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Migration issue from and into Central and Eastern Europe

Abstract

Migration from Central and Eastern Europe is seen as a threat to quality of life and general welfare by the western authorities. Central and Eastern European authorities thought the same about migrants into their countries and still do so even today (The Economist 2016).

People think of it as a plague on their society. Western Europe has plenty of migrants from the East, and the East has plenty of migrants from post-soviet countries. People are just seeking better lives. More and more people are seeking asylum from war or for political reasons in East European countries, because it is cheaper to live there, The Telegraph stated that 4 out of 6 the cheapest cities to live in Europe are in the Central and Eastern Europe (The Telegraph 2018).

The main reason of researching this topic is to understand the premises of the present the cycle of migration within the borders of European continent, a migration which is oriented by a vector from East to West. Why did 1.93 million Polish people migrated to Germany, but not vice versa (United Nations 2015)?

Keywords: migration, Central and Eastern Europe, labor shortage, general well being

Introduction

Migration is a topic which influences millions of people each year and is a prominent feature of the world. It increases ethnic and racial diversity throughout the world and

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facilitates the forming of a coherent and a cohesive society (Dion 2009). Human migration is a geographical process, which involves the movement of people from one place to another (White 2015). In Central and Eastern European countries, it represents a huge problem. The outflow of the people from these countries is much bigger than the inflow. From the 95.9 million citizens of CEE countries, 3.47 million are migrants who came into that region, but 12.53 million people emigrated from these countries (United Nations 2016). The main reason for carrying out this research is to make the reader understand and to explain why people migrate, who migrates, what premises they need to migrate and where do people migrate to. Why? Who? What? Where? These are the main question my research is based on.

The importance of the research is to tackle the concept of migration and to show real impact of the movement of people through European. It is very hard to analyze the data as a whole, notwithstanding, each country has its own reasoning on migration and its own view regarding the concept, according to international standards we may conclude that the genesis of the problem are the same needs and reasons, which will be shown and described detailed further on in the research. It is important to know the reason why big masses of people move from one country to another, to understand why so many families get separated because of migration and why do some countries invite migration and use it for the purpose of development, whereas other countries seem to have a huge economic decline.

People migrate from their countries for a variety of reasons – including fleeing from war or persecution, better economic opportunities, political conflicts and labour surpluses (Jandt 2012). Specifically, in CEE countries, we may conclude that people migrate mainly for better economic opportunities and labour surpluses. The main indicator of the wealth of a population, GDP per capita, can show the situation at the moment. Another key indicator is the rate of unemployment, as it shows the wellbeing of the population as a whole.

Main reasons and consequences of migration

“Migration is as natural as breathing, eating, or sleeping. It is a part of life, a part of nature. So, we have to find a way of establishing a proper kind of scenario for modern migration to exist. And when I say ‘we’, I mean the world. We need to find ways of making that

migration not forced” – Gael Garcia Bernal. Connecting to the topic of the research, migration is a normal movement of people to better conditions and better life, however, it does not always result in a better life. In many cases, people just flee away from war, genocide, political depression or anything that may put in danger their life.

We can categorize all the factors of people’s migration into two: Pull Factors and Push Factors. Push factors are internal factors of the country which motivate people to leave, whereas pull factors are external factors such as special facilities in the destination country. Push factors are poor infrastructure, lack of good medical care, high levels of unemployment, few educational opportunities and bad educational system, high crime rates and poor standards of living. Push factors are associated with the worst things the country has, whereas pull factors are the best things another country can offer. Pull factors such as better infrastructure, better healthcare, better job and educational opportunities, higher standards of living, and mainly stability and general wellbeing attract people (Ramos 2017).

According to data of the International Migration Wallchart for 2015th year (United Nations 2015), the most beloved country by CEE migrants is Germany, so I will take that country as a single example, in order not to overload the research with numbers. Germany has 193,013 Polish citizens, 590,189 Romanian Citizens and 543,527 Czech citizens, what means that more than 2 million people in Germany are migrants from these three countries (United Nations 2015). Germany has such a big stock of migrants due to general situation there. Germany is the biggest economy in Europe and has the lowest unemployment rate, which was 4.4% in January 2016, and was constantly decreasing (Eurostat 2016), so people see great potential in heading to Germany because they are sure that they are going to have a well-paid job and growing opportunities. People who leave CEE countries are young, well trained and two thirds of them are single. In Hungary alone, two thirds of people who left the country were under 40 years old, and that is a huge loss to the population because they are the people who are able to work, to enrich the country and who can have families and increase the demography of the country. The migration from CEE countries is a great loss in the demographical, economic and cultural sectors (Glorius 2018).

Only one in five migrants return to their country of origin, and that is a terrible fact (Coles 2006). People not returning to their home countries is a serious issue for the economy, because according to the previous statement, one of five people who is apt

to work, who have necessary skills to provide high quality services or just who can pay taxes and increase the economy of his own country, does not come back and do not do it. As Max Frisch stated “We asked for workers. We got people instead”, and that is the reality, that the workers who long time ago came, became a part of the society and integrated so well that they do not need to go back home. Whereas, these four people who come back to their home countries are more productive, because they are used to that in the countries where they worked, are more time efficient and these two key qualities boost economy of their homeland. Nevertheless, people who return home have bigger expectancies about health care, social security and economy in general, a thing what boosts governmental structures to work better and to provide better lives to the citizens.

To see the reasons of migration in numbers, we can compare the source and destination countries just by two criteria, GDP per capita and Unemployment Rate.

GDP per capita is the best measurement of country’s wellbeing because it is the division of country’s gross domestic product by its total population, so we can see the real productivity of the country. GDP per capita in destination countries is usually much higher than in source country, for example in Germany, GDP per capita in 2016 was 41,936 USD, whereas in Hungary it was 12,664 USD, Poland – 12,372 USD and Romania – 9,474 USD. Therefore, the difference is huge between these indicators. Destination country has higher GDP per capita by three or even four times than the source country (World Bank 2018).

Unemployment rate is the measurement of the prevalence of unemployed people in a country. In source countries, general unemployment rate is relatively higher than in destination countries. In Hungary, the unemployment rate in January 2016 was 5.9%, Poland – 6.8%, Romania – 6.4%, whereas in Germany it was 4.4% and when you compare the number of population which was unemployed on that time in these state, there is a huge gap between them (Eurostat, 2018). Although general unemployment rate may seem not so high, we should focus more on youth unemployment rate, because the majority of migrants from and into CEE countries are young, but youths play an essential role in the society as taxpayers, developers of the society and promoters of progress. Romania had 16.8% of youth unemployed in January 2018, Poland – 14.1%, Hungary – 10.7%, whereas Germany had 6.6%, the difference can be seen without making calculations (Statista 2018). All in all youths if do not find a good op-

portunity to work in their home countries, they migrate without any constraints. Even if the unemployment rate is tending to lower in the last years, due to the emigration of high skilled labor, there are reported labor shortages in CEE countries.

In Baltic Countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), migrants are mainly from Russia. There are 143.677 Russian migrants in Estonia, 137.224 Russians in Latvia and 59.466 in Lithuania. Poland and Czech Republic are more popular for Ukrainian citizens. There are 206.518 Ukrainians in Poland and 95.474 Ukrainians in Czech Republic. Hungary is most preferred by Romanians, there are 204.603 Romanians in Hungary, whereas Romania is most preferred by Moldovans, there are 81.856 Moldovans who are currently residing in Romania. Slovakia is beloved by Czech Republic citizens; there are 89.304 Czechs in Slovakia. Croatia has 404.874 Bosnia and Herzegovina residents (International Organisation for Migration 2015).

As you can see in the numbers above, nationals of poorer states migrate into Central and Eastern European Countries, whereas people from CEE countries migrate to richer countries such as Germany and United Kingdom. There is a semi cycle within the borders of European continent, that shows us that people from developing countries tend to migrate to more developed countries, but people from more developed countries tend to migrate to the most developed countries, and this semi cycle is natural. Due to tries of governments to uniformize the wages and the well being of the societies within the European Union, migration within those countries tends to be substituted by immigration from third countries. The rise of number of employees from outside the EU shows the attractiveness of European Union labor markets despite high unemployment in some countries and economic stagnation (Matuszczyk 2004).

People migrate to or within CEE countries not only because of financial reasoning. People migrate due to historical reasons, if their ancestors are from that countries, or because of the language, if the language in their home country is similar to the language spoken in the destination country, they will migrate; people migrate as well if there is a powerful diaspora in the country. Generally, there is an assessment of the ability to integrate foreigners in CEE countries made by Central and Eastern European Development Institute (Matuszczyk 2004). There are all the criteria about which people think when they migrate and the indices, which are based on.

The biggest consequence of the migration is the loss of people who potentially can increase the economy, demography and general state in the country. As previously was

stated, mainly are leaving young, single and high skilled people, the people who should run the economy and build a future to the country. Another consequence with is connected to the previous one is the brain drain. Doctors, engineers, IT people are leaving country for getting a lower position but for more money and better life conditions. This loss of people creates labour shortages. Many corporations have difficulties with hiring people in a number of CEE countries. In Central and Eastern European countries, average proportion is 40%, whereas in some CEE countries it is much higher. 72% of companies in Romania have labour shortages, 62 % in Bulgaria, 57% in Hungary, 45% in Poland and 44% in Slovakia (Fruchter–Sielewicz 2017).

Conclusion

This research has an informative contribution on a very popular and harmful issue through the CEE countries, migration. Migration has a high number of good effects for source countries such as new skills brought by returning migrants, money sent home which are reinvested in the economy, whereas the number of bad effects is much higher and is much worse for source countries such as disproportionate numbers of females left behind, low progress of economy due to lack of labour force and brain drain.

By knowing all the patterns of migration included in this research people would think one more time about leaving or staying in their home country, they would even help more people to stay in their home land and develop their country's economy. Countries need their people, because people are the mechanism that runs a country's economy, a mechanism what develops every structure of the country and finally a mechanism what should be at home and make his home better.

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