

## CASE STUDY ON BULGARIAN IMMIGRATION TO GERMANY

### 1. Introduction

During the period following the Second World War a number of demographic, economic and social problems occurred in the developed European countries, relating to their economic growth. This phenomenon has radically changed the make up of major European cities where a higher density of people of foreign origin is concentrated. The changes to the traditional way of life and society have had a strong effect on European peoples' national identity. At present, people of different ethnic origins and nationality live permanently in developed European countries. These dense groups of foreigners have influenced the system of values and often changed the cultural, social and political characteristics of the host country.

The main reason for the increase in emigration has been the same for centuries, namely; a better life for the individual and their family; fear of political, ethnic and religious persecution and forced expulsion from their country of origin.

The intense migration during the past years is due to the globalization of economic life. These significant changes in the socio-economic lifestyle lead to an increased necessity for policies which contribute to the development of mechanisms to integrate the different ethnic groups. The settling of people of different ethnicities in practice creates a complex set of factors and behaviors affecting the whole economic and social life of the country and the region. Each national group has different ethnic and social profiles, use different ways to achieve their personal and professional goals depending on their financial and general economic status. The development of these processes intensifies the cultural diversity which becomes a major distinctive feature of European countries' socio-economic development.

One of the countries that have attracted significant numbers of emigrants is the Federal Republic of Germany. The idiosyncrasy of Germany's post-war economic and social development boom, as well as some aspects of Germany's historical past, has attracted big groups of emigrants. Thus the German authorities face a double dilemma. On the one hand, due to Germany's economic growth, it needed to attract a work force, that is, a flow of immigrants. On the other hand, the growth of foreign citizen's agglomerations on its territory lead to alterations of their population's make up which creates a number of social and other related issues, involving the formulation of special state policy regarding migration.

Large emigrant flows into Germany changes the economic, political, cultural and social life completely and raises a number of challenges regarding the immigrants' behaviour. Some make an effort to adapt quickly to the foreign environment and to integrate in socio-economic life. Others, which include the majority of immigrants, choose not to change their national identity, especially those with different religious and cultural characteristics.

Furthermore, they tend to close themselves within their ethnic circles and display little desire to socialize with other ethnic groups or nationals. The Federal Republic of Germany is the only state in the EU which has been purposefully following a specific emigrant policy<sup>1</sup> since the first decade after the Second World War.

To aid economic growth and because of the lack of a work force, needed to meet production capacities in the German industry, 1955 saw the signing of contracts between FRG and some countries from South and South-East Europe (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, former Yugoslavia, Turkey) to recruit the so called 'gastarbeiter' (guest workers).

Despite the presence of political will and normative-regulating attempts to prevent the permanent settling of foreigners in Germany, the process of hiring a foreign work force has continued for more than five decades resulting in around 15 million migrants settling in the country.<sup>2</sup>

*This study* is dedicated to the structure and characteristics of Bulgarian emigrants to the Federal Republic of Germany. *The main objective* of the study is to research historical, economic and other related factors contributing to the increase of Bulgarian immigrants to Germany, as well as their ability to integrate into German society. The classification of the Bulgarian migrant community allows better analysis of its characteristics and incorporation into Germany's socio-economic life.

The first part of the study consists of a short presentation of the development of the immigration process in Germany, as well as, some major issues and contradictions which have influenced changes in the German immigration policy. The historical and political relations between Bulgaria and Germany during different periods of both countries development determine the structure and characteristics of the Bulgarian immigrants.

The second part of the study researches the regional allocation and other specifications. The third part attempts to identify and position the Bulgarian immigration presence in Germany compared to its development policy and the general increase of the foreign population in Germany. An attempt has been made to clarify the Bulgarian citizens' communication abilities, adaptation and integration into German Society.

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<sup>1</sup> In contrast to other West European countries, FRG has no preferential migration policy towards their former colonies' citizens. That is because after the Second World War Germany was not allowed to have colonies.

<sup>2</sup> Migration und Bevölkerung, 2006, Newsletter Ausgabe 5, July 2006

## **2. Migration trends and flows**

### **2.1. Description of migration patterns of the specific population to Germany in terms of historical, social and political factors**

#### ***2.1.1. Reasons determining the migration increase to Germany***

Germany has a long history in the flow of migration. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century up to the Second World War large groups of German nationals tried to make a living abroad (Russia, France amongst others)<sup>3</sup>. Since the beginning of the 1950s the economic development of FRG has been characterized by huge economic growth. The post-war German 'economic miracle' relied on a large work force to rebuild the infrastructure destroyed by the war, leading to a demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labor, mostly working in unskilled jobs. As a result, foreign labour was required to meet this demand. At this time, bilateral agreements were concluded with Italy (1955), Spain and Greece (1960), Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965) and Yugoslavia (1968).

In the period 1955 to 1961 the number of foreigners living in Germany barely increased by more than 200, 000 people. Then, after 1961 FRG saw sustainable economic growth, coupled with the German Democratic Republic's (GDR) decision to close the borders with the West and erect the Berlin Wall. This led to the immediate suspension of workers coming from East Germany and subsequently intensified the need for an alternative foreign work force in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The introduction of a shorter working week also decreased the work force and augmented the need for labour. Through the 60's to the start of the 70's employment dropped by 2.3 million people. Consequently, in 1960 the foreign workers making up 1.3% of in the German labour force rose to 11.9% in 1973. During this period the general number of employed workers grew from 26.6 to 27.7 million, compared to 1961 to 1970 when the percentage of Germans in the country's work force fell from 47.6 % to 43.7 %.

The first wave of foreign workers consisted mainly of single men between the ages of 20 and 40 years old, but there were also a significant number of single women. By the end of the 60's, the majority of foreign workers were Italian, Spanish and Greek. Later, they were joined by workers from the former Yugoslavia. However, the Turkish gastarbeiters gradually become predominant. In 1968 the Turkish citizens constituted 10.7 % of the foreign population in Germany and the Yugoslavians 8.8 %. By 1973 the Turkish citizens living and working in Germany were already 23 % of foreigners with permanent residence in Germany. By comparison, the Yugoslavians were 17.7%. Many of these foreign workers were located in Nordrhein-Westfalen, Baden-Württemberg, Bayern and Hessen.

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<sup>3</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Germans from the region of Hesse and Palatinate went to France where they played a key role in the expansion of the canals and railway networks. Other known migrations of Germans are their escape from poverty to Russia, South America, USA and Canada.

### ***2.1.2. The rotation principle***

From the beginning of the immigration process in Germany, the authorities' goal was to restrict the foreign workers' stay in the country. The German authorities' main policy was to adopt the rotation principle. After the stay expired – the date determined in advance – foreign workers would return to their home countries being replaced by others. The reality was different. From the beginning of the 60's more and more foreign workers remained permanently in Germany. This was agreeable to employers who would prefer to keep their qualified workers. In their turn, the workers felt more and more at home in Germany. The higher salaries in Germany compared to their home countries, the good prospects for increasing wages, the advantages of a good social policy and the incomparably better infrastructure were significant factors contributing not only to the foreign workers long term stay, but also to attracting their families to Germany.

### ***2.1.3 Foreign workers in the former GDR***

In the meantime, the German Democratic Republic recognized a shortage of labour with the growth of its economic power and tried to attract foreign workers too. For this purpose GDR signed recruitment agreements in the form of a qualification improvement with Hungary, Poland, Algeria, Cuba, Mozambique and Vietnam. Due to the agreements in 1981, 24, 000 foreign workers resided in GDR. In 1989 this increased to 94, 000, 60, 000 of whom came from Vietnam. The conditions and duration of their stay, their rights and their general number were determined individually based on the agreements conducted between their respective governments. The duration of the permit might vary between two and six years. By law, the agreements did not allow for the foreign workers to obtain permanent residence. Furthermore, the workers' families were also refused the right to join their relatives working in GDR. After their contracts' expired the foreign workers were obliged to leave GDR and return to their home countries.

### ***2.1.4 The 1973 ban on recruiting foreign labour***

The first signs of an economic recession at the beginning of the 70's as well as the subsequent increase of unemployment in FRG led to a change in the policies concerning foreign workers, as a necessity to protect the national labour market. First, unlimited access to the labour market was granted to the German citizens, EU citizens and after that to other countries whose citizens had been given the right to reside in Germany – former 'gastarbeiter' and their offspring. Other than them, the right to reside in Germany was granted to foreign citizens persecuted in their own countries and those given refugee status in Germany.

After the petrol crisis and the slowing of the economic growth in FRG at the beginning of the 70's, the federal government made the decision to stop hiring foreign workers in particular those coming from countries outside the

EU. In reality, this decision posed the important question as to what these workers would do about their future. The ban allowed them to remain in Germany permanently as they wouldn't be able to travel back and forth between their countries and Germany. They had to make a decision whether to return home or to remain in Germany for good.

In the 70s the percentage of foreigners in Germany remained relatively steady regardless of the change in policy concerning their foreign work force. During this period Germany had no shortage of labour as the birth rate had risen meaning an increase in the working population. Between 1973 and 1988 the number of foreign workers grew relatively slowly, from 4 to 4.8 million.

After the mid 80s the number of foreigners entering Germany grew significantly, exceeding those leaving the country. In only 11 years time (1986 – 1996) the number of foreigners living permanently in Germany had increased from 2.6 to 7.3 million. This increase was due mainly to the reconciliation of families and the birth of almost 1 million foreign children. The growth of the foreign population was also a result of the arrival of many refugees – a process that started in 1980 and intensified after 1985.

Today, compared to the 50's, 60's and the beginning of the 70's, migration and the settling of foreign workers in Germany are subject to serious restrictions. The contract and seasonal workers do not hold the right to remain permanently in Germany. In 2003 approximately 44, 000 people worked in Germany on temporary contacts in accordance with bilateral governmental agreements.

Another stage in the development of the migration flow was the repatriation of the ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe and the former USSR to Germany. The repatriation of the 'Eastern' Germans was for political reasons due to their persecution after the Second World War. With a special *law* everybody of German origin and their families who were not necessarily of German origin, were allowed to settle permanently in Germany. When issued a Document of Repatriation, they were entitled to German nationality. Since the mid 90s the number of ethnic Germans returning through this programme has decreased for the very fact that significant problems occurred with the integration of these people into German society. Many ethnic Germans' family members didn't speak the language which gave rise to a number of social, cultural and political obstacles.

The executive authorities in Germany gradually showed impatience and discontent for the fact that the ethnic German families from Eastern Europe and the former USSR had difficulties in integrating. Therefore, on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005 the Independent Commission on Migration required non-ethnic Germans (i.e. spouses of non-german ethnic origin and their children) to obtain a basic knowledge of German.

### ***2.1.5 Immigration of highly skilled workers***

After the year 2000 (until the Immigration Act came into effect in 2005), Germany decided to attract highly-qualified foreign experts and specialists in the field of Information Technology (IT). People with high university degree

and/or equivalent education were granted the right to permanent residence and a work permit in Germany's IT industry. By the end of 2004, nearly 18, 000 work permits for highly-qualified jobs had been issued (better known as 'green cards'). According to the Immigration Act, highly skilled specialists and in particular academic and university researchers, high level business and industrial professionals received permanent residence permits on arrival in Germany. Freelancers were also allowed to settle permanently in Germany provided their profession was of economic interest to the German economy.

## ***2.2. Bulgarian immigrants to Germany – statistics and movement flows***

### ***2.2.1. Characteristic features of the Bulgarian immigrants***

Compared to the local German population and the immigrant community in Germany as a whole, the clear classification of Bulgarian immigrants is complicated because of the non-homogenous structure of this group.

After the collapse of the planned economy and the intensification of the economic and social crisis in Bulgaria (after 1989), many Bulgarians choose to emigrate, considerable number of whom had degrees. The majority moved to Germany looking for refuge, a better life for them and their families, better career prospects and other incentives for a more prosperous life. They believed Germany would provide them with all the preconditions for a higher standard of living and more opportunities for professional advancement.

In May 2001, after a census of the population had been taken, Germany ranked as the number one destination for Bulgarian emigrants (at 23%), with the USA second at 19 %<sup>4</sup>. Other preferred destinations were Greece and Spain at 8 %, Great Britain and Italy at 6 %, Canada 5 % and France with 4 %.

The rush of Bulgarian immigrants to Germany has its roots in the close historical and political relations between Bulgaria and Germany. After 1949 a lot of Bulgarians went to East Germany (former GDR) to study, gain a higher degree and work on different economic agreements within the former Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) and other governmental exchanges. Some of whom managed to settle down permanently in GDR.

At the same time Bulgarian immigrants to West Germany after 1945 were mainly people who had left Bulgaria for political reasons and/or reconciliation with their families. During the period 1945-1989 due to the constitutionally guaranteed right to political asylum<sup>5</sup>, Bulgarian citizens found a haven in the Federal Republic of Germany, which gave them legal access to the national labour market. The most significant number of Bulgarians entered the country after the failure of the centrally-planned economy and their deep and long financial crisis.

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<sup>4</sup> According to the National Statistics Institute data, delivered by the Secretary of the Central Census Committee Dr. Yordan Kalchev, March 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland vom 23.05.1949, Constitution of FRG, paragraph 16a, section 1



Many of these highly-qualified specialists decide to leave Bulgaria for their families, considering that in an economically strong country with good social policies it would be easier for their children to obtain better education and jobs in the future. During these years, Germany became an attractive destination because of its economic and social policy and good job opportunities.

Germany and especially its universities have always appealed to Bulgarians since its liberation from Ottoman domination. From 1825 to 1831 a great Bulgarian enlightener Peter Beron studied in Munich and Heidelberg and in 1846 Doctor Ivan Bogorov lived and studied in Leipzig. For Bulgarian intellectuals Germany has the best developed educational system, with inspirational literature and culture. This demonstrates that as long ago as the 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany was the preferred country for Bulgarian intellectuals in a period when the Bulgarian state had not yet been restored. In addition, prior to Liberation, Bulgarian merchants opened companies to trade on German territory.

Bulgarians have been living in Berlin since the Liberation from the Ottomans (1878) to date. There is a long tradition characterized by a rich and structured educational system, good economic networks and positive exchange in science and education. The Student Union 'Rodina' (1908), for instance, has helped young Bulgarians to integrate into Berlin for years.

Bulgarian labour migrants entering Germany in the 30's, initially settled in Leipzig and Munich as gardeners. During the Second World War workers were recruited into the manufacturing, service and agricultural industries. While around 1000 Bulgarian students studied at German universities. Between 1945 and 1989 the Bulgarian labour migration to FRG was formed mainly of political emigrants and people who settled in Germany in order to join their families.

After 1989 Bulgarians didn't meet the formal labour immigration requirements. Therefore, access to the German labour market became difficult<sup>6</sup>. Since 1991 several bilateral agreements for temporary employment of Bulgarians come into force but these quotas had already been filled. Only a small portion of Bulgarian highly qualified IT specialists have managed to benefit from the 'green card' and settle down in Germany with the right to work and long-term residency.

According to statistics and the German migration authorities, the country is defined as an important destination for Bulgaria emigrants during the whole post-war period until the present day. The flow of Bulgarian citizens 'entering' and 'leaving' the country has been monitored by the FRG Statistics Office since 1954<sup>7</sup>. Bulgarian citizens registered with various residence rights have been accounted for since 1967<sup>8</sup>. Nevertheless, a complete picture of Bulgarian mi-

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<sup>6</sup> The regulations are in Paragraph 18 of the Act on residence of foreigners in FRG and on Paragraph 5 of Decree on work permits which regulate the exceptions of the general ban for access to the labour market.

<sup>7</sup> Federal Statistics Office of Germany, (2007): Lange Reihe ab 1952-2006, Herkunft-Ziel

<sup>8</sup> Federal Statistics Office of Germany, (1981, 1985, 1999, 2006): Lange Reihe, Ausländer nach Staatsangehörigkeiten, <http://www.destatis.de>

gration to Germany can only be obtained after 1989, and since 1991 official information is available only for a united Federal Republic of Germany.

After a steady and constant increase of Bulgarian citizens in FRG (according to the initial data in 1967 there were 1,985 people), in 1989 those Bulgarians residing legally in former West Germany reached 5,670. In the same year, according to the Central Statistics Office of the former GDR, 4,900 Bulgarians lived there accounting for barely 2.6 % of all foreigners living in East Germany<sup>9</sup>, at the time (there were 191,200 foreigners mainly from Vietnam, Poland, Mozambique, former USSR, Hungary, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, former Yugoslavia and Angola).

Due to a lack of specific information and more detailed statistical research *the legal grounds* upon which the Bulgarians resided in former FRG as well as in former GDR until 1990 cannot be defined precisely. It can be said for certain that they had neither the 'gastarbeiter' status, for there was no such agreement between the two countries, nor a 'Bilateral agreement for foreign workers qualification improvement programme which had never been signed'<sup>10</sup>.

Until 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 Bulgarian citizens did not have the right to stay for more than three months in Schengen states without a residence permit. Therefore, one of the ways for Bulgarians to stay longer in Germany was to obtain a student visa by studying at German universities or other educational institutions. According to data from the FRG Ministry of Education, in 1975, 81 Bulgarians studied in the former Federal Republic, in 1980, 121 Bulgarians, in 1985, 115 and in 1990, 183<sup>11</sup>.

Another immigration pattern in FRG was marriage to a German citizen<sup>12</sup>. Nevertheless, it is hard to define the exact number of Bulgarians who took advantage of this opportunity during the whole post-war period because of naturalization. It is even harder to define the number of political emigrants from Bulgaria for the whole post-war period as there are no such statistics. Refugee status was another way for Bulgarian citizens to settle in FRG, although this would be temporary (from 6 months up to several years while their asylum applications were reviewed)<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Wirtschaft und Statistik, (1990): Ausländer in der DDR 1989 nach Nationalitäten, H.8, S. 544

<sup>10</sup> Bulgaria and the Soviet Union are the first two countries from which the GDR State Planning Committee invited foreign engineers, young specialists and workers, a total of 50,000 people, for the needs of the German enterprises which import mainly for those two countries. Due to the emigration of Eastern German engineers, specialists and workers to the West, many factories' production facilities remained unused. The proposition was from 26.10.1961, but the Council of Ministers of GDR 'stopped' these plans at its meeting on 25.01.1962., supposedly for political reasons – how was the world going to accept the hiring of foreign workers by a socialist country. However, these first 'plans' pave the way for the adoption of 'Bilateral agreements aiming to improve the qualification of foreign workers', first with Poland (17.03.1963.) and Hungary, later with Vietnam, Mozambique, Algeria, Cuba etc.

<sup>11</sup> BMBF, 1995

<sup>12</sup> This form of migration existed both before 1989 and after that throughout Germany.

<sup>13</sup> Only for the period 1988-1990 did the asylum claims from Bulgarian citizens in Germany reach nearly 9,000. The refugee status was the first stage during which a contact with the employer was made and the structure of the migrants' network base for future migration, set up.



In *the former GDR* the concept of ‘migrants’ (‘emigrants’/‘immigrants’) was considered antisocialist and clashed with official party-government policy. After 1963, foreign citizens could have residency on the following grounds:

a) a bilateral agreement for foreign workers taking a higher qualification, which, as we said before, didn’t exist with Bulgaria.

b) studying at a German university which was widely popular among Bulgarian students graduating from German language schools (18 schools throughout Bulgaria), providing them with an high school diploma compatible with those from GDR; the access to higher education did not require entrance exams and the education itself was free.

c) individuals settling in Germany for various reasons: *family* – marriage, reconciliation of relatives; *acquiring the right to work and residence* after graduating in GDR; *long-term employment* through the exchange of professionals or specialists between Bulgarian and German enterprises, and through foreign trade representation offices amongst others.

After 1990 the number of Bulgarian citizens in Germany increased sharply to its peak of 59,094 people in 1992 after which it dropped to 31,564 in 1998 before rising again to 46,818 people in 2007. When analyzing this data, one should bear in mind they are derived from the residents’ current legal status as well as the registration authority of the receiving country for that particular period. This means, those not covered by the statistical journals are; Bulgarian citizens legally residing in Germany who have left the country unannounced; those with expired residence permits who have stayed in the country ‘unnoticed’ trying to re-register; as well as the illegal residents in FRG. In addition, those granted naturalization have been removed from the list.

Despite the contradictory trends in the number of Bulgarians in Germany and the constant flow in and out of the country, some *conclusions* can be drawn:

- ***The total number*** of the Bulgarian citizens in Germany ***has increased***

Table 1. *Bulgarian nationals in Germany from 1999 – 2007*

Year	Bulgarian Nationals (total)	Women (% of total)	Foreign citizens in Germany (total)	Population of Germany (total)
1999	32, 290	44,9	7, 336, 000	82, 163, 475
2000	34, 359	45,6	7, 268, 000	82, 259, 540
2001	38, 143	47,1	7, 318, 300	82, 440, 309
2002	42, 419	48,9	7, 348, 000	82, 536, 680
2003	44, 300	50,8	7, 342, 000	82, 531, 671
2004	39, 167	54,6	7, 288, 000	82, 500, 849
2005	39, 153	56,6	7, 289, 100	82, 437, 995
2006	39, 053	57,2	7, 255, 900	82, 314, 906
2007	46, 818	57,0	7, 257, 000	82, 217, 830

Source: Federal Statistics Office of Germany (2008), <http://www.destatis.de>

by almost **50 %** for the period 1999 – 2007.

➤ **In 2004**, the year of EU accession for the first CEE countries, a sudden drop in the total number of the Bulgarians in Germany can be observed. It dropped almost 11.5 % which wouldn't change significantly for the following two years.

➤ In 2007, the year of Bulgaria's accession to the EU, the number increased to nearly 20 % while the foreign and local population in Germany marked a slight drop.

➤ **The share** of female immigrants increased **to 57% in 2007**. Then since 2003 their number steadily exceeded those of men, which is unusual for most foreign ethnic groups in Germany.

➤ The average age of Bulgarian nationals in Germany is 35.4 years as the majority are students, young workers and temporary and seasonally employed workers, where the upper age limit is 40.

➤ The majority of Bulgarians (**65%**) are at an active working age, between 25 and 55, and nearly **25 %** of them are students between 5 -25 years old (school and university), which indicates the reasons why Bulgarians go to Germany and remain there in the long-term or indefinitely, namely; **education, professional training and qualified work**.

➤ Only **33 %** of the Bulgarian population in Germany is listed as married. One third of married Bulgarians, around 12 % of the total, are married to Germans, the majority being Bulgarian women. This shows that obtaining residence rights in Germany through marriage or for other family reasons is a significant but not major reason for immigration<sup>14</sup>.

➤ Bulgarians who make families in Germany or live there with them become part of the active and potential labour population. These people strive for a complete integration into the workplace as those who fail to make the transition tend to leave the country.

➤ Provided that Bulgarian nationals have worked legally for more than one year in Germany they can register as unemployed and seek work without leaving the country, made ever more possible with Bulgaria's accession to EU.

➤ The average stay of Bulgarian nationals in Germany is **7 years**; the short-term residents predominate, followed by medium-term and long-term – up to 8 years, the total of around 70 % which coincided with the democratic changes in Bulgaria and its negotiations for EU accession. Almost **95 % of the Bulgarians** in Germany stay there up to 20 years which confirms the assumption that the major part of the Bulgarian immigration in Germany formed after 1989. Around one third stays between 1 and 4 years which can be explained with the milder working and residence regulations as well as with the Bulgarian

<sup>14</sup> Given the chance, Bulgarians who managed to secure good work and accommodation in Germany in advance, left with their whole family, incl. children. In order to adapt faster and easier to the lifestyle and environment in Germany, the children went to German schools, colleges and universities. The member of the family who didn't have a permanent contract could sign one if they were willing to and if they showed the necessary professional skills, as well as knowledge in German and sometimes in English languages.

accession to EU.

The majority of immigrants to East and West Germany are ethnic Bulgarians professing East Orthodox Christianity. After 1989, together with them, many Bulgarians of Turkish origin, professing Islam, headed towards Germany. Most of them entered as illegal immigrants feeling more secure in contacting the Turkish community in Germany and finding shelter in neighborhoods inhabited mainly by Turkish immigrants. There they didn't feel isolated and helpless in this unfamiliar environment. The German 'Turks' became their first employers, the mosques were some of the main places for social contacts and the Turkish immigrants' religious organisations provided everyday help and advice on how to survive in the unfamiliar economic, social and cultural environment. In most cases these people did not speak German and were not able to communicate in this language. It was exactly at these religious centres where the immigrants received the necessary information and support for settling everyday matters and for communicating with German institutions regarding asylum and migration pleas.

From 1989 to 1993 asylum requirements became stricter so a trend was seen in Bulgarian immigrants legalizing their stay in Germany. That is Bulgarian nationals' asylum applications increased up to 74,884 or 7.5 % of all asylum applications by foreigners in Germany. This shows that in a relatively short period a significant number of Bulgarian immigrants had settled in Germany and were looking for ways to stay there permanently.

According to the information given by Bulgarian interpreters hired to hold interviews for the Asylum Authorities, the profile of those seeking asylum generally reflected the ethnic structure of the Bulgarian population. In 1992 the ethnic profile of the population was 85.3 % Bulgarians, 8.5 % Turks and 2.6 % Roma people. Their religious profile was 83.3 % East Orthodox Christians, 12.1 % Muslims (this group consists of Bulgarian nationals who are ethnic Turks and Bulgarian Muslims). The chances to receive the right to asylum as well as work are the main incentives for Bulgarian Turks to settle in Germany.

Later, some changes in their behaviour occurred. A part of them remained connected to the Turkish ethnic community and in practice didn't make any attempts to integrate into the German society. Other Bulgarians of Turkish origin, who had successfully settled in Germany, adopted a European system of values. That is why they turned back to their Bulgarian identity and familiar cultural roots which helped them to integrate into the German society. The relative share of Bulgarians of Turkish origin who managed to receive an official right to work in Germany cannot be described precisely as there is no statistics.

### ***2.3. Regional distribution of the Bulgarian work migration***

The regional distribution of Bulgarian nationals in Germany has the following characteristics shown in Table 2 below.

The majority of Bulgarians (around 75 %) live in economically richer and financially stable provinces, such as North Rhine – Westphalia, Baden-Würt-

temberg, Bavaria, Hesse and Berlin, where they have found better work, remuneration and living conditions. These provinces have world renown universities with traditions in higher and professional education, science, foreign student bodies and part-time employment for students. As those provinces – North Rhine-Westphalia, Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria and Hesse and partly Berlin are in the former GFR where access for Bulgarians was highly limited before the Unification in 1989, an assumption can be made that Bulgarians started to immigrate there after the changes. For certain, there was internal migration which has been generally observed with the German population (migration flows from East to West). An interesting fact shows that the relative share of Bulgarians in the East German provinces of Saxony, Thuringia, Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is around **9 %**, while only Berlin has **10,2%**.

Table 2. *Bulgarian nationals by German provinces, 31 December 2007*

<b>Provinces in Germany</b>	<b>Bulgarian nationals (total)</b>	<b>Bulgarian as a % of foreigners</b>	<b>Foreign population in Germany (total)</b>	<b>Population of Germany (total)</b>
<b>Baden-Württemberg</b>	6 220	13,28 – III	1 277 052	10 754 937
<b>Bavaria</b>	8 948	19,11 - II	1 185 649	12 515 713
<b>Berlin</b>	4 776	10,20 - V	474 083	3 410 147
<b>Brandenburg</b>	667	1,42	66 018	2 593 081
<b>Bremen</b>	875	1,87	85 285	663 050
<b>Hamburg</b>	1 430	3,05	252 002	1 766 156
<b>Hessen</b>	5 320	11,36 - IV	685 409	6 072 717
<b>Mecklenburg – Vorpommern</b>	139	0,30	39 377	1 683 411
<b>Lower Saxony</b>	2 433	5,20	539 729	7 979 194
<b>North Rhine - Wetsphalia</b>	9 263	19,79 – I	1 912 729	18 008 611
<b>Rhineland - Palatinate</b>	2 287	4,88	318 211	4 048 582
<b>Saarland</b>	639	1,37	86 684	1 038 500
<b>Saxony</b>	1 408	3,01	117 813	4 226 490
<b>Saxony - Anhalt</b>	893	1,91	45 860	2 420 209
<b>Schleswig - Holstein</b>	776	1,66	151 250	2 327 021
<b>Thuringia</b>	744	1,59	47 370	2 294 972
<b>Total</b>	<b>46 818</b>	<b>100,00</b>	<b>7 284 500</b>	<b>82 258 300</b>

*Source:* Federal Statistics Office of Germany (2008) <http://www.destatis.de>

These are probably Bulgarians who had settled in former GDR before the Unification. They had kept their professional and family contacts and had good work and study opportunities as there was a small foreign population in these provinces.

The naturalization of Bulgarian nationals in Germany also shows some interesting tendencies:

➤ The number of Bulgarians taking German nationality is within the **1 %** quota and **women** again prevail at **65.0 %**.

➤ Only **30 % of Bulgarians** have acquired German nationality by means of marriage or co-habitation with Germans or through other members of the family; the majority, **70 % of Bulgarians**, have acquired German nationality through their long-term residence permit, including the 8 year permit which shows a high appreciation for their professional abilities in the receiving country.

➤ **93% of the naturalized Bulgarians** have acquired German citizenship in the last 20 years and the majority of them (**around 80 %**) live in the former West German provinces which suggests that naturalization has happened after the Unification of Germany.

➤ The Bulgarians with German nationality are at an active working age between 25 and 55 (**70 %**) and students (**20 %**). Thus they can be described as equal to nationals in the German labour market (Table 3).

Table 3. *Bulgarians granted German nationality between 1999-2006 z.*

Year	Foreigners granted German nationality	Bulgarians granted German nationality	Relative share Bulgarians with German nationality/ all foreigners with German nationality	Relative share of women among the Bulgarians with German nationality
1999	241 972	303	0,13	52,5
2000	186 688	614	0,33	47,9
2001	178 098	615	0,35	53,7
2002	154 547	649	0,42	56,2
2003	140 731	579	0,41	58,5
2004	127 153	404	0,32	60,4
2005	117 241	400	0,34	61,5
2006	124 566	409	0,33	65,0

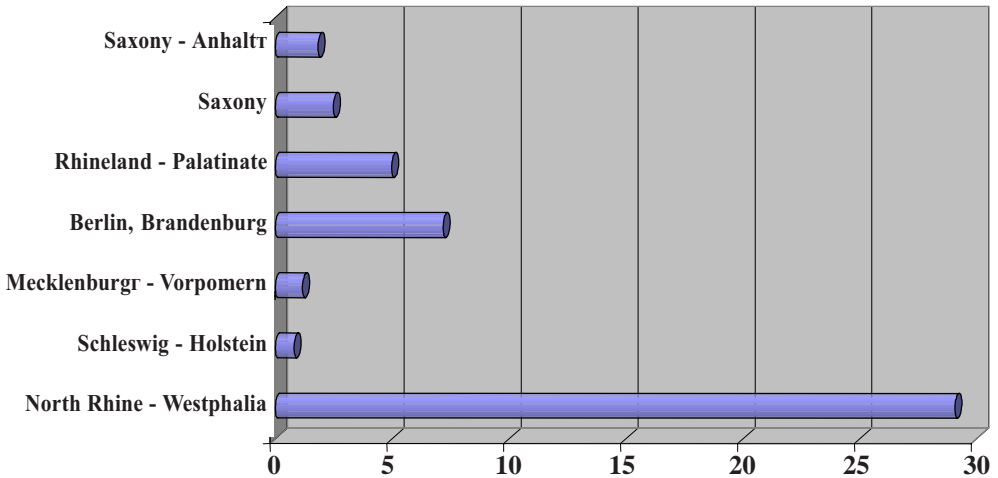
*Source:* Federal Statistics Office of Germany (2007), <http://www.destatis.de>

In an internet survey, the replies of 1,365 emigrants from Bulgaria give an idea of where they are mainly concentrated in Germany. The chart shows that most Bulgarians are from the North Rhine – Westphalia, followed by Berlin, Brandenburg, Essen and Bremen.



Chart 1

## Regional distribution of Bulgarian immigrants, survey from 2008 (%)



Source: Survey from <http://www.zaedno.de>

### 3. Employment characteristics

#### 3.1. Skills and education level

*Bulgarian students in Germany are a specific type of Bulgarian immigrant because some of them usually remain in Germany after graduation.*

Until 1945 studying at universities abroad was typical for certain cultural and economic elites. While in the period 1945-1990 it was a privilege for a certain politically loyal part of the population, in the 90s it is an exception for economic reasons and is considered prestigious. After 2000, studying in foreign universities became highly popular for Bulgarians.<sup>15</sup>

The restrictive migration policy enforced by the Western European countries in the 90's made the free settlement of Bulgarians on their territory very difficult, almost impossible.<sup>16</sup> The measures aimed to keep the higher price of labour in the local labour markets. Therefore hiring foreign worker-immigrants from CEE countries was permitted only if the employer could prove there weren't nationals with the same qualification locally and therefore needed to be imported from outside. Since the beginning of 2001 until 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 – Bulgaria's

<sup>15</sup> Liakova, Marina, The hybrid life of the Bulgarian students in Germany, in: *Criticism and Humanism*, issue 25/2008, p. 45-63

<sup>16</sup> If by 1989, Bulgarian citizens' emigration was controlled by the Bulgarian institutions (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) through the exit visas system, after the democratic changes the Bulgarians' movement abroad was restricted only by the receiving countries through migration policies and their visa regime. Until the spring of 2001 Bulgarian citizens needed visas even when traveling or staying in Western European countries up to 3 months. Despite Bulgaria's full membership to EU, the restrictive clauses on the access to the labour market remained.

EU accession – Bulgarian nationals didn't have the right to spend more than 3 months in the Schengen territory without special permission. The most popular and accessible form of long-term legal residence in EU was with the student status<sup>17</sup>. These who could mainly benefit from this status were young people up to 35 years old who had a higher education diploma and a good knowledge of the language. The students kept their nationality and were granted the right to reside in the country for the time of their studies until graduation. Thus they made up part of the 'internationally mobile students' as qualified by the Statistics Institute of UNESCO<sup>18</sup>. As such they were considered as potential labour migrants i.e. migrants with higher education and corresponding professional experience.

The students' migration from CEE to Western Europe hides the risks associated with the loss of young and qualified labour resources in their own countries, which can slow down the future development of important economic sectors. If the young specialists were to return to their home countries, they could catalyze its future economic development. But the chance for that happening was very slim. The young people usually named the following reasons for not returning: there isn't an appropriate job in their home country with similar work ethics, techniques and know-how, good remuneration and clear prospects for career development; the unstable socio-economic and political situation in the home country adds additional doubts and hesitations about going back.

Nobody denies the importance of migration among students, PhD students, and young scientists, who are involved in one form of education or continuous training abroad. Nevertheless, it is a fact that there is little research in this area. This group can be defined as 'the forgotten' migrants, who gain more and more importance for the future development of a united Europe.

During the 2007/2008 academic year around 50,000 Bulgarian students studied abroad with a very strong presence in Germany. Indeed, at this time out of a total of 233,600 foreign students in FRG 10,500 were Bulgarian. This meant they ranked fifth out of all foreign students in Germany<sup>19</sup>. In reality, the Bulgarian students held third place because some of the Turkish and Russian students in Germany were naturalized Germans. Out of all Bulgarian students going abroad almost 20 % choose Germany for their studies.

The majority of young Bulgarians study in the former West German provinces – North Rhine Westphalia (22%), Bavaria (20%), Baden – Wurttemberg (16%), Berlin (8.5%) and Essen (8.5%). More than 80 % of them go to universities, the rest into other educational institutions. Most Bulgarian students study law, economics and social sciences, linguistic and cultural studies, mathematics and natural sciences. Three of these subjects – computer science, economics and engineering are most popular with Bulgarians.

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<sup>17</sup> After 1999 25-30 % of the Bulgarian citizens in Germany were students in different German educational institutions and universities.

<sup>18</sup> Unesco-UIS, 2006

<sup>19</sup> Statistische Bundesamt, 2007; according to the Bulgarian Consulates in Germany latest research found that the number of students had reached 15,000 people.

**Table 4. Foreign students in Germany including Bulgarian students according to initial year of studies**

Years	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Bulgarian students	1 204	1 945	2 678	3 172	3 080	2 489	1 819	1 319	1 067
%	<b>3,0</b>	<b>4,3</b>	<b>5,0</b>	<b>5,4</b>	<b>5,1</b>	<b>4,3</b>	<b>3,3</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>2,0</b>
Total of foreign students	39 905	45 652	53 183	58 480	60 113	58 247	55 773	53 554	53 758

*Source:* Federal Ministry of Interior, Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, <http://www.bmi.bund.de>

**Table 5. Foreign students in Germany and major subjects (totals and %s correlated for major subjects)**

Academic year	2004/ 2005		2005/ 2006		2006/ 2007		2007/ 2008	
Total	12 848	%	12 794	%	12 170	%	10 504	%
Linguistic and cultural studies	2 670	<b>20,8</b>	2 559	<b>20,0</b>	2 432	<b>19,9</b>	2 089	<b>19,9</b>
Law, economics and social science	4 763	<b>37,0</b>	4 823	<b>37,7</b>	4 626	<b>38,0</b>	3 942	<b>37,5</b>
Mathematics and natural science	2 474	<b>19,3</b>	2 431	<b>19,0</b>	2 324	<b>19,1</b>	1 978	<b>18,8</b>
Engineering	1 667	<b>12,9</b>	1 638	<b>12,8</b>	1 514	<b>12,4</b>	1 321	<b>12,6</b>
Medicine	556	<b>4,3</b>	614	<b>4,8</b>	617	<b>5,1</b>	601	<b>5,7</b>
Art	496	<b>3,9</b>	422	<b>3,3</b>	474	<b>3,9</b>	420	<b>4,0</b>

*Source:* Federal Ministry of Interior, Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, <http://www.bmi.bund.de>

**Table 6. Bulgarian students in Germany and major subjects (total and %s correlated on major subjects)**

Academic year	2000/ 2001		2001/ 2002		2002/ 2003		2003/ 2004	
Total	5 015	%	7 321	%	9 897	%	12 048	%
Linguistic and cultural studies	1 098	<b>21,9</b>	1 568	<b>21,4</b>	2 090	<b>21,1</b>	2 554	<b>21,2</b>
Law, economics, social science	1 936	<b>38,6</b>	2 762	<b>37,7</b>	3 631	<b>36,7</b>	4 422	<b>36,7</b>
Mathematics and natural science	858	<b>17,1</b>	1 413	<b>19,3</b>	1 952	<b>19,7</b>	2 337	<b>19,4</b>
Engineering	577	<b>11,5</b>	861	<b>11,8</b>	1 260	<b>12,7</b>	1 530	<b>13,2</b>
Medicine	165	<b>3,3</b>	251	<b>3,4</b>	373	<b>3,8</b>	470	<b>3,9</b>
Art	286	<b>5,7</b>	327	<b>4,5</b>	399	<b>4,1</b>	482	<b>4,0</b>

*Source:* Federal Ministry of Interior, Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, <http://www.bmi.bund.de/>

Because of the dynamic growth in the number of Bulgarian students, they are of special interest for research. What is their motivation in choosing FRG in particular? Undoubtedly, Germany's geographical closeness is a major factor for their choice.

Due to the former GDR (founded in 1949) belonging to the socialist bloc it was a precondition for many Bulgarians to get easier access to the East German universities even before the Unification (1989). This tradition also continues after 1989.

Another important factor is that the German education system has a good reputation. German universities have traditionally attracted many Bulgarians since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Apparently for Bulgarian students the fact that Germany has established and world renowned universities define their choice of a place to study.

Some Bulgarian students choose FRG for their studies because of all their family and relatives permanently residing in the country. But this is just an initial 'impulse' and they provide a financial guarantee and an easier and faster adaptation to the local way of living.

A characteristic of Bulgarian immigrants in Germany are the limited contacts between the 'old' and 'new' migrants and the lack of succession between them. The old migration was forced to leave the country mainly for political reasons, rarely for family or social reasons. The new migration is entirely economically motivated. Material values dominate among the young Bulgarians, especially among the Bulgarian students in Germany. The material and economic interest is a key reason for their decision to 'immigrate' to Germany as students.

The access to German universities is relatively easy for all foreigners with a high school diploma, as it doesn't require entrance exam for certain subjects. In most universities the only requirement is a German language diploma („Sprachdiplom") which can be obtained either from the authorized institutions, or through an exam at the selected university<sup>20</sup>. It is not a problem for students in Bulgaria as there are 18 German language schools in the country where education is aimed at achieving this diploma.

There is hardly any other country in Europe where so much private funding is invested in foreign language education: private lessons, language courses in specialized schools, private language high schools and test preparation for universities abroad.

Another important reason for choosing Germany is the relatively cheap fees for education in its universities. Up until 2004, the tuition fee was 100 Euros as well as a preferential price for municipal transport, dormitories, student canteens, legal counseling and other benefits. Since 2004 those who have exceeded the duration of their study period pay 500 Euros per semester. Since

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<sup>20</sup> Over the last number years more and more universities accepted foreign students with English, but only in some of the disciplines.

April 2007 the German universities are free to decide whether to introduce tuition fees for all students and up to what amount<sup>21</sup>. On account of Bulgaria's full membership to EU since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 Bulgarian students have the right to apply for a German state loan (BAfÖG) to finance their studies.

One peculiarity of studying in Germany is the relative freedom when forming the curriculum. The students can decide when to sit tests and exams which is a major advantage for those students who have to work in order to finance their studies<sup>22</sup>. On the other hand, for the students who are motivated to study and are supported by their families it is more of an obstacle towards successful graduation. It is accepted as a disadvantage of the educational system because if the future specialists don't graduate on time, there is a risk they might turn into cheap labour in the market – mainly in hotels and restaurants or even some less attractive jobs requiring physical work.

However, this particularity of the German educational system sets conditions for deliberate 'prolonging' of the studying process mainly for the 'pro forma' students who have already graduated in Bulgaria and enroll in Germany in order to benefit from the German labour market through their student status.<sup>23</sup> This deliberate prolonging of the studies is preconditioned by the restriction set in the Foreign Nationals Act (Ausländergesetz). According to it, foreign students are obliged to leave Germany after graduating and to spend at least one year outside the country before being granted a permanent residence permit in case they are offered work by a German employer.

This administrative regulation was revoked by the new Immigration Act (Zuwanderungsgesetz). According to it, from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005 all foreign graduates are granted equal rights in the labour market with German nationals, and are allowed to stay in the country one year after graduation while looking for work related to their subject. To secure incomes during this period they can practice any profession without a work visa. Out of all graduates in 2006, this opportunity benefited mainly Chinese students (503), Bulgarians (133) and Indians (129) which shows that there is serious professional interest on behalf of young Bulgarians to work in Germany.

This legal amendment is related to the change in the whole socio-political climate in Germany. According to the latest demographic research, for the normal functioning of the country's social security system with its negative increase in population, immigration needed is nearly 400, 000 people of working age per year.<sup>24</sup> By allowing foreign students to stay in the country after their studies FRG gains valuable potential from highly qualified immigrants.

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<sup>21</sup> In practice, most universities introduce a tuition fee of around 500 euro per semester and some universities waive the fees for foreign students for social reasons.

<sup>22</sup> Girls find work in the area of gastronomy, household and office work while the boys work in factories, storehouses and garages where the work is harder but brings a higher income.

<sup>23</sup> All students in Germany have the right to 20 hours a week employment during the semester and 40 hours during the semestrial holidays.

<sup>24</sup> Unabhängige Kommission Zuwanderung, 2001



The Bulgarian student community in Germany is multicultural and open to its social contacts. Although there are tens of Bulgarian student organisations – in almost every city where there are Bulgarians studying, the number of their active membership is very small compared to the total number of Bulgarian's studying in Germany. With the increase of the newly accepted students in the recent years an establishment of a Bulgarian student diaspora can be seen. It shows a tendency to be introspective apparent with other large ethnic communities, staying within an ethnic niche and searching and finding monoethnic contacts. In the specialized sociologic literature there is an argument whether this ethnic introspection within one migrant group can be defined as social exclusion, or as a natural process of gathering of individuals with similar habits, expectations and understandings.<sup>25</sup> For young Bulgarians, although in more homogenous groups, they show tolerance and understanding for the different religious and cultural characteristics of their colleagues – as was the case with their predecessors in the 80's and in the 90's.

Bulgarian students don't have a definitive vision for their future after they graduate in Germany. However, almost all of them are willing to 'live well' and to 'earn good money'. Most of them relate this to staying in Germany or other West European countries where the chance of finding a better job on their chosen field is higher. There are some who wouldn't stay in Germany after their graduation as they see a difference in mentality, customs and temper. But they are unanimous that studying in Germany has been an important life experience.

How do the Bulgarian immigrants and students in particular, integrate into Munich's Society in 2008?

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Although Munich is one of the cities where a compact group of Bulgarians live, there is a lack of statistical data on how many of them live there permanently. Bulgarians here are mainly in two groups. The first group consists of students and the second of different working Bulgarian immigrants living in Germany. There are 2,700 Bulgarian students in Munich. In 2002-2003 they were 4,000 which is more than the number of Chinese students. Interesting is the fact that in the course of time the majority of them remain enrolled as students but in practice become 'gastarbeiter'. They use student papers to reside in Germany, but in fact, work wherever they can find it. This is due to peculiarities in the German education system which allows students to change their major up until the fourth semester. Some of the students start work first to save money for their studies or have some capital. Some of them work for four years and then go back to Bulgaria, which explains the decreasing number of Bulgarian students in Germany. However, most Bulgarian students in Germany go there for their studies. Also, the sanctions for prolonging studies have increased after 2004. The Bulgarian student community is characterized by informal commu-

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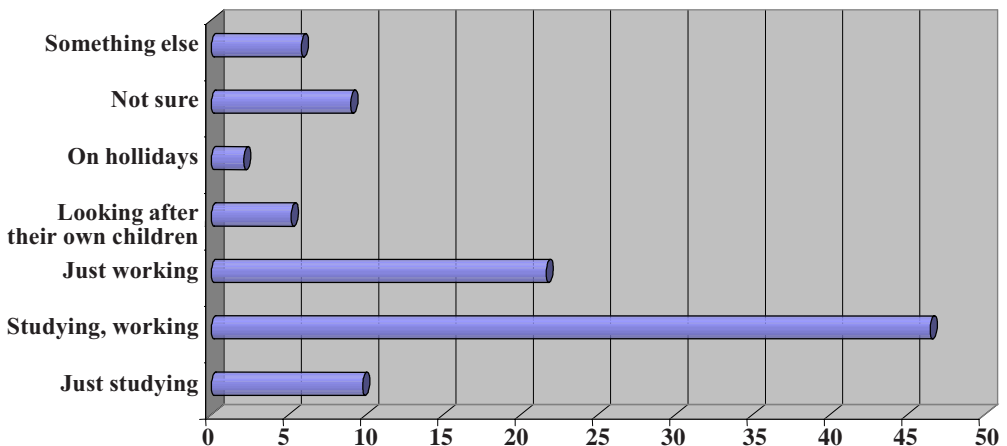
<sup>25</sup> Halm, Sauer (2004,2006); Sen, Halm Sauer (2001); Bukow, Nikodem, Schulze (2007); Nowak (2006)

nication and mutual assistance between the students. Those who already know the bureaucratic obstacles help the new arrivals from Bulgaria to adapt. Thus the new Bulgarian students adapt more easily to the economic and social environment and avoid the cultural shock. The ‘old’ students act as social centres helping the young people adapt to their new life. In practice, they restrict their integration into German society, because they create conditions for easier and trouble-free contacts within the Bulgarian Diaspora. After the Bulgarian accession to the EU (01.01.2007), Bulgarians’ gaining residence in Germany was not as difficult as before. Regardless of the fact that the German labour market was saturated and selective, as there are areas in the real sector where there is still a shortage of labour. That is why Bulgarians with higher education diplomas (especially ones obtained in Germany) find work as engineers, IT specialists, lawyers, doctors, financiers, scientists, where the Bulgarian students also have good chances of finding work.

### 3.2. Employment and occupations

According to the survey below (held on the internet among 910 people) the majority of Bulgarian immigrants in Germany study and work. Around 22 % are in Germany to work, but the survey doesn’t explain what portion of the participants is in Germany temporary or have remained after graduating.

Chart 2. *Distribution of Bulgarian immigrants' employment until 2008 (%)*



Source: <http://www.zaedno.de>

The data presented in Table 7 shows the various forms of temporary employment of Bulgarian nationals in Germany based on intergovernmental agreements enforced after 1991 which are of mutual economic interest. The most popular way is by signing a *labour contract* between a German company and employees of a foreign company (e.g. Bulgarian company) for subcontractor work in Germany for a certain period of time with an optional 4 year extension

Table 7. *Short-term Bulgarian immigration in Germany based on the type of employment, 1991 – 2006*

Years	subcontractors on labour contract	Seasonal employment on intermediary contract	'gastarbeiter' on intermediary contract	house help on intermediary contract
1991	365	-	-	-
1992	1 968	-	3	-
1993	3 802	71	176	-
1994	2 353	70	323	-
1995	1 866	131	326	-
1996	989	188	304	-
1997	1 229	203	245	-
1998	688	236	351	-
1999	1 402	332	378	-
2000	1 724	825	658	-
2001	1 861	1 349	776	-
2002	1 309	1 492	648	-
2003	1 651	1 434	367	-
2004	1 471	1 249	222	-
2005	1 038	1 320	157	38
2006	731	1 293	115	29

*Source:* Federal Ministry of Interior, Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, <http://www.bmi.bund.de/>

clause. The foreigners are paid according to acceptable rates, but their social benefits are covered by the dispatching country. These jobs are mainly in construction and metallurgy requiring good secondary professional diplomas and qualifications.

More and more interest is showed in seasonal employment for foreigners in Germany – *up to 3 months a year*. Typically, for Bulgarians, almost 100 % work in hotels or restaurants. Remuneration is according to the German rates and social benefits are paid in Germany. This is the reason for the increase number of people employed with an intermediary contract for seasonal work, although this type of work doesn't always require a professional degree and qualification. Bulgarians' employed as '*gastarbeiter*' is contradictory. These are working specialists (up to 40 years old) in international companies and joint ventures, who have the right to work in Germany for a year (or a year and a half) with the purpose of raising their qualifications, which is of mutual interest for both countries. They are paid German rates and receive social benefits in Germany. The quota is for 1000 people of which only 50% of the places are filled.

For the purposes of this research some specific data on the business and employment of Bulgarian nationals in Germany prove to be of great interest.

Table 8. *Bulgarian nationals with personal business in Germany*

Nationality/age	before 2005	2005	2006	Total	Women
<b>Bulgarians</b>	94	23	22	139	50
<b>%</b>	<b>3,6</b>	<b>3,1</b>	<b>3,4</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>4,1</b>
<b>Total foreigners</b>	2 599	732	642	3 973	1 232

*Source:* Federal Ministry of Interior, Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, <http://www.bmi.bund.de>

The data in table 8 shows the number of Bulgarian's who have obtained the right to long term residency in Germany. This is because they perform activities of great economic importance for the country and for a particular region. The initial requirement: since 1st Jan 2005 is to invest a minimum of 1 million Euros and open ten working places which has since (1st August 2007) decreased to half a million Euros and 5 working places.

Bulgaria, with 139 investors, among which 50 women, takes eighth place in Germany after China (984), USA (729), Japan (270), Russian Federation (214), Turkey (178), Korea (161), Canada (154). Only China, USA, Japan and Russia have more business women compared to Bulgaria.

Table 9. *Bulgarians granted residence in Germany as highly qualified specialists*

Nationality/ age	2005	2005	2006	Total	Women
<b>Bulgarians</b>	29	0	2	31	10
<b>%</b>	<b>3,0</b>		<b>2,5</b>	<b>2,8</b>	<b>2,9</b>
<b>Total foreigners</b>	972	71	80	1 123	347

*Source:* Federal Ministry of Interior, Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, <http://www.bmi.bund.de>

The data in Table 9 refers to Bulgarian nationals defined as highly qualified specialists – scientists, research associates, professors who have been offered work in Germany where their income allows them to live without social support from the state. 31 Bulgarians are defined as such, one third of whom are women. Among the different nationalities present in Germany, Bulgarians are in 9<sup>th</sup> place after Turkey (185), the Russian Federation (142), USA (138), Romania (65), Serbia and Monte Negro (55), China (43), India (40) and Croatia (37). There is definite 'brain import' from the former socialist countries into Germany – 30 % out of all highly qualified specialists in Germany come from this region and 10% of all representatives of the former socialist science are Bulgarians.

The Bulgarians are among the best represented nations in Germany for IT specialists, in 8<sup>th</sup> place after India (5740), Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, the Baltic

Table 10. *Bulgarians issued work visas as IT specialists for the period 01.08.2000-31.12.2004*

Nationality	Total	Men	Women	From abroad	From German university
<b>Bulgarians</b>	469	373 (80%)	96 (20%)	380	89
<b>%</b>	<b>2,6</b>			<b>2,5</b>	<b>3,1</b>
<b>Total foreigners</b>	17 931	15 773	2 158	15 067	2 864

*Source:* Federal Ministry of Interior, Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, <http://www.bmi.bund.de>

Republics (a total of 2033), Romania (1144) Czech Republic and Slovakia (1031), Former Yugoslavian countries (823), Hungary (553), Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (516). Excluding India, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, whose representatives may have political rather than economical interest to live and work in Europe, the rest of the IT specialists have been attracted from the former socialist countries – 35 %. Bulgarian IT specialists make up a substantial portion although only a quarter have graduated in Germany. Bulgaria has paid for the education and professional development of the other three quarters, but it isn't able to offer them with an equivalent German income and lifestyle. The minimum income which the German employers had to guarantee the foreign IT specialists through a 5-year labour contract was 50,000 Euros per year.

This was regulated by an enactment that after 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2005, all of these specialists could remain long-term or indefinitely in the IT sector in Germany with mutually beneficial conditions. On condition; that their German employer offered them a job in their field of expertise; they agreed to the working conditions and remuneration; they had enough income to live in Germany without needing social or unemployment allowance. Unfortunately, there is no information on how many Bulgarian IT specialists benefited from this opportunity.

***What are the possible reasons and explanations for the present state and structure of Bulgarian immigration in Germany?***

➤ Potential immigrants from Bulgaria to Germany had to wait for 'the borders to be open' for better legal and economic conditions to immigrate, as well as for family reasons, for work, for education or for both work and education

➤ Bulgarian women are more adaptive to the life and working conditions in Germany than the men and it's easier and more common for them to co-habit or marry there.

➤ The flow of immigrants out of Germany after 2003 could be explained with preferences for immigration to the new EU member-states, to Southern European countries like Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy which offer more accessible and better working and residential conditions; or to other continents such as Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand amongst others.

Over the last 8 years and especially after 2000 the number of Bulgarians who settled permanently in Germany decreased. Most of them left, being sea-



sonal workers and labourers in the low qualified sectors of German economy, and returned to Bulgaria. Some of these seasonal migrants stayed for longer periods but migrated in the meantime temporarily to third countries.

***In what fields are Bulgarian workers hired?***

The seasonal workers from Bulgaria and from other CEE countries are usually hired in agriculture, forestry, hotels, restaurants and other temporary jobs. It must be underlined that apart from hiring workers from Bulgaria and other CEE countries, Germany organizes qualification programmes for young people from this region for the duration of 18 months and trains between 3,000 and 6,000 participants annually. German employers and public institutions look for qualified nurses for hospitals and other medical establishments; people who are not limited by the employment restrictions such as scientific researchers, executive and management cadres, foreign language teachers, actors, models, professional athletes and coaches. There is special demand for foreigners under 25 who can look after children for more than a year as well as students who can work during the weekends. Those Bulgarians who want to settle permanently in Germany, including students, study for higher qualifications in order to find a job more easily.

Another type of employment for the immigrants aiming to settle and seek long-term residence in a different socio-economic and cultural environment is setting up their own business. The importance of the 'ethnic economy' in Germany is increasing. The foreign entrepreneurs' actual number, motives and issues are the object of much research by the German Federal Authorities. Most significant is that the number of independent entrepreneurs among the immigrants has increased over the last 15 years, of which the number of entrepreneurs of Turkish and Italian origin has doubled. The increase is considerable compared to the increase of German entrepreneurs.

In 2003 the number of foreign entrepreneurs in Germany was 285,000. Since 1990 this has increased to almost 65 %. The foreign entrepreneurs open jobs mainly for their ethnic groups but still facilitate the labour market. Higher unemployment rates are mostly found among the ethnic groups, for example the Turks and the Italians in Germany, are particularly high. Enterprises set up by foreigners have opened up nearly 1 million jobs, which is 3 % of all jobs in the Federal Republic. This ethnic economy is mainly concentrated in the hotels and restaurants business.

***What are the immigrant's incentives to set up their own enterprise?***

On one hand, they find a way out of unemployment; on the other hand, it is a 'matter of motivation – the desire to be your own boss'. The ethnic economy is in fact a factor for integration. Accordingly, when the German retail traders are displaced by the big retail chains, in many cases the foreign entrepreneurs open their own small shops. They fill the vacated niche market. Another important aspect of this process is the integration of this population through the retail trade. These small shops and restaurants owned by immigrants in Germany turn into centres of cultures and contribute to a peaceful life between foreigners and

Germans. In other words, the owner can rightly claim that as an immigrant he has an equal chance to be recognized in society through his entrepreneurship. The encouragement to integrate as well as the strengthening of the immigrants' social involvement benefits the Bulgarians of Turkish origin and the Bulgarian Muslims. They usually live in agglomerations with compact Turkish populations and are hired by Turkish employers with small businesses. The Bulgarian immigrants of Turkish origin usually work in small Turkish restaurants and in practice never leave this circle. They live in Germany but in reality they don't benefit from the opportunity of adopting a new culture by integrating into the German nation, who has been a lot more welcoming over the last years. Some of these Bulgarian labour immigrants are willing to leave this closed ethnic circle of work and life by orientating their children towards school and even university.

The immigrants' attitude is determined by the extent of their integration into the societies they live in. Bulgarians of Turkish origin, who are Muslim, integrate into German society in a similar way to the Turkish ethnic groups in Germany. Regardless of this fact, there are certain differences in the Bulgarians' (of Turkish origin) behaviour due to the influence of some long-term influencing factors, such as:

- They come from a country which differs from Turkey traditionally and culturally. Ignoring the influence of their family and ethnic environment, these immigrants could change their behaviour and strive for future development.

- Their behaviour and future development is conditioned by their educational level and the ability to communicate adequately in an unfamiliar country.

- This group of Bulgarian immigrants is strongly influenced by religion and therefore cannot leave their circle unless they have higher educational or a professional status. It can only be assumed what their attitude towards German society, culture and lifestyle is<sup>26</sup>. This is a crucial indicator when researching the quality of integration of minorities and also when looking for political solutions within every European country, including Germany<sup>27</sup>.

It is precisely the quality of this integration that defines the majority attitude towards these immigrants. Such data can be found in other research<sup>28</sup> from USA, France, Great Britain, Spain, Italy and Germany. The local population's attitude towards immigrants is not unambiguous but in practice their negative attitude grows, especially towards illegal immigrants and those of Roma origin.

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<sup>26</sup> Thus for example, in many surveys on the Muslims integration, held in USA over the last years, it turns out that the American Muslims have a positive attitude towards the society they live in. At the same time 53% of the participants consider it more difficult being a Muslim in America after 11<sup>th</sup> of September than before the attack of the twin towers. It is worth noting that 47% of the interviewed Muslims define themselves first as Muslims and then as American citizens. In Great Britain however, self-determination is different – 81% put first their apurtenance to the Muslim community and then their British citizenship.

<sup>27</sup> In one of the European Commission's latest reports against racism and intolerance concern has been expressed about the worsening of the feelings against Muslims and the increase of manifestation of anti-Semitism in more and more European countries.

<sup>28</sup> International Herald Tribune, 25 of May 2008.

The conclusion is that a significant majority of English (67%) and 55 % of the Germans and Italians think that too many immigrants reside in their respective countries'. This proportion goes down in Spain where 45% of those interviewed speak of the disproportionate number of immigrants settled on the Iberian Peninsula. The percentage with the French is 32 % which brings them closer to the American attitude towards immigrants. *The Germans think that generally the immigrants are not well integrated into their society and that underscores of the quality of the legal immigrants' integration.*

Furthermore, in a period of economic stagnation and especially in the sectors where foreign and local labour can easily be interchangeable, hiring immigrants leads to growing unemployment among workers of foreign origin born in Germany. The inflexible labour market in almost all European countries means that paradoxically the new immigration flows coexist with low labour participation, shortage of work and unemployment. That demands that migration policies conform not only with social, ethnic and religious factors, but also with some considerable changes in the economic plan, mainly the differences in the labour market which has increased even more following the two EU enlargements<sup>29</sup>.

On the one hand, immigrants increase the population and help overcome the shortage of workers in the market, which contributes to economic growth and competitive power. On the other hand, it creates tension in the labour market with doubts about low qualified workers of foreign origin, even those born in Germany, not being able to answer the new economic requirements and find appropriate work.

The Bulgarian immigrants, who have lived in Germany for years, have higher education and work mainly as doctors, lawyers, actors, artists, with numerous representatives of those professions in cities like Berlin and Munich. The young Bulgarians who have decided to choose Germany for a second home are highly educated working in the fields of banking, finance, tourism and information technology. One characteristic feature of Bulgarians is that if they don't know the language, they quickly adapt, start attending language courses which, as we mentioned before, are organized in Germany for CEE immigrants. By learning the language and due to their entrepreneurship they soon adapt to the German way of living. Their adaptation is helped by the fact that their value system is not much different to the Germans. Thus, in most cases they manage to achieve their personal and professional goals.

An example for such development is the life of a Bulgarian immigrant woman N.K. who arrived in Germany after 1989 wishing to visit new countries and to know a different culture. She decided to stay in Germany and after a while set up a translation company. Currently, she runs a network of over 10,000 free lanced associates around the world.

As the table indicates, Bulgarian immigration increases after 1989 and lev-

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<sup>29</sup> Louka T. Katseli is Professor of Economics at Athens University and Director of the OECD Development Centre ([www.oecd.org/dev](http://www.oecd.org/dev)).

Table 11. *Summarised facts and figures regarding the main tendencies of the Bulgarian immigration in Germany*

First period 1945-1989	Second period 1989-2000	Third period 2000 - to date
<b>Bulgarian immigrants' flows in Bulgaria</b>		
The Bulgarian immigrants in Germany are people who leave Bulgaria mainly for political or family reasons. A flow of people who want to study and then settle in the former	After 1989, increased flows of Bulgarian labour migration on account of the collapse of the centrally planned economy.	After 2000, the structure of Bulgarian immigration changes: increase of seasonal workers and students. The students comprise 25-30% of all Bulgarians in Germany.
<b>Accumulation of immigrants</b>		
Up to 1989, 5,000 Bulgarians settled in Eastern Germany (former GDR) which makes 2.6% of all foreigners in former GDR. Until 1989, 5,670 Bulgarians reside legally in West Germany (former Federal Republic of Germany)	After 1990, the number of Bulgarians in Germany quickly grows. In 1992, their number is 59,094 people. In 1998 has decreased to 31,564.	In 2007, Bulgarian immigrants add up to 46,818 people or barely 0.64% of the total foreign population in Germany. Illegal immigrants have not been considered.
<b>Level of education</b>		
Not very different from those born in the former GDR - specializing in technology, medicine, art, law and economics.	High for students who have studied and remained in Germany. Medium for immigrants who have secondary specialised diplomas. Low compared to those born in Germany. These are immigrants who have non-qualified jobs and come from a relatively low social strata.	High for students who have studied and remained permanently in Germany. Medium for immigrants who have secondary specialised diplomas. Low compared to those born in Germany. These are immigrants who have non-qualified jobs and come from a relatively low social strata.
<b>Skills</b>		
Various skills depending on the immigrants' educational background. In West Germany Bulgarian immigrants have legal status. They are not 'gastarbeiter' because there is no agreement for movement of work force between FRG and Bulgaria.	As with the previous period, the skills correspond to the level of education. High for people with education similar to the German higher or secondary education. The unqualified workers hold limited skills and probably face more difficulties integrating into the German society or acquiring new skills.	High for people with education similar to Germans. The unqualified workers hold limited skills and are unlikely to integrate into the German society and to acquire new skills
<b>Entrepreneurship</b>		
Journalists, artists, lawyers, doctors and other people with free professions settle in West Germany.	No great initiative in setting up small and medium enterprises like the Greek and Turkish immigrants, except for some Bulgarian immigrants of Turkish origin who are involved in ethnic orientated business activities.	There are 139 Bulgarian immigrants who are included in the group of substantial investors and 50% of them are women. The Bulgarian specialists working in the IT sector make 2.6% of all foreign specialists in United Germany.

els off to some extent around 2000. After this period migration tends more towards seasonal than permanent employment which relates to the temporary mobility of the Bulgarian low qualified labour migration. There is no serious incentive among Bulgarian immigrants to set up small and medium enterprises which are a way of surviving, as seen with the Turkish and Greek immigrants. Setting up companies gives Bulgarians the opportunity to develop and expand their business very quickly.

The Bulgarian immigrant population is relatively small compared to those of Greece, Turkey, former Yugoslavia, Italy and others, but then it doesn't have homogenous character and its structure is quite complex. It represents a very small part of the multicultural and multiple societies in Germany. The number of officially registered immigrants are around 40,000 but this number is not fixed. It is seen that the wide ethnic groups of Turks, Greeks and Italian significantly influence Germany's culture, social and political environment in the German cities. In contrast, the Bulgarian immigrant community has a modest influence but is highly appreciated among the German cultural and highly educated circles. The majority of Bulgarians are first generation immigrants who try to preserve their ethnic characteristics, language, cultural values, but also make efforts to adapt quickly to the social, cultural and economic environment in Germany. The Bulgarian immigrants have very weak connections with immigrants coming from countries outside Europe. Though, they generally maintain contacts with Serbs and immigrants from the former socialist countries.

### ***3.3. Some prospects that can attract new highly qualified Bulgarian immigrants to Germany***

The lack of experts in a number of economic fields in Germany influenced the adoption of a new law by the Bundestag whose main purpose is to attract highly qualified specialists, among them Bulgarians.<sup>30</sup>

The law stipulates an easier employment application processes for the Bulgarian students who represent the second biggest group of foreign students in Germany. The requirement for a check to see if there is an appropriate German candidate for the job is removed (this check up is still performed for candidates from third countries). There are also improvements envisaged in the status of young foreigners graduating in the Federal Republic of Germany who live there without a secured residence permit. Those who are well integrated in the country and have a professional or secondary degree, will be granted a residence permit 'for employment purposes'. In some cases they are able to receive social benefits too. Such a permit is given to graduates who have worked in their field of expertise for two years as well as to the specialists who have three years of

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<sup>30</sup> The most significant point of the Law is the decrease of the level of the minimum income. It is supposed that highly qualified workers will agree to receive 63,600 Euros per year in order to be granted an indefinite residence permit instead of 86,400 Euros as it was before. (The amendments must be adopted by the Bundestag which wants an even bigger decrease of the level of the minimum income – up to 53,400.)



professional experience in a field that requires at least three years of continuous education. The precondition for this is a contract with an employer.

These amendments to the law regulating immigrants' labour relations, in practice keeps the Bulgarian graduates in Germany and gives them jobs and a legal status which is an indicator for their long-term or permanent stay in Germany. This concerns mainly highly qualified specialists like doctors and IT experts.

The changes in the German migration policy are aimed at attracting specialists from the new EU members. These allow recognition of qualifications obtained outside the country. In addition, the spouses of the highly-qualified specialist do not have to prove their knowledge of German before their arrival. The work restrictions for low-skilled workers will be in force until 2011. Obviously, the 'brain drain' process from Bulgaria will continue.

#### 4. Conclusions

##### *Summary of key characteristics to be used for future comparisons*

General conclusion: the main reason for the modern Bulgarian immigration to Germany is *short-term and for economic reasons*, it is not related to previous traditions, asylum seeking and political reasons although the unsteady political situation in Bulgaria in the first years of transition influenced the numbers of immigrants with a relative increase in the 90s. The groups of Bulgarian immigrants after the 50s have a different reason. Those Bulgarians left for the former GDR to receive education or work. Typical for the Bulgarian immigrants in former FRG is that they reside there for political and/or family reasons.

The structure of the Bulgarian migration to Germany after the 90s has a different structure and characteristics. Some of the Bulgarians in FRG are probably former students who have integrated into Germany's economic and social life one way or another. Another group of Bulgarians represent the labour migration looking for a better life in a country with high standards and good social policy. The third group is those who agree to work whatever they are offered (Bulgarian and Romanian immigrants are well known for taking the dirty jobs other immigrants refuse to do). They don't want to integrate with German society no matter how long they live in Germany. The new Bulgarian immigrants benefit from the open borders and the relatively ease to overcome legally-economic conditions for settling and living in Germany. These are mainly family reasons related to finding better jobs, receiving better education. It is noted that Bulgarian women are even more adaptable to the life and work conditions in Germany.

The main incentives for immigration are for studying at *university or other higher education institution*<sup>31</sup> or for *temporary employment*<sup>32</sup> which can only turn into long-term employment or indefinite residence with certain mutually

<sup>31</sup> The final goal is to obtain a 'convertible' diploma and a chance for better professional realisation with a corresponding better income.

<sup>32</sup> Short-term employment is preferred to long-term. It's due to the fact that labour migrants can earn good money for a short period of time and thus secure their life and the life of their families in Bulgaria where the standard of living is much lower.



beneficial conditions for both parties. In this context, the social networks and contacts between the immigrants (family, friends, professional, ethnic) play an important role by helping the easier and faster adaptation to the life and work conditions in the receiving country. At the same time, they are not a precondition for the isolation of a community based on religion or ethnicity, or even less for its 'capsulation' within the German socio-cultural environment.

The 'mass' migration from Bulgaria to Germany started in the 90s and compares differently from the Bulgarian networks and migration channels before and after 1989. There is difference in their interests, contacts and behaviour. Those two communities are often strangers. The 'new' migration to Germany is to a great extent due to the better information on going abroad, the intermediary institutions and companies, the better transport connections and the legality of work in Germany. It is also more mobile and can easily turn into 'returned' or 'circulating' between the two countries, depending on the changing socio-economic conditions securing a higher income and better standard of life.

After 1990 Bulgarian nationals can leave Bulgaria freely following the democratic changes which mean the movement of Bulgarians abroad is limited only by the migration policies of the receiving countries which enforce their own visa regime. The aggravated economic situation in the country during the transition period creates a phenomenon known as 'brain drain'. The emigration of young people is defined in Bulgaria as loss of valuable social and economic resource. In practice however, Bulgaria doesn't have the means to restrict the emigrational tendencies among its citizens.

The migration of the well-educated and qualified Bulgarians is a serious problem, but it can be interpreted in different ways. From a national investment in creating 'human resources' and its opposing view the Bulgarian economy definitely loses from the 'capital transfer' towards the West European countries. If the state is not able to form particular tax, social and other policies in order to stimulate private investments and open well paid jobs for its highly qualified specialists and if it can't win recognition as a European 'social market economy', then the 'battle' for the young people is lost.

In the context of the globalised world however, the concept of 'brain drain' should be revised. The return on investments turns into an issue for the global economy of knowledge where human capital is an indisputable resource no matter what its nationality. The problem facing individual countries is to guarantee their citizens and institutions access to the global knowledge and its use and not to withhold human capital within their national economies.

In Germany there isn't one united Bulgarian ethnic community, something typical for other big ethnic communities. However, there are numerous cultural centres and organisations aiming to spread information on the life of Bulgarian immigrants to Germany. They help the Bulgarians adapt relatively easily to the economic, social and cultural life in the country.

The highly qualified Bulgarian immigrants have a good knowledge of German and good professional qualifications according to German standards which defines German lifestyle and salaries.

Usually the educated Bulgarian immigrants as well as the second generation immigrants work in the field of new information and communication technologies, insurance and banking. A lot of Bulgarian immigrants are lawyers and doctors. Some of them are actors, artists and freelance journalists in big German cities, and Berlin in particular. Some of the Bulgarian immigrants start their own business and some even manage to expand them. With few exceptions, most Bulgarian immigrants don't start business in the field of restaurants which is very typical for the big Turkish and Greek communities in Germany.

Bulgarian immigrants with low level degrees and qualification are prepared, as we mentioned, to do dirty jobs and are usually involved in construction, restaurants and hotels as general workers or service personnel.

Regardless of the fact that the Bulgarian immigrants are very few compared to the other big immigrant groups in Germany, they integrate well into German society while keeping some specific characteristics which distinguish them from the others. Their presence in Germany contributes to its multicultural and varied environment.

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## ECONOMIC IMMIGRATION AND NATIONAL IDENTITY <sup>1</sup>

### **1. Immigration – the new risks and challenges for Bulgaria and the EU**

Post-Cold War Europe faces new challenges, among which is the intensification of migration flows on the continent. The European Council reiterates the importance of this issue in the Presidency conclusion by December 2006, focusing its attention on the challenges and changes, which it is related to<sup>2</sup>. Until recently Bulgaria and the European Union (EU) scrutinize migration from two different perspectives. EU identifies as a major problem the mass movement of people from the poorer countries of Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa to the member states. The key challenge for Bulgaria is the large flow of emigration to Western Europe, United States, Canada and other developed countries. However, after Bulgaria's accession to the EU the national point of view to migration will increasingly get closer to the European one. The challenges EU faced yesterday in terms of migration, would be also Bulgarian problems tomorrow for which initial indications could be identified even today.

In this context, several aspects of migration processes are analyzed in the text. First, the risks and challenges to European countries generated by legal and illegal immigration.

Second, the relationship of migration processes with the problems of national identity.

Third, some empirical dimensions and characteristics of immigration and immigrant communities in Bulgaria, related to the issues of identity.

Fourth, implications for policies on migration and to immigrant communities.

#### ***1.1. Legal and illegal immigration***

According to a commonly used definition (e.g. Kalchev, 2001), consistent with the standards of the United Nations (UN) and International Labour Organisation (ILO), „immigrants” are defined as persons who arrive in a foreign country with the intention to remain and live in it more than a year. Two main categories of immigrants are distinguished – legal and illegal. Legal immigration is regulated by the law and systematically monitored by authorised national institutions. Usually three main categories of legal immigrants are defined (see e.g., Office of the UNHCR, 2000):

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<sup>1</sup> This publication is prepared under the project „Economic migration in Bulgaria and national identity”, approved by the National Research Fund in 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Brussels European Council, Presidency Conclusions – 14/15, December 2006, p. 6

- Permanent residents (they have a legal residence permit);
- Long-term residents (workers with temporary contracts to work in the country, officials of international organizations and multinational companies, military personnel, scientists, students and others);
- Refugees (persons in need of international protection, whose status is determined by international and regional agreements; victims of social and military conflicts or natural disasters, etc.).

The reasons for legalization of immigration are mainly economic and humanitarian (including, joining of separated families). Legal immigrants work with regular job permits, do legitimate business or are economically inactive (students, housewives, retired, unemployed). Legal immigration also raises social and economic problems, related especially with: a) the criteria and scale in which it takes place; b) the tension, which it puts on the labour market and tax insurance system of the host country; c) the risks of occurrence of ethno-religious and national identity related conflicts. However, major challenges are related to illegal immigration. Several categories of foreigners are defined as illegal immigrants (see eg. Jahn A., Straubhaar T., 1998):

1. Entering the country illegally;
2. Entering the country legally, but staying illegally in it;
3. Entering and residing legally but working illegally.

In some cases immigrants may enter, stay or work legally, but lose this right as a result of political and/or administrative changes related to the conditions for granting permission to reside or work in the country. Immigrants who illegally enter and reside in the country as a rule are included in the hidden economy, their employment is unregistered and their illegal residence/work is very often ensured with the help of corrupt practices. Legally residing immigrants might also pursue illegal or non-registered activity – work that is done without permission, not declared or prohibited by law.

It is important another distinction to be made – between voluntary illegal immigrants and victims of human trafficking. In the first case, immigration is a personal choice, motivated primarily by economic reasons, and in the second case the act of migration was forced, mostly a result of criminal activity. Channels for trafficking in human beings developed by organised criminal groups for the purpose of sexual or labour exploitation become a serious social problem for the EU. There are grounds to believe that some immigration groups in Bulgaria are also associated with channels for human trafficking.

### ***1.2. Immigration – risks and challenges***

Immigration is not a new phenomenon for Europe, as there is long tradition of joint cohabitation with large immigration communities in countries such as Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands and others. In the context of globalization and European integration, however, migration becomes a key political, economic and social problem. On one hand, the scale of migration processes evoke challenges to European governments and institutions be-



cause of its intensity and unforeseen structural transformations. In less than 40 years (1965-2000) the number of migrants worldwide has doubled – from 75 to 150 million. It is expected that during this decade the migrants wave will again grow almost twice. The European Union is formed as a global attractive center, along with traditional immigration destinations such as US, Australia, Canada and others. Migrant movements from East to West and from South to North constitute a powerful flow, which alter the traditional labor markets, the reactions of sending and receiving countries, the business and social patterns, the structure and activities of the public institutions.

On the other hand, the focus put on the socio-economic dimensions of immigration until recently is complemented by global security issues – terrorism, organized crime, trafficking of human beings, arms, drugs, etc. Citizens and representatives of political circles in the EU express growing concern for preservation of cultural identity, economic stability, the rule of law, values of democracy and legality.

In this context, the risks and challenges of intense international migration during the last two decades have been increasingly shifting from the periphery to the central core of the research problems of economists, sociologists, politologists, statisticians, demographers, antropologists and other representatives of a wide range of scientific areas. Several key areas related to both legal and mainly illegal immigration have been identified, which are seen as problematic and/or give rise to public fears:

First, illegal entry into a foreign country creates security risks for the immigrants themselves. The inclusion in the criminal channels for human trafficking, illegal border crossing, the use of unreliable and dangerous vehicles endanger the lives and health of immigrants. They often become victims of fraud and violence on the part of organized criminal groups sometimes operating under the cover of fictitious employment agencies.

Second, the rights of illegal immigrant workers and residents are not legally protected. As a rule they can not receive legal protection by labour legislation on wages, working hours, working conditions, etc. Immigrants often work in poor conditions without health and social insurance.

Third, legal residents, but illegally working immigrants, take advantage of different national programs for social assistance, health care, education, etc. This sometimes leads to negative reactions of local citizens who practically provide significant part of those immigrants' maintenance through their taxes and insurance payments.

Fourth, the vast majority of illegal immigrants work in the „grey” economy. They do not pay taxes and insurance, sometimes carry out activities prohibited by law, thus distorting the rules of legitimate market order. Public attitudes toward foreigners as offenders of law and morality reinforce xenophobic moods and the political influence of extremely right-wing parties could be strengthened.

Fifth, certain immigration groups in the European countries are increasingly considered as participants in international criminal organizations, with whose



assistance cross-border criminal activity is carried out. Free movement of persons, goods and capital in some cases is associated with the easy operation of international channels for human trafficking in people, arms, drugs, excisable goods such as alcohol and cigarettes, cultural and historical values and others.

Sixth, especially after the attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001 and terrorist acts in Madrid and London, immigrants began to be perceived as a threat to national security and as potential participants in terrorist organisations. These concerns are backed up also by the data that 2/3 of immigrants in the European Union in 90's of the XX century are Muslims mainly from Asia and Africa. In mid-90's the number of Muslim immigrants in Europe amounted to around 13 million people. Furthermore, the birth rate among immigrants is significantly higher than the average for the European countries and the immigrants are expected to be a major source of demographic growth<sup>3</sup>.

### ***1.3. Immigration and dynamics of national identities***

In this dynamic international context new problems related to national identities emerge. Three of them deserve special attention:

***First, diversification of models of transition, which is taking place in the Central and Eastern Europe.***

Practically, there is no country in the region of Central and Eastern Europe in which ethnic, cultural, political and ideological dimensions of national identity to be not debated and reviewed. In some European regions the process of retailoring of territorial borders between countries and within them (between different ethnic regions) could be observed. Patterns of political system and governance are changing. The role of ethnic, cultural and religious norms, feelings and symbols is being strengthened.

### ***Second, fears and barriers to EU enlargement***

On one hand, in the „old” Europe a wave of ethno-nationalism has risen, which restructured traditional post-war political models, thus challenging the conventional political and ideological distinctions „left-right”. In Western societies, which have demonstrated tolerant attitudes towards foreigners and immigrants for decades, manifestations of xenophobia and ethnocentrism have become more frequent. This trend affected also the attitudes towards new migrants from Central and Eastern Europe, and later reflected negatively on the further EU enlargement. An explanation of the negative vote against EU constitution in France and the Netherlands is associated by some experts with the reluctance for further EU enlargement and growing fears and negativism to the East Europeans and other foreigners. On the other hand, the initial positive attitudes to the EU in the postcommunist societies were followed by increased skepticism and even in some cases – hostility towards the European integration project.

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<sup>3</sup> Eurostat, News Release: Population of the EU in 2000. No.86/2001; Eurostat, News Release: Faster Growth of EU Population in 2000. N0.4/2001

### ***Third, the changing structure of transnational migration***

Initial expectations and forecasts were that more than 15 million people in CEE will emigrate towards developed countries and more than half of them will become permanent residents in the Western Europe. Actual migration „East-West” in fact was 3-4 times less than anticipated, however it became one of the leading factors for reconsidering the strategies of the European integration and socio-economic stabilization in the Eastern Europe. At the same time, the new and candidate EU member states from Central and Eastern Europe are facing increasing flow of immigrants coming from outside the European Union.

So far the reactions to these new realities are mostly negative among the population of the host countries, ambivalent and controversial among local politicians from EU member states. The fear is also an emotional motiv of such behavior: the citizens of destination countries of migrant flows fear of loss of jobs and social benefits, which the uncontrolled influx of foreigners might cause; politicians are afraid of losing electoral support if tolerating immigrants. As a result of these attitudes nationalist ideologies promoted by new extreme movements and parties have strengthened, a number of conservative and restrictive immigration policy actions have been offered. The first steps were: strengthening of existing immigration institutions, creating new legislative restrictions, introducing rigid immigration regimes, and attempts to regulate transnational migration. The effect of these measures is still difficult to be seen, but as a whole the migration intensity has not decreased. Territorial configuration of immigrant flows is also changing – it becomes semi-legal, ethnically meaningful and creating new type of immigration communities.

All these developments shift the center of research interest towards the economic, political and social effects caused by global mobility.

## **2. Empirical dimensions of immigration in Bulgaria and the problems of national identity**

The problem of the Bulgarian nation reconstruction on the basis of a new vision for its identity entered the agenda of modernisation and „Europeanisation” of societal relations. For now, the focus of public interest is mainly on the relations between traditional ethnic communities in the country: Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma. Like other CEE countries, Bulgaria has also experienced a period of ethnic and transformational ethno-religious shocks. The first of them was related to the so-called „revival” process in the late 80’s and the subsequent events – resistance of the Bulgarian citizens of Turkish ethnicity against the forced change of names and emigration wave of Muslims from Bulgaria to Turkey. Return of the names and legitimation of the political party Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) temporarily limited the outbreak of ethnic tensions and even political concept of „Bulgarian ethnic model” was launched. In the last 3-4 years interethnic tensions again increased, thus putting the question whether Bulgaria can start along the road to ethnic and religious conflicts.

More and more topical, however, becomes the issue of the new minority /

ethnic groups, which are formed in each country after immigration flows undergo a certain critical mass of permanent and long-term immigrants. This issue is rather complex and there are at least three basic dimensions:

- Demographic, due to the depopulation of Bulgaria;
- Ethno-social, because of national identity and integration of immigrants into the local environment;
- Economic, linked to the reduction of workforce deficit and removal of structural imbalances in the Bulgarian labour market.

### ***2.1. Migration situation in Bulgaria***

Some idea about the number and structure of foreign nationals in Bulgaria gives the Report on migration situation in Bulgaria in 2006 (17). The number of foreigners permanently residing in Bulgaria at the end of 2006 is 55 684, who live mainly in big cities and urban areas of the country. The highest number of immigrants granted permanent residence permits, are citizens of Turkey (903), Russia (455), Ukraine (228), Macedonia (213) and China (165).

Up to 2006, permission for longterm stay (up to one year) have received 14694 foreigners, which is 20% more than the previous year. By countries of origin, they are mainly from Macedonia (2 252), Turkey (2 051), Britain (1840), Russia (1 075), Greece (697), United States (695), Ukraine (571), Germany (452), Cyprus (422), Italy (305) and others.

In 2006, there are 14 468 applications for acquisition of Bulgarian citizenship in Directorate „Bulgarian citizenship” at the Ministry of Justice. In the same year, 6628 persons have received Bulgarian citizenship by decree of Vice-President of the Republic of Bulgaria, which is 781 more than the previous year. Applications are submitted mostly by citizens of Macedonia (8240), Moldova (2467), Serbia (716), Israel (508), Ukraine (506), Russia (439), Albania (421).

Since 1993 until December 31, 2006 15 391 foreigners (including 2688 children) from 81 countries who have sought asylum in Bulgaria have been recorded. In 2006, their number was 639, which was 22% less than 2005. In accordance with international agreements, Bulgaria granted refugee status to 1412 persons and humanitarian status to 3497 foreigners. The main groups of the refugees are from Afghanistan (581), Iraq (254), Iran (81), Syria (55), Ethiopia (55), Turkey (44), Sudan (32) and Congo (28). In 2006, the donor countries of refugees were mainly Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Armenia and the countries of North and Central Africa.

Unfortunately, no studies provide reliable data for illegally residing and working foreigners in Bulgaria. Estimates for the number of illegal immigrants in the country vary between 30 000 and 50 000. The number of foreigners, who have been imposed administrative measures on, according to the Act for Foreigners, increased in 2006. Expulsed from the country were 220 persons (2% more than in 2005), and escorted to the country border were 996 people. At the end of 2006 in all 13 prisons in the country there were a total number of 222 foreign citizens (about 2% of all prison population).

Some idea about the intensity of illegal immigration provided the Report on migration situation in Bulgaria in 2005<sup>4</sup>. In cases of unregulated or illegal border crossings, 2 894 foreigners were detained in 2004. Most detainees made an attempt to cross the Bulgarian-Greek border in the direction of Greece. Border control authorities did not allow 783 foreigners to leave the country illegally, which was 21 percent more compared to 2003. In 2004, for violation of the legal regulations of entry, residence and exit of Bulgaria, the measure „forced escort to the border” was imposed on 791 foreigners – twice more than 2003. Most of the sanctions were imposed on citizens of Afghanistan, Turkey, Armenia and Bangladesh. Compulsory administrative measure „expulsion” was imposed on 135 persons, which represented almost double increase.

In the first 6 months of 2008, about 900 orders for expulsion from the country and forced escort to the border were issued. Of those, 637 people (mostly from Iraq, Afghanistan and Middle East) were expelled for illegal residence or expired visa. Other 72 persons were expelled because of committing a crime or at the request of a foreign country<sup>5</sup>. 366 people have requested, and 125 have received humanitarian protection in Bulgaria.

The existing data shows that the relative share of foreigners in Bulgaria is not high – about 1% of the population of the country. It is not realistic to expect that in the short term our country could attract a significant contingent of well-qualified professionals, medium and small entrepreneurs or self-employed non-residents.

Based on the limited information available, the situation in Bulgaria in terms of economic immigration and illegal employment of immigrants will be analysed below.

## ***2.2. Illegal activities of immigrants***

Illegal employment in Bulgaria and in other postsocialist countries involves the development of a significant criminal economic activity in the last 15 years. It has been carried out by a developed network of criminal and semilegal groups (known in Bulgaria as a „power groups”). Many of these groups are included in the new network of international crime, which have occurred after the political changes in former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. This network is closely related to the implementation of smuggling and illegal cross-border traffic (people, weapons, drugs, cultural and historical heritage, and consumer goods) in Bulgaria and the countries in Southeast Europe. Additional favorable circumstances for the development of regional cross-border crime was the military conflict in the western Balkans during the 90 – year of the twentieth century and the embargo imposed on trade with former Yugoslavia. Smuggling was also stimulated by the spread of „hidden” economy in the country, which includes an extensive network of „grey” wholesale and retail trade.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.evroportal.bg>

<sup>5</sup> Newspaper „Trud”, 20.06.2008., N168, Vanya Petkova, „72 foreigners expelled in 6 months”

There are no reliable data on the engagement of immigrants in Bulgaria with illegal activity, but some examples could illustrate the potential risks.

The start of the heroin market in Sofia for example, is associated by some researchers with a group of emigrants from the Middle East<sup>6</sup>. The earliest source of heroin for domestic market in autumn 1990 was a group of Iranians. Some of them were political refugees. „Iranians from Hemus” (they lived in a hotel „Hemus” in Sofia) themselves used high-quality heroin, which was delivered by foreigners, passing or temporarily residing in the country (Turkish drivers and petty traders from the Middle East). Iranian refugees started to use their channels for personal consumption to provide additional income from emerging Bulgarian drug market. Gradually, contacts were established between Bulgarian drug users and Iranian immigrants. Despite the large quantities of high quality heroin available, in the first two years Iranians sold heroin only to persons who they knew well and refused to sell to strangers. Subsequently, some other foreigners, passing or living in the country, joined drug trafficking networks – Albanians, Kurds, Lebanese and Turks, offering small quantities of heroin. Despite the growth of heroin usage, it was still available only at a limited number of locations in Sofia up to 1992. Then Iranians began to sell heroin in the city centre with increasingly less caution and in ever-larger quantities. At the end of 1993 Iranian top sellers of heroin in the country were shot in a police action. Meanwhile, since 1992 many small Arab companies have provided heroin to the Bulgarian market, along with the „grey” import of goods for mass consumption. In the beginning, the street drug dealers were buying heroin from Arabs living in Sofia, but later some Arab citizens trading with drugs moved to Plovdiv and Varna. After 1995 many small and medium-sized companies owned by foreign nationals from the Middle East were put on strong pressure by the police and criminal groups, thus losing their niches in the Bulgarian drug market.

Another example of immigrants’ involvement in grey economic activities is the illegal import of Chinese goods. Experts have identified as key participants in this activity Chinese nationals living in Bulgaria<sup>7</sup>. They not only finance illegal Chinese imports, but also arrange the transfer of Chinese goods through Bulgarian borders. The number of Chinese immigrants in Bulgaria increased rapidly at the end of last and early 21 century. Among them are mainly two groups – traders (importers of Chinese goods) and other entrepreneurs (mostly owners of restaurants and shops). About ten influential Chinese families control the smuggling imports and maintain contacts with Chinese enterprises (often with the mediation of their relatives in China). They get preferential prices and ensure regular supplies.

In mid 90-ies, Chinese traders established relations with Bulgarian organized crime groups. They provided them access to the warehouses, commercial

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<sup>6</sup> Drug market in Bulgaria, Center for the Study of Democracy, Sofia, 2003, p.10-13

<sup>7</sup> Transportation, smuggling and organized crime, Center for the Study of Democracy, Sofia, 2004, p. 61-63



infrastructure (mainly in the commercial base „Iliantsi”) and certain tax-free zones. Protection of routes for imports through the Bulgarian border was also secured. To obtain these services however, Chinese traders had to pay to the respective Bulgarian crime group. According to information from Chinese traders, payment varied from 1000 to 5000 leva per month to use a pavilion and/or warehouse. At the end of 90 -ies some influential Chinese traders began to use Bulgarian organized crime to exert physical violence against competitors trying to extend their influence<sup>8</sup>.

Chinese community, related to smuggling imports, is of closed nature and it is extremely difficult more specific information about its social organization and economic activity to be obtained. However, some pieces of information on the illegal activities carried out by Chinese immigrants still exist. Smuggling process from China to Bulgaria has several phases<sup>9</sup>. Importer orders merchandise in China through his agents (usually members of his „broad family”). Payments are made through offshore bank or through a Chinese bank. Then the cargo arrives at a port (most often in Thessalonica) or at the airport. Middlemen, related to Bulgarian crime groups, arrange the transfer of Chinese goods through Bulgarian border and custom office, depositing them in a store or warehouse. For a delivery of a container to the store, the middleman receives between 25 and 50 thousand leva, which includes all costs (taxes, duties, transport, bribes, etc.). For example, in the period July 2002 – July 2003 through the border post Kulata about 300 containers of Chinese goods were transferred and declared as construction materials. The difference between the duties owed vs. duties paid was about 11-12 mil.BGN.

### ***2.3. Pilot survey of Immigrants in Bulgaria***

During the implementation of the research project „Economic migration in Bulgaria and national identity”, pilot study was conducted among foreigners residing in Bulgaria. The main parameters of the study were:

***Method of registration:*** structured face-to-face interview.

***Target group:*** foreigners living at least 6 months in Bulgaria.

***Sample size:*** 60 immigrants from over 20 countries residing in Bulgaria.

***Sample composition:*** more than half of the respondents (51.7%) have lived in the country more than 6 years, and about 40% – from two to five years. Two-thirds of respondents permanently reside in Bulgaria and 11.7% are long-term residents. Around 14% are foreigners with double citizenship (they have Bulgarian citizenship as well). Over half (56.7%) of respondents live in Sofia, 20% live in a regional center, 18.3% – in another city, and 5% – in a village.

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<sup>8</sup> Characteristic is the case with the Chinese citizen Chen Shiyan (known as „The big Chen”), who was exulsed from Bulgaria in 2001. See, newspapers „Monitor” and „Sega” from 9 March, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Transportation, smuggling and organized crime, Center for the Study of Democracy, Sofia, 2004, p. 69-70



**Field work:** the survey was conducted in the period December 2007 – January 2008.

Some of the more important preliminary results of the pilot study could be summarized as follows:

1. The respondents have good material and financial status. Nearly half of them (45%) assess their material situation as average, and 26.7% considered themselves well-off or rich. Overall, the income of respondents is higher than officially reported average income of Bulgarian citizens. Over 80% of respondents live in their own dwelling (45%) or in a rented accommodation (36.7%). In this context, the expressed public fears that immigrants misuse social funds of the country, seem unjustified.

2. Nearly half of the respondents consider that they have better opportunities in Bulgaria than in the country where they lived before. The vast majority claim that in Bulgaria they can get good income, which is the main reason to live in the country. This enables significant share of immigrants (40%) to financially assist their families who do not live in Bulgaria, sending them money.

3. Over 80% of the respondents fully or partially support the idea that immigrants contribute to the economic prosperity of Bulgaria; 70% are convinced that immigrants bring benefits to Bulgaria. Meanwhile, 60% of respondents completely or somewhat agree that many immigrants work illegally in «grey» and «black» economy. Furthermore, 28.3% believe to one degree or another that illegal immigrants are sometimes related to criminal groups.

4. Less than half of respondents completely (3.3%) or somewhat (40%) agree with the statement that discrimination against immigrants is a serious problem in Bulgaria. Every third felt discriminated in the last year because of his nationality, race, or religious beliefs, and 3.3% reported to be victims of crime because of their racial, national, ethnic or religious affiliation.

5. Over three-quarters of respondents (76.3%) assessed the attitudes of the Bulgarians to foreigners as tolerant. Significantly lower is the share of those who think that the official institutions assist immigrants and promote actively their integration into Bulgarian society.

6. Political beliefs/sympathies of immigrants are concentrated in the centre (35%), the moderate right (20%) and the moderate left (13.3%).

#### **4. Policies on migration and towards immigrant communities**

The policy of European countries in the field of migration went through significant changes in the years after World War II. M. Castells (Castells, M, 2006) differentiates three periods of the European migration policy: liberal, restrictive and selective. The liberal period embraced the post years until 1974, when the economic boom in the European countries caused acute need of labour. Some authors even argue that the economic prosperity of Western countries significantly due to cheap labour from abroad. During this period migration policy was dictated by economic benefits and aimed at boosting import mainly of workers with low qualification.

The restrictive period covered the period from 1974 until the beginning of 90's. Immediately after the energy crisis in mid-70's of 20<sup>th</sup> century, West European economies and labour markets were restructured, the unemployment increased and public pressure on national governments to limit immigration was exerted. This policy extended throughout the European community. The concepts of multiculturalism and the role of ethnic diversity in the development of nations, which emerged in the 90's gave way to economic pragmatism and fear of losing social benefits and regulated labour market in the second half of last century. Early 21<sup>st</sup> century was characterized by searching for alternative immigrant policies and legal regimes. According to Castells, the most important innovation in that area was the launched programs for selective and temporary import of foreign workers. Immigration regimes in Western countries increasingly have been taking into account the political and economic situation in the EU and individual member states.

In parallel with the different periods of migration policy and in different historical and socio-cultural contexts, three kinds of identities develop, according to Castells:

➤ **Legitimising identity** – encouraged by dominant public institutions and ideologies in order to enhance cohesion and streamline various alternative ethnic, religious or other collective identities with the dominant national identity (legitimation of those „who are or want to be” like us „);

➤ **Resisting identity** has been generated by actors whose positions are devalued or marginalised. For example, „protective identities” emerge in part of the Roma community in Bulgaria. During this phase passed also the Movement for Rights and Freedoms in the 80's of last century;

➤ **Projected (new) identity** – build on available and accessible cultural attributes. For example, important factor in the new self-identity of Turkish ethnic community in Bulgaria is its influential independent participation in national and local governments. Most likely, particular attention has to be paid in the coming years to the potential projected identities of immigration communities in Bulgaria.

According to Jacqueline Hagan (Hagan, J., 2006) several major (changing, overlapping) patterns of migration policy can be distinguished in the context of relationship „immigration-national identity”:

➤ **Assimilative**. Assimilative policy seeks to break links with the immigrants' culture of origin and integrate immigrants into the host nation (typical for U.S.). Currently there is no European country where this model could be clearly demonstrated with sustainable results. Some signs of integration could be observed in the second and third generation of immigrants in Germany, Austria, Scandinavian countries, but it is under permanent pressure from active ethnic communities, religious and other social organizations.

➤ **Transnational**. Characterized by interruption of relations with the nation of origin, but immigrants still keep their old identity. Thus, a specific dual status of immigrants is established: by social status to the host country and

by cultural belonging – to the country/ community of origin. In case of identity crisis, original identity prevails as a rule and a process of ethnonationalism could get underway (e.g., the ethnic conflicts in France and Germany in 2006).

➤ **Selective exclusion.** It is adopted by countries, that see excessive immigration as a threat to their internal stability and security. This model suggests selective immigration legal regimes – immigration is admitted if there is an unmet demand in the labour market. A typical example is Great Britain, but Germany has also adopted elements of such policy recently. There is ground to believe that most countries of "Old" Europe will apply similar arrangements to restrict foreign competition on national labour markets and ensure access to jobs for local residents.

In this context, immigration policy in Bulgaria faces the challenge of several groups of problems related to tensions between different identities:

First, the formation of new external or originated in immigrant communities models of social relations and economic behavior;

Second, immigrants' adaptation to current and anticipated changes in labour markets and public opinion on labour force „import”;

Third, the incorporation of immigrants into the local institutional and cultural environment.

### **Conclusion**

The present analysis of „economic immigration – national identity” relationship only touches this vast research area of increasing importance for the economic and social development of the country and the European Union. The analysis has a limited task to give an initial idea about the forms, the scope and the extent of the legal and illegal economic immigration and its connections with national identity. Awareness of the problem and its impartial scrutinisation are key prerequisites for searching effective political and managerial decisions. The need for the development and implementation of systematic and coordinated policies, programs and initiatives in the field of economic migration requires considerable resources and an extended period of time to achieve tangible and sustainable results.

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