

# **Work or social transfers – the sources of income and characteristics of immigrants from Poland to four EU countries based on survey information**

Katarzyna Saczuk<sup>1</sup>

Paweł Strzelecki<sup>2</sup>

Extended abstract, version: 20.11.2013

## **Abstract:**

In many EU countries the abuse the social security systems by immigrants became one of the topics of political agenda. This kind of discussion base sparsely on solid evidence.

The aim of this paper is the presentation of selected results of the survey of Polish immigrants in four EU countries: United Kingdom, Ireland, Netherlands and Germany carried out in 2012 by SMG/KRC for National Bank of Poland. According to the results of the survey great majority of immigrants worked. It can be also estimated that only a limited percentage of immigrants was employed in informal sector and avoided paying taxes and social contributions as most of them had health insurance. Majority of immigrants were young persons who didn't use any kind of social transfers (63-85% of answers). Despite the fact that in the past short-term migration strategies prevailed among immigrants from Poland and still relatively high percentage of immigrants that left their families in Poland more recent observations suggest the change of attitudes. Majority of emigrants declare that they want to stay more than three years.

---

<sup>1</sup> Warsaw School of Economics, Institute of Statistics and Demography, National Bank of Poland, Economic Institute, [katarzyna.saczuk@gmail.com](mailto:katarzyna.saczuk@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Warsaw School of Economics, Institute of Statistics and Demography, National Bank of Poland, Economic Institute, [pstrzell@sgh.waw.pl](mailto:pstrzell@sgh.waw.pl)

## 1. Introduction

The free movement of workers is one of the values secured by the European Union (EU). The enlargement of the EU created a incentives for migration flows between the New Member States and the countries of Western Europe. Indeed, huge migration flows were observed and boosted the significantly the potential GDP growth of EU countries more exposed to immigration. Economic crisis has led to the rise in unemployment rate in most of the countries of Western Europe, especially among less skilled workers. Despite the fact that crisis also hampered the new immigration and even cased to some extend return migration in the years 2009 and 2010 (table 1) the number of Polish immigrants in EU is significant and growing in the last two years. That is why immigration policy started to be an important part of political agenda in coutries like UK, Netherlands or Ireland.

Table 1. The official estimate of the number of emmigrants from Poland (in thousands)

	Census 2002	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>1 000</b>	<b>1 450</b>	<b>1 950</b>	<b>2 270</b>	<b>2 210</b>	<b>2 100</b>	<b>2 000</b>	<b>2 060</b>	<b>2 130</b>
<b>EU</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>1 200</b>	<b>1 610</b>	<b>1 925</b>	<b>1 887</b>	<b>1 765</b>	<b>1 685</b>	<b>1 754</b>	<b>1 816</b>
<i>Labour market open door policy since 2004</i>										
Great Britain	24	150	340	580	690	650	595	580	625	637
Ireland	2	15	76	120	200	180	140	133	120	118
Sweedeen	6	11	17	25	27	29	31	33	36	38
<i>Labour market open door policy since 2006</i>										
Spain	14	26	37	44	80	83	84	48	40	37
Portugal	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Finland	0	0	1	3	4	4	3	2	2	2
Greece	10	13	17	20	20	20	16	16	15	14
Italy	39	59	70	85	87	88	88	92	94	97
<i>Labour market open door policy since 2007</i>										
Netherlands	10	23	43	55	98	108	98	92	95	97
<i>Labour market open door policy since 2008</i>										
France	21	30	44	49	55	56	60	60	62	63
<i>Labour market open door policy since 2009</i>										
Belgium	14	13	21	28	31	33	34	45	47	48
Denmark	0	0	0	0	17	19	20	19	21	23
<i>Labour market open door policy since 2011</i>										
Austria	11	15	25	34	39	40	36	29	25	28
Germany	294	385	430	450	490	490	465	440	470	500

Source: Polish Central Statistical Office

One of the most important claims is that imigrants from NMS are costly for social security systems in the destination countries or they usually work in shadow economy and thus do not contribute to social security systems. The aim of the paper is the presentation of selected results of the survey of Polish immigrants in order to describe the main features of Polish immigrants and verify the hypotheses that base on the popular myths that exist in the public

debate. As a main source of information we use the observations from the unique survey of Polish immigrants abroad that was carried out in 2012 in United Kingdom, Ireland, Netherlands and Germany by National Bank of Poland. The analysis focus on following topics::

- 1) The estimate of the percentage of immigrants employed in the official and shadow economy,
- 2) The percentage of immigrants that receive social security benefits and the average value of that benefits,
- 3) The description of the family situation of Polish migrants and their migration strategies (permanent migration, short-short term migration, circulatory migration etc.).

## 2. Data and method

In this paper we use unique survey among immigrants carried out by SMG/KRC company for National Bank of Poland. The survey was carried out in United Kingdom (n=1500), Ireland (n=1000), Netherlands (n=700) and Germany (n=1500) in Autumn 2012. The survey was carried out using CAPI method on the sample of Polish citizens in the age 18-65. Due to the lack of the sampling frame the sample stratified sampling was used. It based on the structure of Polish immigrants available from other datasources. The translated part of survey questionnaire is presented in the appendix.

## 3. Draft results

According to the results of the survey great majority of immigrants worked. The percentage of those whose work was more than only seasonal or casual amounted to more than 70% and the total percentage of employed immigrants exceeded 90% in UK, Netherlands and Germany. On the other hand in Ireland where unemployment rate remains very high those numbers were lower with significantly higher percentage of unemployed persons.

Table 2. The percentage of immigrants that have any job (Q17)

	UK	Ireland	Netherlands	Germany
Employment (permanent work)	79	58	70	76
Employed (casual work)	12	15	22	13
Unemployed	6	16	5	5
Not active on the labour market	3	11	2	7

It can be also estimated that only a limited percentage of immigrants was employed in informal sector and avoided paying taxes and social contributions as most of them had health insurance (table 3).

Table 3. The percentages of immigrants that have health insurance (the indirect measure of legal work - Q11 )

	UK	Ireland	Netherlands	Germany
Yes	66	100	80	75
No	34	0	20	25

Majority of immigrants were young persons who didn't use any kind of social transfers (table 4) 63-85% of answers.

Table 4. The percentages of immigrants that currently receive any social transfers (Q27)

	UK	Ireland	Netherlands	Germany
Yes	25	37	28	13
No	75	63	72	87

Despite the fact that in the past short-term migration strategies prevailed among immigrants from Poland and still relatively high percentage of immigrants that left their families in Poland more recent observations suggest the change of attitudes. Majority of emigrants declare that they want to stay more than three years.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The paper aim to verify the hypothesis about the behaviour of Polish immigrants. Draft results suggest that the immigrants that most of the immigrants from Poland work legally and do not receive any social transfers. Additional analysis are needed to construct more multidimensional portrait of current Polish immigration.

## Appendix

### The National Bank of Poland survey questionnaire – selected questions (Great Britain)

<b>Part one</b>	
<b>P1. Gender:</b>	1. Male 2. Female
<b>P2. Age:</b>	1. 18 - 24 2. 25 - 34 3. od 35 do 44 lat 4. od 45 do 54 lat 5. od 55 do 65 lat
<b>P3. Educational attainment (completed):</b>	1. Primary 2. Basic vocational 3. Secondary vocational 4. Secondary general 5. Tertiary – private university 6. Tertiary – public university
<b>P10. Does any of the members of your family plan to come to the UK (for longer than 3 months)?</b>  <i>You can select multile answers</i>	1. Nobody plans to come 2. Husband/wife 3. Partner 4. Adult child 5. minor child/children 6. parents/in-laws 7. siblings 8. grand-parnets
<b>P11. Health insurance in Great Britain?</b>	1. Yes 2. No
<b>P13. How long have you stay in the UK? Please indicate the total duration</b>	..... years and ..... months
<b>P14. How long do you plan to stay in the UK?</b>	1. less than 3 months 2. 3-6 months 3. 7-12 months 4. 1 - 3 years 5. > 3 years but not permanently 6. permanently
<b>P17. Situation on the labour market?</b>	<b>In Poland (6 months before you left Poland):</b> 1. Employment ( permanent work) 2. Employment (casual work) 3. Do not work, serching for a job and was able to work 4. Do not work and not interested in finding paid work <b>In the UK (currnetly):</b> 1. Employment ( permanent work) 2. Employment (casual work) 3. Do not work, serching for a job and was able to work 4. Do not work and not interested in finding paid work
<b>P27. What is the amount of social benefoits received by you from social security?</b>	1. do £ 200 2. £ 201-400 3. £ 401-800 4. £ 801-1000 5. > £ 1000 6. No benefits