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LABOR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT MIGRATION WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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ABSTRACT

The issue of migration is a growing phenomenon. It has its source in mundane social causes, working conditions, personal as well as political circumstances. After joining the European Union and the Schengen area, new labor markets were opened for the Poles. This raises many opportunities, but also challenges and threats for emigrants and citizens of the countries to which they go. Trends in the world and in Europe represent the majority of seasonal or time trips. Poland is also becoming an increasingly attractive country for paid work, especially for the citizens from the eastern border of the country. Migration is an important aspect of the European integration, which has a huge impact on economic development, primarily reflected in the labor market.

Key words: migration, European integration, labor market

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the characteristics of free-market economy is the phenomenon of unemployment. In individual countries, its scale and structure vary, in some the intensity of unemployment being weaker, in others stronger. Poland belongs to the latter group¹. During the period of socialism in Poland, a political and social system deprived the people of their independence, spontaneity and creativity, which in turn led to passivity and conviction for the omnipotence of the state. The over protectiveness and incapacitation on the part of the state authority led people to focus on ad hoc matters, while the free economy requires activity and spontaneous action, as well as the ability to set goals and fulfill them (not only locally but globally). A sudden change in the labor market surprised the whole society². Unemployment is an object of interest to many scientists. There is a wide selection of publications on it, and research is often conducted on it. The Central Statistical Office (GUS) represents the scale of this phenomenon on an on-going basis³. The issue of migration is a growing phenomenon. It has its source in the mundane social causes, working conditions, personal as well as political circumstances. After joining the European Union and the Schengen area new labor markets were opened for the Poles. This raises many opportunities, but also challenges and threats for emigrants and citizens of the countries to which they go. Trends in the world and in Europe represent the majority of seasonal or time trips. Poland is also becoming an increasingly attractive country for paid work, especially for the citizens from the eastern border of the country. Migration is an important aspect of the European integration, which has a huge impact on economic development, primarily reflected in the labor market. One of the characteristics of free-market economy is the phenomenon of unemployment. In individual countries, its scale and structure vary, in some of the countries the intensity of unemployment being weaker, in others stronger. Poland belongs to the latter group⁴.

The over protectiveness and incapacitation on the part of the state authority led people to focus on ad hoc matters, while the free economy re-

¹ T. Borkowski, A. Marcinkowski, *Socjologia bezrobocia*, Interart, Warszawa 1996, p. 20.

² Op. cit., pp. 33–36.

³ M. Pilc, *Determinanty bezrobocia w Polsce w latach 1993–2012*, CeDeWu, Warszawa 2014, p. 96.

⁴ T. Borkowski, A. Marcinkowski, *Socjologia bezrobocia*, Interart, Warszawa 1996, p. 20.

quires activity and spontaneous action, as well as the ability to set goals and fulfill them (not only locally but globally). A sudden change in the labor market surprised the whole society⁵. Unemployment is an object of interest to many scientists. There is a wide selection of publications on it, and research is often conducted on it. The Central Statistical Office (GUS) represents the scale of this phenomenon on an on-going basis⁶.

2. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES IN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES

European societies (in particular the western ones) are characterized by the following problems in the labor market:

- A continuing trend of aging society (65+);
- Declining working age;
- Too low labor supply in professions that require special qualifications or in low-paid professions.

This allows for the influx of emigrants who are more willing to accept non-skilled jobs that are often too low-paid for their citizens to make them affordable, and for foreigners often this is a multiple of the salary that they can earn in their home country. Aging society is also a big market for nurses, doctors and carers of the elderly.

Another important problem is the varied situation on the labor markets of different countries – in one of them there is high unemployment and in the second, there is the shortage of skilled workers. An important role was also played by the crisis, which slowed down the mobility within the European Union.

Contrary to appearances, after the enlargement of the EU in 2004, the number of EU citizens of working age who live in another EU country has decreased and now stands at 3%⁷. Migration helps to meet societal challenges, but its potential is not fully exploited, it also has its negative effects, and citizens often have prejudices against foreigners allegedly taking up their jobs. Immigrants are often younger than the average worker, have a secondary or higher education and higher qualifications than are

⁵ Op. cit., pp. 33–36.

⁶ M. Pilc, *Determinanty bezrobocia w Polsce w latach 1993–2012*, CeDeWu, Warszawa 2014, p. 96.

⁷ H. Konkolewsky, *Demografia, mobilność i migracje w Europie oraz wpływ tych zjawisk na stabilność systemów zabezpieczenia społecznego*, [in:] Kostrowiecka M., Marczyk M., (ed.) *Wyzwania XXI wieku a systemy emerytalne*, Warszawa-Gdańsk 2015, p.16.

required in occupied positions. They are often employed in the workplace to fill gaps in the labor market and agree on that due to the difficult labor market situation in their home country⁸.

3. THE THREATS AND BARRIERS OF MIGRATION AND ITS SUPPORT FROM THE EU

Foreign labor migration brings some difficulties connected with the cultural and linguistic barriers. It is also difficult to find oneself in a new administrative situation or in social security⁹. Illegal employment can also be a problem.

Immigrants are a competition for local, highly qualified workers, which can contribute to a higher unemployment rate among immigrants and their unstable situation. A number of international agreements have been set up in terms of hiring workers, providing them with social security and minimizing discrimination in employment and equal opportunities as employees¹⁰.

4. SITUATION IN THE EUROPEAN LABOR MARKET AND ITS INFLUENCE ON EMPLOYMENT MIGRATIONS

It can be concluded that the lowest unemployment rates are in countries like Germany and Great Britain. This can be represented by the most frequent employment migrations of the Poles and a survey conducted on a group of students. The highest unemployment among young people occurs in Spain and Greece, where the situation has remained at a similar level for many years.

Young people, in many cases school graduates, choose to migrate because of prospects for better earnings, growth opportunities, higher standards of living, decent working conditions, the desire to gain valuable work experience, and improve their foreign language skills. The political situation in the country, which, despite expressed dissatisfaction, has not changed for many years, also contributes to this. Projections indicate an increasing tendency of emigration to low-unemployment countries. One cannot forget, however, that the emigrants encountered the depreciation of their qualifications and employment in low-paid jobs¹¹.

⁸ Ibidem, p.16.

⁹ Ibidem, p.16.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 17.

¹¹ Ibidem, p.23.

As it can be observed, unemployment in the European Union is not uniform, certainly other data are indicated in large cities and other in small towns. Average values are given on the map. Countries in the Mediterranean region show higher levels of unemployment. This trend has been going on for many years and is especially affecting young, educated people.

5. POLISH LABOR MARKET (UNEMPLOYMENT IN VOIVODESHIPS) – OUTLINE OF THE PROBLEM

In the voivodeships, the highest unemployment occurs in the following voivodeships: Zachodniopomorskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Podkarpackie, Świętokrzyskie, Podlaskie, Lubelskie. These are low-industry voivodeships with a low demand for services, which results from the relatively low average earnings in these regions. In contrast, the lowest unemployment occurs in voivodeships such as Wielkopolskie, Mazowieckie, Śląskie and Małopolskie. This is due to the large distribution of industrial plants in these regions and the developed service market.

In recent months there has been a downward trend in the unemployment rate in the country. Unemployment is gradually declining, and more and more job offers appear both in Poland and abroad. Most offers appear in the following voivodeships: Małopolskie, Mazowieckie, Dolnośląskie. The Minister for Labor and Social Policy signals that “the decrease of unemployment has to be accompanied by wage increases and greater employment stabilization”¹².

Voivodeship	Citizens planning employment migration (%)	
Podkarpackie	16,8	The highest% in the country
Opolskie	14,3	
Warmińsko-mazurskie	13,2	
Mazowieckie	6,4	The lowest% in the country
Wielkopolskie	8,4	

Tab. 1. Planned migration acc. voivodships/Source; after: R. Bera.¹³

¹² http://www.praca.pl/poradniki/rynek-pracy/bezrob-spada,a-rosnie-licz.ofert-pracy_pr-1450.html [02.08.2015].

¹³ R. Bera, op. cit., p. 30.

From Table 1 above, it is clear that citizens are least likely to migrate in voivodeships with the highest average remuneration in the country. Those who decide to migrate are young people who have not yet set up a family, who are under-qualified or, on the contrary, they are characterized by higher education or specific specialization. These migrations are often long lasting, meaning taking up a life chance¹⁴. The inhabitants of the less urbanized areas are much more likely to migrate for work¹⁵.

6. EMPLOYMENT MIGRATIONS OF THE POLES AFTER THE EU ACCESSION

Following the accession of Poland to the European Union on 1 May 2004 and the entry into the Schengen area, new labor markets opened up. This did not provoke sudden, uncontrolled waves of departure from the country. The migration directions remained similar, i.e. Germany and Great Britain. The largest increase in migration was recorded in Ireland and Great Britain. The factor that determines the flow of labor is not the full liberalization of its flows, but the demand for employers from a given country. There has also been a tendency to reduce the number of seasonal trips and increase the number of long-term trips. Gradually, there is a shortage of workers in Poland caused by emigration, especially in the medical staff. On the day of accession, Poland was included in the system of mutual recognition of professional qualifications. This translates into greater opportunities for finding employment, reducing discrimination and better social security for people working abroad¹⁶.

7. STATISTICS – RETURNING FROM MIGRATION

Many Poles after leaving the country, after getting a satisfactory job, stabilizing their situation abroad and language training, rarely express the desire to return. There are opinions that in a given country live is better than in Poland, wages and the development prospects are much better¹⁷. Analyzing the reasons for going to work abroad it can be observed that

¹⁴ L. Kolarska-Bobińska, *Wstęp* [in:] Kolarska-Bobińska L., (ed.) *Emigrować i wracać. Migracje zarobkowe Polaków a polityka państwa*, Warszawa 2007, p. 7.

¹⁵ J. Wiśniewski, M. Duszczyk, *Migracje zarobkowe Polaków po 1 maja 2004 roku* [in:] Kolarska-Bobińska L., (ed.) *Emigrować i wracać. Migracje zarobkowe Polaków a polityka państwa*, Warszawa 2007, p. 16.

¹⁶ op. cit., pp. 15-23.

¹⁷ R. Bera, p. 28.

the Poles in 28% of cases wanted to obtain higher income from their work, for 17% it was important to gain new experience and learn a language, 17% decided it was a political situation, and 11% had problems finding a satisfactory job in the country. As it can be seen, the main criterion is economic considerations, which are difficult to combat, because abroad the salary is currently several times¹⁸.

79% of the Poles work permanently, and 12% temporarily. 44% of them are satisfied with their work and are not going to look for another job, and 38% are willing to seek a better one, despite their job satisfaction. Only 12% of Polish expatriates are unhappy with their job and are looking for another, and 3% are not satisfied and do not believe in finding a better job. So much satisfaction may result from the similarity of work done to that country at much higher wages and better matching to their qualifications. And the main data is the study of living standards, as 88% of respondents rated their current living standards as higher than in Poland, a comparable one – 9% and lower – 6%¹⁹.

As far as returning to the country is concerned, 36% of respondents are determined to return to the country in the long run. 54% of people consider their decision to be right in every way and do not plan to return home²⁰. Many people, however, are afraid of returning to the country because this can be considered a failure in their environment and in their own judgment. The problems with finding a job in Poland are also important²¹.

8. MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES TO REDUCE MIGRATION

It is often forgotten how important are the working conditions in Poland and looking at them from the level of the employer. Many people believe that working conditions are not worthy, remuneration and incentive system inadequate for the work done and overall organizational culture is low.

In Poland, this is a big problem that human capital is not yet recognized and valued as in Western European countries, so it is difficult to develop. Motivation systems are based on bonuses, so employees perform their du-

¹⁸ Op. cit., p. 28.

¹⁹ Op. cit., p. 28.

²⁰ J. Frelak, *Dlaczego wyjechali, czy wrócić? Wyniki sondażu internetowego* [in:] Kolarska-Bobińska L., (ed.) *Emigrować i wrócić. Migracje zarobkowe Polaków a polityka państwa*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 86-89.

²¹ Op. cit., pp. 86-89.

ties in the fear of losing bonuses, not on how to best work for themselves and the organization. It is worth taking care of the development of the employee in the organization. Ensuring equitable remuneration and continuing organizational culture as it is invaluable. An interesting solution is also benefits for employees and preparing for them social security. It is helpful to provide feedback on the results of one's work. Researchers point out that the higher the level of perceived support, the more often employees show pro-social behavior. We must not forget that the lack of support from the management decides about 75% of the work leaving²².

9. SUMMARY

The continuing trend and further prospects for the growth in migration within the European Union forces the reflection of not only politicians, employers but also academics. It is becoming increasingly evident that European integration is becoming even more global. The enormous challenge for the coming years is to ensure an optimal level of migration in every European country, with the provision of labor force, the minimization of unemployment and satisfactory citizens' standard of living.

Employees often lack the sense of identification with the company, so they are more likely to choose to change jobs or move. It is worth setting specific quality, salary and employees' treatment standards. This process should begin with the selection of employees, especially managers, who should be leaders and with their attitude and understanding – support the work of their employees.

It seems that maybe much better salaries, the opportunity to grow according to clear rules in the form of career paths and rich organizational culture would allow to retain much more staff in the country.

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²² D. Turek, I. Czaplńska, *Praktyki ZZL, klimat organizacyjny i postrzeganie wsparcia menedżerskiego a zachowania*. [in:] Cyfert S., (red.) *Organizacja i kierowanie*, Warszawa 2014, p. 124.

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