

GEOGRAPHY OF EUROPEAN MIGRATION

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In recent decades, the role of international migration has increased dramatically in most European countries. The growth in migration has made some authors proclaim the beginning of a second Migration Period that could transform the social and cultural identity of Europe. The article presents an analysis of international migration geography in Europe in the last twenty-five years. The authors identify the main trends in migration, provide migration profiles of European countries, and propose a classification based on the recent changes in the migrant stock. Changes in the migrant stock (total emigration and immigration) reflect the level of involvement in international and global processes. They can serve as an indicator of a country's attractiveness for both foreigners and the country's citizens. The study shows that European countries are increasingly split into 'immigrant' and 'emigrant' states. The authors describe spatial patterns of migration. The volume and localisation of migration flows in Europe are affected not only by cultural and historical circumstance, such as a colonial past or a common language. The scale of immigrant influx often does not depend on a donor country's demographic potential or the level of its socio-economic development. The links between the place of origin and destination are often more complex than it might initially seem. The authors stress the importance of a differentiated immigration policy taking into account ethnic and cultural features of host societies.

Key words: immigration, emigration, Europe, migration flow, immigration policy, migration ties

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Submitted on February 19, 2016.

doi: 10.5922/2079-8555-2016-3-4

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There are different perspectives on the situation brought about by a mass influx of migrants into Europe, which has been observed in recent decades and especially the last few years [4; 10; 12; 17; 21]. We can discuss whether the current state is a unique phenome-

non that does not have parallels in the past of Europe and other regions or this happened before and it is a mere reflection of the laws of social development. All estimates demonstrate that the scale of international movements has increased in recent decades both on the European subcontinent and around the world. This is a result of globalisation manifested in an increase in growing mobility.

This article analyses 1990—2015 data on migrant stock (immigration and emigration) in European countries. The key method is a comparison of data on places of birth and residence, which takes into account long-term cross-border movements without totalling annual net migration. This approach allows for assessing fundamental shifts in the intensity and directions of migration flows, excluding — when it is possible — the impact of short- and mid-term ‘background’ return and transit migrations.

The key objectives of this study are to identify steady international migration trends in Europe, to construct a migration profile of countries, and to group them by migration stock characteristics. Special attention is paid to the analysis of spatial characteristics of migration flows and assessing the prospects of migration in individual regions and countries of Europe.

The major statistics sources used in the study are the data provided by the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs [7].

The new migration wave rising in Europe was shaped by both an influx of migrants from other regions of the world and an increase in migration between European countries having different levels of economic, social, and political development. The increase in migration between European states was partly closed by the fall of the Iron Curtain — the collapse of the global socialist system led by the Soviet Union and the removal of foreign travel restrictions in Eastern European states.

As Russian and international researchers stress [6; 15; 23], the period following the 1990s saw the most considerable increase in the number of migrants in European countries. This was due to several circumstances. Firstly, armed conflicts on the territory of the former USSR and Yugoslavia, alongside the enlargement of the European Community and strengthening internal European ties, resulted in an increased migrant influx into European countries. Secondly, an important factor contributing to the intensity of migration was the growing transport accessibility of European countries for migrants from poor and war-torn Asian and African countries. In the times of Marco Polo and Magellan, the way from Eastern Asia to Europe took months and not everyone could overcome its adversities. Today, travelling many thousands of kilometres is a mass phenomenon.

The effect of both the process and result of migration — the latter expressed in the number of emigrants and immigrants — cannot be interpreted as a solely positive or negative factor affecting the socioeconomic and political situation in a country or region. Lower and higher (as compared to the regional population size) emigration and immigration rates can be considered as either a positive or negative phenomenon depending on whether they are perceived by the majority as having a socially beneficial or harmful effect [3; 22].

A large influx of migrants can be interpreted as a benefit for a country's economic development. Since the proportion of working age individuals and the youth in immigrants is above the national average, immigration stimulates the development of the labour market and consumption [20]. Both factors contribute to economic growth. At the same time, the level of education in migrants is often considerably lower than that of local population, which leads to social segregation and additional public spending on the adaptation and readjustment of migrants. The ethnic aspects of immigration complicate interactions with the host population, cause a rapid transformation of the current social norms, and contribute to social tensions. This can be illustrated by anti-immigrant rallies in Germany, France, Austria, and some other European countries [26; 27].

Mass emigration, coupled with a low immigration rate, has different consequences. Migration is usually directed from a territory with lower standards of living to regions with higher social standards¹ [1, p. 151]. However, some researchers [9; 11; 16] believe that migrants demonstrate a higher level of *passionarity* defined as an activity manifested in individuals' eagerness to reach a goal (often an illusory one) and their propensity towards fierce struggle and self-sacrifice in achieving this goal [5, p. 509]. Indeed, staying at home is much easier than exploring the unknown searching for a better life in strange lands. Mass emigration makes the source country an inert traditional society with an unfavourable age-sex structure and a low potential for internal transformations. In Europe, typical cases are the Balkan countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro) and, to a lesser degree, countries of Southern Europe (Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Malta).

However, mass emigration does not only entail preservation of the source country's backwardness but also provides an opportunity for renaissance. Connections with the historical homelands cemented by family bonds of millions of peoples can be converted into the investment of financially successful members of the diaspora and the economic development of source countries [24]. In recent history, a typical case is the phenomenal economic growth in China in the 1980—1990s, which was partly accounted for by the investment from *Huáqiáo* — the overseas Chinese [2].

Alongside qualitative migration intensity and net migration, it is important to consider the geographical direction of migration flows — the countries with which individual European states have the closest population connections. In the early 1990s, 59% of all European immigrants were residents of other European countries. Despite the fall of the Iron Curtain and the significant enlargement of the European Union — which shaped the common European labour market — this rate has not increased, on the contrary, it dwindled by several percentage points² (fig. 1).

¹ An exception is temporary labour migration to regions with unfavourable living conditions and high salaries, as was the case in the Soviet period during the reclamation of most of Siberia, Far East, and the European North of Russian.

² According to the UN, in 2015, 53% of European immigrants were residents of other European countries.

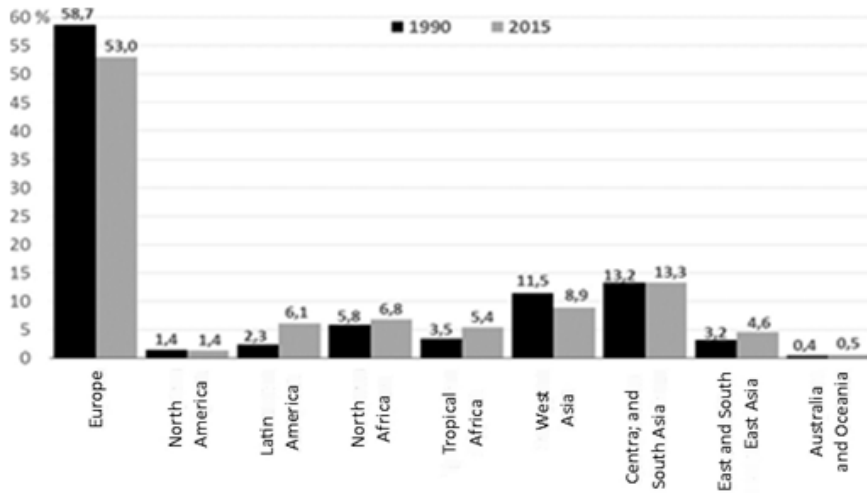


Fig. 1. Migration stock in Europe from different regions of the world (% of the total number of immigrants)

Compiled by the authors based on [7].

Nevertheless, emigration from European countries is primarily restricted to the continent. As of 2015, more than two thirds of European-born emigrants lived in a different European country. Since 1990, this figure has increased by ten percentage points.

The most intensive migration exchange is observed between states that share a land border and have a common historical background. When these factors are accompanied by ethnic and linguistic affinity, reciprocal movements dominate the international migration connections of the neighbouring countries.

Whereas in the forty European states under consideration, migration between neighbouring countries accounts, on average, for 36% of total migration³, in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, this rate is much higher. The highest intensity of migration between neighbours is characteristic of the three post-Soviet countries — Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. In Belarus, 87% of the residents born beyond its borders arrived from the neighbouring states⁴, in Russia and Ukraine, this rate is 70 and 82% respectively. This also holds true for emigration — 79, 65, and 66% of emigrants born in Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine respectively live in the neighbouring countries.

In different countries and regions of Europe, the geography of migration connections is shaped by their history. In the European states that once had large dominions, most immigrants come from the corresponding countries.

³ Including 33 % of immigration stock and 40 % of emigration stock.

⁴ For instance, Russia accounts for 63 % of all immigrants in Belarus.

Most UK immigrants originate from the former colonies in South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka); French immigrants — from North Africa (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia); Dutch — from Indonesia, Surinam, and the Antilles; and Portuguese — from the country's former African colonies (Angola, Mozambique, Cabo-Verde, and Guinea-Bissau). Residents originating from former colonies account for 54% of all immigrants in the UK⁵, 50% in France, 54% in Portugal, 37% in Spain, and 21% in the Netherlands. In other European countries, which did not have large colonies in the past, most immigrants are of Middle Eastern origin. In Germany, which pursued an active policy in the Ottoman Empire and Iran in the 19th/early 20th century, individuals from Turkey and the Middle East account for 18% of the immigrants. People of Middle Eastern origin constitute one fifth of the immigrants in the Nordic countries. History still determines migration connections of European states. The table below shows that each large European country has a characteristic source country.

**Regions of origin and number of immigrants (1,000 people)
in the largest European countries**

Country	Total number of immigrants	Region of origin										
		Western Europe	Eastern Europe	North America	Latin America	North Africa	Tropical Africa	East and South-East Asia	South Asia	Central Asia	West Asia ⁶	Australia and Oceania
Germany	12006	18.8	40.8	1.3	1.9	1.7	1.8	4.1	1.1	10.6	17.8	0.1
Russia	11643	1.4	39.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.1	42.6	15.2	0.0
UK	8543	20.5	15.5	3.6	5.4	1.5	15.6	10.4	19.0	0.9	5.1	2.5
France	7784	28.3	6.0	1.0	3.6	36.0	12.2	5.5	1.6	0.1	5.6	0.1
Spain	5853	20.1	18.5	0.8	37.7	13.2	3.3	3.6	1.8	0.1	0.8	0.1
Italy	5789	13.4	40.6	1.4	10.6	12.2	6.3	6.5	7.0	0.3	1.3	0.4
Ukraine	4835	5.9	77.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.1	11.6	4.7	0.0
Switzerland	2439	55.6	18.0	2.2	5.7	2.0	3.6	3.9	3.0	0.4	5.2	0.4
Netherlands	1979	17.0	12.2	2.0	18.3	10.5	5.8	13.6	2.5	1.8	15.6	0.7
Sweden	1640	27.1	17.3	1.6	5.2	1.8	8.9	8.1	3.1	2.4	24.2	0.3
<i>European total</i>	<i>76106</i>	<i>18.5</i>	<i>34.5</i>	<i>1.4</i>	<i>6.1</i>	<i>6.8</i>	<i>5.4</i>	<i>4.6</i>	<i>3.7</i>	<i>9.6</i>	<i>8.9</i>	<i>0.5</i>

Compiled by the authors based on [7].

⁵ This includes the Irish and people born in the countries of pioneer colonisation — the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

⁶ The Georgians, Armenians, and Azerbaijani — residents of former Soviet republics — account for most immigrants from West Asia.

In Russia — a country that is very heterogeneous in terms of migration [8] — former USSR republics account for more than 96 % of immigrants and 77 % of emigrants. In recent decades, Eastern European states were the largest ‘importer’ of migrants to the economically developed countries of Western Europe⁷⁸. Until 1990, emigration from socialist countries to the West was restricted due to political reasons. An exception was the republics of united Yugoslavia, whose citizens enjoyed greater mobility rights and had an opportunity to move to Germany, Austria, or Switzerland seeking employment. After the fall of the Iron Curtain in the early 1990s, the situation changed dramatically — millions of residents of Eastern and Southeastern Europe headed for the West. Today, they account for 30—55 % of all immigrants in such countries as Austria, Germany, Italy, Finland, Ireland, and Greece.

Residents of Eastern European states show strong geographical preferences when choosing a country of emigration. The reasons behind these preferences are rather clear. For instance, 79 % of Albanians living abroad have chosen two states of South European countries — Greece (437 thousand people) and Italy (448 thousand people). Almost 1.7 million Romanians who gained the right to seek employment in EU states without any restrictions have chosen linguistically similar Italy (over 1 million) and Spain (660 thousand). These two states and Germany account for 77 % of all Romanian immigrants in the EU. The same three countries, although in a different order (Spain — Germany — Italy), have become new homes for 53 % of Bulgarian immigrants in the EU [7].

Being the economic driver of Europe and having a diversified labour market and high living standards, Germany is the most attractive country for most Eastern Europeans. This holds true for not only its eastern neighbours — Poland and the Czech Republic — but also Hungary, Slovakia, and former Yugoslavian republics. Germany has received a fourth of all emigrants from Croatia, 30 % of those from Hungary, 40 % from Poland, and almost 60 % from the Czech Republic.

The UK and Ireland are Germany’s major competitors for the position of the most popular recipient country. These states were the first to lift all restrictions on the employment of citizens of Eastern European states that acceded to the EU in 2004—2007. In the UK, the number of immigrants from

⁷ In this cases (and in the table) the term ‘Western Europe’ refers to the twenty states of Western, Nordic, and Southern Europe — Germany, the UK, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, and Malta.

⁸ The term ‘Eastern Europe’ refers to the 20 states of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, which were defined as socialist countries before the 1990s — Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, and Bulgaria.

Slovakia, Latvia, and Lithuania is far above that in all the other European countries. Moreover, the country has become the second (after Germany) most preferred destination for Poles (203 thousand people).

The choice of new place of residence is not always explained by geographical remoteness, ethnolinguistic proximity, cultural and historical ties, or socioeconomic development. It is easy to explain why Algerian and Moroccan diasporas are the largest in France, Indian and Pakistani in the UK, and Turkish and Polish in Germany. It is evident why Spain has become home to immigrants from Romania and Latin America, alongside Moroccans living in the vicinity of this country. Russia's history determined its close population connections with Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.

It is more difficult to explain why many countries of Western Europe are populated by large groups originating from the states located thousands of kilometres away and having no evident links to their new home.

Let us consider several cases. In Luxembourg, the Portuguese account for 38% of all immigrants and comprise 17% of the Grand Duchy's population. However, in the neighbouring states — France, Belgium, and Greece — the proportion of the Portuguese is 9.2, 3.1, and 0.8% of all immigrants respectively. In Belgium, whose population size is 20 and the number of immigrants 5.5 times those in Luxembourg, the absolute number of the Portuguese is 2.2 times smaller [7].

Another case is three Scandinavian countries — Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. They have a comparable proportion of immigrants (10, 17, and 14% respectively). At the same time, the proportion of immigrants from Sri Lanka, which is distant from the Nordic countries in all respects, in Norway is 5.7 times as high as in the neighbouring Sweden. However, the number of Bangladeshi immigrants in Sweden is 7.3 times that in Norway. In Sweden and Denmark, there are large Lebanese diasporas (26 and 13 thousand respectively), whereas only 2,000 representatives of this Middle Eastern nation live in Norway.

Differences in the number and proportion of immigrants from different countries of the world are also observed on the largest Western European states. The UK, France, Germany, and Italy have never had steady migration or any other connections with the Philippines, Thailand, or Afghanistan. In the UK and Italy, there are large Philippine diasporas comprising over one hundred thousand people, whereas in France and Germany, the proportion of immigrants from this country is much lower. The proportion of immigrants from Thailand in Germany is 4.2 times that in France and 8 times that in Italy. The Afghani who have moved to Europe in recent decades escaping the terrors of civil war and have been granted asylum, prefer to settle in Italy and the UK. The proportion of the Afghani⁹ in the total immigrant population in these countries is 10—20 times that in Germany and France, where the Afghani population is almost absent.

⁹ This concerns ethnicity rather than nationality.

The above and other similar cases suggest that today, both qualitative and quantitative parameters of the immigrant inflow into a European country are determined by both the public migration policy and preferences of immigrants. The geopolitical and geoeconomic position of certain countries and their regions are also important [13].

The localisation of international migrants and the intensity of migration flows do not always follow obvious geographical patterns, even if the movement is restricted to a relatively homogeneous ethnocultural environment. The recent decades have seen a massive influx of immigrants from Latin America into Spain, which is explained by ethnocultural proximity and the attractiveness of the former metropolitan state as a country with higher standards of living. However, the number of immigrants from different Latin American states living on the Iberian Peninsula is seldom correlated with the demographic potential of these states. The number of Ecuadorians (422 thousand) living in Spain is 2.3 times that of Peruvians (183 thousand) residing on the Iberian Peninsula, although the population of Peru (31.2 million people) is twice that of Ecuador. (15.3 million) [7].

The assumption that a poor¹⁰, semi-patriarchal society has a lower spatial mobility or the opposite statement — countries with lower incomes have higher migration rates — are not always true. For instance, out of the three Central American states, which are comparable in terms of their population size — Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Honduras — the least economically developed Honduras accounts for most immigrants living in Spain. The number of Hondurans residing on the Iberian Peninsula is 11 times that of immigrants from Costa Rica, which is considered an affluent Latin American country¹¹ and five times that of the newcomers from poorer and densely populated Guatemala¹².

The above suggests that the geography of migration connections does not always follow a simple pattern, according to which the intensity of migration flows and the choice of destination country are determined by socio-economic parameters, a common cultural and historical (or ethnolinguistic) background, and transport connections. It is often difficult to determine what the initial impulse behind the development of diasporas was. Sometimes it is an arbitrary choice of a group of immigrants who learnt about an earlier unknown ‘promised land’ in Europe. Sometimes the impulse is a PR campaign of destination states, which was the case in Finland in the 1990s — the country granted refugee status to a large group of Somalis [25]. The mechanism of the ethnic diaspora development, which is described below is rather typical and is observed in different countries.

¹⁰ Here and below, the adjective ‘poor’ has a purely economic meaning suggesting low standards of living.

¹¹ According to the UN Statistics Division [18], in 2013, the GDP (PPP) per capita reached USD 10,200 in Costa Rica, 3,500 in Guatemala, and 2,300 in Honduras.

¹² The population size of Honduras is 8.7 million people, that of Guatemala 16.2 million.

At the first stage, a group of immigrants is granted permanent residence — this can be political asylum or any other ‘humanitarian’ mechanism. Later, the immigrant community starts to grow with an influx of new refugees and family reunions. In modern Europe, the right to asylum and family reunion is a basic principle of migration policy. Thus, a developed ethnic community becomes a powerful magnet for new immigrants. As a result, large immigrant communities are formed ‘out of thin air’. In 1990—2015, the number of Somalis living in Finland increased from 54 people to 12.5 thousand. Today, the immigrants from this African state are the fourth largest diaspora in Finland, the first three originating from the neighbouring states — Estonia (51 thousand), Sweden (41 thousand), and Russia (14 thousand). Over the same period, the number of Iraqis living in Norway increased 32-fold — from 0.7 to 22 thousand people and the Afghani community in the UK grew more than 130-fold — from 0.5 to 683 thousand people [7].

Studying the localisation of migration flows in Europe and analysing their quantitative characteristics allow us to identify the geographical patterns of international migration on the continent and trace the changes that took place in this area over the quarter century.

Despite a more than 50% increase in the total number of immigrants in Europe in 1990—2015, the country-specific growth rates differed substantially. After a series of armed conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia, the number of immigrants in the countries of Southeastern Europe increased by 40%, whereas a 2.6-fold growth was observed in the Nordic countries and 4.4-fold in Southern Europe¹³. As figures 2 and 4 show, a decline in the number of foreign-born residents took place only in the former USSR republics (except Russia), Poland, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The most dramatic decrease took place in the Baltics (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), Moldova, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In these countries, the proportion of the foreign-born population reduced 1.6—4-fold over 25 years. In the former Yugoslavian republic, this reduction was caused by a civil war, which raged for almost four years, and the ensuing ethnic cleansing, whereas, in the Baltics and Moldova, changes in the ethnic composition were peaceful, attained through a consistent public policy of ousting ‘migrants’ [14]. A reduction in the number and proportion of immigrants took place in Belarus and Ukraine, although at a smaller scale¹⁴ (fig. 2).

A reduction in the number of individuals born beyond the current borders of Poland was accounted for by the natural decrease in the Poles who had moved into the USSR after World War II¹⁵.

¹³ The most dramatic growth was observed in Spain, where the proportion of immigrants increased almost sevenfold in 1990—2015.

¹⁴ In 1990—2015, the number of persons born abroad decreased by 13% in Belarus and 30% in Ukraine.

¹⁵ According to different estimates, from two to two and a half million Poles were transferred, either voluntarily or involuntarily, from Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania to Poland.

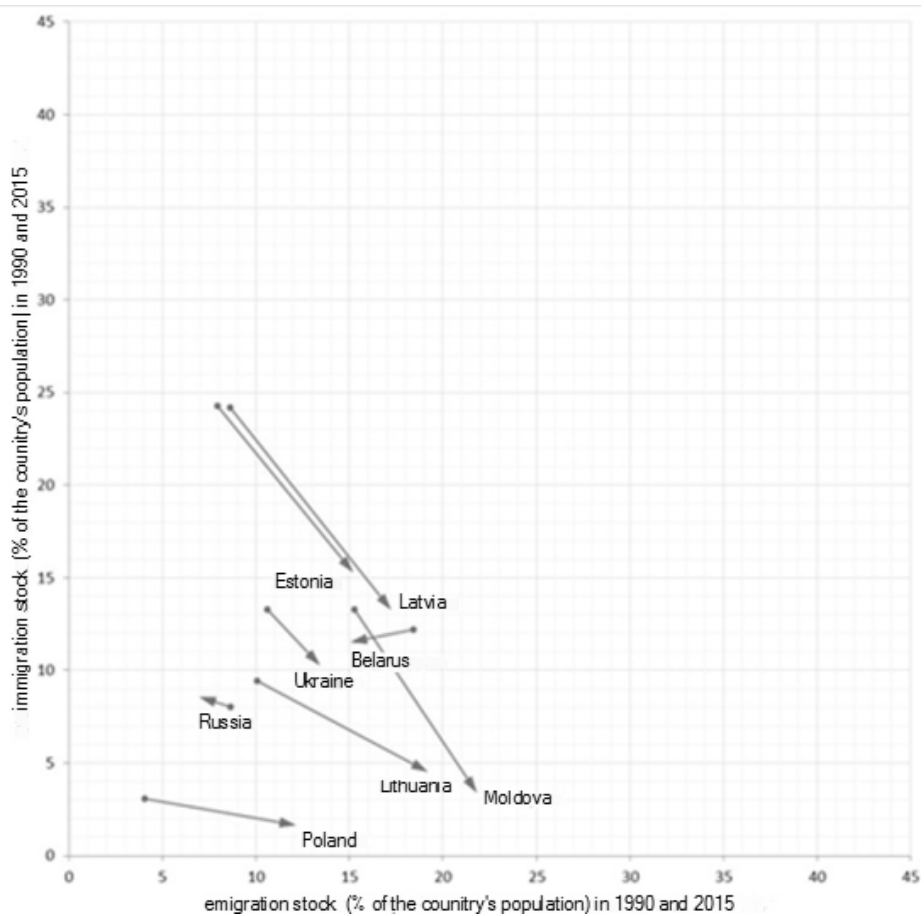


Fig. 2. European countries that changed their migration profiles in 1990—2015

Compiled by the authors based on [7].

The number of emigrants increased in most European countries over the 25 years. The average European increase in the number of individuals living beyond the borders of their historical homeland was 21%. In Eastern and Southeastern Europe, the growth was more than twofold¹⁶ (see fig. 2 and 4). As a result, the divergence between source and destination countries has become more pronounced in Europe in recent decades. The number of foreign-born persons (immigration stock) is almost twice that of people who have left the country for other states (emigration stock) in the most developed European states (fig. 3).

¹⁶ An exception in the Eastern European trend is two former Soviet republics — Russia and Belarus, — where the number of nationals living abroad reduced in 16—17%.

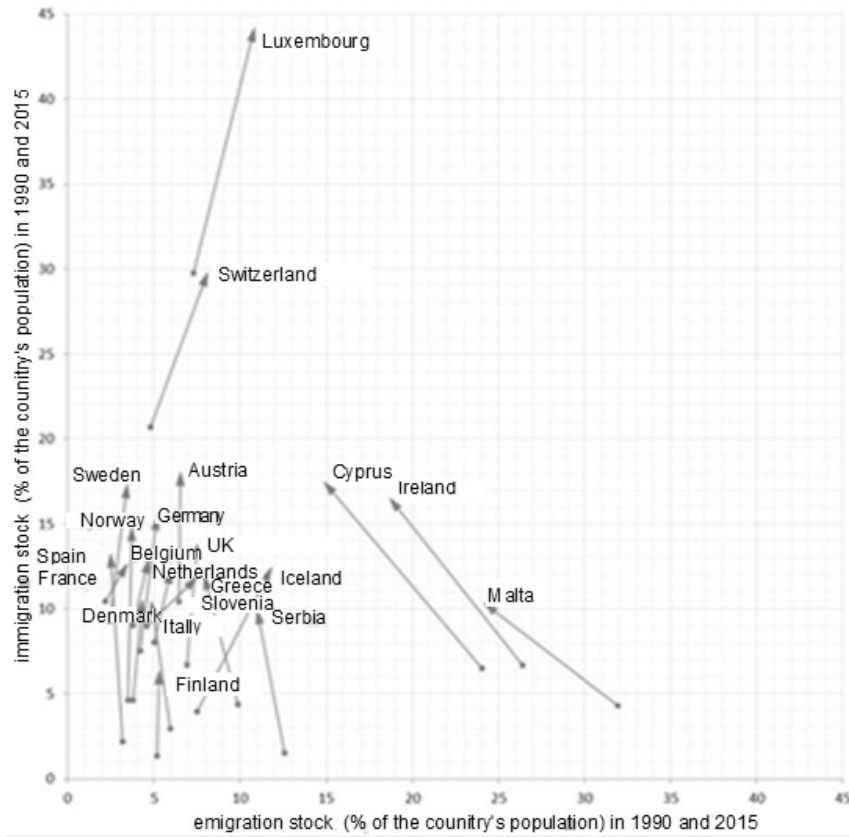


Fig. 3. European countries with an increase in immigration stock, 1990—2015

Compiled by the authors based on [7].

In a number of Southeastern European states — Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania — one foreign-born resident accounts for 10—50 emigrants. The number of immigrants and emigrants is almost equal in eight out of the forty European states. This ‘buffer’ zone is changing over times — the Nordic and Western European states (Finland, Iceland, and Ireland) are rapidly becoming destination states, whereas Eastern European countries — Estonia, Latvia, and Ukraine — are turning into sources of migrants (see fig. 3—4).

The geographical patterns of migration connections characteristic of most European states emphasise the need to pursue differentiated immigration policies. It contradicts the idea of a common European approach. The common EU principles and rules of immigration legislation do not take into account national particularities. In the UK, abandoning the immigration rules developed by the European Commission was one of the reasons behind the Brexit vote, which stressed the unacceptability of a unified migration policy.

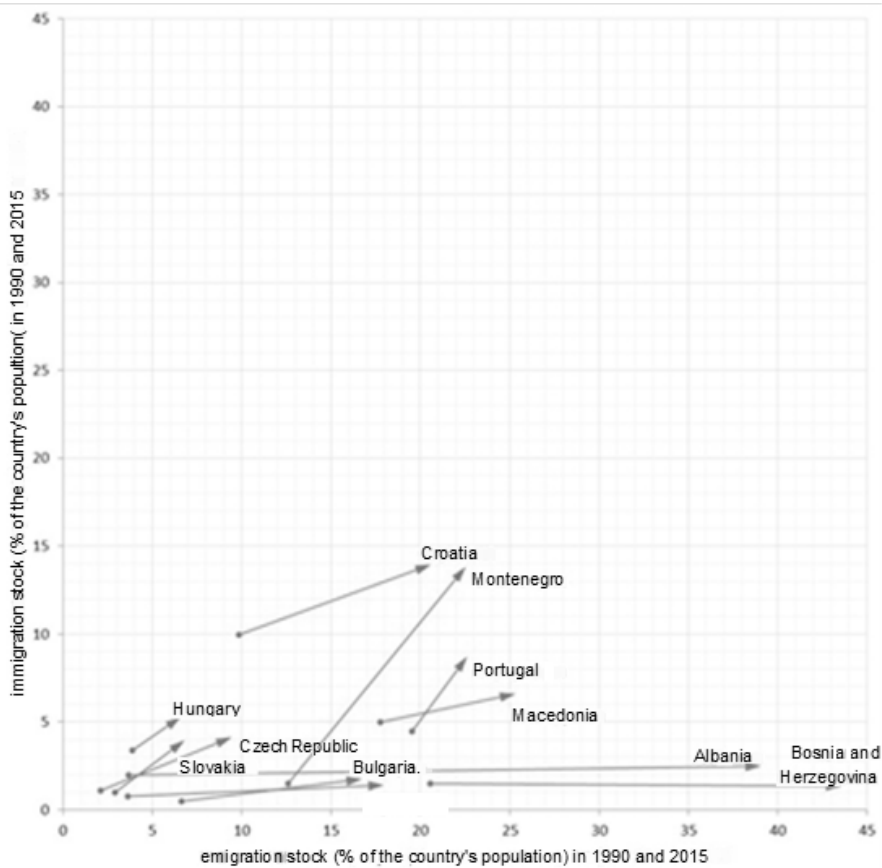


Fig. 4. European countries with an increase in emigration stock, 1990—2015

Compiled by the authors based on [7].

The aggravation of migration situation observed in Europe in recent years — a result of a new influx of immigrants from Africa and the Middle East — necessitates the development and introduction of new approaches to the immigration policy. These approaches should take into account both the established migration connections of each European state and the opportunities for integrating immigrants into local societies. The latter depends on not only quantitative parameters of the migration flow but also ethnic and religious identities.

The persistence of the above migration trends will inevitably lead to a total transformation of the European sociodemographic and ethnocultural space. From the perspective of world history, these changes occur at a rapid rate. In the *Decline of the West*, Oswald Spengler writes that, as 70 years was the lifetime of a man, 1000 years appeared to be the lifetime of a civilization [19, p. 269]. However, the rate of all social process has increased significantly since the times of Spengler and a transformation of Europe would re-

quire not centuries but a much shorter period. During the Great Migration, which took place in the middle of the first millennium, a change in the ethnocultural landscape of the European continent required several centuries, today, a similar process is taking place.

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To cite this article:

Zhitin D. V., Krasnov A. I., Shendrik A. V. 2016, Geography of European Migration, *Balt. reg.*, Vol. 8, no. 3, p. 56—69. doi: 10.5922/2079-8555-2016-3-5.