

Quantitative aspects of migration trends in Europe, with an emphasis on the EU-15

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I Introduction

Over the last few years, migration trends have become a major political issue for the EU Member States. Such factors as the increase in migration flows, the uncertainties as regards the international economic environment, the persistent unemployment in most of the host countries despite the labour needs in certain economic sectors as well the expected shrinkage and ageing of the EU population tend to place migration issues relatively high on the political agenda. The peculiarities of the migration movements covered by this article are mainly related to political and socio-economic changes, which have occurred in Eastern Europe and the Balkans throughout the past two decades. These changes have favoured both increasing migration flows of third-country nationals and ethnic migrants. Yet, compared to the 1950s or 1960s, geographical mobility within the EU-15 remains rather low despite the implementation of the Common Market and the possibility of free movement granted to EU-15 nationals (European Commission 2002: 16 | OECD 2001: 37).

It is a rather difficult task to quantify migration trends, because the peculiarities of the migration phenomenon are closely related to its nature. Various criteria such as the country and the time period in question, migration motives, and the legal or illegal status of migrants, shape different types of migration that are not always fully reflected in official statistics. Until recently, the experience of each Member State as host or sending country determined the kind of mobility that was recorded for purposes of statistical observation. Thus, in the 15 EU Member States, the attention either focused on inflows, outflows or—in some cases only—on both of them.

Moreover, it is a fact that meanwhile all 15 EU Member States have become net immigration countries. Though this development has contributed to a better harmonisation of figures on geographical mobility, reliable data are frequently missing. This makes the analysis of long-term variations in migration and of differences among the Member States a difficult task.

Besides distinguishing between migrants and foreigners, analysing the quantitative aspects of migration in the EU-15 requires some additional differentiations between migrants who enter or live in a country of the EU-15 and are EU nationals coming from another Member State, migrants coming from a third country, ethnic migrants and return migrants. Actually, the 15 Member States feature a great variety of the above 'migration types', which, among others things, is closely related to their geographical location as well as to their previous experience as host or sending country.

This article examines some quantitative aspects of migration in the EU-15 over the last 15 to 20 years. The first part deals with migration trends, breaking them down into inward flows, outward flows and net migration. Although this distinction cannot be made for every single Member State, the available statistical data permit us to at least present the main developments from 1985 onwards and to evaluate the impact of migration flows on the stock of foreigners living in some of these Member States. This first part also analyses the role of migration as a demographic component of the EU-15 population

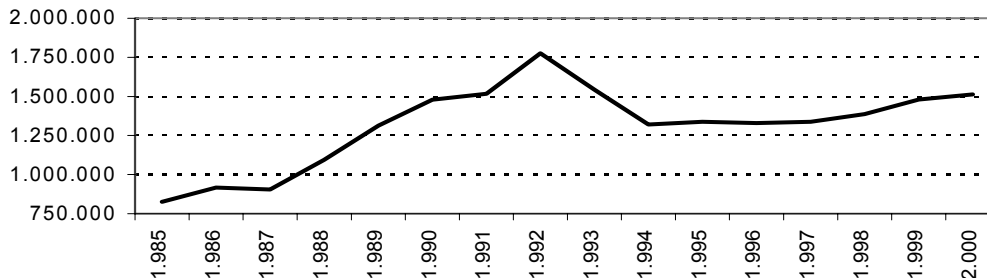
during the past decades, as well as in the context of a shrinking population and an expected increase in demographic ageing. In the second part, the focus is on labour market issues in relation to overall migration trends. The analysis clearly shows that national diversities in terms of the degree to which foreigners are integrated into the labour market of the 15 old EU Member States are far from negligible.

2 Population and migration in the EU-15

2.1 Inward migration trends in the EU-15

From 1985 onwards, trends in geographical mobility show a net increase in immigration flows over the period 1985–1992, followed by a net decrease between 1993 and 1997, and a further growth after 1997 (see Figure 1). For the EU-15 as a whole, annual inward flows of migrants (third-country or EU-15 citizens) grew from 800,000 in 1985 to 1.8 million in 1992 and decreased to a level of 1.3 million after 1992. During the last years, the number of immigrants amounted to around 1.6 million, of which nearly 60% are non-EU-15 nationals. In general, out of 100 persons entering an EU-15 Member State, 25 are nationals of or originated from that country, 17 are citizens of another EU-15 Member State, and 58 are third-country citizens.

Figure 1: Inflows of foreign population in the EU-15, 1985–2000

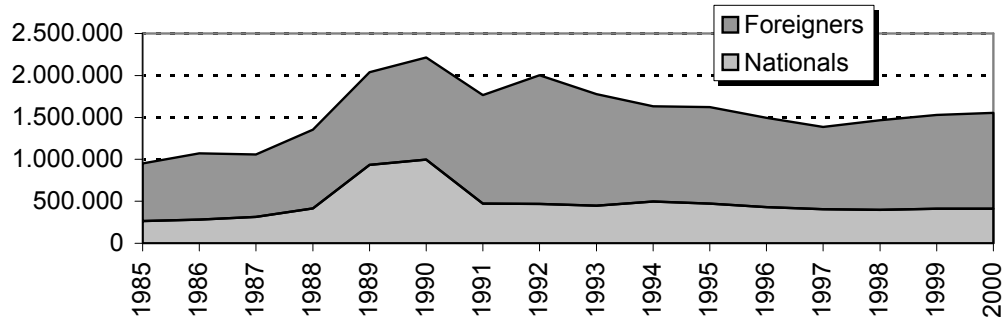


Note: Austria is not included

Source: Calculations based on Eurostat's data, Demographic Statistics, Migration Statistics and on OECD's data, SOPEMI Reports

It is not always feasible to classify the annual inward flows of immigrants for both EU-15 and third-country citizens for every single country and for the whole period after 1985. Moreover, in some countries, return migration is very often mixed up with immigrants who originated from these countries, and who are not nationals in terms of citizenship.

Figure 2: Total inflows of foreigners and nationals in seven selected EU Member States, 1985–2000



Note: The seven countries are: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom

Source: Eurostat, Demographic Statistics and Migration Statistics

For these 'technical' reasons, we selected seven EU Member States (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom), for which the available statistical migration data are more detailed for the period after 1985, in order to analyse the quantitative aspects of immigration. It is worth noting that, during the past two decades, the total population of these seven Member States corresponded to around 50% of the total EU-15 population, and the inward flows of foreigners accounted for 70–87% of the total immigration flows in the EU-15 (Bagavos 2003a: 45). Figure 2 shows that inward flows of both foreigners and nationals into the above countries rose by around 130% between 1985 and 1990, somewhat declined between 1990 and 1997 to rise once more after 1997. The distinction between foreigners (EU-15 or non-EU-15 nationals) and nationals reveals both the particularity of the period 1989–1993 and the importance of the inflows of nationals. The sharp increase in inward flows in 1989 and 1990 is mainly due to the immigration of nationals. In the period 1989–1990, around one out of two persons who entered the above countries was a national. This result is closely related to migration trends in Germany, where the percentage of nationals in the total immigration flows was around 50%. Moreover, the share of German nationals in the total immigration of nationals was very high (almost 80% if one takes the seven countries as a whole). From 1990 onwards, the net decrease, which was followed by a relative stability in the numbers of nationals, has been combined with a shrinkage in their share in the total immigration flows. The proportion of nationals in the total inward migration dropped from 46% in 1989 to 23% in 1992, and to 25% in 1993 (Bagavos & Papadopoulou 2003: 36). After 1993, this figure once more rose to the pre-1989 level (around 30%). In other words, whereas in a 'normal situation' the share of nationals in the total inward migration is around 25–30%, the developments at the end of the 1980s and in the beginning of the 1990s caused an unexpected rise to a level slightly above 45%.

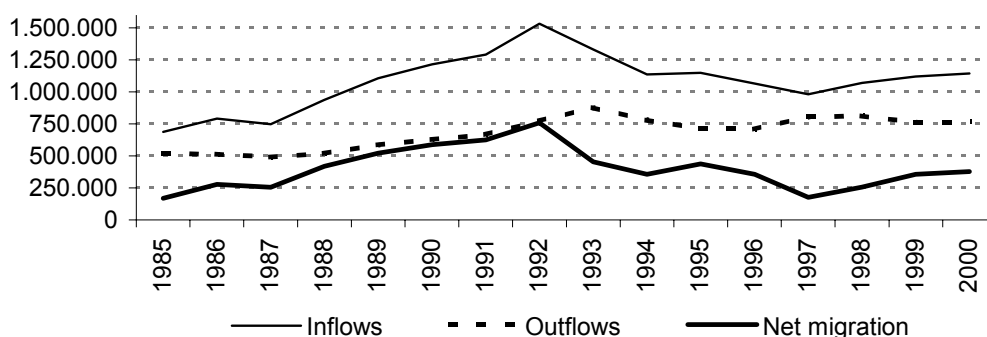
Differentiating foreign immigrants (EU-15 citizens and those coming from a third country) is another important element in inflows. According to the data available for the seven countries mentioned above, this distinction can only be made for some specific years. Figures indicate that during a 'normal' period of immigration flows (before 1989

and after 1993), 15–17% of the immigrants were EU-15 citizens, 54–57% were third-country nationals and 27–29% were nationals (Bagavos 2003b: 49). In 1990—a rather particular year as regards immigration flows—the above figures were 9.5%, 45.5% and 45% respectively. It is quite obvious that, for the entire period 1985–2000, the total size of inward flows is by no means identical with the number of immigrants who are third-country citizens. In fact, the share of non-EU-15 nationals in the overall immigration flows does not exceed 60%, even in the years standing out by a sharp increase in immigration. The final assessment of the quantitative aspect of immigration requires a further distinction between inflows, outflows and net migration.

2.2 Trends in outflows of migrants and their impact on net migration in the EU-15

Figure 3 shows that, over the last two decades, outflows of foreigners (EU-15 or third-country citizens) increased from 1987 to 1993 and then stabilised at relatively high levels from 1993 onwards. The combination of these trends with the changes in inflows over a longer period of time indicates that the gap between entries and exits (net migration) has remained rather small after 1993. In other words, net migration—i.e. the number of people who really 'stayed' in the host countries—is clearly lower than inward migration, which was marked by a net increase throughout the time period under consideration.

Figure 3: Total inflows, outflows and net migration of foreigners in seven selected EU Member States, 1985–2000

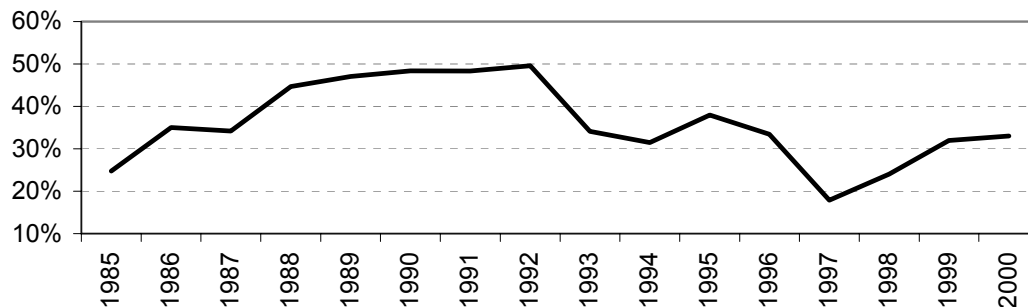


Source: Eurostat, Demographic Statistics and Migration Statistics

This diversity becomes even more evident, when net migration is presented as a proportion of inward migration (see Figure 4). Despite the fluctuations over time, this proportion has never exceeded 50%. Although there is a 'qualitative' difference between inflows of migrants and net migration (in fact, these two developments do not necessarily concern the same persons), it is worth noting that, from a purely quantitative point of view, only a rather small part (18–50%) of people who entered the seven EU Member States finally stayed there. When only third-country citizens are considered, this share is 20–52% (Bagavos & Papadopoulou 2003: 39). Once again, this result for the seven EU Member States is closely related to the case of Germany. For instance, the level of 52%, which was estimated for the year 1990, is closely related to the fact that the net migration

in Germany was nearly 66% of the total net migration in the seven countries as a whole, and the net migration as a proportion of inward migration was 47%.

Figure 4: Annual net migration as percentage of the annual inflows of foreigners in seven selected EU Member States, 1985–2000



Source: Calculations based on Eurostat's data, Demographic Statistics and Migration Statistics

Similarly, the low share in 1997 (20%) is related to the negative net migration of third-country citizens in Germany. In any case, the significant element arising from the comparison between inflows, outflows and net migration is that, even in the case of non-EU-15 nationals, the number of people staying in the 15 Member States is clearly lower than the number of people entering these countries. In other words, migrants coming from a third country have a high mobility pattern within the EU-15. Moreover, there can be no doubt that the above developments lead to a gradual increase of migration stock (i.e. an increase in the number of foreigners) living in the EU-15.

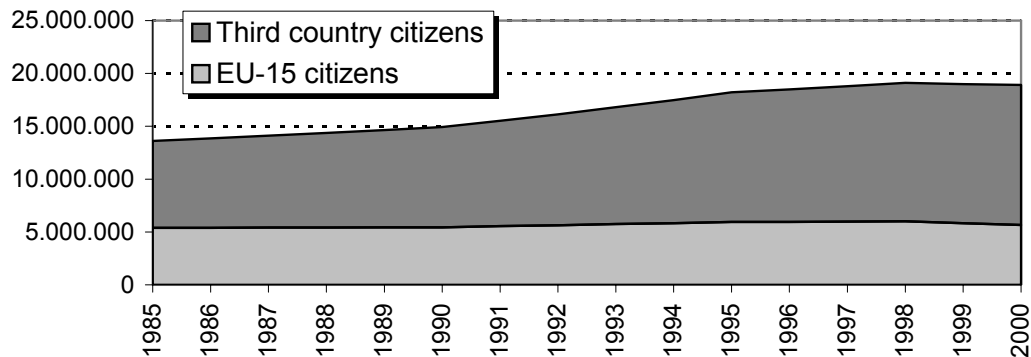
2.3 Migration and demographic changes in the EU-15

In the long run, foreign-population trends in the host countries are related to three factors:

- 1) changes in net migration,
- 2) natural increase (deaths minus births) of the foreign population, and
- 3) policy measures regarding the acquisition of citizenship.

This last point can lead to a significant difference between the number of immigrants and the number of foreigners in a host country. Although it is almost impossible to evaluate what impact each of these three factors has on the changes in the total foreign population, it is a fact that the foreign population increased in the EU-15 during the past two decades (see Figure 5).

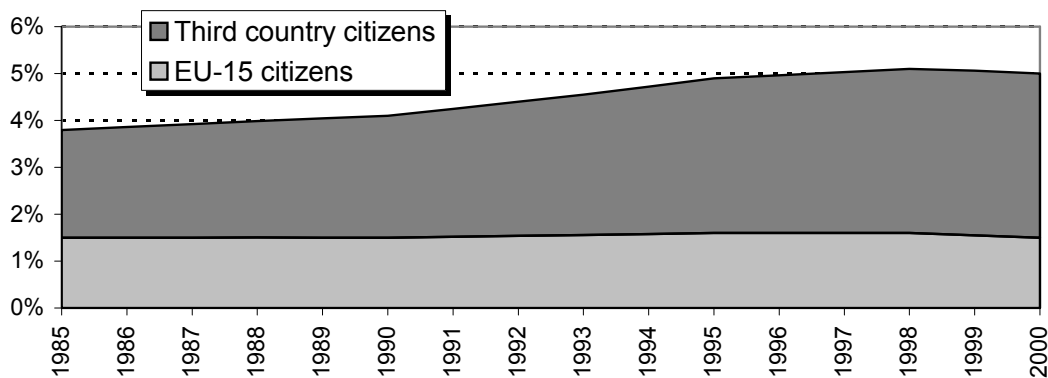
Figure 5: Foreign population in the EU-15, 1985–2000



Source: Calculations based on Eurostat's data, Demographic Statistics, Migration Statistics

The number of foreigners rose by around 39% between 1985 and 2000 (from 13.6 to 18.9 million). As the number of EU-15 citizens living in a country other than the one in which they were born has remained rather stable (5.4 and 5.7 million in 1985 and in 2000 respectively), this is mainly due to the increase in third-country citizens (from 8.2 to 13.2 million). This increase in the number of third-country nationals was particularly pronounced between 1990 and 1995 (nearly 30%) and rather weak after 1995 (8%).

Figure 6: Foreign population in the EU-15, 1985–2000 (percentage of total population)



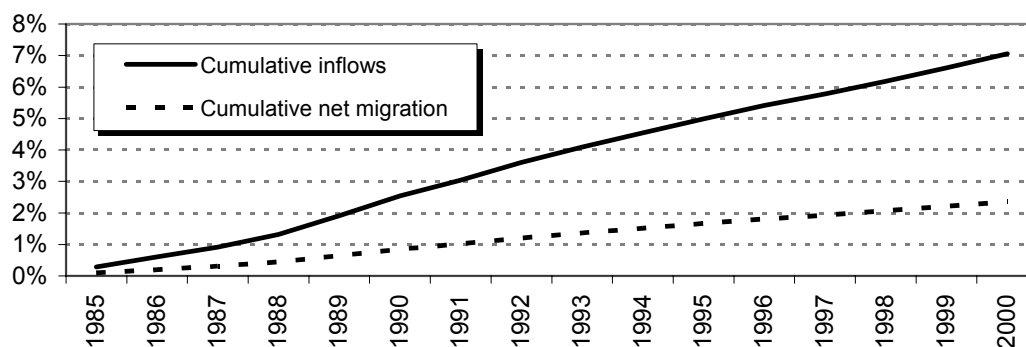
Source: Calculations based on Eurostat's data, Demographic Statistics, Migration Statistics

At the same time, the low or very low fertility levels in the EU-15 throughout the past 15 years led to a slight growth of the national population (around 4%). All the above changes resulted in an increasing share of the foreign population in the total population, which rose from 3.8% in 1985 to around 5% in 2000 (see Figure 6). Once more, this development is more due to third-country nationals (their share grew from 2.3% to 3.5%) than to EU-15 nationals living in another Member State (their number remained almost stable at a level of 1.5%). However, there are considerable differences between the

individual Member States. For instance, in Luxembourg, where the foreign population accounts for around 35% of the total population, non-EU-15 nationals have a share of less than 4%. In Austria, 9.5% of the total population are foreigners, of which the share of third-country nationals is almost 8%, while the remaining 1.5% are EU-15 nationals.

On the whole, the above migration and foreign population developments between 1985 and 2000 indicate that despite the sharp increase in inward flows and the slight natural increase in the national population, the share of third-country nationals in the total population grew at a rather slow pace. This result is related to the fact that net migration, which contributes directly to the increase of the foreign population, was much lower than immigration, which is only one of various quantitative elements in migration trends and in foreign population growth.

Figure 7: Estimate of the cumulative inflows and net migration of third-country citizens in seven selected EU Member States, 1985–2000 (as percentage of the total population of the seven selected countries)



Source: The estimate is based on Eurostat's data, Demographic Statistics Migration Statistics and Labour Force Survey

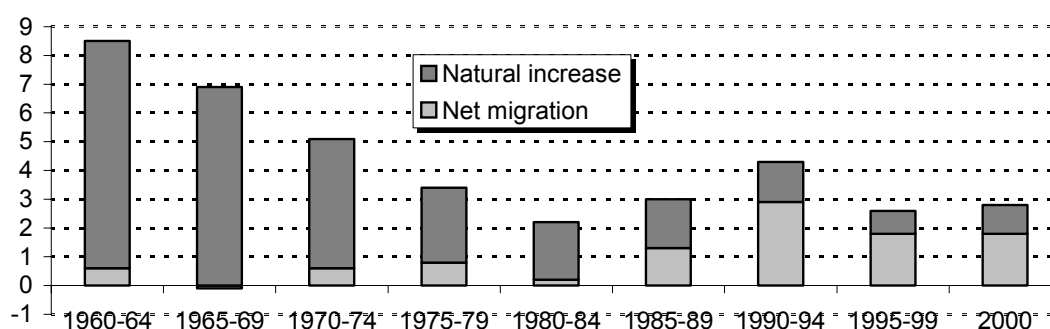
These results are depicted in Figure 7, which illustrates an estimate of the share (real and potential) of third-country foreigners in the total population of all seven Member States during the period 1985–2000. If we only take into account the cumulative inflows of migrants coming from a third country during the period mentioned above (i.e. the stock of foreigners who were living in the host countries before 1985 is supposed to equal 0), their potential share in the total population should increase from 0.3% at the end of the year 1985 to 6.6% at the beginning of the year 2000. If we only consider the cumulative net migration of third-country citizens, their share rises by only 2.2%, which is three times lower than the previous figures. In other words, if we consider the seven EU Member States together, the sharp increase in geographical mobility of third-country nationals over the last 15 years is likely to have resulted in an increase in their stock, relative to the total population, by slightly more than two points.

2.4 Migration as a demographic component of the EU-15 population

Migration definitely became a very important element in the changes observed in the EU-15 population during the past two decades. Usually, the demographic impact of migration patterns is examined from three different angles. The first is the impact of migration flows on the total population size, which is studied by distinguishing between natural increase and net migration. The second refers to the difference in fertility between nationals and migrants, since the fertility levels of migrants tend to be higher than those of nationals. The third aspect concerns differences in the age structure, since the migrant population tends to be younger than the national population. Therefore, migration could somewhat slow down the demographic ageing of the EU-15 population, which is expected to increase in the years to come.

The growing importance of migration for the growth of the population in the EU-15 during the past four decades becomes evident if we distinguish between the two components of population change, i.e. natural increase and net migration (see Figure 8). Before 1985, population growth was fairly high due to natural increase (essentially because of high birth rates). However, from 1985 onwards, net migration has become a very significant component in the total population increase. In particular during the 1990s, the impact of net migration on population growth was more than twice as high as that of natural increase. This trend was even more pronounced in some of the 15 Member States (i.e. Italy, Greece) where positive net migration not only compensated for the negative natural increase in the late 1990s but also prevented a decrease in the total population.

Figure 8: Average annual rate of population change by component, 1960–2000 (per 1,000 inhabitants)



Source: European Commission, 2002: 66

Migration flows also impact on birth rates in the host countries (OECD 2001: 54). In the late 1990s, the share of foreign births in the total number of births was particularly high in certain EU-15 countries, such as Luxembourg (more than 48%), the United Kingdom, Germany and France (10–13%). These high birth rates are related to the total size and the age structure of the foreign population as well as to the relatively high fertility of migrants. Nevertheless, some rather pronounced differences among countries could be

observed. For instance, the high share of foreign births in Luxembourg is mainly due to the high number of EU-15 nationals, who have lower fertility rates than third-country foreigners, who are the minority in this country. In contrast, the generally low share of foreign births in Portugal and Italy is likely to result from a relatively high fertility of third-country immigrants who constitute the majority of the foreign population in these countries. This diversity becomes obvious when the share of foreign births in the total number of births is compared with the percentage of foreigners in the total population. For instance, this ratio is 70% higher in Portugal than in Luxembourg, which means that fertility levels of foreigners are higher in Portugal than in Luxembourg since the foreigners are of different nationalities.

The impact of migration inflows on the age structure of the population of the host countries is another demographic aspect of migration. It depends on the share of migrants in the total population, on their age structure and on their fertility level. The higher the proportion of foreigners is, the younger their age structure and the higher their fertility, the more significant will the role of immigration be in moderating the effect of ageing of the EU-15 population. Moreover, this impact on the population trend in the EU-15 is related to third-country foreigners and not to EU-15 citizens, since the latter are few in numbers and their fertility levels do not differ significantly from those of nationals.

Up to now, the impact of third-country immigration on the age structure of the EU-15 population is rather weak. Although foreigners have a younger age structure and a higher fertility than nationals do, their number is rather low. As mentioned above, the share of third-country foreigners in the total EU-15 population never exceeded 3.5% during the period 1985–2000. Net migration has contributed to a further increase of the total population of the EU-15, but its impact on the age structure was rather limited. Despite the increase in migration flows from 1985 onwards, the share of the elderly (65 years and over) in the total population of the EU-15 continued to increase (from 13.6% in 1985 to 16.2% in 2000). It is worth noting that this increase was even higher than the one during the period 1970–1985 (the share was 12.2% in 1970).

As for the future, a further increase in inflows of migrants could somewhat slow down the expected population ageing but not completely compensate for it. Because of the population's present age structure (i.e. fertility, mortality and, to some extent, migration trends observed in the past), a further acceleration of demographic ageing is expected in the EU-15. In fact, as demographic ageing is already 'programmed' in the current age composition of the EU-15 population, a further increase in the years to come is inevitable (Bagavos 2003b: 142). Moreover, in the long run, the impact of the higher fertility of foreigners becomes rather weak, as migrants tend to adapt their fertility to that of nationals. Last but not least, population dynamics indicate that the population variations in low-mortality countries are much more related to fertility than to migration trends. In other words, future trends in demographic ageing of the EU-15 population will depend more on fertility resumption and on mortality patterns than on migration inflows.

Recent analyses regarding the impact of migration and fertility on the long-term population prospects of the EU-15 population up to 2050 tend to confirm that the demographic future is already inbuilt the present age structure (European Commission 2002: 27 | Lutz & Scherbov 2003: 7). Although scenarios on future net migration may be significantly different, they don't radically modify the expected changes in total population or population age structure. In 2050, the total population of the EU-15 could range from a minimum of 271 million (a decrease of –28% as compared to the present level) to a maximum of 431 million (an increase of 15% as compared to the present level). These results are based on two relatively extreme scenarios:

- zero net migration combined with a very low total fertility rate of one child per woman, and
- a net migration of 1.2 million per year combined with a total fertility rate of 2.2.

Moreover, the scenario based on present trends (an annual net migration of 800,000 people combined with a total fertility level of 1.4) yields a decrease in the total population by –9.5%. Given that the total population of the EU-15 increased by around 28% between 1950 and 2000, it is rather evident that even under quite extreme conditions the variations will be weaker in the future than they were in the past. In other words, the total population will be a rather 'inert' variable in the years to come. Net migration could prevent a future decrease in the total population size but it is not expected to lead to a significant increase.

As for the impact of migration on the future age structure of the population, the different and sometimes extreme scenarios do not significantly modify the expected increase in demographic ageing. Zero net migration at the present fertility level (1.4) will increase the demographic dependency of the elderly (i.e. the ratio between people aged 65 years and over and people aged 15–64 years) from 0.24 to 0.57 in 2050. With the same fertility scenario and a net migration of 1.2 million per year (something which, except for 1992, never happened in the past), the demographic dependency of the elderly might be around 0.47 in 2050. In other words, a variation from 0 to 1.2 million in annual net migration over the next 50 years will probably have a relatively low impact on demographic ageing by reducing demographic dependency of the elderly from 0.57 to 0.47 in 2050. Moreover, even in a somewhat extreme, very favourable scenario, which combines a net migration of 1.2 million per year with a total fertility level of 2.2, demographic dependency is expected to be twice as high as it is at present. In fact, figures obtained in various and even extreme scenarios on fertility and net migration show a slight and rather limited diversification in demographic dependency. In other words, although immigration could contribute to moderating demographic ageing in the years to come, it can not prevent or reverse its continued increase.

3 Migrants and the labour market in the EU-15

In the majority of the EU-15, the 1990s were marked by strong growth, which went along with a net increase in job creation and a decline in unemployment rates during the second half of the 1990s. Most of the EU-15, however, continue to experience high levels of long-term unemployment and persistent youth unemployment. At the same time, the rise in immigration flows in a context of demographic slowdown has resulted in an increasing contribution of foreigners to the labour force.

3.1 Migrants and labour force in the EU

During the past number of years, migrants have increasingly contributed to the increase in the total labour force. Between 1995 and 2000, their number as well as their share in the total labour force increased in most EU-15 Member States, especially in those of Southern and Northern Europe (see Table 1). It is only in Germany that the number of foreign workers has slightly decreased. However, in 2000, Germany registered the highest number of foreign workers (nearly 3.4 million), followed by France (1.6 million) and the United Kingdom (1.2 million).

Table 1: Foreign labour force in the EU-15, 1995 and 2000

	1995	2000	1995	2000
	In thousands		Percentage of labour force	
Austria	366	377	9.7	9.8
Belgium	327	366	7.9	8.4
Denmark	54	78	2.0	2.8
Finland	18	34	0.8	1.3
France	1,566	1,571	6.3	6.1
Germany	3,505	3,429	9.1	8.8
Greece	71	163	1.7	3.8
Ireland	42	60	3.0	3.5
Italy	100	246	0.5	1.1
Luxembourg	65	77	39.1	42.0
Netherlands	281	298	3.9	3.7
Portugal	21	104	0.5	2.2
Spain	121	227	0.8	1.4
Sweden	186	205	4.2	4.8
United Kingdom	1,011	1,220	3.6	4.2

Source: OECD 2003: 59

The share of foreigners in the total labour force shows a certain variation (see Table 1) in 2000. The case of Luxembourg is rather unique, as around 4 out of 10 persons in the labour force are foreigners. In the rest of the Member States, the share of foreigners is below 10%, with the highest values in Austria, Germany and Belgium (8–9%), and the lowest in Italy, Finland, Spain and Portugal (1–2%). In such other former European immigration countries as France, Sweden and the United Kingdom, the share of foreigners is 4–6%. In the last group (Denmark, Greece, Ireland and the Netherlands), the corresponding figures are 3–4%. Nevertheless, as already mentioned above for the total population, the high percentage of foreigners in the labour force in Luxembourg is linked with the presence of EU-15 citizens who constitute almost 90% of the foreign labour force (Bagavos & Papadopoulou 2003: 45). The second country with a relatively high percentage of EU-15 citizens in the labour force is Belgium (6%). Austria and Germany have the highest percentages of third-country foreigners in the total labour market (8% and 6% respectively). Despite the differences in the level and nationality of foreigners, their share in the total labour force has grown in all 15 Member States—except for Germany, France and the Netherlands—during the past five years.

In general, the above differences should also be reflected in the share of foreigners in the total population. However, very often, some differences are observed due to the importance of family-related migration in the migration flows across countries and the use of different statistical sources for assessing the phenomenon of migration, especially in Southern Europe. Moreover, allowance also has to be made for temporary, employment-related migration, which varies across the Member States and tends to increase more rapidly than the permanent migration of foreign workers (OECD 2003: 58).

In any case, the presence of migrants on the labour market is not only related to migration flows but also to participation rates. Such factors as age, educational level, professional experience and family structure usually determine whether a person can participate in the labour market. Especially for foreigners, the participation rates are also related to the length of their stay and to their knowledge of the language that is spoken in the host country. A 10-year stay in the host country seems to be one of the main factors for the integration of foreigners into the labour market. Allowance has, however, to be made for the close relationship between the length of stay and the high participation

rates. In fact, this relationship could mask other elements, among them, employment-related immigration waves or an increase in the female participation rate of foreigners who have lived in a host country for quite a long time.

Although immigrants tend to have lower labour-market participation rates than nationals, certain diversities can be observed within the EU-15. The participation of migrants in the labour market is higher in countries where migration inflows are a rather recent phenomenon than in those having a somewhat longer history as host countries. In addition, this diversity is also related to the fact that there are host countries where employment-related migration predominates (for instance in Southern Europe) and others (for instance Northern Europe) that have a history in receiving a large number of refugees. Moreover, in countries where nationals have relatively low participation rates (and large differences between male and female participation rates), the rates for migrants are higher than in countries where nationals have high participation rates. For instance, in the late 1990s, participation rates of foreigners were clearly higher (7–23%) than those of nationals in Spain, Italy and Greece (Bagavos & Papadopoulou 2003: 47). Moreover, differences were more pronounced (15–27%) when only third-country foreigners were taken into account. In contrast, in Denmark, Sweden and in the Netherlands, foreigners had lower participation rates (25–40%), and the corresponding figures for third-country foreigners were even lower (by 80%, 51% and 43% respectively).

In addition, within the foreign population, we can observe quite an important difference between male and female participation in the labour market. In fact, in the foreign population, participation rates for women are systematically lower than for men even in countries where there is no significant difference between male and female nationals in terms of their participation in the labour market (see Table 2).

Table 2: Participation rate of nationals and foreigners by gender in the EU-15, 2000–2001 average

	Men		Women	
	Nationals	Foreigners	Nationals	Foreigners
Austria	78.9	85.1	62.4	63.3
Belgium	73.3	72.4	57.0	41.0
Denmark	84.1	71.2	76.2	53.0
Finland	79.4	83.1	74.6	60.2
France	75.1	76.6	63.3	48.6
Germany	78.9	77.6	64.7	50.7
Greece	76.2	89.2	49.0	56.0
Ireland	79.2	77.0	55.9	56.2
Italy	73.6	87.7	46.6	50.7
Luxembourg	74.0	79.7	47.7	57.7
Netherlands	84.9	69.5	67.2	49.0
Portugal	79.0	81.5	64.0	65.3
Spain	77.3	85.4	50.9	59.1
Sweden	78.0	63.1	74.2	60.3
United Kingdom	83.1	75.6	68.4	55.8

Source: OECD 2003: 60

Gender-based disparity within the foreign population is particularly pronounced in Italy, Belgium and Greece where participation rates for males are more than 60% higher than for females. In 2000–2001, the participation rates for foreign women clearly exceeded 60% in Austria and Portugal, whereas they were below 50% in Belgium, France and the

Netherlands. The fact that the national female population has relatively high participation rates when compared to the foreigners seems to indicate that female foreign workers face difficulties in entering the labour market in these countries.

3.2 Migrants and employment in the EU

In general, the employment of migrants shows greater fluctuations than total employment in the host countries, since it is more sensitive to cyclical variations. The individual characteristics of migrants such as skills, professional experience and length of stay, and other issues related to their concentration in certain economic sectors and, in some cases, to various forms of discrimination, make them more exposed to overall economic trends. The presence of immigrants in the labour market of the host countries seems to confirm the segmentation theory, since foreign workers are willing to meet labour needs when activities at the bottom of the social scale become unattractive for nationals. Moreover, the foreign labour force may facilitate labour flexibility in countries where the geographical and sectoral mobility of the native population is limited.

Since the start of the economic recovery (during the first half of the 1990s), the employment of foreigners has increased at a higher pace than total employment in the 'new' host countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal and Ireland). In the 'old' receiving countries (Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), the trend was initially less favourable for migrants: their employment situation differed markedly from the overall employment situation, especially in France and in the Netherlands (OECD 2001: 60–61). However, four to six years after the start of the economic upswing, they caught up and foreign employment grew despite the strains on the labour market (OECD 2003: 61).

The integration of migrants in the EU-15 labour market is closely related to their overrepresentation in certain employment sectors. This is, first of all, the result of the restrictive rules governing migrants' employment in the public sector of the host countries. Apart from that, the occupation of migrants in particular sectors mainly depends on the total employment in those sectors. The sectoral breakdown of the foreign labour force in the EU-15 shows that migrants were clearly over-represented in secondary sector activities in the early 2000s (OECD 2003: 61). Above all in Germany, Italy and, to a lesser extent, in Austria, Sweden, Belgium and the Netherlands, foreign workers were over-represented in mining and manufacturing. Foreigners are also concentrated in the construction sector in Austria, Belgium, France and the Southern European Member States of the EU.

All across the EU-15, migrants are over-represented in the service sector, and in particular in the hotel and restaurant industries. Mention should also be made of Sweden, where foreigners tend to work in the education sector; and of Denmark, where foreigners are concentrated in the health sector, while they typically render services to households in Southern Europe. In the latter sector, the concentration of foreigners might even be higher than officially recorded, as illegal migration seems to predominate in this sector. Particular attention has to be paid to the low figures of foreign workers in agriculture (except for Spain and, to a lesser extent, the Netherlands). However, these figures have to be considered with some reservation, as seasonal activities and temporary employment, the two main characteristics of the agricultural sector, are not always well reflected in official statistics and in the estimates based on these data.

Although the sectoral breakdown of foreign employment seems to indicate a certain convergence with that of nationals, an important difference regarding the characteristics of

jobs still persists. Foreign employment is more concentrated in the lowest socio-occupational categories, especially in Austria and France (OECD 2001: 185). In addition, having an atypical job is a much more frequent phenomenon among foreigners than among nationals. This difference is largest in Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands. In general, it is greater in countries where temporary work accounts for the largest proportion of total employment.

Along with the relatively high share of foreigners in atypical jobs, a somewhat growing number of foreign specialists have been registered during the past couple of years. Skilled foreign workers mainly work in such sectors as information technologies and communication, health and education. Although the absolute numbers of these workers remain rather low in the EU-15, their share in total employment is far from being negligible in some countries. This holds true for health workers in the United Kingdom, tertiary-education teaching staff and computer engineers in France, health professional and, to a lesser extent, computer specialists in Germany (OECD 2003: 67). It is also worth noting that these three countries have recently introduced programmes aimed at attracting not only foreign specialists but also people with intermediate-level qualifications such as computer and electronic technicians, nurses or secondary-education teachers.

Among the foreign labour force, self-employment is also an important element in the integration of immigrants into the labour markets of the host countries. In this respect, the situation clearly differs from one EU Member State to the other. The number of self-employed foreign workers is highest in Denmark, Finland, Spain, Ireland and the United Kingdom, and lowest in Greece, Austria and Italy. However, this picture is fairly different when self-employment for foreigners is compared with the total figures for self-employment. If we exclude agricultural activities, foreign self-employment accounts for the largest share of total self-employment in Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany and Austria. In general, the degree of participation of foreigners in non-salaried activities is related to the share of self-employment in the total employment of the host country and to the nationality of foreigners as well. For example, in Luxembourg and Belgium, where EU citizens account for a large proportion of the total number of foreigners, this finding has to be linked with the fact that it is easier for EU citizens than for third-country nationals to enter certain professions.

3.3 Migrants and unemployment in the EU

For many reasons, foreigners are more vulnerable to unemployment than nationals. Economic trends and the nature of jobs taken on by foreigners determine both the disparities of unemployment figures between foreigners and nationals and the differences in the frequency of being without a job found with foreigners of different nationalities. Moreover, the demographic structure of the foreign population and such characteristics of migrants as age, length of stay in the host country, gender, skill level and knowledge of the language of the host country, play an important role in explaining their vulnerability to unemployment.

In the beginning of the 2000s, unemployment for foreign men was clearly higher than for nationals in all the EU-15, except for Italy and, to a lesser extent, Greece where the figures do not differ significantly. Male foreign unemployment was particularly pronounced in Denmark, Belgium, Sweden, Portugal, the Netherlands, Finland and France where unemployment rates for foreigners were 2.4–3.4 times higher than for nationals (see Table 3). In these Member States, this also holds true for females, except for Portugal and Denmark where the gap between unemployment rates for foreign and national women is

lower than for men. Spain is the only country where foreign women are less vulnerable to unemployment than their national peers, followed by Greece where the figures for both groups are almost at the same level.

Unemployment rates among foreign women are usually higher than for men. Exceptions are Germany, Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The gap is extremely high in Greece and Italy where unemployment rates for foreign women are more than twice as high as they are for men. As a rule, unemployment rates for women, be they foreigners or nationals, tend to be higher than for men. The differences between the unemployment rates of foreigners and nationals tend to be higher for women than for men.

Table 3: Unemployment rate of nationals and foreigners by gender in the EU-15, 2000–2001 average

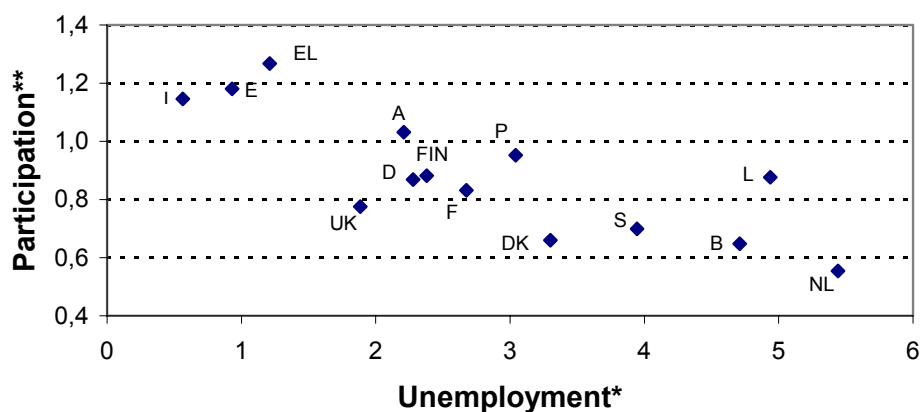
	Men		Women	
	Nationals	Foreigners	Nationals	Foreigners
Austria	3.9	8.4	3.9	8.6
Belgium	4.6	14.2	7.0	16.5
Denmark	3.6	12.2	4.9	7.2
Finland	10.0	24.2	11.2	29.9
France	7.1	17.1	10.7	23.9
Germany	7.2	13.4	7.8	11.7
Greece	7.2	7.6	16.2	17.6
Ireland	4.1	5.1	3.8	6.2
Italy	8.0	7.4	13.9	21.3
Luxembourg	1.2	2.5	1.7	3.8
Netherlands	1.9	4.7	2.9	7.0
Portugal	3.1	8.4	5.1	9.6
Spain	9.3	12.9	19.8	17.2
Sweden	5.5	16.1	4.6	13.0
United Kingdom	5.5	9.8	4.4	7.9

Source: OECD 2003: 60

Moreover, long-term unemployment rates tend to be more pronounced for foreigners than for nationals. In Sweden, for example, almost one out of two foreign unemployed persons was a long-term unemployed (OECD 2003: 70). This also holds true, though to a lesser degree, for Belgium and France. In the Southern European countries (Spain, Greece and Italy), where immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon, long-term unemployment tends to hit immigrants less hard than nationals.

On the whole, figures on the integration of immigrants into the labour market of the EU-15 clearly differ depending on the nationality of the foreign workers. Among other things, Figure 9 shows the differences in unemployment and labour-market participation rates between third-country foreigners and nationals. When only third-country foreigners are considered, the EU-15 can be divided into three groups. The first group is characterised by a relatively easy integration of third-country nationals into the labour market, in the sense that their participation rates are higher than those of nationals and their unemployment rates do not differ significantly from those of nationals. Italy, Spain and Greece are the countries that belong to this first group.

Figure 9: Foreign workers (third-country nationals) and labour market in the EU-15 in 2000



Note: Ireland is not included.

Source: Calculations based on Eurostat Data, Labour Force Survey.

* Ratio between the unemployment rate of foreigners (third country citizens) and the unemployment rate of nationals

**Ratio between the participation rate of foreigners (third country citizens) and the participation rate of nationals

The second group reflects an intermediate situation where migrants' integration is not as smooth as in the first group. The position of third-country nationals is quite unfavourable in terms of unemployment: their unemployment rates are two to three times higher than those of nationals. Yet, the differences in labour-market participation rates are rather small: in the most extreme case, they are 20% lower than those for nationals. Most of the EU Member States belong to this group, in particular Austria, Germany, the United Kingdom, Finland, France and Portugal and, to some extent, also Denmark. Lastly, Sweden, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands form the third group where foreigners have noticeably lower participation rates in the labour market than nationals, and their unemployment rates are three to five times higher than those of nationals. In other words, a simple division of foreigners into third-country and EU citizens already shows the great diversity among the EU-15 Member States as regards the integration of third-country foreigners into the labour market.

4 Conclusion

In combination with the development of the European integration process, the increase in migration flows and the growth in the stock of foreigners living in the EU-15 over the last two decades have led to a rather vivid debate on the socio-economic impact of migration and on the integration of immigrants into the host societies. The strong mobility within the EU-15 constitutes one of the main features of the foreign population coming from third countries. This finding is mainly based on the fact that the inflows of third-country nationals have not contributed to the increase of the stock of foreigners to the extent that might be expected by the strong rise in immigration. Moreover, this development

indicates that, although initiatives at the national level continue to predominate over those at EU level, there is a need for handling migration flows as an EU issue

In reality, the marked differences among countries in terms of migrants' nationalities, immigration motives (in particular work, family reunification and asylum), length of immigrants' stay and the different timing of various migration waves in the host countries reinforce the need for national policies regarding migration issues. Particular attention has to be paid, however, to integration policies for migrants. Putting great emphasis on national policy initiatives for a particular group increases the risk of subdividing foreigners into various socio-economic categories, and of becoming even more selective as regards their rights and the degree of their socio-economic integration.

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