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Adam A. Ambroziak\*  
Michał Schwabe\*\*

## Factors Influencing Immigration to Poland As an EU Member State

**Abstract:** *The European Commission has lately been exposed to increasing pressure from the Italian and Greek Governments to actively participate in solving the problem of growing immigration from African and Middle East countries. This surging pressure has resulted in actions aimed at redistributing immigrants among the EU Member States. The implementation of this solution would mean that the immigration issue is most likely to also affect countries which have not had to deal with large immigrant populations in the past. This article focuses on potential immigration to Poland, as one the largest economies in the EU Member States. It aims to answer the question whether Poland needs and is ready, in social, economic and cultural terms, to accept international immigrants from developing countries. Another problem tackled by this paper is the European Union's attitude towards immigration. It is argued that the redistribution of migrants will be pointless unless other accompanying actions are taken simultaneously. The twin issues of the immigration crisis and the distribution of immigrants have revealed problems resulting from differences between the Member States in terms of their quality of life, including differences in wages and social benefits. This article posits that had the EU met the cohesion goal many economic and social problems, including migrants' distribution, would not have arisen.*

**Keywords:** migration, Poland, immigrants' assimilation, economic migrants, migrants' relocation

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## Introduction

In the neoclassical approach to migration theory, the main force behind labour migration is considered as differences in wages, which stems from differences in the marginal productivity of labour between countries. It is generally assumed that people are rational individuals (based on the homo oeconomicus concept), who aim to increase their wellbeing by maximizing the wages and salaries which they receive for their work. Migration processes are hence driven by the differences in remuneration received by an individual in his or her current place of residence and potential remuneration in another country (potential destination).<sup>1</sup>

In the latest migration research (New Economics of Labor Migration), the emphasis in migration studies is placed on family, which is perceived as the decision-making unit in migration processes, rather than on individuals. A family considers the migration opportunities for one (or more) of its members in order to diversify sources of income, with the aim of eliminating the risk of insufficient income to the household budget.<sup>2</sup>

However, every approach to migration studies must take into account the fact that immigration is a socially sensitive topic and that migration processes are hampered by the immigration policies of developed countries, as well as other barriers which potential immigrants necessarily face. The general role of obstacles to migration was first emphasized in a study by E. Lee,<sup>3</sup> who claimed that all barriers to the migration process must be considered individually for each migrant, similarly as to the expected gains from migration. Some barriers, however, can be perceived as universal for migrants willing to enter a country which could offer them higher wages. In this paper we consider these obstacles as regulations preventing migrants from third countries to enter the European Union or the United States, which obviously hamper the migration process on the global scale. What is important to bear in mind, however, is that such barriers do not exist within the European Union, due to the common policies (i.e. free movement of people) which allow the EU workforce to migrate to and look for a job in any of the EU Member States.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J.R. Hicks, *The theory of wages*, London 1932; G.J. Borjas, *Economic theory and international migration*, "International Migration Review", nr 23/1989, pp. 457–485; M.P. Todaro, *A model of Labor Migration and Urban Unemployment in Less-Developed Countries*, "American Economic Review", nr 59/1969, pp. 138–148.

<sup>2</sup> D. Massey et al., *Worlds in Motion. Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium*, New York 1998; H. De Haas, *The determinants of international migration: Conceptualizing policy, origin and destination effects*, Oxford 2011.

<sup>3</sup> E.S. Lee, *A Theory of Migration*, "Demography", nr 3(1)/1966, pp. 47–57.

<sup>4</sup> A.A. Ambroziak, *Wpływ ewolucji prawa swobodnego przepływu osób na migrację w ramach Unii Europejskiej. Bilans dwudziestolecia istnienia rynku wewnętrznego (The impact*

Nonetheless, the decisions taken by the Council of the European Union in 2015 regarding the redistribution of asylum seekers among all EU Member State poses new challenges for many member state countries (particularly those which joined the EU during or after 2004) in terms of immigrants' assimilation into their societies. It is here argued if actions aimed at the social integration of immigrants are not undertaken, social tensions are likely to emerge, which can lead to the development of immigrant ethnic enclaves in the major Member States.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, it should be borne in mind that from the legal point of view there is a substantial difference between refugees, who leave their country in search of a safe place to live while waiting to return their home country when an ongoing situation is stabilised (end of war, introduction of democracy, etc.) and economic migrants, who leave their home countries looking for a better paying jobs and a higher quality of life and standards of living for themselves and their families. Therefore it is worth noting that albeit the aforementioned Council decisions concerned only refugees, there is an intensive debate on general immigration from the African and Middle East Countries. Therefore we decided to analyse the overall movement of foreign migrants to the EU.

In this paper we place a special emphasis on Poland as a migrant-receiving economy, in order to assess its needs and readiness to accept international immigrants from developing countries in social, economic and cultural terms. Another problem tackled by this paper is the EU's attitude towards immigration. It is argued herein that the migrant redistribution will be pointless unless other accompanying actions are taken simultaneously. To this end we analyse data concerning social, economic and cultural factors which can have an influence on migrants' decisions regarding to their possible destinations. The period under research is 2008-2015 (or 2014 in some cases, where data for 2015 are not available), due to the fact that it corresponds to the most recent wave of migration to Europe from African and Middle Eastern countries. Therefore, all remarks concerning the EU Member States, especially those concerning Poland, were formulated on the basis of economic and social programs as well as support schemes available during this period.

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*of free movement of persons on migration within the European Union. Consequences of the 20 year existence of the Internal Market of the European Union*), "Studia Europejskie", nr (67)3/2013, pp. 115–136.

<sup>5</sup> J. Zhang, *A Dynamic Model of Residential Segregation*, "The Journal of Mathematical Sociology", nr 28(3)/2004, pp. 147–170.

## 1. African migration to Europe – common regulations, individual problems

One of the most popular routes for migrants from Africa attempting to enter the European Union is the Central Mediterranean Route, which is used by migrants from Northern Africa who aim to reach Italy or Malta, usually departing from Libya. The first symptoms of increasing migration on this route were observed in 2008, when over 40,000<sup>6</sup> African immigrants were detected in the direct proximity of the Italian borders. However, the problem of immigration from Africa was temporarily resolved by the Treaty on Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation which was signed between Italy and Libya at the end of that year.

The Treaty broadly regulated the countries' bilateral relations, tackling numerous issues which seemed important from the political point of view at that time, such as the consequences of the Italian colonial reign as well as the compensation for Italians deported under Gaddafi's regime, but it also included a chapter on partnership, with both sides' agreeing to prevent illegal immigration to Italy. Article 19 of the Treaty provided operational guidelines in this regard, whereby both sides agreed to form mixed Italian – Libyan patrol crews, which would monitor the 2,000 kilometres of Libyan coastline, as well as to introduce a satellite monitoring system for Libyan land borders.<sup>7</sup>

As the Treaty went into effect, the number of intercepted African migrants significantly declined, amounting to 11,000 in 2009 and only 4,500 in 2010. In 2011 the unstable political situation in Libya resulted in increased immigration (64,300) as thousands of citizens were expelled from the country, but the statistics for 2012 gave reason to believe that it was only a temporary phenomenon. However, in 2014 the Italian Government had to face the largest inflow of immigrants into a single country in the European Union's history, as the number of immigrants reached over 170,000. These migrants came mostly from Libya, which after the collapse of Gaddafi's regime was a country without a stable legal and political system, as well as from other African and Middle East countries, with a majority of Syrians and Eritreans.

At that point of time the Italian Government urged the European Commission to redistribute migrants among the other EU countries, claiming that Italy was often perceived only as a gateway to the European Union,

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<sup>6</sup> All the numbers quoted in this paragraph were derived from the Frontex data base.

<sup>7</sup> N. Ronzitti, *The Treaty on Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation between Italy and Libya: New Prospects for Cooperation in the Mediterranean?*, "Bulletin of Italian Politics", nr 1(1)/2009, pp. 125–133.

and not as the migrants' final destination on the European continent. However, according to Regulation no. 604/2013,<sup>8</sup> colloquially referred to as the Dublin III Regulation, the country responsible for processing the asylum claim is the country where immigrant first applies for asylum, which in most cases is the first country through which the asylum seeker enters the European Union.

The idea behind Regulation no. 604/2013 was to prevent illegal immigrants from applying for asylum in several EU Member States in search of a country which would be willing to grant it to them. Narrowing down immigrants' choice to only one country resolved that particular problem, but at the same time it created many others, especially for the EU border states. In Italy's case it had to cope with growing number of asylum applications and immigrants, whose numbers were far beyond the country's capacity to absorb, while the Italian Government realized that it was not Italy itself which was the primary targeted destination for the vast majority of migrants.

In October 2014 the Council adopted conclusions on *Taking action to better manage migration flows*, which stated that the challenge linked to increasing migration flows and the shifting routes of access to the EU, in part as a consequence of measures taken at the national level, needed to be addressed with common actions. It was stated that these migration flows not only affect countries on the frontline, but Europe as a whole due to the large secondary movement taking place.<sup>9</sup> On this basis, in April 2015 the European Council committed, within the framework of reinforcing internal solidarity and responsibility, to set up the first voluntary pilot project on resettlement across the EU, offering opportunities to persons qualifying for protection.<sup>10</sup> Then the Commission proposed the distribution key, which was based on a) the size of the population (40% weight); b) the total GDP (40% weight); c) the average number of spontaneous asylum applications and the number of resettled refugees per one million inhabitants over the period of 2010–2014 (10% weight); and finally the unemployment rate (10% weight).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Regulation (EU) no 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person, OJ L 180/2013, pp. 108–136.

<sup>9</sup> Council Conclusions on “Taking action to better manage migration flows”, Brussels, 10 October 2014.

<sup>10</sup> European Council Statement, Special meeting of the European Council, 23 April 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Commission Recommendation of 8 June 2015 on a European resettlement scheme, Brussels, 8.6.2015, C(2015) 3560 final.

In June 2015 the European Council came to conclusion that the EU needed a balanced and geographically comprehensive approach to migration, based on solidarity and responsibility. Thus the European Council agreed on the temporary and exceptional relocation of 40,000 migrants, as well as resettlement of another 20,000 displaced persons from Italy and Greece, to other EU Member States. The process was assumed to last over two years and involve the active participation of the Member States, taking into consideration the specific conditions of each of the countries involved.<sup>12</sup> These provisions allowed the Justice and Home Affairs Council of the European Union to adopt a resolution on relocating 40,000 immigrants from Greece and Italy (32,256 as a first step) to certain EU Member States, as well as on resettlement to the European Economic Areas Countries – through multilateral and national schemes – of 20,000 persons who were found to be in clear need of international protection (Table 1).<sup>13</sup> Moreover, a few days later the Council took the decision to introduce provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and of Greece. The decision was aimed at providing support to these countries in emergency situations, such as sudden inflows of immigrants into their territories.

This mechanism covered 120,000 applicants (15,600 from Italy, 50,400 from Greece, as well as 54,000 applicants from other Member States) (Table 1).<sup>14</sup> In accordance with Protocol nos. 21 and 22 on the position of the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark in respect of the area of freedom, security and justice (annexed to the TEU and to the TFEU, and without prejudice to Article 4 of that Protocol), those countries were not deemed to be taking part in the adoption of the aforementioned decisions and were not bound by them. However it is worth noting that Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland approved of this concept and agreed to receive some relocated persons based on bilateral arrangements with Italy and Greece.

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<sup>12</sup> European Council, 2015, Conclusions, European Council meeting, 25–26 June 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Outcome of the Council Meeting, 3405th Council meeting, Justice and Home Affairs, Brussels, 20 July 2015 and Council Decision (EU) 2015/1523 of 14 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and of Greece, OJ L 239/2015, p. 239.

<sup>14</sup> Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and of Greece, OJ L 248/2015, p. 80.

**Table 1. Number of relocated and resettled persons according to the European Commission's proposals and final Council decisions of 2015**

Member States	EC's Recommendation of 8.06.2015		Council Resolution of 20.07.2015		Council Resolution of 20.07.2015 and Council Decision 2015/1523 of 14.09.2015		Council Decision 2015/1601 of 22.09.2015		Total
	Share	Allocation number	Relocation of 32,256 persons	Relocation (1) of 40,000 persons	Resettlement of 22,504 persons	Relocation (2) of 120,000 persons	Resettlement of 54,000	Total number	
Austria	2.22%	444	0	0	1,900	1,953	1,599	5,452	2.99%
Belgium	2.45%	490	1,364	1,691	1,100	2,448	2,004	7,244	3.97%
Bulgaria	1.08%	216	450	558	50	852	696	2,156	1.18%
Croatia	1.58%	315	400	496	150	568	464	1,678	0.92%
Cyprus	0.34%	69	173	215	69	147	121	552	0.30%
Czech Republic	2.63%	525	1,100	1,364	400	1,591	1,301	4,657	2.55%
Denmark	1.73%	345	0	0	1,000	0	0	1,000	0.55%
Estonia	1.63%	326	130	161	20	199	163	543	0.30%
Finland	1.46%	293	792	982	293	1,286	1,052	3,613	1.98%
France	11.87%	2,375	6,752	8,373	2,375	12,962	10,605	34,315	18.80%
Germany	15.43%	3,086	10,500	13,021	1,600	17,036	13,939	45,596	24.98%
Greece	1.61%	323	0	0	354	0	0	354	0.19%
Hungary	1.53%	307	0	0	0	1,294	1,059	2,353	1.29%

Ireland	1.36%	272	600	744	520	0	0	0	1,264	0.69%
Italy	9.94%	1,989	0	0	1,989	0	0	0	1,989	1.09%
Latvia	1.10%	220	200	248	50	281	228	807	807	0.44%
Lithuania	1.03%	207	255	316	70	416	339	1,141	1,141	0.63%
Luxembourg	0.74%	147	320	397	30	237	194	858	858	0.47%
Malta	0.60%	121	60	74	14	71	59	218	218	0.12%
Netherlands	3.66%	732	2,047	2,538	1,000	3,900	3,191	10,630	10,630	5.82%
Poland	4.81%	962	1,100	1,364	900	5,082	4,157	11,503	11,503	6.30%
Portugal	3.52%	704	1,309	1,623	191	1,642	1,343	4,799	4,799	2.63%
Romania	3.29%	657	1,705	2,114	80	2,475	2,025	6,694	6,694	3.67%
Slovakia	1.60%	319	100	124	100	802	658	1,684	1,684	0.92%
Slovenia	1.03%	207	230	285	20	337	277	919	919	0.50%
Spain	7.75%	1,549	1,300	1,612	1,449	8,023	6,563	17,647	17,647	9.67%
Sweden	2.46%	491	1,369	1,698	491	2,397	1,963	6,548	6,548	3.59%
United Kingdom	11.54%	2,309	0	0	2,200	0	0	2,200	2,200	1.21%
Norway					3,500			3,500	3,500	1.92%
Iceland					50			50	50	0.03%
Liechtenstein					20			20	20	0.01%
Switzerland					519			519	519	0.28%

Source: Outcome of the Council Meeting, 3405th Council meeting, Justice and Home Affairs, Brussels, 20 July 2015, Council Decision (EU) 2015/1523 of 14 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and of Greece, OJ L 239/2015, p. 239, Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and of Greece, OJ L 248/2015, p. 80.

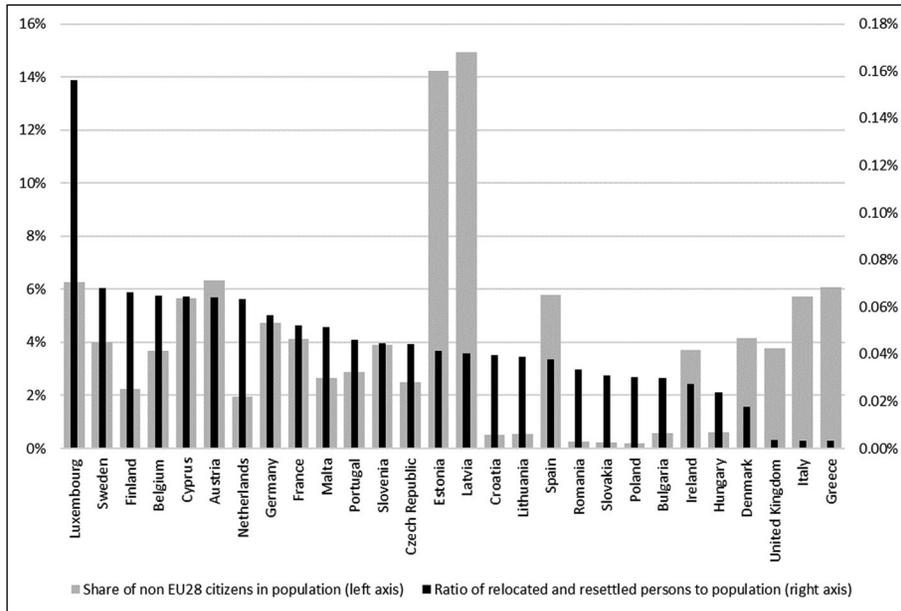
Both Council decisions mentioned above obliged Poland to host over 11,500 immigrants, which amounted to 6.3% of all persons subject to relocation and resettlement procedures. This was the fourth largest share among all the EU Member States (only three countries were assigned a higher percentage of immigrants: Germany 24.98%; France 18.80%; and Spain 9.67%). The Polish ratio stemmed primarily from the percentage share of Poland's population in the overall number of inhabitants of the European Union (7.48% in 2015).

However, the ethnic characteristics of the immigrant population subject to this redistribution were substantially different from the regular migration of workforce within the internal market of the European Union, especially with regard to Poland, which until then was not a popular destination country for immigrants (with the exception of immigrants from the former Soviet republics). Thus, because it represented an extraordinary phenomenon in terms of the economic reasons, culture, religion and country of origin of immigrants, we decided to confront the numbers of relocated and resettled persons with the ratio of non-EU 28 foreigners who lived in the EU Member States (Figure 1). Taking into account the above-mentioned indices, the proportion of the number of relocated and resettled persons under the Council decisions of 2015 to Poland's overall population (0.03%) was one of the lowest among all the EU Member States (comparable to Bulgaria's 0.03%, Hungary's 0.024%, and Ireland's, which voluntarily – outside the binding decision – decided to accept immigrants amounting to 0.027% of its population, as well as Denmark, with corresponding value of 0.018%, and the United Kingdom with 0.003%). Therefore we can state that the number of immigrants assigned to Poland is relatively small (in relation to the country's population) in comparison to other EU Member States.

In concluding this section it is worth noting that on one hand the European Council agreed on the temporary and exceptional relocation and resettling of migrants taking into account the specific situations of the hosting Member States, while on the other the Commission proposed a strict distribution formula for relocation, and the Council adopted a pre-defined number of persons who should be received by each Member State. However in both the aforementioned decisions the Council underlined that in order to decide which EU Member State should be the country of relocation for each migrant, emphasis should be placed on certain qualifications and characteristics of the applicants, such as their foreign language skills and other individual characteristics (family, cultural or social ties) which could facilitate their integration in the society of the targeted Member State.

Moreover, it was decided that in the case of *vulnerable* applicants, consideration should be given to the capacity of the target Member States to provide adequate support to these applicants. Furthermore the necessity of ensuring a fair distribution of applicants among the Member States was stressed.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 1. Ratio of relocated and resettled persons to population and share of non-EU28 immigrants to the overall population in the EU Member States**



Source: Eurostat, Outcome of the Council Meeting, 3405th Council meeting, Justice and Home Affairs, Brussels, 20 July 2015, Council Decision (EU) 2015/1523 of 14 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and of Greece, OJ L 239/2015, p. 239, Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and of Greece, OJ L 248/2015, p. 80.

<sup>15</sup> Council Decision (EU) 2015/1523 of 14 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and of Greece, OJ L 239/2015, p. 239, Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and of Greece, OJ L 248/2015, p. 80.

## **2. Social incentives and economic reality for migration to Poland in comparison to other the EU Member States**

There are many economic factors which encourage or discourage immigration to a given region or country. It is clear that when it comes to refugees we should not focus on their economic incentives for migration, as their primary motivation is to escape from a war zone or some other exceptionally dire situation. At the same time however, we believe that while refugees do not tend to carefully consider and compare economic and social benefits as well as quality of life in each of the EU Member States, their secondary motivation is related to improving their wellbeing and therefore some economic factors are likely to influence their decision regarding choice of destination country. Therefore we distinguished some indices describing particular sectors of the economy which could be of the highest importance to immigrants. In order to grasp the position of Poland in comparison to the other EU Member states, we analysed data for all the countries involved in and covered by the EU migration policy and actions.

### **2.1. Demographical factors**

We believe that one of the most important demographical characteristics that needs to be addressed is the structure of population in terms of its ethnic homogeneity. We argue that the share of foreigners in the population of a given country matters to potential immigrants. Firstly, a higher share of foreigners in society, (understood as first or second generation immigrants), allows potential immigrants to formulate an assumption that the national residents generally accept (or at least tolerate) foreigners and hence that the immigration policy of such country can be described as liberal or flexible. Secondly, many immigrants tend to migrate to countries with which they have some vicarious experience, i.e. that have already been visited and verified by their families, relatives and/or friends. This, in line with Migrant Networks theory, is a factor of the highest importance to migrants, who are looking for information about the labour market and general living conditions in the destination country, as well as for assistance from their compatriots in the job search process.<sup>16</sup>

A similar phenomena is observed with respect to entrepreneurs who, on the basis of the New Economic Geography Theory, agglomer-

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<sup>16</sup> M. Granovetter, *Getting a Job: A Study of Contacts and Careers*, Cambridge 1974; M. Granovetter, *The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited*, "Sociological Theory", nr 1/1983, pp. 201–233.

ate close to their competitors so that they can benefit from common suppliers and common means of distribution of their goods. Moreover, new entrepreneurs in a given sector tend to invest close to their competitors, knowing that by doing so they will be able to *a priori* verify the profitability of investment in a given region. A somewhat similar approach is taken, from economic point of view, by immigrants looking for the best and the safest place to move and resettle. Thus new immigrants are convinced that if numerous immigrants of their own ethnic/cultural background are settled in a given location, that is an indication they can be successful there.

It is undeniable that there are significant economic differences between African and the poorest Middle Eastern countries and the European Countries (especially with respect to the EU Member States). And it is also a fact that economic immigrants from those regions have been present in European countries for many decades. However, due to the rapid developments in ICT, including cheap communication via Internet, smartphones and other mobile communication devices, potential immigrants can now easily communicate with their families, relatives and friends living abroad. These technological innovations make it extremely easy for them to gain knowledge about available employment opportunities, social benefits, quality of life, as well as the perception of foreigners by residents in a given country, region, or city.

Given that migrants are able to easily compare countries using the available data, as well as through migrant networks, we analysed the structure and dynamics of Poland's immigrant population and we compared it to other EU Member States.

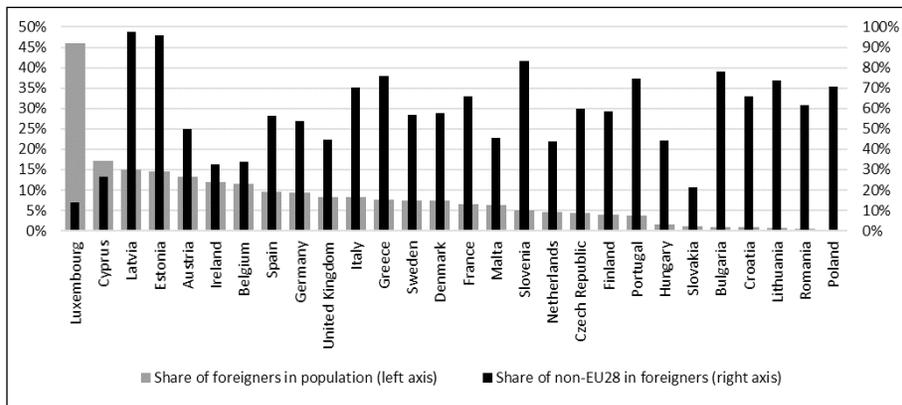
Poland recorded the lowest share among all other the EU Member States of foreigners in the total population (0.3% in 2015) (Figure 2). The rate of non-EU28 citizens among all foreigners living in Poland amounted to 70.7%, however the majority of them migrated to Poland from the neighbouring countries of Ukraine and Belarus, which is a result of this region's history.

The highest share of foreigners among the EU countries was in Luxembourg, Cyprus, Latvia, Estonia and Austria (respectively 45.9%, 17.1%, 14.7%, 14.0%, 13.2%). However, the highest share of non-EU28 citizens in the immigrant population in 2015 was recorded in Latvia and Estonia, as well as Slovenia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, and Poland in 2015 (from 97.7% – Latvia, to 70.7% Poland). Notwithstanding this fact, it should be emphasized that these countries observed substantial (Latvia, Estonia) or moderate (Lithuania) decreases, or at most a very slight increase (Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia) in the share of non-EU28 foreigners in their popula-

tions, while the wealthiest EU Member States recorded a substantial increase in the share of non-EU28 citizens in their foreign population. This shows that Poland, together with other less wealthy Central and Eastern European countries, was not the primary destination for the recent wave of immigrants.

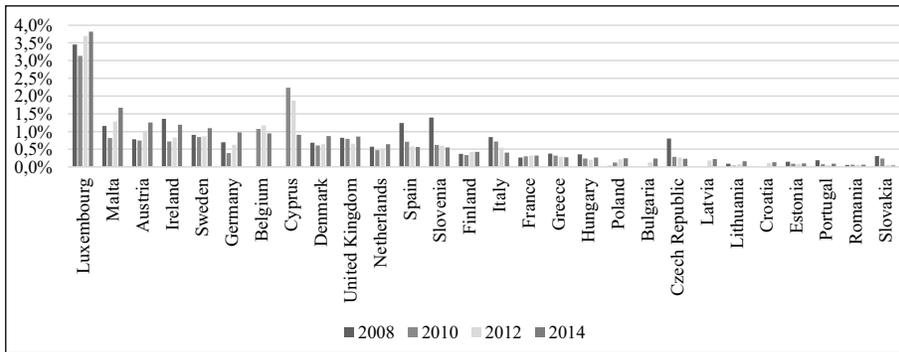
The aforementioned conclusions were positively verified by a study on the inflow of immigrants to the EU Member States in recent years (2008–2014). Although for Poland the annual rate of incoming immigrants in the total population increased eight times over this period (from 0.03% in 2008 to 0.25% in 2014), this index's value is still below the EU average (0.66%) (Figure 3). The highest ratio of immigrants' inflow to the total population was recorded in Luxembourg (3.82% in 2014) and then in Malta (1.67%), Austria (1.26%), Ireland (1.19%), and Sweden (1.09%). Countries with an annual ratio slightly below 1% included Germany (0.98%), Belgium (0.95%), Cyprus (0.90), Denmark (0.87%) and the United Kingdom (0.87%). At the same time, Member States which recently (during and after 2004) joined the EU, as well as Portugal, observed the lowest annual rate of immigrants' inflow in relation to their total population in the period under research.

**Figure 2. Share of foreigners in the population of the EU Member States in 2008–201.**



Source: Eurostat.

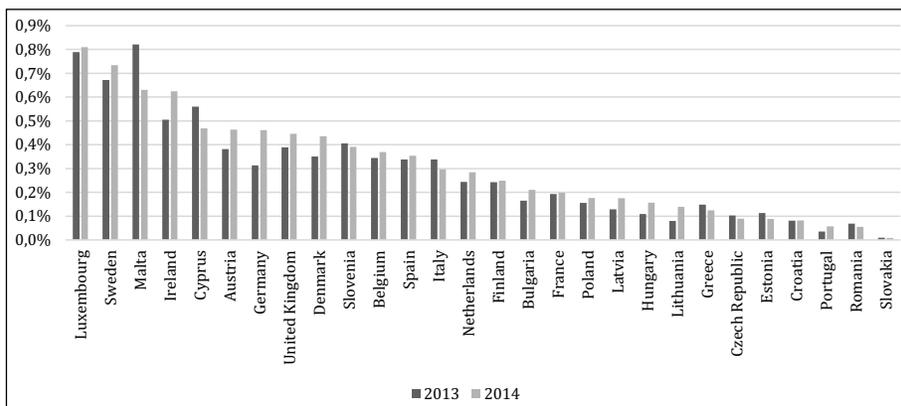
**Figure 3. Annual ratio of immigrants' inflow to population in the EU Member States in 2008–2014**



Source: Eurostat.

A similar distribution was found with respect to the relationship between the number of new incoming immigrants from non-EU28 countries to the total populations of the EU Member States. In 2014 the highest ratio was reported by Luxembourg (0.81%), Sweden (0.73%), Malta (0.63) and Ireland (0.62%), while the lowest (below 0.18%) was in Poland and the other Central European countries, with the exception of Bulgaria (0.21%) (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Relationship between the number of immigrants from non-EU28 countries and total population in the EU Member States in 2013–2014**



Source: Eurostat.

In our view the Polish case is not so straightforward and cannot be explained by quoting the statistics alone. This is due to historical reasons,

which should be outlined before drawing conclusions from the immigration statistics. After World War II Poland, being a socialist, underdeveloped and highly regulated economy, was not attractive to foreign immigrants. The situation in this regard has not changed that much even after the collapse of the communist regime in 1989. Until 2013 the number of foreign citizens in Poland has been growing very slowly, reaching the total number of 121,219 at the end of that year, which amounted to as little as 0.32% of the Polish population at that time.<sup>17</sup> This percentage indicates that foreign-born immigrants were and are a marginal phenomenon in Poland, and hence they were and are not likely to draw the major attention of either the Polish society or Polish policy makers.

Moreover it should be underlined that over 50% of the immigrant population came from the former USSR republics, which meant a cultural similarity and low likelihood of assimilation problems. The majority of immigrants living in Poland at the end of 2013 were persons of Ukrainian origin (37,500), followed by Vietnamese (13,500) Russians (11,000) and Belarusians (11,000).<sup>18</sup>

However, we can observe major differences between the two largest immigrant populations in Poland, i.e. the Ukrainians and Vietnamese, concerning both their geographical distribution and occupational attainments. Ukrainians have tended to be more geographically dispersed across Poland, whereas nearly 85% of Vietnamese live in Warsaw and its surroundings. Moreover, the Vietnamese population has been dominated by males, self-employed in the small gastronomy and trade sectors, while the Ukrainian population has been predominated by blue collar female employees, working in HORECA and the household services sectors.

The Polish government's official approach toward immigration changed at the beginning of 2015, when it was revealed that during 2014 Poland was a target country for more immigrants (53,847) than during the previous six years combined (between 2007 and 2013 immigration to Poland increased by 44,865 persons). This information gave rise to a public discussion in the Polish media and brought the journalists' and politicians' attention to the problem of the rapidly growing (yet still quite minor in nominal numbers) immigration to Poland.

The migration numbers and proportions have been influenced not only by the unstable situation in Africa, which resulted in the Council decisions of 2015 on the migrants' redistribution, but also by the unstable

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<sup>17</sup> Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS), data as of 31 Dec. 2014.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

political situation in the Ukraine, which caused growth in migration to Poland from that country.

The growing migration from Ukraine was enabled by the Polish labour market regulations, which included a simplified procedure for the citizens of Ukraine, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Russia to acquire a work permit.<sup>19</sup> This simplified procedure basically required the employer to request a working permit for a person whom they were about to hire. The requests placed in the first half of 2015 by Polish employers concerning their demand for foreign workers indicated that they were willing to hire over 400,000 foreign employees in the forthcoming months.<sup>20</sup> This number does not reflect the reality however, as firstly not all of the requests were accepted, and secondly many of these workers were likely to quit their jobs after the first few days, or even not to show up in their place of employment at all. Nonetheless the data may be considered as giving a general impression of how attractive Poland was becoming for foreign workers during that period of time.

## 2.2. Socio-economic factors

Although demographic factors are generally important, it is the socio-economic determinants which can be decisive when analysing the influence of different groups of factors on decisions regarding immigrants' destination – especially for those who migrate due to economic reasons. The most commonly known and widely accepted index, which shows a country's economic development while taking into account the wellbeing of its inhabitants, is the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *per capita*.

In 2013, Poland's *per capita* GDP amounted to EUR 10,100, which was the fourth lowest value among all the EU Member States [the lowest being Bulgaria (5,500), followed by Romania (7,100) and Hungary (9,900)] although it should be noted that its dynamics was above the EU average in comparison to 2008 (Figure 5). It is worth noting that the Poland's *per capita* GDP value was not only lower than the EU-15 countries, but also lower than that of some other Central European countries. Also, when we analysed changes in countries' *per capita* GDP we noticed that the increase in the corresponding value for Poland in the period of 2008–2013 by 4% was lower than the increases recorded by smaller economies [Lithuania (16%), Estonia (15%), Slovakia (12%), and Latvia (10%)], as well as the wealthiest EU economies [Sweden (21%), Germany (11%), Luxembourg (9%), Austria (9%), and Belgium (6%)].

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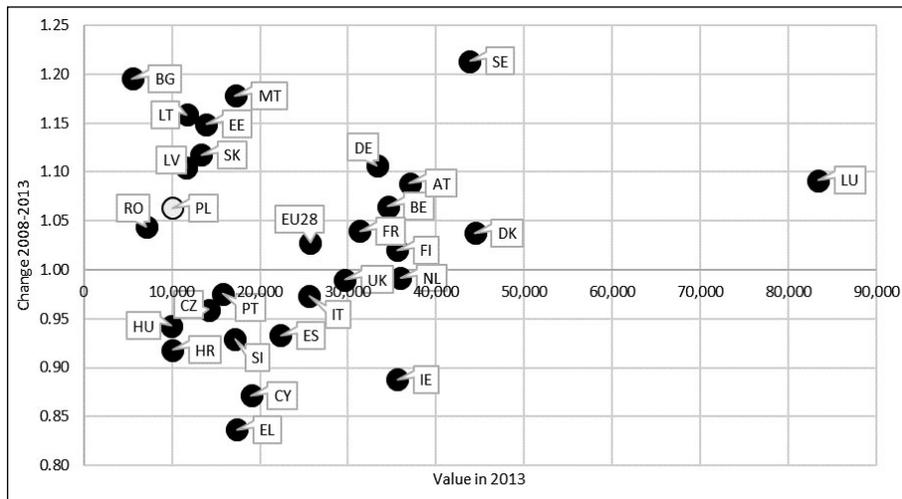
<sup>19</sup> Source: [www.migrant.info.pl](http://www.migrant.info.pl).

<sup>20</sup> Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

Looking from migrants' perspective, if we take into account the economic dimension of the destination-choosing process, then it is obvious that Poland will definitely not be their first choice of destination. In the EU there are many far better-developed countries – with GDP *per capita* over three times higher than in Poland, in this same time, a positive growth in GDP *per capita* [France (4%), Denmark (4%) and Finland (2%)] or just a slightly negative trend in GDP *per capita* trend [the United Kingdom (-1%), the Netherlands (-1%)]. Hence there is a high probability that these countries will be considered as a destination by voluntary economic immigrants rather than the Member States from the Central and Eastern part of the EU, including Poland.

Our research also shows that there seem to be at least two different groups of economic migrants – the first group consists of migrants who are willing to and wish to improve their economic situation by taking on employment in the destination country, and the second group consists of those migrants who look forward to receiving social benefits in the host country. Nonetheless, the situation on a given labour market is important for both groups, because a lower unemployment rate usually translates into: (a) a wider possibility and a higher probability of finding a better paid job by job-seeking immigrants, and (b) a higher level of wealth in the society and hence lower competition for social assistance.

**Figure 5. GDP *per capita* in the EU Member States in 2008–2013 (in euro)**



Source: Eurostat.

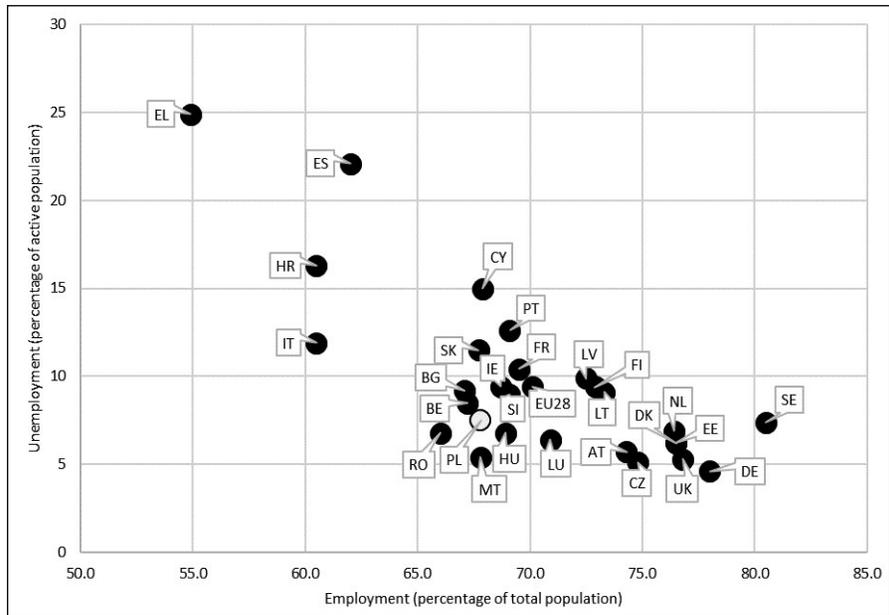
Hence we argue that a relatively low unemployment rate is one of the most crucial indicies for potential imigrants. The highest unemployment rate (as a percentage of the active population) was recorded in 2015 in the Southern European countries: Greece (24.9%), Spain (22.1%), Croatia (16.3%), Portugal (12.6%) (Figure 6). In addition, with the exception of Portugal these countries reported a very low employment rate (as a percentage of total population), respectively 54.9%, 62.0%, 60.5%, 69.1%. The second group of the EU Member States consists of France, Ireland and the majority of Central European countries, including Poland (with the exception of the Czech Republic and Estonia), with employment rates ranging between 65–70%, and unemployment rates between 5.4% – 11.5% in 2015. These indices show that the situation in these countries' labour markets was much better than that of the Southern European countries, yet not as good as observed in the rest of the EU. The third group of the EU Member States consists of countries in which the employment rate reached circa 75–80%, while unemployment amounted to less than 7% (Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Denmark, the Czech Republic, and Austria). Thus, taking into consideration only the countries with the best labour market indices, immigrants from both aforementioned groups – i.e., those interested as well as those not interested in finding employment in the destination country – theoretically should look for immigration opportunities in the third, most affluent, group of the EU Member States.

From the point of view of economic migrants (i.e. those who migrate to actively look for a job), one of the key factors when considering potential destination countries should also be the level of salaries. However it is most often the case that potential immigrants tend to compare salaries in absolute (nominal) terms and not in relation to the cost of living in a given country. Also, migrants who are not interested in employment seem to be interested in the salary levels in potential destination countries because this value usually reflects the level of social payments which are offered within this country's social policy. It must be noted that comparing salaries in nominal values is to some extent justified, especially for migrants whose strategy is based on maximizing remittances to their home countries while reducing costs of living to the necessary minimum.

In order to find out which countries could be the most interesting for immigrants in terms of salaries we analysed salary levels, defined as the total remuneration (in current prices), in cash or in kind, payable by an employer to an employee in return for work performed by the employee during the accounting period.

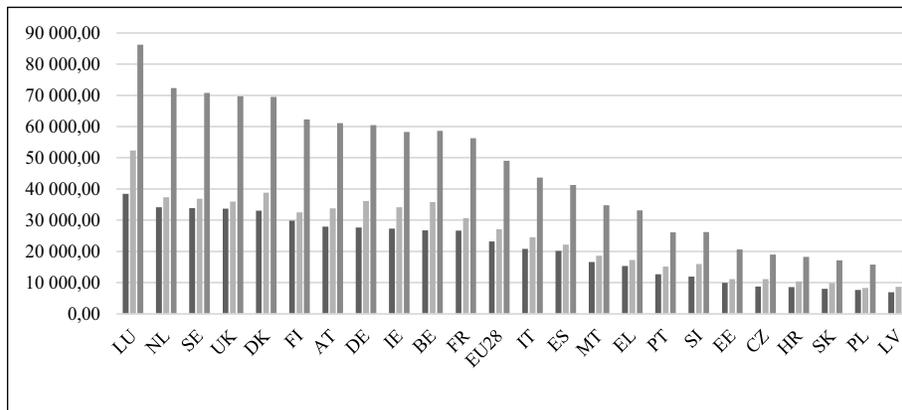
In the EU the highest annual net earnings in 2014 were registered in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Finland, Austria, Germany, Belgium and France (Figure 7). In all other

**Figure 6. Employment, and unemployment rates in the EU Member States in 2015**



Note: Employment (percentage of total population (from 20 to 64 years), unemployment (percentage of active population).  
Source: Eurostat.

**Figure 7. Annual net earnings in the EU Member States in 2014**



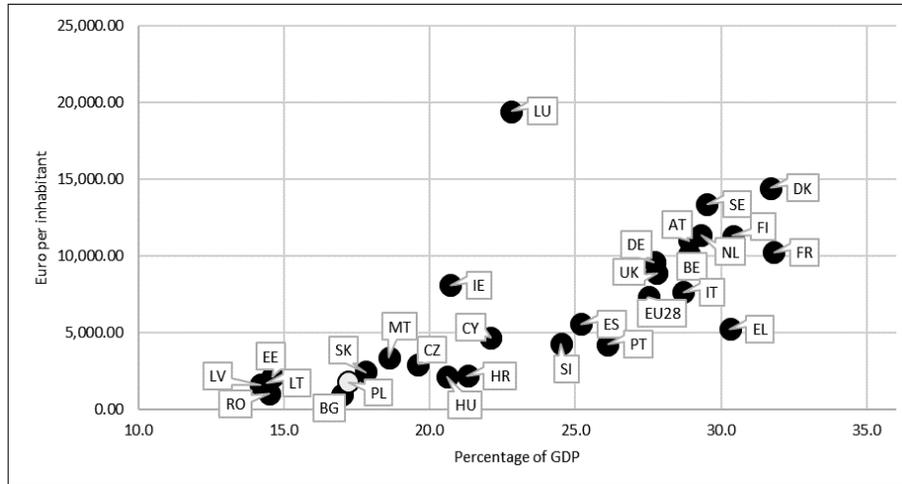
Source: Eurostat.

Member States, including Poland, we observed annual average remuneration below the EU average (23,431 EUR for a single person without a child). Therefore we can say that the EU average value of annual net earnings constitutes a demarcation line between countries which, due to their relatively high wages, can become a targeted destination for economic immigrants; and those, including Poland (7,613 EUR), where significantly lower wages do not attract economic migrants.

For those immigrants who are looking only (or mainly) for social benefits, it is also relevant to analyse the data concerning social policy instruments offered in all Member States. With regard to social protection benefits, the most generous social protection package is offered by a group of countries representing the most developed and the richest EU economies (Figure 8), where both indices, i.e. the social protection benefits as a percentage of GDP as well as the value of social protection benefits per inhabitant were above the EU28 average. At the same time, the Central and Eastern European countries, including Poland, as well as Ireland, Spain, and Portugal recorded much lower social expenditures. In Poland, for example, average social benefits per inhabitant amounted to 1,763 EUR annually in 2013, while the EU28 average equalled 7,320 EUR. The value for Poland was very much lower than in the EU's most wealthy countries, where the corresponding value reached, respectively: Luxembourg 19,442 EUR, Denmark 14,425 EUR, Sweden 13,376 EUR, Finland, 11,321 EUR, the Netherlands 11,333 EUR, Austria 11,011 EUR, France 10,229 EUR, Belgium 10,154 EUR, Germany 9,606 EUR and the United Kingdom 8,859 EUR. On top of the value of average social benefits, one of the biggest concerns of migrants are the conditions for receiving these benefits, which significantly vary among the EU Member States. The simple comparison performed in this section of our paper shows that countries which joined the EU during or after 2004 offered much lower social benefits than the EU-15 countries, and it is clear that **none of the Central and Eastern European Member States, including Poland, could compete with the better developed EU Member States in terms of offering social benefits to immigrants.**

When analysing the most recent data on the total social benefits for a family in the EU Member States, we can observe that the majority of the EU Member States offer social payments to support pro-family policies (this is however linked only to number of children), and very few offer social tax exemptions. This distinction is of paramount importance, because only the richest and the most highly developed countries can offer the highest pro-family benefits in nominal value. The highest amounts of pro-family benefits in 2015 were available in Luxembourg (6,715 EUR),

**Figure 8. Social protection benefits in the EU Member States in 2013**



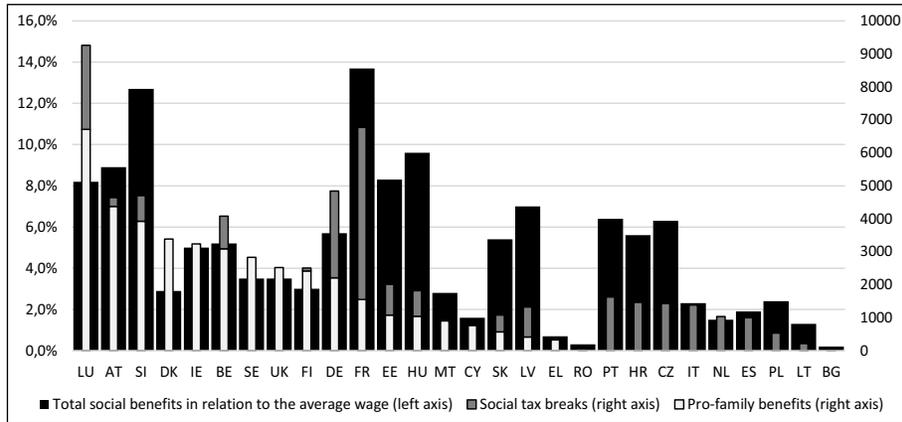
Source: Eurostat.

Austria (4,378 EUR) and Slovenia (3,925 EUR), while the lowest values were in Bulgaria (20.5 EUR), Lithuania (216 EUR) and Poland (530 EUR) in 2015 (Figure 9). It is worth noting that wealthy countries offered higher values of pro-family benefits, while the lesser developed Central and Eastern European countries preferred to grant social tax exemptions. Therefore we can state that the richer countries of the EU can offer some additional social incentives in order to increase the birth rate, while the countries which joined the EU during or after 2004, including Poland, as of the end of 2015 offered more pro-labour and pro-economic incentives, granting social assistance on the basis of the employment of at least one of parents. This leads us to conclusion that Poland, which together with other less wealthy EU countries offered work-related social benefits, could be at most a potential destination for work-driven immigrants, while the other (most wealthy) EU Member States can be the targeted destinations of those immigrants wishing to benefit from generous social policies. While these two immigrant groups can both be classified as economic immigrants, their motivations can lead them to different choices in terms of their destination country.

Although it might not be a common thesis, we argue that – taking into account economic indicators – the immigrants who are willing to find employment and settle in the host country can justifiably consider the CEE countries as their destination. As we prove in the next section of this paper, this is especially true for immigrants with similar cultural and

religious backgrounds and/or speaking a language of the same linguistic family. Although the salaries in these countries are lower than in EU-15, still their standard of living can be rather similar due to the significantly lower costs of living and lower taxation levels.

**Figure 9. Total social benefits for a family in the EU Member States in 2015 (annually in euro)**



Note: A family: 2 Adults (each earns an average wage) + 2 kids (4 and 8 years old, in a public pre-school and a public primary school).

Source: PWC.

### 2.3. Cultural issues

Apart from the economic factors which can influence migration directions, cultural issues are also of great importance, especially those related to two aspects: language proficiency in the host country; and religions which are professed (or at least accepted) in the host country.

Foreign language proficiency is especially important for immigrants who do not want to rely on their ethnic network in the job search process. Lack of knowledge of the host country's language is likely to result in immigrants being unemployed (with employment opportunities reduced basically to ethnic businesses within their diaspora) and few (if any) possibilities to assimilate into the host country's society.

However the analysis of language proficiency is more complicated due to the fact that some official languages used in some of the EU Member States are widely known by incoming immigrants. Therefore, we focused on French-speaking (France, Luxembourg and Belgium) and English-speaking (the United Kingdom, Ireland) countries in order to compare them to the other EU Member States. Moreover, we argue that some

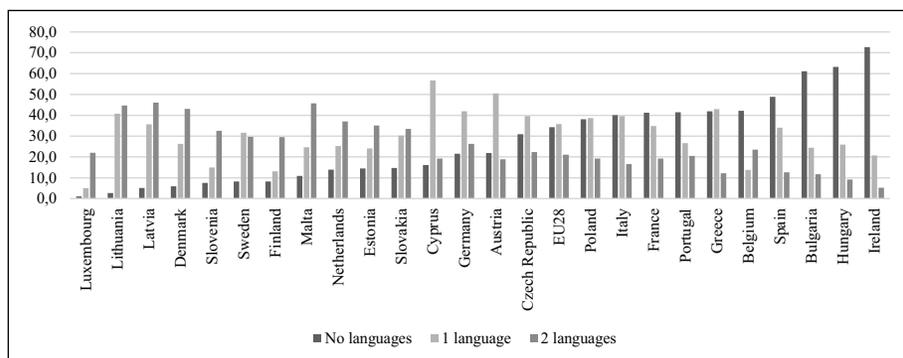
countries should be added to that group – i.e. small countries (e.g. the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg), as well as the Scandinavian countries, where English is well known.

Taking into account the aforementioned assumptions, the lowest percentage rate of respondents who declared that they do not know any language other than their mother tongue was recorded, in 2011, in Lithuania, Latvia, Denmark, Slovenia, Finland, the Netherlands, Germany, and Austria (Figure 10). These countries make up a group of the EU Member States where the share of respondents who declared a knowledge of more than one language was above the EU28 average. However, many Central and Eastern European Countries, as well as Italy, Spain and Portugal (with the aforementioned French and English-speaking country exceptions) reported the highest rate of respondents who claimed not to have any foreign language proficiency.

If we assume that foreign language skills are essential to find a job and to assimilate into the host society, this can be in fact one of the decisive factors when choosing a destination country. It is also clear that the CEE countries, including Poland, cannot be perceived as a migration target based on this factor.

The second factor under cultural research which we think can have a tremendous impact on the inflow of immigrants is the religion professed by a majority of citizens. It seems that if a religion is particularly dominant in a given country, then this country is likely to be a destination for immigrants who are of this particular religion, and is not likely to be targeted by migrants of other religions.

**Figure 10. Number of foreign languages known in 2011 (in percentage)**



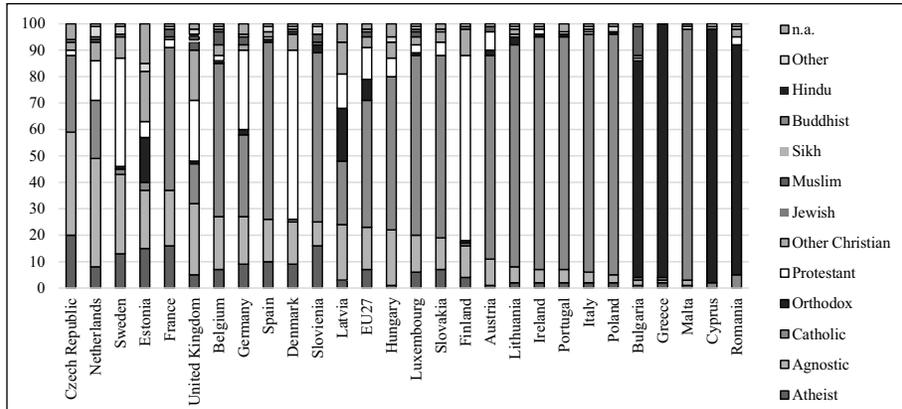
Note: No data for the United Kingdom, Croatia and Romania.

Source: Eurostat.

The European Commission data reveal that the lowest percentage of people who declared observance of any religion was in the Czech Republic (59%), the Netherlands (49%), Sweden (43%), Estonia (37%), France (37%), the United Kingdom (32%), Belgium (27%) and Denmark (27%) (Figure 11). At the same time, there is a relatively large group of EU Member States, including Poland, where it is possible to identify a predominant religion, i.e. one which marks its presence in everyday life. If this religion is not professed by immigrants, than there is a high probability that they will not be interested in joining this society. The highest share of inhabitants who declared being of certain religion concerned the following religions: Orthodox (Greece – 96%, Cyprus – 96%, Romania – 87% and Bulgaria 82%); Catholic (Malta – 95%, Poland – 91%, Italy – 90%, Portugal – 88%, Ireland – 88%, Lithuania 84% and Austria – 77%); and Protestant (Finland – 70%, Denmark – 64%). A very interesting situation was observed in Germany, where there no dominant position is held by any of the major religions (Catholic – 31%, and Protestant – 30%), with a quarter of society reporting the non-observance of any religion. Taking into consideration aforementioned findings we can observe a tendency which shows that the lower the share of (a) major religion(s) professed in a given country, the higher is the probability that that country will be a destination for migrants professing other religions.

When we think about Poland in terms of the cultural and religious aspects of immigration, it is worth observing that Polish society has not suffered any major social problems caused by the presence of any immigrant population since World War 2. A Pew Research Center analysis revealed that Poland, among the EU countries analysed in the report, was the one with the lowest percentage of respondents (40%) who claimed that their country should accept fewer immigrants. Moreover, it was the third-ranked country (after Germany and Spain) where respondents claimed that more immigrants should be allowed to work in their country (9%). The worst results in this regard were observed in Greece and Italy, where respectively 86% and 80% claimed that immigration to their country must be subject to limitations, and only 1% and 2% said their country should accept more immigrants. According to the report, Poland was also the country where the lowest share of respondents (42%) who claimed that (in their opinion) immigrants living in Poland wished to be different from the Polish society and impose their cultural patterns on Polish society instead of making an attempt to assimilate.

**Figure 11. Shares of main religions in the populations of the EU Member States in 2012**



Note: based on the question: “Do you consider yourself to be...? (DO NOT READ OUT)”

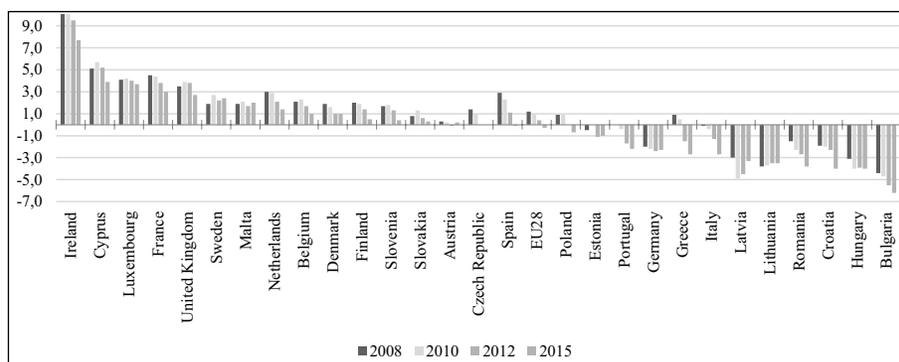
Source: European Commission (2012) Discrimination in the EU in 2012, Special Eurobarometer 393.

#### 2.4. A problematic issue: changes in population

In the analysed time period Poland, like many other EU Member States, struggled with demographic problems. Its birth rate decreased (while the death rate generally remained constant), and hence its natural changes in population recorded negative values. (-0.7% in 2015) (Figure 12). A similar, negative tendency was observed in a majority of the EU Member States. In the period 2008–2015 the biggest drop in the rate of population changes was recorded not only in countries with negative birth rates (Greece -2.7 in 2015, Italy -2.7, Spain -0.1, Portugal -2.2, Romania -3.8 and Croatia -4.0), but also in those which had positive birth rates (Ireland 7.7, France 3.0, the Netherlands 1.4, Finland 0.5 and Belgium 1.0). Only seven of 28 EU Member States reported an increase in the overall rate of population change (however among them only four – Sweden, Malta, Luxembourg and Slovakia – reported positive values in 2015).

In addition to a pro-family policy (including social benefits), a pro-immigration policy can increase demographic indices. Analysis of the net migration flows in Poland reveals (with exclusion of the crisis period) a relatively stable negative net migration index between 2008 and 2015. It is worth noting that although more people emigrated from Poland than immigrated to Poland during each of these years, the numbers in relation

**Figure 12. Overall rate of population changes in the EU Member States in 2008–2015**



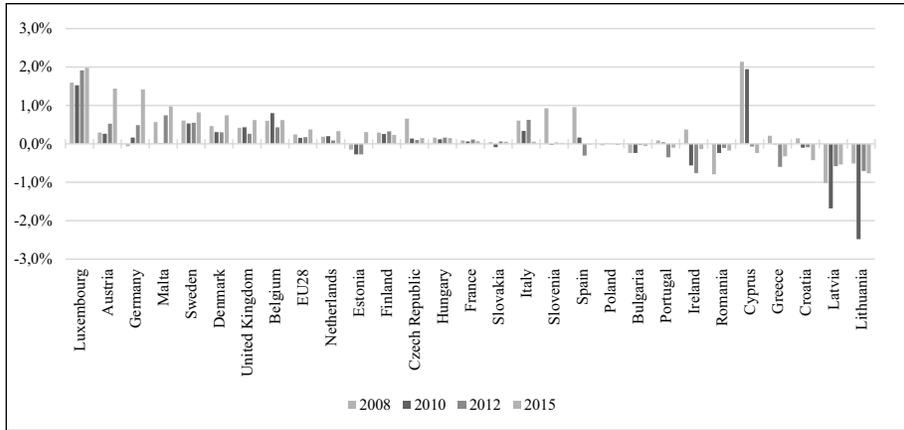
Source: Eurostat.

to the total Polish population were not substantial (Figure 13). Therefore, taking into consideration the low number of immigrants to Poland, the rate of net migration to the total population decreased in comparison to the values recorded 8 years earlier (-0.07% in 2008 and -0.03% in 2015). Similarly, a relatively low impact of net migration on demographics was recorded in Bulgaria (slightly negative, up to -0.06% in 2015), or France (+0.07%), while significant negative changes were noted in the Czech Republic (from 0.65% to 0.10%), Italy (from 0.61% to 0.05%), Slovenia (from 0.92% to 0.02%), Spain (0.95% to -0.02%), Ireland (from 0.37% to -0.14%), and Cyprus (from 2.14% to -0.24%).

An increasing impact of migration on demographic changes, in terms of the rate of net migration in the population, was reported in Luxembourg (1.98% in 2015), Austria (1.43%), Germany (1.42%), Malta (0.97%), Sweden (0.82%), Denmark (0.74%), the United Kingdom (0.62%), and Belgium (0.62%). Also the Netherlands and Estonia recorded an increase in the ratio of net migration to population (respectively 0.33% and 0.31%). It is worth observing that there are EU Member States which suffered from relatively high emigration in comparison to immigration, which resulted in high values of net migration to the population ratio (e.g. Lithuania -0.77%, Latvia -0.54%, Croatia -0.42% and Greece -0.33%).

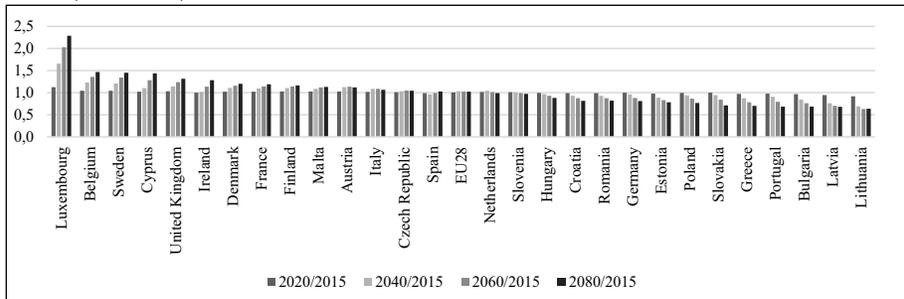
According to the Eurostat studies on projected populations in the EU Member States, Poland will record a substantial decrease in its number of inhabitants, which will drop by 6% in 2040 and by 23% in 2080 in comparison to the data from 2015 (Figure 14). Similar forecasts of substantial declines in population were reported in the cases of the lower developed EU countries, especially: Slovakia (up to 29%), Greece (30%), Portugal (31%), Bulgaria (32%), Latvia (32%) and Lithuania (37%). According to

**Figure 13. Rate of net migration (foreign countries) in the total population of the EU Member States in 2007–2015**



Source: Eurostat.

**Figure 14. Projected changes in population of the EU Member States in 2020–2080 (2015 = 1)**



Source: Eurostat.

the demographic projections, the populations of some of the most developed countries, as well as of the smallest ones, will increase in the upcoming decades (especially in Luxembourg, which is project to record a 129% increase in 2080, Belgium 47%, Sweden 45%, Cyprus 44%, the United Kingdom 32%, Ireland 28%, Denmark 20%, and France 19%).

### 3. Polish migration policy

In 2012, the Polish government – in response to the growing public discussion on migration issues – issued a document which addressed the problems and reviewed the legislation concerning immigration to Poland. The document, entitled *The Polish Migration Policy* (original Polish

title: *Polityka Migracyjna Polski*<sup>21</sup>) was approved by the Polish government in July 2012. This comprehensive document gathered together historical and empirical data concerning immigration to Poland, as well as introduced legal regulations, both at the country level as well as at the EU level. Moreover, it sought to interconnect migration policy with other policies on the national level.

The document, despite being comprehensive and well structured, definitely lacks an economic background.<sup>22</sup> Despite that fact the overall assessment of *The Polish Migration Policy* can be seen as positive, inasmuch as it provides reasonable recommendations for Polish policy makers in terms of each problem introduced in the document,<sup>23</sup> nevertheless it must be noted that the vast majority of the recommendations are very vague (e.g. ‘adoption of solutions aiming at solving the problem of low availability of apartments for foreigners under international protection’, or ‘fostering cooperation with immigrant groups in the process of immigrant assimilation’<sup>24</sup>) and are not operationalized. However, in general terms the suggestions and directions included in the document are reasonable and may prove beneficial if more detailed operational documents are to follow.

One such operational document, which deals with the recommendations of the Polish Migration Policy, is the document entitled *The Polish Policy of Foreign Citizens’ Assimilation* (original Polish title: *Polska Polityka Integracji Cudzoziemców – założenia i wytyczne*),<sup>25</sup> prepared by the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in 2013. It was created on the basis of the Polish Migration Policy and addresses the recommendations and suggestions included in the policy document.

This particular document seems to be the most important and urgent in the present political situation, especially taking into account the Council decisions of 2015 on the acceptance of quotas of foreign migrants. This is because Poland, being a country with no (or marginal) experience in

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<sup>21</sup> *Polityka Migracyjna Polski – stan obecny i postulowane działania (The Polish Migration Policy – Current State and Postulated Actions)* Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, Warszawa 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> The document *Polityka Migracyjna Polski* is divided into ten problem sections, which include a) legal immigration, b) prevention of the illegal immigration, c) protection of foreign citizens in Poland, d) integration of foreign citizens in the Polish society, e) citizenship and repatriation, f) labour migrations – return migration, g) efficiency of the legal and institutional system, h) international constraints on the Polish migration policy, i) interdependencies between the Polish migration policy and other policies, and j) monitoring of migration processes.

<sup>24</sup> *Polityka Migracyjna Polski...*, op.cit., p. 18.

<sup>25</sup> *Polska polityka integracji cudzoziemców – założenia i wytyczne (The Polish Policy of Foreign Citizens’ Assimilation)*, Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, Warszawa 2013.

dealing with immigration populations, will be exposed to completely new challenges in terms of immigrants' integration and assimilation.

Although the survey conducted by the Pew Research Center suggests that due to the general positive attitude of the Poles towards foreign immigrants the assimilation process might be relatively easy, it must be pointed out that the general positive perception of minorities in Poland most likely results from two factors: (a) the extremely low number of foreign immigrants in Poland at the time of conducting the survey, and hence the respondents' lack of experience concerning the problems which might emerge in coexisting with different ethnic groups; and (b) the fact that the vast majority of immigrants living in Poland are of a quite similar cultural and religious background as Polish citizens.

The document addresses many important issues concerning the immigrants' assimilation and integration, but the most relevant recommendation seems to be in connection with programs aimed at teaching the Polish language to immigrants and their children. Mastering the Polish language by foreigners is the most crucial issue, because language is the basic tool which enables communication between immigrants and the host society. Research shows that immigrants who are unable to speak the immigration country's language tend to remain in their ethnic communities, which results in the creation of ethnic enclaves. Moreover, if many immigrants are unable to speak the host country's language, the odds are relatively high that an ethnic labour market is going to emerge. This could create an incentive for new migrants to join their compatriots even if they cannot and/or are not willing to learn the host country's language.

Immigrants who do not speak the host country's language are often subject to social exclusion, even though they are able to perform jobs which do not require understanding this language. On the other hand, if immigrants to Poland are willing to learn Polish, it also means their readiness to assimilate.

Hence Polish language education seems to be the greatest challenge for the Polish authorities responsible for immigrants' integration, both in terms of organizing the entire system for such education and financing it. Therefore, such education should be obligatory and provided without cost to the immigrants, or at least co-financed by the Polish state, and it should cover every immigrant who is to be granted a residence permit in Poland and declares his or her willingness to stay in Poland.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Many actions in the field of immigrants' integration into Polish society are conducted by Non Profit Organisations (and financed by them, as well as, by some Polish universities).

Another interesting tool introduced in the document consists of individual integration programmes (IIP) intended to be available to every asylum seeker. As of now only one person from the immigrant family is covered by the individual integration program, while the document emphasizes the need to provide an IIP for every family member. The IIP includes recommendation of mentoring programs for newcomer immigrant families, with mentors being immigrants already integrated into the Polish society. According to the recommendations included in the document, the mentor should closely cooperate with the social worker, who coordinates the program for a given family. This tandem should also seek out the best possible solutions in terms of family integration and assimilation.

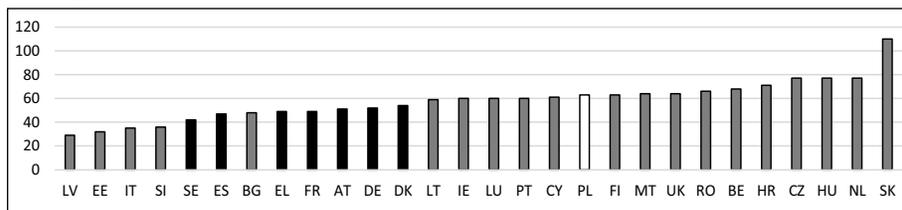
Finally, it is important to note that the actions included in the integration policy should also be aimed at immigrants' children. The most urgent need is to introduce a system and establish procedures for dealing with foreign-born children, who do not speak Polish upon their arrival in Poland. Each school should be able to provide such children with additional Polish language classes until they are able to actively participate in all the classes taught in Polish. This requires not only additional resources, but also a systemic approach and a change in the mentality of both Polish teachers as well as pupils – especially in the small cities and rural areas.

## **Conclusions**

Carrying out a statistical analysis in terms of the demographical, social, economic, and cultural issues at the country level can be considered as just the initial step in understanding the role which migration plays in a country's economy and demography. It is not wise to compare the rankings without additional analysis, as this can lead to false conclusions. The basic indicator which can be considered relevant is the share of foreigners in the overall population, as well as the increase in this share over time. However, after analysing these two indicators, with the aim of assessing the incentives offered by a country to economic migrants, we should make some additional remarks. These additional remarks are especially important for the Central and Eastern European Countries, where the vast majority of migrants are of East European origin (i.e. from Russia and the post-Soviet republics). Although the number of immigrants in the population and the increase in their share of the population in recent years can be considered relatively high, this does not necessarily mean that these countries (e.g. Poland) will be considered attractive to poten-

tial migrants from the African/Middle East countries. Taking this into account we claim that the countries which can be of the highest interest for economic immigrants looking for societies open for foreigners from non-EU countries would most likely be Sweden, Spain, Greece, France, Austria, Germany and Denmark (Figure 15). Although in nominal terms Poland is ranked only slightly behind this group of countries, it is not likely to be perceived as a destination for immigrants coming from countries other than the Eastern European region.

**Figure 15. Summarised ranks (from 1 to 28 in four categories) of the EU Member States in terms of demographic factors negatively influencing economic immigration**

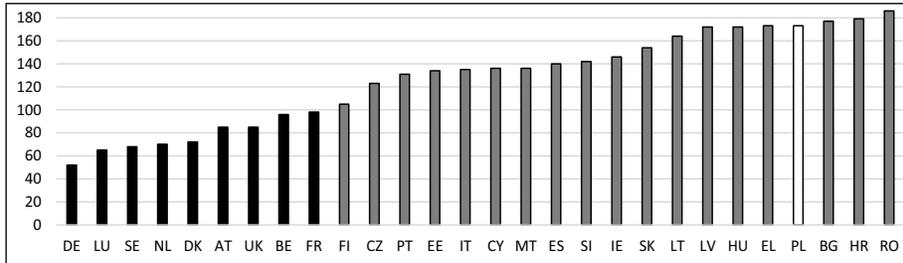


Source: own calculations.

This points to the conclusion that it is immigrants' *perception* of a given country which is the most important factor in the decision making process. And this perception is in most cases shaped during pre-migration contacts with immigrants' friends and relatives who have already migrated to that country – which is in line with the Migrant Networks Theory.

Taking into account the purely economic performance of all the EU Member States, as well as the social benefits offered by them, the most desirable countries from migrants' point of view should be Germany, Luxembourg, Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark, Austria, the United Kingdom, Belgium and France (up to 100 cumulated points in their ranks) (Figure 16). It is worth noting that from the perspective of economic immigrants the most interesting destination countries are those countries with the highest GDP *per capita* and the lowest employment rate (at least for those who are willing to look for employment opportunities), as well as the highest social benefits, which are positively correlated to economic outcomes in these countries. Taking into account all of the above-mentioned factors, we can assume that Poland is not likely to be targeted by economic immigrants (seeking relatively higher paying jobs and higher social benefits).

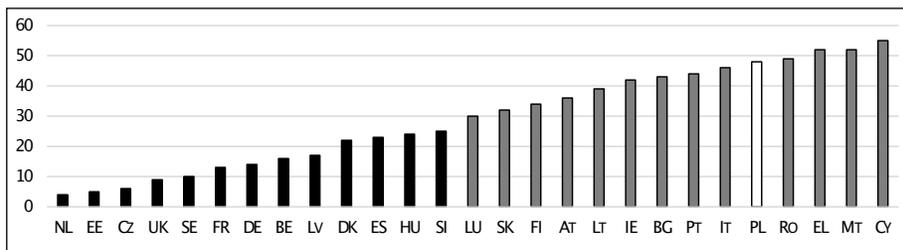
**Figure 16. Summarised ranks (from 1 to 28 in four categories) of the EU Member States in terms of social and economic factors negatively influencing economic immigration**



Source: own calculations.

The next conclusion which stems from our research is that when we consider a given country as a potential destination for international migrants we cannot underestimate factors such as its cultural and religious background. If the vast majority of citizens know only one language (their mother tongue), without having any foreign language skills, and there is one common religion professed by a majority of people, then the chances are high that this country will not be targeted by international migrants of a different religious and cultural background. Taking into account these assumptions, both some Central European Countries and the EU-15 Member States are much more popular destinations among economic migrants than Poland (Figure 17).

**Figure 17. Summarised ranks (from 1 to 28 in four categories) of the EU Member States in terms of cultural and religious factors negatively influencing an economic immigration**

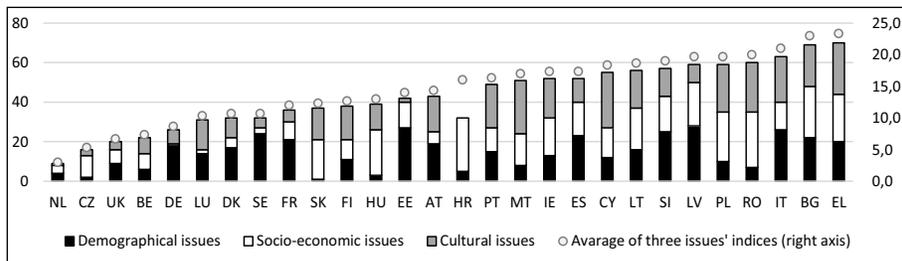


Source: own calculations.

Taking into account the outcomes of the rankings of the demographic, socio-economic, and cultural issues which may influence an economic

immigrant's decisions, we can rank the top ten EU Member States which can be considered as the prime destinations for immigrants to EU countries. These Member States are: the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden, France and Slovakia (Figure 18). However, in the context of the recent immigration wave it is worth noting that the Czech Republic and Slovakia have qualified to this group due to the very high rate of foreigners in their populations, as well as their relatively open, liberal societies. At the same time their socio-economic indices were significantly lower in comparison to those of the other aforementioned Member States.

**Figure 18. Summarised ranks of three categories of issues (demographical, socio-economic and cultural issues) of the EU Member States having an influence on an economic immigration**



Source: own calculations.

In conclusion, on the basis of our research we can state that potential economic immigrants are not particularly interested in the most recent Member States of the EU or in any other countries with substantial economic problems or disadvantages in comparison to the better developed countries. Therefore we should not expect a high number of them to voluntarily and intentionally choose to locate in Central and Eastern European Countries, including Poland.

With respect to Poland specifically, uncertainty of employment combined with a lack of procedures and lack of experience in dealing with immigrant groups, especially those from different cultural backgrounds, can be considered a serious problem for Poland if it were about to face a significant immigrant influx in the nearest future. The Polish official documents that postulate specific actions with reference to the acceptance and assimilation of immigrants are very general, and even if some actions are indicated in detail they lack operationalization and information and – more importantly – financial backing for the indicated ventures.

Translating the suggestions contained in the documents into reality seems to be very urgent matter, even of paramount importance. The most important issue is to introduce a system of Polish language education, both for adults and their children. In the latter case the system should cover each public school, as many of them are likely to accept the immigrant children in the nearest future. In our opinion this seems to be most crucial and urgent action in the immigrant assimilation process.

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