



# Migration trends in an enlarged Europe

## Summary

*Main issues*

*Survey methodology*

*Expected migration levels*

*Profile of the typical migrant*

*Motives for migrating*

*Influence of economic situation*

*Importance of life satisfaction*

*Key factors in Poland and Turkey*

*Impact on current Member States*

*Challenges for new Member States*

*Conclusion*

*Annex: Tables*

Migration has become a significant economic and social policy issue in the EU. This short document summarises the findings of a research report from the European Foundation for the Improvement and Living Conditions, drawing on the results of Eurobarometer surveys carried out in the EU and the 13 acceding and candidate countries. The objective of the research was to contribute to the policy debate on migration in the EU by presenting new empirical evidence on the potential extent and breakdown of migration from the acceding and candidate countries towards the EU. In this way, it is presented as a contribution to the discussion about possible future migration trends in an enlarging EU.

The report is based on individual survey data which were collected in the 13 acceding and candidate countries during the negotiations for accession to the EU (April 2002), two years before 10 of the 13 acceding and candidate countries would become Member States of the European Union in May 2004.

## *Main issues*

The analysis highlights the varying situations of the potential migrants with a view to enabling policymakers to develop targeted policy measures. It also raises the question as to whether the 'real' social and economic challenges of migration will occur in the receiving countries of the 'old' EU or within the 'sending' countries of the new Member States. The key concerns are around a possible 'brain and youth drain' in these countries.

In addition, the report tests the significance of income poverty, economic deprivation and their subjective perception for migration. Are these conditions drivers or barriers for migration? It also considers whether sufficient resources are necessary for migration to be able to take place.

Finally, the analysis examines the importance of the existing level of satisfaction with quality of life in the acceding and candidate countries as a factor in migration. Is general dissatisfaction on its own a significant factor influencing migration? Or does dissatisfaction with particular areas of life trigger migration? How important is social policy in relation to existing health and social security provisions?

In some Member States, the likelihood of increased inward migration from the acceding countries has become an important issue for the internal political agenda. Three questions have come to the fore:

1. How quickly will citizens from the acceding countries be entitled to take up jobs in the EU countries?
2. How much inflow will this trigger?
3. What are the possible economic and social impacts of increased emigration from the acceding countries?

There are economic concerns that there may be a further increase of already high internal unemployment rates through crowding out local blue-collar and unqualified workers with better qualified but also 'cheaper' employees from the acceding countries ('social dumping'). Social fears are voiced with regard to possible abuse of the existing welfare system and increased competition for cheap housing in inner city areas. Other concerns are expressed about increased crime levels and the negative effects of a multicultural society.

In the acceding countries, the possible labour market effects are seen as 'double-edged'. Acceding countries with high levels of unemployment and low economic growth rates undoubtedly benefit by the migration of their low-skilled and unqualified workers. This reduces their labour force and leaves fewer people without a job. Also, the remittance payments of migrant workers have a positive impact on income, consumption and demand. The emigration of higher qualified people, however, may erode a country's long-term competitive position. It is agreed that such a 'brain drain' could have negative repercussions on a country's developmental process.

## ***Survey methodology***

This study is based on Eurobarometer data collected for the European Commission. The survey was conducted in early spring 2002 in the 13 acceding and candidate countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. An identical set of questions was asked of representative samples of the population aged 15 years and over in each country. The sample was 1,000 persons per country, except Malta and Cyprus (500). For this study, a 2,000-person sample was used in Poland and Turkey (countries with large populations ) to achieve better coverage.

The study measures the attitudes towards migration into the EU on three different levels: 1) 'general inclination' to migrate, 2) 'basic intention' to migrate, and 3) 'firm intention' to migrate. It measures the different strengths of migration intentions by combining and controlling different relevant indicators. It also provides information on a staged decision-making process, as it distinguishes between overcoming 'natural inertia' to migration in an earlier phase and identifying more specific target areas in a later phase.

The study has, however, certain limitations. It cannot provide a distinction between different types of migration according to the length of intended stay. It lacks a longitudinal dimension, a family focus to decision-making, and a measurement of concrete preparatory activities for migration. Most importantly, however, the interpretation of the results has to consider the existing gap between stated intentions to migrate and actual migration behaviour. This gap varies between different groups. People whose behaviour is less dependent on external control and who have more personal room to manoeuvre (better education, single with fewer family restrictions) are more likely to bridge the gap between intention and action.

## ***Expected migration levels***

The study concurs with the results of most methodologically acceptable micro and macro studies that the EU should not expect a tidal wave of emigrants from the eastern and Mediterranean acceding and candidate countries. All indicators point to a volume similar to that experienced after the southern enlargement of the EU in the 1980s.

- The volume of intended firm migration is likely to be around 1.0% of the population of 15 years and older in the AC 10 and CC 13 in the next five years.
- The largest, but relatively unrealistic, migration potential (people who expressed a general inclination) is around 4.5% in the same time span.
- The predictions of this study for migration from the 10 central and eastern acceding and candidate countries, excluding the three Mediterranean countries, concur with the latest results of an econometric study of the European Commission. That study predicts a gross migration of around 1.1 million within five years.

The predicted volume between the 13 acceding and candidate countries varies significantly, however. According to this study, the highest migration potential within the CC 13 is in Bulgaria and Romania. Turkish respondents were much less likely to be considering a move to Europe, with a narrow migration potential of less than half a percent and a wide migration potential of 6%. The figures for all larger acceding countries in the narrow potential band are around 1% in the next five years.

## ***Profile of the typical migrant***

The typical migrant from the acceding countries is young, well-educated or studying in third-level education and living as a single, non-cohabiting person. An increasing number of migrants are female. The study revealed the following findings:

- The sending countries face the prospect of a major ‘youth drain’, in the region of 2%-3% of the youngest age category. In Bulgaria and Romania, it may lead to an outflow of nearly 10% of the youngest age group in the next five years.
- The potential youth drain is combined with a potential ‘brain drain’. The sending countries are in danger of losing between 3% and 5% of people who have achieved third-level education, and more than 10% of their students. These figures represent the wider migration potential. Looking at the ‘firm’ intention to migrate, there may be a ‘brain drain’ of around 2-3% among graduates and students in the next five years.
- Recent hypotheses of an increasing feminisation of migration are confirmed. Looking at the wider migration potential in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, a greater proportion of women among the female population expressed a general inclination to migrate than did men among the male population. Conversely, in Bulgaria, Poland and Turkey, the male percentage of migrants per male population is higher than the female percentage per female population. There are clear signs of an accelerating trend over time.
- Unemployment has an influence on migration, but to a much lesser extent than predicted and only in a limited number of countries. Overall, 2% (expressing a ‘firm’ intention) of unemployed people want to migrate. The strongest push due to unemployment is in Turkey, Bulgaria and Estonia.
- Married people are less willing to migrate. The main migration potential consists of single people.

## ***Motives for migrating***

The study concurs with the resumé of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) ‘that there is no single explanation for migration potential but rather a combination of explanations, which depend upon the country under consideration and the kinds of migration which occur’. However, there are some overall trends. Employment and financial motives are the dominant rationales for migration, which is supplemented within the IOM study by the objective to enhance living conditions. Women have a similar, but less economically pronounced, motivation. Unsatisfactory housing conditions play a minor role but gain an increasing importance for those expressing a firm intention to move and for female migrants. Family and other social reasons are less important, but their relevance increases in some quarters, particularly for potential female migrants of the richer acceding countries. This group is also strongly motivated by poor current housing conditions.

As expected, the rationales for migration are widely diverse among the 13 countries. They include a balanced social and economic rationale (Czech Republic, Latvia, Slovenia), a balanced employment and financial rationale, an overwhelming short-term financial motivation (Bulgaria, Romania), and a predominantly family orientation (Cyprus, Malta). Higher economic development goes hand in hand with an enhanced importance of family and personal motives.

## ***Influence of economic situation***

Is low income a push factor for migration or a barrier, bearing in mind that potential migrants need sufficient resources? Due to restrictions in the available survey data, this question can only be discussed for Poland and Turkey. Overall, the results are relatively inconclusive. Income and deprivation, as well as subjectively perceived economic difficulties, have

no linear and coherent influence on migration. In addition, the pattern between the two countries varies greatly, providing statistically significant results only for Turkey.

Turkey shows that high and low income has a strong and significant influence. Perceived economic strain also plays a strong part in the willingness to migrate. There is a cumulative pattern of influence on migration, which combines objective and subjective factors. The Polish results, however, are not statistically significant. This micro level evidence questions models of migration behaviour based on neo-classical labour market theory, which put great emphasis on income and income differentials as the main motivation for migration.

### ***Importance of life satisfaction***

Is dissatisfaction with existing living conditions a driver of migration? How important is a dissatisfaction model of migration behaviour compared with a rational choice approach?

Within this context, four questions can be raised:

1. Does individual dissatisfaction lead to the decision to relocate the household and to migrate into the EU?
2. How important is general life satisfaction for migration?
3. To what extent does satisfaction in specific life domains influence migration?
4. Has dissatisfaction with life domains which are privately controlled a stronger effect on migration than dissatisfaction in life domains outside the immediate control of the individual?

Overall, general life satisfaction and life satisfaction in specific domains have only a minor influence on the intention to migrate in both Poland and Turkey. Subjective well-being in the current place of living is not a very relevant factor. Specific domain satisfaction has a stronger effect on migration than general life satisfaction.

Both countries reveal different patterns, however, which should be a warning against hasty generalisations of results. Turkey shows a more homogenous model: dissatisfaction increases the willingness to migrate for all eight indicators, and statistical relationships are, overall, more robust. It presents a combination of significant relationships through overall life satisfaction and through specific domain satisfaction, including employment and health care. Poland is quite different. It has four positive and four negative relationships between satisfaction and willingness to migrate, following a more heterogeneous pattern. In conceptual terms, the results give some weak support for a 'satisfying' approach. Due to the data limitations, these results have to be interpreted with caution.

### ***Key factors in Poland and Turkey***

In the last part of the study, the bi-variate results of the previous analysis are controlled through a multivariate analysis. The logistic regression of the general inclination to migrate supports results in previous chapters of different causal patterns in Poland and Turkey. This result reaffirms the strong influence of country specific effects, which are being increasingly considered in econometric models of migration.

Overall, the Polish model has less explanatory power, as it includes only three significant causal relationships. None of these are surprising and they have been well argued in various concepts of migration. Men are more likely to migrate than women in Poland. In this respect, the Polish results do not support concepts which predict an increasing feminisation of migration. The youngest age group has a significantly higher probability of migration. This is in line with

human capital concepts and other empirical research in Europe. Lastly, unemployed people are significantly more motivated to migrate than groups of other employment status. Uncertain employment prospects are an important push factor.

In Poland, neither higher education nor marital status has a significant influence. The non-significance of higher education is surprising against the background of the conceptual debate, even though several authors have questioned this empirical effect. It could, however, be interpreted as an indication of uncertainty about the comparative relative gains of migration just before accession takes place. In contrast to the results in many other candidate countries, being a student is not a significant driver for migration in Poland.

The Turkish model has eight significant influence factors and therefore fits better into the conceptual debate. As in the bi-variate analysis on age, the second youngest age group has the highest probability to migrate. Different family structures in Turkey may be the reason for later migration during the life course. Another explanation could be that the young age effect is superimposed by the 'student effect'. Students, the majority of whom are between 18 and 24 years, have a significantly higher propensity to migrate than other occupational groups in Turkey. This strong student effect is in line with the overall results for the CC 13.

Unemployment is as important a driver of migration as it is in Poland. Thus, basic economic thinking is confirmed. Medium and, in particular, higher education strongly influences migration. Higher education is a pull and facilitating factor. It acts as a pull in the prospect of improved income in the potential target countries and it facilitates search and information behaviour, as well as reducing uncertainty.

In both countries, marital status and subjective economic strain have no significant influence on potential migration. The male influence on migration is evident in both countries though it is insignificant in Turkey. Unemployment is the only common influence factor in both countries.

### ***Impact on current Member States***

The overall volume of expected inwards migration after enlargement and from the remaining candidate countries is much less than predicted by some politicians and in the public debate. Most of the 'old' countries of the EU will be hardly affected. In addition, two thirds of all migration is likely to be of a temporary nature. Therefore, the old Member States will experience, in the 10 years after accession, significant return migration, if the economic and social conditions improve in the new Member States.

Negative labour market effects will be limited and will be concentrated in certain regions and on specific occupational labour markets. Negative effects on the housing market are mitigated by the high percentage of single migrants, which will mean less demand on larger accommodation. The positive demographic effect for the old Member States will be marginal due to the relatively small increase in the number of potential gross migrants up to 2030 and the expected return migration, triggered by improved living and employment conditions in the new Member States.

Looking at the profile of the potential migrants, the outlook is relatively positive. The receiving countries of the EU can expect a high quality labour supply of young, qualified and mainly unmarried people, which should improve its short-term economic and its long-term socio-economic base through an improved demographic structure. This would seem to offer more opportunities than risks for the old EU Member States. However, some serious doubts are voiced with regard to the level of education and skills of the potential migrants, which would reduce the positive effects of inward migration.

## ***Challenges for new Member States***

The empirical results confirm that the acceding and candidate countries face the prospect of a major 'youth drain' in the region of 2%-5% of the youngest age group in the next five years. The potential youth drain is combined with a potential 'brain drain'. The sending countries are in danger of losing between 3% and 5% of people with third level education and more than 10% of their students. The net results may be a 'brain drain' of around 3% in these countries in the next five years.

For the acceding and candidate countries, these figures mark a significant challenge to improve their internal economic and social performance, as the main motivations for migration of younger and better qualified people are better quality of life and better income prospects in the 'old' EU Member States. This raises important issues for EU developmental policy for all of the acceding and candidate countries and, in particular, for Bulgaria and Romania in the pre-accession phase before 2007.

## ***Conclusion***

The study provides a significant contribution to a micro level analysis of the intention to migrate. The results on age, education and unemployment are in line with mainstream research. In contrast to other studies, this report identifies students as a potentially highly motivated group towards migration. It also highlights the emerging feminisation of migration as an important research topic. The results of this study indicate avenues for further empirical and methodological developments in order to provide relevant and high quality research, which can inform policymaking at European and national levels.

The report, *Migration trends in an enlarged Europe*, is available online (from end March 2004) at:  
[www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF03113.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF03113.htm)

**H. Krieger**, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

---

## ***Annex: Tables***

### *Various migration intentions in the ACC (%)*

	General inclination	Basic intention	Firm intention
Poland	3.7	1.6	1.0
Bulgaria, Romania	5.0	3.2	2.0
Cyprus, Malta, Slovenia	2.1	0.8	0.7
Turkey	6.2	0.8	0.3
Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia	2.4	0.8	0.6
Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	3.5	2.0	0.8
AC 10	3.1	1.3	0.8
ACC 13	4.6	1.5	0.9

Source: *Candidate Countries Eurobarometer 2002.1 April, 2002*

### *General inclination to migrate by gender across countries (%)*

	Male	Female
Poland	5.0	2.5
Bulgaria, Romania	6.7	4.2
Cyprus, Malta, Slovenia	2.3	1.9
Turkey	8.6	3.7
Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia	1.9	2.8
Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	3.9	3.1
AC 10	3.6	2.7
ACC 13	5.9	3.3

Source: *Candidate Countries Eurobarometer 2002.1 April, 2002*