the line followed in the evaluations by researchers and specialists from the Ministry of Health. Although migration of the so-called 'white personnel' is a noticeable phenomenon, its scale is not so large as to pose a threat to the healthcare system in the short-term. This threat is not that significant because, in the experts' opinion, the Polish educational system "produces" medical professionals at a rate still higher than their potential outflow to other states. In fact, to some extent migration of medical specialists may be viewed as a brain overflow rather than brain drain, which is particularly true in the case of young professionals trapped in the Polish "feudal" organisational structures of the medical profession with limited chances for promotion. Nonetheless, the outflow of medical doctors appears very painful in the case of certain specializations. This especially refers to anaesthesiology (here the percentage of potential migrants amounted to almost 16 per cent!), chest surgery (12.8 per cent), plastic surgery (14.7 per cent), as well as radiologists (7.7 per cent). The outflow problem has a considerable impact on specialties of the most difficult position in terms of income on the Polish labour market (anaesthesiologists, radiologists) or of high demand on foreign labour markets (plastic surgeons). Moreover, a temporary or permanent imbalance on local and regional labour markets is likely to happen (or has already happened).

The above presented data may be supplemented by information on the migration of students – a group usually perceived as extremely mobile. The official data says very little about the real scale of the phenomenon. Less than 10,000 persons annually participate in exchange programmes

(ERASMUS, programmes based on bilateral agreements). According to estimates of the Ministry of Education, the number of persons studying abroad “out of their own accord” may be even 2 or 3 times higher. Nevertheless, the scale of students’ mobility in Poland is very low and far below Western European standards (see next part).

Very little is known about the educational attainment or skill level of migrants from other EU8 countries. In the case of Hungary, starting back from 1989 the number of R&D employees fell dramatically - from ca. 45,000 in 1989 to 20,000 in 1995. Among other causes, it had resulted from the transformation of science and research related institutions. In effect, some highly skilled individuals were either looking for employment in other areas nationwide or went abroad. However, this tendency was gradually reversing – in the early 1990s roughly 4-5 per cent of Hungarian R&D employees temporarily resided abroad (work or scholarships), while in 1999-2001 this number went down to ca. 2 per cent. In the case of Hungary the outflow referred mostly to representatives of natural sciences and medical sciences. At the end of the 1990s this outflow started being compensated with the inflow of foreign R&D staff. Nevertheless, the problem was that, in the majority of cases, the inflow concerned specialists in the social sciences (e.g. in 1999 150 natural sciences and 138 medical sciences’ professionals went abroad with an inflow of 139 and 30, respectively). The key point is that for Hungary the flow of workers in the scientific area was of low importance – the process of brain circulation concerned merely 10 per cent of all scientific institutions (Inzelt 2003).

An interesting case is the Baltic States, where the mass outflow of high-class specialists was a direct consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the case of Lithuania, in 1992 over 5,000 university graduates left the country, but in the later years the figure dropped radically and was not more than 600 in 1996 and slightly over 400 in 2000. In this sense the trends in the migration of specialists were quite similar to the general pattern of migration in the region (Ribickis 2003).

Recent surveys showed a relatively high propensity for going abroad in most CEE countries. As far as the highly skilled are concerned, in 2004 almost 26 per cent of Lithuanian doctors and nurses planned to seek employment abroad. Similar research conducted among Estonian health care professionals gave the result of 5.4 per cent of respondents (which is about 700-800 individuals) who had definite plans to work abroad, 17.9 per cent who developed such plans and 32.3 per cent who had a vague plan. Only 44.4 per cent of respondents did not take emigration into account. Migration intentions of medical professionals are even stronger in other EU8 countries, even if recorded migration flows are moderate (Figure 12 in the annex).

At the same time, surveys reveal the temporary character of intended migration of highly skilled. Out of all Estonian medical professionals who want to work abroad, 6.5 per cent want to leave the home-country for permanent, while 44.5 per cent for a couple of years and 22 per cent for a couple of months. The percentages of physicians and nurses who want to emigrate permanently (among the total of those who want to emigrate) are 25 per cent for Poland, 11 per cent for the Czech Republic, 7 per cent for Hungary and 5 per cent for Lithuania. According to a survey research of the Estonian working-age population, in 2003 out of the total 3 per cent would definitely wish to work abroad permanently, while a further 6 per cent for a few years only (Vörk, Kallaste, Priinits 2004; Aidis, Krupickaitė, Blinstrubaitė 2005).

In at least a few countries of the region (Poland, the Baltic States), the propensity to migrate is relatively high among the highly skilled. Nowadays migrant workers are well-educated and young.

The key factor that determines the possible consequences for sending societies and their economies is the duration of stay abroad. Past migration trends and survey research results indicate a temporary character of labour migration. Nevertheless, there already are specific labour shortages, for instance of qualified workers, medical professionals etc., and, thus, these countries will face the need for importing foreign labour force in the near future.

## **5. Brain drain, brain exchange or brain waste?**

Independently from the above data indicating that we still have to do with positive selection of the emigrants from Poland with regard to education, this process does not have a mass character, and its scale and significance are decisively incomparable to the phenomena faced in the 1980s. Regardless of the fact that Polish migrants are, at least to some extent, positively selected with respect to human capital, they are concentrated predominantly in the secondary sectors of receiving economies and taking jobs in “typical” migrant sectors such as construction, agriculture, cleaning, hotels.

This conclusion can be drawn, among others, from the WRS data. The largest group of workers from the A8 countries (34 per cent) includes persons hired in administration, business and management, with a further 21 per cent working in hospitality and catering, 12 per cent in agriculture and 8 per cent in manufacturing. In absolute terms, the majority of migrants applied for work in the administration, business and management sector (143,805). Polish workers dominated in all sectors.

However, the above presented picture may be misleading<sup>18</sup>. Considering the information on the occupations of applicants from accession countries, it turns out that they mainly undertake simple jobs which do not demand high skills. From this perspective, data on occupations are hardly comparable with the data on sectors in which applicants were employed (cf. Table 4). Among the top occupations are such posts as process operative (over 95,000 applicants till June 2006), warehouse operative (25,215), packer (24,130), kitchen and catering assistant (24,090), cleaner, domestic staff (20,430), farm worker (18,105), waiter/waitress (15,840) can be found. The biggest group of workers was classified as process operatives (other factory worker) (36 per cent) and was followed by catering assistants (10 per cent) and packers (9 per cent).

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<sup>18</sup> For example, in case of administration, business and management the problem is that workers in this sector work predominantly for recruitment agencies so could be employed in a variety of occupations.

**Table 4. 28 (of 250) top occupations among the A8 immigrants, July 2004 - June 2006**

No.	Occupation	Number of applicants	No.	Occupation	Number of applicants
1	Process operative	95 865	16	Chef's assistant	4 845
2	Warehouse operative	25 215	17	Truck driver	3 620
3	Packer	24 130	18	Administrator, general	3 600
4	Kitchen assistant	24 090	19	Fruit picker	3 580
5	Cleaner, domestic staff	20 430	20	Driver, delivery van	2 695
6	Farm worker	18 105	21	Hotel porter	2 435
7	Waitress	15 840	22	Carpenter	2 355
8	Maid	13 835	23	Bus driver	2 245
9	Care assistant	12 610	24	Launderer	1 720
10	Sales assistant	10 535	25	Leisure and theme park attendant	1 700
11	Construction worker	10 525	26	Baker	1 695
12	Crop harvester	8 020	27	Butcher	1 545
13	Food processing operative (fruits/veg.)	6 295	28	Mechanic	1 505
14	Bar staff	6 030	<b>Together 28 occupations*</b>		<b>326 495</b>
15	Food processing operative (meat)	5 030	<b>All occupations</b>		<b>388 265</b>

\* 84 per cent of all occupations

Source: Author's elaboration based on the Home Office data

The above presented data shows that a vast majority (80-90 per cent) of migrants from the A8 countries are hired for occupations that need no professional qualifications. Other sources state that out of the total number of migrants from Poland to the UK the share of persons holding a university degree exceeds 25 per cent. This would indicate that, certainly, positive effects related to opportunities for qualification improvement or professional development are out of range for the majority of educated migrants. Rather wasting or deskilling of brains, a typical phenomenon for the migration of the 1980s, should be expected.

As already stated, recent migration from Poland is marked by a higher share of persons with tertiary education than for the total population. This picture may be completely misleading without assessment of the structure of the Polish population. In the last 20 years, Poland experienced a true educational breakthrough. Between 1970 and 2001, the share of university graduates among the Polish population increased from 2 per cent to 12 per cent. At the end of the 1990s, the number of students was 2.6 higher than in 1990. Nowadays in Poland there are over 1.8 million students, and the data from GUS (the Central Statistical Office) shows that in the early 2000s the gross enrolment ratio (the rate of all studying to the whole population) in the age group 19-24 was close to 50 per cent, which means that as for the universality of higher education Poland has almost reached the standards of the developed countries (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2005). If we take into consideration that a higher propensity to migrate is typically a feature of relatively young persons (aged 18 to 35), the recent increase in the highly skilled migration may be a statistical artefact only. In this context the increase in the share of relatively well-educated migrants should be perceived as a natural consequence of educational developments in Poland. Outflow of persons with tertiary education who often face serious problems on the Polish labour market can thus be described as brain overflow and not brain drain. This process does not necessarily have to be negative for Polish economy – those who leave stand a better chance to find work and accumulate money they may use in the sending country afterwards (if they return, obviously...). Additional benefits may result from gaining professional and cultural experience<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Additional benefits may arise due to the positive impact on human capital formation i.e. through the demonstration effect as proposed by Oded Stark (2005). However, in case of Poland and other CEE countries whose citizens regardless of their skill level are employed predominantly in secondary sectors of receiving economies, this effect seems to be rather doubtful.

In the early 2000s the share of migrants with tertiary education among all expatriates in Poland (and also other CEE countries) was higher than in the case of the total population but, at the same time, significantly lower than for well-developed countries. In many cases (European countries), the share of expatriates with tertiary education was higher than 30 per cent, in a few cases (USA, Japan, Australia) close to 50 per cent. The relative scale of highly skilled migration seems moderate, and is higher only than in such countries as Turkey and Southern European countries<sup>20</sup>. In this context, the increasing scale of highly skilled migration from Poland is to be perceived as a rather typical and not exceptional process. In fact, from the data included in table 5 it follows that the structure of migration predominantly reflects the composition of the sending society.

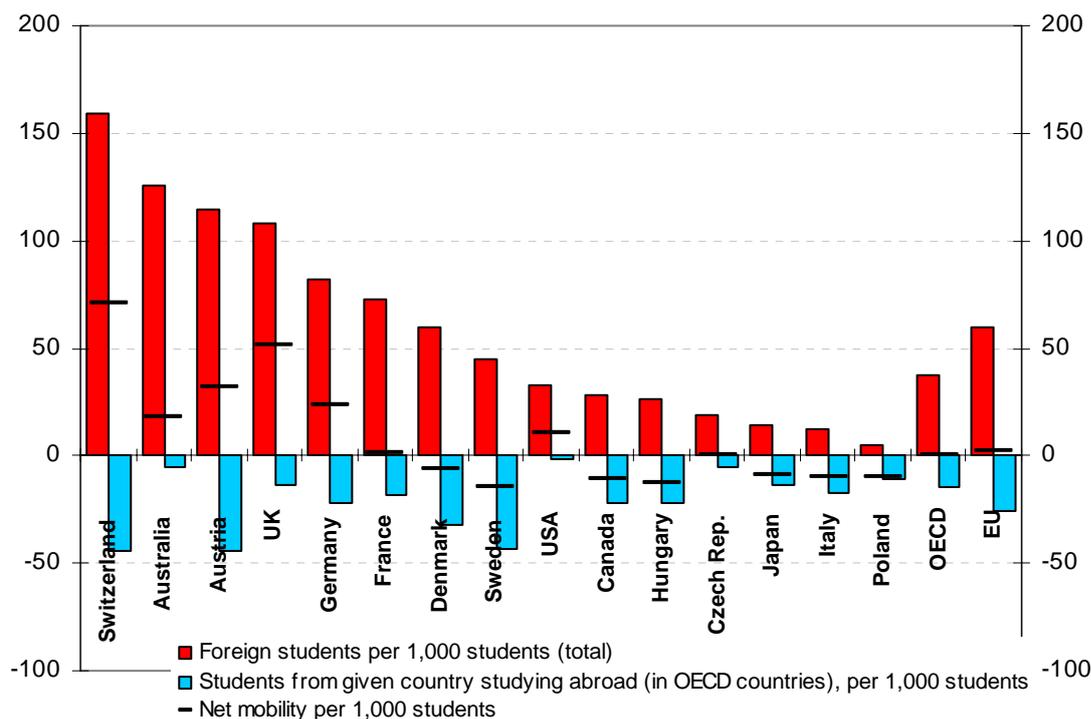
**Table 5. Expatriates from selected OECD countries by level of education around 2000 (in per cent)**

Country	Share of expatriates with:			Number of expatriates
	tertiary education	secondary education	primary education	
USA	49,9	28,3	21,8	809 540
Japan	49,7	38,9	11,4	575 992
Australia	45,9	33,1	21,0	267 314
UK	41,2	32,8	26,0	3 229 676
Canada	40,6	40,0	19,4	1 044 978
France	36,4	32,8	30,8	1 013 581
Germany	30,4	42,1	27,5	2 993 757
<b>Hungary</b>	<b>29,6</b>	<b>42,4</b>	<b>28,0</b>	<b>314 922</b>
Ireland	27,5	21,2	51,2	792 316
<b>Poland</b>	<b>26,6</b>	<b>42,0</b>	<b>31,4</b>	<b>1 276 482</b>
<b>Czech Rep.</b>	<b>25,2</b>	<b>50,5</b>	<b>24,3</b>	<b>215 879</b>
Spain	18,7	27,8	53,5	763 013
Italy	13,0	26,8	60,3	2 430 339
Turkey	6,4	21,7	71,9	2 195 645

*Source: Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2005, based on OECD 2005.*

Similarly, figure 9 shows that the scale of students' mobility from and into Poland is far from well-developed countries' standards. In contemporary societies students' migration became a common and inevitable phenomenon – an integral part of an academic or professional career. Looking at trends in the development of the educational systems in Poland and other CEE countries it would also be reasonable to expect gradual increase in the mobility of students.

<sup>20</sup> In the latter cases, a relative low share of expatriates with tertiary education is the consequence of massive recruitment of low-skilled workers in the past (questworker scheme).

**Figure 9. Foreign students in selected OECD countries, 1998**

Source: Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2005.

However, one has to remember that this particular group is hardly predictable with respect to their migration strategies and plans. Temporary mobility (scholarships, training) may easily transform itself into permanent stay in the destination country. That is one of the reasons for the growing popularity of recruitment programmes targeted at students applied in the USA, Canada, Australia and most Western European countries.

The mobility of the highly skilled does not necessarily lead to negative consequences as described in public debates. Recent developments do not entitle to draw dramatic pictures of brain drain. Interestingly, the authors of reports on the mobility of Polish scientists, while using an alarming title “brain exodus” for the first report in the series, concluded their research with the humble statement on the “mobility of scientists” in the third one spanning the period of 1994 -1996 (Hryniewicz, Jałowiecki, Mync 1997). On the other hand, as clearly stated by the authors, the outflow of scientists from Poland has not lead to a brain drain, but on the other, it also has not succeed in terms of brain exchange, i.e. exchange of thoughts, ideas and experiences relevant for the development of scientific research in Poland.

## 6. Concluding remarks

Outflow of highly skilled specialists is a highly complex matter that gives rise to many controversies. On the one hand the outflow of specialists (loss of human capital) can be treated as one of the reasons of the relative technological backwardness of the states from the region. On the other, in the era of globalization migrations are becoming an inevitable phenomenon. This particularly concerns specialists or, more generally, persons with tertiary education. The global

economy in its current shape generates a considerable demand for such migrants related to the recent labour division on a global basis, entailed by the dynamic growth of new technologies in the services (including intangible services) and increasingly better opportunities in communications. Migrations of highly skilled persons are becoming a natural element of economic and social processes, and human resources as well (e.g. scholarships, scientific internships, mobility within transnational companies). Therefore, the pejorative notion of “brain drain” has been abandoned in favour of such terms as “circulation” or “brain exchange”.

The crucial issue is that a significant share of highly-skilled persons among emigrants is featured in highly developed states; the higher the level of socio-economic development, the more transparent this interdependence. Therefore, the increasing contribution of immigrants from CE countries holding university degrees should not be a surprise. On the contrary, it is to be expected that social and economic progress will result in the relative growth in the value of the migration of specialists from this region. However, brain drain may be a real issue for sending countries. This may occur if a negative balance in the migration of highly skilled personnel is observed, and would be particularly painful in the case of intangible services (i.e. medical services). Such a phenomenon may be particularly true in the case of Poland – a country with no tradition of immigration, where the inflow of highly skilled persons is relatively low.

In accordance with earlier prognosis, since the accession into the EU an increase in the scale of migration has been observed (although the scale of the phenomenon may be surprising for most migration specialists). The most drastic changes concern migration to the UK and Ireland, i.e. two of the three countries which opened their labour markets in May 2004. So far, this migration should not be described in terms of exodus, especially as predominantly of short-term character.

Changes in the scale of mobility observed since May 2004 concern highly skilled persons or specialists to a small degree. The most significant increase was revealed in the case of students and medical professionals. The first case should not be perceived in negative terms; to the contrary, the mobility of students in the contemporary world is an important aspect of education and may increase future productivity / stock of human capital. The case of medical professionals is the most controversial issue in recent public debates on migration. So far, this process is still far from being a mass one. However, even today the outflow of nurses and doctors results in serious problems on the local and regional markets (particularly in the case particular specialties). Additionally, in the face of the dramatic situation in the Polish health services sector, the scale of medical professionals' mobility may increase dramatically. The only way to stop the outflow or decrease its level would be a deep reform of the public health care system, including such spheres as education and training, working conditions, and earnings.

Up to the early 1990s, the EU countries were not attractive for highly skilled migrants, who almost exclusively targeted traditional immigration countries such as the USA, Canada or Australia. This situation changed as a consequence of introducing selective pro-migratory measures in migration policies and applying recruitment programmes. This, in turn, increases the risk of outflow from Poland and other CEE countries. The most recent migration to the UK and Ireland may serve as a perfect exemplification of this thesis.

Mobility of top specialists could be, and in many cases is, a crucial factor spurring the development of scientific disciplines, fostering research, and exchange of thought and experiences. The survey carried out by Hryniewicz, Jałowicki and Mync (1997) proves that Polish scientists who emigrate

maintain close ties with Poland and the scientific community back in Poland<sup>21</sup>. Even when residing abroad, they can exert a huge influence upon the scientific activities in Poland, and contribute to transfer of knowledge and technologies. The key obstacle is lack of mechanisms that would enable the scientists to return to CE. Thus, one of the most important task for migration policy makers would be to create favourable conditions for those highly skilled migrants who would like to return to their home countries.

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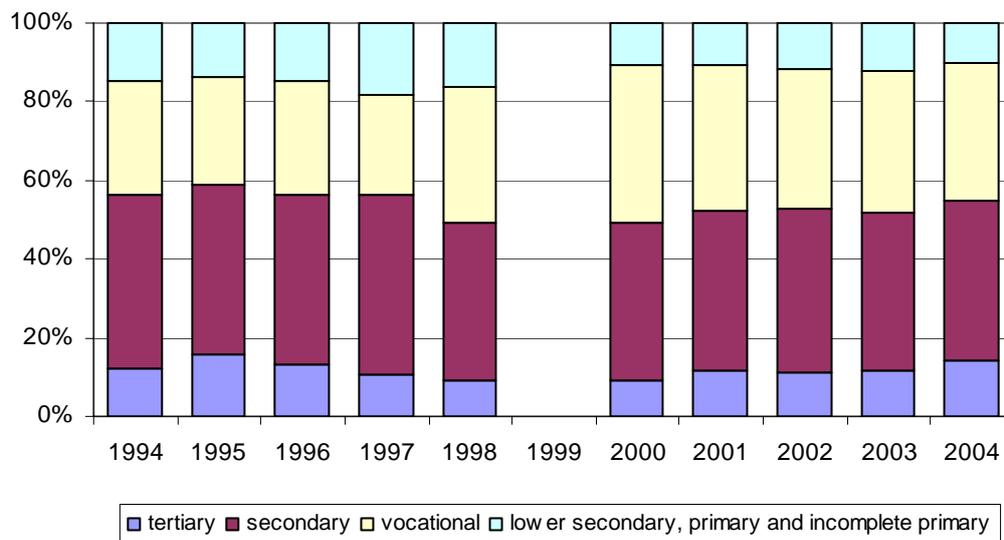
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<sup>21</sup> 93 per cent of respondents declared staying regularly in touch with Polish science, and 80 per cent of them occasionally visit Polish scientific institutes, 74 per cent come to Poland for conferences, 63 per cent invite colleagues from Poland to their foreign institution, 49 per cent publish their works in Poland.

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**Annex**

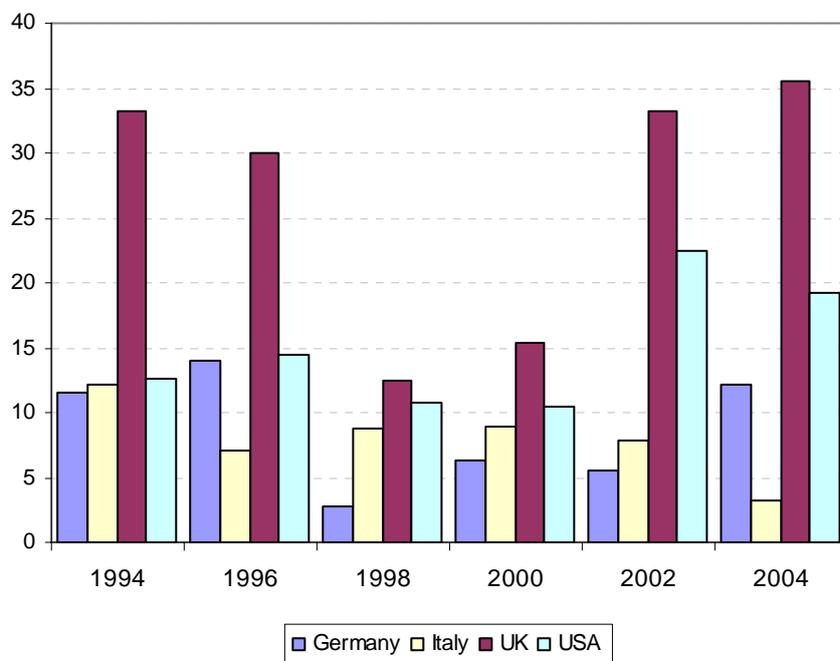
**Figure 10. Polish migrants by the level of education, 1994-2004 (3<sup>rd</sup> quarters, in per cent)**



\* no data available for 1999

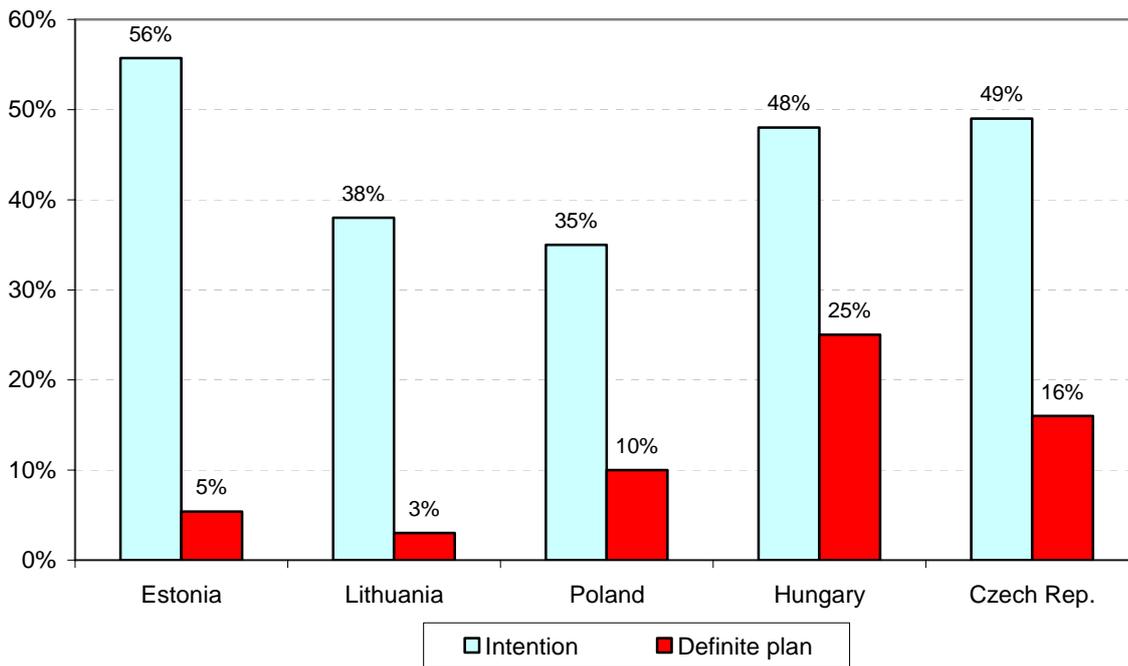
Source: Author's elaboration based on the LFS data

**Figure 11. Share of migrants staying temporarily abroad (for longer than 2 months) with tertiary education in four most important receiving countries, 1994-2004, 3rd quarters (in per cent)**



Source: Author's elaboration based on the LFS data

**Figure 12. Migration intentions of health care professionals in selected countries, 2004.**



Source: Fihel, Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2006.

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