



GLocalEAsT

Joint Policy Papers Series

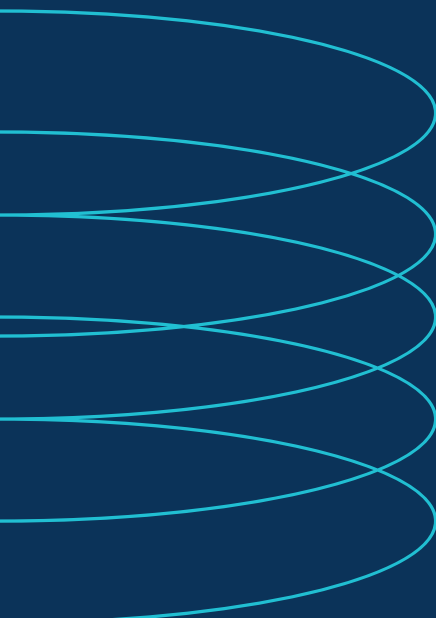
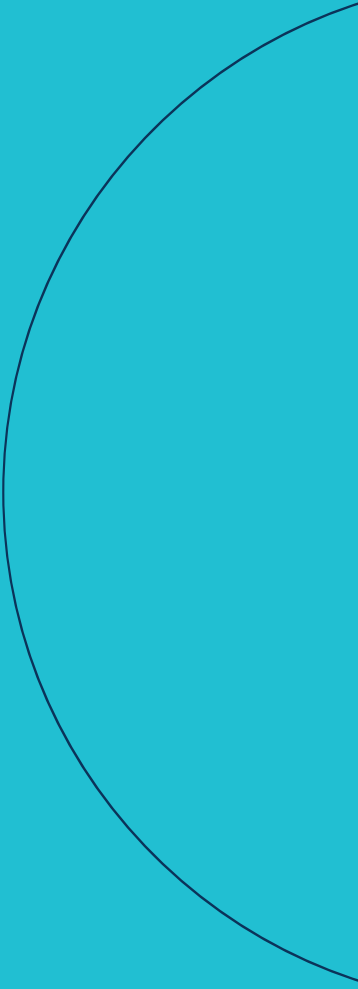


Edited by:

Mirjana Bobić

Stefan Janković

**Milica Vesković
Anđelković**



'Developing a new curriculum in Global Migration, Diaspora and Border Studies in East-Central Europe" (GLocalEAsT) is Erasmus+ project carried out by six universities as full partners and ten associated partners from different countries.'



GlocalEAsT



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

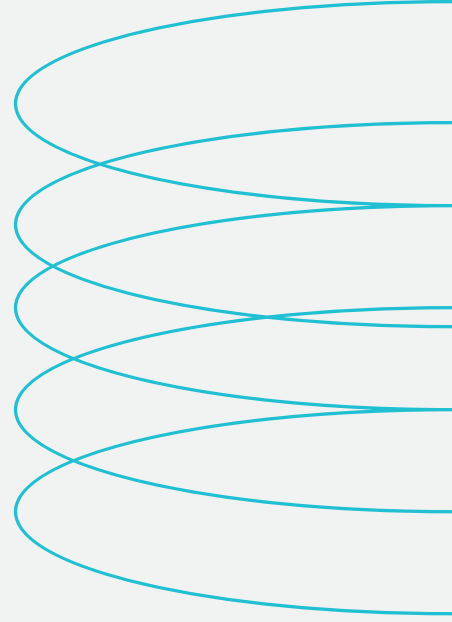
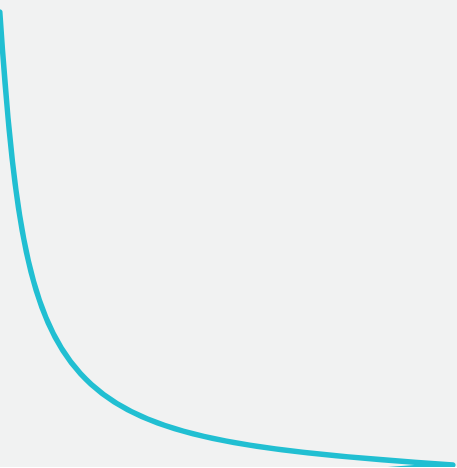


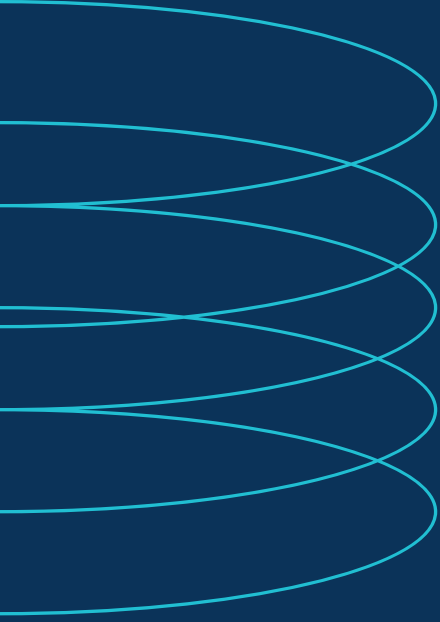
Belgrade, 2023

The content of this document represents the views of the authors only and is his/her sole responsibility; it can not be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or any other body of the European Union.

Contents

* List of figures	5
* Preface	7
* Mission	11
* Introduction	15
Aneta Világi	
* Ch. 1: Central and Eastern Europe - on the way from emigration to immigration countries	19
Zsolt Gál	
* Ch. 2: Educational offer: Skill gaps analysis	41
Aneta Világi & Darina Malová	
* Ch. 3: Educational Innovation: Macroareas and Interdisciplinarity	55
3.1. Introduction – Educational Innovation in Higher education Migration, Diaspora and Border studies	56
Drago Župarić-Ilić	
3.2. Ethnicity and Politics of Identity in East-Central Europe	61
Marco Puleri	
3.3. Global Migration, Diasporas and Migrant Integration	64
Mirjana Bobić, Dainius Genys & Zsolt Gál	
3.4. Geopolitics of migration	68
Jarosław Jańczak	
3.5. Borders in Motion in East-Central Europe	71
Carolin Leutloff-Grandits	
* Ch. 4: How to Transition out of Being a Transit Country: Croatia's State-Sponsored Immigration Discourse vs. Reality	79
Maja Osmančević	
* Ch. 5: Concluding section with recommendations	95
Tomasz Błaszczak	
* Author's affiliations	104





List of figures

* Figure 1. Employment, unemployment, intra and extra-EU labour migration in the European Union	23
* Figure 2. Unemployment rate, 2021 (% of labour force, people aged 15–74, by NUTS 2 regions)	24
* Figure 3. Ukrainian refugees in CEE countries since the start of Russian invasion (February 24, 2022)	31
* Figure 4. Comparative overview on HEIs courses/programmes in selected countries	44
* Figure 5. Scheme of ideal curriculum in migration, diaspora & border studies	50





Preface

Migration came to the fore of population studies, global politics, law, political sciences, civil society, public opinion and media ever since the 1980s, when the world became vastly mobile with 94 million registered migrants. The figures have been increasing further on (136 million in 1990, 173 M in 2000, 221 M in 2010 and 280 M in 2020). Populations of the North have been facing a long term birth crisis, negative natural population change and ageing. Thus the policies shifted from birth promotion to migration management. The latter was perceived as an important tool of demographic intervention, population engineering and way to fill in the gaps in labor market and social protection funds, an ailment to ageing societies and depopulation as a consequence of declined fertility and increased longevity, with all the consequences that followed.

Immigration of foreign workers to the states of Central and Eastern Europe has been registered from the mid-2010s as a result of fast economic growth and rising employment following the accession to the European Union. At the same time they registered high emigration of the domestic working age population to more developed 'old' Member States.

Educational offerings needed to be adjusted to new realities both globally, locally and regionally, in countries of immigration, emigration and those tra-

siting from traditionally outgoing to incoming ones. Refugees, asylum seekers, migrants arriving from Asia and Africa to Europe and global North, transmigrants, returnees, but also diaspora, work and education related, circular mobility, and returns, etc., all these required new understanding, new theories and methodologies and practical engagement of various stakeholders. New academic approaches called for interdisciplinarity, intersectionality and transnationalism.

The overall aim of the Joint Policy Paper Series is twofold: to grant high and tangible visibility to the program and to the actors involving larger audiences; and help showing the significance of promoting the values of inclusion and equity in education and training of the youth through the dissemination and wide communication of the project outcomes.

Of particular relevance are the policy recommendations, as these will concern the following aspects:

- theories and methodologies for the improvement of the educational offer focusing on border, migration and diaspora studies;
- the relevance of adopting digital e-learning tools, and the outcome of the project experience (including best practices);
- strategies and suggestions to enhance the employability of the youth and the connections between HEIs and the labor market (with specific reference to the internship established as part of the project).

The Joint Policy Paper Series is aimed at wider audiences, outreach, as well as to students, researchers, educators, but also to practitioners working on the ground in order to upgrade, refresh, and situate their expertise in the context of global migration or age of migration and the most recent one the age of acceleration, local circumstances, permanent training, integration and social inclusion.

The Joint Policy Paper Series is organised as follows: after briefly presenting the overall mission of the GLocalEAsT project, the introductory chapter by Aneta Világi further explores the complexities and impacts of human mobility. It emphasises the project's aim to develop innovative educational programmes to address related challenges, thereby fostering stronger research and policy connections to improve migration management and integration in Central and Eastern Europe. Chapter 1, written by Zsolt Gál, elaborates on how Central and Eastern European (CEE) labour markets underwent a rapid convergence process with improved employment rates, wages, and productivity. Gál asserts that de-

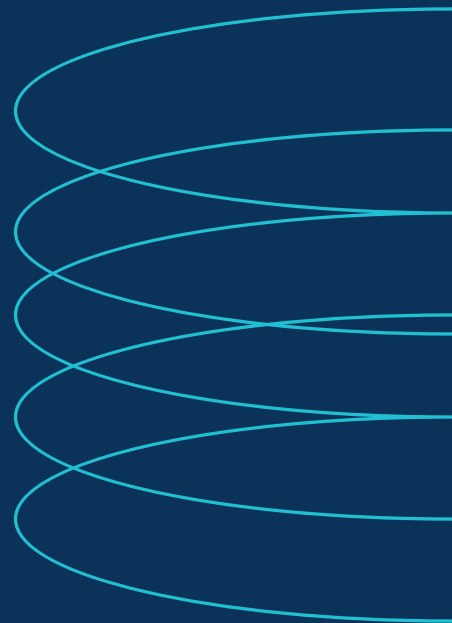
mographic changes, out-migration, and rapid economic growth have led to labour shortages and historically low unemployment rates, pushing the region to rely increasingly on foreign workers. In Chapter 2, Aneta Világi and Darina Malová analyse the current higher education landscape regarding migration, diaspora, and border studies. They identify gaps in the existing curriculum based on national reports from the GLocalEast project teams and present opportunities for the development of a new curriculum within the framework of the GLocalEast project.

Chapter 3 delves into the curriculum developed during the GLocalEast project, discussing its four core modules and reflecting on improvements in teaching methods and educational innovations. An introduction by Drago Župarić-Iljić illustrates how the project promoted collaborative student projects, leveraged the diverse backgrounds of participants, and integrated digital technologies. These efforts fostered improved intercultural competencies, digital literacy, and critical thinking skills, enhancing the teaching and understanding of migration, diaspora, and border studies in Central-East Europe. The chapter then explores each module in detail. Marco Puleri presents the module 'Ethnicity and Politics of Identity in East-Central Europe', which develops a historical approach to explore the migration-identity nexus. Mirjana Bobić, Dainius Genys & Zsolt Gál present the module 'Global Migration, Diasporas and Migrant Integration', which provides theoretical knowledge and analytical skills and offers policy formulation guidelines to foster wider social, economic, and cultural impacts. Jarosław Jańczak presents the 'Geopolitics of Migration' module, which examines migration and border issues from a global to a specific regional context, emphasising the European Union's role. Carolin Leutloff - Grandits presents the module 'Borders in Motion in East-Central Europe', which delves into various aspects related to borders and migration.

Chapter 4, written by Maja Osmančević from a student's perspective, argues that despite an increasing migrant stock, Croatia continues to identify and act as a transit country rather than acknowledging its new role as a destination for immigrants. Osmančević claims that this case study particularly exposes the disadvantaging processes experienced by impoverished, racialised individuals and traditional national minorities through hostile legislative measures, reflecting an emerging model of authoritarian capitalism tied to predatory modes of capital accumulation. Lastly, Chapter 5 by Tomasz Błaszczak provides final recommendations and conclusions.



Mission



The GLocalEAsT Joint Policy Papers Series (JPPS) situates itself at the intersection of migration studies and education aiming to fill the gap between these fields. JPPS is a specialized policy paper series focused on promoting education innovations by improving teaching and creating links between educational programs and the labor market in the fields:

- (1) Ethnicity and Politics of Identity in East-Central Europe;
- (2) Borders in Motion in East-Central Europe;
- (3) Global Migration, Diasporas and Migrant Integration in East-Central Europe;
- (4) Conflict and Security in East-Central Europe.



JPPS offers a platform for experts from academic, NGOs and local governmental institutions monitoring migration and integration processes in East-Central Europe. The JPPS tackles skill gaps in managing migration issues in Eastern and Central Europe and aims at promoting implementation of innovative practices in the field of education.

The main mission aims at:


- encouraging publications analyzing both local and global dimensions of migration flows, together with dynamics of social inclusion;
- inspiring training of academics and exchange of good practices in new and innovative multi-disciplinary pedagogies;
- promoting new learning outcomes-based educational tools (including digital) that will encourage existing curricula to meet the labour market and societal needs.




Introduction



Aneta Világi



Migration is a fundamental aspect of human history and culture. Studying migration contributes to a better understanding of human societies, facilitates informed policymaking, and helps address the complexities and opportunities presented by human mobility in our increasingly interconnected world.



Migration has a significant impact on societies affecting the development of both sending and receiving countries. There are several potential benefits and challenges associated with migration, including remittances, brain drain, social and political implications, and the impact on the well-being of individuals and communities. By studying migration, we can analyse the social and cultural transformations that occur when people from diverse backgrounds interact and live together. It sheds light on issues such as multiculturalism, integration, social cohesion, identity formation, and the exchange of ideas, customs, and traditions. We can also gain insights into the motivations, patterns, and consequences of people moving from one place to another. It helps us understand the factors that drive migration, such as economic, social, political, and environmental factors.

There have been several migration crises in recent years that have provoked political and societal reactions in Europe and draw the attention to the subject of migration, diaspora and border studies. The ongoing conflict in Syria, has led to one of the largest refugee crises in recent history. The influx of refugees, particularly in 2015 and 2016, triggered political debates and responses across Europe. At the same time, various political, economic, and environmental challenges have contributed to migration flows from Sub-Saharan Africa. Factors such as conflict, poverty, climate change, and limited opportunities have driven many individuals to embark on dangerous journeys via the Mediterranean route. And last but not least, the war initiated by Russia against Ukraine in February 2022 has resulted in the largest refugee migration in Europe since World War II, with more than 5 million individual refugees [1].

These migration crises have sparked political reactions and policy debates within European countries and the European Union as a whole. International migration has become a contested issue. In particular, growing populist parties and movements – worldwide and in East-Central Europe – as well as the conflicting tendencies toward multiculturalism and identity left the integration of migrants very problematic. Responses have varied, ranging from calls for stricter border controls and limitations on immigration to efforts to improve the management of arrivals, enhance cooperation among European countries, or address the root causes of migration. However, the last mentioned conflict has significantly changed the outlook on migration, even in the East-Central European countries, which had been traditionally more reluctant or opposed to migration and refugee inflows in the past (e.g. in 2015-16). The wave of solidarity with Ukrainian refugees has encouraged governments to take more accommodating steps and strive for better integration of immigrants.

Migrants have been integrated into societies with very different modalities and degrees of success, depending on culture, migration patterns and traditions. Moreover, global challenges related to migration and political stability emerging from the international arena are still present in Europe: different frozen conflicts and aggressive foreign politics/policies of certain states re-define borders (i.e. the cases of Ukraine and Georgia, Syria, Libya and Iraq), and changing geopolitical orientations are becoming issues uniting the efforts of universities, NGOs, ethnic communities, politicians into a common concern consortium.

Against this background, there has been a growing need at higher education institutions to offer students innovative courses that would be more responsive to the challenges on the ground.

The GLocalEAsT strategic partnership in migration, diaspora and border studies has been designed to address these challenges by promoting research, practice and political links following both transnational and trans-sectoral perspectives. The project embodied the simultaneous creation of an innovative curriculum in the field of migration, diaspora and border studies and a platform of experts from academic, non-governmental and local government institutions monitoring migration and integration processes in Eastern and Central Europe. The GLocalEAsT curriculum also included practical skills acquired through classes and internships to facilitate the transition of students to the labour market. At the same time, the GLocalEAsT consortium involved participating institutions in the development and testing of innovative digital methods and pedagogies in order to develop attractive teaching methods, strengthen the professional profile of staff, fill gaps in specific teaching areas and support internationalization and networking.

18

In the first step, the GLocalEAsT project partners provided an overview of the state of higher education in migration and migration policies, processes and practices in the countries involved in the project. This is reflected in the paper ‘Central and Eastern Europe - on the way from emigration to immigration countries’ by Zsolt Gál which tackles labour market and migration policies in countries of Central and Eastern Europe and in the paper ‘Educational offer: Skill gaps analysis’ written by Aneta Világi & Darina Malová.

In the next step, the project consortium designed and developed the GLocalEAsT syllabi and teaching materials for a new curriculum in the field of migration, diaspora and border studies with a focus on Eastern and Central Europe reflected in the paper written by Drago Župarić-Ilić ‘Educational Innovation: Macroareas and Interdisciplinarity’ which was successfully implemented into the Blended Intensive Programme in academic year 2022/23 at the University of Bologna - Forlì Campus. Based on the same curriculum, the GLocalEAsT consortium has also prepared a MOOC course for NGOs. This Joint Policy Papers Series aims to provide a brief overview on main findings and lessons learned through the project implementation as well as to offer policy recommendations.

References

[1] OECD (2022), International Migration Outlook 2022, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/30fe16d2-en>.

Chapter 1

Central and Eastern Europe - on the way from emigration to immigration countries



Zsolt Gál

Introduction – from high unemployment to labour shortages

CEE labour markets experienced a fast convergence process in both employment rates, wages and productivity after EU accession. Once coping with high unemployment and relatively large emigration (although with significant cross-country differences), from the mid-2010s acute labour shortages became a quite common phenomenon in the region soon resulting in the radical increase of the numbers of foreign workers. Already before the Covid-19 pandemic the 11 post-communist Member States of the European Union witnessed falling unemployment rates to record low levels unseen since the start of the economic transformation in the early 1990s. Actually, some countries started to have the lowest unemployment rate in the whole European Union with a considerably high employment rate, and the region as a whole had unemployment below the EU average. The most important contributing factors have been the following [1] [2] [3] [4]:

- Demography. Relatively low birth rates and population ageing resulted in a situation that natural increase has been negative or only slightly positive in the majority of countries in the region and the size of the working age population started to shrink as well.

- Migration. Additionally, most countries experienced significant out-migration, especially labour migration to the more developed 'old' Member States of the EU.
- Economy. Meanwhile, relatively fast economic growth in CEE countries lead to rising employment and falling unemployment.

Various factors were present to a different degree across the region. Typically, during the last two decades it has been the Balkan (Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia) and the Baltic states that had the combination of negative population growth and negative migration balance. On the other end of the interval, Czechia and Slovenia had both natural increases (but a very modest one) and positive migration balance, so their populations were growing. Poland and Slovakia basically stagnated in the middle while Hungary's population has been declining because the positive migration balance hasn't been large enough to offset the effects of natural decrease.

These demographic trends are likely to continue in the future. According to the baseline projection of the EUROPOP2019 set of latest population projections provided by Eurostat the EU's population will fall only slightly, by 6.0 million people or 1.3 percent during the three decades between 2021 and 2050 [5]. However, there are large regional differences: Populations of Western and Nordic countries are projected to grow while most of the population losses are concentrated at the Eastern, and partially the Southern part of the EU. While for example every (NUTS 2 level) region of Denmark, Ireland and Sweden is projected to experience a population increase, on the other hand in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania every region is projected to see its population fall [6]. Additionally, in Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia, every region – except for the capital region – is projected to experience a decline in population numbers too. On the national level only Czechia and Slovenia are projected to avoid significant population decline up to 2050.

The Covid-19 pandemic – as almost everywhere in the world – disrupted the positive tendencies on CEE labour markets, but only for a relatively short period. Most countries were back on track from 2021-2022 ongoing and acute labour shortages immediately returned. As of April 2023, two CEE countries, Czechia and Poland had the lowest unemployment rate, both 2.7 percent, in the whole European Union (Figure 1). On average the unemployment in the region has been well below the average of the EU-27 or the Eurozone (6 and 6.5 percent respectively). From the 11 post-communist Member States only 4 smaller countries had above average unemployment but only one, Lithuania, has been significantly above the EU average. Croatian unemployment was basically equal to Eurozone average and the Estonian and Slovak rates were only way slightly above the EU average (Figure 1.). Considering (NUTS 2 level) regions, as

Figure 2. demonstrates, the majority of Czech, Hungarian, Polish or Slovenian regions had similar unemployment rates as the best performing regional labour markets in Germany, Netherlands or Austria. The same applies for the capital regions and more developed Western parts of Romania, Slovakia and Bulgaria. Naturally, low unemployment does not automatically mean high employment since a large part of the working age population might be inactive (not employed but not actively seeking employment and thus not considered as unemployed). Usually students, people in early retirement schemes, parents on parental leaves, or people affected by long-term disabilities or short-term sickness belong here. Therefore, it makes sense to look at employment figures as well. However, in CEE countries low unemployment rates are usually combined with high employment rates. In 2022 from the 11 countries only two, Romania and Croatia had employment levels below the EU average. The relatively high economic growth in the previous two decades resulted in rising numbers and shares of employed people and parallel to this rising number of vacancies and labour migrants signaled intensifying labour shortages. As experts from the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies summarized: "The EU member states in Central and Eastern Europe (EU-CEE) have been experiencing increasing labour shortages, which only briefly subsided in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ongoing demographic decline suggests that labour shortages will only get stronger over time... Despite domestic concerns that automation would generate massive job losses, our findings suggest that capital deepening has taken place faster where labour was in higher demand. Thus, labour was not substituted with capital, but rather the complementary effect prevailed. Employment actually increased in EU-CEE over the past two decades – despite the shrinking working-age population. Employers could hire not only the formerly unemployed, but also the formerly inactive, and used the relaxed immigration policies to attract foreign workers, especially from Ukraine and the Western Balkans' [7].

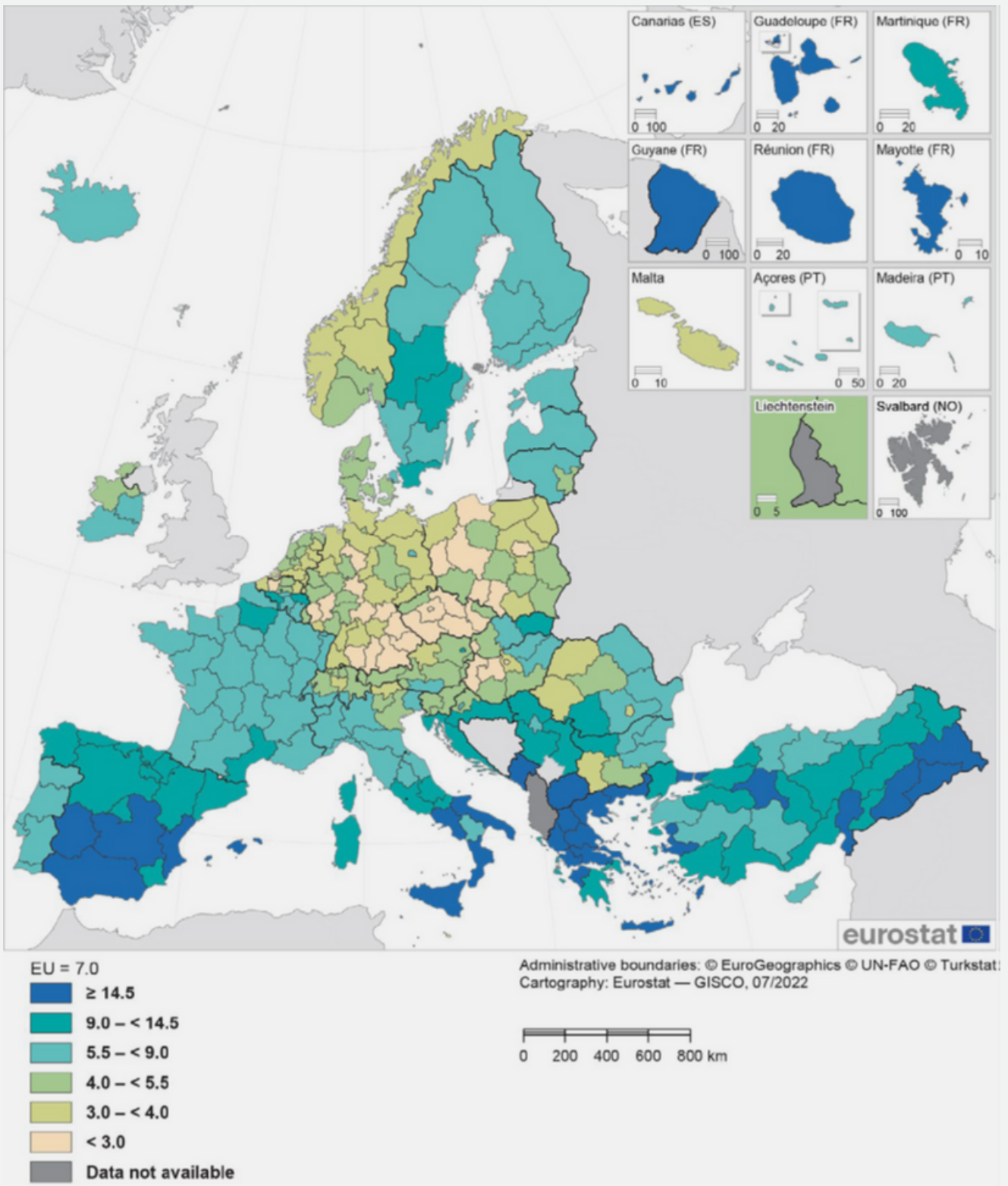
Job vacancy rates started to increase dramatically in the region from 2013-2014 with the Czech Republic leading the way, followed by Hungary, Slovenia, Romania and Slovakia; in various business surveys a rising number of companies reported difficulties filling jobs [8] [9]. 'Unsurprisingly, filling vacancies has become particularly difficult in larger towns and manufacturing regions (for example in Bratislava and its surrounding region in Slovakia, Western Hungary and Prague and its surrounding area), where unemployment rates are even lower than in the countries as a whole, and the needs for highly skilled workers is greater, leading to salary inflation. This problem is often compounded by a lack of internal geographical mobility. Job vacancy rates have risen to levels not previously experienced, despite companies being more willing to increase salaries in order to retain employees or hire new ones.' [10].

Figure 1. Employment, unemployment, intra and extra-EU labour migration in the European Union [11]

Country, area	Unemployment %, 4/2023	Employment %, 2022	EU movers, stocks 2021		TCNs, stocks 2021	
			1 000s	share, %	1 000s	share, %
Euro area-20	6.5	74,1				
EU-27	6.0	74,6				
Belgium	5.6	71,9	642	10	379	6
Bulgaria	3.9	75,7	8	0	72	2
Czechia	2.7	81,3	200	3	302	5
Denmark	4.9	80,1	171	5	227	7
Germany	2.9	80,7	3 330	7	4 398	9
Estonia	6.1	81,9	16	2	115	15
Ireland	3.9	78,2	279	9	232	8
Greece	11.2	66,3	119	2	488	8
Spain	12.7	69,5	1 285	4	2 579	9
France	7.0	74,0	898	2	2 415	6
Croatia	6.5	69,7	12	1	64	3
Italy	7.8	64,8	1 073	3	2 715	8
Cyprus	5.1	77,9	75	14	53	10
Latvia	5.7	77,0	7	0	62	4
Lithuania	7.5	79,0	5	0	139	13
Luxembourg	4.9	74,8	170	42	41	10
Hungary	3.9	80,2	58	1	98	2
Malta	2.8	81,1	35	11	50	15
Netherlands	3.4	82,9	474	5	426	4
Austria	5.1	77,3	588	11	506	9
Poland	2.7	76,7	61	0	307	1
Portugal	6.8	77,5	117	2	388	6
Romania	5.6	68,5	49	0	66	1
Slovenia	3.6	77,9	17	1	116	9
Slovakia	6.1	76,7	47	1	16	0
Finland	6.8	78,4	74	2	135	4
Sweden	7.2	82,2	213	4	434	7

Source: [12].

Figure 2. Unemployment rate, 2021 (% of labour force, people aged 15–74, by NUTS 2 regions)



Labour shortages radically transform migration patterns and policies

Due to the above-described labour market trends, Central and Eastern Europe has become one of the EU macro regions where labour shortages are most acute. This is especially true for some countries, economic sectors and regions. Various statistical measurements provide rising empirical evidence for this. One of the standard measurements are job vacancy rates. In the last year before the Covid-19 pandemic, 2019, with a job vacancy rate exceeding 6 percent the Czech Republic had by far the highest share of vacant jobs in the European Union[11]. Czechia was followed by the group of five: Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Latvia and Germany (all over 3 percent) and by Hungary, Finland and Slovenia – exceeding 2 percent which was still over the EU-27 average [12]. Thus, four CEE countries are among the first nine in the list. On the other hand, it is important to note that Romania, Slovakia and Poland were near the end of the list. However, another type of measurement, based on business surveys, showed a clear dominance of CEE countries. In the 2019 European Company Survey businesses with 10 or more employees were asked if it is difficult to recruit employees with the required skills. When combining the answers ‘very difficult’ and ‘fairly difficult’, then the list is the following: Slovakia, Romania, Malta, Czechia, Germany, Austria, Estonia, Bulgaria, Croatia – the first two being close to astonishing 90 percent and the rest still over 80 [13]. When looking at economic sectors, CEE labour shortages became especially concerning in the manufacturing sector. This sector, most notably the automotive industry, is the backbone of CEE economies, especially in the V4 countries but also in Romania [14]. In 2019, according to Eurostat’s Business survey data, the share of firms in industry reporting labour as a constraint on production reached almost 60 percent in Hungary and almost 50 in Poland, was around 40 percent in Bulgaria, Czechia and Slovenia and near to 30 percent in Croatia and Slovakia [15]. Meanwhile the EU average stood below 20 percent. Additionally, considering most recent positive employment trends in CEE countries described above, it is very likely that labour markets already became even tighter than before the pandemic, just the confirming datasets are missing yet. What is even more important, is the dynamics of change during the last decade: all existing data confirm radical increases in job vacancy rates and sharp rises in the share of companies reporting difficulties in hiring workers across the CEE region [16]. This trend is likely to continue due to further investments and resulting economic growth. For example, analytics at UniCredit, one of the largest banking groups in Europe and the region, projected accelerating growth with higher public and private investments in the 8 EU-CEE countries (the post-socialist EU members except for the three Baltic states) for 2023-24 [17].

Businesses and governments have a relatively wide range of options to address rising labour shortages and practically all possibilities have been used – naturally to a various extent – in the CEE region during the last few years [18]. Recruiting workers from abroad – both from elsewhere in the EU or from third countries – has been the most frequently used measure in the eight EU-CEE countries and included the following government policies [19]:

- All countries have quota regimes as well as labour market testing (LMT) trying to ensure that migrant workers are admitted only after employers have unsuccessfully searched for national workers, European Economic Area (including EU) citizens or legally residing third-country nationals with access to the labour market.
- However, most countries (Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) have published so-called shortage lists exempting certain occupations from LMT and providing simplified work permit procedures for foreign workers. Additionally, in Czechia the LMT period was reduced from 30 to ten days. In Poland the obligation to carry out LMT now applies only to certain occupational groups. Slovakia in 2018 simplified the conditions for hiring third-country nationals in selected professions with a documented shortage of qualified labour in districts where the registered unemployment rate is below 5%. For instance, LMT is not required for shortage occupations.
- Quota restrictions or ceilings for foreign nationals were relaxed in several countries. In Bulgaria the ceiling on employment of third-country nationals was increased from 10% to 25% of a company's workforce. In Croatia, where a national level quota is used, the limit for foreign workers in 2020 has been increased to 78.470 and a further revision of the quota system was announced. In 2019, Romania similarly increased the number of work permits issued to non-EU citizens to 30.000 – an all-time high.

The relaxation of conditions for foreign guest workers is an ongoing process that is intensifying and this trend is likely to stay in the CEE region during the following years. Most recent development includes the new employment legislation in Hungary establishing a new category of employment for guest workers [20]. The parliamentary supermajority of Victor Orbán's government – by the way, one of the loudest anti-immigration fighter in the CEE region and the whole EU – in June 2023 extended legal possibilities and time for guest workers from non-European Economic Area countries to legally reside and work in Hungary. With the purpose of seeking employment guest workers can now legally reside in Hungary for more than 90 days and once employed, they may stay in the country for up to two years, with the possibility of extending their stay for another year. At the end of this three-year period, guest workers will have the chance to resubmit their applications and continue residing in the country.

The case of Hungary is just one illustration for the trend present in all countries across the region. Continuous relaxation of living and working conditions for labour migrants by governments combined with the intensified efforts of companies to attract foreign workers lifted the number of guest workers to record levels.

If we stay in Hungary, the number of foreign workers in 2022 increased by 14 percent, to 81.000 according to data from the Central Statistical Office (KSH); and while most of them still come from the neighbouring countries, the number of migrant workers from the Far East and South-East Asia showed the sharpest increase: 182 percent [21]. Slovakia also witnessed a new record, the number of foreign workers in 2022 reached almost 88.000, a 28-fold increase compared to a year of EU accession – in 2004 only 3351 guest workers were counted in the country [22]. All this is still far away from the Czech Republic, the traditional CEE leader regarding labour migration. Needless to say, the number of foreigners working in Czechia reached a record high level at the end of 2022 when the statistical office recorded almost 905000 foreign citizens working in the country [23]. This is a threefold increase compared to 2010 levels. Finally, in the fourth and largest country of the Višegrad Group, Poland, the number of foreign workers registered in the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) by the end of December 2022 passed one million for the first time [24]. The 1.06 million foreigners registered represent 6.5% of all those insured – an increase by 192 thousand, or 22 percent over the year.

The reliability of the data might be questioned; various official statistics usually tend to underestimate the numbers of foreign workers – although to a different degree, but the trend is unquestionable: dramatic increase of labour migration across the region, which is likely to continue. In the decade between 2012 and 2021 employment of the foreign-born population has increased much more strongly than total employment in all 8 EU-CEE countries [25]. CEE countries are still at the beginning of the road, Western and Southern European EU members have much higher proportions of foreign residents and workers (Figure 1). Even if we adjust Labour Force Survey (LFS) data which are notoriously unreliable because they vastly underestimate foreign residents and workers, especially smaller groups and/or most recent migrants – which is usually the case in most CEE countries. Just two examples: in Poland the Labour Force Survey in the third quarter of 2022 indicated that there are 116.000 foreign workers, but there were 875.000 officially registered foreign citizens paying social contributions (ZUS) and the Polish Economic Institute estimated that in 2022 there were approximately 1.7 million employed people from Ukraine alone [26]. In the regional labour migration leader, Czechia LFS data show roughly half a million working aged people in the country, however the registered number of foreign workers provided by the Czech Statistical Office was over 804 thousand [27]. However, even after adjustments to LFS

data, for example using other data sources or estimates, the share of migrants/foreign workers would be still significantly lower than in Western, Nordic or Southern European countries. On the other hand, during the last few years, the CEE region as a whole and most countries within it definitely transformed from emigration to immigration countries and the inflow of Ukrainian refugees (see below) provided a final push in this transformation.

The gradual transformation has been uneven, very large differences still prevail across the region mostly related to the level of economic development and corresponding income/wage levels. The two most developed countries in the region, Czechia and Slovenia have been immigration countries with positive migration balances since the early transition years in the 1990s. Until most recently, only these two countries in the CEE region had a higher share of foreign nationals than the share of their domestic citizens living abroad. In 2019, the share of Czech citizens living in other EU countries was only 1.6 percent of the domestic population, the corresponding figure for Slovenia was 3.6 percent [28]. On the other hand, the share of foreign nationals residing in Czechia reached 5.2 percent, and in Slovenia 6.6 percent. In all other CEE countries it was the other way around: stocks of citizens living abroad outnumbered foreigners residing in the given country and usually by large margins. Romania had the highest share of own citizens living in other EU states among all 28 EU members, an astonishing 18.4 percent, followed by Lithuania (15.8%), Portugal (14.3%), Croatia (13.6%), Bulgaria (12.7%) and Latvia (10.9%)[29] – with the exception of Portugal only CEE countries [29]. On the contrary, Romania had the lowest share of foreign citizens residing in the country in the whole EU, only 0.6 percent of its total population. In other CEE countries this share remained under 2 percent, only Latvia and Estonia are exceptions due to their large resident populations made of Russian citizens [30]. (Thus, the 'foreign' population in these two countries is not made by new immigrants but older Soviet era residents.)

Migrant stocks are changing just gradually, so the dominance of emigrant stocks over the immigrant ones would stay for some years. However, when looking at more recent migration flows and especially labour migration flows, the situation is different. Data show positive migration and labour flow balances for most CEE countries, although the magnitude of net migration is usually modest. For example, during the two decades between 2002 and 2021 not only the Czech Republic and Slovenia had positive migration balances but also Hungary had a substantial and Slovakia a marginal positive net migration [31]. However, Poland experienced a negative balance but only a very small one. When looking at mobility flows of working age people (basically labour migration flows) in the EU member states in the last pre-pandemic year of 2019, there were only three countries, Latvia, Bulgaria and Romania with significant negative net

migration balances [32]. In Slovakia, the balance was next to zero, and all other CEE countries had positive migration balances. Again, the reliability of the data might be questioned, but this development should only illustrate that positive net migration is not a completely new phenomenon in the region. These gradual transformation processes were suddenly interrupted by a huge shock of the Ukrainian refugee wave, which definitely pushed most CEE countries to the 'immigration country' status.

The period of radical increase of labour migration towards CEE countries coincided with the EU migration or refugee crisis (2014-2016) and its aftermath where most CEE countries, especially the V4 ones took a radical anti-immigration position. An interesting gap was born between political rhetoric (anti-immigration attitudes of most political elites) and real policies and immigration trends (largely successful attempts to attract more labour migrants from abroad with relaxing the immigration rules). The biggest anti-immigration heroes usually became the largest foreign-labour importers at the same time. Interestingly, immigration as an issue was almost non-existing in the V4 public debate before the 2015 refugee crisis [33]. However, from 2015 it has become the arena of sharp political contestation, having a huge influence on domestic politics as well as on relations towards EU institutions and Member States, most notably Germany. In spite of the fact that (with the exception of Hungary) V4 countries avoided the massive flow of refugees in 2015 and experienced low numbers of asylum applications, the anti-immigration rhetoric had been very sharp. '[T]he stances of V4 governments on the issue of migration and refugees were marked by reluctance or explicit rejection to participate in sharing of responsibility for managing the crisis with other EU member states. This clear position has been repeatedly demonstrated to Brussels and Western European capitals by Visegrad ruling political elites, either en bloc or by individual officials, national politicians... The reasons why representatives of Visegrad political elites do not take the issue of migration and refugees as the challenge and opportunity for their societies are obvious – political positioning and power considerations in the conditions of persisting isolationist mindset and xenophobic moods of big parts of the population. Politicians present the issue purely as a problem, stressing concerns and fears, emphasising the costs, but avoiding to speak about possible benefits and opportunities of receiving migrants' [34]. We must underline a major difference between the CEE region, most notably V4 countries and Western Europe: 'In Western Europe, far-right and anti-establishment groups have driven the increase in these sentiments, but in the Visegrad countries, anti-immigrant rhetoric comes from the very center of the political space. In these countries, long-established right- or left-wing forces exert a "supply side" effect: they make political capital out of anti-immigrant sentiment and thus legitimize xenophobia' [35]. In February 2022 another U-turn followed, when CEE countries were accepting millions

of Ukrainian refugees after the full-scale Russian invasion against Ukraine. However, despite this fact, general attitudes regarding migration and especially the acceptance of African and Asian refugees have barely changed. When in June 2023 EU-27 interior ministers finally approved the EU Migration Pact that had first been proposed by the European Commission in 2020, Hungary and Poland voted against, whereas Lithuania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Malta abstained [36]. No wonder, considering that the pact included a compulsory solidarity system for managing the arrival of irregular immigrants who file for asylum [37] – ‘quotas enforced on us by Brussels’ is a dominant CEE narrative. As Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán was quick to comment: 'Brussels abuses its power. They want to forcibly transfer migrants to Hungary. This is unacceptable! They want to turn Hungary into an immigration country by force.' His Polish colleague, Mateusz Morawiecki reacted in a similar way: 'Forced relocation does not solve the immigration problem, but violates the sovereignty of member states. Poland will not pay for the mistakes of other countries' immigration policies' [38]. Thus, the sharp contrast between anti-immigration stances and rhetoric and real policies and migration flows continues to exist in many CEE countries.

The unexpected boost towards ‘immigration country’

30 status – the Ukrainian refugee wave

During the migration crisis of 2015 Central and Eastern Europe showed its worst face, but after the Russian invasion of Ukraine it showed the nicest one. The CEE region, and especially some countries within it accepted more refugees during a shorter period than Western European countries during the 2015 migration/refugee crisis relative to their population. After the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022 a huge migration wave started, until May 2023 more than 8.2 million people had fled Ukraine [39]. From the 5.1 million Ukrainian refugees gaining some type of protection in the European countries (except for Russia and Belarus) 12 CEE countries gave shelter to more than half, almost 2.8 million (Figure 3.). The recorder in absolute terms has been Poland with providing protection to 1.6 million people – this is more than Germany accepting around 1 million refugees. Poland also recorded an astonishing number of almost 12 million border crossings from Ukraine since the beginning of the invasion. In relative terms (ratio to the receiving country’s population) the largest host countries in the EU were Czechia, Estonia, Poland, Lithuania and Bulgaria – all post-communist CEE member states [40].

Figure 3. Ukrainian refugees in CEE countries since the start of Russian invasion (February 24, 2022) [44]

Country	Data Date	Refugees from Ukraine registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes	Refugees from Ukraine recorded in country	Border crossings from Ukraine*	Border crossings to Ukraine**
Bulgaria	23.5.2023	159 225	51 365	NA	NA
Czechia	14.5.2023	519 964	520 234	NA	NA
Estonia	21.5.2023	45 690	71 215	NA	NA
Hungary	23.5.2023	36 313	36 313	2 719 596	NA
Latvia	19.5.2023	47 948	31 527	NA	NA
Lithuania	19.5.2023	77 610	77 610	NA	NA
Poland	22.5.2023	1605 738	1605 738	11746 812	9 494 434
Moldova	21.5.2023	Not applicable	108 889	822 393	468 119
Romania	20.5.2023	132 362	94 179	2 377 264	1 967 334
Slovakia	21.5.2023	116 718	116 718	1 394 047	1 130 152
All*		2 741 568	2 713 788	19 060 112	13 060 039
Croatia	19.5.2023	22 538	22 538	NA	NA
Slovenia	22.5.2023	9 229	9 477	NA	NA
All Europe**		5 140 259			

Source: [45]

There are many differences between the 2015 and 2022 refugee waves, which can explain the entirely different behaviour of the CEE countries. It is not the aim of this paper to analyse them in a detailed way here. However, some crucial differences influenced the decision of Ukrainian refugees to stay in CEE. Ukrainian migration is not a new phenomenon in the region. From the mid-2010s the number of Ukrainian labour migrants has been rapidly increasing in the V4 countries, most notably in Czechia and Poland. In the Czech Republic by the end of 2021 (thus before the Russian invasion) almost 221 thousand Ukrainian workers were registered[41]. By 2020 an estimated 2 million foreigners lived in Poland and migrants from Ukraine comprised roughly two thirds of this number [42]. The most important determinants regarding the choice of destination country were the following according to a mid-2022 survey among Ukrainian refugees: 1. presence of a pre-existing social network, i.e., family members or friends in the relevant destination country; 2. Geographical proximity to Ukraine – the destination is close to the border; 3. Work opportunities; 4. Cultural proximity and 5. Schooling options for children [43]. Overall, most CEE nations fit very well to these criteria, especially Czechia and Poland. There were large Ukrainian communities before 2022, they are geographically close to Ukraine, they had the lowest unemployment in the EU with labour shortages in many sectors and areas, they have similar culture and language (Slavic language group) and therefore Ukrainian children can relatively easily adapt to their school systems.

It is next to impossible to make reliable projections on the length of stay of most Ukrainian refugees in the host countries, since it depends on many factors and the single most important one, the outcome of the war in Ukraine is highly unpredictable. It is likely that some recent refugees will become permanent migrants, but it is very hard to assess their share. What is certain however is the role of the huge Ukrainian migration wave in turning most of CEE countries to immigration ones.

The host countries are in a good position to use the potential of the refugee wave and turn it into an economic contribution to their society. In general, refugees face specific challenges at labour markets, their integration is usually a much slower and more complicated process compared with other migrants. However, this time there are many signs and already some empirical evidence that the integration of Ukrainian refugees is a faster and easier process compared to other refugee groups [46].

Conclusions and policy options

From the mid-2010s various factors, like demography, migration and economic de-

velopment resulted in major transformation of Central and Eastern European (CEE) labour markets. Once they were characterized by high unemployment, relatively large out-migration of the labour force and not very attractive job opportunities (although with large cross-country and regional differences).

More recently most CEE countries enjoyed significant employment growth, sharp fall of unemployment below the EU average – in some cases to the lowest levels within the EU – and started to face acute labour shortages. The most widespread solution has been to attract labour migrants to fill vacancies; the number of foreign workers has been increasing rapidly. The transformation from emigration to immigration countries has been well under way when a huge external shock, the 2022 refugee wave from Ukraine accelerated this process, definitely pushing most CEE countries towards the ‘immigration country’ status. Meanwhile, using the 2015 refugee crisis, large parts of CEE political elites, often including parts of the political mainstream started to play with the migration card in a populist manner having sharp anti-immigration rhetoric. A huge gap evolved between this rhetoric and actual policies (relaxing migration barriers and attracting labour migrants) with potentially dangerous consequences.

In order to address labour shortages and better use the potential of both domestic and foreign workforce while trying to foster the integration of immigrants CEE governments should consider the following policy options.

By keeping sharp anti-immigration rhetoric and at the same time importing ever larger

numbers of migrant workers including anthropologically and culturally very different ones (e.g. from the Indian subcontinent or South-East Asia) some political elites are creating a dangerous mix. They risk a popular backlash and the explosion of tensions between the native population and migrant workers. This is especially true in some microregions with larger factories employing hundreds or thousands of migrant workers who are often concentrated at workers' hostels. Therefore, it would be useful to calm the heated migration debate and use a more constructive and realistic language. At the same time, we have to acknowledge that the resistance against migration within the public is strong, and constantly creates a demand and a huge temptation for populist politicians to play the migration card. However, at one point the explosive mix they contributed to make might blow into their faces with potentially damaging political consequences for them as well.

34

In spite of declining unemployment, in most CEE countries there is still a large reservoir of unused labour force: youth, women, elderly people and marginalized ethnic communities, namely large parts of the Roma minority, etc., have considerably lower employment rates. Before attracting more foreign migrants, policy makers should consider increasing labour participation rates of these groups. Again, to do so, one should put aside typically populist practices. For example, lowering the effective retirement age in rapidly ageing societies is unsustainable and limits the participation of elderly workers in the labour market. In countries with high shares of Roma population, most notably Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Hungary the role of the education system is crucial because low employment rates and low paid employment of Roma is mostly rooted in their lower education.

To increase the labour market participation of women several changes in the welfare system and labour market regulation should be considered. This is also important regarding Ukrainian refugees since most of them are women with their children. One major barrier in many CEE countries is the limited availability of childcare facilities like childcare centres and kindergartens. This problem is usually concentrated in big urban centres and their surroundings where otherwise labour shortages are most acute and many vacant jobs are available. The lack of adequate public institutional care is forcing many women to stay at home on maternity leave, as costs of private care are often too high and salaries from re-entering jobs would not compensate for them. Additionally, CEE countries are still lagging behind the West in flexible work arrangements, like flexibility of working hours. The share of women with children having part time employment and/or home-office is still much below the Western European or Scandinavian standards. Thus, there is room for improvement in labour market legislation to allow and endorse flexible employment regimes.

All available data on recent Ukrainian refugees confirm that their level of education is above the average of host societies'. They are also managing to enter labour markets much earlier and in bigger shares than previous groups of refugees. However, there are many indications that they are entering low skilled jobs with lower qualifications, not appropriate considering their skills and education. A brain waste phenomenon, to put it short. Therefore, by reducing barriers in skill assessments and recognition of qualifications may help to use the potential of the migrant workforce much better. Especially when considering that many sectors face acute labour shortages on one hand, and there are many skilled and educated people among the refugees from a given area on the other. Health-care systems with short supply of medical doctors and nurses are a typical example across the region.

With the arrival of large numbers of Ukrainian refugees CEE countries have been gaining – previously non-existing – huge experiences with the management of migration waves and efforts to integrate refugees. They should use these experiences in the future. In accordance with the status of temporary protection, Ukrainian refugees can freely circulate and work within the EU – unlike asylum seekers who face some restrictions accessing labour markets. Based on the current experiences, immediate or at least relaxed access to work opportunities should be considered in the future also for asylum seekers. Taking into account their very low numbers in CEE countries, it would not cause significant disruptions on the labour markets but might substantially increase future integration prospects and perhaps the acceptance of new immigrants in the society as well.

In some CEE countries like the Baltic States, Slovakia or Romania labour shortages exist in parallel to still relatively high unemployment rates implying a skill mismatch. These countries should consider increasing the resources for Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP) especially on vocational training and requalification courses. In the case of migrants and refugees, additional language courses can improve the chances for labour market integration.

References

[1] 'Sharp Increase Observed in Number of Foreign Workers in Hungary.' 2023. Telex. May 15, 2023. <https://telex.hu/english/2023/05/15/sharp-increase-in-number-of-foreign-workers-in-hungary>.

[2] Astrov, Vasily, Richard Grieveson, Doris Hanzl-Weiss, Sebastian Leitner, Isilda Mara, Hermine Vidovic, and Zuzana Zavorská. 2022. 'How Do Economies in EU-CEE Cope with Labour Shortages? Study Update from Wiiw Research Report 452.' <https://wiiw.ac.at/how-do-economies-in-eu-cee-cope-with-labour-shortages-dlp-6406.pdf>.

[3] Fruchter, D. – Sielewicz, G. 2017. Labour shortages in Central and Eastern Europe countries: a growing concern for businesses. COFACE Economic Publications, Bois-Colombes: COFACE SA.

[4] Dascalu, C., Arokszállasi, Z. and Rzentarzewska, K. 2020. CEE challenge no.6: Labor market. Erste Group Research Special Report: CEE Economy, Vienna: Erste Group Bank AG.

[5] European Commission 2023. Annual Report on Intra-EU Labour Mobility 2022. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, p. 21.

[6] Ibid.

36

[7] Astrov et al. 2022, p. 5.

[8] Fruchter – Sielewicz 2017, p. 5.

[9] Astrov et al. 2022, p. 13.

[10] Fruchter – Sielewicz 2017, p. 5.

[11] The unemployment rate is the number of working age (15 to 74) people unemployed as a percentage of the labour force, while the labour force is the total number of people employed plus unemployed. Employment refers to the share of employed people in the age group 20-64. EU movers are intra-EU migrants coming from other member states while TCN refers to third country nationals, citizens of third countries outside the EU – their shares are in percentages of working age population. All data are based on a harmonised data source, the European Union Labour Force Survey (LFS).

[12] European Commission 2023. Annual Report on Intra-EU Labour Mobility 2022. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, p. 55-56; Eurostat 2023/a. Euro area.

[13] Eurostat 2022. Eurostat regional yearbook 2022 edition. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, p.84.

[14] Eurofound 2021. Tackling labour shortages in EU Member States. The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, p. 17.

[15] Ibid, p. 19.

[16] Dębowska, K., Ambroziak, Ł., Czernicki, L., Kłosiewicz-Górecka, U., Kutwa, K., Szymańska, A. and Ważniewski, P. 2019. The automotive industry in the Visegrad Group countries. Warsaw: Polish Economic Institute; Ecorys 2021. The future of the EU automotive sector. Publication for the committee on Industry, Research and Energy, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, Luxembourg: European Parliament. McKinsey 2020. Rethinking European Automotive Competitiveness. The R&D CEE opportunity, Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/automotive-and-assembly/our-insights/rethinking-european-automotive-competitiveness-the-r-and-d-cee-opportunity>.

[17] Astrov et al. 2021, p. 14.

[18] Astrov, Vasily, Richard Grieveson, Doris Hanzl-Weiss, Sebastian Leitner, Isilda Mara, Hermine Vidovic, and Zuzana Zavorská. 2022. 'How Do Economies in EU-CEE Cope with Labour Shortages? Study Update from Wiiw Research Report 452', p. 14.; 'Sharp Increase Observed in Number of Foreign Workers in Hungary.' 2023. Telex. May 15, 2023, p. 14; Eurofound 2021. Tackling labour shortages in EU Member States. The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, p. 17.

[19] UniCredit 2023. Preparing for a turnaround. CEE Quarterly, Q2 2023. Munich: UniCredit Bank AG. Available at: https://www.research.unicredit.eu/DocsKey/emergingmarkets_docs_2023_184832.a shx?EXT=pdf&K EY=l6KjPzSYBBGzROuioxedUNdVqq1wFeRockNs3hFoaK-H67WodFfQjA==&T=1&T=1.

[20] Astrov et al. 2022, p. 15-39; Fruchter – Sielewicz, 2017, p. 6-9.

[21] Astrov et al. 2022: 16-18.

[22] R, Bleona. 2023. 'Hungary Opens Doors to Guest Workers with New Employment Legislation.' SchengenVisaInfo.com. June 14, 2023. <https://www.schengenvisa.info.com/news/hungary-opens-doors-to-guest-workers-with-new-employment-legislation/>.

[23] 'Sharp Increase Observed in Number of Foreign Workers in Hungary.' 2023. Telex. May 15, 2023. <https://telex.hu/english/2023/05/15/sharp-increase-in-number-of-foreign-workers-in-hungary>.

[24] IOM Slovensko 2023. Migrácia na Slovensku. Bratislava: Medzinárodná organizácia pre migráciu – Úrad v SR, Available at: <https://www.iom.sk/sk/migracia/migracia-na-slovensku.html>

38

[25] Dobiašovský, Závaš. 2023. 'V Česku Pracuje Už K Milionu Cizinců. Podnikatelé Chtějí Více - Echo24.Cz.' Wwww.echo24.Cz. March 3, 2023. <https://www.echo24.cz/a/H5Ci3/zpravy-domaci-v-cesku-pracuje-milion-cizincu-pracovni-trh-nema-zamestnanost>.

[26] Tilles, Daniel. 2023. 'Number of Foreign Workers Registered in Poland Passes One Million.' Notes from Poland. January 16, 2023. <https://notesfrompoland.com/2023/01/16/number-of-foreign-workers-registered-in-poland-passes-one-million/>.

[27] Astrov et al. 2022, p. 30.

[28] Polish Economic Institute 2023. CEE Economic Monthly 3/2023. Warsaw: Polish Economic Institute, p. 5.

[29] Czech Statistical Office 2023. Foreigners: Employment. Praha: Český statistický úřad, Available at: https://www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci/2-ciz_zamestnanost.

[30] Dorn, D and Zweimüller, J. 2021. Migration and Labor Market Integration in Europe. IZA Discussion Paper No. 14538, Bonn: IZA – Institute of Labor Economics, p. 7.

[31] The corresponding shares of other CEE countries were the following: Estonia (7.0%), Poland (6.9%), Slovakia (6.7%) and Hungary (4.8%).

[32] The share of foreigners in the remaining countries of the region was the following: Estonia (15.1%), Latvia (13.9%), Hungary (1.8%), Croatia and Lithuania (both 1.7%) Bulgaria (1.4%) and Poland (0.8%).

[33] Astrov et al. 2022, p. 11.

[34] European Commission 2022. Annual Report on Intra-EU Labour Mobility 2021. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, p. 40.

[35] Kovář, Jan. 2022. “Politicisation of Immigration in Central and Eastern Europe: Evidence from Plenary Debates in Two Countries.” *Problems of Post-Communism*, July, 1–12; “Sharp Increase Observed in Number of Foreign Workers in Hungary.” 2023. *Telex*. May 15, 2023. <https://telex.hu/english/2023/05/15/sharp-increase-in-number-of-foreign-workers-in-hungary>.

[36] Kucharczyk and Mesežnikov 2018, p. 9-10.

[37] Hunyadi, B. and Molnár, C. 2016. *Central Europe’s Faceless Strangers: The Rise of Xenophobia*. Nations in Transit Brief, Washington, DC: Freedom House, p. 1.

[38] Posts, the editorial board of the *Visegrád Post* View All. 2023. “EU Migration Pact Met with Harsh Criticism in Central Europe, Poland Vows Not to Comply | *Visegrád Post*.” June 16, 2023. <https://visegradpost.com/en/2023/06/16/eu-migration-pact-met-with-harsh-criticism-in-central-europe-poland-vows-not-to-comply/>.

[39] If adopted by the European Parliament, the EU Migration Pact will provide for a compulsory solidarity system for managing the arrival of illegal immigrants who file for asylum and a common framework of rules to streamline border procedures. Under the agreement, 30,000 asylum seekers would be relocated each year in other EU countries. Member states refusing to accept their quota of migrants would have to pay €20,000 per person refused (*Visegrád Post* 2023).

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] UNHCR 2023. Operational Data Portal, Ukraine Refugee Situation. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.

[40] Eurostat 2023/d. Temporary protection for persons fleeing Ukraine - monthly statistics. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Temporary_protection_for_persons_fleeing_Ukraine_-_monthly_statistics.

[41] Czech Statistical Office 2023. Foreigners: Employment. Praha: Český statistický úřad.

[42] Dascalu, C., Arokszallasi, Z. and Rzentarzewska, K. 2020. CEE challenge no.6: Labor market. Erste Group Research Special Report: CEE Economy, Vienna: Erste Group Bank AG, p. 5.

[43] EBRD 2023. Transition Report 2022-23, Business Unusual. London: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, p. 38-39.

[44] NA - Not applicable (no border with Ukraine) or data not available. * All 10 countries involved in the so-called Refugee Response Plan. ** All European countries except for the Russian Federation and Belarus.

[45] UNHCR 2023.

40

[46] 'Between Vague Return Prospects and Limited Employment Opportunities: The Challenges of Ukrainian Refugees' Labour Market Integration.' n.d. GLOBSEC - a Global Think Tank: Ideas Shaping the World. Accessed July 14, 2023; OECD 2023. What we know about the skills and early labour market outcomes of refugees from Ukraine. OECD Policy Responses on the Impacts of the War in Ukraine, Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Temporary_protection_for_persons_fleeing_Ukraine_-_monthly_statistics.

Chapter 2

Educational offer: Skill gaps analysis



Aneta Világi & Darina Malová



Introduction

Over the last few decades, migration and the management of migration flows have gained importance even in those countries that traditionally belonged to sending rather than receiving states, e.g. Central East European (CEE) countries. Migration management and integration policies employ various actors; starting from politicians, through state officials, local government to various non-governmental and charitable organizations helping refugees directly in the field. The group of actors who are indirectly affected by migration is even more numerous in each state. Therefore, professions that deal with migration (either directly or indirectly) are numerous. The state and public institutions, including those responsible for training and preparing experts for practice (Higher Education Institutions – HEIs), need to respond adequately to such developments in Europe (or even worldwide). It is rather questionable whether and to what extent individual countries were able to adapt from institutional as well as from a societal point of view.

The GLocalEAsT project in Migration, Diaspora and Border Studies responded to this development by promoting research, practice, teaching and political links in addressing migration issues, following both transnational and trans-sectoral perspectives.

Experts from HEIs of six countries, namely Croatia, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Slovakia and Serbia, have created strategic partnership to exchange and build up knowledge and good practices in the above mentioned fields of interest. Collaboration of the project countries with rich experiences with migration flows (e.g. Italy, Germany or Serbia) has contributed beneficially to the countries that only recently have started to face the immigration. One of the main goals of the project was to explore and design new curricula in Migration, Diaspora and Border Studies that would fill existing gaps and provide opportunities for students to be better prepared for the current challenges in the fields.

This paper [1] provides an analysis of the challenges and opportunities in the higher education system regarding the studies in above mentioned fields. The paper is based on the several reports that were prepared by national project teams of the GLocalEAsT project. They mapped the existing offer of the HEIs on the topics of migration, diaspora and border studies and offered a general overview of the number and the basic characteristics of courses / study programmes in respective countries. Using various methods, the project partners described the main gaps in the existing educational offer and identified opportunities for developing a new curriculum on migration, diaspora and border studies in the framework of the GLocalEAsT project.

The paper is organised as follows. After this short introduction we firstly briefly examine the current educational offer in the fields of migration, diaspora and border studies in the six partner countries. Then the paper focuses on analysis of gaps, needs and opportunities and finally, it summarizes conclusions and presents recommendations.

Educational offer in six project countries

The tradition of teaching migration-related topics in the six selected countries varies, and to a certain extent reflects countries' experience with migration as such. Due to the rather minor migration flows and prevalence of emigration in the four CEE countries, the issue of international migration has not been politically and societally significant. Since the 'migration crisis' of 2015-2016, the national debates have started to reflect wider migration trends.

On the other hand, Germany and Italy have experienced substantial immigration due to their level of economic development. Active policies supporting labour migration in the

case of Germany, and a natural buffer position of Italy have attracted migrants from less developed European countries and from Africa and Asia. As a result, these countries had to deal with challenges of managing migration and integration much earlier, thus professionals working in this specific area were required.

The CEE countries only gradually realise the complexity of migration issues and their relevance for the national policies, politics, economy and social well-being. In every project country, the HEIs give attention to the migration issues to some extent – either in the form of individual university courses or in study programmes, which offer a complex and tailor-made preparation for certain professions. The general comparative overview is presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Comparative overview on HEIs courses/programmes in selected countries

	courses	programmes	level	language	obligatory/ elective	disciplinary focus	geographical focus	skills covered / employment opportunities
Croatia	15		mostly undergraduate 1 (9)	mostly Croatian (13)	mostly elective (14)	social science and humanities (sociology, law, history)	national and regional (West Balkan, Central and South-East European)	migration management, public administration, media, education, research
Lithuania	27		mostly graduate (16)	mostly Lithuanian (21)	elective (15) and obligatory (12)	Political science, sociology, anthropology, history, demography, culture studies	national & international; regional (South East Europe, Baltic sea region)	governmental institutions, EU political institutions; management of migration and ethnic relations
Serbia	43		mostly undergraduate 1 (32)	Serbian only	mostly obligatory (28)	social science and humanities (demography, sociology, geography, law, political sciences, economy and security studies)	national and global	research and data analysis; policy evaluation; work with migrants
Slovakia	19		mostly graduate 1 (12)	mostly Slovak (12) & English	mostly elective	law, social work, political science, ethnic studies	national, EU and regional (V4)	legal counselling and advocacy, social work public institutions, dipplomacy, NGOs, international organisations; research; migration and integration management; work with migrants (psychological and social work, legal counselling)
Italy	-		mostly graduate: 8 MA, 14 Master 25 Degrees	mostly Italian & English		law; sociology, psychology	national, international & regional (Mediterranean)	social work, education, migration management on national and international level, research, public policy
Germany	-		mostly graduate 17 (10)	German & English, French		sociology, history, political science, social work, anthoropology, psychology, education	national & international; sending countries	social work, education, migration management on national and international level, research, public policy

Source: National reports on GlocalEAsT Review of the HE programs in Migration, Diaspora and Border Studies, available online at: <https://glocal.sk/project-outputs/>

Our analysis of the existing educational offer in the project countries suggests that there are **two groups of countries. The first group consists of CEE countries, in which migration issues are covered largely through university courses** of different disciplines of social science and humanities (law, political science, social work, sociology, social anthropology, and ethnic studies). They provide students with a basic understanding of the topic. Only exceptionally, **the courses define actual skills (such as mastering statistical/research methods) or employment prospects of the graduates.**

A comparative analysis implies certain differences and similarities among CEE countries, accentuating national migration contexts. Starting with Lithuania, several courses focus on migration from the perspective of ethnic relations between migrant populations in the Baltic region, while other courses are devoted specifically to the Lithuanian diaspora. A significant part of the educational offer on migration in Serbia is embedded in studies of social demography, including topics such as migration and development, contemporary labour migration, statistics, etc. In Croatia, the courses are designed largely from a sociological perspective, including aspects of law, history and demography. In Slovakia, law courses prevail, yet these are mostly practically-oriented courses of asylum clinics, preparing students for real-life cases of legal counselling and advocacy in asylum law.

Even though some courses aspire to offer a broader interdisciplinary view on migration, most of them offer a single-disciplinary perspective on migration or specific migration-related issues. Moreover, these courses only rarely include practical preparation. Since most of them are optional, their reach is rather limited and usually, they are offered in the respective national language. However, there is a great potential for the comprehensive English language courses, which might increase perspectives for an international career for CEE students, as migration is increasingly a global phenomenon. In these countries, the complex approach to studying migration in a specific study programme is largely missing. The HEIs in Croatia, Serbia and Slovakia offer only one migration-related study programme – and even though these new programmes are rather ambitious and interdisciplinary, their reach so far is quite low [2].

Germany and Italy have however a longer tradition of teaching migration. Their approach is more holistic, being a subject of study programmes. The growing salience of migration has prompted increase of the new study programmes and stimulated the high interests of university students in these topics. The comprehensive study programmes with clear prospects for future employment are closely interconnected with the specific labour market needs.

Italy currently offers 25 study programmes, focused mainly on law and social work aiming to train professionals working in the field of migration management. These programmes include both theoretical knowledge and preparation for provision of specific services in the migration and integration management. The Master programmes are in particular skills-oriented, relying on the cooperation with external institutions from the field (governmental institutions, NGOs, research and cultural institutions) and thus providing students with specialised, tailor-made training (e.g. on planning, coordination and evaluation of interventions; accompanying migrants in the reception and integration phase, etc.). Some of the programmes include area specialisation and linguistic preparation, while the focus is largely on the Mediterranean and the Adriatic region. Contrary to the CEE offer, there are no programmes dealing with diaspora and border studies.

In Germany, there are 17 universities, which offer altogether 17 study programs on BA and MA-level in the thematic scope of migration, diaspora and border studies. Based on the recognition that the management of migration and integration requires interdisciplinary and critical perspective, the HEI programs increasingly integrate various fields: the social (and cultural) sciences, law and economics. The focus on migrant communities and their home countries is apparent: several study programmes offer specialisation in area and language studies (e.g. Islamic Studies, Slavic Studies, Eastern European Studies). The study programmes provide students with the practical experience and at the undergraduate level, some programmes offer dual education (working along with studies), some graduate programmes require stay abroad or internships. The potential employment of the absolvents is available in the field of social work, local administrations, international organisations, firms and chamber of commerce, politics, universities, and foundations.

46

In sum, we draw several conclusions from mapping the educational offer in migration, border studies and diaspora in six selected countries:

- **Firstly, currently there is no course or study programme integrating migration, border studies and diaspora in a comprehensive way.** The topic of migration is covered from various disciplinary perspectives as well as from a multidisciplinary approach typical for study programmes.
- **Secondly, the integration of area studies and/or global perspective into courses/study programmes is still minor.** Germany and Italy pay attention to migrant-sending countries and to migrant communities, but this is just an emerging approach. In Croatia, Lithuania, Serbia and Slovakia the migration is studied from the national and/or EU perspective.

- **Thirdly, in all partner countries, the educational offer regarding migration is still very much limited to domestic university students, as the majority of study programmes in Germany and Italy are offered in national languages.** In the case of Croatia, Lithuania, Serbia and Slovakia, courses on migration exist at a few universities, in their capitals. There is considerable room to expand the migration curricula to a broader audience, both geographically and in relation to the target group, which could include the state/local government officials, or practitioners working with migrants in various fields (education, health, labour integration).

Skill gaps analysis

Based on the national HEI educational offer we identified key skills and competences the students can develop by attending selected courses or study programmes. Then, we asked experts and practitioners to gain insight into labour market demands. Therefore, in the next section, we break down the concrete knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary to increase the readiness of the HEI graduates for their employment in the professions related to migration. Equally, we summarise expert feedback on perceived gaps, needs and opportunities in the current educational offer.

47

The expert surveys advocated for an improvement of existing curricula by including a more complex approach to studies of migration, with better reflection of the labour market needs. Overall, all partners underlined the need for an **interdisciplinary approach** that entails social and cultural as well as sciences of law and economics. The interviews with local experts in CEE countries confirmed the need for a complex preparation of the HEI graduates with application of theoretical knowledge into practice. There is a growing demand for experts who could take positions at the different levels of state administration. The future graduates should be trained for cross-sectional tasks such as work with clients (applicants or recipients of international protection, labour migrants), cooperating and networking with other state institutions and participating in meetings at the EU level. The issue of migration has been often hijacked by politicians, therefore substantial change is needed, as the ageing population creates shortages in the labour market and the return programmes for ex-patriots are not yet successful (for more details see article of Zsolt Gál in this issue). Moreover, recent geopolitical development in this region (Ukraine, Belarus) has proved that the incoming migrations flows started to require a professional approach similar to ones adopted in countries of Western Europe.

In Germany, the demand for development of an **interdisciplinary border study perspective** was detected. Such a perspective could improve an understanding for the social boundaries migrants meet as well mechanisms of categorization and mobility control. The interviews pointed to a lack of an understanding of migration-based factors in sending and transit countries, the historical legacies, as well as the training of language competences. In Italy, further development of **area and/or global studies** would connect general understanding of migration with specific knowledge of migrants' countries of origin and specificities of the regional migration flows. The demand for a more practical approach through internships and trans-sectoral cooperation was highlighted. That would allow developing skills in networking, project drafting and planning of EU-funded projects and basic legal and administrative issues.

The **ideal theoretical preparation** should therefore include basic knowledge from the following disciplines of social sciences and humanities.

1. Political science & Law

- a. Actors/organizations in migration (international, EU & national)
- b. Legal basis for migration management (international, EU and national)
- c. Human rights protection
- d. Integration mechanisms (theoretical but also practical case studies)
- e. Geopolitics from migrant perspective (understanding of forced migration)

2. Sociology & Economy

- a. Sociology of migration
- b. History of migration and current migration trends in the global context
- c. Social research methodology – how to find the data, process them & create tool for public opinion or qualitative research
- d. Economic aspects of migration (labour migration, impact and forecasts)

3. Anthropology & Cultural Studies

- a. Cultural background and specificities of migrant communities (understanding political, cultural, social and religious background of migrants' home countries)
- b. Models and challenges of integration in host societies
- c. Migrants' perspectives and experiences

4. Psychology & Social work

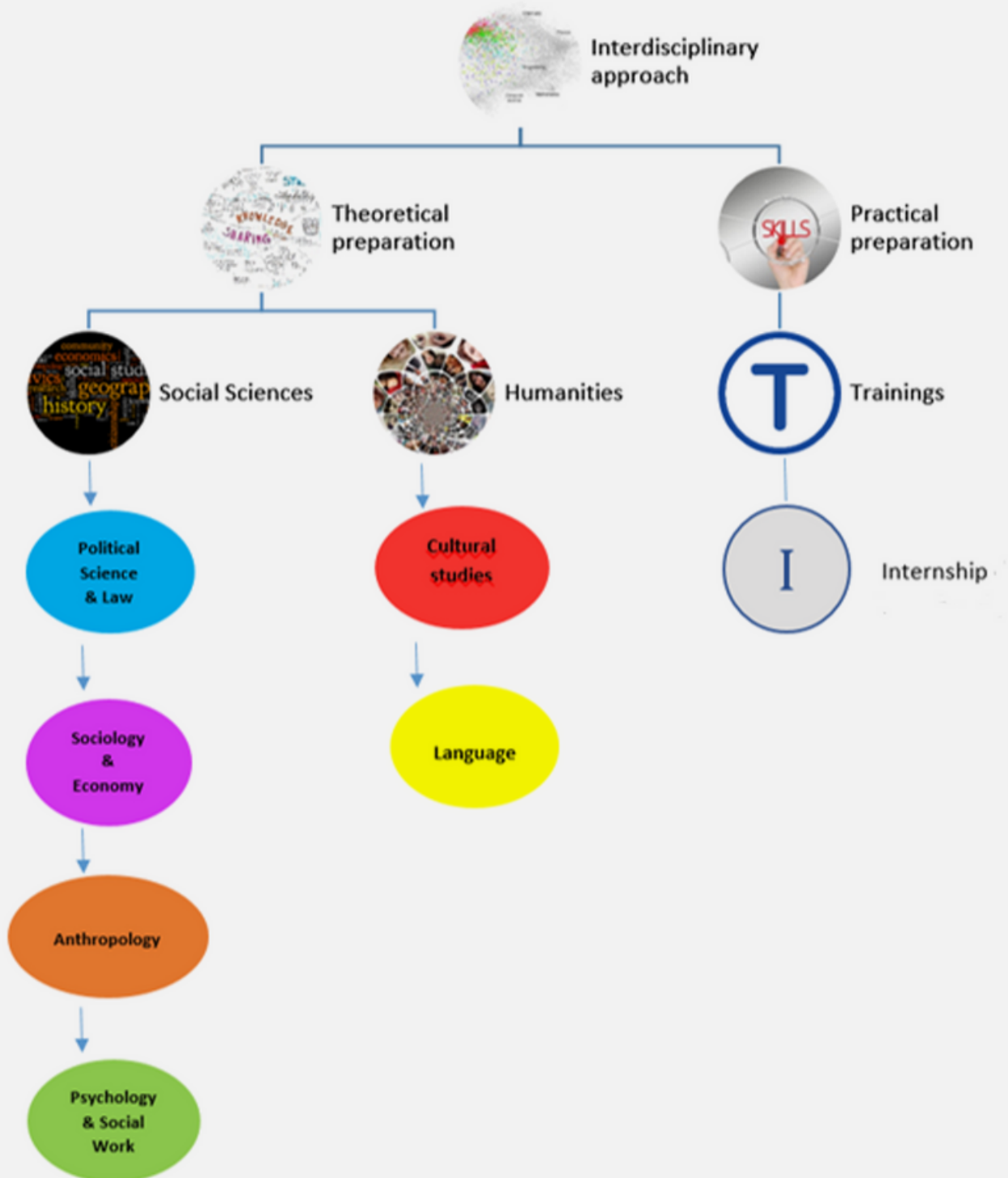
- a. Specific needs of migrants, including vulnerable groups
- b. Psychological coaching (cultural shock, dealing with trauma, etc.)
- c. Advisory work and providing social services (migrants' rights and obligations)

Moreover, most countries highlighted the need to include language preparation. Yet, while in the Central East European countries, the graduates are expected to master at least English in order to be able to work with foreign sources, cooperate with international partners and apply for funds, in Germany and Italy, the rationale reflects rather the need to communicate with migrants in their own language (Turkish, Arabic, Slavic languages).

The experts also voiced the necessity to include the practical aspects of managing migration and integration of migrants in university education. While such an approach is better established in Italy and Germany, where study programmes include obligatory internships or work experience, cooperation with external institutions, or HEIs from countries of migrants' origin, it is still mostly lacking in CEE countries. Experts in these countries called for better connection of theoretical knowledge with practical skills, gained through direct experience, e.g. through internships, volunteering, excursions, fieldwork, or mediated through contact with guest lecturers working in the field. Such activities could contribute to a more realistic and holistic perspective on implementation of migration and integration policies, migrant integration in local communities or the migrants' experiences and challenges.

The overall approach to developing a new curriculum in the field of global migration, diaspora and border studies, should therefore be based on the pillars as indicated in the Figure 5. (next page). The GLocalEAsT project has developed the new curricula that address the identified needs and gaps and which is based on below mentioned pillars. More details on the GLocalEAsT curricula could be found in the next parts of this issue of JPPS.

Figure 5. Scheme of ideal curriculum in migration, diaspora & border studies



Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the systematic analysis provided by the project partners in the GLocalEAsT project, this paper presented the current educational offer in the six project countries. We have detected a niche for revising and/or developing a new curricula, courses, possibly programmes which would respond to both the need of the theoretical and practical preparation of the HEI graduates. While there were many existing courses and study programmes devoted to various aspects of migration, diaspora and border studies, we have documented several possible ways how to update and expound existing curricula and/or develop new courses that would respond to skill gaps analysis and would respond to recent challenges while also integrating novel attributes.

The analysis has highlighted the following gaps and needs:

- The need for the HEI graduates to have an open-minded and respectful attitude, which would include a humane and empathetic approach towards migrants and foreigners as such.
- The need for cultural sensitivity and self-reflectivity as crucial soft skills, which is essential for working with the clients, but needed also in research and policy professions.
- The need for practice-driven skills acquired through both classes and internships, which could help to facilitate the transition of students to the labour market.

51

The analysis also paths the way how to address these issues, by highlighting (among other things):

1. Practical trainings

- a. Communication skills: argumentation, negotiation and advocacy, active listening skills
- b. Cultural mediation (familiarizing migrants with cultural norms of the receiving society and vice-versa; conflict management; de-escalation training)
- c. Diversity training: Critical reflection on personal motivation and attitudes
- d. Analytical skills: research methods for migration & policy recommendations
- e. Team work (with focus on interdisciplinary teams)
- f. Project writing and management (European & national grant schemes)
- g. Marketing & PR: competent handling of social media tools and platforms

2. Internships

- a. Direct contact with migrants and/or practitioners
- b. Direct implementation of obtained knowledge & skills
- c. Connection between academic and practical expertise

Based on the comparative analysis conducted within the GLocalEAsT project, we have proposed following recommendations to improve the education on migration, diaspora and border studies.

52 Firstly, we recommend either to strengthen or to include the **interdisciplinary approach** of the new or revised curricula, which would allow getting out of a single disciplinary focus characteristic for CEE countries and draw inspiration from the complex educational programmes in Germany and Italy. Combination of different disciplines of social sciences and humanities contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the migration phenomenon and encourages a more holistic and sensitive approach. Interdisciplinary education in general encourages students to reflect critically on migration, diaspora and border studies, considering it from multiple perspectives. Such an approach will help students to integrate knowledge from different disciplines to better understand and intervene in migration which represents complex global problems. Moreover, interdisciplinary teaching supports students' abilities and skills to tolerate and/or embrace ambiguity of migration in CEE countries. Interdisciplinary education could help students to understand why conflicts over migration have commonly ascended in this region. An interdisciplinary approach could better identify the causes and consequences of migration and, in general, it would be an ideal way to address this issue. Furthermore, while there were courses which focus on diaspora, i. e. on teaching about their emigration histories and consequent diaspora communities worldwide, this could be effectively integrated into the courses on migration, so it would strengthen the student's motivation and integrate emotional aspects.

Secondly, in order to provide a more specific focus, the new revised curricula or new interdisciplinary and integrated courses on migration, diaspora and border studies could be developed within the **global studies** and/or in the **area studies** at respective universities, while including specific regional focus on Central and Eastern Europe. In such a way special courses related to migration, diaspora and border studies integrate history, geography, politics, economics, culture, and languages to examine migration as a global phenomenon and learn about current and future challenges. Students should also need to learn about the context of migration such as globalization, development, environmental challenges, human rights, conflict, and cooperation.

Thirdly, the revised curricula and/or new courses and programs should require inclusion of **intercultural and language preparation** (at least for two years), so the students can learn how to communicate with the future target groups, i.e. migrants.

Fourthly, the revised curricula and/or new courses should need to integrate the **practical aspects** in order to support development of students' skills and prepare them for their professional paths. Involvement of practitioners as lecturers, in internships and in closer cooperation with other actors in the field (local authorities, civil society organisations, etc.) could be seen as potential to provide students with the often-missing practical elements in teaching migration. New study programs on migration thus request to encompass obligatory internships or in case volunteering, excursions, fieldwork, etc.

Fifthly, the revised curricula and/or new courses should integrate the **online platforms** that could expand the target groups for this type of education beyond university students, and offer further education to practitioners and professionals working with migrants regardless of their location.

Finally, the revised curricula and/or new courses should quest for incorporating the **international dimension**. Academics and experts from different countries can offer a unique perspective on migration and provide case studies to complement the theoretical education. Equally, given the prevalent focus on the national context in the existing educational offer, strong anchoring of the new curricula and/or courses in the transnational and the global dimension of migration is able to bring a fresh perspective.

References

[1] This article is based on national and comparative reports prepared in the GLocalEAsT project. Therefore, we would like to thank the authors of all GLocalEAsT reports (in alphabetical order): Bagić, D., Bantouvaki, J., Bobić, M., Gál. Zs., Janauskas, G., Janczak, J., Jastrzab-Skwarczynska, P., Králiková, M., Leutloff-Grandits, C., Puleri, M., Rajković, M. I., Schaefer, H., Schenk, A., Trako Poljak, T., Vesković Anđelković, M., Würffe, S., Zoppi, M., Župarić-Ilić, D. The original national & comparative reports are available online at: <https://glocal.sk/project-outputs/>.

[2] In Croatia, it is the novel integrated 5-year programme Demography and Croatian Diaspora at the University of Zagreb. In 2017, Serbia launched an interdisciplinary MA programme Studies of Migration, which includes practical preparation. However, it is attended only by 10 students yearly or even less. The Department of Social Work of Comenius University in Bratislava offers a Master studies specialisation in International Migration and Development. However, this specialisation is not open every year. In Lithuania's Vytautas Magnus University, the study programme on Migration policy and history of diasporas was created in 2017, yet it has not started due to structural reasons.



Chapter 3

Educational Innovation: Macroareas and Interdisciplinarity as Recommendations for innovation in educational offer



Drago Župarić-Ilić, Marco Puleri, Mirjana Bobić,
Dainius Genys, Zsolt Gal, Jarosław Jańczak,
Carolin Leutloff-Grandits



3.1. Introduction - Educational Innovation in Higher education Migration, Diaspora and Border studies



Drago Župarić-Iljić

Learning and discussing migration and its impacts needs to move from traditional teaching methods in order to create an engaging learning environment, the one that enables critical thinking and introduces students to global mobility of people and consequences that have had on cultural diversity of the contemporary world. Teaching migration-related topics across multiple academic disciplines could eventually provide a broadened perspective and more holistic understanding of complexities of migration processes and phenomena, one which will recognize interconnections and intersectionality of migration with different aspects of social, historical, economic, political, and cultural structures and dynamics.

Drago Župarić-Ilić: Introduction

By providing a space for students' collaborative projects on working together with their peer colleagues it could encourage their further research and skills in problem-solving and public presentation. Different backgrounds of students, teachers, scholars and other involved actors of different status and migration backgrounds could contribute to improvements in their intercultural competences and promote inclusivity and equality at higher education plans. Additional use of digital and interactive technologies (such as virtual classrooms of MOOC and Moodle) could in this regard help to boost students' digital literacy skills and to cultivate critical thinking towards technology use in the education process. Thus, innovative approaches to teaching multifaceted aspects of migration could have several potential benefits for students and fellow professors, as the ones we have aimed to provide during the GLocalEAsT project on migration, diaspora, and border studies in Central-East Europe.

Educational innovations seem to be necessary prerequisites and driving engines of progressive social, economic and technological solutions for many challenges of today's world. GLocalEAsT partners looked for envisioning and designing one Master programme that will share some of common features with other master programs in Migration studies. Yet, there were some novelties to be addressed as well, which could foster the project's main objective and foreseen outcome in its future afterlife. We started with a common ground understanding that we want to develop a curriculum that cherishes systematic, comparative, transnational/transcultural and transdisciplinary perspectives. Critical awareness and comprehensive analysing of migration related phenomena lead us to better understanding of recent and future challenges regarding human mobility. Theoretical and empirical knowledge was seen as important for practical solutions on migration-related issues and evidence-based policy making, which reveals its decision-making and implementing relevance. We believe that this approach could boost employability after completion of the programme for the students. Second main goal was to cover a diversity of topics, disciplinary approaches and teaching methods producing a general coherence and consistency of all courses and syllabi content. Here we strived for a balance between national and regional (East-Central Europe), and European, or more global cross-case-study perspective, in its both diachronic and synchronic dimensions.

Coming up with a new, innovative master programme in Migration, Diaspora and Border studies was a collaborative task for the GLocalEAsT team members of the consortium partners' universities, among experts in such diverse, yet similar areas and fields of social sciences and humanities. Disciplinary approaches of the team members who worked diligently on designing the new curriculum and syllabi Global Migration, Diaspora and Border Studies in East-Central Europe, ranged from Political science and Sociology, Social Anthropology, History, Cultural Studies, Demography, Economics, Legal studies, Social Geography, Gender studies, Political Philosophy, International Relations, and others. Next to the disciplinary backgrounds, various research interests and teaching experiences of colleagues partaking in GLocalEAsT projects encompassed interdisciplinary studies, namely Migration Studies, Critical Border Studies, Ethnicity and Nationalism Studies, Diaspora and Transnationalism Studies, European Studies, that seem to be especially relevant for researching and teaching mobility and identity phenomena.

58

Our new curriculum covers topics that represent, in their own sense, not only separate national case studies but also bear a potential for comparative cross-national case studies, and strives to include a wide range of thematic blocks and methodological approaches: integration, migration governance, family migration, securitization, irregular migration, forced migration, ethnic migrations, border management, fiscal consequences of migration, remittances, post-Soviet diaspora, identity politics, populism, routes and corridors, ethnography of borders, youth emigration, diaspora networks and identity, public attitudes towards migration, politicisation of (im)migration, intra-EU mobility, etc. All these are investigated and taught with special focus on East-Central Europe, and in addition to South-East Europe and Baltic-Black Sea region, although the scope of Geopolitics of migration was a global one.

Dealing with potential cross-cutting and overlapping content in the curriculum, was recognized as a challenge not only by team members but also by student participants. So, there was the need to include some insights from other underrepresented disciplines such as psychology, social work and media studies. The first issue was resolved through discussion among team members and in-between different teams, who oftentimes could have had a different scope, perspective, a paradigm in investigating some particular phenomenon or a process, thus proposing merging, reducing and shifting of some particular content. For example, transnationalism as a topic could fit into schemes of all Task Forces, but one team would look for cultural and identity practices of transmigrants, other would focus on transnational citizenship and family ties, the third would discuss on economic and developmental aspects of transnationalism, and the last one could discuss transnational nationalism and political practices of transmigrants.

Invitation and incorporation of the associated partners into teachings at the Viadrina Summer School in September 2022, and during the Blended Intensive Program in Bologna in June 2023 provided additional value for the project. A wide network of multinational and trans-sectoral associated partners of the project, including NGOs, research centres and governmental actors has remained at the disposal to support the project aims and objectives, even though it was, and still is, a challenge of how to create a measurable product of transdisciplinarity, that could be incorporated in the curriculum and disseminated in the later phases of the project's life. Interests of associated partners and involvement into project activities with expertise and networks in teaching practical soft skills could boost further students' analytical skills, transdisciplinary team work, research methodologies, presentation skills, project writing and management skills, policy recommendation writing, dissemination and promotion skills.

One of the project's main tasks was to design new syllabi, teaching materials and to define outcomes of learning process, by members of academic task forces, divided into four thematic macroareas: Ethnicity and Politics of Identity in East-Central Europe; Borders in Motion in East-Central Europe; Global Migration, Diasporas and Migrant Integration in East-Central Europe; and Geopolitics of Migration. Each of these four thematic macroareas created two courses, the first course (the core course) including a basic conceptual, theoretical and methodological knowledge in accordance with each task force thematic area. The teaching in the second course consists of mostly applied, comparative and practical case studies, deepening students' knowledge about topics from the core course. The second course was devoted to exploration of regional comparative case studies in accordance with pre-defined geographic criteria and socio-political scope (East-Central Europe, Baltic, and South-Eastern Europe and European Border Regions). Both courses are complementary, and the second one aims to a more in-depth understanding of local/regional dynamics of the topics to be discussed in the Core course. Thus, the core course tends to include more traditional methods of teaching (lecturing) while within the second course, which could be also understood as a seminar course, some more innovative approaches of teaching are applied and explored, such as debates, interactive audio and video materials, role playing, simulation games, and alike.

While the first, core courses use more established list of academic literature, second courses use those as well as more of non-traditional sources such as NGOs reports on case studies; policy analyses and recommendations; governmental reports, strategic positions, expert opinions, media content, etc., out of which many secondary sources were produced by the project's associated partners. The syllabi proposal was then discussed, amended, consolidated and finalized and then shared on collaborative web

tools that later on became transferable to a digital sphere as new digital teaching materials for online training/education platforms for distant online teaching, such as Moodle.

Learning outcomes were defined in such a way that includes not only theoretical knowledge and empirical insights, but also practical skill-boosting, participatory teaching methods and interactive and applied knowledge and skills. It was very helpful to get students' comments and feedback after the summer school in Viadrina as students' engagement in the process of curriculum finalization.

Incorporation of potential other beneficiaries i.e. students of immigrant/refugee background as guest speakers and as participants was needed, however not always possible to achieve, and remain as one of the potentials for future to be resolved. Unfortunately, some of the challenges and impediments we have encountered related to the persisting global corona pandemic situation which resulted in moving to online format for some of the project objectives. **These new realities, risks and challenges such as the consequences of Covid-19 pandemic on global and regional (im)mobilities have been partly discussed, yet again there is a need to investigate them further in close correlation with migration, diaspora and border issues.**

3.2. Ethnicity and Politics of Identity in East-Central Europe



Marco Puleri

The academic taskforce working on the Macroarea 'Ethnicity and Politics of Identity in East-Central Europe' elaborated the syllabi of two main courses, which are devoted respectively to the exploration of interdisciplinary approaches (Core course) and selected case studies (Second course).

The main research question behind both courses was the following: 'What is identity, and how is it connected to migration?'. The researchers identified such a question as being at the core of any preliminary approach to the study of mobility as a social phenomenon shaping the identity of both individuals and polities. The rationale behind the drafting of the syllabi has mainly followed an historical approach, exploring the roots of the migration-identity nexus from the past to the present time, and touching first on the impact of climate change, morality and religion and then on the role played by phenomena such as war, conflict and violence.

Among the main learning outcomes of the syllabi we may mention the exploration of the several dimensions of identity in human societies: ethnic identities; national identities; class-based; and, eventually, race-based identities. By acquiring an in-depth knowledge of the heterogeneous nature of identities, students may be able to apply, for example, concepts of ethnicity in different perspectives – from historical to anthropological and sociological – and to use concepts of nation and nationalism for their study of state-building processes. Furthermore, learning about the evolution of racism in Europe from the Age of Enlightenment through the Holocaust, students learn how racism is not only a product of classical imperial/colonial society, but also an integral part of European history and the product of migration flows within the European continent.

62

Furthermore, while exploring the global spread of populism in different political contexts all around Europe, students are introduced to 'the politics of identity': i.e. the process of politicization of identity (be it ethnic, national or class-based) for pragmatic purposes. This process are explored through the lenses of the emerging anti-immigrant rhetoric and sentiments in most contemporary societies, by looking at selected case studies. Finally, the impact of multiculturalism and globalization as a source of transformation of identities and cultures in the 21st century is the ground for open discussion with students about different strategies and policies adopted for diversity management. Thus, students learn how can liberal democracy best be realized in a world fraught with conflicting new forms of identity politics and intensifying conflicts over culture.

Overall, the novelty of this kind of approach is mainly to provide students with a variety of methodological instruments helping them to deconstruct fixed identity-based narratives and to work along several directions (e.g., discourse analysis; archival research; sociological research): in our view this approach provides students with an interdisciplinary background for their studies of migration, differently from most of master programmes in migration studies that are usually based on a single disciplinary approach. Furthermore, by exploring the local dynamics in East-Central Europe, student have the chance to get a better understanding of the processes they had the chance to analyse in a theoretical perspective, while at the same time acquiring in-depth knowledge of the region.

Along these lines, in our syllabi, the proposed case-studies have been selected in order to give a long-term perspective on the intersection between migration and identity in East-Central Europe: students move from the exploration of the imperial context at the eve of the 20th century to the rise of nation-states, the collapse of communist regimes and the rise of new supranational organizations in the heart of Europe.

While on the one hand the analysis of the national question in the Habsburg Empire give them the chance to approach the roots of the ‘identity question’ within multi-ethnic polities, on the other the analysis of post-World War I territorial settlement let them get a practical understanding of the constant overlapping of border-change, social order, identity issues and public policies. Moving from the national question within empires to the rise of minority rights within nation-states, students grasp how the evolution of the international order has been constantly intersected with the different waves of state formation in Europe, making East-Central Europe an extraordinary laboratory for identity politics. For example, the case of Yugoslavia let students analyse the complex relations between ethnic groups in multi-ethnic settings, while at the same time learn how different group identities are shaped and transformed under the influence of ideology, state administration and everyday life.

Furthermore, forced migration and refugee-return processes are studied through the lenses of the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, showing how recent dynamics emerging from Russia’s aggression on Ukraine is not new to the contemporary history of social and political dynamics of the region. At the end, students access the experience of EU enlargement eastwards in early 2000s through the lenses of the change of self-perception among citizens of new and old EU member states vis-à-vis migrants from inside/outside the EU.

Finally, among the teaching materials included in our syllabi, we may mention a wide range of sources that grant students access to statistical data produced by governmental organizations, archival materials, officials’ public speeches, NGO’s reports. This let students familiarize with a variety of sources which are traditionally linked to studies pertaining to single disciplines and make them ready to develop a thorough understanding of the peculiar dynamics making the history of borders, migration and diasporic groups constantly intersecting, both in the past and the present of human experience.

This macro area familiarizes students with leading theories and concepts of international migration, diaspora and migrants' integration. The core and seminar courses are based on innovative teaching strategies designed to deconstruct the phenomena and explain to what extent the accumulated scientific knowledge is (un)able (and why) to solve practical problems.

Both academic research and practical applications of conceptual and methodological tools are incorporated into the courses, creating prerequisites for the development of public openness and outreach activities. Besides providing general theoretical knowledge and practical analytical skills the courses discuss the guidelines for the formulation of public policy principles and recommendations for political actors and other stakeholders (civil society organizations, NGOs, etc.) aimed to create wider social, economic and cultural impact.

3.3. Global Migration, Diasporas and Migrant Integration



Mirjana Bobić, Dainius Genys & Zsolt Gál

The particular advantage stems from the fact that courses include regional empirical case studies (Serbian, Slovak, Lithuanian, and Croatian) on international migrants, diasporas and integration of immigrants into the host societies. Students are acquainted with national and regional policies and experiences of networking of home countries with diaspora and migrants taking into account their various assets ('win-win' strategy).

Syllabi are created so as to tackle social, economic, demographic, political and cultural causes and consequences of global and local/regional migration (emigration and immigration, labour market, fiscal effects, remittances, diaspora, circular mobility, migrants' networks and capitals/resources, challenges of migrants' integration, gender and migration, structures vs. agency, aspirations vs. capabilities, etc.).

The originality and novelty of the selected study subjects are dictated by the rapidly changing reality of Eastern and Central Europe - when many of the emigrating countries have become attractive for immigrants from neighbouring and distant nations. For example the massive Lithuanian exodus since the fall of the former Soviet Union and throughout its independence was an enormous challenge for both – the state and the society as it was vastly unexpected and therefore found academics, politicians, civil society and other stakeholders fairly unprepared.

Sociological analysis combined with economic, political, demographic and anthropological, a genuine interdisciplinary one, tackles less visible, but not less important aspects of norms, values, and power relations, its interconnectedness from social, economic, cultural and political point of view. The aim of both core and seminar courses is to review relevant sociological theories, methods and their applicability in migration research. It is worth distinguishing between two directions, i.e., to articulate the uniqueness of sociological knowledge on the dominant and most characteristic social processes and ideas (like progress, wealth, leadership, inclusion etc.) and to define the level of civic agency (individual's capacity to collaborate with others who are different in order to address challenges, solve problems, and create a common good) and therefore its impact on the migration process.

Sociodemographic topics are selected so as to unravel the history of modern migration globally and the evolution of theories and referent policies that were focused on linking social change, population development and transformation of migration. They took into account both structures and agency, strategies deployed by migrants to overcome various barriers (borders, political regimes, common views, etc).

One of the main policy implications is that socioeconomic, population, cultural development and democratization of societies bring about diversification and pluralization of migration types (immigration, circular, urban to rural, intra-urban, etc.) while the populist, right wing options aimed at curbing human mobility are bound to fail.

In case of eastern and central European states and regions, immigration is seen as an important driver of slackening of population decline and ageing of the work force and overall population. This is not seen as a single remedy to demographic decline but as a part of the comprehensive response to the ongoing and long-lasting challenges (fertility crisis, deformation of age and gender structure, high age dependency ratios, emigration of the youth, etc.).

Selected are also the topics devoted to economics of immigration, especially to the various effects of migration, i.e. how it influences the labour market, the wages, prices and profits and the state of public finances. In addition, we tried to identify the most important factors shaping the impact of migration flows. Finally, we emphasized the current labour migration trends in Central and Eastern European countries.

66

The topic of international migration is becoming more and more politicized and a polarizing issue, creating a kind of new cleavage in most European societies. Numerous myths, false beliefs, misinterpretations have been increasingly attached to international migrants. Therefore, we see a rising importance for an objective scientific analysis: what can we expect considering theoretical concepts and what can we find in the international empirical literature. Are the immigrants really taking away the jobs from the natives, do they create a huge burden on public finances, or on the contrary, is 'replacement migration' an easy solution to the fiscal sustainability problems of aging European societies? Having a closer economic look on the problems, we can see that overheated political debates are quite often far from the real development and the empirical evidence.

Having in mind contemporary global technological and communication advances (ICT, internet, mobile phones, satellite TV, social media) new phenomena related to migration and mobility are evidenced such as transnationalism, transnational social networks, transnational entrepreneurship, digital diaspora, transnational capitalist class, political and business elites, etc. Transnational networks facilitate migrants' multiple relations across international borders, linking them with home country nationals, family and friends (non-migrants) and host societies (colleagues, business partners, research centres, etc.). In that vein emigration of youth, professionals and

skilled workers is perceived not only as a loss but also as a chance for local and national development. It is because the freedom of an individual is understood as a right to choose and one of the chances is to move out. The topic of transnationalism is a cutting edge among different macro areas of this master program such as Borders in Motion and Geopolitics of Migration.

In order to understand the functioning of the postmodern global space that transcends national borders, research on transnational mobility (of both people and ideas) is gaining more and more importance in Europe. A deeper understanding of this new social reality creates a better understanding of why migration is not solely determined by a country's inner setting, or why the rational arguments of various policies do not always materialize nor affect different social groups equally. Interdisciplinary approach in the migration studies not only highlights the social dimension in macro processes and defines as well as activates civic agency, but it also reveals the dynamics of structural development of concrete society (like changing values from materialistic to post-materialistic) and develop public concerns accordingly (from more concrete issues to more abstract values).

There are many other overlapping topics and connections to other disciplines and macro areas targeted in the project. First and most important, the decisions of migrants are mostly shaped by economic factors, e.g. whether to emigrate or not, where to emigrate etc. To put it simple, migration flows are mostly influenced by economic factors. Additionally, successes and failures in the integration processes are also dominantly dependent on economic factors. The employment and income of immigrants is crucial and largely connected to the situation in the labour markets, respectively tax and welfare arrangements. Regarding these crucial issues we can find connections to most topics addressed in the project. Secondly, there is a strong link to the politicization of migration, to the problems of populism and identity politics. Very often the arguments for or against migration in the political debates are of economic nature. For example, migrants are often accused by populist politicians for taking the jobs away from natives, depressing their wages or excessively using the welfare system causing a huge burden on public coffers. Protectionism regarding labour market access for (potential) immigrants and welfare nationalism are heavily used tools in the repertoire of anti-immigration populists. Therefore, it is of high importance to understand the economic motivations, the economic and fiscal effects of migration on various countries, regions and groups in their complexity, seeing them as multidimensional problems we can look at from the different viewpoints of several disciplines.

The first classes especially focus on the interconnections between international relations and migrations, the methodology of research in this field, and testing concepts of state, sovereignty, and human rights. This module is followed by the next one, which concentrates on the European Union and tests its geopolitics, migration, borders, securitization, as well as public policy toward migration. The third package investigates the role of diaspora in the geopolitics of migration, East-Central Europe as an area of macroregions, and the history and memories of migrations and peoples' relocation in this part of the continent.

3.4. Geopolitics of migration



Jarostaw Jańczak

The second course deepens the knowledge acquired in the core course and develops analytical skills and competencies. The first group of topics concentrates on specific mesoregions, investigating the Baltic States, Visegrad Countries, Eastern Europe (including Russia and the Eurasian space as well as other non-EU East European countries), and the successor states of Yugoslavia, with a special focus on displaced people, refugees, migrant relocations, and transit routes. The next part of the seminar explores the EU migration strategies and the policies adopted by candidate/potential candidate countries. The third group of classes contains intensive involvement of students through group work and simulation games emulating migration crises on the EU-Belarusian border in 2021-23, with the aim of deepening understanding and creatively constructing possible solutions.

The first course is structured to explore the issues of migration and borders, starting with the general context in its global form, then narrowing down the debate in the European context, and finally testing spatial and thematic peculiarities by concentrating on European subregions and issues. This choice assumes the necessity of gaining a deep understanding of general contextual knowledge rooted in global processes, both conceptually and empirically. Furthermore, the European Union, as the key regional structure, is introduced to understand European and around-European manifestations of global tendencies. The relation between space and migration remains the key element of the approach. Finally, in the third step, migration, diaspora, and borders are investigated themselves, being linked with the terms, concepts, and analyses introduced in the first parts of the seminar.

The second course assumes that the themes from the core course have been delivered, well understood, academically internalized, and intellectually approached with a critical perspective by students. This allows for a deepening of the participants' expertise, mainly by focusing on case studies. Its catalog follows the logic of covering the subregions of the European East and European South in order to gain a broad perspective composed of numerous micro-approaches. The topics' list enables a practical approach by involving participants in task-oriented activities and the practical application of internalized knowledge. This shall let them develop further skills but also experience tensions and limitations of working at the edge(s) of science and policy making.

The described macroarea develops and uses knowledge offered by the other macroareas, offering a wider and deeper interpretation of reality based on and using the concepts and processes explored in the others. For example, in the case of 'Ethnicity and Politics of Identity', it interprets and builds on anthropological, historical, and political concepts. In the case of 'Global Migration, Diasporas, and Migrant Integra-

tion', it draws on migration studies and diaspora studies. It seems that models and concepts of border studies, especially permeability, durability, and liminality (as developed by the B/Orders in Motion research center), create a conceptual bridge between them, with a high potential for usage.

The courses developed within the framework of the 'Geopolitics of migration' macroarea allow for formulating some recommendations addressed to other MA programs in migration studies:

Regarding the teaching methods, the two seminars have been using an innovative approach. First of all, it refers to the disciplinary perspective of geopolitics, which, as a part of international relations, provides an interesting input into the understanding of migration processes. Being often (especially until recently) considered an outdated perspective with a strong ideological component, it has been rediscovered and proved its strong explanatory power in exploring current political, social, and economic processes. At the didactical level, this unusual approach is additionally used by combining numerous methods that do not typically go alongside in classical teaching. On the one hand, traditional lectures are offered, further combined with discussions. Further, comparative analysis and discourse analysis are planned, with students analyzing public papers on migration and papers in which we could recognize geopolitical intentions. And further, comparative analysis of different statements and socio-political assessments of state leaderships and NGO activists. Students receive reports or primary sources to read, present, and comment on during classes. Some readings (articles) are to be commented on with and by students, as well as papers elaborated by EU officials (especially from the DG Regio). This is to be combined with academic readings shared with students, followed by small group discussions and group presentations. The final set of methods contains role-playing, negotiations, and attempts to formulate compromises, translating academic competencies and skills into a practically oriented approach.

Regarding the teaching materials, innovation is based on the diversity of sources at two levels. First of all, it includes a wide geographical span of authors that are present in the reader construction, offering a geographically diversified catalog of facts, opinions, and interpretations. On the other hand, it includes a wide spectrum of types of materials, containing not only classical academic texts but also, statistical data, policy papers, EU and state policy statements, and statements of key actors (political and non-political) in the field of migration. Moreover, students are also involved in finding and selecting materials that will constitute the reading corpus, embodying in this way the paradigm of a two-dimensional transfer of knowledge and peer-learning.

This section introduces the syllabus for the thematic macro area "Borders in Motion in East-Central Europe," which we defined as one of the main pillars important to learn about and critically approach for students. The syllabus has been developed in an international consortium of academic partners from 4 universities: Marco Zoppi, a political scientist from the University of Bologna; Stefan Janković, a sociologist from the University of Belgrade; Tomasz Blaszcak, a historian from the University of Kaunas; and Carolin Leutloff-Grandits, a social anthropologist from the European University of Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder). It starts with some general remarks on the structure of the syllabus, which, like the other macro areas, is divided into a core course and a second course. It then provides a more detailed presentation of the course and the second course, including a sample of individual classes and potential case studies, further tackling the issues of interdisciplinarity and transnational and transsectoral perspectives, as well as the importance of cooperation with non-academic actors.

3.5. Borders in Motion in East-Central Europe



Carolin Leutloff-Grandits

The core course is designed as an introduction to borders studies and into the nexus between borders and migration, meaning that we look at migration from a border perspective. The core course has a special focus on theories, while also highlighting practical aspects, and by looking at borders and migration from an Eastern - and Southeastern European perspective. Fundamental to the course is the introduction into key concepts in border and migration studies. The course offers top-down and bottom-up perspectives, as well as approaches from different disciplines, including international relations and political sciences, and history, sociology and social anthropology/ethnography. In the second course, case studies will be provided from Eastern and Southeastern Europe and materials that contain visual materials and perspectives from non-academic actors, such as governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations, as well as the voices of migrants and refugees themselves. Furthermore, a focus are laid on methods. Finally, students learn how to design a research proposal to explore the border regimes, including the methods to be used.

72

In order to understand the social construction of borders, and its changing nature, the first session of the core course offers a conceptualization of borders in its most abstract sense by defining borders as social classification systems that ascribe status to spaces, things and people and are thus first of all social boundary markers, including their institutional dimension. It thus also stresses the intrinsic relation between borders and social orders, which is however also always in tension with each other, letting social orders as well as borders always being in motion, in a process of becoming, of change and transformation.

The following sessions then offer historical perspectives of border regimes and the changing meanings and qualities of state borders in Europe and beyond. Instead of taking borders for granted, or taking them out of the societal and historical context, the class aims to understand that also geopolitical borders, which may appear as lines on the map, are first and foremost socially constructed and relate to processes of social boundary making. The class then relates borders to questions of state sovereignty and the interplay of actors and infrastructures that bring borders into being. As such, the processual character of bordering is brought to the fore. The class starts from examining borders in the Westphalian age, which were seen as a marker of state sovereignty. It then focuses on the so-called post-Westphalian age, in which border management very much relies on multiple actors and allies, as well as infrastructure and discourse – in short, on a complex 'border assemblage', a concept which is introduced within this session. The class explains this process of change, and deals with regimes and sovereignty issues and the different elements which form border assemblages, as well as the practices of co-bordering, i.e. that states rely on neighbouring states and other institutions to protect and manage their borders.

Another series of classes deals with the double layering of borders, e.g. as national and EU borders, and the implications for cross-border cooperation. Here again, a historical view is taken to help to understand the diverse and shifting qualities of borders and borderlands and the question of power asymmetries they entail. For this, students look at imperial b/orders in early 20th century, Soviet b/orders, the dissolution of the Soviet union and the entangled nation building processes and the role of borders in it, among others with examples from CEE/Baltic region, as well as b/orders in relation to the EU integration. The latter also relates to the location of state borders as inner EU or external EU borders. Here, we can also look at the process of changing the border meaning/quality and becoming also an EU external/internal border, such as in the case of Poland or Croatia. Zooming into cross-border cooperation, we can also differentiate the cooperation within the EU as well as between an EU with a non-EU country. Focusing on the institutions which demarcate (de)b/ordering processes, we can ask how institutions cooperate across borders and what kind of EU programs are supportive here and how are the used?

Within this series of classes, we also touch upon the concepts of 'phantom borders' and 'tidemarks', i.e., borders which lost their geopolitical relevance, such as the Iron Curtain, but which may still impact on the mindset of people and influence the present and the future, and which offers a knowledge B/order as a sediment of b/orders to which people may refer to. We also get familiar with the concept of borderlands as 'liminal zones' or 'grey spaces', marked by a perceived non-binarity of borderlands, which do not fit into the classifications and markers of difference built up by nation states. More generally, we want to create awareness for different layers of bordering – which are next to geopolitical borders for example, possibly also language/cultural borders in the region, and different qualities of borders. These different border dimensions may overlap and fall together at one and the same geographical location, but they may also counteract geopolitical borders. Border can thus be described as 'thick' and 'thin', in case a geopolitical border falls together with a language and religious boundary or not. At the same time, geopolitical borders that are difficult to cross can for example be regarded as 'hard' borders - such as the border between the GDR and Poland in the 1980s, or the border of Socialist Albania, and 'soft' or permeable borders, such as inner EU borders.

A further series of classes deals with the ethnography of the border and the borderland and the experience of border shifting and living at the border especially from a bottom-up perspective. The class deals with taking notice of the very different geopolitical realities and – also based on that – the very different experiences and subjectivities of humans who live at the (shifting) borders and cross it in their everyday lives (or not). It explores the experiences of peripheralization because of geopolitical changes, e.g. the establishment and fall of the Iron Curtain and EU and unequal integr-

ation processes as well as subalternization processes. It asks what happens to individuals who live close to borders, in borderlands, or who traverse borders (regularly or not)? How do these unique experiences relate to globalization? With this, the class allows to critically investigate the hegemonic approach of borders, and processes of marginalization and peripheralization as well as what Milica Bakić-Hayden has called 'nesting orientalisms', the taking up of taxonomies of 'Orient', i.e. otherness and primitiveness, by those who are 'othered' themselves. It also critically investigates the (re-establishment of (state) order – partly by force, as well as imperial, national, post- and neo-colonial relationships and power structures.

The core course then also deals with migration management as one of the main functions of contemporary borders and shows that in this respect, the border is a system which is classifying human beings and deciding about their possibilities and speed of movement. In relation to migration, borders also establish filtering systems, which are increasingly digitalized and unfold their own logics.

Special attention is put onto the border, migration and security nexus. One class focusses on the links between securitization of borders and migration management and new devices of control/management, and especially the increasing importance of digitalization and data transfer, such as the use of biometrics, digital and automated controls within and outside the EU. It explores how smart/digital borders change the quality of borders and the processes of bordering, as well as decision making processes and responsibilities, and asks if digital borders create more security or also insecurity, and for whom. For this, different EU digital migration management platforms, such as EURODAC, EU-LISA, are introduced and critically explored. Another class zooms into the categorization processes within contemporary bordering mechanisms, especially in relation to smart borders. It explores how people are categorized and what are the effects for them. Here, the creation of so-called “data doubles”, which can be accessed in no time from different locations, while at the same time they are attached to the bodies of the migrants. It is critically explored what this means for individuals, including the possible dangers and problems it entails. Furthermore, the possibilities to resist such categorizations – from the perspective of migrants as well as human rights activists – also are explored.

A special focus is put on the externalization of the EU migration management and the new EU external border from a political and international relations perspective. This includes a critical investigation of the location of the EU external border and its management. It shows that the management of migration does not (only) take place at the geographical borderline of the state, but is increasingly externalized, relying on cooperation with EU neighboring and transit states as well as sending states. This is pushed forward by the EU neighborhood policy for migration management, and more recently also the EU New Pact on Migration and Asylum. The class shows that the relationships between sending, transit and receiving states are however asymmetrical, meaning that certain power hierarchies exist between partners in migration management. Due to mutual dependencies, sending and transit countries may however also react with strategies of resistance, torpedoing the functioning of the EU migration system. Here, also the creation of so-called hotspots for the management of migration and their functions are discussed. Furthermore, the production of the category of illegality as well as deportation and detention as methods are introduced.

Another class takes an ethnographic approach and deals with the experiences of border crossers from different perspectives: from privileged border crossers, such as those who live in borderlands in which border controls have been lifted, to border crossers for whom border controls are severe, or those who have to take irregular routes, trying to bypass controls. There is a question how do irregular border crossers experience illegality, and in what ways do migrants - as well as other mobile people - internalize and deepen categorization systems created from above? Moreover, to what extent do they resist and create alternative realities. As such, it asks for power structures, forms of governance and the implementation of bordering and classification systems and reconsiders the concept of subalternization from a migrant point of view. By stressing the agency of migrants, it also explores the concept of the autonomy of migration. Furthermore, the emotional/bodily experience of border crossing and the border as attached to the body, as well as spatio-temporal aspects of border crossing, such as the liminality of the border/of border crossing/of being out of time, are discussed. A critical view on the migration and border regime is achieved with the inclusion of counter maps, in which migration is not characterized as a security threat, but in which refugees deaths are marked.

Another important topic which is explored is the spectacularization of borders, and, on the other side of the coin, the (in)visibility of irregular migration and border crossing. It starts from the account that the dynamics of forced and economic migra-

tion have made certain borders particularly 'visible' in media and political terms. Taking a view into recent European history, it is shown that this has often meant the intervention of both state and non-state actors, representing securitarian and/or humanitarian approaches to the management of migration and rescue operations at the borders. As a result, visibility and the spectacularization of operations have become a political tool to assemble specific narratives which are then used by governments to report to public audiences about their success in managing migration. By the same token, the invisibility of migrants and migration can also be artificially enacted to conceal complex global issues that governments are not capable of solving, creating a sense of securitization through absence itself. This class explores the concepts of securitization and humanitarianism and then further looks at the production of the military-humanitarian border spectacle. It thus provides insight on how (in-)visibility is part of the processes and dynamics occurring at the borders. As the overall aim of the class, students are provided with tools to critically analyze narratives of border management in EU politics, to critically link them to concepts of securitization and humanitarians, and to take notice of what is not communicated and remains invisible and unheard.

76

Finally, it is shown that the EU border and the state border are simultaneously also internalized, as movement restrictions and lack of rights as well as exclusion mechanisms extend to the inner of the EU and the inner of nation states. Introducing the concept of differential inclusion, the course also shows that certain bordering functions are performed in the inner of the state, where they structure the everyday life of migrants – be it in relation to their right to stay, and generally about their rights also after crossing a geopolitical border, such as their right to work, to social services or to fetch family members.

The second course offers concrete case studies for the insights into concepts and theories laid out in the core course by taking a special perspective on borders in motion and their entanglement with migration in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, be it in countries that already belong to the EU, as well as those which still remained outside. It thus provides the students with a contextualized knowledge which decenters Europe and puts attention to countries and contexts which often remain invisible from Europe's so-perceived core, the 'old' EU states.

Within this second course, one class is designed to exemplify the process of disintegration and integration into geopolitical and societal orders by focusing on the Baltic case and imperial borders from a historical perspective. This may entail 19th century Germany/Russia; the administrative divisions of the Russian Empire by looking at the Lithuanian and Latvian case; and the interwar Period: Polish/Lithuanian/

Soviet border by looking at Lithuanian and Belarusian cases). It highlights the role of borders in nation building and on the various aspects of shifting internal and external borders in the Baltics and the central and Eastern European region. Materials on nation building are chosen according to the linguistic abilities of the students. By looking at cases of the Polish/Lithuanian, Lithuanian/Belarusian, Latvian/Russian border, we also look at social changes after 1991/2004, as well as the phenomenon of Polish/Lithuanian/Latvian phantom borders, which impacted on contemporary bordering processes and their (de-)legitimation.

To exemplify cross-border cooperation between different EU countries and the processes of EU-integration and de-bordering, we look at case studies, e.g. the relations between Poland and Germany, between Germany and France and/or Slovakia and Austria, and possibly in comparative perspective. The class shows the historical links and boundaries of such cooperation, as well as the changing institutional frame, and explores policy tools which enhance this. A special attention is also paid to so-called double cities in cross border regions, such as Frankfurt (Oder)/Slubice in the German-Polish borderland, and in the Baltic region Valka/Valga, Narva/Ivangorod. Here, also insights from organizations dealing with cross-border cooperation, as well as Borderland foundation, are integrated into the classes.

Another series of classes deals with the effects of externalization and the changing qualities and the shifting of borders in EU neighboring countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe which have been classified as 'transit countries' for migrants on their way to the EU, as well as the biopolitics of migration along the so-called 'Balkan Route' by looking at the itineraries, networks and spatial interstices. One class aims to critically reflect on the nexus of EU border management, migration and security in relation to the EU and the Western Balkans 'borderlands'. It analyzes the so-called 'Western Balkans' from the specific perspective of (in)security understood as the consequence of practices and narratives of border control and the externalization of EU migration management. The focus is on the impact of migration flows in the 2015 and subsequent years, and on EU externalization policies. Another class engages into analysis of the border assemblages at the fringes of the EU by looking at the work of EU agencies, institutions in EU neighboring countries as well as private companies which are involved in border and migration management. It introduces the border regime analysis as a method on how to approach migration research from a border perspective and work with videos to give visual footage to the altering shape of border regimes. Here, the so-called 'hybrid war' on the Poland-Belarus border, in which migrants are turned into weapons to destabilize the European order, are discussed.

Again, another class focuses on the informal spatial tactics and creation of new itineraries by migrants. It thus contributes to understanding various informal means

of crossing geopolitical borders. We then zoom into the proliferation of more or less informal encampments in border regions, which emerged as a result of the EU's crackdown on border policies in recent times. Becoming strategic transit hubs, these camps or similar aid-providing sites along the borders, condensate a plethora of services, aid, information, but also smugglers, humanitarian NGOs and volunteer services. This class explores various methodological and engagement-driven experiences from these sites, such as engaging with methodological issues of fieldwork in camps and similar sites, as well as engaging with various conflicting agencies. The class aims at fostering an understanding for migration routes and outcomes of migration flows and mobilities, as well as an understanding for the effects of camps and other informal migratory hubs on local border regions and communities. Again another class investigates various political responses and employing state-power in order to re-establish the order on borders and it explores numerous biopolitical engagements and governmental practices in articulating border crossings as well as it detects technological and digital means of border controls and assemblages. A further class looks at the changing situation of so-called 'transit-migrants' (from the Global South) and the local population in an entangled perspective. It asks for social processes which unfold in the different localities, as well as the drawing and crossing of boundaries as well as new forms of solidarity.

78

Finally, the course wants to exemplify 'inner boundaries' which migrants meet within the receiving society and to draw special attention to the boundary drawings and exclusion mechanisms in an intersectional perspective. It is the aim to learn about intersectionality theory and apply it to case studies, to understand the role of media and to shift from a migrant to a state as well as society perspective and vice versa.

Within the second course, a special focus is laid on introducing various methods of border and migration studies, and students are asked to critically reflect on these methods. The course introduces how to explore a border and what it means to see like a border, and it also introduces into the border regime analysis and also into ethnographic methods which focus on everyday (formal and informal) dynamics and experiences of borders. On a methodological level, the classes also explore tools for the analysis of networks of state bordering assemblages faced with migrant informal networks. Furthermore, methodologies in studying networks of migrants and border control issues are introduced, as well as methods of ethnography in exploration of migrant itineraries and informal spatial tactics. On an overarching methodological level, it is discussed how to conduct ethnographic research that focusses on everyday (formal and informal) dynamics and the experiences of borders and bordering mechanisms, and what kind of interview method can be applied. Here, also ethical questions, research and interview methods, and an introduction into intercultural communication shall receive appropriate space.



Chapter 4

How to Transition out of Being a Transit Country: Croatia's State-Sponsored Immigration Discourse vs. Reality




Maja Osmančević





Introduction



Ever since the long summer of migration in 2015 [1], the Republic of Croatia [2] has been discursively positioning itself as a transit country, while at the same time progressively securitizing its borders, finding itself multiple times at the receiving end of accusations of human rights violations [3]. Though fortifying its borders in hopes of deterring impoverished and racialized people on the move, Croatia seems hopeful when it comes to harvesting the economic and demographic potential of rich, highly-skilled migrants and the Croatian diaspora. Multiple laws passed in recent years have made it easier for people of Croatian descent to gain citizenship and for highly-skilled and/or rich citizens of the Global North to enjoy life in Croatia either as digital nomads or so-called expats. Apart from being a part of forced migration and life-style migration routes, Croatia is, as of recent, an increasingly popular labour migration destination. In 2023 alone, by the end of April the Croatian Ministry of Interior issued 54,592 stay and work permits and counted 740 digital nomads registered in the country [4]. Lastly, when it comes to statistics on asylum seekers, the number of requests for asylum in 2022 stood at 12,872, though that number could be well-surpassed by the end of 2023 considering the number of asylum requests by the end of March

was 7,884[5]. If one were to add up the listed numbers of stay and work permits, digital nomads and asylum seekers, the sum of all these people — 76,088 of them to be precise — would make up the 5th largest town in Croatia, surpassing coastal Zadar by more than 5,000 people [6]

In this paper I will be arguing that no matter its versatile and enhancing migration stock, the Republic of Croatia is not acknowledging its new character as a destination country for potential immigrants, but is instead discursively insisting on its position as a transit country. Furthermore, the country is describing itself as a transit country all the while (re)producing this state of affairs by creating a hostile environment for permanent immigration on a legislative level. This is particularly visible in the case of traditionally disadvantaged communities such as impoverished and racialized people, as well as traditional national minorities (like Serbs, Bosniaks and Romani people). The analysis aims to contribute to the praxis of dissecting the imperialist, white-supremacist, capitalist patriarchy (as often defined by the late bell hooks) and to show on the example of Croatia how 'contemporary bordering practices and securitization strategies are intrinsic to an emerging model of increasingly authoritarian capitalism designed to protect and extend the frontiers of profit-making centred on increasingly predatory modes of capital accumulation' [7].

In the following chapter, I shortly review previous critical research on Croatia's position as a transit country and how that ties in with the integration of some groups and disintegration of others. I am laying out several examples of how immigration policies in Croatia are centred around ethnonationalist, yet deeply neoliberal conceptions of citizenship. In order to showcase how these hostile policies primarily target impoverished and racialised people, I am outlining primarily the double standards of the linguistic and financial criteria of immigration policies. Though more criteria could be used as an example, especially when it comes to migrants' agency of choosing their line of work and the restriction of pathways to go from a precarious legal status to a secure, permanent one, that is beyond the scope of this paper. The third chapter provides a quick historical overview of recent migration and demographic trends in Croatia before proceeding to a media ethnography of the evolution of the transit country discourse. Once more, concrete examples of the connection between hostile immigration policies and neoliberal governance are provided. The final chapter will concisely provide recommendations for further research on the topic.

(Dis)integration practices as an aspect of neoliberal governance

Though Croatia's self-identification (or rather branding itself) as a transit country isn't something new and it has been criticised in the past [8], the previous criticism was centred mainly around refugees' rights, explaining how this kind of state discourse not only ignores the presence of refugees in the country but actively stifles their integration rights. My contribution to this discussion aims to widen the existing criticism in order for it to better elaborate how Croatia's self-discourse of being a transit country — alongside discriminatory practices encoded within the Aliens Act [9] and the Croatian Citizenship Act [10] — restrict the integration possibilities of almost all immigrant populations, but most of all of impoverished and racialized third-country (non-EU) migrants. This interpretation follows the notion of (dis)integration as elaborated by Collyer, Hinger and Schweitzer [11]. Because the concept of integration entails 'a set of normative assumptions, practices, policies and discourses, (...) directed at particular groups or categories of people' [12], integration cannot be conceptualised nor put in place without a type of segregation of people based on arbitrary (and typically state-created) criteria of belonging. The authors elaborate as follows:

82

'The context and perceived desirability of migrants' and minorities' integration ultimately depends on how they are categorised by the state in which they live. At one extreme, some migrants are obliged to fulfill certain criteria associated with integration in order to renew their visa, be reunited with their family or ultimately naturalise. For others, integration is temporarily suspended – for example until their asylum status has been determined – or simply not considered necessary, given their intended temporary residence or employment in the country. At the other extreme, integration efforts are explicitly criminalised, as in the case of those migrants whose presence in the country is deemed 'illegal'. Policies have begun to emerge which do not simply exclude groups from the potentially beneficial impact of integration policies, but which have the specific objective of undermining their integration or certain aspects of it. . . . Disintegration policies and practices do not only overlook settlement but also actively set out to do harm and discourage it, although they are sometimes justified within a broader integration framework' [13].

I would like to take a moment here to elaborate and provide examples of ways in which these disintegrative practices worst of all target and affect people who fall at the intersection of impoverished and racialised communities. The very term migrant has become heavily racialised in the Croatian vernacular language as the media-backed securitisation discourse around migration promotes the orientalist visual representation of a migrant as a brown or black man of traditional, regressive values who is at the same time idle and a threat to a) the price of domestic workers' labour, b) the nation's women and c) European values themselves — the latter supposedly implying democracy and the rule of law, not religion [14]. Just how much migrants are associated with racialized people was demonstrated by a bizarre and cruel event in 2019, when two young Nigerian students, who had come to Croatia to compete in an international university sports event, found themselves forcefully displaced in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Croatian police who had assumed them for irregular migrants [15], not believing the students when they said their passports were at the reception of their hostel as is often the case in tourist accommodation in Croatia.

Racialised migrants get the short end of the stick when it comes to double standards in many fields of life, one example being language learning. They are often perceived as either incompetent or not willing to integrate into the country if they are not attending Croatian-language classes or not able to speak the language fluently, yet the same criteria is rarely if ever applied to migrants of European descent [16] as their integration is implicit or simply not regarded as necessary. Moreover, persons given international protection in Croatia are legally obliged to attend classes on Croatian language, history and culture [17] with potential non-attendance leading to debt towards the government, or at least that would be the case if the classes were to consistently be organised by the state [18]. The only [19] migrant population which has consistently received government support in this particular area of integration are, ironically, members of the Croatian diaspora itself who Croatia identifies as the main desirable group of immigrants with the potential to salvage the country's declining population [20].

The descendants of Croatian emigrants are encouraged to come to Croatia and learn the language through scholarships, though the Croatian Citizenship Act doesn't require them to know the language in order to obtain citizenship [21]. By legislative standards, the Croatian descent of these immigrants immediately implies their social and political adequacy for belonging — no matter their knowledge of the language, amount of time spent in the country, their means of subsistence or qualifications [22] — while others have to prove they are worthy of it. This kind of understanding of integration and citizenship is deeply ethnocentric and puts immigrants of non-Croat background 'in the

role of guardians of good citizenship' [23] as the state imposes demands on them in order to prove their worthiness of being and living in the country, and does so in ways that cannot be required of existing citizens [24]. Moreover, the state puts these demands on immigrants of non-Croatian descent as necessary conditions to be fulfilled in order to obtain Croatian citizenship, but without providing any support along the way; in this way, the state disregards historical distributive inequalities and shifts the blame for unequal participation in society on individuals who then get blamed for being unwilling or unable to integrate [25]. This is especially the case with racialised and impoverished immigrants, as earlier stated, but also in regard to national minorities who have traditionally been part of the local population for centuries, but who were forced to flee during the Homeland War, such as ethnic Serbs, Bosniaks and Romani people. There are recorded cases of returnees who have been living in the country for more than a decade, but are unable to change their legally precarious status because of the height of the material means of subsistence needed to go from a temporary stay permit to a permanent one which serves as a precondition to applying for citizenship [26].

84

Canjuga [27] elaborates on this paradox of the country's legislation by comparing how the state would not approve an issue of a permanent residency permit for immigrants if they do not prove they earn at least half of the average net salary in Croatia [28], yet this amount vastly surpasses the amount considered as satisfying basic living standards by the General Tax Law and the Social Welfare Act. By comparing the calculations provided by the Croatian Bureau of Statistics and conditions from the Aliens Act, we can conclude the Republic of Croatia considers the minimum amount a foreign national must earn in 2023 in order to get their temporary residency permit approved (among other things) is 507.86 euros per month. On the other side, according to the General Tax Law and Social Welfare Act 132.72 euros are actually considered the minimum amount of money monthly needed for a single person capable of work because if a Croatian citizen earns this amount through work or pension, they are not entitled to financial assistance from social welfare [29]. Ignoring the statistics and taking into account strictly the real-life cost of living in Croatia, of course, neither of these numbers are true when applied if the goal is to live a dignified life, but this just goes to prove how the politics of deservingness and belonging which govern the logics of immigration (and welfare) policies were never there in the first place as a mechanism to shield the nation-state community's resources for those who truly belong [30], be it by birth or by merit.

Instead, they are a byproduct of the neoliberal state whose bordering processes are one example of 'managing the contradictions that arise from state strategies to en-

sure the compatibility of territorial security with a minimum of hindrance to markets and the free movement of capital' [31]. Discourses on (im)migration and restrictive legislation are just some of the methods through which these bordering processes and disintegrative practices are achieved.

Croatia's (deceitful) self-discourse as being a transit country

In 2022, migrants made up 3% of the resident population in Croatia (EU nationals 1% and third-country nationals 2%, respectively) which is a big rise from the 0.3% back in 2015 [32]. It is important to note that the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia and the ensuing wars that had happened made Croatia one of the most monoethnic countries of the EU, with little domestic ethnic diversity and even less foreign-born citizens. The monoethnicity is a direct product of this (state-produced, but civilian-backed) violence [33] which was reflected in citizenship policies and politicians' speeches, especially with the authoritarian first president of Croatia notoriously always starting his speeches with the words: 'Croats, citizens...' (Croatian: 'Hrvatice i Hrvati, građani...'). Igor Štiks [34] analysed Croatia's citizenship policies from the start of its independence through the country's post-Tuđman period. In his analysis, Štiks remarked that 'though postsocialist constitutions offered all the usual democratic rights to minorities, [the constitutions] described these minorities as "historical guests" on a territory which belongs to the "autochthone" ethnic group, and as a rule that is the group that inscribes its name into the name of the state' [35]. In this manner, populations who have historically been a part of the territory and the culture of life were degraded to second-class citizens and that position was solidified in legislation. This instrumentalisation of legislative and administrative processes by the governing structures as a way of influencing the ethnic composition of the population in favour of the dominant ethnic group was defined by Štiks as 'ethnic engineering' [36].

After the Homeland War, there was a downfall of the country's formerly heavily-industrialised economy as a consequence of the rapid privatisation process parallel to the rise of crony capitalism. Furthermore, the already weak economy was one of the most impacted by the 2008 world recession, so following the entry of Croatia into the EU in 2013, many young adults emigrated to traditional Croatian diaspora countries such as Austria and Germany, as well as new popular EU-destination countries such as Ireland and Sweden. That outward flow of young working-age, people from the country was the main frame of the societal conversation on migration for several years [37], though a new discourse on migration emerged in the country following the

long summer of migration in 2015. When Balkan Corridor had opened [38], there was an almost immediate creation and consolidation of the perception of Croatia as an exclusively transit country. This view was equally shared by the highest figures in office at the time, like the then PM Zoran Milanović [39] and Minister of Interior Ranko Ostojić [40], but even by representatives of institutions researching migration, such as the head of the Institute for European and Globalization Studies, Anđelko Milardović [41].

86 While it can definitely be argued that a lot of people passing the Balkan route at the time did, indeed, want to reach richer countries at the North-West of Europe, what is important to note is that, first of all, the Minister of Interior was very open with the fact that Croatia had not been collecting the fingerprints of the people on the move. The reason for this is that, by the infamous EU Dublin Regulation, the first country of an asylum-seekers' entry to the EU is responsible for the processing of the asylum request, and Croatia was intent on not accepting that large of a number of people. Taking that into account, we cannot know for certain what the destination countries would have been if Croatia and other South-Eastern countries had been open to that possibility. Secondly, the discursive shaping of Croatia as a transit country was happening in parallel to the implementation of stricter policies when it comes to entry and civic solidarity with people on the move, as well as a growing number of documented cases of border police violence, a low acceptance rate of asylum requests and bad reception conditions for asylum seekers [42]. One can see how, comparing to these circumstances, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs' statement – on Croatia wanting to meet the quota of welcomed refugees it had agreed upon, but not being able to because 'refugees do not want to be in Croatia' [43] – has to be read with a grain of salt. That rationale would in the least be naive and at worst deceitful coming from people with executive political power, yet it is still being used today [44].

How this discourse is entwined with neoliberal governance and crony capitalist practices is perfectly shown by the example of the Ministry of Interior's Secretary, Žarko Katić, who on one side speaks of Croatia being a transit country in regards to asylum seekers and irregular migrants [45] and labels asylum seekers as hardly employable because of their lack of fluency in the Croatian language [46] but who on the other side is involved in the scandalous conflict of interests in which he had been keeping quiet that his son is the owner and only employee of a foreign worker recruitment agency since 2020, the timing coinciding with the liberalisation of foreign employment through reforms of the Aliens Act that his ministry was largely

in charge of [47]. Of course, asylum seekers and irregular migrants who don't speak Croatian are no less employable than the temporary labour migrants who also don't speak Croatian, but are employed through recruitment agencies; the latter just pay large sums of money to the recruitment agencies in order to get the chance to work, often in conditions akin to modern slavery [48], and that their temporariness (or transitoriness) within the country is explicit in the name of their legal status.

Croatia's (deceitful) self-discourse as being a transit country

Though more could be added to the analysis (most importantly, the experiences of migrant communities, be it temporary labour migrants, refugees, returnees, migrant students or lifestyle migrants, no matter their legal status), for the intention and scope of this paper, the provided analysis will suffice. Apart from migrants' experiences, what could benefit the further research of the topic are interviews with other key actors of both the meso- and macro-level (like the owners of foreign labour recruitment agencies, NGOs and unions dealing with migrants' rights, policy-makers and others). Furthermore, a more thorough qualitative content analysis and of a greater scope would be needed for the identification of other discursive frameworks when it comes to different immigrant populations and foreign citizens. What is safe to say is that the Republic of Croatia will have to deal with the reality on the ground and do so by putting the wellbeing of people — instead of the market and eurocentric conceptions of humanity — at the centre of its policies. The current situation is not allowing neither autonomy of migration nor is it truly benefitting the country's labour market or demographic situation as it does so for the pockets of exploitative company owners and smugglers[49].

87

References

[1] Of Hope. Hungary and the Long Summer of Migration | Bordermonitoring.eu.' n.d. <https://bordermonitoring.eu/ungarn/2015/09/of-hope-en/>.

[2] It is important to note this distinction between the state on one side and the country as the people being governed on the other side. Throughout the paper, when I speak about *Croatia's* discourse as a transit country, I am referring to the hegemonic discourse shaped by the state and its officials. Though, of course, surely there are people who would agree with such a claim, this paper will not be analysing nor taking into account public opinion about the country's immigration.

[3] BVMN. 2020a. *The Black Book of Pushbacks: Volume I*. Brussels: European Parliament.

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3AscDs%3AUS%3A3f809f15-bada-4d3f-adab-f14d9489275a&viewer%21megaVerb=group-discover>;

BVMN. 2020b. *The Black Book of Pushbacks: Volume II*. Brussels: European Parliament.

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3AscDs%3AUS%3Ab10a04a4-25dd-45f1-8b2d-e9c25946cb44&viewer%21megaVerb=group-discover>;

'Osigurate Li Strancu Bez Papira Smještaj Ili Prijevoz, Mogli Biste Biti Kažnjeni S 23.000 Kuna.' n.d. www.index.hr. Accessed August 1, 2023.

<https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/osigurate-li-strancu-bez-papira-smjestaj-ili-prijevoz-mogli-biste-bit-kaznjeni-s-23000-kuna/888104.aspx>;

tportal.hr. 'Škorić: Policiju Se Pribija Na Stup Srama Zbog Migranata, a Ona Samo Štiti Sigurnost Granice,' n.d. <https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/skoric-policiju-se-pribija-na-stup-srama-zbog-migranata-a-ona-samo-stiti-sigurnost-granice-foto-20180926>;

Kolinda u šokantnom intervjuu priznala da hrvatska policija krši zakone - Index.hr. 'Kolinda u Šokantnom Intervjuu Priznala Da Hrvatska Policija Krši Zakone,' n.d. <https://www.index.hr/clanak.aspx?id=2099829>;

Objavljene snimke, maskirani muškarci s oružjem hrvatske policije tuku migrante - Index.hr. 'Objavljene Snimke, Maskirani Muškarci s Oružjem Hrvatske Policije Tuku Migrante,' n.d. <https://www.index.hr/clanak.aspx?id=2309106>;

<https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/ovo-je-naredba-policajcima-o-tjeranju-migranata-pazite-da-vas-ne-snime/2336836.aspx>;

see also: Hameršak, M. 2017/2018. *Confined in Movement: The Croatian Section of the Balkan Corridor*. In: Bužinkić, E. and Hameršak, M. (eds.) *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor: Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context*. Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research (Zagreb), Centre for Peace Studies (Zagreb), Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V. (Munich): 9-41;

Jovanović, T. 2021. *Forced (Im)Mobilities En Route*. 'Justified' Violence of the Border Regime in Balkans. *Glasnik Etnografskog instituta SANU*, 69 (2): 433-455.

[4] See: MUP. 2023a. *Statistički podaci izdanih dozvola za boravak i rad u travnju 2023. godine*:

[4] See: MUP. 2023a. *Statistički podaci izdanih dozvola za boravak i rad u travnju 2023. godine*:

[4] See: MUP. 2023a. *Statistički podaci izdanih dozvola za boravak i rad u travnju 2023. godine*:

[4] See: MUP. 2023a. *Statistički podaci izdanih dozvola za boravak i rad u travnju 2023. godine*:

[4] See: MUP. 2023a. *Statistički podaci izdanih dozvola za boravak i rad u travnju 2023. godine*:

https://mup.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/2023/5/Statistika_dozvola%20za%20boravak%20i%20rad_travanj.pdf; MUP. 2023b. Statistika važećih privremenih boravaka u svrhu boravka digitalnih nomada na dan 30.4.2023. godine. <https://mup.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/statistika/digitalni-nomadi/2023/5/podaci%20digitalni%20nomadi%20od%20za%202022,%20do%2030%2004%202023.pdf>

[5] See: MUP. 2023c. Statistički pokazatelji osoba kojima je odobrena međunarodna zaštita u Republici Hrvatskoj zaključno do 31.12.2022. <https://mup.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/OTVORENI%20PODACI/Tra%C5%BEit elji%20me%C4%91unarodne%20za%C5%A1tite/web%20statistike%202022%20Q4%20TMZ.pdf>;

MUP. 2023d. Statistički pokazatelji osoba kojima je odobrena međunarodna zaštita u Republici Hrvatskoj zaključno do 31.03.2023. https://mup.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/statistika/2023/Statisticki%20pokaz atelji%20osoba%20kojima%20je%20odobrena%20medjunarodna%20zastita%20u%20RH%20zakljucno%20s%2031_3_2023.pdf

[6] Croatian Bureau of Statistics. 2022. Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2021: First Results by Settlements. <https://podaci.dzs.hr/media/ixpn5qzo/si-1711-popis-stanovnistva-kucanstava-i-stanova-2021-prvi-rezultati-po-naseljima.pdf>

[7] Bianchi, R. V., Stephenson, M. L. & Hannam, K. 2020. The contradictory politics of the right to travel: mobilities, borders & tourism. *Mobilities*, DOI: 10.1080/17450101.2020.1723251, p. 2.

[8] Bužinkić, E. 2017/2018. Welcome to vs. Welcome Through: Crisis Mobilization and Solidarity with Refugees in Croatia as a Transit Country. In: Bužinkić, E. and Hameršak, M. (eds.) *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor: Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context*. Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research (Zagreb), Centre for Peace Studies (Zagreb), Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V. (Munich): 143-167; CMS. 2021, June 19. Svjetski dan izbjeglica u Hrvatskoj u duhu probiranja izbjeglica. Welcome.cms.hr. <https://welcome.cms.hr/index.php/2021/06/19/svjetski-dan-izbjeglica-u-hrvatskoj-u-duhu-probiranja-izbjeglica/>; JRS. 2022, 28 September.

Hrvatska polako razvija svoje migrantske politike, ali potrebno je čuti i razumijeti potrebe migranata. Jesuit Refugee Service Croatia. <https://hrv.jrs.net/hr/price/hrvatska-polako-razvija-svoje-migrantske-politike-ali-potrebno-je-čuti-i-razumijeti-potrebe-migranata/>; Leutloff-Grandits, Carolin. 2023. 'The Balkans as "Double Transit Space": Boundary Demarcations and Boundary Transgressions between Local Inhabitants and "Transit Migrants" in the Shadow of the EU Border Regime.' *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, January, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2022.2164043>.

[9] OG 133/2020. Aliens Act. [https://mup.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/zakoni/ALIENS%20ACT%20\(Official%20Gazette%20No%20133_2020\).pdf](https://mup.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/zakoni/ALIENS%20ACT%20(Official%20Gazette%20No%20133_2020).pdf).

[10] OG 53/91, 70/91, 28/92, 113/93, 4/94, 130/11, 110/15, 102/19, 138/21. Croatian Citizenship Act. <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3ae6b4dc14.pdf>.

[11] Collyer, Michael, Sophie Hinger, and Reinhard Schweitzer. 2019. 'Politics of (Dis)Integration – an Introduction.' IMISCOE Research Series, October, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25089-8_1; cf. Täubig, Vicki. 2009. *Totale Institution Asyl*. Beltz Juventa.

[12] Collyer, Hinger and Schweitzer 2020, p. 2.

[13] Ibid, p. 2.

[14] Cf. Popović, H., Kardov, K., & Župarić-Iljić, D. 2022. *Medijske reprezentacije migracija: Diskurzivne konstrukcije migranata, izbjeglica i tražitelja azila u hrvatski medijima*. Zagreb: Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade Republike Hrvatske; Editor, Focaal Web. 2015. 'Elissa Helms: Men at the Borders: Gender, Victimhood, and War in Europe's Refugee Crisis.' [Www.focaalblog.com](http://www.focaalblog.com). December 22, 2015.

[15] See: IZ ZAGREBA DO BIHAĆA (VIDEO): Hrvatska Policija Kidnapovala Nigerijske Studente I Prebacila Ih U BiH!" 2019. *Žurnal*. December 3, 2019. <https://zurnal.info/clanak/hrvatska-policija-kidnapovala-nigerijske-studente-i-prebacila-ih-u-bih/22587>; MUP: Ne Znamo Kako Su Nigerijski Studenti Završili U BiH." n.d. [Www.vecernji.hr](http://www.vecernji.hr). Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/mup-ne-znamo-kako-su-nigerijski-studenti-završili-u-bih-1363805>.

[16] Just take a look at an article on the extremely popular blog for expats in Croatia where the author herself says, before advising expats to study the language, if she had a coin for every time she heard 'someone say they weren't going to learn Croatian because "everyone in Croatia speaks English"', she could retire (cf. Expaticroatia n.d.).

[17] OG 70/15, 127/17, 33/23. Zakon o međunarodnoj i privremenoj zaštiti. <https://www.zakon.hr/z/798/Zakon-o-me%C4%91unardnoj-i-privremenoj-za%C5%A1titi>, Article 74.

[18] Cf. Mayr, Fran Radonić. 2022. 'Vlada Ne Integrira Izbjeglice.' H-Alter. June 28, 2022. <https://h-alter.org/ljudska-prava/vlada-ne-integrira-izbjeglice/>.

[19] An argument could be made about the reception of Ukrainian refugees also being an example of how the reception of refugees had never been about resources, but about political will and the racist, imperialist logics behind it (cf. Hina 2022; Arbutina 2022). Though bureaucratically life has been made much easier for Ukrainian refugees in comparison to virtually any other migrant group in Croatia, nevertheless, one has to keep in mind that in practice Ukrainians under temporary protection have still dealt with a lot of the same issues as other migrants (lack of financial support, poor access to public health services, children experiencing issues regarding their access to additional language classes and thus their right to education — to name a few).

[20] See: Središnji državni ured za demografiju i mlade. 2021, July. Komunikacijska strategija Strategije demografske revitalizacije Republike Hrvatske za razdoblje do 2033. godine. https://demografijaimladi.gov.hr/UserDocImages/Brochure/KOMUNIKACIJSKA%20STRATEGIJA_STRATEGIJE%20DEMOGRAFSKE%20REVITALIZACIJE%20RH_2021.pdf; Hrvatski Sabor. 2021. Nacionalna razvojna strategija Republike Hrvatske do 2030. godine. <https://hrvatska2030.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Nacionalna-razvojna-strategija-RH-do-2030.-godine.pdf>.

[21] See Article 11 in: OG 53/91, 70/91, 28/92, 113/93, 4/94, 130/11, 110/15, 102/19, 138/21. Croatian Citizenship Act. <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3ae6b4dc14.pdf>.

[22] see Article 16 in: *ibid*.

[23] Collyer, Hinger and Schweitzer 2020, p. 9.

[24] Ibid.; cf. Dimitrijević, V. 1998. The Construction of States: nationalism and the Definition of Nation-States in Post-Communist European Countries. In: Stern, B. (ed.) *Dissolution, Continuation and Succession in Eastern Europe*. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers (The Hague) 147-170.

[25] Collyer, Hinger and Schweitzer, 2020.

[26] See: Canjuga, I. 2022. Pravna analiza: problem dugotrajnih privremenih boravaka državljana trećih zemalja s osvrtom na uvjete koji se tiču sredstava za uzdržavanje i zdravstvenog osiguranja po Zakonu o strancima (NN 133/2020). Sisak: Civil Rights Project Sisak.

[27] Ibid.

[28] The calculation is provided every year by the Croatian Bureau of Statistics.

[29] OG 133/2020; Državni zavod za statistiku. 2023, March 1. Prosječna mjesečna isplaćena neto plaća i prosječna mjesečna bruto plaća po zaposlenome u pravnim osobama Republike Hrvatske za 2022. https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2023_03_24_394.html; OG NN 115/16, 106/18, 121/19, 32/20, 42/20, 114/22; Zajamčena Minimalna Naknada - Gov.hr. n.d. Gov.hr. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://gov.hr/hr/zajamcena-minimalna-naknada/714>.

[30] Cf. Rogers Brubaker. 2002. *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Rogers Brubaker. 1996. *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[31] Bianchi, Stephenson & Hannam 2020, p. 5; cf. Tuathail, Gearóid Ó. 1999. 'Borderless Worlds? Problematizing Discourses of Deterritorialisation.' *Geopolitics* 4 (2): 139–54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650049908407644>; Stoffelen, Arie. 2021. 'Managing People's (In)Ability to Be Mobile: Geopolitics and the Selective Opening and Closing of Borders.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, September. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12486>; Baričević, V. 2022. *Insajderi ili autsajderi građanstva? Državljeni, stranci i socijalno građanstvo u Hrvatskoj*. *Anali Hrvatskog politološkog društva*, 19 (1): 41-64.

[32] Baričević, 2022.

[33] See: Stambeno Pitanje: Rat Za Portun (Fali Prvih Sedam Minuta).” n.d. [Www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7b0xzw7cdWM&ab_channel=LeoPopovic). Accessed August 1, 2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7b0xzw7cdWM&ab_channel=LeoPopovic.

[34] Štiks, I. 2010. *Uključeni, isključeni, pozvani: politike državljanstva u postsocijalističkoj Europi i Hrvatskoj*. *Politička misao*, Vol. 47 (1): 77-100.

[35] Ibid: 80.

[36] Ibid: 84.

[37] 'HUP Predstavio Rezultate Istraživanja Među Iseljenicima O Razlozima Odlaska.' n.d. [Www.hup.hr](https://www.hup.hr). Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.hup.hr/hup-predstavio-rezultate-istrazivanja-medju-iseljenicima-o-razlozima-odlaska.aspx>.

[38] Hameršak, 2017/2018.

[39] 'Milanović: Ne Mogu Jamčiti Koliko Dugo Ćemo Moći Ovako.' 2015. N1. September 17, 2015. <https://n1info.hr/vijesti/a72993-milanovic-ne-mogu-jamciti-koliko-dugo-cemo-moci-ovako/>.

[40] See: 'Ostojić: Poštujem Orepića, Bili Smo Suborci '91.' 2016. N1. January 21, 2016. <https://n1info.hr/vijesti/a98475-ostojic-postujem-orepica-bili-smo-suborci-91/>; "Balkanska Ruta: Samo Tranzit, Molim! – DW – 24.01.2016." n.d. [Dw.com](https://www.dw.com/hr/balkanska-ruta-samo-tranzit-molim/a-19001188). Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.dw.com/hr/balkanska-ruta-samo-tranzit-molim/a-19001188>.

[41] 'Milardović: Izbjeglička Ruta Mogla Bi Skrenuti Prema Dalmaciji.' n.d. [Glas Slavonije](http://www.glas-slavonije.hr). Accessed August 1, 2023. <http://www.glas-slavonije.hr/280180/1/Milardovic-izbjeglicka-ruta-mogla-bi-skrenuti-prema-Dalmaciji>.

[42] The worst of all could be the example of how, until recently, asylum seekers had no possibility of legal employment before the expiration of 9 months from their asylum request or having asylum granted, whichever comes first. That paired with the fact that the governmental financial support to asylum seekers is 13 euros (100 Croatian kunas if we are speaking in the former currency) gives a realistic picture of the reasons why asylum-seekers would possibly want to seek to build their life elsewhere. See also: 'Žao Mi Je Izbjeglica, Ali Moramo Brinuti O Sebi.' n.d. [Express.24sata.hr](https://express.24sata.hr). Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://express.24sata.hr/top-news/zao-mi-je-izbjeglica-ali-moramo-brinuti-o-sebi-4265>;

'Osigurate Li Strancu Bez Papira Smještaj Ili Prijevoz, Mogli Biste Biti Kažnjeni S 23.000 Kuna.' n.d. [www.index.hr](https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/osigurate-li-strancu-bez-papira-smjestaj-ili-prijevoz-mogli-biste-bit-kaznjeni-s-23000-kuna/888104.aspx). Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/osigurate-li-strancu-bez-papira-smjestaj-ili-prijevoz-mogli-biste-bit-kaznjeni-s-23000-kuna/888104.aspx>; 'Sin Državnog Tajnika MIUP-a Za Imigraciju Tajio Da Mu Sin Uvozi Strane Radnike.' n.d. www.vecernji.hr. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/drzavni-tajnik-u-mup-u-tajio-da-mu-sin-uvozi-strane-radnike-1670150>.

[43] 'Orepić: Ne Možemo Ispuniti Kvotu Jer Izbjeglice Ne Žele U Hrvatsku.' n.d. IUS-INFO. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.iusinfo.hr/aktualno/dnevne-novosti/orepic-ne-mozemo-ispuniti-kvotu-jer-izbjeglice-ne-zele-u-hrvatsku-29219>.

[44] See: 'Katić: Broj Tražitelja Međunarodne Zaštite Porastao Za 320 Posto.' n.d. [Tportal.hr](https://www.tportal.hr). Accessed August 1, 2023. https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/katic-broj-trazitelja-medunarodne-zastite-porastao-za-320-posto-20221122?meta_refresh=1. 'Hrvatska Polako Razvija Svoje Migrantske Politike, Ali Potrebno Je Čuti I Razumijeti Potrebe Migranata.' n.d. JRS Hrvatska. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://hrv.jrs.net/hr/price/hrvatska-polako-razvija-svoje-migrantske-politike-ali-potrebno-je-cuti-i-razumijeti-potrebe-migranata/>.

[45] Ibid.

[46] 'Eksplozija Stranih Radnika; Više Ih Za 20 Tisuća Nego Lani; Evo Gdje Ih Je Najviše.' n.d. [Tportal.hr](https://www.tportal.hr). Accessed August 1, 2023. https://www.tportal.hr/biznis/clanak/eksplozija-stranih-radnika-vise-ih-za-20-tisuca-nego-lani-evo-gdje-ih-je-najvise-20220520?meta_refresh=1.

[47] See: 'Sin Državnog Tajnika MIUP-a Za Imigraciju Tajio Da Mu Sin Uvozi Strane Radnike.' n.d. www.vecernji.hr; 'Zatajio MUP-u Što Mu Radi Sin: 'Katić Mu Je Morao Reći Da Karijeru Ne Može Graditi Na Uvozu Stranaca.'" n.d. www.vecernji.hr. Accessed August 1, 2023.

[48] 'Sindikalist: Strani Radnici Do 15 Rade Na Građevini, Nakon Toga Kao Dostavljači.' n.d. www.index.hr. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/sindikalist-strani-radnici-do-15-rade-na-gradjevini-nakon-toga-kao-dostavljaci/2465131.aspx>.

[49] Cf. 'Što Se Događa S Uvozom Radnika? Iz Hrvatske U Godinu Dana Otišlo Gotovo 40 Tisuća Stranaca.' n.d. www.vecernji.hr. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/sto-se-dogada-s-uvocom-radnika-iz-hrvatske-u-godinu-dana-otislo-gotovo-40-tisuca-stranaca-1685238>.



Chapter 5

Concluding section with recommendations



Tomasz Błaszczak





Introduction

The GLocalEAST 'Developing a New Curriculum in Global Migration, Diaspora and Border Studies in East-Central Europe' project consortium members assume that Central East Europe (CEE) remains a dynamic and vivid social and political area explored and researched further to understand different dynamics and processes through the lenses of Migration, Diaspora, and Border Studies. A closer look at the personal and group experiences of migrants, transmigrants, and 'stayers' engages a deeper understanding of the causes and consequences of human mobility across national and cultural boundaries. The consortium assumed that migration being a genuinely a transdisciplinary phenomenon requires a complex approach to understanding, research and teaching. It apparently quests for a coherent, comprehensive, holistic view and critical stance towards various challenges and opportunities stemming from migration processes and dynamics in the CEE region.

Thus, it was concluded that there is a need for the HEI graduates to obtain the right attitudes for the work in the field of migration: an open-minded and respectful one, which would include a humane and empathetic approach towards migrants and foreign-

ers. They should include approaches that promote equity, inclusivity and openness of migrants' receiving societies and social, economic and climate justice in sending societies. At the same time their viewpoints need to reflect and encourage values of democracy, diversity, inclusiveness, respect, cooperation and solidarity among the students and general population of different backgrounds, statuses, chances, and perspectives.

Considering the rising number of immigrants in the CEE region and projected further increases, the demand for professionals dealing with immigrants in various areas has been rising too. Experts understanding the legal systems and the labour market opportunities, knowing the languages and the cultures of incoming migrants, having specific skills needed in cultural mediation, conflict resolution, psychological help, etc., are of short supply in most CEE countries and regions. This is understood as being mainly due to the existing gaps in the present higher education systems.

Cultural sensitivity and self-reflectivity are crucial for professions working on the ground as well as researchers, NGOs, and policy stakeholders. The innovative educational offer presented in the GlocalEast project aims to promote human mobility not as a problem, deviation, or anomaly but as a necessary precondition for social change and transformations of many migrants' sending, transit and receiving countries. In doing that it is concluded that it needs to foster and enable joint and interdisciplinary teaching and research in higher education institutions, including and connecting students, scholars, NGOs, politicians and persons with migrant backgrounds for future collaborations. Practice-driven skills are especially emphasised and acquired through classes and internships, facilitating students' transition to the labour market.

One of our goals within the GLocalEast project has been the identification of these gaps across the countries of the consortium. Compared to Western or Southern European countries, such as Germany and Italy, higher education programmes and courses related to migration needed to be better developed, based on the explored significant gaps existing in the CEE states. Therefore, CEE countries considered and accepted an increasing support in creating and expanding courses and programmes, which are crucial to educating professionals able to address the complex challenges arising from increasing immigration to the region.

Based on the papers presented in this publication and their main conclusions there are some major recommendations to be driven:

- **promoting an interdisciplinary approach;**
- **merging traditional and innovative teaching methods;**
- **implementing interdisciplinary curricula on migration, diaspora, and borders;**
- **ensuring incorporation of intercultural and language preparation;**
- **integrating practical elements into study programs;**
- **including an international dimension in new teaching methodologies;**
- **establishing modern virtual platforms for knowledge sharing.**

Recommendations

1) The main point is to strengthen and include the interdisciplinary approach that allows getting out of a single disciplinary focus characteristic for CEE countries:

- Combining different social sciences disciplines and humanities contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of migration and encourages a more holistic and sensitive approach.
- Interdisciplinary education encourages students to reflect critically on migration, diaspora, and border studies, considering it from multiple perspectives. Such an approach helps to integrate knowledge from different disciplines to better understand and intervene in migration which represents the complex global problem.
- In that way, students are able to analyse the complex migration phenomenon from viewpoints of different disciplines and using different methods. This approach enables them to abandon simplistic views on immigration and to understand that the same development might have very different outcomes in various areas, territories and depending on various factors.

- Interdisciplinary teaching supports students' abilities and skills to tolerate and embrace the ambiguity of migration in CEE countries. Interdisciplinary teaching helps students understand why conflicts over migration have commonly ascended in this region. An interdisciplinary approach better identifies the causes and consequences of migration, and, in general, it seems to be a correct way to address this issue.
- Furthermore, topics which focus on diaspora, i.e., teaching about their emigration histories and consequent diaspora communities worldwide, can be effectively integrated into the courses on migration. In that way, they strengthen the students' motivation and eventually integrate emotional aspects.

2) The innovative educational offer needs to include various teaching methods, approaches, and materials, combining traditional teaching with interactive materials, out-of-classroom field trip engagements, experiential learning, internships, and others:

- The space for the involvement of direct practitioners in teaching should be explored, ranging not only from state policymakers and local authorities' practitioners but also to directly involved people who work with and for migrants, such as social workers, physicians, psychologists, pedagogics, media workers, artists, civil society organisations, governmental bodies, and others.
- It is shown to be essential to include migrant associations and collaborative groups in teaching to address and promote their agency, share their experiences, and understand the dynamics of their integration and emancipation.
- Innovative curricula and syllabi in migration, diaspora, and border studies rely on interactive, virtual, and creative methods such as simulation games, role-playing, storytelling, and art projects in teaching and practical work.

3) As a result of three years Erasmus+ project GLocalEAsT, the consortium has arrived to the newly revised curricula and the new interdisciplinary and integrated courses on migration, diaspora and border studies that provided a more specific focus that could be further developed within the global studies and in the area studies at respective universities while including a specific regional focus on the CEE.

- In such a way, special courses related to migration, diaspora and border studies integrate history, geography, politics, economics, culture, and languages to examine migration as a global phenomenon and learn about current and future challenges. Students also learn about the context of migration, such as globalisation, development, social change and innovation, environmental challenges, human rights, conflict, and cooperation.
- Not only does it incapacitate students to translate academic theories into policy and evidence-based recommendations for stakeholders, but it also prepares them to critically evaluate current policies and challenges, including comparative analytical skills to allow students to propose integrated regional research and policy approaches to mobility.

4) The future study programs should also include efficient intercultural and language preparation, so as the future students can learn how to better communicate with the target groups, i.e. migrants, transmigrants, potential migrants. The innovative educational offer should therefore continue to work on the intercultural competencies of students in multicultural environments of academia and vivid multicultural settings of the field.

- The curriculum should further promote active citizenship and community engagement of students, their peers, scholars, teachers, and other stakeholders starting from local levels, through regional ones and then connecting and collaborating in transnational and cross-comparative perspectives
- We must stress that basically universities are indeed a place of zero tolerance towards discrimination and violence, including racism and xenophobia. Nevertheless, future curricula will need to further develop and include even more opportunities for working with and learning from racialized people, people on the move, those missing legal status and people with a migrant background.
- The soft skills rooted in empathy are also crucial and need to be even more invigorated and promoted to the migration-related field requiring community-building skills.

5) The practical aspects should be integrated to support student skills development and prepare them for their professional path.

101

- Involvement of practitioners as lecturers, internships and closer cooperation with associated partners provides the often-missing practical element in teaching migration. That boosts not only a general knowledge of the phenomena but also practical know-how and problem-solving skills related to the field of migration. They are ensuring the needs to achieve that students gain insights and work on their policy-making skills and publicly advocate the rights of the people on the move.
- Associated partners (NGOs) and guest lecturers complement classical approaches (frontal lectures, seminars) with their valuable field experiences and competencies. In that way, students develop relevant practical skills and close gaps between academic and practical knowledge, increasing their employability. They are exploring the empirical approaches in research methods such as case studies, work with international and big data, etc. Innovative teaching modalities will be applied, such as group discussions, role-playing, movies, etc.

- Master program that came out of the project foresees inclusion of the obligatory internships, volunteering, excursions, fieldwork, guest lecturers working in the field, etc. This is an important added value that should be further developed and made sustainable. This experience and some form of practical involvement is evidently created to better prepare HEI graduates for future work in all professional fields related to migration, such as social work, local administrations, international organisations, companies and chambers of commerce, politics, universities, and NGOs.
- Students must be able to relate macro processes with micro-stories, practically assess their interdependence, and have both conceptual tools to define empirical variables and monitor their trajectories. Throughout the internalised sociological imagination, students will enhance their ability to understand better the importance of social reality, like values of empathy, happiness, tolerance, etc., in developing future policies.

6) The new teaching includes and should further foster an international and regional dimension. Academics and experts from different countries are able to offer a unique perspective on migration and provide case studies to complement theoretical education. Equally, given the prevalent focus on the national context in the existing educational offer, strong anchoring of the new curricula and courses in the transnational and global dimension of migration could bring a fresh perspective.

- Practical and political recommendations stem from the complexity of the interdisciplinary approach to the global and local migration flows, their causes, and consequences. They facilitate a diversity of human mobility and social inclusion of migrants, especially those coming from distant and different sociocultural, linguistic, national, and religious backgrounds.
- As a part of an international dimension of the study and research, it would be necessary for students to reflect on internal power relations within the international academia.

7) Finally, one of the main results of the consortium was digitalization of the master program and its various courses and study areas. Such an approach would definitely require further development of modern virtual platforms, allowing the sharing of knowledge behind academia, and expanding the target group beyond university students, and offering further education to practitioners and professionals working in the field. Such platforms secure communication, exchange of ideas, further opportunities between the program graduates, and strengthen the community.

Author's affiliations

* Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave (Slovakia)

Darina Malová

Aneta Világi

Zsolt Gál

* Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna (Italy)

Marco Puleri

* Univerzitet u Beogradu (Serbia)

Mrijana Bobić

Stefan Janković

Milica Vesković Anđelković

* Vytauto Didziojo Universitetas (Lithuania)

Tomasz Błaszczak

Dainius Genys

* Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder) (Germany)

Jarosław Jańczak

Carolin Leutloff-Grandits

* Sveučilište u Zagrebu (Croatia)

Drago Župarić-Ilić

Maja Osmančević

