

# Migration Trends

in Selected Applicant Countries

**VOLUME I – Bulgaria**  
**The social impact of seasonal migration**



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European Commission Project:

***“Sharing Experience: Migration Trends in Selected Applicant Countries and Lessons Learned from the ‘New Countries of Immigration’ in the EU and Austria”***

**VOLUME I – Bulgaria**

**The social impact of seasonal migration**

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## PREFACE

### Migration to the EU

Migration to the European Union continues to be a disputed issue throughout Europe. Starting in the 1960s it began with the recruitment of migrant workers by some Western European countries and through family reunification in the 1970s, the process then continued with most Western European countries successively becoming countries of immigration. This has not necessarily been an intended process, but has become a fact in the better-off countries of the EU.

New EU members in the north and in the south have seen their immigration figures rise after accession, partly as a result of related increased economic growth. Countries like Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Italy or Greece – all situated on the EU periphery, where emigration had previously prevailed – had to adapt quickly to the new situation in the course of the 1990s. In terms of policy, the process suffered from a lack of experience, so the management of the flows was often not ideal and local societies were taken by surprise to a certain degree.

The surge in immigration has mainly been fed by people seeking protection from the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and by the fall of the iron curtain, which has allowed citizens of Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) to move. They made use of this possibility in direction of the prospering EU. Policy developments, notably linked to freedom of movement and to irregular migration, have carefully been described and analysed in two previous publications jointly produced by IOM and ICMPD: *“Migration in Central and Eastern Europe. 1999 Review”* and *“New Challenges for Migration Policy in Central and Eastern Europe”*.

With the accession of 10 new member states to the EU in May 2004 (and two more in 2007), these countries are likely to follow the path of the previous EU accession countries and, in turn, become countries of immigration. With increased global mobility and a growing number of severe conflicts and wars, people seeking shelter from Africa and Asia have become a growing source of migrants in recent years. Their paths of migration are directed to the EU and often lead through the accession countries. In this process, in spite of fortified border protection and the “safe third countries” rule, which has become a standard in the states of the EU, accession countries are increasingly becoming target countries of migration. For their societies, this means a rapid change from countries almost without migration via strong emigration to more immigration in the future. This scenario requires preparation and careful planning. On the other hand and on the background of demographic trends, this may be a rather desirable change. According to projections of the EC, the population of all accession countries in Central and Eastern Europe has a tendency to decrease, a fact likely to pose significant problems to economy and society in the future. Compared to Western European countries, where the established migration chains will soften the population losses for a longer period, the future eastern border countries of the EU will increasingly face this problem no later than 2010.

In relation to this, one very important characteristic of globalisation, that is especially relevant when talking about migration, is that causes and effects can happen in completely different parts of the world. This simple fact is even more significant if one comes to think that the interdependency of migration to social economic or political

## IV

factors is extremely high. The globalisation of economy and politics, the continuous merging of cultural factors and the shortening of distances by the availability of quick and cheap transportation, makes regular migration always hard to isolate as a regional phenomenon or to control by national means. We have come to understand that Migration has its own internal dynamics. These particular dynamics – sensitive of course to external factors – can be maybe best compared with what liberals would describe as a marketplace. A place, where reality is the clash product of a demand and an offer, and where intervention can only be done with observance to these mechanisms. Arbitrary intervention can and does usually lead to unwanted results.

Before we attempt to develop this concept, let us enumerate briefly three more assumptions that are relevant for these internal dynamics, when discussing the marketplace approach: 1. First of all, the quantitative (as opposed to qualitative) degree of migratory movements always depends on the extent to which restrictive actions have hindered the migration process previously. Recent history of the continent has illustrated significantly enough this statement and comparing 1980 and 1990 statistics gives you a clear picture. 2. Very much related to the above assumption, one could safely talk about fluctuating cycles in migration, with ascending lines, peaks and regressions. In Europe, most of the Candidate Countries have passed their peaks in producing migration in the mid-90s. 3. Migration, especially the one motivated economically, is more sensitive to pull than to push factors. This assumption is very much relevant in Europe today, and it radically contradicts whoever states that the European Union has little to offer to migrants. The fact is that there are jobs available in the Union today, particularly in certain areas of the labour market. Migrants will satisfy this demand within or outside a regulated framework. Further it might very well be that legislators and policy maker who want to intervene in a certain manner on this marketplace would only be able to succeed by working precisely at these pull-factors. The way some countries do it – maybe the most relevant are the US and Canada – proving that they have understood this reality by attracting qualified migrants from all over the world, becoming preferred destinations even for people who are not that dependent on push factors in their own countries. And the moment is not far when competition between European and non-European destinations for qualified migrants may have a much more decisive impact on trends than the aforementioned demographic changes. Having taken into account these assumptions and coming back to the migration marketplace, maybe the first corollary of this analogy is the fact that as long as migration happens – with no regard to the policy of the state – it is proof enough that migrants are actually needed. As long as the movements are driven by labour related issues, the interior dynamics of migration, as said earlier, will always take precedence, no matter if the destination state will restrict it or not. The difference is only in the degree of legality within which the economic activities of the migrants (usually labour) will happen. In Europe this is both true in the member states of the EU and will be progressively more and more true in the Candidate Countries as they approach accession.

As we shift towards the particular European dimension of the marketplace analogy, one would say that state intervention has to be always in agreement with the intrinsic state of the determinant factors at the moment of intervention, and should ideally be justified by an unusual imbalance of the migratory “market”. That means that when a state designs its policy on migration or other way to control migratory movements such

intervention has to be in line with current migration realities and deal with them from within. But let us develop this. It is far from our intention to say that because of such a marketplace approach the best way to go around migration is an absolute laissez-faire, and it is also far from our intention to say that the Candidate Countries or the European Union should open their borders to whatever waves of migrants might want to enter. Like on every marketplace in our complex times, intervention might not only be legitimate and necessary but it usually is to the overall benefit. The only care to be taken when designing state intervention is that it should be in tune with the dynamics of the phenomenon, observing migration also in the context of supply and demand. And in this sense, keeping always with the market concept, let us not un-wantingly increase illegal employment nor unnecessarily expand the market share for traffickers and smugglers. Because to forget that most markets, have a black-market, may hinder the overall result that we were aiming for in the first place. The new European common policy proposal on immigration seems to have incorporated such interventions particularly by refining its employment strategy, but also by reviewing the impact of an ageing population on security and pensions and by making training more responsive to the market needs. A communication on illegal immigration has also been released, and the Candidate Countries will have to align themselves to this common policy probably before accession.

However if one looks at the entire accession negotiations in the field of Migration, the two most striking common features in all these countries seem to be: 1. Sometimes technical negotiations for accession were underestimated in favour of the political negotiations and 2. Migration realities were too rarely regarded in perspective. First, on the technical question. Beyond the status of a formal condition for enlargement (as defined in 1993 at the European Council in Copenhagen), technical criteria are of the utmost importance for the union, but especially for the country in question. No doubt that political negotiations are important and more than that, commitment to democratic values backed up by political commitment to the enlargement process are crucial factors. But it would be a mistake to underestimate the role of technical capacity. On the long term, political-only driven efforts will prove to be counterproductive, while technical efforts, resulting in a better infrastructure tailored to cope with European challenges will prove its benefits in facing very close future situations. Higher flexibility in implementing European legislation, higher efficiency in providing security to individuals, higher response of the administrative structures to fast changes, managing migration and other challenges and not least a better understanding – at all government levels – of the way the different states in the European Union work for a common interest are just some few arguments for the technical side of negotiations for enlargement. But in the end we face political and technical interdependency anyway: Accession may be a priority political objective, but migration management should not be too far behind, not least because it is the one topic in today's Europe that the electorate does not seem to be ignoring. In what regards the second common feature, the lack of perspective in approaching migration, the most common illustration of it is a state that would not diligently try to cope with the *Acquis* in the area of migration for the apparent (and obvious) reason that there were not too many migration challenges in that particular state. In a time magnified frame, that statement is true. Most of the candidate countries are not (yet) particular destinations for migrants (especially economic migrants), and when such phenomenon occurs it is typically insignificant and anyway just a "pit-stop", a transit period in the migrant's route towards the final destination (with the exception of the Czech Republic, where the percentage of

foreigners has already reached 2%). But upon accession this state of fact will change radically: as part of the Union the candidate countries will find themselves becoming very attractive for migrants over night, and not by accident: the membership in the Union's political processes will make these countries safer, the flow of capital and the development of the economic markets will increase the demand for labour and finally, the social welfare system will probably become more friendly.

All these changes will drive migration flows towards these countries, and this is the perspective that legislators and administrations have to keep in mind when designing their migration policy and when aligning themselves to the Migration Acquis. Moreover, adopting the Acquis alone, by a simple legislative process will never be enough, without the building of administrative capacity to enforce the EU framework legislation and to react in symphony to the challenges of the Union the process will be far from effective. What we all have to understand is that membership in the Union brings along a lot of advantages, in terms of strengthening the economy, consolidating democratic processes and providing for safety and security. But these advantages come along with huge responsibilities, because the way one single state deals with certain challenges – such as migration – is not only relevant for that state alone but for the whole union. And if the capacity of that state to face such challenges is lacking then there are high chances that completed enlargement may turn into weighty political embarrassment when the same state finds itself in the impossibility to strive for the values of the Union in undeniably visible situations.

Migration in the Candidate Countries is on its way to change in quantitative and qualitative presence, and these changes – in the good practice of globalisation trends – are both causes and effects of so many and complex other processes, of which the enlargement of the European Union is certainly the most revolutionary. In this context migration policies have to be carefully designed to lead eventually to migrants' economic and cultural integration in an extended area of freedom security and justice. An area which must consistently strive to balance rights and responsibilities of migrants. A balance that can only function when legal transposition is matched with both administrative and enforcement capacity. It is therefore high time to prepare the process, which must go beyond legislation and technical co-operation. Alongside emigration and established temporary migration to the west, the societies in the accession states have to be prepared for a new challenge to their cohesion: foreigners in their cities, often right in their neighbourhood, maybe competing for their jobs. Let us avoid emergency management and rather, in a timely fashion, strive for long term orderly migration supported by functional integration measures in tune with the host societies.

### **Research Methodology**

What began as a classical multiple country case study, later developed in a comparative study with the aim of creating a certain typology distinguishing between those countries where there is immigration and those countries where there is emigration. What also emerged was the need to distinguish between countries where permanent emigration is prevailed upon by circulatory emigration. Additionally a great deal of attention needed to be paid to the phenomena of transit immigration, temporary immigration and permanent settlement immigration. Some countries used to regard their emigrants to the EU only as a source of remittances. In the 90s this pattern changed and now the same emigrants are looked at as the ones who can potentially build transnational

connectivity. The question of whether this trend is also spilling over to the accession countries was a further element which needed to be assessed. What also needed appropriate attention is the issue of nationality and naturalization. Where usually nationality has been closely related to ethnic background, the new realities may create revised views and policies on this matter. With more and more people wanting to be naturalized, it is clear that the relevant laws and policies, when less than adequate, will bear the strain. This point has also been analyzed.

In fact this booklet is part of a product of comprehensive research and analysis of migration trends in each of six participating EU accession countries: Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria. The research project has been supported by the European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs, under the European Social Fund budget line *“Analysis of and research on the social situation, demography and the family”* and was managed by IOM Vienna.

Under the title **“Migration Trends in Selected EU Applicant Countries”**, the following volumes are available:

**Volume I – Bulgaria.** The Social Impact of Seasonal Migration.

**Volume II – The Czech Republic.** The Times They Are A-Changin.

**Volume III – Poland.** Dilemmas of a Sending and Receiving Country.

**Volume IV – Romania.** More ‘Out’ than ‘In’ at the Crossroads between Europe and the Balkans.

**Volume V – Slovakia.** An Acceleration of Challenges for Society.

**Volume VI – Slovenia.** The perspective of a Country on the ‘Schengen Periphery’.

Within the project, applied research enhancing the EU knowledge basis on migration in candidate countries to the Union has been sought. Although building on the acquired knowledge, it is no continuation of the previous IOM / ICMPD research, but is inscribed in a different logic. The particular interest here was to find out more about the effects of migration on the countries’ societies. For this purpose, a mixed methodology was conceived, taking into account the different levels of migration research in the participating countries. It has been applied and can be found in each of the six country reports as well as in the overview.

The research was developed with an attempt to align the research process as far as possible. This field of research being new for the participating countries, two major disadvantages had to be faced: little research and a low number of researchers to draw upon as well as scarce data availability. However statistics and literature was found to be better in those countries which have already experienced in-migration to a certain degree (the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia, to a lesser degree also Slovakia), whereas Bulgaria and Romania were still greatly lacking both research and statistical apprehension of the phenomenon.

As a consequence, the methodology has been elaborated in three steps, which accompanied the entire research process: Literature analysis, interviews and recommendations. In fact data has systematically been completed by interviews with officials, experts, and migrants themselves or their associations, depending on the gaps



## VIII

in literature and statistics. Collaboration of the researchers with the respective IOM country missions has facilitated this process. For each of the countries, the interviews form the added value of the reports. Hitherto undocumented aspects of migration phenomena in the accession countries become perceivable for the first time, and besides, analysed in a systematic manner.

The research is made pertinent by analysis weighing the information against credibility and by the elaboration of conclusions to each chapter of the research. Recommendations to different stakeholders are formulated at the end of the text for optimal usability.

Through its form and result, the project *“Sharing Experience: Migration Trends in Selected Applicant Countries and Lessons Learned from the ‘New Countries of Immigration’ in the EU and Austria”* hopes to contribute to EU migration research and policy at the time of the expansion in May 2004 and beyond.

The reader may expect comprehensive information on the situation of migrants both, in and out of the countries, and the countries’ migration management approaches, with the main purpose to illustrate the impact of migration trends on the local society and the social situation in the country.

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At the same time, the research team states that this report does not necessarily express the official views of any of the abovementioned institutions. Conversations on migration issues with Irina Nedeva, Elena Jileva and Katia Iordanova proved particularly helpful for the completion of the report. Last but not least, the research team wishes to thank all of the interviewed migrants from Sofia, Kalofer, Kirkovo, Momchilgrad, Drangovo and Nanovitsa, as well as from Amsterdam and The Hague.

**Contents:**

<b>Preface</b> .....	<b>III</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Contents</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Executive summary</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Historical overview - migration after WWII</b> .....	<b>10</b>
1.1. In-migration: 1944-1989 .....	10
1.2. Out-migration: 1944-1989 .....	11
1.3. Migration movements between 1989-1997 .....	14
1.4. Conclusions .....	15
<b>2. Overall migration scales</b> .....	<b>16</b>
2.1. Emigration .....	16
2.1.1. Emigration scales .....	16
2.1.2. Out-Mobility – direction of movement .....	22
2.1.3. Trends in potential migration .....	26
2.2. Immigrants .....	30
2.2.1. Immigration scales .....	30
2.2.2. Refugees .....	32
2.3. Conclusions .....	34
<b>3. Factors contributing to migration movements</b> .....	<b>37</b>
3.1. Factors contributing to emigration .....	37
3.1.1. Push factors .....	37
3.1.2. Pull factors .....	40
3.1.3. Irregular migration, including trafficking and smuggling in human beings .....	44
3.2. Factors contributing to immigration .....	46
3.3. Conclusions .....	47
<b>4. Impact of migration movements on the subject society</b> .....	<b>48</b>
4.1. Impact of emigration .....	48
4.1.1. Positive impact – the growing remittances .....	48
4.1.2. Cultural impact of seasonal migration – does western culture change the Bulgarian milieu? .....	50
4.1.3. Negative impact of emigration – brain drain, depopulation, a negative image .....	52
4.1.4. Impact of emigration on education and the social system .....	54

4.2. Impact of immigration – the refugee case .....	55
4.2.1. Economic impact .....	55
4.2.2. Are there discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of violence against migrants? .....	55
4.2.3. Public opinion and perception of migrants and migration .....	56
4.3. Conclusions .....	57
<b>5. Migration policy, legislation and procedures – present situation and planned migration management strategy .....</b>	<b>58</b>
5.1. Legal background and control of migration in Republic of Bulgaria .....	58
5.2. Migration management strategy .....	66
5.2.1. Regulation and control of labour migration .....	66
5.2.2. Admission of third-country nationals for paid employment .....	67
5.2.3. Admission of third-country nationals for the purpose of pursuing activities as self-employed persons .....	70
5.2.4. Statistics concerning work permits .....	72
5.2.5. Regulating emigration .....	72
5.3. Conclusions .....	74
<b>6. Integration policies and practices .....</b>	<b>76</b>
6.1. Emigration .....	76
6.1.1. Integration of returning highly qualified emigrants .....	76
6.1.2. Integration programmes for preventing low-qualified emigration .....	76
6.2. Integration of immigrants and refugees .....	78
6.3. Conclusions .....	80
<b>7. Conclusion and recommendations .....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Tables .....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Map .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Interviews done by bulgarian team .....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Graphs .....</b>	<b>93</b>

## Executive Summary

The report follows the main guidelines of the comparative research outline designed by IOM-Vienna: brief introduction to the problem from the point of view of introducing historical background, the statistical development over the past five years (1997 to 2001), the legal and administrative provisions with regard to migration and migration management, trying to find answers to the main question of the study: *How does migration affect the local society in Bulgaria at this point of time?*

The report analyses both out-migration and in-migration trends, but **in the Bulgarian case what seems clear is that out-migration exceeds in-migration, thus emigration rather than immigration has bigger impact on the Bulgarian society.** The public discourse is dominated by concerns about brain-drain, the economic benefits from Bulgarian migrants working abroad temporarily, the possibilities for exporting skilled labour legally, and the harm inflicted by returned asylum-seekers on Bulgaria's image. Immigrants are not particularly visible yet, and concerns about their number, protection of their rights, xenophobia or their integration come rarely to the fore. That is why, in searching for the social impact of migration on the Bulgarian society, the Bulgarian team will pay more attention to out-migration than to in-migration.

The report is based on secondary analysis of relevant literature (Appendix 1); normative documents, regulating migration; statistical and border police data about migration (Appendix 2); sociological surveys on potential migration and on the economic impact of migration; interviews with representatives of state institutions and NGOs dealing with migration, as well as with immigrants and emigrants (Appendix 3).

### **Main conclusions and recommendations:**

#### **I. Current migration trends differ significantly from the pre-1989 tendencies.**

As a whole, from 1880 to 1988, around 1 283 000 people emigrated from Bulgaria, while 808 600 immigrated to the country. *In that period*, in-migration included mainly ethnic Bulgarians living on the territories of neighbouring countries, while the main waves of out-migration were comprised mostly of ethnic minorities living in Bulgaria, predominantly ethnic Turks. The main reasons for both out- and in- migration were political. In-migration flows *now* include more refugees and foreign immigrants, while out-migration has no such clearly expressed ethnic profile – it is characteristic for all the ethnic groups inhabiting Bulgaria nowadays. The main reasons for emigration now are economic.

The historical heritage has the following consequences for the current migration patterns:

Firstly, the Bulgarian community abroad is quite diversified, including different social groups, with different ethnic origin and different motives for emigration. The notion of different groups of Bulgarians living abroad has been embedded in the new law on Bulgarians living outside of Bulgaria (of 11 April 2000), which introduces the concept of "Bulgarian community abroad". The political use of the term "Bulgarian community abroad" is helpful, but for analytical purposes and in the process of elaborating concrete policies, it has to be differentiated in order to explain the specific characteristics of the different groups which ought to be treated in a different political

manner. A special emphasis deserves to be put on new emigrants, whose motives for emigration are quite different from those of the old diaspora.

Secondly, there is still ethnically specific out-migration, as the already existing large ethnic Turkish diaspora helps a lot the seasonal migration of ethnic Turks currently living in Bulgaria.

Thirdly, the in-migration of foreign citizens is a relatively new phenomenon and needs to be investigated and treated with special attention.

**II. One of the most important conclusions of the study is that there is no precise unified methodology for observing emigration trends. There is an urgent need of elaborating such a methodology and establishing of a stable, publicly accepted information database on the processes of emigration that would be able to take account of the period of staying abroad.** There are no data about seasonal migration, let alone the irregular one. Keeping track of the number of irregular emigrants is a very difficult task that requires more efforts and coordination among different institutions, both Bulgarian and foreign ones. A possible partial solution might be the regular gathering of information from the Bulgarian municipalities about the size and destination of seasonal migration.

Data from the national censuses conducted in 1992 and 2001 showed that between these two censuses approximately 196 000 people emigrated from Bulgaria, while the number of persons who have returned or settled to Bulgaria was a total of 19 000. Net migration from Bulgaria is negative, amounting to roughly 177 000 people who had left the country in 1992-2001, or an average of 22 000 people leaving Bulgaria yearly. Other data show a significantly larger number of emigrants.

It is difficult to make precise conclusions about the possible scope of emigration almost entirely on the basis of research of potential migrants. Yet one is able to detect a tendency showing that **temporary seasonal migration dominates upon the permanent one.** The preferred destinations are Greece, Spain, Italy, Germany and The Netherlands and the main motive is related to finding a job or one that is better paid. The Bulgarian seasonal emigrants work mostly in agriculture, construction building, domestic care, housekeeping, hotels and restaurants, and the textile industry. The profile of migrants as well the destination of migration is geographically determined and depends on already created networks. So in some Bulgarian municipalities female emigration prevails, while in others migrants are predominantly male. Migration is also ethnically specific, meaning that in some municipalities the emigrants come entirely from the Turkish ethnic group in Bulgaria, whereas in others they are ethnic Bulgarians. In still other municipalities, Roma emigration prevails. The fact that **migration from Bulgaria has a regionally as well as ethnically specific profile suggests that regulating and managing migration would require regionally and ethnically differentiated policy measures.**

The prognostic evaluation of expected actual emigration, done by the experts of the National Statistical Institute on the basis of preliminary data from the 2001 census, shows that in the next five years there is no danger of an emigration wave from Bulgaria which would destabilise the labour markets in the EU member-states.

The number and profile of immigrants to Bulgaria are better known to the official authorities than the communities of Bulgarian emigrants abroad. Concerning immigration, Bulgaria remains primarily a transit country despite the visible signs of its

greater attractiveness as a final destination country manifested in the last years, and especially after the start of the EU accession negotiations in 1999. The National Police data clearly show that there is a tendency of increasing the number of foreign citizens staying legally in Bulgaria with permanent and long-term residence permits.

Structurally, there are no major changes in the countries of origin of the permanent and long-term residents in Bulgaria in the last couple of years. One of the most significant tendencies is the decreasing number of citizens from CIS countries and the increasing number of Russian citizens, although the total number of CIS and Russian citizens remains stable.

The traffic of foreigners to and through Bulgaria becomes more complex and better organised. Changes in legislation in 2001-2, improvement of the administrative capacity of the specialised border police institutions and the tightened and more effective control on the Bulgarian borders led to restructuring of the channels for illegal immigration to the EU countries. The chief migration flows are from Asia and Africa, namely from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Nigeria, Sudan, Ethiopia and Algeria.

Lifting visa restrictions for short-term entry of Bulgarian citizens into the Schengen space in April 2001 resulted in more than 4-fold decrease in the number of border-regime violations committed by Bulgarian citizens.

In 1994, a new category of immigrants was introduced into Bulgarian legislation - refugees and people with humanitarian status of different duration, and the first statuses based on the Decree for Granting and Regulating the Refugee Status were given in 1995.

From 1993 until 1 January 2003, a total of 11 253 persons (7 601 men, 1 748 women and 1 904 children) applied for refugee status. They came from 72 states, but most of all from Afghanistan, Iraq, Armenia, Yugoslavia and Iran. Of all the applicants, 1 356 persons (including 327 children) were granted refugee status according to the Geneva Convention of 1951. 24% of them are aged up to 17, and 76% are of 18-59 years of age. Humanitarian protection was granted to 2 668, people, of whom 595 children and 245 women.

**III. The main factors for emigration are economic** - the relatively high level of unemployment in Bulgaria and the low standard of living. In the last two years, the official statistic has registered a relative economic growth, as well as decreasing unemployment. If this trend continues in the future, it will probably stabilise migration, too. **Potential and real migrants are oriented more to seasonal migration. Signing bilateral agreements will regulate this process and will prevent irregular migration in large numbers.** The practice has shown that after the term of employment contracts abroad expires, the Bulgarian workers return to the territory of Bulgaria.

There is a process of strengthening the control over and the struggle against trafficking in human beings which is another factor that will reduce in the future the illegal channels of emigration.

Another important factor for emigration is the already created networks of relatives and friends, the diasporas, which will provoke and maintain a relatively stable flow of

emigrants. But at the moment, most of these networks function as a means for coping with current difficulties, i.e. they are oriented more to seasonal rather than to permanent migration.

As for immigrants and refugees, there have been transformations in their social profile in the last couple of years. The push factors for immigration are more related to the economic conditions in their countries rather than to the political situation there.

#### **IV. The impact of emigration upon the Bulgarian society is ambivalent, having both positive and negative consequences.**

**The first positive impact is related to the growing size of remittances.** For the period January-November 2002, current transfers from Bulgarians living abroad amounted to 449.6 million USD, surpassing the amount of direct foreign investments by 20.9 million USD and making 2.9% of GDP. Thus for the 11 months of last year, the remittances were 56.67 USD per person. According to the data of the Bulgarian National Bank, remittances surpassed by far the financial help coming from the EC pre-accession funds, which for January-November 2002 amounted to 100.8 million USD.

**The second positive impact concerns the cultural lessons learned from seasonal work abroad related to a new organization of work and life,** and producing a new worldview (*Weltanschauung*) that leads to the development of entrepreneurial behaviour. Yet in some municipalities the transfer of Western skills to Bulgarian soil seems to fail. In both cases, there is a strong Western influence upon consumer practices.

Another impact of increased seasonal migration is the attempt of local authorities to participate more actively in mediating work abroad.

There are negative impacts of emigration, too, related to brain drain, depopulation, and the creation of a negative image of the Bulgarians working abroad.

But the research done is not systematic, so **there is an urgent need of more research on the impact of emigration upon the local societies and the large society as a whole, especially in the sphere of cultural impact.**

**The impact of immigrants in Bulgaria has not been sufficiently studied yet,** so more research is needed in that direction as well. The experts have established that asylum seekers self-finance the refugee status granting process with 68% of the total costs (1999 data). Further, their labour might contribute to lower prices of unskilled labour in the climate of liberalisation of the labour market.

**V. Regulation of migration processes is already harmonized with international norms and the *acquis communautaire*;** nearly all the recommendations for adjusting the Bulgarian legislation to contemporary legal norms have been fulfilled. The management and control of migration processes are a key priority of the Bulgarian government. The main objective is to increase the feeling of security of the citizens in their own country, thereby decreasing their desire for emigration while adopting efficient measures to stop illegal immigration.



Measures undertaken by the Bulgarian government for the *regulation and control of labour migration* are basically the following:

- a) Measures for regulating labour migration, involving a complex approach and continuous application, directed at the perfection of the Bulgarian national legislation and policies:
  - Examination of existing migration legislations and cases of successful migration management as a basis for the perfection of the national policies on migration;
  - Active participation in the international co-operation for the control of labour migration - for the implementation of international and European standards.
- b) Measures regarding labour emigration – a premise for short-term, regulated labour emigration:
  - Continuous analysis of the work on the operative bilateral agreements for the exchange of labour force, for any modifications in the relevant legislation and the instructions included in the agreements to assist Bulgarian citizens;
  - Intensification of the process of making bilateral agreements for the exchange of labour force in other countries;
  - Comprehensive information on the conditions under which Bulgarian citizens can work abroad under operative agreements.
- c) Measures regarding labour immigration – adopted to protect the labour market:
  - Amendments in the legislation regarding the admittance of foreigners as employees – a permit regime has been adopted since 1994;
  - Adopting legislation for the admittance of foreigners as freelance individuals – a separate permit regime is being introduced;
  - At the same time – ensuring the equal treatment of those foreign migration-workers that have been admitted to the Bulgarian market. In this area the criteria of EU legislation and the requirements of other international organisations have been covered.

Bulgaria is observing and adopting in its legislation the various requirements of the EU regarding the citizens of member states and the citizens of third countries for work-related stay, for access to the labour market, for labour permission of the families of workers who have already been admitted. Bulgaria is adhering strictly to the equal treatment of those foreigners who have already been hired – regarding work conditions, payment, holidays, dismissal, etc.

**VI. In the field of integration policies a series of programmes have been developed, oriented to the integration of returning highly qualified emigrants as well as to preventing low-qualified emigration.** This process should continue.

**More efforts have to be put in developing programmes for better integration of immigrants and refugees,** including more programs for learning the Bulgarian language, more events presenting the specific culture of immigrants, as well as more active monitoring of the actual defence of their rights.

Finally, our research team is deeply convinced that **there is an urgent need for establishing channels for better coordination of policies concerning migration. An efficient tool in that direction will be the establishment of a State Agency dealing with migration.** At the present moment such an institution is planned as a Directorate at the Ministry of Interior, but the problems of migration are wider than the issue of security, as they concern employment and social insurance as well as the social, economic and cultural impact of migration processes upon the Bulgarian society. The research team tends to agree that this agency ought to be independent or directly subordinated to the Council of Ministers. The establishment of such an agency will help the creation of a unified information system for monitoring migration processes as well as of the practical implementation of all migration regulation rules. Such an agency will be in a position to initiate and elaborate concrete policies for coping with migration problems.

**Next steps have to be oriented more towards strengthening the administrative structure, as well as towards investing in education, training and the necessary human and technical resources** for controlling and professionally regulating the migration processes.

Last, but not least, is the need of financing of systematic research on processes of migration (emigration, with a special focus on temporary migration, and immigration) and their impact on Bulgarian society in order to elaborate adequate policies in that field.

## 1. Historical Overview - Migrations After WWII

### 1.1. In-migration, 1944-1989.

a) Until the end of WWII, the changing political boundaries of Bulgaria were the basic factor explaining migration, especially in the border regions (Bobeva 1994, 221). After September 1944, as a defeated Axis-country, Bulgaria had to return the lands it acquired in April 1941 as a German ally, i.e. Aegean Thrace, Aegean and Vardar Macedonia, as well as the border regions around Tsaribrod and Bosilegrad, which it disputed with Yugoslavia. After these territories went to Greece and Yugoslavia at the end of WWII, thousands of ethnic Bulgarians left for Bulgaria proper and were resettled there roughly until 1949. Until the end of 1944 only, around 100 000 Bulgarian immigrants were welcomed into the country (Vassileva 1991, 138-53).<sup>1</sup> These migration waves included two types of Bulgarian migrants - refugees, namely people from Bulgarian origin but of foreign citizenship who were leaving their home places in Alexandroupolis, Xanti, Drama, Kavala, Demirhisar, Siar, Tasos island, etc. for the first time; and the so called resettlers, i.e. Bulgarian citizens who migrated from Bulgaria proper to the newly incorporated lands in 1941-3 and were now to return to their pre-war settlements. The refugees went primarily to the South-western Bulgarian regions of Gorna Dzhumajia, Plovdiv and Sofia, while the resettlers (from Aegean Thrace) went back to their former dwellings in Stara Zagora and Bourgas regions in the Bulgarian South-east.

Once in Bulgaria, the newly arrived Bulgarian immigrants experienced two further types of movement in the second half of the 1940s. Those of them who were from Vardar and Aegean Macedonia were transferred - voluntarily and sometimes involuntarily - to Yugoslavia, into the then People's Republic of Macedonia. In 1945, Yugoslavia attempted to gather all of them on the territory of the People's Republic of Macedonia, and was assisted in its efforts by the Bulgarian government, which then propagated the establishment of a Balkan Federation and believed in the existence of a separate Macedonian nation. Although the exact number of people transferred from Bulgaria to Yugoslavia is not known, some researchers think it is around 40 000.

The second type of movement experienced by the newly arrived Bulgarian immigrants was their resettlement throughout Bulgaria. In 1945, the number of Bulgarian refugees settled to Bulgaria was 12 015, and that of resettlers - 22 444. During the secondary resettlement, Bulgarian immigrants from South-western Bulgaria were sent to Northern and North-eastern Bulgaria, as well as Dobrudzha in order to alleviate the migration pressure on the South-western areas and find better opportunities for work and survival of the migrants. The majority of them settled in villages. They were primarily small peasants, who rarely possessed more than 50 dka of arable land. The secondary resettlement ended in 1949, and a change in the law of Bulgarian citizenship adopted in 1950 gave Bulgarian citizenship to all refugees of Bulgarian origin but without citizenship.

b) Two other waves of in-migration - this time for political reasons - took shape in the late 1940s. *Greek Communists* and civil war fighters began migrating to Bulgaria after

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<sup>1</sup> For migration trends in the period before WWII, see the collection of documents *Migratsionni dvizheniia na bulgarite*: 1993

1947, and until 1950 their number was nearly 5 000. In 1948, the Ministry of Interior set a State Commission for Accommodating Greek Refugees in Bulgaria, signalling the nationalisation of care for the Greek political immigrants. Greek children were treated with special attention: their schooling was eased through special classes, additional lessons in Bulgarian, and in Greek language and history. Grown-up Greek refugees lived in temporary shelters in Berkovitsa, Bankia, Belogradchik, etc., where their most urgent problems were health care and employment. As a rule, they were not given permission for long-term settlement, without which they could not choose where to work. Almost all of them were placed in the industry where some of them were offered low-wage jobs and were refused further qualification. Later, Greek refugees were integrated through special privileges - they were given apartments, pensions, quotas for the universities, and money grants from the Ministry of Finance, which they could send to their relatives in Greece.

*Yugoslav political immigrants* also came to Bulgaria, which welcomed them after the Tito-Stalin break of 1948. Their integration was more difficult than that of the Greek refugees, because the majority of the Yugoslavs were members of the Communist party apparatus and could not be directly employed in the industry. The younger of them were accepted at the university, while the elder were oriented to the mining industry. Some of them formed a separate labour brigade that participated in the building of the new socialist town of Dimitrovgrad. The Bulgarian state assisted their opposition to the Yugoslav government: in 1949-1954, the Yugoslav immigrants published a biweekly newspaper and helped increase the number of dissident radio broadcasts to Yugoslavia.

c) During the Communist regime, Bulgaria recruited foreign labour, too. As a result of bilateral agreements, workers from Vietnam, Nicaragua, Cuba, etc. came to cover the deficit of manual work generated by overemployment (Bobeva 1994, 233). They became useless at the beginning of 1990, after economic restructuring terminated the shortage of manual workforce. Since domestic public opinion pressed for the removal of foreign workers, they were quickly expelled at the expense of the Bulgarian government.

## 1.2. Out-migration (1944-1989)

Apart from the influx of Bulgarian immigrants returning to their home country, post-WWII Bulgaria experienced also considerable **out-migration**. Large ethnic groups, among them Turks, Jews, Czechs and Slovaks, Armenians, Russians and Serbs, as well as political opponents of the Communist regime formed the waves of post-war emigration processes.

**Table 1**

Year	Total emigrants from Bulgaria
1946-1950	100 121
1951-1955	101 454
1956-1960	1 063
1961-1965	429
1966-1970	14 280
1971-1975	27 139
1976-1980	73 890
1981-1988	684

Source: *Statisticheski godishnitsi na NR Bulgariia, TsSU, 1952-1989, quoted in Kalchev 2001, 128*

a) The emigration of *Bulgarian Turks* was by far the most significant phenomenon in the early post-war Bulgarian migration history (and in Bulgarian migration history in principle). Bulgarian Turks constituted the bulk of emigrants in the peak years of 1946-50, and especially in 1966-80. With the ascent of Communism in post-war Bulgaria, the Bulgarian government sealed the borders and introduced a ban on free movement. However, in 1947 Turkey declared that it was ready to accept new Turkish immigrants from Bulgaria. The Bulgarian authorities had already started to regard the presence of a significant Turkish population with sympathies toward an adjacent ethnic homeland and a Cold War enemy as potentially harmful for Bulgaria. In addition, the European experience of the immediate post-war years seemed to speak in favour of permitting Turkish emigration, as millions of ethnic Germans, Hungarians, Poles and Ukrainians had by that point already been "transferred" to their respective states. The number of Bulgarian Turks to migrate to Turkey had been set during protracted negotiations between the two states and Turkey opened its border on December 2, 1950. During the eleven months that it remained open, more than 150 000 Turks left Bulgaria, although another 111 000 who applied for exit visas were not permitted to leave (Ilchev 2000, 245; Baev / Kotev 1994). A number of agreements were concluded in subsequent years in order to reunite divided Turkish families, and another 110 000 Bulgarian Turks left between 1968 and 1978 (Kalchev 2001, 133).

b) *Jews* represented the second biggest post-war emigration wave from Bulgaria. With the help of eminent Bulgarians, MPs and the Bulgarian king, the 50 000 Bulgarian Jews were saved during WWII and did not perish in the Nazi concentration camps<sup>2</sup>. Yet 25 000 of them were resettled from Sofia to the province as a step preparing their would-be deportation to Poland, a fact that facilitated their decision to emigrate to Israel in 1948.

The end of WWII radically changed the status of Jews in Bulgaria. From the most persecuted minority, they became one of the most privileged ones, owing to their active presence in the anti-fascist struggle and their involvement in the new leftist government. Although the 25 000 resettled Jews were allowed to return to Sofia, their community was hit by post-war economic destruction, mass unemployment and the state's inability to recuperate quickly their lost properties, goods, houses and status.

Two alternative visions of the fate of the Jewish minority emerged - the Jews Communists insisted on the integration of Jews into the Bulgarian society and the effacement of all traces of the fascist anti-Semitic legislation, while the Jews Zionists campaigned for emigration and settlement to Palestine, to a new Jewish state. Between 1944 and 1948, Zionism gained considerable influence among Bulgarian Jews, striving on post-war destruction and the remnants of anti-Semitic feelings. By 1946, from around 50 000 Jews in Bulgaria, only 3 000 were not supporting Zionism. In 1947, the Bulgarian government also changed its anti-emigration stance, prompted by the firm position of the USSR in support of Israel. In September 1948, an Emigration Commission started work, guiding the organised emigration of 32 106 Jews to Israel between October 1948 and May 1949. Before that, around 4 000 Jews - primarily children and youth - had migrated to Israel to join the anti-Arab fight. By 10 May 1949, the number of Jews in Bulgaria was 9 926, which by 1956 dropped to 6 431 persons.

c) Representatives of other ethnic groups also left Bulgaria after the end of WWII. Czechoslovakia, which had suffered big demographic losses during and after WWII, including the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans, was eager to populate its deserted

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<sup>2</sup> except for 11 300 Jews from the newly acquired territories in Macedonia and Aegean Thrace

territories with ethnic *Czechs and Slovaks* coming from abroad. According to Art. 4 of its October 1944 peace agreement with the Allied forces, the Bulgarian government undertook to transfer abroad its non-Bulgarian population. Around 2 000 Czechs and Slovaks returned to their home country from Bulgaria between 1949 and 1951. They left their villages in Pleven, Svishtov and Bourgas regions, after having been given group passports and their savings transferred to Czechoslovakia. Primarily gardeners and vine-producers, the migrants were settled chiefly in southern Moravia.

The Soviet government also campaigned actively for strengthening the Armenian ethnic element in Armenia and recuperating work force. The measures facilitating the emigration of ethnic *Armenians* - cheap credits for building houses, tax-exemption for imported goods, etc. - combined with the dire economic situation in post-war Bulgaria, as well as with their problematic citizenship (the majority of Bulgarian Armenians had refugee passports, the so called Nansen passports). Between 1946 and 1948, around 5 000 Armenians emigrated from Bulgaria, almost 80% of them leaving the city of Plovdiv. Several dozen *Russian* families from North-eastern Bulgaria also left for the USSR.

The Yugoslav government applied an identical policy to its minorities abroad. Willing to compensate for the population losses during the war, it requested the repatriation of *Serbs* from Bulgaria. Although their exact number has not been determined so far, at least 149 Serbs took part in this migration movement. This population transfer followed the already established pattern - it was not expulsion but repatriation, executed according to bilateral agreements and with the consent of the receiving country.

d) The establishment of the Communist regime conditioned a wave of political emigration from Bulgaria. According to data of the International Refugee Organization, 8 000 *Bulgarian political refugees* were settled in Western Europe and America in the mid 1950s (Vassileva 1999). The majority of them emigrated after 1944, and only few of them came from the Bulgarian student colonies in Austria and Germany from before WWII. Until 1948, Bulgarian political emigrants came from the circles of followers of pre-WWII political regimes. Their principal channels of migration were through Greece and Turkey. After the ousting from power of the leftists opposition parties in 1948, Bulgarian political emigration started comprising also members of these opposition parties. Deterioration of the relations with Yugoslavia opened a third migration channel, too, through the western border between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. The largest communities of Bulgarian political emigrants were concentrated in the neighbouring countries, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey. Because of that, they were unstable, the emigrants pondering over repatriation or re-emigration. As their number grew in the late 1940s and early 1950s, these communities served as a kind of "reservoir" for further re-emigration to Western Europe, America, Australia and New Zealand. From the late 1950s, their number and political influence had steadily declined. The largest communities of Bulgarian political emigrants in Western Europe were located in Italy and France. Bulgarian political emigration was ideologically and politically divided. Being a victim of internal and personal conflicts, it had never managed to unite and constitute itself as a viable alternative centre to the Communist government in Bulgaria.

During the Communist regime a ban on free movement of Bulgarian citizens was in place. Restrictions on travel sealed the border from the outside, too, allowing practically for no in-migration either. Bulgaria kept its citizens at home through a cumbersome and extremely complicated system of issuing of passports for travel abroad, a rigorous policing of borders and a sophisticated control of border regions, comprising security and economic measures. Those who managed to emigrate used illegal channels, but

since the late 1950s their number dramatically decreased. For 1956-65 less than 1 500 people emigrated from the country, and in 1981-8 their number was even smaller - less than 700.

As a whole, from 1880 to 1988, around 1 283 000 people emigrated from Bulgaria, while 808 600 immigrated to the country (Kalchev 2001, 134).

### **1.3. Migration movements between 1989-1997**

1989 was a year of dramatic transformations in both political and demographic terms. On 10 November 1989 the Communist government fell from power. Few months before that, there took place a large exodus of Bulgarian Turks, leaving Bulgaria for Turkey. The majority of the political scientists in Bulgaria admit that this unprecedented out-migration of Bulgarian Turks, then called euphemistically "the big excursion", had a great impact upon the shattering of the Communist regime. Mass migration started in the spring of 1989, following vigorous, and sometimes bloody, protests from Bulgarian Turks against the renaming campaign of 1984-5, during which Bulgarian Turks were given Bulgarian names. Termed in the Communist jargon a "revival process", this campaign, targeting a unified and homogeneous Bulgarian nation through a forced Bulgarization of ethnic Turks, was the push factor for their mass exit.<sup>3</sup> It was made possible by two government acts, Turkey asserting its readiness to accept all immigrants from Bulgaria and Bulgaria opening its southern border. A significant pull factor was Turkey's willingness to receive these migrants, for whom it was given more than 250 million dollars in grants and loans by the US government and by the Council of Europe (Bobeva 1994, 225). By the time Turkey closed the border unilaterally because of inability to cope with the migration wave (August 1989), around 360 000 Bulgarian Turks succeeded in leaving Bulgaria. More than 1/3 of them returned to Bulgaria when the ban on Turkish names was revoked in December 1989. In 1990-1, an additional 150 000 Bulgarian Turks left voluntarily for Turkey, forced by the deep economic decline which affected especially the ethnically mixed regions in Bulgaria (ibidem, 245-6). This decline was conditioned by the lowering of tobacco prices, the loss of Soviet block markets, the collapse of the construction sector, and by the loss of the privileges for the border regions, which had been a powerful economic tool for controlling emigration.

Lifting the ban on free movement after 1989 produced large migration waves from the ethnic Bulgarian population, too. Also compelled by the declining economy, and still experiencing travel as a form of political freedom, thousands of Bulgarians headed for Western Europe, USA, Canada, Australia and South Africa.<sup>4</sup> Public opinion asserted their number at several hundred thousands. Yet their free travel was hampered by a strict visa regime that served as a mechanism for controlling unwanted migration. Especially burdensome was the visa regime imposed by the EU countries given that Bulgaria signed an association agreement with the EU in 1995 and started accession negotiations in 2000. Put on the EU "negative" visa list in 1993, it was not until April 2001 that Bulgaria was removed from it and its citizens permitted a visa free entry for a short-term stay in the Schengen space. Although prior to that the majority of the applications for visas were ultimately approved, it was the time-consuming, expensive and often demeaning bureaucratic visa-granting procedures that effectively deterred Bulgarians from

<sup>3</sup> For its reasons see Ilchev 2000, 242-4

<sup>4</sup> Quoting newspaper data, Ilchev (2000, 266) writes that in the early 1990s some 300 000 ethnic Bulgarians left the country, heading for Western Europe, North America and South Africa



travelling to the EU. Bulgarian citizens ranked the lifting of the visa restrictions for short-term stay on the Schengen territory as the third most important event for the 20<sup>th</sup> century, following the end of Communism and the socialist take-over of September 1944 (Jileva 2002a, 273-4, 284).

#### **1.4. Conclusions**

Current migration trends differ significantly from the pre-1989 tendencies. From 1880 to 1988, around 1 283 000 people emigrated from Bulgaria, while 808 600 immigrated to the country, and in-migration included mainly ethnic Bulgarians living in the territories of neighbouring countries, while the main waves of out-migration were comprised mostly of ethnic minorities living in Bulgaria, predominantly ethnic Turks. The main reasons for both out- and in-migration were political. In-migration flows now include more refugees and foreign immigrants, while the out-migration has no such clearly expressed ethnic profile – it is characteristic for all the ethnic groups inhabiting Bulgaria at present. The main reasons for emigration now are economic.

The historical heritage has the following consequences for the current migration patterns:

The Bulgarian community abroad is quite diversified, including different social groups, with different ethnic origin and different motives for emigration. The notion of different groups of Bulgarians living abroad has been embedded in the new law on Bulgarians living outside of Bulgaria (of 11 April 2000), which introduced the concept of "Bulgarian community abroad". The political use of the term "Bulgarian community abroad" is helpful, but for analytical purposes and in the process of elaborating concrete policies it has to be differentiated in order to explain the specific characteristics of the different groups which ought to be treated in a different political manner. A special emphasis deserves to be put on new emigrants, whose motives for emigration are quite different from those of the old diaspora.

Secondly, there is still ethnically specific out-migration as the already existing large ethnic Turkish diaspora helps a lot the seasonal migration of ethnic Turks currently living in Bulgaria.

Thirdly, the in-migration of foreign citizens is a relatively new phenomenon and needs to be investigated and treated with special attention.



## 2. Overall migration scales in the present

### 2.1. Emigration

#### 2.1.1. Emigration Scales

As a whole, there are two official - though conflicting - sets of data accounting for the number of emigrants from Bulgaria in the decade following 1989, both of them produced by the National Statistical Institute (NSI). The first comes from border police data combined with the NSI's specialised observations executed in 12-15 border points in Bulgaria for the period 1991-1996, and the second - from a comparison between official data from the population censuses organised by NSI in 1992 and 2001.

a) The first set of data is based on border police data, showing the number of Bulgarian citizens who exited from and returned to the country in the framework of one year. Since the difference between the two figures is not a sufficient measurement of emigration, it was corrected through border observation data gathered on the basis of a methodology designed by Iordan Kalchev, currently Head of the Population Statistics Section of NSI (Natsionalen Statisticheski Institut 1992, 12; 1993, 11). The series of inquiries on Bulgarian citizens travelling abroad was conducted from 1991 to 1996. It took place at 12 to 15 border checkpoints through which around 2/3 of all border crossings with the main types of transport (auto, rail, air and water) were done. Observed were all Bulgarian citizens aged over 16 who exited or entered via the particular checkpoint. The investigations took place during one week in April and October in 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995 and 1996, 24 hours a day. Their goal was to establish the number of emigrants on the basis of a set of indicators, including socio-demographic ones. This information was to be combined with the respondents' declared answers to 3 main questions: "How much do you intend to stay in the foreign country? (few days; up to 6 months; 6-12 months; more than a year; I will stay there; I already live there)", "What is the reason of your travel? (business; education; health treatment; work under a state contract; work under a private contract; excursion/holiday/guest visit; marriage/family reunification; resettlement; I do not live in Bulgaria)", and "Would you settle there to live/work in that country? (yes, I will stay now; yes, if I have a possibility; I will return immediately upon reaching my travel aim)". In order to assure objectivity and lack of administrative and official pressure on the interviewed, the survey was executed in the "no man's land", after the conclusion of all border and duty controls in Bulgaria.

Apart from measuring the migration potential of the Bulgarian population which will not be discussed here, the NSI series of observations on border crossings pretended to have helped identify the number of emigrants from Bulgaria for the period 1989-1996. According to them, Bulgarian emigrants amounted to 654 000 people for these 8 years (Kalchev 2001, 128, 150-2).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> According to Kalchev (2001, 151), data from the 1992 census confirmed the evaluation of the emigration flows corroborated by the border inquiries. Border inquiries yielded the number of around 420 000 emigrants for 1989-1992, while census data set the number of emigrants from Bulgaria to slightly more than 450 000 for the same period. The statistics and figures from the border inquiries are used also in Totev / Kalchev 1999

**Table 2**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total emigrants from Bulgaria (border information)</b>
1989	218 000
1990	88 000
1991	45 000
1992	65 000
1993	54 000
1994	64 000
1995	54 000
1996	66 000

On the basis of these consecutive border-crossing observations, several other conclusions were drawn. After the "big excursion" and the "revival process", responsible for the migration boom of 1989, emigration started narrowing its scope and intensity. In 1989-91, emigration of Bulgarian Turks accounted for 90% of out-migration which was thus oriented mainly to Turkey. The average emigrant from Bulgaria in these years was an ethnic Turk, up to 30 years old, with secondary or below the secondary education, and of peasant background. In 1992-3, the scope and structure of the emigrant flows changed. The average emigrant became older and of better education; the share of ethnic Bulgarians and Roma increased while that of ethnic Turks decreased, although Bulgarian Turks continued to account for a large part of the migration flows. The migration flows were directed primarily to Canada, USA, Poland, Turkey, Czechoslovakia and Greece. In 1995-6, further transformations in the migration flows were detected. 60% of emigrants were between 30 and 49 years of age whereas the majority of emigrants were already recruited from urban dwellers. The direction of emigration flows radically changed as well: Germany became the preferred country for emigration, targeted by 20% of Bulgarian emigrants, followed by Austria (12%), the Czech Republic (11%) and Greece (10%). Around 10% of emigrants went beyond Europe, to the USA, Canada, Australia and the South-African Republic. The border surveys revealed that in 1995-6 there grew the number of Bulgarian emigrants returning from abroad. According to the calculations from the survey in 1996, around 19 000 Bulgarians who left the country in the last 4 years returned home during 1996 alone (Kalchev 2001, 153-74).

b) However, data from the national censuses conducted in 1992 and 2001 showed different figures for the migration flows. Between these two censuses, approximately 196 000 people emigrated from Bulgaria, while the number of persons who have returned or settled to Bulgaria was a total of 19 000. I. Kalchev acknowledged that it had been very difficult to count foreign citizens residing in Bulgaria for more than a year and that he believed their number was much bigger. The census figures were received through analysis of the information from 2.5% of all counted people as of 1 March 2001, done by NSI. **According to these statistics, net migration from Bulgaria is negative, amounting to roughly 177 000 people who had left the country in 1992-2001, or an average of 22 000 people leaving Bulgaria yearly** (ibidem, 175).

**Table 3**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Emigrants from Bulgaria (census data)</b>	<b>Immigrants to Bulgaria (census data)</b>
1992-2001	196 000	19 000

The NSI declares that its experts have executed a monographic investigation of all the migrants, but the results of it have not yet been published.

**The considerable discrepancy between the size of Bulgarian out-migration established through the two different methodological tools of NSI (border information and the censuses) has not been addressed meaningfully in the expert literature.** In the conclusion of his book *Out-migration of the population in Bulgaria*, published in 2001, Kalchev reverts to the border information trends, disregarding the census figures and regardless of the fact that border observations ceased in 1996. His summary is that net migration from Bulgaria for the period 1989-1996 is negative and is between 580-600 000 persons. For the whole period of 1989-2000, the prognostic net migration should be 640-670 000, and this number is calculated on the basis of expected immigration of 50-60 000 foreign citizens to Bulgaria in 1996-2000 only (Kalchev 2001, 213-4). The discrepancy between the statistical data does require explanation. On the one hand, it makes it impossible to account correctly for the emigration flows from Bulgaria during the last decade. On the other, it demonstrates the ultimate need of a unified methodology and closer coordination between the institutions dealing with migration issues in order to be able to establish with a better precision the size, direction and profile of migration flows.

**There are no reliable data on the number of Bulgarian emigrants abroad per country either.** The State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad, which is the state institution entitled to collect data about and implement the governmental policy towards Bulgarians abroad, has no concept of "emigrant" and works with the notion of "Bulgarians abroad". According to a high-ranking official in the Agency (*interview No. 1*), the new law on Bulgarians living outside of Bulgaria (of 11 April 2000) introduces the concept of "Bulgarian community abroad". It is divided in 3 groups:

a) old, traditional, historical diaspora, consisting of the heirs of people who emigrated before 1878, the year when Bulgaria gained its independence from the Ottoman empire, and Bulgarians left outside of the boundaries of the state due to political reasons and unsuccessful wars. Such are the Bulgarians in Bessarabia, Crimea, Russia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Romania, Northern Greece, Macedonia, Albania, Serbia and Montenegro.

b) contemporary diaspora, formed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Those are economic and sometimes political emigrants, who possessed Bulgarian citizenship at the time of migration. They include emigrants after the two world wars, settled in Europe, North and Latin America, Argentina, Australia, etc., and a newer diaspora, formed after 1989.

c) persons of non-Bulgarian origin, residing abroad, but who constitute part of the Bulgarian national and cultural identity. Such are the Bulgarian Turks, Jews and Roma. They had Bulgarian citizenship at the time of migration (and might still keep it), speak the Bulgarian language and are of Bulgarian socio-cultural identity.

According to the Agency's representative, there might appear a fourth group, too. Its members would be people who are gradually turning to Bulgarian consciousness as a result of their ancient roots, like the Bulgarians in Tatarstan for example.

The number of Bulgarians settled abroad after 1989 is not known, says the same representative of the Agency, because there is no unequivocal concept of "emigrant". The Bulgarian consular offices abroad cannot account for the size of the Bulgarian communities there, for the migrants are not obliged to register at the Bulgarian embassies. The Agency maintains contacts with 350 organisations of Bulgarians abroad, yet completely disregards the problem with irregular Bulgarian citizens there. According to its officials, the rights of such people should be exercised within the local

legislation. If the Bulgarians abroad are regular and documented migrants, they will be protected by the Bulgarian state through its embassy. If they are irregular, the Bulgarian state has no mechanisms of protecting them. *"For our Bulgarian state, there does not exist a problem with irregular migration"*, said the representative of the Agency, adding that such cases had diminished in number and were of no relevance (Interview No. 1).

Thus the Agency operates with incomplete statistics about the number of Bulgarians abroad. Its website contains a publication, *World Bulgaria* (Ianev / Pavlov 2000), which gives approximate numbers of Bulgarians abroad, gathered both from official foreign sources and unofficial indirect estimates. Sometimes, as in the case with Greece, the category of "Bulgarians abroad" refers to the old, historic diaspora and not to emigrants, let alone to labour migrants. Since it is put on the internet, one might take it as the official one. However, the institution's experts work with different statistics, again official and unofficial, the latter received on the basis of indirect indicators and partners' opinions (interview No. 2). To their regret, a 1995-6 project for monitoring of the emigration from Bulgaria had not been realised. The project aimed at using border police data and voluntarily filled in questionnaires by exiting and entering Bulgarians so as to establish the number of Bulgarian emigrants and their age, social, professional and educational profile. It could not be implemented because the Ministry of Interior did not have enough computers at the borders until recently. The following table provides data of the number of Bulgarians abroad the Agency uses at that moment:

**Table 4**

Country	Number of Bulgarians, from <i>World Bulgaria</i>	Number of Bulgarians, from interview with SABA expert
USA	Between 80 000 and 150 000	Officially 55 000, unofficially 200 000; of them 80 000 post-1989 migrants
Canada	120 000-220 000 "old" emigrants	A total of 200 000, including 80 000 post-1989 migrants
Australia and New Zealand	5 000 people in Australia	5000 post-1989 migrants
Germany	30 000 - 35 000 at least 10% of the total are	300 000, of them 150 000 post-1989; marginalized - live on social benefits and are of criminal behaviour
Greece	200 000 Bulgarian Christians who had preserved their national identity	Regular 50 000; irregular - 150 000
Spain	More than 3 000	10 000, some of them of criminal behaviour
Italy	Around 6 000	10 000, some of them of criminal behaviour
France	Between 8 000 - 10 000	10 000
Portugal	No data	10-12 000
Austria	Around 6 000	regular 80 000; irregular - 20-30 000; Austria is a transit country
Great Britain	Around 3 000 - 4 000	25 000 (number given by the Bulgarian consul in London)
Czech Republic	Together with Slovakia - 7-8 000, with their families - over 20 000	30 000, of them 20 000 post-1989 migrants, which are a criminogenic factor
Poland	No data	less than 10 000
Hungary	Around 5 000	under 10 000, because of the language barrier

*World Bulgaria* mentions also that the number of Bulgarians in 6 North-european countries, namely Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands, is around 10 000 people, the majority of them in Sweden and Belgium.

**It is obvious that there lacks a precise unified methodology for observing emigration trends which leads us to one of the most important conclusions of the study. There is an urgent need of elaborating such a methodology and establishing of a stable, publicly accepted database on the processes of emigration, differentiating the period of staying abroad. There are no data about seasonal migration, let alone the irregular one. Checking the number of irregular emigrants is a very difficult task that requires more efforts and coordination of activities among different institutions, Bulgarian and foreign.**

In order to gather some data on the number of Bulgarians engaged in seasonal work abroad, on 8 August 2003 the project team, together with the IOM-Sofia branch, sent a short questionnaire to the mayors of all 263 municipalities in Bulgaria. Although the data received are not the result of strict and exhaustive checks by municipal clerks, they are useful because they give an approximate picture of the scope of seasonal migration as perceived by municipal officials in Bulgaria. In our opinion, if the municipalities are required to gather such data on a regular basis, this could be a valuable source for the future information database.

The questions asked in the questionnaire were how many people exercised seasonal work abroad (women or men), for what period of time, where, and for what type of work. The mayors were also asked to briefly evaluate the effect of migrant work abroad on their municipalities. Until 2 September 2003, replies have arrived from 103 municipalities (4 of them with more than 50 000 inhabitants), with 8 of them saying there was no available information. According to the approximate estimates of the mayors who have provided data so far, the number of migrants doing seasonal work is 73 989 people of a population of 1 173 052 people, or an average of 6.3%. The top 10 municipalities (from those answered the questionnaire) with the biggest percentage of migrants are:

- Momchilgrad (45%), Kurdzhali region
- Rila (25%), Kiustendil region
- Kotel (20%), Sliven region
- Dupnitsa (9-18%), Kiustendil region
- Satovcha (15.3%), Blagoevgrad region
- Tvurditsa (11-14%), Sliven region
- Suedinenie (13.4%), Plovdiv region
- Stamboliiski (13%), Plovdiv region
- Tutrakan (12.1%), Silistra region
- Dzhebel (10.3%), Kurdzhali region

The Top 10 municipalities with the biggest absolute number of migrants are:

- Momchilgrad (14 000 migrants), Kurdzhali region
- Dupnitsa (5-10 000), Kiustendil region
- Iambol (8 000), Iambol region
- Stamboliiski (3 000), Plovdiv region

- Satovcha (2 800), Blagoevgrad region
- Sandanski (2 500), Blagoevgrad region
- Tutrakan (2 500), Silistra region
- Svilengrad (2 500), Haskovo region
- Tvarditsa (1 800 - 2 300), Sliven region
- Petrich (2 000), Blagoevgrad region.

In 28 municipalities the migrants are predominantly female, while in the rest men represent more than 50% of the migrants. Work is done primarily in Greece, Spain and Italy, but also in Portugal, Germany, Israel, Holland, Cyprus, Turkey and Belgium. There are also seasonal migrants to Austria, the Czech Republic, the USA, Sweden, Libya, Poland, France, Russia, the UK, as well as (rarely) Canada, Ireland, Serbia and Denmark. Work is predominantly seasonal, for a period less than 12 months, and migrants work in construction, agriculture, domestic care (for babies, elderly and sick people), housekeeping, hotels and restaurants, and the textile industry. Fewer of the migrants work as drivers, medical personnel, car technicians, or are students.

Migration is also ethnically specific, meaning that in some municipalities the emigrants come entirely from the Turkish ethnic group in Bulgaria, whereas in others they are ethnic Bulgarians. In still other municipalities, Roma emigration prevails. **The fact that migration from Bulgaria has a regionally as well as ethnically specific profile suggests that regulating and managing migration would require regionally and ethnically differentiated policy measures.**

## 2.1.2. Out- Mobility – direction of movement

**Table 5. Trips of bulgarian residents abroad by purpose of visit and by country in 2002<sup>6</sup>**  
(number)

Country	Total	Tourism	As guests	Professional	Others
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 188 384</b>	<b>865 027</b>	<b>176 027</b>	<b>1 933 319</b>	<b>214 011</b>
Austria	70 081	38 722	1 277	27 937	2 145
Belgium	27 225	9 495	1 329	14 338	2 063
United Kingdom	38 434	2 447	2 930	17 848	15 209
Germany	222 007	78 970	10 282	109 814	22 941
Greece	464 063	53 944	20 299	367 767	22 053
Denmark	4 262	412	457	2 730	663
Israel	9 082	196	551	4 913	3 422
Ireland	1 617	55	156	544	862
Spain	61 188	32 031	4 433	17 855	6 869
Italy	70 187	33 046	3 225	28 760	5 156
Canada	5 585	187	895	571	3 932
Luxembourg	503	45	29	334	95
Former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia	244 102	86 211	61 922	93 627	2 342
Netherlands	38 757	21 303	1 263	14 350	1 841
Norway	2 879	291	430	1 163	995
Poland	20 626	7 892	1 160	10 660	914
Portugal	2 627	844	252	848	683
Romania	156 414	42 196	10 060	102 453	1 705
Russian Fed.	21 582	1 533	1 581	14 686	3 782
Slovakia	2 247	746	63	1 291	147
USA	34 072	1 320	5 985	5 142	21 625
Turkey	925 795	132 186	11 591	725 521	56 497
Ukraine	16 003	1 081	546	13 555	821
Hungary	23 697	10 088	573	12 285	751
Finland	1 267	75	154	642	396
France	47 409	14 434	3 300	23 171	6 504
Czech Rep.	36 742	19 557	1 023	15 109	1 053
Switzerland	12 934	2 581	871	6 296	3 186
Sweden	3 858	405	562	1 723	1 168
Yugoslavia, FR (Serbia and Montenegro)	553 130	259 297	21 961	266 846	5 026
Other countries	70 009	13 437	6 867	30 540	19 165

The table clearly shows that the most visited countries are the neighbouring countries and this is probably due to visits to relatives and friends in Turkey, Serbia and Macedonia, or in some cases to petty cross-border trade. Greece's ranging fourth in the hierarchy of mobility might be due to temporary seasonal migration. As qualitative research demonstrates, a significant number of Bulgarians go to Greece in the summer in order to pick oranges and lemons or grow tobacco and olives.

<sup>6</sup> See the website of the National Statistical Institute at [www.nsi.bg](http://www.nsi.bg)

Comparing data on mobility with data on the destinations of potential migration given below, one can see that there is a difference between the most visited countries by Bulgarians and the potential migration destinations. The most “popular” destinations for the Bulgarians from the EU member-states are Greece and Germany. As there are no data concerning irregular emigrants, one could presuppose that the number of tourists represents the highest limit of the possible number of irregular migrants in a given country.

As a whole, in the studies on *potential migration* done by IOM and NSI<sup>7</sup>, data on the direction of emigration from Bulgaria tend to overlap. According to the inquiry executed in the framework of the 2001 census, the direction of emigrant flows from Bulgaria in the last couple of years is the following: to Germany - 23%, the USA - 19%, Greece - 8%, Spain - 8%, the UK - 6%, Italy - 6%, Canada - 5%, France - 4%, etc.

For the emigrants for good, the preferred destinations are the USA (25%) and Germany (20%), then there follow Spain, Canada and the UK with around 6-7% each. Labour migrants, regardless of the duration of stay, would most often go to Germany (25%) and the USA (15%), then come Greece (11%), Spain (9%), the UK (8%), Italy (5%), etc.

25% of the respondents state they would organise and undertake emigration personally, 22% would use mediating firms and organisations ensuring them contracts abroad, 12% would recur to invitations from friends and relatives, while 10% would apply for a "green card" or different lotteries. 9% of the interviewed would rely on an individual work contract and the help of tourist agencies.

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<sup>7</sup> IOM-Sofia has executed three Migration Potential Studies for Bulgaria in 1992, 1996 and 2001 with similar methodology and samples. The method used was that of semi-standardised interviews. In 2001, 1 972 interviews were carried out involving respondents aged 18-60 from 200 clusters in 108 towns and villages throughout the country. Of the 1 972 interviewed, 1 678 persons were of Bulgarian ethnic origin, 124 were Turks, 118 were Roma, whilst 52 respondents belonged to other ethnic groups. The NSI surveys were done during the national censuses in 1992 and 2001. They are representative, and the sample for 2001 comprised 2.5% of the population



**Data from IOM surveys on the profile and motives of potential migrants from Bulgaria:**

**Table 6. If you were intending to leave to work in another country for a couple of months, which country would you prefer to leave for?**

	1992	1996	2001
Germany	-	28%	16.6%
The U.S.A.	-	11%	10.9%
Greece	-	13%	6.8%
Italy	-	6%	3.4%
Canada	-	5%	3.4%
Great Britain	-	2%	3.4%
France	-	4%	3.0%
Scandinavian countries	-	3%	2.6%
Australia	-	2%	2.6%
Other Central or Eastern European countries	-	2%	1.9%
Turkey	-	6%	1.8%
Switzerland	-	2%	1.7%
Spain	-	-	1.6%
Other	-	7%	0.9%
Russia	-	-	0.5%
Israel	-	-	0.3%
Austria	-	-	0.2%
The Netherlands	-	-	0.2%
Belgium	-	-	0.2%
Sweden	-	-	0.2%
The Czech Republic	-	-	0.2%
Cyprus	-	-	0.2%
Portugal	-	-	0.1%
Poland	-	-	0.1%
New Zealand	-	-	0.1%
Malta	-	-	0.1%
Ireland	-	-	0.1%
Argentina	-	-	0.1%
Yugoslavia	-	-	0.1%
Kuwait	-	-	0.1%
Republic of South Africa	-	-	0.1%
Have not identified any	-	7%	12.8%
No response	-	2%	24.0%

**Table 7. If you were intending to go and live permanently abroad, which country would you prefer to leave for?**

	1992	1996	2001
Germany	-	12%	11.5%
The U.S.A.	-	22%	11.0%
Australia	-	8%	3.3%
Canada	-	8%	3.2%
France	-	3%	2.5%
Greece	-	-	2.4%
Italy	-	5%	2.1%
Scandinavian countries	-	3%	2.0%
Switzerland	-	5%	2.0%
Great Britain	-	2%	1.9%
Turkey	-	19%	1.6%
Other Central or Eastern European countries	-	2%	1.6%
Spain	-	-	1.6%
Other	-	4%	0.9%
Russia	-	-	0.4%
Other CIS countries	-	-	0.2%
Austria	-	-	0.2%
The Netherlands	-	-	0.2%
Belgium	-	-	0.2%
Sweden	-	-	0.2%
The Czech Republic	-	-	0.1%
New Zealand	-	-	0.1%
Ireland	-	-	0.1%
Brazil	-	-	0.1%
Republic of South Africa	-	-	0.1%
Denmark	-	-	0.1%
Have not identified any	-	4%	14.7%
No response	-	3%	36.2%

The data show a difference between destinations of permanent migration and of temporary migration. Apart from Germany, the rest of the preferred countries for emigration for good are the USA, Australia and Canada. The identification of these countries as attractive for emigration and settlement might be due to their active immigration policies and the possibility for easier legal immigration. However, the fact that they are at the greatest distance from Bulgaria might contribute to their image as dream countries of emigration, related more to fantasy and contemplation rather than to real mobility. Real mobility, as it is seen on the first table, concerns more the neighbouring countries and the EU member-states.

Although not representative for the whole country, the data gathered from the municipalities in August-September 2003 show that the preferred destination of short-term migration (from a couple of months up to 1-2 years) is Greece, followed by Spain, Italy, Germany and The Netherlands. These data reveal a growing interest in the new countries of immigration as a destination for seasonal labour migration.

### 2.1.3. Trends in potential migration

**Data on the trends of potential migration are contradictory. In addition, since these are trends in potential migration, they express attitudes, and are not based on real migration and mobility.**

The NSI forecasts a stable and even decreasing migration.

- Data from the representative sociological survey executed during the 2001 census demonstrate that around 8% of the population aged 15-60 found it "quite probable" or "probable to some extent" to *emigrate for good* to another country. These potential emigrants could be regarded as future emigrants for good. As regards the time when they would set out to accomplish their intentions, 25% of them were resolved to do that during that very year (2001), 49% in the next 2-3 years, and 26% in the near future.
- The share of those who thought it was "quite probable" to emigrate for good was 3.8%.
- There existed another category of potential emigrants - 7% of the total - who intended, and it was "quite probable" or "probable to some extent", to *go to work or study abroad* for more than a year. This category of potential emigrants formed the flow of external labour migration. Concerning the time of realisation of their intentions, the structure of this group of emigrants was almost identical to that of emigrants for good. 26% intended to emigrate that very year (2001), 48% in the next 2-3 years, while 25% planned their trip for the near future.
- The share of those who thought it was "quite probable" to go to work/study abroad was 5.2%.
- The latter two groups of emigrants had made up for the long-term external emigration of the Bulgarian population. It comprised 15% of the population in the target age-brackets. For the purposes of comparison, one should mention that the identical study executed in 1996 set the scope of long-term external emigration to nearly 25%.

5% of the respondents contemplated *short-term emigration*. According to them, it was "quite probable" and "probable to some extent" to go abroad for a couple of months, namely for a period of less than a year, so as to work or study/specialise. Of that group, 24% intended to emigrate that very year (2001), 44% - in the next 2-3 years, and 31% - in the near future.

- Around 10% thought it probable during 2001 or the next years to go abroad as tourists or guests of relatives and friends.

The share of those who thought it was "not particularly probable" and "improbable" to travel at all outside of Bulgaria was 70%.

A total of 80% of the population of that age had no intention to emigrate from the country, meaning they were not potential emigrants.

The change in the structure and size of potential emigration between 1996 and 2001 is shown on the tables below<sup>8</sup>.

**Table 8. 1. Go and work abroad for a couple of months?**

Years	1996	2001
Degrees	%	%
1. Quite probable	6%	4,8%
2. Probable to some extent	11,5	8,9
3. Not particularly probable	23,9	15,2
4. Improbable (no probability)	58,6	71,0

**Table 9. 2. Go and work/study abroad for a couple of years?**

Years	1996	2001
Degrees	%	%
1. Quite probable	6,8	5,2
2. Probable to some extent	13,2	7,5
3. Not particularly probable	28,5	13,8
4. Improbable (no probability)	51,5	73,5

**Table 10. 3. Go and live in another country?**

Years	1996	2001
Degrees	%	%
1. Quite probable	3,0	3,8
2. Probable to some extent	3,9	4,7
3. Not particularly probable	11,0	10,2
4. Improbable (no probability)	82,1	81,3

**The data show that there is a tendency for stabilizing both short-term and permanent emigration.** As it has already been said, when using and interpreting the data on potential migration, one should bear in mind that this is sociological information. There are always factors (reasons) pushing people to react not as they wished and said. Some inquiries show that 10-15% of human activities directly correspond or are the result of personal attitudes.

The prognostic evaluation of expected actual emigration, done by the NSI, shows the following: Preliminary data from the 2001 census show that the Bulgarian population aged 15-60 is 5 029 000 people. The persons who stated that it was "quite probable" and "probable to some extent" to go and live, work, or study abroad for more than a year (potential emigrants) constituted 15% of the above population, or 754 000 persons. Persons who said it was "quite probable" to go and live (3.8%) or work or study abroad for more than a year (5.2%) constituted a total of 9% of the target population, or 452 600 persons. The prognostic evaluation of the expected actual emigration is based on this number with expected realisation of 12% and 15% (expert evaluation), whereas persons

<sup>8</sup> The 1996 data are from the sample study of potential external migration of IOM-Sofia. The size of the sample was 1 917 persons aged 18-60. The 2001 data are from the sample study of potential external migration executed during the census of 1 March 2001 and with the same methodology. The size of the sample was 25 542 persons aged 16-60

who stated they would wait for a "green card" have been excluded. The total number thus is 407 340 people.

**Table 11. Prognostic evaluation of expected actual emigration**

No.	Prognostic evaluation of the actual number of emigrants	With 12% realisation	With 15% realisation
1.	Total	48 900	61 100
	Including labour emigrants	28 200	35 300
	Of them in Europe	20 700	25 900
2.	During the first year (03.2001 – 03.2002) – total	12 500	15 700
	Including labour emigrants	7 400	9 300
	Of them in Europe	5 500	6 800
3.	For the next 2 – 3 years (03.2002 – 03.2005) – total	24 000	29 900
	Including labour emigrants	13 700	17 100
	Of them in Europe	10 000	12 600
4.	In the near future (for a period of 2 – 3 years after 03.2005) – total	12 400	15 500
	Including labour emigrants	7 100	8 900
	Of them in Europe	5 200	6 500

Source: National Statistical Institute

As is evident from the table, there is a tendency towards a *decreasing total number of expected emigrants*, which, depending on the respective degree of realisation, will be in the range of 12 500 - 15 700 in the first year, 8 000 - 10 000 people in each of the next 3 years, and in the range of 4 000 - 5 000 people a year in the near future. Identical decrease is observable as regards labour emigrants, including those who are expected to choose destination countries in Europe. The expected labour emigration from Bulgaria to Europe amounts to 5 500 - 6 800 people in the first year, 3 300 - 4 200 persons in each of the next 3 years, and in the range of 1 700 - 2 200 people a year in the near future. **On the basis of these numbers, one may conclude that there is no danger of an emigration wave from Bulgaria which could destabilise the labour markets in the EU member-states.**

There are data from other surveys which differ slightly from the abovementioned, yet they show also that there is no large increase in the number of potential migrants.

Data from the surveys of IOM-Sofia, *Profile and Motives of Potential Migrants from Bulgaria*:

**Table 12. Do you consider it quite probable, probable to some extent, not particularly probable, or improbable that you would do the following?**

	Quite probable			Probable to some extent			Not particularly probable			Improbable			Don't know / no response		
	'92	'96	'01	'92	'96	'01	'92	'96	'01	'92	'96	'01	'92	'96	'01
Go abroad for a short while as a tourist	33%	8%	15.5	17%	11%	16.3	23%	22%	25.8	23%	55%	39.2	5%	4%	3.1
Go abroad to work there for a couple of months	12%	6%	17.1	16%	11%	17.4	28%	24%	24.0	37%	54%	38.1	7%	5%	3.4
Go abroad to work there for a couple of years	8%	5%	16.3	12%	11%	14.7	25%	20%	22.4	47%	60%	43.3	8%	4%	3.2
Go abroad to study for a couple of years	-	2%	5.3	-	2%	5.0	-	9%	13.5	-	81%	72.7	-	6%	3.5
Permanently resettle in another country	3%	3%	6.1	3%	4%	7.2	11%	11%	15.1	70%	76%	66.2	13%	6%	5.5

If we aggregate these data, combining the answers “quite probable” and “probable to some extent”, the following table will appear:

**Table 13**

	2001	1996
Work abroad for a couple of months	34.5%	17%
Work abroad for a couple of years	31%	16%
Study abroad for a couple of years	10%	4%
Resettle abroad permanently	13%	7%

**Table 14. Would you encourage your children (if you have any, or when you have some) to:**

	1992		1996		2001	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Go abroad to work there for a couple of months	-	-	66%	34%	74.7%	25.3%
Go abroad to work there for a couple of years	-	-	59%	41%	72.7%	27.3%
Go and permanently live in another country	-	-	26%	74%	35.8%	64.2%

Data from a survey done in May 2002 by the Bulgarian sociological agency Alpha Research:

**Table 15. Some people are emigrating from Bulgaria, others have decided to live in it. Which of the following versions expresses more your personal view?**

I have decided to emigrate permanently from the country and I have undertaken concrete steps for this	3%
In principle I do want to emigrate permanently from the country but I did not do anything concrete in that direction	20 %
I do want to live here	74%
No answer	3%

**We will not dare to make definite conclusions on the possible scope of emigration waves from Bulgaria. This notwithstanding, what is clearly seen in all the tables is that the desire for temporary migration dominates over that for permanent one. Out qualitative study tends to support this assumption, and we can say that the most typical type of migration in Bulgaria will be the temporary one.**

## 2.2. Immigrants

### 2.2.1. Immigration Scales

The number and profile of immigrants to Bulgaria are better known to the official authorities than the communities of Bulgarian emigrants abroad. Concerning immigration Bulgaria remains primarily a transit country, despite the visible signs of its greater attractiveness as a final destination country manifested in the last years, and especially after the start of the EU accession negotiations in 1999. The National Police provides the following unpublished data on the number and profile of foreigners in the country:

In 1994, 44 953 foreign citizens resided legally in Bulgaria with permanent and long-term residence permits. In 2002, their number rose to 60 028. (See Appendix 4, Graph 1 - Number of foreigners with permanent and long-term residence permits, 1994-2002).

Structurally, there are no major changes in the countries of origin of the permanent and long-term residents in Bulgaria. One of the most significant tendencies is the decreasing number of citizens from CIS countries and the increasing number of Russian citizens, although the total number of CIS and Russian citizens remains stable. This is due to a change in the Citizenship Act of the Russian Federation, after which a lot of ethnic Russians citizens of CIS countries are substituting their previous citizenship with a Russian one. Another trend is the increasing number of citizens of the countries from the so-called "second circle of neighbourhood", i.e. other neighbouring states such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Cyprus and Ukraine, as well as from Turkey.

In 2002, Bulgaria has been visited by 5 562 917 foreigners, of which 53.8% were tourists, 3.24% on professional trips, 0.43% on guest visits, and 4.25% for other reasons. 38.28% of the foreigners were transit travellers. This means that for 61.72% of the foreigners Bulgaria has been the final destination.

The traffic of foreigners to and through Bulgaria becomes more complex and better organised. Changes in legislation in 2001-2, improvement of the administrative capacity of the specialised border police institutions and the tightened and more effective control on the Bulgarian borders led to restructuring of the channels for illegal immigration to the EU countries. The chief migration flows are from Asia and Africa, namely from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Nigeria, Sudan, Ethiopia and Algeria.

According to unpublished border police statistics, more than 12 000 Bulgarian and foreign citizens were stopped at the Bulgarian borders in 2000. 5 856 persons, of whom 3 071 foreigners, were apprehended at the green (land) and blue (sea and river) borders. The figures reveal a two-directional migration pressure on Bulgaria - from Asia to Europe and from the former Soviet republics and Romania to Macedonia and Greece. Among the offenders, the Romanian citizens were 1 584. Their entry in Bulgaria was visa-free under a bilateral agreement, thus legal, but they crossed the country and attempted to enter into Greece illegally. In 2001, when visa requirements for short-term travel of Romanians in the Schengen states were lifted, the number of offences from Romanian citizens radically diminished.

By 2000, the number of illegal immigrants' attempts to cross the Bulgarian-Turkish border rose substantially. 5 408 persons trying to enter Bulgaria illegally were stopped there. While in 1998 irregular migrants using the channel from Turkey through Bulgaria towards Western Europe were 15% of the total number of offenders, in 1999 they were 38%, in 2000 - 81% and in 2002 - 85%. This channel is most often used by Afghani, Iraqi, Palestinians and Kurds.

6 635 foreigners defying the border requirements for entry to Bulgaria were not allowed to enter. The majority of the attempts for illegal entry to Bulgaria were done by citizens of Turkey (1 934), Romania (550), Moldova (535), Bosnia (325), Macedonia, Yugoslavia, and the CIS countries. 3 581 foreigners, who resided in Bulgaria illegally or had violated Bulgarian laws, had been expelled from the country.

The total number of border crossings in 2000 was lower than the one in 1999 with 120 000. In 2001, when visa restrictions for short-term travel of Bulgarians in the Schengen zone were lifted, total border crossings exceeded those in 2000 by 9%. Total border crossings in 2002 surpassed those in 2001 with 12.5%. Border crossings of Bulgarians in 2001 exceeded those of 2000 by 10%; border crossings of Bulgarians in 2002 surpassed those in 2001 by 19%. There were 6 343 000 border crossings of Bulgarians through all the checkpoints in 2002.

Illegal green- or blue-border crossings of Bulgarian citizens were 560 in 2002, while in 2000 they were 2 785. The respective figures for Romanian citizens for 2002 are 50 and for 2000 - 1 584. Thus lifting visa restrictions for short-term entry in the Schengen space resulted in more than 4-fold decrease in the number of border regime violations of Bulgarian citizens; for the Romanian citizens this decrease is 30-fold. For the rest of the foreign citizens the figures are relatively stable (Graphs 2, 4, 5, 6).

### **2.2.2. Refugees**

In 1994, a new category of immigrants was introduced into Bulgarian legislation - refugees and people with humanitarian status of different duration, and the first statuses based on the Decree for Granting and Regulating the Refugee Status were given in 1995 ([www.oref-bg.org](http://www.oref-bg.org)). Prior to that, in late 1992, 40 persons were seeking asylum in Bulgaria. Since the procedure was not yet legally regulated, the refugee status was



granted by the Bureau of the UNHCR in Sofia. In 1993, 120 persons from Croatia, mainly women and children possessing legal refugee status, resided in Bulgaria and were accommodated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare through an emergency fund of the state budget (Bobeva 1994, 234).

In 1992-3, a National Bureau for Territorial Asylum and Refugees was established, which in 1999-2000 was transformed into an Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers, becoming a State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers in December 2002. This institution manages, coordinates and controls the implementation of the state policy for granting a refugee and humanitarian status to foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria. It has five directorates, an inspectorate, and three territorial units, namely two registration and reception centres in Sofia and in the village of Banya, Nova Zagora municipality, as well as one integration centre in Sofia. The registration and reception centres are responsible for conducting registration, accommodation, medical checks, social and medical assistance, and the procedures for granting refugee and humanitarian status until the respective decision on the application for asylum enters into force. The integration centre provides vocational training, courses in the Bulgarian language, social work with children and adults, and measures for cultural adaptation.

From 1993 until 1 January 2003, a total of 11 253 persons (7 601 men, 1 748 women and 1 904 children) applied for refugee status. They came from 72 states, but most of all from Afghanistan, Iraq, Armenia, Yugoslavia and Iran. In 2002, Afghanistan lost its position of a Top 1 country of origin of asylum seekers to Iraq, followed by Armenia, Nigeria, Iran and Sudan (Graph 4, 6 and 7).

The channels asylum seekers used so as to arrive in Bulgaria are usually illegal, through the green border with Turkey. Immigrants from Africa also cross primarily the border with Turkey, illegally and in groups, although some of them (Nigerians) might arrive legally on the airport, with passports, tourist vouchers or business visas, but to present themselves without passports to the State Agency for Refugees. There are single cases of persons attempting to cross illegally the "blue" border on the Black Sea and the Danube river, and around 100 such cases a year on Sofia Airport. The biggest share of irregular immigrants of all nationalities comes from Istanbul, from Zeytinburnu district, where the poorest of immigrants live and wait to be transferred further west. As a rule, unauthorised crossings happen in groups of 10-25 people, their size depending on the traffic organiser. In the previous years, the groups were led mainly by co-nationals of the migrants, while now traffickers tend to be Turks on the Turkish territory and Bulgarians on the Bulgarian territory. The rough price of trafficking through the Bulgarian-Turkish border amounts to 450-600 USD/person. The majority enters in sealed trucks, which arrive in Sofia and drop the immigrants in the vicinity of the capital, or even on the barren field right in front of the State Agency for Refugees' building (*interview No. 8 and interview No. 9*).

Of all the applicants, 1 356 persons (including 327 children) were granted refugee status according to the Geneva Convention of 1951. 24% of them are aged up to 17, and 76% are of 18-59 years of age. Thus the number of refugees in working age is 3 times higher than that of children (Graph 5).

Humanitarian protection was granted to 2 668, people, of whom 595 children and 245 women (Graph 8).

The applications of a total of 2 287 asylum seekers (of them 469 children) were officially

rejected, while the procedure of another 4 658 had been interrupted. Rejections are based on the Council of Ministers' lists of safe countries of origin and safe third countries (Graph 9). Anyone whose application was rejected, has the right to appeal and to remain in the country until a final decision is reached. The majority of the rejected applicants use their right to appeal, yet in 90% of the cases the Supreme Administrative Court confirms the rejections. The legal procedures of appeal take more than a year; the reasons for appeal are chiefly procedural questions from the process of granting a refugee or humanitarian status.

14 days upon reception of the final decision, both the rejected applicants and those with interrupted procedures become irregular and join the group of undocumented migrants attempting to enter the EU member states. Their number for 1995-2002 is 6 945, and their names are sent to the Ministry of Interior which assumes responsibility for them from that moment on. It is difficult to deal with rejected applicants on that stage, for there are no direct flights with the majority of the risk countries, the immigrants are without documents and there might not be embassies of their countries in Sofia to provide assistance (*interview No. 8*). For example, Afghan immigrants whose humanitarian status has expired and has not been prolonged beyond 1 year, need to pay 100 USD for issuing of a new passport and another 500-600 USD for a plane ticket to Afghanistan (through Istanbul, because there is no direct flight to Kabul), while the Afghan embassy is not in a position to help them financially (*interview No. 14*).

In 2001-2, the exit of irregular migrants from Bulgaria was through Romania, via Hungary, to Austria and further west. Since the mid 2002, the Bulgarian-Serbia border at Vidin has been increasingly used for this purpose. Another exit point is the Bulgarian-Greek border, the channels leading from the Bulgarian-Turkish border, through Sofia into Greece, or via Macedonia into Greece (*interview No. 4*) (Fig. 30, 31).

Those who receive a refugee or humanitarian status have all the rights of the Bulgarian citizens except for the rights to vote or be elected, join the army, and occupy positions for which Bulgarian citizenship is necessary. Yet this also means that the refugees become entirely responsible for their subsistence. The majority of them have insufficient or no knowledge of Bulgarian, which, combined with the high unemployment rate in Bulgaria, is an additional obstacle towards their finding a job. Jobless and unable to pay for accommodation, the refugee becomes a "risk factor". The majority of them fail to secure legally their subsistence, and some choose to migrate again, to a richer country. There is no reliable information about how many of them manage to do that. Others join the grey economy, finding job on the notorious Iliantsi market for cheap or smuggled goods at the outskirts of Sofia, which is one of the central places attracting foreign labour from Turkey, China, Asia, the Arab countries, Africa, etc. (*interview No. 8 and No. 14*).

The majority of the refugees are concentrated in Sofia. Some of them have stalls or small shops on Iliantsi market and Women's market or in their vicinity, others join informal labour networks of their better-off co-nationals in Bulgaria.<sup>9</sup> Few of them begin their own businesses, like for example the prosperous Afghan-owned construction companies in Sofia. In all these cases knowledge of the Bulgarian language is not needed - in the first one the refugees are self-employed, in the second they function within their own ethnic network, and in the third they are rich enough in order to hire both Bulgarian staff and translators/interpreters.

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<sup>9</sup> In 2001, there were 150-200 refugees working at the Iliantsi market or some other places (UNHCR Bulgaria / State Agency for Refugees in Bulgaria / New Bulgarian University 2003, 12)

There are a few Afghan immigrants who had settled successfully in Sofia. The majority of them work at Iliantsi market, *"where the atmosphere is better for foreigners - there are Arabs there, all kinds of foreigners"* (interview No. 14). These migrants trade with Turkish goods, and are satisfied with the conditions in Bulgaria. They have bought apartments, houses and have integrated. For example, a former colonel with 6 children, who is at fight with his relatives in Afghanistan - thus cannot return - prepares food at home, sells it at Iliantsi and manages to survive. Some representatives of the Afghan community are very poor and receive financial help from richer relatives in the west, sometimes with the mediation of the embassy (interview No. 14).

Otherwise the permanent Afghani residents in Bulgaria are about 150 families, of 4-5 people each, the majority of whom are former students in Bulgaria. They have two organisations - a "Cultural Society" and an "Afghan Society" - yet both of them are not particularly active, owing to the deep political divisions among the refugees. Some of the members are mujahiddins, others are Communists, while those apolitical are not welcome anywhere. Afghan children attend Bulgarian schools and speak Bulgarian better than their parents. Some of the children do not even speak the Persian language, while others are enrolled in secondary school No 18 in Sofia which teaches Persian, Chinese, Arab, etc. At this moment, the presence of Afghan immigrants in Bulgaria is at its lowest level ever. According to a high-ranking official of the Afghan embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria is a transit country for his co-nationals, who pass through Bulgaria on their way to the west. Transit Afghan migrants are thousands, and they travel without notifying the embassy. Yet their number declines, because of 3 reasons - better control on the Bulgarian-Turkish border from both sides, the wave of former refugees who return to Afghanistan after the start of the reconstruction of the country, and the poverty of Afghani in their homeland who do not have 5-6 000 USD so as to emigrate to the west. The Afghan embassy expects that many of the Afghan immigrants to Bulgaria will return to their homeland after a 2-year period of active reconstruction there, and the first to go back will be those with humanitarian status, who are in the worst situation here (interview No. 14).

### 2.3. Conclusions

**There is no precise unified methodology for observing emigration trends and this leads to the conclusion that there is an urgent need of elaborating such a methodology and establishing of a stable, publicly accepted information database on the processes of emigration, that would be able to take account of the period of staying abroad.** There are no data about seasonal migration, let alone the irregular one. Keeping track of the number of irregular emigrants is a very difficult task that requires more efforts and coordination among different institutions, both Bulgarian and foreign ones. A possible partial solution might be the regular gathering of information from the Bulgarian municipalities about the size and destination of seasonal migration.

Data from the national censuses conducted in 1992 and 2001 showed that between these two censuses approximately 196 000 people emigrated from Bulgaria, while the number of persons who have returned or settled to Bulgaria was a total of 19 000. Net migration from Bulgaria is negative, amounting to roughly 177 000 people who had left the country in 1992-2001, or an average of 22 000 people leaving Bulgaria yearly. Other data (of state agencies, newspaper articles and interviews) show a significantly larger number of emigrants.

It is difficult to make precise conclusions about the possible scope of emigration almost entirely on the basis of research of potential migrants. Yet one is able to detect **a tendency showing that temporary seasonal migration dominates over the permanent one.** The preferred destinations are Greece, Spain, Italy, Germany, and The Netherlands and the main motive is related to finding a job, or one that is better paid. The Bulgarian seasonal emigrants work mostly in agriculture, construction building, domestic care, housekeeping, hotels and restaurants, and the textile industry. The profile of migrants as well the destination of migration is geographically determined and depends on already created networks. So in some Bulgarian municipalities female emigration prevails, while in others migrants are predominantly male. Migration is also ethnically specific, meaning that in some municipalities the emigrants come entirely from the Turkish ethnic group in Bulgaria, whereas in others they are ethnic Bulgarians. In still other municipalities, Roma emigration prevails. **The fact that migration from Bulgaria has a regionally as well as ethnically specific profile suggests that regulating and managing migration would require regionally and ethnically differentiated policy measures.**

As it is seen from the above cited table No 11, the prognostic evaluation of expected actual emigration done by the experts of the National Statistical Institute, the prognostic evaluation of expected actual emigration, done by the experts of the National Statistical Institute on the basis of preliminary data from the 2001 census, shows that in the next five years there is no danger of an emigration wave from Bulgaria which would destabilise the labour markets in the EU member-states.

The number and profile of immigrants to Bulgaria are better known to the official authorities than the communities of Bulgarian emigrants abroad. Concerning immigration, Bulgaria remains primarily a transit country despite the visible signs of its greater attractiveness as a final destination country manifested in the last years, and especially after the start of the EU accession negotiations in 1999. The National Police data clearly show that there is a tendency of increasing the number of foreign citizens staying legally in Bulgaria with permanent and long-term residence permits.

Structurally, there are no major changes in the countries of origin of the permanent and long-term residents in Bulgaria in the last couple of years. One of the most significant tendencies is the decreasing number of citizens from CIS countries and the increasing number of Russian citizens, although the total number of CIS and Russian citizens remains stable.

The traffic of foreigners to and through Bulgaria becomes more complex and better organised. Changes in legislation in 2001-2, improvement of the administrative capacity of the specialised border police institutions and the tightened and more effective control on the Bulgarian borders led to restructuring of the channels of illegal immigration to the EU countries. The chief migration flows are from Asia and Africa, namely from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Nigeria, Sudan, Ethiopia and Algeria.

Lifting visa restrictions for short-term entry of Bulgarian citizens in the Schengen space in April 2001 resulted in more than 4-fold decrease in the number of border-regime violations committed by Bulgarian citizens.

In 1994, a new category of immigrants was introduced into Bulgarian legislation - refugees and people with humanitarian status of different duration, and the first statuses based on the Decree for Granting and Regulating the Refugee Status were given in 1995.

From 1993 until 1 January 2003, a total of 11 253 persons (7 601 men, 1 748 women and 1 904 children) applied for refugee status. They came from 72 states, but most of all from

Afghanistan, Iraq, Armenia, Yugoslavia and Iran. Of all the applicants, 1 356 persons (including 327 children) were granted refugee status according to the Geneva Convention of 1951. 24% of them are aged up to 17, and 76% are of 18-59 years of age. Humanitarian protection was granted to 2 668, people, of whom 595 children and 245 women.

### 3. Factors contributing to migration movements

#### 3.1. Factors contributing to emigration

##### 3.1.1. Push factors

In the absence of sound research of the emigrant communities, one can attempt to reveal the motives for migration from the inquiries on potential migration as well as from the in-depth interviews of the present study.

The representative sociological survey in the framework of the 2001 national census has demonstrated that the character of and motivation for internal and external migration differed significantly. The main reasons for internal migration are related to the family - reunification of divided families, marriage, elderly relatives moving to younger kin, etc. Such are 50% of the answers. Only 24% of the interviewed who had changed their place of residence within Bulgaria singled out finding employment as a motive for internal migration, while 13% would move in search of a job that suited their qualification. 22% of the respondents said they were looking for a better standard of living, whereas 15% - for a better future of their children. Women accounted for the bigger part of internal migration, namely 53% versus 45% men (there were 2% non-respondents).

On the contrary, the dominating motives for potential external migration are rather economic, relating to a desire for living and working in a country with a higher standard of living, devoid of material problems. There is different motivation behind emigration for good (preferred by 8% of potential migrants) and emigration for finding employment (potential labour migrants) being 7% of all the respondents.

The primary aim of potential emigrants for good is "to live and work in a country of a higher standard of living" (54%). Every fifth of them (20%) would attempt to solve material problems - personal or familial - through emigration. More than 9% of those who would emigrate for good stated that they did not wish to live in Bulgaria anymore.

The chief goal of potential labour emigrants would be to improve the material conditions of their lives (47%). 35% of labour migrants would be tempted abroad by the higher standard of living and working outside of Bulgaria. Nearly 5% of both these groups target particular education, of themselves or of their children.

Among potential short-term emigrants, those who would like to solve material problems abroad (42%) predominated. Higher standard of living abroad was attractive for 33% of short-term migrants. 5% of potential short-term migrants would move for better professional career abroad, while 4% aimed to improve their education.

Although all potential emigrants have particular goals to achieve through migration, a considerable part of them did not yet know how their aims might be reached. 42% of long-term emigrants and 39% of short-term emigrants had no idea what their activities abroad could be.

The greatest percentage of the potential emigrants for good - 12% - intended to be craftsmen. 7% of the emigrants for good would be engaged in trade and the hotel industry, while 6% would continue their education. Potential labour emigrants also intended to be craftsmen - 15% of them would pursue such career. 9% of labour migrants would work in agriculture, and 5% would be employed in trade and the hotel industry.

An identical percentage of labour migrants - 6% - would hope to continue their education or improve their qualification. The biggest share of potential short-term emigrants would also prefer to be craftsmen - 14%. 9% would look for job in agriculture, and 7% in the hotel industry and trade. Industrial work is attractive for 5% of all categories of potential migrants.

That migration is conditioned to the greatest extent by economic reasons is evident from the representative national surveys of IOM-Sofia.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 16. What are the three most significant reasons for which Bulgarians would decide to leave Bulgaria?**

	1992	1996	2001
Economic reasons	-	-	89.5%
Disappointment with Bulgaria	-	-	50.5%
Career development	-	-	30.1%
Relatives abroad	-	-	20.7%
False perceptions about the West	-	-	15.5%
Adventure/change	-	-	10.2%
Political reasons	-	-	8.2%
Curiosity	-	-	6.9%
Ignorance and confusion	-	-	4.4%
Enjoy human rights	-	-	4.0%
Ethnic reasons	-	-	4.0%
Culture reasons	-	-	2.0%
Religious reasons	-	-	1.3%
Do not know	-	-	3.9%
No response	-	-	3.1%

**Table 17. How significant do you think is each of the reasons, listed below, to make you leave Bulgaria?**

	Very significant	Fairly significant	Insignificant	Cannot tell/ no response	Total
People can earn a living in the West even if they have a low-paid job	58.7%	21.4%	8.2%	11.7%	100.0
There are more opportunities abroad to learn business skills	34.6%	27.5%	18.2%	19.7%	100.0
There is greater personal and political freedom abroad	27.5%	25.0%	27.5%	20.0%	100.0
The experience of friends gone abroad is a good one	41.7%	26.5%	15.7%	16.2%	100.0
Living conditions abroad are better	62.7%	21.1 %	5.0%	11.2%	100.0
People like you find better employment opportunities abroad	55.4%	17.3 %	9.45	17.85	100.0
It seems that economic conditions in Bulgaria will stay the same or get worse	57.7%	19.7 %	7.9%	14.8%	100.0
There is not sufficient foreign aid to help Bulgaria create new opportunities for people like you	33.5%	22.1%	18.6%	25.7%	100.0

So, Bulgarian citizens are virtually unanimous that the chief reason for migration is economic hardship at home. While 77% consider it the paramount motive behind migration, a still higher number - 90% - place it among the three main reasons for leaving Bulgaria. This opinion is expressed mostly by unmarried respondents, by respondents below the age of 30, by respondents who reside in the larger cities as well as by respondents who occupy a higher social position, and enjoy a higher standard of living. Down in the list of the top three reasons for which a Bulgarian may decide to leave its home country are disappointment with reforms in Bulgaria (selected by 50% of respondents), and career development (favoured by 30% of interviewees).

The economic reasons for migration reflect the perception of deteriorated economic situation in Bulgaria. Around 81% of respondents who plan to live and work abroad are dissatisfied with their current financial situation. The financial status depends both on the high unemployment rate in the country, and the absence of well-developed labour market capable of accommodating a huge number of highly qualified citizens. 20% of interviewed who intend to work in a foreign country believe that they will be able to find there a better job than the one they currently hold. Another 14% expect to secure a job similar to but better paid than the one they have now. While the first figure seems to present the number of Bulgarians who possess high qualifications but are compelled to work in under-qualified positions, the second presents the number of those who are dissatisfied chiefly with their remuneration yet are not willing to sacrifice their profession to any occupation in a foreign country just for the sake of a bigger financial award. Both figures might well show the percentage of high-skilled Bulgarians willing to migrate, who appear to amount to nearly 35% of all potential migrants. These migrants regard affluent societies as a challenge and nurture the ambition for success and prosperity in an extremely competitive environment. In this sense, they conform to the worldwide pattern of increasing mobility among the highly qualified personnel, which has acquired unprecedented dimensions in the last decade.

In contrast, those who are ready to take either a lower-skilled or illegal job are 15% of the respondents who intend to migrate. It is symptomatic that another 18% of people who wish to work abroad do not yet know what kind of a job they will be doing. We might presume that the latter figure also reflects possible migration of low-skilled persons, increasing the percentage of low-skilled migration pressure to a total of around 33%. Among them might be highly qualified people, yet what is more important is their readiness to occupy positions in a foreign country requiring less skills. If this contention is correct, then we may conclude that high-skilled migration slightly outnumbers the low-skilled one in the profile of the Bulgarian migration potential.

As was already mentioned, another powerful motive behind the intention to migrate is the existence of relatives abroad, a reason for migration chosen by 21% of respondents who have decided to work and live in a foreign country. This figure is reinforced even further when compared to the number of Bulgarians who would not migrate because of family ties keeping them in their home country. Relations with family, friends and the society as a whole constitute a significant reason which binds 62% of all Bulgarians aged 18-60 to their homeland. For 78% of respondents who do not plan to migrate, ties with their family and friends are strong enough to deter them from leaving Bulgaria. Therefore if friends and relatives do go abroad, this would constitute a mighty incentive for displacement and cross-border movement for their peers and kin. Provided that 20% of respondents have relatives permanently living in some EU member-state, this percentage may well reflect a stable migration intention. We may expect a chain



migration with around one-fifth of the respondents who wish to migrate following their friends and relatives who had already settled abroad.

It is interesting to note that 17% of all respondents have listed adventure, change and curiosity among the top three reasons for migration. This would certainly diminish the relative weight knowledge of the country targeted for migration has within the motives governing cross-border displacement. Ethnic, cultural and religious reasons occupy the bottom of the scale of important motives for migration, having received the votes of only 7% of respondents who have decided to move abroad.

The indicators and the ranking of Bulgaria in the *European Comparison Program 1999* confirm the main motivation motive for emigration - the bad economic situation in Bulgaria (see Appendix, Tables A1 and A2).

These data on the GDP in European countries need hardly any commentary. They show that the answers of potential migrants have an objective basis. The level of unemployment in June 2001 was 19.4 %, now it is reported to be about 15 %. This percentage is especially high in some mountain regions.

### 3.1.2 Pull factors

**Here are the answers of the respondents of the survey of IOM-Sofia *Profile and Motives of Potential Migrants from Bulgaria* on the question**

**Table 18. Why have you chosen exactly that country for possible migration?**

	1992	1996	2001
That country is a quiet one, safe and politically stable	-	-	61.6%
It has a good labour market	-	-	51.1%
Some friends/relatives of mine live there	-	-	25.1%
It is easy to obtain a residence permit for that country	-	-	15.9%
I have some relatives there	-	-	15.7%
Other	-	-	11.1%

As the table shows, the most important pull factors are the good conditions for life, the better opportunities on the labour market in the countries-destinations of migration, and the presence of friends and relatives there. The labour market and the family networks will be analysed in the next paragraphs.

### Labour market

As it has been demonstrated, the dominant form of migration from Bulgaria is the seasonal labour migration. The work abroad of Bulgarian citizens is possible in two settings - within the framework of an official intergovernmental labour exchange/agreement programmes, or through finding individually an employer wishing to hire foreign labour, by the help of a mediator or directly contacting the foreign company/institution (Stankova 2003).

For the last 12 years, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has undertaken measures with regard to labour emigration aimed to establishment of conditions for development of short-term labour emigration, for return and realisation in the home country and for prevention of illegal emigration. More detailed presentation of these agreements is

given in Chapter 5. During the last 12 years, there operated 4 intergovernmental labour agreements of Bulgaria with Germany and Switzerland through which around 20 000 Bulgarians managed to exercise work abroad. The practice shows that after expiring of the term of the employment contracts abroad, the Bulgarian workers return back to Bulgaria.

Although there are no statistics about how many Bulgarians succeed in finding work on their own, outside of the framework of intergovernmental agreements, it is safe to assume that their number by far surpasses that of the workers sent abroad through the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Part of the problem lays in their irregular position and the fact that they often work without adequate visas, in the informal sectors of foreign economies, thus it is extremely difficult to identify them. Public opinion in Bulgaria and newspaper articles emphasise that sometimes one third, and even one half, of the population of working age of some Bulgarian villages and towns sets out to begin seasonal labour mainly in Spain, Italy, Germany, Greece and The Netherlands. This trend is particularly sorely felt in the smaller municipalities and villages where the mobility of considerable part of the population is very visible and has repercussion on the social and economic life of the community. Unfortunately, there lacks a rural-urban indicator in the existing statistical data on migration, which makes it almost impossible to account for the precise share of rural versus urban Bulgarians undertaking seasonal work abroad.

According to recent publications in the Bulgarian press, large groups of seasonal migrants especially from Southern and North-western Bulgaria travel regularly to Italy, Greece, The Netherlands, Spain, etc. to find short- or longer-term employment. Almost all people of working age in Kutovo village, *Vidin region* - over 120 people - have migrated abroad, and the majority of them had settled in the small Italian villages of Nettuno, Rimini and Anzio, at a 50 km distance from Rome (Nikolov 2003, 14).<sup>11</sup> Forced abroad by unemployment in Bulgaria, men work as car-mechanics and agricultural workers in the greenhouses for broccoli and the kiwi gardens, while women try to find work as assistants of elderly people. In previous years, a hard work there would earn 60 EUR per day (6 EUR/hour) but now competition from Albanians, Romanians, Indians and Moroccans is harsh and one earns 3 EUR/hour at best. Accommodation is roughly 200 EUR/month. The first migrants from Kutovo came to Italy 7-8 years ago and the majority of them were irregular, those with working visas and regular documents being only a few. The average age of the migrants is 33, and 1/3 of them are families. The majority of them live in one district, which the Italians call "Bulgarian"; there are even Bulgarian restaurants there. Every week, 6-7 buses from Vidin depart for Italy, and carry to the Bulgarians in Nettuno and Rimini 70-80 parcels of luggage, mainly food (rakia, Bulgarian cheese and dried meat). Kutovo is a Vlach village, some of whose inhabitants do not speak Bulgarian. Yet, according to the local mayor, they learn Italian faster, "since this is the language of money".

More than half of the residents of the *town of Ardino, South-eastern Bulgaria*, inhabited by Bulgarian Turks, live on seasonal work in The Netherlands, pushed by unemployment, low wages and lack of career opportunities in Bulgaria (Bairiamova 2003, 14). There is a

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<sup>11</sup> The journalist Katia Iordanova and the operator Genadi Tsokov from Vidin Cable Television have shot a series of 9 documentary films dedicated to the fate of Bulgarian migrants from North-western Bulgaria to the towns of Anzio, Nettuno, La Vigno and San Lorenzo in Italy, between 11 and 16 July 2001

"Dutch" quarter in Ardino, where there is a seasonal migrant in every house, practically all of them irregular. Until 2001, before the lifting of visa-restrictions for travel in the Schengen area, Turks received visas with more difficulties than the Bulgarians, this is why many Ardino residents had voluntarily changed their names to Bulgarian ones. But even the new Bulgarian names were useless in the Netherlands, where the people from Ardino were registered in the Dutch companies under Dutch names. They were hired through private labour offices kept by Turks and Kurds who maintained all connections with the Dutch employers willing to hire irregular workers. The Hague is the heaven for irregular workers from South-eastern Bulgaria - from Ardino, Kurdzhali, Haskovo and Smolian. Inhabitants of Ardino, who had once learnt English and German, had found out that the most useful language in The Hague was Turkish. Migrants over 35 years of age can rarely be hired; work is mainly agricultural, in the greenhouses (*interview No. 16 and No. 34*) Upon return to Bulgaria, they carry money and use them to build houses and buy furniture and cars. "Let Allah help all Bulgarians to find work abroad", says a woman from Ardino recently deported from The Netherlands.

Around 400 seasonal migrants from *Vulkosel village - Gotse Delchev region, South-western Bulgaria*, inhabited by 3 000 Bulgarian Muslims (Pomaks) - work in the Portuguese town of Tovira, in the construction industry and agriculture (Sega 2003). Pushed by unemployment, male residents of Vulkosel started migrating in groups in 2002. They have marked their compact presence and have publicly announced their foreign status by putting a street sign with the name of their home village next to the name of the town of Tovira. Similar stories can be told about Liliache village, Vratsa region, North-eastern Bulgaria, inhabited by Bulgarians and Vlachs, whose nearly 1/2 of the population of working age had found jobs in Spain. Such are the Turkish villages of Tatul, Gorna Chobanka, Raven, Nanovitsa in Momchilgrad municipality, the villages of Drangovo, Gorski izvor, Gorno kupinovo, Podkova in Kirkovo municipality, the town of Kameno in Bourgas region, etc.

### Family and other informal links

Both surveys on potential migration and qualitative surveys show that family and informal networks are the main mediator for going abroad, while the mediating firms are perceived as not particularly credible.

**Table 19. Where do you get information from on the legal opportunities to leave for another country?**

	1992	1996	2001
Friends/relatives	35%	36%	49.8%
Television	11%	18%	37.3%
Newspapers	6%	14%	33.1%
The radio	1%	9%	26.6%
People, whose job is to advise on these issues	9%	7%	13.2%
Foreign embassies	6%	9%	11.3%
Rumours	9%	7%	11.2%
Official information from the Bulgarian Government	3%	5%	10.1%
Official information from foreign governments	9%	4%	7.5%
Other (please specify)	1%	2%	1.3%
Do not care/no response	7%	34%	26.4%

**Table 20. There are people and companies whose business is to provide advice to Bulgarians who want to go and live or work in another country. Have you ever been in contact with such people or companies?**

	1992	1996	2001
Yes	16%	17%	20.1%
No	80%	57%	57.0%
Do not care	3%	24%	20.3%
No response	1%	2%	2.6%

**Table 21. Based on your experience, are they credible?**

	1992	1996	2001
They are credible	10%	2%	2.8%
They are credible to some extent	33%	15%	16.3%
They are not particularly credible	27%	21%	22.5%
They are not credible at all	19%	24%	20.6%
Do not care/ have not been in contact with such people or companies	9%	32%	33.2%
No response	2%	6%	4.7%

In addition, the existence of relatives abroad, as it was already mentioned, is a very powerful motive behind the intention to migrate, a reason for migration chosen by 21% of respondents who have decided to work and live in a foreign country. This figure is reinforced even further when compared to the number of Bulgarians who would not migrate because of family ties keeping them in their home country. Relations with family, friends and the society as a whole constitute a significant reason which binds 62% of all Bulgarians aged 18-60 to their homeland. For 78% of respondents who do not plan to migrate, ties with their family and friends are strong enough to deter them from leaving Bulgaria. Therefore if friends and relatives do go abroad, this would constitute a mighty incentive for displacement and cross-border movement for their peers and kin. Provided that 20% of respondents have relatives permanently living in some EU member-state, this percentage may well reflect a stable migration intention. **We may expect a chain migration with around one-fifth of the respondents who wish to migrate following their friends and relatives who had already settled abroad.**

### **Ethnic migration**

The NSI data show that the ethnic structure of potential emigrants corresponds to a great extent to the ethnic structure of the population in Bulgaria. Potential emigrants from Bulgaria include 80% ethnic Bulgarians, 12% Turks, 6% Roma, and 2% other. Among those who would emigrate for good the ethnic Bulgarians are 81%, the Turks - 13%, and the Roma - 2%. Potential labour migrations would be formed by 77% ethnic Bulgarians, 12% Turks and 8% Roma. For short-term migration these figures are, respectively, 83% ethnic Bulgarians, 10% Turks and 4% Roma. On the basis of these data, one can conclude that emigration for good would be more popular among Turks. Roma prefer labour migration, and ethnic Bulgarians - short-term migration.

Our research team found out that emigration to different countries has different ethnic profile; it is also geographically determined and depends on the informal migrant networks already operating in different countries. For instance, it is told that from all the

irregular Bulgarian migrants in the Netherlands, 80% are ethnic Turks, most of them coming from the South-eastern Bulgarian district of Kurdzhali, 10% Roma and 10% Bulgarians (*interview No. 15*).

### **3.1.3. Irregular migration, including trafficking and smuggling in human beings**

Trafficking and smuggling in human beings is another aspect of irregular migration. The department of illegal trafficking of Bulgarian citizens at the National Office of Border Police, created in December 1999, is fighting with the traffic of Bulgarians abroad, and especially, of women. One can only indirectly account for the number of Bulgarian women trafficked abroad, i.e. through the number of deported women Bulgarian citizens, although it will always be smaller than the real number of the victims of traffic. According to the head of department, there is a tendency towards raising the number of Bulgarian women deported from abroad and decreasing the number of women non-Bulgarian citizens expelled from Bulgaria.

The traffic in women non-Bulgarian citizens - chiefly from Russia, Moldova and Ukraine - was drastically reduced after successful police actions against traffic organisers, among whom were some Bulgarian border guards and Romanian policemen. Instrumental in the struggle against the illegal traffic of Russian and Ukrainian women through Bulgaria was the imposition of visa requirements for Russian and Ukrainian citizens in October 2001, which was one of the measures for harmonisation of the Bulgarian visa regime with that of the EU. The introduction of these visa restrictions resulted in effectively curtailing the illegal traffic in women from these countries. The direction of human traffic from Bulgaria underwent transformations as well. While until 2000 women were trafficked primarily to Greece, after 2000 the flows were oriented to Western Europe, mainly to France and Belgium, now to Spain and Holland, too (*interview No. 4*).

The reasons for the traffic are above all economic. The majority of the Bulgarian women victims of traffic come from North-eastern Bulgaria - from the regions of Dobrich, Ispirih, Turgovishte, Razgrad - where unemployment and the lack of prospects are hitting the young people especially badly. Border police experts have detected a "geographic specialisation" among Bulgarian traffic organisers. Traffickers from Pazardzhik export women to Belgium and Holland, those from Sliven send the women to France. Traffic organisers from North-eastern Bulgaria have recently found a new destination in Poland, while Greece is targeted by traffickers from Petrich, in the South-west, because of the geographic proximity (*interview No. 4*). There are single cases of villages (around Sliven) with a chain migration abroad of women victims of traffic (*interview No. 11*).

Since the victims are, as a rule, of lower education and their age is falling - there are even 14-16 year old girls among them - they are not in a position to evaluate appropriately the risks behind finding employment abroad. Many of them are tempted by vague promises, others are cheated right away. Those who have become victims of fraud are the first to return: they do succeed to escape within 2-3 or maximum 6 months. Some of them are placed in shelters, managed by inter- and non-governmental organisations such as IOM, Nadia Centre, Animus Foundation, etc. Despite that the anonymity of the capital attracts returned victims of traffic to stay in Sofia, non-governmental experts recommend that they return to their home places and use the extended network of their family and relatives in order to re-integrate faster into society. In 1998, Nadia Centre hosted 9 victims of traffic in its shelter, in 1999 - 1, in 2000 - 3, in 2001 - 3, and in 2002 - 17 (but has

consulted 25). There are several examples of successful re-integration of victims of traffic both in and outside of Sofia (*interview No. 11*). But one of the problems is the fear of the victims of the traffic organisers: *“I feel safely here and I want to stay here, because when I return to Bulgaria ‘they’ will find me and I do not want to imagine what will happen to me. The Bulgarian police could not protect me”*, says a Bulgarian prostitute in Holland, living now in a shelter there (*interview No. 19*).

Because of irregular migration, deportations of Bulgarian citizens from the west have recently increased.

Graphs 1 and 2 in the Appendix show the number of deported Bulgarian citizens in 2001 and 2002, according to Border Police data.

In the last three years, there were sharp changes in the profile of women victims of traffic coming from and through Bulgaria. While the number of women foreign citizens expelled from Bulgaria drastically fell, the number of Bulgarian women deported from European countries rose. In 2000, there were 888 women foreign citizens expelled from Bulgaria, nearly all of them coming from former Soviet republics. In 2001, their number was 763, and in 2002 – 34. On the opposite, while the number of Bulgarian women deported from abroad was 679, in 2001 it rose to 1 122, and again to 1 958 in 2002. Almost all of the women were deported from European countries, with single cases coming from Israel, Turkey, the USA, Saudi Arabia, and Australia.

Even in countries where the presence of Bulgarian citizens is rather insignificant, one can detect a certain rise in the number of Bulgarian immigrants, asylum seekers, and deported Bulgarians (e.g. for staying without a visa or residence permit, working illegally, etc.). For example, in 1998-2002, their number in Denmark was the following:

**Table 22**

	Bulgarian immigrants in Denmark	Bulgarian asylum seekers in Denmark	Bulgarians, other than asylum seekers, expelled from Denmark
1998	87	8 (0.10% of total)	4 (0.12% of total)
1999	105	10 (0.09% of total)	2 (0.10% of total)
2000	120	11 (0.11% of total)	n.d.
2001	109	21 (0.17% of total)	14 (0.81% of total)
2002	137	37 (0.86% of total)	22 (1.23% of total)

However, one should add that the number of Bulgarians integrated into and accepted by the Danish society also rose:

**Table 23**

	Bulgarian citizens with permanent residence in Denmark	Bulgarian citizens granted Danish citizenship
1998	352	20
1999	385	16
2000	407	39
2001	419	44
2002	445	51

In 1998-2002, the Danish Embassy in Sofia had issued 80-200 residence and work permits to Bulgarian citizens per year. The total number was divided more or less evenly into three categories, i.e. 1) students, 2) professionals going to work in Denmark (typically doctors, engineers, and IT experts), and 3) Bulgarian citizens who have married Danish citizens and who are settling in Denmark.<sup>12</sup>

The Bulgarian government applies administrative measures against Bulgarians who have violated foreign countries' legislation, namely a ban on exiting the country for a certain period of time. Last year it was up to 1 year, but now it has been extended to up to 2 years, in order to prevent criminal behaviour of Bulgarian citizens abroad. The measure is enforced through taking the passport from the offender and sending it to the passport authorities in the offender's place of residence. According to border police experts, their work will be significantly facilitated if Bulgaria becomes a member of Europol. A new law for fighting the trafficking in humans was promulgated in the *State Gazette* of 20 May 2003, which places a special emphasis on the protection of victims who agree to testify against traffic organisers. It establishes a National Commission for Fighting the Trafficking in Humans whose president will be a vice-premier.

### **3.2. Factors contributing to immigration**

One of the pull factors for people seeking asylum in Bulgaria is the financial, social and health assistance the applicants for refugee status automatically receive upon registration and during potential appeal. They are given 40 BGN/month, and their accommodation, health care and education of children is covered by the State Agency for Refugees. According to a high-ranking official from the embassy of Afghanistan in Bulgaria, these conditions are "*100 times better than those in Turkey, Pakistan, and Afghanistan itself*" (interview No. 14). This assistance is thought to be one of the reasons for which a lot of irregular immigrants to Bulgaria decide to apply for a refugee status, thus legalizing their presence in the country at least for a while.

According to the State Agency for Refugees, more than 70% of asylum seekers do not comply with neither of the 5 conditions for granting refugee status, namely to be prosecuted because of their racial, religious, national, social or political identity. The Agency has found out that the majority of asylum seekers are economic migrants, sometimes even those coming from Iraq. During the interviewing procedure at its offices, it often turns out that the push factors behind migration had been the dire economic situation in Iraq rather than the dictatorship and the political climate. Some asylum seekers from Egypt and other Arab-speaking countries pretend to be Iraqi or Palestinian, knowing that these categories had seldom been denied refugee or humanitarian status. The Agency employs native interpreters who recognise the particular dialects, and apply a variety of measures to check the claimed identity, i.e. asking questions about the currency in Iraq or details of Baghdad's topography. The asylum seekers learn about the practices of the Agency in Istanbul, in Zeytinburnu district, where they wait to be trafficked to the west (interview No. 9). Communication with immigrants from Africa is easier for they speak English and French, yet almost all of them are economic migrants.

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<sup>12</sup> The project team thanks the Danish embassy in Sofia for the data provided



It is interesting to note that representatives of the National Office of Border Police and of NGOs working with refugees have detected identical transformations in the refugees' social and educational profile in the last couple of years, meaning that the push factors for their immigration are increasingly related to the economic conditions in the sending countries rather than to the political situation there. In the late 1990s, those seeking asylum in Bulgaria were predominantly richer, highly educated immigrants, most of them Afghani, coming with their families. Now they come alone, are of lower education - sometimes illiterate in their own language - with no qualification and from peasant regions (*interview No. 3*). Before the war in Afghanistan, asylum seekers from Afghanistan comprised chiefly adherents of the former regime of Najibullah, with pro-Soviet views, legal businesses, and aversion to drugs. They openly declared their political opinions, and the reason for their emigration was indeed political. After the American attack against Afghanistan, the profile of Afghan immigrants radically changed. The recent Afghan asylum seekers are followers of the Taliban, and migrate to Bulgaria for economic reasons. From Afghanistan there come now illiterate people, drivers, and shepherds. At the moment, the educational level of Iraqi immigrants is much higher than that of the Afghani. The Iraqi refugees come alone or with their families. Yet the peak in family migration was in 2000-1 for all nationalities, whereas now families of refugees become rare. There is a pronounced tendency for single, male migration: conforming to a typical Islamic strategy, the most educated and intelligent person from a kin group is sent abroad on the money of all the relatives; when he settles down successfully, he pulls out the rest of the relatives, too (*interview No. 14*).

### 3.3. Conclusions

**The main factors for emigration are economic** - the relatively high level of unemployment in Bulgaria and the low standard of living. In the last two years, the official statistic has registered a relative economic growth, as well as decreasing unemployment. If this trend continues in the future, it will probably stabilise migration, too. As it has already been shown, **potential and real migrants are oriented more to seasonal migration. Signing bilateral agreements will regulate this process and will prevent irregular migration in large numbers.** The practice has shown that after the term of employment contracts abroad expires, the Bulgarian workers return to the territory of Bulgaria.

There is a process of strengthening the control over and the struggle against trafficking in human beings which is another factor that will reduce in the future the illegal channels of emigration.

Another important factor for emigration is the already created networks of relatives and friends, the diasporas, which will provoke and maintain a relatively stable flow of emigrants. But at the moment, most of these networks function as a means for coping with current difficulties, i.e. they are oriented more to seasonal rather than to permanent migration.

As for immigrants and refugees, there have been transformations in their social profile in the last couple of years. The push factors for immigration are more related to the economic conditions in their countries rather than to the political situation there.



## 4. Impact of migration movements on the subject society

### 4.1. Impact of emigration

#### 4.1.1. Positive impact – the growing remittances

Over the past decade, there has been observed a marked trend in the structure of migration flows from Bulgaria. While in the early 1990, emigration for good dominated, in subsequent years migration was undertaken for shorter periods of time, with temporal, seasonal migration constituting an ever growing part of out-migration flows. Unfortunately, specialised research on patterns of seasonal migration from Bulgaria has not been done, and one has to rely on newspaper articles and in-depth interviews only.

According to data provided by the Bulgarian National Bank, the amount of remittances is growing every year and has even surpassed the amount of direct foreign investments in the Bulgarian economy (Kapital 2003, 9-12). The National Bank keeps yearly statistics about the inflow of money sent by the Bulgarian emigrants abroad, which, as it assumes, falls under the rubric "current private transfers". These data are collected from the Bulgarian banks, which are obliged to report on a monthly basis the size of transfers from abroad to Bulgaria. "In the last years, current private transfers comprising primarily transfers from emigrants and Bulgarians working abroad to their families in Bulgaria substantially rose both as an absolute sum and as a percentage of the GDP", says an analysis of the Bulgarian National Bank on the balance of payments for January-November 2002. While in 1998 the amount of current private transfers was 177.3 million USD, in 2001 it already reached 402.1 million USD. While in the former year current private transfers constituted 1.4% of GDP, in the latter they were already 2.5% of GDP. For the period January-November 2002, current transfers from Bulgarians living abroad amounted to 449.6 million USD, surpassing the amount of direct foreign investments by 20.9 million USD and making 2.9% of GDP.<sup>13</sup>

Thus for the 11 months of last year, the remittances were 56.67 USD per person. A great deal of them were transferred through the non-banking systems of Western Union and MoneyGram, which have numerous offices throughout Bulgaria and a vigorous advertising campaign in electronic and paper media. According to the data of the Bulgarian National Bank, remittances surpassed by far the financial help coming from the EC pre-accession funds, which for January-November 2002 amounted to 100.8 million USD. Some experts believe the size of remittances is also comparable to the amount of the export of Bulgarian goods abroad. They think that remittances are responsible for the state of growing trade and consumption at a time of shrinking production in Bulgaria, stating that "Bulgaria gains more from the export of people than from the export of goods". According to data of the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad, at least 300 000 Bulgarian emigrants send their families in Bulgaria small amounts of money, ranging from 100 to 300 USD. They function as a kind of social assistance, provided through migrants' work abroad rather than from the state budget.

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<sup>13</sup> According to sociologists from the Social-democratic Institute in Sofia, remittances constitute 800 million BGN a year. 26% of families in Bulgaria have relatives abroad. In addition to the financial assistance from abroad, 100 million EUR are imported by the seasonal workers in Greece and Western Europe. Comparing Bulgaria to Albania and post-war Serbia whose populations were supported through emigrant money, one of the leaders of the Bulgarian Socialist Party concluded that the foreign businesses' trust in Bulgaria had declined, using migration in the internal political power struggle (24 chasa: 2003)

One should make a disclaimer on these data. First, the rubric "current private transfers" contains not only remittances, but transfers from abroad of any kind. The Bulgarian National Bank does not yet have a precise methodology to calculate the amount of remittances only. Lacking a geographic indicator too, it can distinguish neither between transfers from the USA, Germany, France, etc., or between transfers to Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna or other Bulgarian cities. However, representatives of the Bulgarian National Bank are aware of the growing importance of remittances for the balance of payments in the country and are in the course of elaborating a finer methodology to calculate them. Unaccountable for are also the money transferred cash from Bulgarians returning from abroad. It is a wide-spread practice of temporary seasonal emigrants to carry money personally on their way back home, for they are not obliged to declare sums below 5 000 BGN (3 012 USD) on the Bulgarian border.

Despite the considerable size of remittances, local authorities have not thought about calculating the amount of money coming to their municipalities through the labour of Bulgarian emigrants abroad. *According to the secretary of Momchilgrad municipality - Kurdzhali region, with a concentrated presence of Bulgarian Turks - her institution had not attempted to identify this money as a viable financial resource to be appropriately channelled in the local economy (interview No. 28). In spite of the widespread beliefs that the remittances in the region of Kurdzhali are at least 100 million EUR a year, she conceives of them as a "dead capital", immobilised into purchases of apartments, houses or luxury cars. "This money does not circulate, does not serve the local business", adds the secretary who is convinced that receiving EC programmes' grants is the only mechanism for stimulating the regional economy. In her opinion, money from seasonal workers abroad is not significant, because such people work primarily in low-wage sectors, do not bring a lot of money, and whatever they bring is used for consumption (often conspicuous - "Momchilgrad municipality is the region with most Mercedes cars per person in the whole country", interview No. 28).*

Low wages and insufficient start-up capital is the reason stated by migrants themselves when asked why they had not contemplated beginning a small business in their home places. *"Money is little. How much could one save for a year? Less than 10 000 levs, maximum 800 levs per month. That is it, this is not enough for business", says a seasonal migrant who had worked in the construction industry and the greenhouses in the Netherlands (interview No. 34). According to his calculations, one should work there for 4-5 years in order to save enough for starting up a small private enterprise. With a salary of around 800-900 EUR, and expenses for rent at 150 EUR and food at 150-200 EUR per month, saving for opening up of a small business at home seems a very long-term strategy to the seasonal migrant.*

Yet the pattern of allocating migrants' money to houses and apartments has boosted the market of immobile property in the region, whose prices have increased significantly in the last years. On the one side, there are numerous apartments and houses, emptied as a result of the mass emigration of Bulgarian Turks to Turkey throughout the 1990s, and from the other - seasonal workers with savings in euro who are able to buy more expensive property.

However, the mayor of Kirkovo municipality - an ethnically mixed region on the Bulgarian-Greek border in South-eastern Bulgaria, inhabited by Bulgarian Muslims (Pomaks) - believes the situation in Momchilgrad is much better than in his area where seasonal labour migration is also a pronounced pattern, with flows directed to The Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Israel, less Germany and increasingly Greece. This is so

because seasonal migrants from Momchilgrad were the first to start working in Western Europe, in The Netherlands and Belgium, using the long-established international networks of ethnic Turks in the west. Longer seasonal work abroad and better payment than in Greece, for example, have made the municipality of Momchilgrad richer than that of Kirkovo (*interview No. 25*).

#### **4.1.2. Cultural impact of seasonal migration – does western culture change the Bulgarian milieu?**

In Kirkovo municipality, there are only 1-2 examples of seasonal migrants who had started their own business. The mayor explains some of the difficulties in this respect:

*"Now, with the future opening of the border checkpoint at Makaza (on the Bulgarian-Greek border), there come people with savings, asking me what they could do with them. They want to build gas stations and restaurants along the road to Makaza. Yet the land around Makaza is chiefly state or municipal property, while private land has already become too expensive, around 1 500 BGN/dka. They have no clear idea what their business should be, and with the lack of cheap land, they cannot buy anything. Then they decide to buy apartments in the city. First, they bought flats in Kurdzhali and Momchilgrad, now they already buy in Plovdiv, with dollars or euro. Such people do not want to start work for 200-300 BGN/month anymore. At the moment, there are unemployed construction workers in the municipality, but the Turkish firm building the road to Makaza cannot find enough construction workers, because seasonal workers are already used to European salaries" (interview No. 25).*

One of the reasons for the absence of remittances-fuelled entrepreneurship in the ethnically mixed regions of South-eastern Bulgaria might be the fact that seasonal migrants, especially irregular ones, are not able to gain sufficient know-how from their staying abroad. In spite of being in The Netherlands, Italy, Germany, etc., they fail to communicate with their western colleagues or employers. Not knowing the local language, they cannot relate meaningfully to the foreign milieu and later transfer the accumulated knowledge to the Bulgarian soil. Motivated to save as much as they could, seasonal workers drastically curtail their social and cultural activities and live in isolation on the margins of host societies. Kept in the networks of ethnic Turks and Kurds, some of them seem to inhabit parallel worlds with little connection to western attitudes and way of life. Upon returning to Bulgaria, they often lose all the acquaintances they had made abroad, even the Bulgarian ones, as well as novel practices such as communicating through mobile phones or using bank cards (*interview No. 25*).

Therefore **seasonal work abroad and the particular environment in which it happens seem to generate further migrations**. Its effects on local mobility are two-fold. First, internal migration of Bulgarian Turks from villages to the towns and further to the bigger cities has intensified in South-eastern Bulgaria. It was propelled by the savings of seasonal workers who initially spent their money on building houses in their own villages, then bought property in the regional town of Kurdzhali, and, last, in Plovdiv, which is the second biggest city in Bulgaria. Then, after having frozen the remittances into immobile property or in bank accounts, seasonal labourers remain again unemployed, neither starting small businesses nor willing to begin work at a lower wage than their "European" salaries. This pushes them into a new circle of temporary migration and seasonal employment abroad.

However, **in the case of Kalofer, money from work abroad was, indeed, used for starting up small enterprises.** Kalofer is a small town, with 4 000 inhabitants, situated in Central Bulgaria. It was a famous manufacture and cultural centre during the Bulgarian Revival in the nineteenth century, and during the Communist regime there were two enterprises, related to the military industry developed in the region. Now, after a long period of inactivity, one of the enterprises has been privatised, while the other is still state-owned and the salaries are not paid regularly. So, the inhabitants of Kalofer started looking around for strategies that would help them cope with the situation, with migration becoming one of the most popular of them. There are no statistical data about migration from Kalofer, but an in-depth inquiry had revealed that a lot of people, mostly women, are going for seasonal work abroad – either in Greece for picking oranges, or in Spain and Germany as baby-sitters, cleaning ladies and housekeepers. Usually this migration is seasonal, but some of the migrants are staying longer. After returning home, most of them start up private businesses. All the pubs and cafes in the town are owned by people who had been working abroad. A young family couple, who has picked oranges in Greece for two consecutive summers, has accumulated enough money and has now started a private business, first opening up of a shop and now developing of an aluminium joinery workshop. The couple recounted that the months spent in Greece were one of the most horrible in their whole life, with working for 11-13 hours a day under the burning sun, living in terrible conditions – 20 persons in a hot and dirty barrack, and with practically no rest. *Yet one of the spouses also admitted that “in spite of all the troubles, work in Greece was a good start for our business, I could not manage to open it up with these salaries here. And what I learned from our work there was that the best thing in the world is to be your own master rather than to work for other masters – be they the state or [private] employers” (interview N 22).*

It turns out that **it is not the money and the specific know-how which is the most significant “import”, but the cultural lessons related to a new organisation of work and life that produces a new worldview (Weltanschauung).** Here is a part of the interview with a 53 year old woman from Kalofer: *“I have worked in Greece for 8 months and when I came back here I realised that the most important thing I had earned was not the money - actually it was not so much - but the very stay and work there that had changed me. In Greece I understood that here in Bulgaria we are still living with our socialist mentality, waiting something to happen to us, and not struggling for achieving it. In Greece I learned how to be active and combinative in order to survive. And also how to be strict and responsible - no delays, no explanations – if you have to do something you have to do it. I understood that I had to take control of my life, to be more enterprising and inventive. So, when I returned from Greece I was a different person. And I started to think what I shall do in order not to be dependent only on my salary. Then a person from the Bulgarian Association of Alternative Tourism came here in order to look for houses appropriate for alternative mountain tourism. And I said to myself – that is it, why do I have to work for this Zig Zag tourist firm, when we can develop our own tourist business” (interview No. 20).*

The two different cases, in Kirkovo municipality and in Kalofer, require further research and analysis in order to explain why there was no strong cultural impact upon attitudes and behaviour in the former one, whereas in the second, things went in the opposite direction. What is common to both cases, though, is the strong western influence upon local consumer practices.

Another impact of the increased seasonal migration is the attempt of local authorities to participate more actively in mediating work abroad. The municipality of Vidin had decided to establish a regular bus line between Vidin and Italy, to serve the needs of the local migrants. In another example, the mayor of Kirkovo had organised meetings of Greek employers and local candidate-workers which took place in the building of the municipality. By constituting themselves as brokers of temporary work abroad, representatives of the local authorities hoped to spare the would-be migrants the huge taxes of private consulting firms (in the range of 800 USD per exit) as well as to regulate migration flows. Their endeavours had remained so far unsuccessful, since even the engagement of local power could not force foreign employers to offer legal work contracts to their Bulgarian employees.

#### **4.1.3. Negative impact of emigration – brain drain, depopulation, a negative image**

As a result of out-migration, Bulgaria had lost large segments of highly qualified specialists and workers as well. The intensive emigration of highly qualified personnel has continued since 1990. Of the total emigrants in 1991, some 12% held university degrees and 18% had graduated from college (Bobeva 1994, 230). In 1992, the Institute of Demography conducted an investigation on the losses of scholars from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences as a consequence of the economic crisis and the lack of adequate resources for scientific research in the transition period (Tsekova 1993). It demonstrated that in 1990-2, 440 of the scholars working in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences had left the country; this number constituted nearly 6% of all scholars in the Academy. The worst to be hit by brain drain were the sciences with established traditions of international co-operation, namely biology (144 people), mathematics (71), the technical sciences (47) and physics. The most preferred destination country was definitely the USA, having attracted around 1/3 of all emigrant scholars, followed by Germany, France, Canada, and the UK.

Brain drain affected particularly negatively the community of the Bulgarian Turks, which lost 9 000 university graduates during the early 1990s, according to Turkish statistics (Bobeva 1994, 227). The deficit of economists, teachers and engineers in the ethnically mixed regions of Bulgaria becomes an additional predicament to the economic development of these stagnating regions. Recent emigrations from these areas kept involving the most active and qualified part of the population, those who had lost their privileged social status amidst political and economic transformations. Among them are former mayors and representatives of municipal councils, former policemen, technicians, students and doctors (*interviews No. 25 and No. 26*).

One of the negative impacts of emigration is the depopulation of some areas in Bulgaria, especially in the ethnically mixed regions where emigration took massive proportions. Some villages, towns, cities and municipalities have almost halved their population for the last decade or so. The scale of this phenomenon is evident from the table below, showing the population movement in Kirkovo municipality in South-eastern Bulgaria. Although the difference between the two columns gives the number of those residing elsewhere (both in and out of Bulgaria), it is used by local population statistics experts and the administration as a figure showing the approximate size of external migration.

Population movement in Kirkovo municipality for the period 1989-2003 (population statistics data):

**Table 24**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Residents with permanent address</b>	<b>Residents with actual address</b>
1989	46 198	44 620
1991	46 426	40 000
1992	46 597	34 812
1993	46 729	33 808
1994	46 814	32 007
1995	46 747	30 226
1996	46 680	28 974
1997	46 465	28 079
1998	46 121	26 929
1999	45 914	26 046
2000	45 595	26 031
2001	45 514	25 904
2002	45 381	24 902
2003	45 354	24 676

Apart from its deep demographic and economic consequences, depopulation has a political dimension too. Emigration has been quoted as one of the reasons behind the Bulgarian ethnic experience, cited as the most successful model of integration of ethnically diverse populations on the Balkans (Ilchev 2000, 259). As a result of the decline in the population of Kurdzhali region, two parliamentary seats were removed from it, which intensified political struggle there but diminished the region's political weight.

Resolved to deal with depopulation, the Bulgarian government attempted to settle ethnic Bulgarians coming from abroad into such regions. Ethnic Bulgarians from Moldova and the Ukraine returning to Bulgaria were settled around the town of Kurdzhali. In addition to their bringing human resources to deserted areas, their settlement there increased the number of ethnic Bulgarians in this politically sensitive region. This unwritten policy did not go without problems. The desire of returning ethnic Bulgarians was to settle in the cities and towns, while the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad tried to direct them to the deserted areas, to compensate for the insufficient work force and to help improve the situation of the declining agriculture. The greatest challenge was to manage to attract young ethnic Bulgarians, some of them enrolled in universities through a special governmental programme, to these depopulated lands (*interview No. 2*).

Another negative impact of migration is related to irregular migrants and more concretely to the growing number of deported Bulgarians, whose expulsion attracts public attention and contributes towards the formation of a negative image of Bulgaria in some EU countries. *“The problem of illegal immigration in the Netherlands has several aspects. First, it creates a very bad image of Bulgarians here - usually “a Bulgarian” is associated with a prostitute, Roma beggar or a thief, despite the fact that most of the illegally working people here are working in the hot houses. From the point of view of our future integration in the EU, the country’s bad image is a great problem, so I am trying to*

*show that we, the Bulgarians, are very decent and normal people. In order for this to happen, it is very important that the different groups of deported people are differentiated. Most of them are expelled because they had no address registration, and most of them are working illegally in the hot houses, they are not criminals. The problem could be easily solved by signing a bilateral employment agreement” (interview No. 15).*

#### **4.1.4. Impact of emigration on education and the social system**

The impact of emigration on education is ambivalent. On the one side, data from the qualitative study made by the research team show that some of the families invest money saved from seasonal migration in insuring better education for their children. Acquiring high quality education is usually related to movement to larger educational centres either in Bulgaria or abroad. *“Jenny, my daughter, has come here [to Spain] two years ago, but she was working in Barcelona like a baby sitter and a cook at the house of a young family. Our wish was that she could graduate at a western university, so we saved money for her education. Now she is in Münster (Germany), studying Spanish philology” (interview No. 21 - Kalofer).*

Yet on the other side, a study on the access to education in Bulgaria found out that one of the frequently cited reasons for dropping out of school is the family’s travel abroad as seasonal short- or longer-term migrants (Iliev / Kabakchieva 2002). In all of the surveyed population centres, the research team discovered large-scale migration to Greece, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands and Norway. It was reported that some of the children from such families remain in Bulgaria, usually in the care of grandmothers or aunts. Since such pupils possess money (sent by their parents), whereas their grandmothers and aunts tend to be too indulgent, the teachers claim such students become spoiled, start smoking and drinking, or stop attending school altogether. If the children leave with their parents, they leave school formally and from then on drop out of sight as far as the educational system is concerned. Should they come back and enrol at the same school their development would be monitored, but if they happen to choose another school no one could follow up on them. The further fate of migrants’ children is virtually unknown. It is very likely that the majority of them will continue their education, but the problem is in the absence of information. Nonetheless, it has turned out that at the moment, the rates of dropping out of school among the children of migrants are the highest.

Concerning the impact of migration upon the social system, one should mention that as a rule irregular seasonal migrants pay neither for social insurance nor for their health insurance. This puts at danger the health of seasonal migrants and poses grave problems for their social security. At the same time, one should also admit that employment abroad – no matter whether regular or not – alleviates the burden of supporting unemployed people in Bulgaria, and financially assisting people with low incomes. To the extent that seasonal migration remains conditioned primarily by unemployment and low wages in Bulgaria, the country will be in a position to export poverty and displace its concomitant problems in the future.



## 4.2. Impact of immigration – the refugee case

### 4.2.1. Economic impact

There are no studies of the impact of immigrants' labour and culture upon the Bulgarian society, with one exception only: in 1999, a single attempt was made to assess the economic and social impact of refugees on Bulgaria as a host country. In an effort to help rethink the role of refugees in Bulgaria and other societies, the Institute for Market Economics in Sofia conducted a research, which focused on the identification of costs related to refugees as they apply to the refugees themselves, to government institutions, and to non-governmental and international organisations (Institute for Market Economics 1999). The inquiry discovered that the estimated total refugee-related costs in Bulgaria in 1999 were 10 234 599 BGN (5 685 888 USD), or 0.046% of estimated 1999 GDP. Of them, governmental support for refugees constituted 21% only, whereas external donor assistance amounted to approximately 11%. The biggest share of the costs of hosting refugees and asylum seekers went to the applicants and holders of refugee status themselves, who self-financed the process with 68% of the total expenses. The report concluded that the number of refugees in Bulgaria did not seem to contribute significantly to the poverty rate. Neither did the refugees constitute a serious problem for the social sector or on the labour market. The inquiry recommended labour market liberalisation and the reduction of the entry barriers for doing business in Bulgaria so as to enhance both domestic and imported entrepreneurship. Under such conditions, refugee labour might contribute to lower prices on unskilled workforce.

### 4.2.2. Are there discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of violence against migrants?

According to the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC), which monitors discrimination and xenophobia on a yearly basis, the instances of xenophobic and violent attitudes towards immigrants in the country are rare. The annual reports on the status of human rights in Bulgaria for the last two years mention briefly that Black foreigners very rarely become victims of criminal racist gangs ([www.bghelsinki.org/frames-reports.htm](http://www.bghelsinki.org/frames-reports.htm)). Yet xenophobia and racist discrimination is most explicit towards representatives of the Roma minority in Bulgaria, that is why BHC's annual reports usually record rough treatment and violence against Roma and Black foreigners together. No individual cases of skinheads' attacks against immigrants have been quoted in the last five BHC reports. Nevertheless, some experts think that instances of xenophobic violence are still not widespread in Bulgaria, because the number of refugees and immigrants is rather small. A BHC specialist working with refugees and migrants assumes that discrimination and xenophobia will increase with the growing number of refugees and immigrants coming to Bulgaria (*interview No. 10*).

Some of the refugees also feel rejected by the Bulgarian society because of their ethnic difference. For example, refugee women report how their children are perceived as Roma in the Bulgarian schools because of their darker skin and discriminated on that ground. Neither teachers nor their classmates dare to touch them, thinking they are dirty; some Bulgarian pupils refuse to talk to them and do not approach them for months. According to the refugees, the toughest discrimination they experience is in Bulgarian hospitals (*interviews No. 36 and No. 37*). Probably because in these instances they are sick people in need, expecting more attention than usual, refugees are deeply



hurt by racist remarks of doctors and nurses, especially those of the refugees who speak Bulgarian. An expert from the Acceptance and Integration Department of the State Agency for Refugees complained about difficulties in finding personal doctors (GPs) for the asylum seekers, because of widespread stereotypes. Even though enrolling refugees in their practices would bring them financial benefits, the GPs refuse to treat refugees, thinking they are noisy, dirty, do not speak Bulgarian, do not like to wait patiently in line, will alienate their Bulgarian patients, etc. (*interview No. 9*). *"I thought Bulgarians are a tolerant people, but this is absolutely wrong", says an Iraqi woman who had settled in Bulgaria since 1994 (interview No. 37).*

#### **4.2.3. Public opinion and perception of migrants and migration**

Two separate sociological surveys on the public perception of immigrants have been conducted in the first half of 2003. The first, done by the Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC), explored attitudes to refugees in Bulgaria and the willingness to donate in support of refugees in the country (Bulgarski Cherven Krust 2003). The second, done by Manfred Wörner Foundation (MWF), had to establish the degree of integration and human rights violation of immigrants in Bulgaria (Nedelnik 2003).

The BRC survey was based on 30 in-depth interviews with representatives of Bulgarian businesses, foreigners living in Bulgaria, and Bulgarians having lived abroad for at least 5 years, who were thought to be more sensitive to the fate of refugees in the country. Done between December 2002 and April 2003, it revealed huge information gaps on refugees that existed in the public space. Not being able to discern any difference between economic and political factors behind asylum seekers' decision to migrate, the interviewed perceived of them as a threat to the economic stability in the country. They disclosed perceptions of refugees which were entirely negative, being characterised with fear about personal space and interests, physical and social rejection of refugees, association of refugees with criminal behaviour, prejudices towards them ("they are dirty and lazy"), xenophobia and racism. It was of no surprise that in these circumstances the survey registered low levels of willingness to help refugees through donations, and especially through money. Having found out that the respondents looked more favourably on refugees whom they knew personally, the survey recommended the design of a media campaign based on personal stories of refugees, in the form of a documentary.

The second study was a representative sociological poll, done in February-March 2003, on the base of representative samples of Bulgarians and immigrants of different status. As a whole, it concluded that Bulgarians did not perceive of immigrants as a threat. Only 13% of the Bulgarians were inclined to think of foreigners as a threat while the rest were firmly against such propositions. 21% of the respondents said foreigners in Bulgaria were too many but only 7-8% of them had a negative attitude to them. The strongest negative attitudes were expressed by Bulgarians who intended to emigrate. On their part, 1/3 of immigrants conceived of Bulgaria as an appropriate country for residence, yet another 1/3 did not feel comfortably there. Those dissatisfied came primarily from developing countries and 1/3 of them would leave Bulgaria the fastest they could. The survey also defined the profile of the average immigrant in Bulgaria: s/he was younger than the average Bulgarian (55% of immigrants being below the age of 35), and might even have higher education than the average Bulgarian above 18 years of age (21% of the immigrants). 12% of immigrants were unemployed, while 33% were experts in

different fields, 9% were entrepreneurs, 7% were freelancers, and 2% held executive positions.

### **4.3. Conclusions**

**The impact of emigration is ambivalent, having both positive and negative consequences.**

**The first positive impact is related to the growing size of remittances.** For the period January-November 2002, current transfers from Bulgarians living abroad amounted to 449.6 million USD, surpassing the amount of direct foreign investments by 20.9 million USD and making 2.9% of GDP. Thus for the 11 months of last year, the remittances were 56.67 USD per person. According to the data of the Bulgarian National Bank, remittances surpassed by far the financial help coming from the EC pre-accession funds, which for January-November 2002 amounted to 100.8 million USD.

**The second positive impact concerns the cultural lessons learned from seasonal work abroad related to a new organization of work and life,** and producing a new worldview (*Weltanschauung*) that leads to the development of entrepreneurial behaviour. Yet in some municipalities the transfer of Western skills to Bulgarian soil seems to fail. What is undisputable, however, is the strong western influence upon consumer practices in the regions experiencing substantial migration.

Another impact of increased seasonal migration is the attempt of local authorities to participate more actively in mediating work abroad.

**There are negative impacts of emigration, too, related to brain drain, depopulation, and the creation of a negative image of the Bulgarians working abroad.**

But the research done is not systematic, so **there is an urgent need of more research on the impact of emigration upon the local societies and the large society as a whole, especially in the sphere of cultural impact.**

**The impact of immigrants in Bulgaria has not been sufficiently studied yet,** so more research is needed in that direction as well. The experts have established that asylum seekers self-finance the refugee status granting process with 68% of the total costs (1999 data). Further, their labour might contribute to lower prices on unskilled labour in the climate of liberalisation of the labour market.

## **5. Migration policy, legislation and procedures – present situation and planned migration management strategy**

### **5.1. Legal Background and Control of Migration in Republic of Bulgaria**

As far as the international legal regulation of immigration control is concerned, the Republic of Bulgaria provides legal guarantees that these rules are effectively implemented. The basic ground is the principle enshrined in the Constitution of the country according to which: “Any international instruments which have been ratified by the constitutionally established procedure, promulgated and having come into force with respect to the Republic of Bulgaria, shall be considered part of the domestic legislation of the country. They shall supersede any domestic legislation stipulating otherwise”.

National legislation plays an important role in the defence of the foreigners’ fundamental rights and freedoms. Mere incorporation of international law in the domestic legislation is not enough to provide the necessary guarantees. A well-elaborated process of creation and adoption of legal rules is necessary to reflect the specific national conditions and the democratic spirit of the international protection of human rights.

The basic rules with regard to the foreigners in Bulgaria can be found mainly in the domestic legislation. There are two types of existing statutes – general and special.

Domestic statutes of general nature contain only some general rules concerning the conduct of the foreigners on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Until 1989 the terms and conditions under which foreigners could enter and stay in Bulgaria, and the specific rules on granting refugee status and right to asylum, were extremely strict. The development of social and political life in the following years made it possible to change the system of the organisation of society. The legislation became more liberal, even excessively liberal in certain aspects, and that created difficulties for the control of the foreigners in the country.

The new migration policy of Bulgaria seeks optimal balance between freedom of movement of people and illegal immigration control, combined with respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms.

A series of measures was undertaken to improve migration legislation and policy.

The *Bulgarian Citizenship Act of 18 November 1998* regulates the procedure for acquisition, restoration and loss of Bulgarian citizenship. It resolves the issue of dual citizenship as well. The statute represents the legal ground for adoption of the Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, Bulgarian Identity Documents Act, Civil Registration Act, Administrative Services for Natural Persons and Legal Entities Act.

The *Bulgarian Identity Documents Act of 11 August 1998, in force since 1 April 1999*, introduced procedures and conditions for the issuance, usage and safekeeping of Bulgarian documents for personal identification including those for foreigners legally

residing in the country. The new identity documents are produced in full compliance with the European Union standards. They have all levels of protection against counterfeiting and *mala fide* usage. The adoption of this statute is a stage in the harmonization of Bulgarian national legislation with the migration legislation in Western Europe. The term “passport” is used only with regard to travels abroad, while, similarly with the situation in the countries of the Schengen Agreement, the “identity card” shall be used by the citizens of the Republic of Bulgaria to prove their identity on the territory of the country.

The *Civil Registration Act of 27 July 1999* regulates the terms and procedure for civil registration of all Bulgarian citizens, foreigners permanently staying on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, individuals having refugee or humanitarian status and individuals who have been granted the right to asylum on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria. In addition to that, two more statutes should be mentioned. These are the Administrative Services for Natural Persons and Legal Entities Act regulating the organisation of administrative services, and the Personal Data Protection Act regulating the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of data and access to the latter.

Other statutes of importance for the foreigners in the country are the *Administrative Procedure Act of 13 November 1979* and *Administrative Violations and Penalties Act of 28 November 1968*. These contain basic rules regarding administrative actions and imposition of administrative sanctions.

The *Judicial System Act of 22 July 1994* and *Supreme Administrative Court Act of 19 December 1997* expressly envisage that only individuals having solely Bulgarian citizenship may apply for job in these structures. Therefore, certain offices in the state are preserved exclusively for Bulgarian nationals, which by no means infringe foreigners’ rights and freedoms.

The *Asylum and Refugees Act (ARA) of 31 May 2002* provides for the types of specific protection, procedures and conditions for granting it to foreigners on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria. The statute, that entered into force on 1 December 2002, regulates the procedure for granting refugee status, determines the rights and the obligations of the refugees, as well as the state bodies and their terms of reference with regard to the protection of the refugees in the Republic of Bulgaria. The provisions of the act pay special attention to individuals with specific needs – women and unaccompanied minors. ARA meets the European criteria and standards in the sphere of asylum. The effective implementation of its provisions is one of the basic priorities in the National Programme for Adoption of the *acquis* of the EU (NPAA). The Act establishes a strong legal base regulating the questions connected with application for and granting of refugee status, as well as with the appeals against refusal to grant such a status.

The Asylum and Refugees Act is in compliance with the basic international instruments – the United Nations’ Geneva Convention on Refugee Status of 1951 and the New York Protocol on Refugee Status of 1976, and the European Convention on Protection of

Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR). The statute includes and regulates the following important issues:

- The adoption of the non-refoulement principle enshrined in Art.33 of the Geneva Convention of 1951, Art.3 and Art.5 of ECHR and in the EU *acquis* (Resolution on the minimal guarantees in procedures for the granting of asylum);
- Every individual who has filed an application is guaranteed access to procedure;
- Precise regulation of the cases when the interviewer is to take decision on the application and the types of decisions;
- The term of the humanitarian protection is amended with a view to the adoption of permanent decisions in a long-term perspective;
- There is clear distinction between saving and resolute clauses, in accordance with the Geneva Convention of 1951;
- A summary procedure is envisaged in the cases of expressly unfounded applications in accordance with the EU Resolution of 1992 concerning obviously unfounded requests for asylum. The role, independence and qualifications of the bodies responsible for the summary procedure and the decisions within its framework are clearly defined;
- The term for appeal within the summary procedure is increased from 24 hours to 3 days;
- A principle, that applications must be registered with state and local bodies which have received clear and detailed instructions on refugees, is adopted. This is in compliance with the requirements of the EU Resolution on the minimal guarantees in procedures for the granting of asylum, enacted on 20 June 1995;
- Applications for asylum are reviewed by bodies qualified in the issues of asylum and refugees, as envisaged by the Resolution mentioned in the preceding paragraph;
- Practical measures have been implemented to guarantee the rights of the vulnerable groups of refugees and of individuals with specific needs, as envisaged by the Foreigners Act. The emphasis is on the complete guarantee of the rights and on the special care for unaccompanied juvenile foreigners;
- The principle, enshrined in the EU Resolution of 20 June 1995, that all necessary facts and data may be found on the initiative of the interviewing authority is adopted as well.

The *Employment Promotion Act of 29 December 2001* creates the legal possibility for work under labour contract, or for business trips, within the framework of services rendered by foreigners on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria. The statute establishes legal guarantees against direct or indirect discrimination, and for equal treatment of the legally employed foreigners with regard to work conditions, remuneration, termination of contract, etc. There are provisions envisaging the possibility for Bulgarians to work abroad.

Provisions related to the terms and conditions of the foreigners' residence in Bulgaria may be found in the *State Property Act, Municipal Property Act, Obligations and Contracts*

*Act, the Penal Code, the Penal Procedure Code, the Family Code*, as well as in other regulations enacted both by the legislature and by the executive power.

Domestic sources of legal provisions of special nature regulate in details the conditions and the procedures for the foreigners to enter and stay in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Most important is the *Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria Act of 23 December 1998*, last amended in 2002. The adoption of this statute and the subsequent amendments in it, contributed to the harmonization of the Bulgarian legislation with the West European one. This may be exemplified firstly by the fact that the definition of the term “foreigner” is in correspondence with the one laid down in the Convention on the implementation of the Schengen Agreement, with regard to the distinction of the foreigners who are citizens of the European Community. Secondly, there is a new way of regulating the terms and conditions for the foreigners to enter the country. In addition, a new section was introduced, envisaging the introduction of a National Register of Foreigners Residing on the Territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The most recent amendments and supplements in the Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria Act achieved the following:

- The definition of “person without citizenship” is changed to become in compliance with the Convention on the status of apatrides;
- There is preferential treatment of students’ trips in accordance with the Decision of the Council of 30 November 1994 for joint action, adopted on the ground of Art. K 3.2, “b” of the Treaty of the European Union concerning the facilitating of trips of students from third countries, residing in a member state (394 D 0795);
- It is envisaged that no visas shall be required for foreign students, legally staying in a country with whom the Republic of Bulgaria has established a non-visa regime, if they are students travelling within the frames of a school trip and accompanied by a teacher who has a list of the students, issued by the respective school;
- The classification of the types of visas is in full compliance with the Schengen Agreement - for airport transfer, for transit passing, for short-term stay, for groups, for long-term stay, and issued at the border;
- Special protection for foreigners under 18 years of age is introduced in the Council Resolution of 26 June 1997 on unaccompanied juveniles citizens of third countries (397 Y 0719 (02)). It is envisaged that these persons receive the necessary material support and care for their basic vital needs, medical care, and the corresponding guardianship, including legal help and representation, as well as access to school. The responsible authority is the Children Protection Agency;
- In compliance with the Council Resolution of 4 December 1997 on the measures to be taken against marriages of convenience (397 Y 1216 (01)), it is envisaged that issuance of a permit for a long-term stay may be refused, and an issued one shall be revoked in case of a foreigner who has married another foreigner, who has obtained permit for a long-term stay, if evidence exists that the marriage has been contracted solely for the purpose of evading the norms stipulating the regime for foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria and obtaining a permit for stay;

- The statute also reflects the Council Resolution of 30 November 1994 concerning the restrictions on admission of citizens of third countries on the territories of the member-states with the aim of carrying out freelance activity (396 Y 0919 (03)), because its provisions regulate the terms and procedure for obtaining of permission for a long-term stay with the aim of carrying out freelance activity, and also define the meaning of “freelance activity”;
- In the Council Recommendation of 22 December 1995 on coordinated action and cooperation in implementation of expulsion measures (396 Y 0110 (02)) it is envisaged that the state bodies exercising authorized activities in connection with the conditions and the order of entering, stay and leaving the Republic of Bulgaria by the foreigners interact with the competent bodies of other countries in the fight against illegal migration and in carrying out expulsion;
- The Act envisages legal possibility for reunion of divided families, in accordance with the express recommendation of the European Commission;
- With the aim of strengthening the control over the foreigners residing in the country, the latter must declare in writing the address where they stay in the Republic of Bulgaria, as is the practice in a number of European countries. In order to make the control mechanism more effective, the Act envisages an obligation for a person, granting a place to live to a foreigner, to inform the authorities exercising administrative control of the foreigners, for such circumstances;
- With the aim to achieve greater harmony between domestic legislation on foreigners and basic international conventions for protection of human rights and freedoms, ratified by Bulgaria, the Act introduces a prohibition on the expulsion of foreigners in cases where they are to be sent to a country where their life and freedom are endangered and they may be subjected to a danger of prosecution, torture or inhuman or humiliating treatment;
- Another important rule is that as an exception, when required by the state interest, by extraordinary circumstances or by humanitarian reasons, as well as in the cases admitting no delay, or if so stipulated by a ratified international agreement in force for the Republic of Bulgaria, the bodies of border passport control at the border checkpoints can, in coordination with the offices for administrative control of the foreigners, or with Consular Relations Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, issue single entry visas for airport transfer, transit passing, and short term stay for a period of 10 days;
- The statute precisely enumerates the conditions under which the bodies of border passport control may revoke issued visas. In such cases they inform with no delay the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

According to the Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, a foreigner may enter the country at the defined border control checkpoints. The individual must have valid documents for travel abroad, visa if it is required, as well as the necessary financial resources to stay in and leave the country, and the mandatory insurance.

Foreigners may stay in the Republic of Bulgaria for a short term or a long term. The short-term stay is up to 90 days from the date of entering the country. The term may be extended by the services for administrative control of foreigners due to reasons of humanitarian character.

The long term is:

1. continuous - with permitted term up to one year;
2. permanent - with permitted unlimited term.

Foreigners reside in the country on the ground of an issued visa, international agreements for visa free or alleviated visa regimes and permission by the services for administrative control of foreigners.

An individual who does not have the necessary financial resources to stay in the Republic of Bulgaria may not be allowed to enter the country or his/her right to stay may be revoked by the competent authorities.

The Act regulates the issues of visa regime and the powers of the state bodies in that sphere. The visa issued to a foreigner may be viewed as a legal form containing permission for the individual to enter, stay or transit cross the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The types of the visas, determined by the purpose of the visit, are:

1. for airport transfer;
2. for transit passing;
3. for short-term stay;
4. for a group;
5. for long-term stay;
6. issued at the border.

The term for stay in the country on the basis of a visa may not exceed 90 days. Visas are issued by the diplomatic and consular offices of the Republic of Bulgaria and in exceptional circumstances by the bodies of the border passport control at the border checkpoints.

The statute pays special attention to the compulsory administrative measures that can be imposed on the foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria. Through these measures, the state expresses its negative reaction against the fact that a given foreign individual has violated the law or has failed to act in accordance with his/her statutory obligations. Repression is employed in cases when circumstances show that the presence of a foreigner on the territory of the country is undesirable. Based on its sovereign right to control foreigners' access, presence and departure, in compliance with the generally recognized principles of the International law, and having in mind its commitments under the international conventions, ratified by it, the Republic of Bulgaria has paid attention to and has implemented the basic values of the democratic societies. The Act envisages the prerequisites for the imposition of compulsory measures on foreigners, in accordance with the International law.

Due attention should be paid to the fact that the orders imposing the following compulsory administrative measures:

- revoking of the right of stay in the Republic of Bulgaria;
- expulsion;



- prohibition to enter the Republic of Bulgaria;
- prohibition to leave the Republic of Bulgaria;

are subject to appeal under the terms and procedures of the Administrative Procedure Act, the administrative appeal being launched with the minister of foreign affairs, and the judicial one with the corresponding regional court.

The rules on the application of the Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria Act develop in further details the provisions of the Act of the Legislature, regulating the terms and conditions for residing in the country.

Among the domestic sources of legal provisions of special nature one should mention the *Regulation on the Terms and Procedures for Issuance of Visas by the Diplomatic and Consular Offices of the Republic of Bulgaria of 11 May 2002, that came into force on 1 December 2002.*

Immigration control in the country is exercised by the police forces and mainly by the National Police Service (NPS) and the National Border Police Service (NBPS). Their activities are of great importance for the fulfilment of the international commitments undertaken by the Republic of Bulgaria in the field of immigration.

According to Art.60, Sec.1, Sub – Sec. 9 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Act (MIAA), the National Police Service issues identity documents, residence permits to foreigners and carries out administrative control. As a result of this basic task, all officers of the National Police Service have the power to exercise control over the foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Structural units are established within the NPS with the aim to handle that task. Part of the structure of the National Police Service Directorate is the Identity Documents and Passport Control Unit that has four subdivisions:

- Administrative Management, Identity Documents and Migration Processes;
- Automatic Informational Service System;
- Identity Document Personalizing;
- Identity Document Control.

The Sofia City Directorate of Internal Affairs has an Identity Documents and Foreigners Unit within the Regional Police Service.

Regional Directorates of Internal Affairs have Identity Documents and Foreigners teams carrying out the same tasks.

District Police Departments have their Identity Documents and Foreigners teams too, which carry out tasks related with the foreigners control in the respective area.

The following units are responsible for the administrative services and control with regard to the foreigners on the territory of the capital Sofia:

- Student and Permanently Residing Foreigners;
- Refugees;
- Businessmen;
- Tourists.

The tasks of the National Border Police Service are defined by MIAA. This is a specialized security and investigation police force within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, responsible to guard the state border and to control the observance of the border regime. The Service exercises its powers and duties in the border zone, border checkpoints areas, at the international airports, in the internal sea waters, the territorial sea, the adjacent zone, the continental shelf, the Bulgarian part of the Danube river and in the other rivers and water basins. The structure of the National Border Police Service corresponds to the enumerated tasks.

As mentioned above, Bulgaria regulates visa issues through the Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and the Regulation on the Terms and Procedures for Issuance of Visas by the Diplomatic and Consular Offices of the Republic of Bulgaria. The visa policy of the country is almost fully in compliance with Regulation 574/99 of the EU Council of 12 March 1999, enumerating third countries whose citizens must hold visas when crossing the external borders of the member states. Bulgaria has introduced unilaterally visa-free regime for individuals with standard international passport, citizens of the USA, Canada, Japan, Israel, New Zealand and Australia. The country has bilateral visa-free agreements with the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Lithuania, South Korea, Romania, San Marino, Macedonia and Yugoslavia.

In accordance with a Decision of the Council of Ministers, adopted in December 2000, Bulgaria has started the procedure to terminate the bilateral visa-free agreements with Georgia, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Tunisia. Due to that, the negative visa list of the country is almost fully in compliance with the EU/Schengen one. The difference is that Bulgaria will continue to have visa-free regimes with Macedonia and Yugoslavia - two countries that are included in the Schengen negative list. Both are neighbouring countries having minorities of Bulgarian origin and close economic relations with Bulgaria. The above-mentioned Regulation enumerates 62 states qualified as representing "risk" with regard to illegal immigration. Citizens of these countries must meet additional requirements in order to obtain Bulgarian visa including inter alia proving the aim of and the reasons for the visit, to demonstrate possession of financial resources for the return trip or return ticket respectively, to demonstrate possession of financial resources to meet the cost of their living and others.

As far as the sphere of return and readmission is concerned, Bulgarian legislation is absolutely in compliance with the European acquis. When preparing readmission agreements, the Republic of Bulgaria observes Council Recommendation No 274/20 of 30 November 1994, giving the model form of bilateral readmission agreement between a

EU member-state and a third country. The Republic of Bulgaria has signed readmission agreements with all EU member-states. In addition, it has similar agreements with Norway, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Yugoslavia. The agreements are fully in compliance with the above-mentioned Recommendation. The only exception is the agreements signed before the Recommendation entered into force and the other parties to them are not EU members (Switzerland, Poland and Slovakia).

The Republic of Bulgaria is prepared to perform all the necessary procedures to denounce the visa-free agreements from the date of its accession to the EU.

## **5.2. Migration Management Strategy**

The management and control of migration processes are a key priority of the Bulgarian government. The main objective is to increase the feeling of security of the citizens in their own country, thereby diminishing their desire for emigration while adopting efficient measures to stop illegal immigration. The regulation of migration channels is a complex task requiring a number of steps.

### **5.2.1. Regulation and control of labour migration**

The measures undertaken by the government for regulation and control of labour migration are basically the following:

1. Measures for regulating labour migration, involving a complex approach and continuous application, directed at the perfection of the Bulgarian national legislation and policies. Among them are:
  - Examination of existing migration legislations and cases of successful migration management as a basis for the perfection of the national policies on migration;
  - Active participation in the international co-operation for the control of labour migration - for the implementation of international and European standards.
  
2. Measures regarding labour emigration – a premise for short-term, regulated labour emigration:
  - Continuous analysis of the work on the operative bilateral agreements for the exchange of labour force, for any modifications in the relevant legislation and the instructions included in the agreements to assist Bulgarian citizens;
  - Intensification of the process of making bilateral agreements for the exchange of labour force in other countries;
  - Comprehensive information on the conditions under which Bulgarian citizens can work abroad under operative agreements.

3. Measures regarding **labour immigration** – adopted to protect the Bulgarian labour market:

- Amendments in the legislation regarding the admittance of foreigners as employees – a permit regime has been adopted since 1994;
- Adopting legislation for the admittance of foreigners as freelance individuals – a separate permit regime is being introduced;
- At the same time – ensuring the equal treatment of those foreign workers who have been admitted to the Bulgarian market. In this area, the criteria of EU legislation and the requirements of other international organisations have been covered.

In addition, Bulgaria is observing and adopting in its legislation the various requirements of the EU regarding the citizens of member states and the citizens of third countries for work-related stay, for access to the labour market, for labour permission for the families of workers who have already been admitted.

On the other hand, Bulgaria is adhering strictly to the equal treatment of those foreigners who have already been hired, regarding work conditions, payment, holidays, dismissal, etc. This also applies to foreigners on business trips.

The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria and its national legislation are based on the principle of non-discrimination as provided by article 6 of the Constitution. The rights stipulated in the legislation do not refer to certain groups based on a certain characteristic, but to all citizens under the jurisdiction of the country. It means that the Bulgarian legislation recognises the individual rights and freedoms of all persons without any restrictions based on nationality, ethnic origin, race, sex, religion, education, political and other affiliation, personal, public or property status.

### **5.2.2. Admission of third-country nationals for paid employment**

The admission of foreign nationals for paid-employment and for self-employment is treated separately - in conformity with requirements of the EU *acquis*.

The admission is regulated in the following legal instruments:

- Foreign Nationals Act;
- Employment Promotion Act – Chapter Eight;
- Regulation on the terms and procedures for issuance, denial and suspension of foreign nationals' work permits in the Republic of Bulgaria (SG No. 39/16.04.2002, in force from 17.06.2002)

A new *Employment Promotion Act* has been adopted; it has been in force since 01.01.2002. According to the new *Employment Promotion Act*, the Employment Agency is established under the minister of labour and social policy for the purposes of

implementing the government's policies for employment promotion, labour market protection, job brokerage for job information and hiring, vocational information and consultation, vocational and motivational training of unemployed and employed persons. The Employment Agency is an executive agency, which is a second-level spending budgetary unit under the minister of labour and social policy, and is a legal person with an official seat in Sofia.

The *Employment Promotion Act* stipulates that foreign nationals may work on the basis of labour contracts or secondment within the framework of the provision of services in the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria upon receiving a work permit in line with the requirements of the Regulation on the terms and procedures for issuance, denial and suspension of foreign nationals' work permits in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Work permits are issued by the Employment Agency by request of a local employer. Work permits are issued to foreign nationals in accordance with the situation and development of and implied public interest in the national labour market, and in case that the total number of foreign nationals working for the local employer does not exceed 10 percent of the number of payroll employees who for the last 12 months have been Bulgarian citizens or foreign nationals granted asylum or recognised refugees.

The *Employment Promotion Act* regulates that the Employment Agency shall maintain co-operative relations with the public employment services of other countries, responsible for the recruitment of alien workers, through exchange of information on the national labour legislation and the laws relevant to the recruitment of alien workers; Bulgarian nationals employed in the territory of the corresponding country and nationals of that respective country employed in the Republic of Bulgaria; the ascertained violations of the terms and conditions for employment; the ascertained cases of illegal work of Bulgarian nationals within the territory of the respective country as well as the respective country's nationals in the Republic of Bulgaria.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Employment Agency are the administrative structures whose competences include the application of the current legislation governing the employment of foreign nationals.

The Minister of Labour and Social Policy exercises the overall inspection on the observance of the *Employment Promotion Act*, as well as the other statutory regulations in the field of employment and unemployment. Specialized inspection is carried out by the General Labour Inspectorate Executive Agency under the minister of labour and social policy.

Having established cases of violation, the state inspection bodies draw up statements against the offenders. The establishment of violations, and the issuance, appeal and enforcement of penalty orders must comply with the provisions of the *Administrative Offences and Penalties Act*.

Any employer who hires a foreign national without a work permit on the basis of a labour contract or a foreign national working without a work permit, shall be imposed a fine or property sanction respectively in the amount under Article 48 of the *Foreign Nationals Act*.

Administrative liability in cases of legal violations:

- A fine of 500 to 5 000 leva is imposed on natural persons - employers who hire foreign workers without a work permit; the fine may rise to 1 000 to 10 000 leva in cases of repeat violations (Article 48 of the *Foreign Nationals Act*).
- The penalty for legal persons who employ foreign workers without a work permit is a 20 000 leva fine; the fine may be increased to 40 000 leva in cases of repeat violations (Article 48 of the *Foreign Nationals Act*).
- A foreign national working without an employment permit must pay a fine of 500 to 5 000 leva, and in cases of repeat violations it may rise to 1 000 to 10 000 leva (Article 48 of the *Foreign Nationals Act*).

The *Regulation on the terms and conditions for issuance, denial and suspension of foreign nationals' work permits in the Republic of Bulgaria* adopted by the Council of Ministers in April 2002 repeals the Regulation on the Terms and Procedures for Work Permit Issuance to Foreign Nationals in the Republic of Bulgaria (adopted by Council of Ministers Decree No 267/1992, SG No. 4/1993; amended SG No's 56/1994, 43/1996, 64 and 120/1997).

The new Regulation is in conformity with the *acquis*, in particular with *Council Resolution of 20 June 1994* on limitations on admission of third-country nationals to the territory of the member states for employment.

The Regulation sets out the terms and procedures for issuance, denial and suspension of foreign nationals' work permits in the Republic of Bulgaria, the cases of exemption from work permit issuance of foreign nationals in the Republic of Bulgaria and the total duration of employment permissible. A work permit may be issued to a person hired under an employment contract by an employer as defined in the Labour Code or to a person seconded on the basis of provision of services in the Republic of Bulgaria. The work permit is valid only for a particular employer - legal or natural person - and in a location, position, type and period of employment specified in the permit.

A work permit for hiring a foreign national under an employment contract may be issued in accordance with the situation and development of and implied public interest in the labour market in the following cases:

- The local employer has presented proof of having actively sought for a period no shorter than one month a suitable applicant on the labour market, including at the Labour Office Directorate of the Employment Agency and by advertising the job in the national and local mass media;

- The foreign national has special secondary or a higher degree of education and/or specific professional skills or experience relevant to the objective requirements for the respective position/job and the activities carried out;
- There are no Bulgarian nationals or foreign nationals permanently residing in the Republic of Bulgaria or enjoying equal rights as laid down in Article 70, Paragraph 3 of the Employment Promotion Act who possess the required profession, specialty and/or skills and there is no opportunity for timely training of the necessary staff, which has been found out as a result of a due labour market research matching the objective requirements and specific features of the job.

Refusal to grant a work permit is based on a number of conditions, including:

- The foreign national has been penalized for illegal employment in the preceding 5-year period, or, according to the documents submitted, he/she has worked illegally in the Republic of Bulgaria during a previous stay and/or at the moment of application;
- The employer/person hiring a commissioned foreign national has been penalized during the preceding 2-year period for employing alien labour without a work permit;
- Over the past 3 months, the employer, on his own initiative, has made redundant Bulgarian nationals, foreign nationals permanently residing in the Republic of Bulgaria or enjoying equal rights under Article 70, Paragraph 3 of the *Employment Promotion Act*, who could have been hired for the job applied for by a foreign national;
- There are other reasons pursuant to Articles 10, 11 and 21a of the *Foreign Nationals Act* (visa and entry denial; the person is listed in the information database of foreign nationals unwanted in the country).

The work permit serves as a ground for receiving of residence permission for the length of the employment. Foreign nationals shall reside outside the territory of the country until they are granted a work permit. Foreign nationals who entered the country on a certain ground cannot extend their stay in the country for a different reason, except in urgent cases and those married to Bulgarian citizens.

Foreign citizens residing permanently in the country are not required a work permit, nor are foreign nationals with granted asylum or refugee status. Exceptions to the work permit obligation may be provided for in an international agreement acceded to by the Republic of Bulgaria.

### **5.2.3. Admission of third-country nationals for the purpose of pursuing activities as self-employed persons**

As indicated above, the admission of foreign nationals for the purpose of employment and for self-employment is treated separately.

The following legal instruments regulate the self-employment of foreign nationals in the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria:

- Foreign Nationals Act;

- Regulation of the ministry of labour and social policy on the terms and conditions for issuance of permissions to foreign nationals for purposes of pursuing self-employment activities in the Republic of Bulgaria (Regulation No. 2, SG No. 90/10.09.2002)

The 2001 amendments to the *Foreign Nationals Act* regulate in principle the possibility to admit persons for the purpose of pursuing activities of self-employment.

‘Article 24. (1) Permission for long-term residence shall be only grantable to foreign nationals who: ‘15. wish to pursue activities as self-employed persons following a permission from Ministry of Labour and Social Policy authorities and in compliance with Article 24a’.

This Regulation is in conformity with the *acquis*, in particular with *Council Resolution of 30 November 1994* related to the limitations on the admission of third-country nationals to the territory of the member states for the purpose of pursuing activities as self-employed persons.

This Regulation lays down the terms and procedures for issuance, denial and suspension of permits for pursuing self-employment activity by foreign nationals in the Republic of Bulgaria.

A permit for pursuing self-employment activity or the extension of its validity will be issued by the Executive Director of the Employment Agency for a term of up to 1 year. The term of the permit will start expiring from the date of the permission for long-term residence based on Article 24, Paragraph 1(15) of the *Foreign Nationals Act*.

The applying foreign national must prove the economic and/or public effect through a business plan. Additionally, the applicant submits:

- Certificate of education and/or qualification, recognised in the Republic of Bulgaria, enabling the applicant to perform the respective self-employment activity;
- Document certifying that the person is not banned from performing the respective activity, which is issued by the country where the applicant last practiced that activity;
- Document certifying the availability of financial resources for performing the self-employment activity in compliance with the presented business plan;
- Medical certificate;
- Other documents required by virtue of legal instruments regulating the respective self-employment activity.

Denial to grant permission for self-employment activity is based on a number of conditions, including the following:

- The business plan presented and/or the report on its implementation are not well grounded or do not justify their economic and/or public effect;
- The documents submitted show that the applicant intends to perform activity under a labour contract;



- The applicant has submitted documents before the expiry of 12 months from the date of suspension of preceding self-employment activity permit;
- The applicant has not met his/her obligations under the Compulsory Social Security Code or his/her tax obligations.

#### **5.2.4. Statistics concerning work permits**

From 1 January 2003 to 31 March 2003, 141 work permits have been issued in Bulgaria, of which 103 new and 38 extended permits. For comparison, from 1 January to 31 December 2001 the total number of work permits issued is 512, of which 276 new and 236 extended work permits.

In 2002, there have been 33 investigations of the lawful employment of foreigners in Bulgaria. 29 violations have been registered, leading to 5 instructions for their amendment and 24 bills of indictment. 80 foreigners were found to be working full-time or on commission on Bulgarian territory without a work permit. 15 of them were issued bills of indictment for administrative violation of Article 70, paragraph 1 of the Law for the Encouragement of employment. During the same period, 7 employers have been found to employ foreigners without work permits, for which a total of 9 bills of indictment have been issued.

#### **5.2.5. Regulating Emigration**

One of the main factors generating emigration from Bulgaria is the economic one. The ministry of labour and social policy is attempting to regulate this movement as much as it is possible. Several measures have been undertaken to reach that end: elaboration of new legislation, harmonisation of Bulgarian legislation with the negotiation chapters 24 "Co-operation in the field of justice and home affairs" (the part on "Migration") and 2 "Free movement of people" of the *acquis communautaire*, and joining of international treaties in the field of migration and human rights. There has been published an information brochure containing the requirements of the EU member states for entry, residence and work on their territories as well as the bilateral labour and social insurance agreements. Good practices of the EU member states for regulating labour migration have been identified and accepted, and the process for signing of bilateral agreements with the member states and the 10 would-be members among the accession countries has been intensified (Stankova 2003).

For the last 12 years, there operated 4 intergovernmental labour agreements of Bulgaria with Germany and Switzerland through which around 20 000 Bulgarians managed to exercise work abroad. In addition, the Bulgarian Employment Agency has an agreement with the Central Office for Labour Mediation in Bonn for finding jobs for Bulgarian students during their vacation. Most active co-operation was established with Germany, which, for the last 12 years, accommodated almost all of the 20 000 Bulgarians having worked abroad under the agreements. The official agreements are the following:

- Intergovernmental agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany concerning

workers from Bulgaria for the implementation of employment contracts, signed on 13.03.1991;

- Intergovernmental agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany concerning employment of workers for enhancement of their professional and linguistic knowledge, signed on 04.02.1992;
- Agreement for temporary employment of Bulgarian workers in the sphere of recreation and for help in families in need of special care, signed in December 2002.
- Agreement between the government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the government of the Swiss Confederation for exchange of trainees, signed on 05.04.1995.

**The practice has shown that after expiring of the term of their employment contracts abroad, the Bulgarian workers return to the territory of Bulgaria.**

An agreement between the government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg for exchange of trainees entered into force on 1 June 2003.

The agreement between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Czech Republic for mutual employment of their citizens entered into force in 2000. By the end of 2003, the procedure for applying for work abroad under the agreement will be specified.

An agreement between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Portugal for mutual employment of their citizens entered into force on 12 July 2003.

The signing of 3 new agreements is forthcoming in September 2003. These are the agreement between the government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the government of the Flemish Community of the Kingdom of Belgium for exchange of trainees, the agreement between the government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the government of the French Republic for exchange of trainees and the agreement between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Kingdom of Spain for regulation of labour migration between the two states.

Several draft agreements for regulation of labour migration are submitted for consultation to the competent authorities, namely to the Kingdom of the Netherlands; the United Kingdom, Italy, Estonia, Lithuania, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia, the Republic of South Africa, etc.

An agreement for seasonal labour between Bulgaria and Greece has been signed at the end of 1995 yet it has not been implemented in practice. A new agreement with Greece has been prepared and is being currently negotiated.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For a list of intergovernmental agreements see [www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/integration/agreements/index.htm](http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/integration/agreements/index.htm)

At the same time, attempts are made to sign agreements for social insurance with those countries so that this type of relationships be regulated as well and Bulgarian citizens be able to accumulate points towards their pensions or other periods of time. In case Bulgaria does not have an agreement for social insurance with the respective country, a special article is included in the labour agreement stating the intention of the countries to do that. The best solution at this stage is to sign a package of 3 agreements with the member states, namely for employment, social insurance, and readmission. Bulgaria has already signed readmission agreements with all of the EU member states.

In issue No 49 of the *State Gazette* from May 2003, there has been published the new Ordinance for the Conditions and Order for Executing Consultancy for Securing Employment, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers. The Ordinance lists the conditions and order for executing consultancy for securing employment in the Republic of Bulgaria and other countries, as well as of marine workers, for registration for executing consultancy, its rejection and suspension, the maximum amount of the price of the consultancy service, paid by the hired persons, and the obligatory requirements for the contents of the consultants' contracts.

*Changes had occurred in the following directions:*

- Easing of the regime for executing consultancy for finding employment through its transformation from a permissive to a registering one. The expiry date of the registration has been extended from 2 to 3 years.
- Registration in the Agency for Employment of all contracts signed between the consultant and the foreign employer, including the ship-owner (operator). The contracts between the employer and the hired person are not registered in the Agency for Employment.
- Gathering of information during 3 months about the hired persons on indicators approved by the executive director of the Agency for Employment.

The expected results from the change and elaboration of the conditions and order for executing consultancy for finding employment are the following: easing of the procedure at the start of the activity, improvement of the quality of the consultancy services offered, raising the efficiency of the control and monitoring of the consultants' work.

### **5.3. Conclusions**

**Regulation of migration processes is already harmonized with international norms and the *acquis communautaire*; nearly all the recommendations for adjusting the Bulgarian legislation to contemporary legal norms have been fulfilled.** The management and control of migration processes are a key priority of the Bulgarian government. The main objective is to increase the feeling of security of the citizens in their own country, thereby decreasing their desire for emigration while adopting efficient measures to stop illegal immigration.

Measures undertaken by the Bulgarian government for the *regulation and control of labour migration* are basically the following:

- a) Measures for regulating labour **immigration**, involving a complex approach and continuous application, directed at the perfection of the Bulgarian national legislation and policies:
  - Examination of existing migration legislations and cases of successful migration management as a basis for the perfection of the national policies on migration;
  - Active participation in the international co-operation for the control of labour migration - for the implementation of international and European standards.
- b) Measures regarding labour **emigration** – a premise for short-term, regulated labour emigration:
  - Continuous analysis of the work on the operative bilateral agreements for the exchange of labour force, for any modifications in the relevant legislation and the instructions included in the agreements to assist Bulgarian citizens;
  - Intensification of the process of making bilateral agreements for the exchange of labour force in other countries;
  - Comprehensive information on the conditions under which Bulgarian citizens can work abroad under operative agreements.
- c) Measures regarding labour immigration – adopted to protect the labour market:
  - Amendments in the legislation regarding the admittance of foreigners as employees – a permit regime has been adopted since 1994;
  - Adopting legislation for the admittance of foreigners as freelance individuals – a separate permit regime is being introduced;
  - At the same time – ensuring the equal treatment of those foreign migration-workers that have been admitted to the Bulgarian market. In this area the criteria of EU legislation and the requirements of other international organizations have been covered.

Bulgaria is observing and adopting in its legislation the various requirements of the EU regarding the citizens of **member states** and the citizens of **third countries** for work-related stay, for access to the labour market, for labour permission of the families of workers who have already been admitted. Bulgaria is adhering strictly to the **equal treatment** of those foreigners who have already been hired – regarding work conditions, payment, holidays, dismissal, etc.

The next steps have to be oriented more towards strengthening the administrative structure, as well as towards investing in education, training and the necessary human and technical resources for controlling and professionally regulating the migration processes.

## 6. Integration policies and practices

### 6.1. Emigration

#### 6.1.1. Integration of returning highly qualified emigrants

In 2000, a high-profile campaign under the auspices of the then prime minister Ivan Kostov was launched so as to help return the highly qualified Bulgarian emigrants from abroad. Named "The Bulgarian Revival", the initiative was organised as a debate on future plans for the development of the country. It took place between ministers and high-ranking governmental officials and representatives of the young and prosperous Bulgarian emigrants living primarily in Western Europe and the USA. Ivan Kostov's attempt at channelling the know-how and skills of Bulgarian emigrants into the ruling of the country was quickly followed by another similar initiative, that of the then president Peter Stoyanov, which happened in the summer of 2000. The last edition of the "Bulgarian Revival" that took place during Easter 2003 focused on the elaboration of a draft strategy on improving Bulgaria's image abroad. Some of the most active participants in the "Bulgarian Revival" are now on top positions in the Bulgarian government, managing key ministries like the ministry of economics, finances, transport, etc.

Some of the young and prosperous Bulgarian emigrants have created special structures - clubs, internet sites, and societies - to maintain contacts with the Bulgarian government, transfer know-how, and lobby for investments and joint businesses. Such are the New York-based Wallstreet Club and the London-based City Club, one of whose central figures is Prince Cyril, the son of the Bulgarian prime minister Simeon Sax-Coburg-Ghotta. The Washington-based New BGeneration Foundation, uniting young Bulgarian professionals living in the USA, campaigns for preventing brain drain from Bulgaria. Its president, Hristoslav Angelov, proposes the creation of business incubators and post-doctoral programmes at Bulgarian universities so that students are stimulated to stay in Bulgaria after they graduate. He also offers the idea to attract highly qualified foreigners from Moldova, the Ukraine, Russia, Albania, Macedonia and Yugoslavia / Serbia and Montenegro, especially because there are large ethnic Bulgarian communities there ([www.novabg.org](http://www.novabg.org)). In fact, the Bulgarian government, through Decree No 103 of 31 May 1993, has begun to invite young ethnic Bulgarians living abroad to study at Bulgarian universities and schools.<sup>15</sup> Convinced that brain-drain is detrimental to Bulgaria because it de-capitalises, de-intellectualises and lessens the dynamics of public life, experts from the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad have suggested a "social therapy" in the form of establishing academic joint ventures, clubs of Bulgarian academics abroad, and high-tech business parks (Vasilev 2002).

#### 6.1.2. Integration programmes for preventing low-qualified emigration

The rate of unemployment and the lack of hope for improvement of the economic

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<sup>15</sup> According to this decree, the state subsidises up to 50 places at schools and up to 400 places at universities for students of Bulgarian nationality in disciplines approved by the minister of education. It provides for 10 doctoral scholarships and 100 months of post-doctoral research on topics approved by the minister of education. Decree No 228 of 20 May 1997 finances up to 150 places for citizens of Macedonia at Bulgarian state universities.

situation in Bulgaria are probably the main reasons for current labour migration out of the country. From that point of view, every policy directed at coping with the problem of unemployment and raising the standard of living could be seen as integration policy. Here are listed some of the programmes developed by the Bulgarian government for coping with that problem, with a special focus on young people and Roma:

- *National programme "From social aid to securing employment"*. The goal is to secure employment and social integration for unemployed people able to work but receive monthly social payments, through opening of working positions for activities of public benefit for the municipality and the state. In 2003, the programme had 217 614 144 BGN for employment of 100 000 people, acquisition of professional qualification of 5 000 persons, and training in basic literacy of 1 000 people.
- *Stimulation of employers to open work places for unemployed former prisoners (article 55 of the Employment Promotion Act)*. The goal is to secure employment for jobless former prisoners. In 2003, employment will be offered to 110 people and professional qualification to 20 persons, through a total of 220 000 BGN.
- *Stimulation of employers to open work places for unemployed single parents (foster parents) and/or mothers (foster mothers) with children up to 3 years old (article 53 of the Employment Promotion Act)*. The goal is to secure employment for jobless single parents (foster parents) and/or mothers (foster mothers) with children under 3 years of age. In 2003, employment will be offered to 500 persons with the means of 1 056 000 BGN.
- *National programme for social integration and professional realisation of youth from the orphanages*. Its goal is a rapid, well-targeted and effective professional realisation and integration into society of young people from the orphanages.
- *Stimulation of employers to hire unemployed persons below 29 years of age (art. 36, p. 1)*. In 2003, employment will be secured for 5 342 persons through 4 163 529 BGN.
- *Stimulation of employers to hire unemployed persons below 29 years of age with impaired working abilities as well as youth from orphanages who had graduated from school (art. 36, p. 2)*. In 2003, employment will be offered to 700 persons using 1 360 000 BGN.
- *Stimulation of employers to open work places for training and professional qualification and/or internship for unemployed up to 29 years old (article 41 of the Employment Promotion Act)*. In 2003, employment will be offered to 300 persons, professional qualification to 200 people, through a total of 381 600 BGN.
- *Social Integration Project - PHARE 2001*. The goal is to facilitate the social and economic integration of Roma, other ethnic minorities, differently abled people and other groups in marginal positions on the labour market. The project also fosters the development of measures for training, employment and entrepreneurship with the aim to improve the literacy levels and competence of the target groups. In 2003, the project will offer professional qualification to 4 500 people, with the means of 5 161 435 BGN.

The annual Action Plan for Employment comprises different other measures for integration of socially marginalised groups, and their accomplishment can be traced on the web-page of the ministry of labour and social policy.

## 6.2. Integration of immigrants and refugees

The integration of refugees begins after their registration as asylum seekers at the State Agency for Refugees. The Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC) has expressed its worries that integration begins as late as that stage and has criticised the Agency for its unwillingness to create transit centres at the borders, a fact which often leads to refolement and breach of human rights (Human Rights in Bulgaria in 2002). Part of this problem lays in the inability of state institutions to distinguish between rejected irregular immigrants and those seeking asylum, as is evident from the annual statistics of the National Border Police Service at the Ministry of Interior. The lack of state finances and of a programme for repatriation of irregular immigrants as well as the impossibility of expelling illegally staying aliens, along with the lack of a normative basis to regulate the temporary status of tolerance, are the main reasons for the unfair and illegal lengths (in some cases several months to a year) of the administrative detention.

Once allowed on the territory of Bulgaria, asylum seekers can use the services of the Integration Centre at the Agency. It offers courses in the Bulgarian language for beginners, at an intermediary level, for children, and for adults, as well as professional training in sewing, hairdressing, cosmetics, arts and crafts, etc. Between September 1996 and December 2002, over 1 700 refugees have attended these courses. Particular attention is paid on the courses for children. The teachers in Bulgarian from the Centre have written a special handbook for teaching Bulgarian to refugee children. Children can participate in drawing and flower arrangement clubs, while the adults are assisted in their communication with the Employment Offices, the social services, the municipal authorities, etc. Exhibitions, concerts, and children's feasts also take place there.

Despite these efforts, the majority of the asylum seekers are not able to learn Bulgarian to a sufficient level so as to find employment upon a positive decision on their status. One of the reasons is the very short term for which they can benefit from the Centre's services: 2-3 months for those who are granted refugee status and about a year in case of a refusal and subsequent appeal. Yet in the latter case the motivation for learning Bulgarian and willing to integrate into the Bulgarian society is practically non-existent. The second reason, however, is the lack of motivation of the asylum seekers during the status-granting procedure. They might not wish to learn the Bulgarian language until they know whether they would receive official status or not. Poor language ability is cited as the most powerful barrier impeding integration both by the refugees and by the institutions dealing with them.

Upon leaving the premises of the Agency, the refugees are helped in their integration by the Bulgarian Red Cross, the UNHCR, Caritas Foundation and the BHC. The Refugee-Migrant Service at the Bulgarian Red Cross (RMS) offers social counselling and information in Bulgarian, English, Persian and Arabic. It organises courses in Bulgarian for which the refugees receive 40 BGN/month and have their transport expenses covered. At the moment, there are 2 groups, each of 10 persons, studying Bulgarian. A special course has been organised for 2 Iraqi women with impaired eyesight. Monthly information on free workplaces is supplied to recognised refugees, together with courses in sewing, cooking, bar tending, arranging flowers, etc. The RMS runs a hot telephone line, provides psychiatric and psychological help, reimbursement of medicines, additional nutrition for babies, kindergarten support, and distributes monthly allowance to Convention refugees within 10 months after recognition. With the UNHCR and the DAFI Programme, it offers scholarships and/or covers taxes of 6 recognised refugees studying at Bulgarian universities, additional classes and manuals



in certain disciplines for refugee pupils, and a summer camp for refugee children and socially marginalised Bulgarian children. An average of 200-300 visits per month are registered at the RMS (*interview No. 12*).

The Bulgarian Red Cross has helped create the first non-governmental organisation of refugee women in Bulgaria, the Council of Refugee Women, established by 7 refugee women from Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan in May 2002. It has now around 25 members who consult newly recognised refugees in the process of their initial adaptation, in Persian, Arabic and English. The women have been trained in teamwork, social consultancy and work with volunteers, and have already established connections with the Organisation of Refugee Women in Romania. They also organise cultural events - for the Persian New Year, Children's Day, the International Refugee Day, etc. From May through December 2002, the Council has assisted 320 refugees (*interview No. 35*).

The BHC has a special Programme for Legal Defence of Refugees and Migrants, which offers legal consultancy to asylum seekers and refugees. BHC lawyers represent the rejected asylum seekers in court during appeals and offer help for signing work contracts, establishing small businesses, etc. In 2001, they have provided 31 consultancies for small business, 16 for citizenship, 289 for social rights and integration, 21 for education, 37 for labour, and 37 for family reunification. In 2002, there were 22 consultancies for small business, 288 for social rights, 17 for education, 40 for labour, and 65 for family reunification (*interview No. 10*). In 2002, the BHC's programme for refugees and migrants became a member of Save the Children's "Separated Children in Europe" programme and put a special emphasis on work with unaccompanied juveniles and minors seeking asylum.

Asked about their degree of integration in the Bulgarian society, refugees say they are in a very difficult financial situation, unlike their relatives in the west who have found refuge in richer countries. *"All of the refugees like Bulgaria, but do not wish to stay here", says a refugee woman. She adds that the refugees like the climate in Bulgaria and the variety of religions (Christian, Muslim, etc.), but prefer to live in Western Europe. However, some refugees who had managed to go to Western Europe return to Bulgaria to spend their holidays at the Black Sea (interviews No. 35 and 36).*

Being poor in Bulgaria transforms refugees' social existence. They cannot maintain normal connections with their home countries. As a rule, it is the relatives and friends at home who call the refugees in Bulgaria because the latter do not have enough money. Refugees in Bulgaria rent their flats thus cannot bring any furniture from home. An additional obstacle to transporting goods from home was the embargo in Iraq. What the refugees miss most in Bulgaria is their national food, and especially some spices such as cardamom (hel), which they are used to serving with tea to guests of high social status. Here this outward recognition of social hierarchy is difficult to express. Economic difficulties force the refugees to stay at home, to avoid meeting friends, because this requires setting a table and offering food, according to their unwritten hospitality rules. The inability to invite guests and meet friends at restaurants adds to the social isolation of the refugees, who lose connections even with other people of the same status and with their co-nationals here (*interviews No. 35, No. 36, No. 37*).

The poverty of refugees in Bulgaria generates specific psychological problems for people who had been rich in their home countries but have meagre income in Bulgaria. This is what a refugee woman says about that: *"They [the refugees] usually come from rich countries, countries where there is everything but peace. They come here where there is peace but poverty as well. Men are used to being able to maintain financially their*



*families, but here they are not able to do that. They become nervous, aggressive, there appear family and psychological problems. That is why refugees often suffer from asthma, epilepsy; there appears the problem with home violence; scandals and quarrels increase" (interview No. 37).*

### **6.3. Conclusions**

In the field of integration policies, a series of programmes had been developed oriented to the integration of returning highly qualified emigrants as well as to preventing low-qualified emigration. This process should continue.

More efforts shall be invested in developing programmes for better integration of immigrants and refugees, including programmes for learning the Bulgarian language. More events need to be organised, presenting the specific culture of immigrants to the Bulgarian public and, at the same time, more active monitoring of the actual defence of their rights shall be instituted.

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

**I. Current migration trends differ significantly from the pre-1989 tendencies.** As a whole, from 1880 to 1988, around 1 283 000 people emigrated from Bulgaria, while 808 600 immigrated to the country. *In that period*, in-migration included mainly ethnic Bulgarians living on the territories of neighbouring countries, while the main waves of out-migration were comprised mostly of ethnic minorities living in Bulgaria, predominantly ethnic Turks. The main reasons for both out- and in- migration were political. In-migration flows *now* include more refugees and foreign immigrants, while out-migration has no such clearly expressed ethnic profile – it is characteristic for all the ethnic groups inhabiting Bulgaria nowadays. The main reasons for emigration now are economic.

The historical heritage has the following consequences for the current migration patterns:

The Bulgarian community abroad is quite diversified, including different social groups, with different ethnic origin and different motives for emigration. The notion of different groups of Bulgarians living abroad has been embedded in the new law on Bulgarians living outside of Bulgaria (of 11 April 2000), which introduces the concept of "Bulgarian community abroad". The political use of the term "Bulgarian community abroad" is helpful, but for analytical purposes and in the process of elaborating concrete policies, it has to be differentiated in order to explain the specific characteristics of the different groups which ought to be treated in a different political manner. A special emphasis deserves to be put on new emigrants, whose motives for emigration are quite different from those of the old diaspora.

Besides, there is still ethnically specific out-migration, as the already existing large ethnic Turkish diaspora helps a lot the seasonal migration of ethnic Turks currently living in Bulgaria.

In addition, the in-migration of foreign citizens is a relatively new phenomenon and needs to be investigated and treated with special attention.

**II. One of the most important conclusions of the study is that there is no precise unified methodology for observing emigration trends.** There is an urgent need of elaborating such a methodology and establishing of a stable, publicly accepted information database on the processes of emigration that would be able to take account of the period of staying abroad. There are no data about seasonal migration, let alone the irregular one. Keeping track of the number of irregular emigrants is a very difficult task that requires more efforts and coordination among different institutions, both Bulgarian and foreign ones. A possible partial solution might be the regular gathering of information from the Bulgarian municipalities about the size and destination of seasonal migration.

Data from the national censuses conducted in 1992 and 2001 showed that between these two censuses approximately 196 000 people emigrated from Bulgaria, while the number of persons who have returned or settled to Bulgaria was a total of 19 000. **Net migration from Bulgaria is negative**, amounting to roughly 177 000 people who had left the country in 1992-2001, or an average of 22 000 people leaving Bulgaria yearly. Other data – of state

agencies, newspaper articles and interviews – show a significantly larger number of emigrants.

It is difficult to make precise conclusions about the possible scope of emigration almost entirely on the basis of research of potential migrants. Yet one is able to detect **a clear tendency showing that temporary seasonal migration dominates over the permanent one.** The preferred destinations are Greece, Spain, Italy, Germany, and The Netherlands and the main motive is related to finding a job, or one that is better paid. The Bulgarian seasonal emigrants work mostly in agriculture, construction building, domestic care, housekeeping, hotels and restaurants, and the textile industry. The profile of migrants as well the destination of migration is geographically determined and depends on already created networks. So in some Bulgarian municipalities female emigration prevails, while in others migrants are predominantly male. Migration is also ethnically specific, meaning that in some municipalities the emigrants come entirely from the Turkish ethnic group in Bulgaria, whereas in others they are ethnic Bulgarians. In still other municipalities, Roma emigration prevails. The fact that **migration from Bulgaria has a regionally as well as ethnically specific profile suggests that regulating and managing migration would require regionally and ethnically differentiated policy measures.**

The prognostic evaluation of expected actual emigration, done by the experts of the National Statistical Institute on the basis of preliminary data from the 2001 census, shows that in the next five years there is no danger of an emigration wave from Bulgaria which would destabilise the labour markets in the EU member-states.

The number and profile of immigrants to Bulgaria are better known to the official authorities than the communities of Bulgarian emigrants abroad. **Concerning immigration, Bulgaria remains primarily a transit country** despite the visible signs of its greater attractiveness as a final destination country manifested in the last years, and especially after the start of the EU accession negotiations in 1999. The National Police data clearly show that there is a tendency of increasing the number of foreign citizens staying legally in Bulgaria with permanent and long-term residence permits.

Structurally, there are no major changes in the countries of origin of the permanent and long-term residents in Bulgaria in the last couple of years. One of the most significant tendencies is the decreasing number of citizens from CIS countries and the increasing number of Russian citizens, although the total number of CIS and Russian citizens remains stable.

The traffic of foreigners to and through Bulgaria becomes more complex and better organised. Changes in legislation in 2001-2, improvement of the administrative capacity of the specialised border police institutions and the tightened and more effective control on the Bulgarian borders led to restructuring of the channels for illegal immigration to the EU countries. The chief migration flows are from Asia and Africa, namely from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Nigeria, Sudan, Ethiopia and Algeria.

Lifting visa restrictions for short-term entry of Bulgarian citizens in the Schengen space in April 2001 resulted in more than 4-fold decrease in the number of border-regime violations committed by Bulgarian citizens.

In 1994, a new category of immigrants was introduced into Bulgarian legislation - refugees and people with humanitarian status of different duration, and the first statuses based on the Decree for Granting and Regulating the Refugee Status were given in 1995.

From 1993 until 1 January 2003, a total of 11 253 persons (7 601 men, 1 748 women and 1 904 children) applied for refugee status. They came from 72 states, but most of all from Afghanistan, Iraq, Armenia, Yugoslavia and Iran. Of all the applicants, 1 356 persons (including 327 children) were granted refugee status according to the Geneva Convention of 1951. 24% of them are aged up to 17, and 76% are of 18-59 years of age. Humanitarian protection was granted to 2 668, people, of whom 595 children and 245 women.

**III. The main factors for emigration are economic** - the relatively high level of unemployment in Bulgaria and the low standard of living. In the last two years, the official statistic has registered a relative economic growth, as well as decreasing unemployment. If this trend continues in the future, it will probably stabilize migration, too. **Potential and real migrants are oriented more to seasonal migration. Signing bilateral agreements will regulate this process and will prevent irregular migration in large numbers.** The practice has shown that after the term of employment contracts abroad expires, the Bulgarian workers return to the territory of Bulgaria.

There is a process of strengthening the control over and the struggle against trafficking in human beings which is another factor that will reduce in the future the illegal channels of emigration.

Another important factor for emigration is the already created networks of relatives and friends, the diasporas, which will provoke and maintain a relatively stable flow of emigrants. But at the moment, most of these networks function as a means for coping with current difficulties, i.e. they are oriented more to seasonal rather than to permanent migration.

**As for immigrants and refugees, there have been transformations in their social profile in the last couple of years.** The push factors for immigration are more related to the economic conditions in their countries rather than to the political situation there.

**IV. The impact of emigration upon the Bulgarian society is ambivalent, having both positive and negative consequences.**

**The first positive impact is related to the growing size of remittances.** For the period January-November 2002, current transfers from Bulgarians living abroad amounted to 449.6 million USD, surpassing the amount of direct foreign investments by 20.9 million USD and making 2.9% of GDP. Thus for the 11 months of last year, the remittances were 56.67 USD per person. According to the data of the Bulgarian National Bank, remittances surpassed by far the financial help coming from the EC pre-accession funds, which for January-November 2002 amounted to 100.8 million USD.

**The second positive impact concerns the cultural lessons learned from seasonal work abroad related to a new organisation of work and life, and producing a new worldview**

(*Weltanschauung*) that leads to the development of entrepreneurial behaviour. Yet in some municipalities the transfer of Western skills to Bulgarian soil seems to fail. In both cases, there is a strong Western influence upon consumer practices.

Another impact of increased seasonal migration is the attempt of local authorities to participate more actively in mediating work abroad.

**There are negative impacts of emigration, too, related to brain drain, depopulation, and the creation of a negative image of the Bulgarians working abroad.**

But the research done is not systematic, so **there is an urgent need of more research on the impact of emigration upon the local societies and the large society as a whole, especially in the sphere of cultural impact.**

**The impact of immigrants in Bulgaria has not been sufficiently studied yet, so more research is needed in that direction as well.** The experts have established that asylum seekers self-finance the refugee status granting process with 68% of the total costs (1999 data). Further, their labour might contribute to lower prices on unskilled labour in the climate of liberalisation of the labour market.

**V. Regulation of migration processes is already harmonized with international norms and the *acquis communautaire*; nearly all the recommendations for adjusting the Bulgarian legislation to contemporary legal norms have been fulfilled.** The management and control of migration processes are a key priority of the Bulgarian government. The main objective is to increase the feeling of security of the citizens in their own country, thereby decreasing their desire for emigration while adopting efficient measures to stop illegal immigration.

Measures undertaken by the Bulgarian government for the *regulation and control of labour migration* are basically the following:

- a) Measures for regulating labour **immigration**, involving a complex approach and continuous application, directed at the perfection of the Bulgarian national legislation and policies:
  - Examination of existing migration legislations and cases of successful migration management as a basis for the perfection of the national policies on migration;
  - Active participation in the international co-operation for the control of labour migration - for the implementation of international and European standards.
- b) Measures regarding labour **emigration** – a premise for short-term, regulated labour emigration:
  - Continuous analysis of the work on the operative bilateral agreements for the exchange of labour force, for any modifications in the relevant legislation and the instructions included in the agreements to assist Bulgarian citizens;
  - Intensification of the process of making bilateral agreements for the exchange of labour force in other countries;
  - Comprehensive information on the conditions under which Bulgarian citizens can work abroad under operative agreements.
- c) Measures regarding labour **immigration** – adopted to protect the labour market:
  - Amendments in the legislation regarding the admittance of foreigners as employees – a permit regime has been adopted since 1994;

- Adopting legislation for the admittance of foreigners as freelance individuals – a separate permit regime is being introduced;
- At the same time – ensuring the equal treatment of those foreign migration-workers that have been admitted to the Bulgarian market. In this area the criteria of EU legislation and the requirements of other international organizations have been covered.

Bulgaria is observing and adopting in its legislation the various requirements of the EU regarding the citizens of **member states** and the citizens of **third countries** for work-related stay, for access to the labour market, for labour permission of the families of workers who have already been admitted. Bulgaria is adhering strictly to the **equal treatment** of those foreigners who have already been hired – regarding work conditions, payment, holidays, dismissal, etc.

**VI. In the field of integration policies a series of programmes have been developed, oriented to the integration of returning highly qualified emigrants as well as to preventing low-qualified emigration.** This process should continue.

**More efforts have to be put in developing programmes for better integration of immigrants and refugees,** including more programmes for learning the Bulgarian language, more events presenting the specific culture of immigrants, as well as more active monitoring of the actual defence of their rights.

Finally, our research team is deeply convinced that **there is an urgent need for establishing channels for better coordination of policies concerning migration. An efficient tool in that direction will be the establishment of a State Agency dealing with migration.** At the present moment such an institution is planned as a Directorate at the Ministry of Interior, but the problems of migration are wider than the issue of security, as they concern employment and social insurance as well as the social, economic and cultural impact of migration processes upon the Bulgarian society. The research team tends to agree that this agency ought to be independent or directly subordinated to the Council of Ministers. The establishment of such an agency will help the creation of a unified information system for monitoring migration processes as well as of the practical implementation of all migration regulation rules. Such an agency will be in a position to initiate and elaborate concrete policies for coping with migration problems.

**Next steps have to be oriented more towards strengthening the administrative structure, as well as towards investing in education, training and the necessary human and technical resources for controlling and professionally regulating the migration processes.**

**Last, but not least, is the need of financing of systematic research on processes of migration (emigration, with a special focus on temporary migration, and immigration) and their impact on Bulgarian society in order to elaborate adequate policies in that field.**

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## Appendix 1

### Tables

**Table A1. LEVEL OF GDP PER CAPITA IN 1999**

Country	Nominal GDP		Real GDP			Overall PPPs (1 PPS= ...nat. currency)	Exchange rate (1 euro= ...nat. currency)	Price level indices (EU-15 = 100)	
	per capita	Value in euro EC-15=100, %	per capita	Volume indices EC-15=100, %	Ranking			%	Ranking
EU-15	21 249	100	21 249	100	-	1	1	100	-
Austria	24 356	115	23 641	111	7	14.18	13.76	103	11
Belgium	22 852	108	22 461	106	10	41.04	40.34	102	12
UK	22 758	107	21 155	100	15	0.7086	0.6587	108	7
Germany	24 150	114	22 677	107	9	2.083	1.956	106	9
Greece	11 124	52	14 420	68	20	251.3	325.8	77	17
Denmark	31 078	146	25 731	121	4	8.98	7.44	121	3
Ireland	23 412	110	23 393	110	8	0.7882	0.7876	100	13
Spain	14 286	67	17 501	82	17	135.8	166.4	82	16
Italy	19 217	90	21 973	103	11	1693	1936	87	15
Luxembourg	41 609	196	38 847	183	1	43.21	40.34	107	8
Portugal	10 710	50	15 487	73	18	138.6	200.5	69	20
Finland	23 563	111	21 709	102	13	6.453	5.946	109	6
France	22 444	106	21 176	100	14	6.952	6.560	106	10
Netherlands	23 653	111	24 332	115	6	2.142	2.204	97	14
Sweden	26 096	123	21 887	103	12	10.50	8.81	119	4
EU CANDIDATE COUNTRIES									
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>1 418</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5 750</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0.482</b>	<b>1.956</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>
Estonia	3 381	16	7 820	37	26	6.764	15.647	43	24
Cyprus	12 840	60	17 814	84	16	0.4172	0.5788	72	19
Latvia	2 615	12	6 080	29	28	0.2683	0.6238	43	25
Lithuania	2 704	13	6 972	33	27	1.654	4.263	39	28
Malta	8 827	42	11 723	55	22	0.3206	0.4258	75	18
Poland	3 767	18	8 275	39	25	1.925	4.227	46	23
Romania	1 469	7	4 995	24	31	4808	16345	29	30
Slovakia	3 425	16	10 233	48	24	14.77	44.12	33	29
Slovenia	9 448	44	14 516	68	19	126.6	194.5	65	21
Turkey	2 690	13	5 602	26	30	214775	447230	48	22
Hungary	4 477	21	10 560	50	23	107.2	252.8	42	26
Czech Rep.	4 975	23	12 439	59	21	14.75	36.89	40	27
OTHER EUROPEAN EFTA COUNTRIES									
Iceland	29 215	137	25488	120	5	88.47	77.18	115	5
Norway	32 161	151	26535	125	2	10.07	8.31	121	2
Switzerland	34 089	160	26497	125	3	2.059	1.600	129	1

Source: Eurostat

**Table A2. VOLUME INDICES OF PER CAPITA GDP  
MAIN COMPONENTS IN 1999 (EU-15=100)**

Country	Actual Individual Consumption		Collective Consumption		Gross Fixed Capital Formation	
	Index - %	Ranking	Index - %	Ranking	Index - %	Ranking
<b>EU-15</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-</b>
Austria	110	5	110.0	7	125.0	6
Belgium	101	11	103.0	11	112.0	11
UK	107	7	105.0	10	87.0	16
Germany	106	8	93.0	16	114.0	10
Greece	73	19	89.0	18	74.0	20
Denmark	114	4	123.0	4	120.0	7
Ireland	91	14	72.0	24	127.0	5
Spain	81	17	84.0	21	97.0	13
Italy	105	9	86.0	20	101.0	12
Luxembourg	141.0	1	148.0	3	203.0	1
Portugal	78.0	18	93.0	15	87.0	17
Finland	86.0	16	107.0	8	117.0	8
France	99.0	12	116.0	6	88.0	15
Netherlands	104.0	10	150.0	2	116.0	9
Sweden	98.0	13	102.0	12	94.0	14
<b>EU CANDIDATE COUNTRIES</b>						
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>32.0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>31</b>
Estonia	40.0	26	88.0	19	26.0	26
Cyprus	89.0	15	106.0	9	75.0	19
Latvia	32.0	29	59.0	27	22.0	28
Lithuania	39.0	27	62.0	26	20.0	29
Malta	56.0	22	79.0	23	62.0	21
Poland	42.0	25	52.0	28	37.0	25
Romania	27.0	30	36.0	31	15.0	30
Slovakia	51.0	23	70.0	25	43.0	23
Slovenia	67.0	20	96.0	13	79.0	18
Turkey	27.0	31	47.0	30	22.0	27
Hungary	50.0	24	90.0	17	39.0	24
Czech Rep.	60.0	21	80.0	22	56.0	22
<b>OTHER EUROPEAN EFTA COUNTRIES</b>						
Iceland	121	2	171	1	147	2
Norway	107	6	117	5	142	4
Switzerland	115	3	95	14	146	3

Source: Eurostat

## Appendix 2

### Map



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## **Appendix 3**

### **Interviews Done by the Bulgarian Team**

#### **Representatives of state institutions**

- State Agency for Bulgarians Living Abroad: Interviews No. 1 and 2
- Border Police Authorities: – Interviews No. 3 and 4
- Directorate “European Integration and International Relations” in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy – Interviews No. 5 and 6
- State Employment Office – Interview No. 7
- State Agency for Refugees (SAR) at the Council of Ministers – Interviews No. 8 and 9

#### **Representatives of NGOs**

- Bulgarian Helsinki Committee – Interview No. 10
- Nadia Centre – Interview No. 11
- Bulgarian Red Cross – Interview No. 12
- Open Society Foundation - Interview No. 13

#### **Ambassadors**

- Afghan embassy in Bulgaria
- Bulgarian embassy in The Netherlands - Interviews No. 14 and 15

#### **Bulgarian emigrants abroad:**

- In The Netherlands – Interview No. 16, 17, 18, 19
- Kalofer case – Interviews No. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24
- Kirkovo and Momchilgrad case - Interview No. 25, 26,27,28
- 6 interviews with temporary migrants - Interviews No. 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34

#### **Immigrants in Bulgaria**

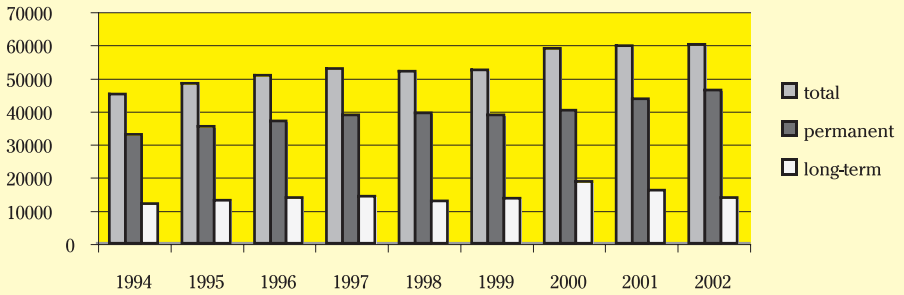
- members of the Council of Refugee Women in Bulgaria – Interviews No. 35, 36, 37



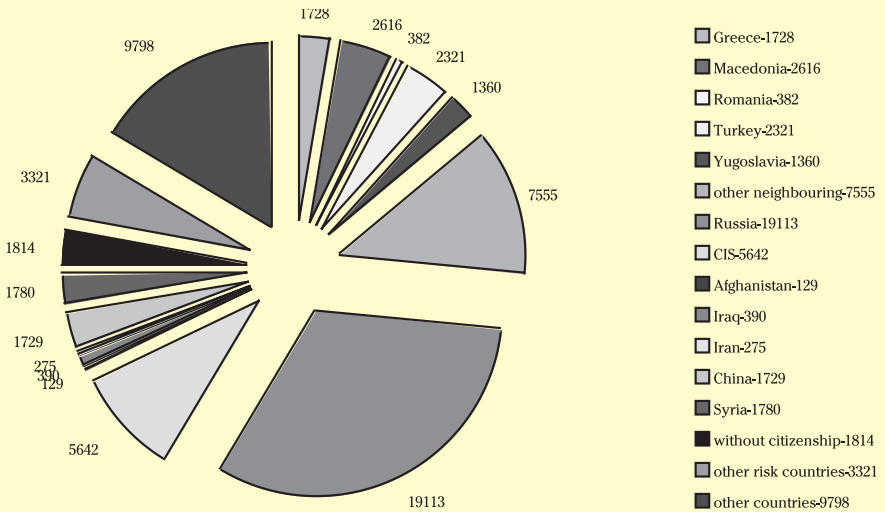
# Appendix 4

## Graphs

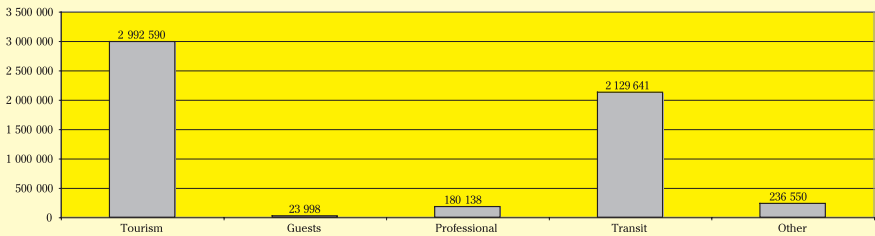
**Graph 1: Number of foreigners with permanent and long-term residence permits, 1994-2002**



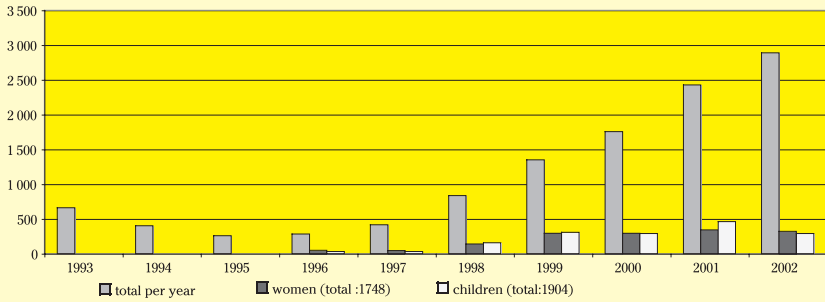
**Graph 2: Structure of permanent and long-term foreign residents in 2002**



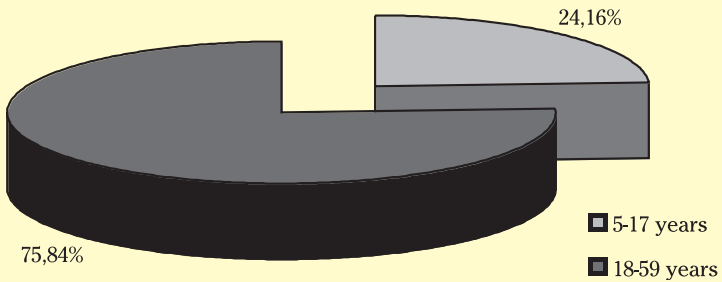
**Graph 3: Foreigners' visits in Bulgaria in 2002 by purpose of trip**



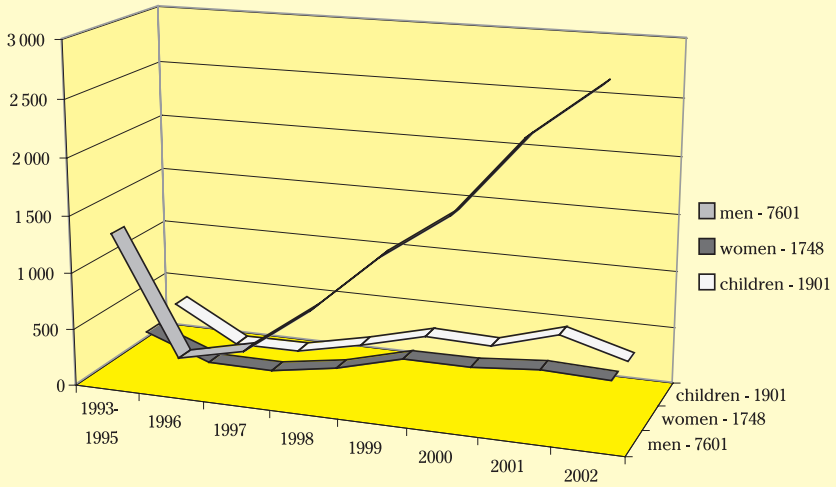
**Graph 4: Applicants for refugee status**



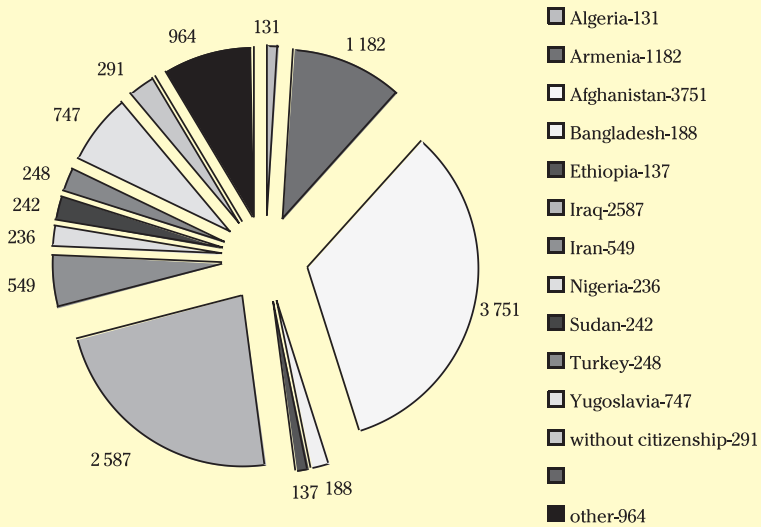
**Graph 5: Granted Refugee Status for the period 1993-January 2003 per age**



**Graph 6: Applicants for refugee status – men, women, children**

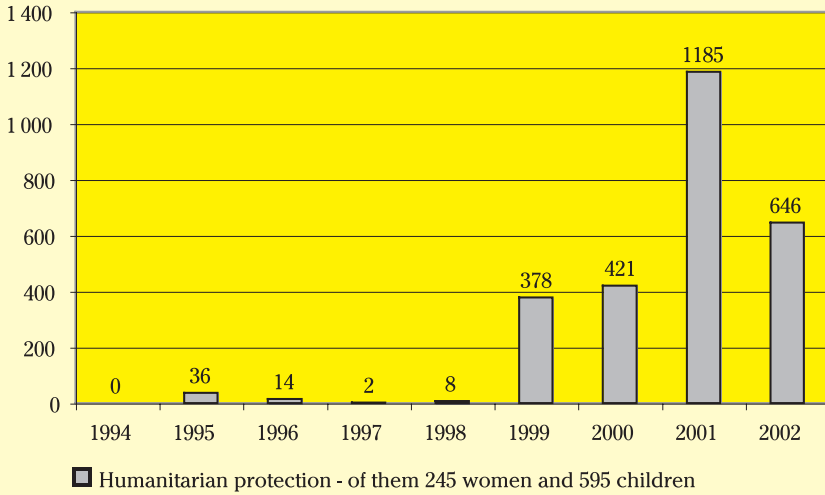


**Graph 7: Applicants for Refugee Status per Country for the Period 1993 – January 2003**

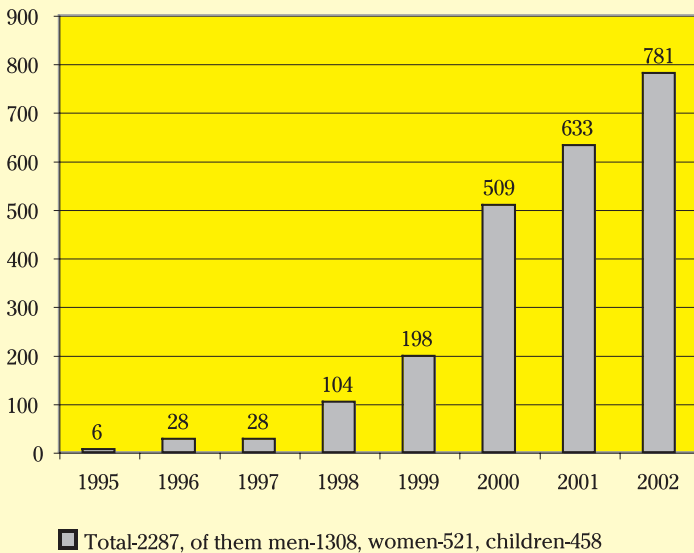




**Graph 8: Granted Humanitarian Protection**



**Graph 9: Rejected Applications of Asylum Seekers**



## Sharing Experience...

Accession to the EU is expected to bring about changes in migratory routes and destinations, as well as societal changes in the future EU member states. How do new migration trends affect the local societies of these countries? How is the integration of migrants possible in societies marked mostly by emigration throughout the 1990ies? Which approaches do governments envisage in the different countries? Are they becoming countries of immigration – what can be expected after May 2004?

This booklet is part of a product of comprehensive research and analysis of migration trends in each of six participating EU accession countries. The research project has been supported by the European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs, under the European Social Fund budget line “*Analysis of and research on the social situation, demography and the family*” and has been managed by IOM Vienna.

Under the title “Migration Trends in Selected Applicant Countries”, the following volumes are available:

**Volume I – Bulgaria:** The Social Impact of Seasonal Migration.

**Volume II – The Czech Republic:** The Times They Are A-Changin.

**Volume III – Poland:** Dilemmas of a Sending and Receiving Country.

**Volume IV – Romania:** More ‘Out’ than ‘In’ at the Crossroads between Europe and the Balkans.

**Volume V – Slovakia:** An Acceleration of Challenges for Society.

**Volume VI – Slovenia:** The perspective of a Country on the ‘Schengen Periphery’.

The reader may expect comprehensive information on the situation of migrants both, in and out of the countries, and the countries’ migration management approaches, with the main purpose to illustrate the impact of migration trends on the local society and the social situation in the country.