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EU Accession and Migration: Evidence for Bulgarian Migration to Germany

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Bulgaria's European Union accession in 2007 turned the country's citizens from third-country nationals with restricted mobility rights into EU citizens with rights to free movement within the EU. Economic rights were restricted for seven years by transitional periods in the free movement of workers. This article explores changes in the Bulgarian migration pattern to Germany after 2007 in the specific context of free movement with restricted freedom to work, and analyses the extent to which those changes can be related to that particular regime. Starting from this point, Bulgarian migration patterns to Germany are overviewed and a periodisation of migration since the World War II is suggested. Changes in the dynamics, forms and composition of migration after EU accession in 2007 are analysed, based on administrative data and a small-scale survey among Bulgarian migrants in Hamburg. Both the administrative data and the survey results provide empirical grounding for a plausible relation between EU accession and migration patterns. The scale of migration has increased and more temporary migration has taken place. However, the rise of migration can be attributed not only to new migration from Bulgaria but also, to a large extent, to a redirection of migration flows from other destination countries and the legalisation of irregular migrants. Circular migration has lost to a great extent relevance which could be plausibly explained by changed migration strategies under a regime of free movement. Despite transitional periods in the free movement of workers, labour migration has become a predominant form of mobility. Transitional periods did not prevent migrants from moving to Germany but, given the reduced labour market opportunities, may have hampered their successful labour market integration.

Keywords: EU accession; free movement; migration patterns; Bulgarian migration; migration periods

Introduction

For a number of reasons – mainly geographical and political distance, particularly prior to 1989 – Bulgaria was not in the sphere of particular interest for Germany and was seldom targeted by special migration policies. As a result, Bulgarian migration to Germany did not occur on a large scale, as was the case with other Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs). The country's EU accession in 2007 changed that by triggering migratory movements of an unknown scope and shaping Bulgaria as a main sending country for Ger-

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many. Annual net migration rose from 228 in 2006 to 25 044 in 2012, leading to a sharp increase of the total resident Bulgarian population from 39 000 to almost 118 800 in the same period. Even after the EU enlargement which transformed Bulgaria into a main sending country for Germany, the latter is still not recognised as a main destination country for Bulgarian migration. As a result, the phenomenon of Bulgarian migration to Germany is little known.

Thus this article overviews Bulgarian migration to Germany over time from a historical perspective and analyses its remarkably changing migration pattern since 2007; a periodisation since the World War II is then suggested in the first section. A special focus lies on the EU post-accession migration that took place in the context of the general free movement of persons with restricted access to the labour market from 2007 to 2013. Changes in the dynamics, forms and composition of migration are studied and then analysed to determine the extent to which they could be explained by Bulgaria's EU citizenship (the second section). Empirical evidence of changes in migration patterns is provided by administrative data and a small-scale survey among 401 Bulgarian migrants in Hamburg. Finally, the issue of the relation between changing migration patterns and integration under the influence of EU citizenship is discussed in the closing section.

Bulgarian migration to Germany: a historical overview

Migration relations between Germany and Bulgaria have their roots in the nineteenth century, when many Bulgarians studied in German cities such as Leipzig and Dresden. Their numbers intensified in the late nineteenth century, when German schools opened doors in big Bulgarian cities and a number of German-Bulgarian cultural associations were established (Troebst 2013). Taking into consideration the significant political and legal changes which had an impact on migration patterns, a periodisation of migration is suggested for the period from 1945 to 2013. Bulgarian migration to Germany can be divided into five periods: the Cold War period, the transition period, the visa requirement period, the EU pre-accession period and the EU post-accession period.

In the Cold War period (1946–1989) the emigration of Bulgarian citizens had been severely restricted by a complicated pass-issuing system and intense border controls. Moreover, the political ideology and the Western–Eastern division in socialist and democratic countries had a major impact on migration dynamics between Bulgaria and the two German states: the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Whereas mobility to other communist and Arab countries, and migration of temporary nature, were desired, mobility to Western democratic countries and permanent settlement abroad were unwelcome. The GDR received mainly temporary migrant workers, political migrants and students who, however, were fewer in number than those from the former Soviet Union (Poutrus 2005). In line with this political stance in both the sending and the receiving country, migration to the GDR took place mainly for tourism and study purposes and permanent settlement was rather the exception.

With regard to Bulgaria's relations with the Federal Republic of Germany, no bilateral agreement for the recruitment of labour migrants on a temporary basis was signed between the two countries, as was the case with other European countries such as Poland and Hungary. Labour migration thus barely played a role. The political situation in Bulgaria triggered mainly political refugees fleeing from the communist regime. From the perspective of the Bulgarian state, these were irregular emigrants. In Germany, however, they were welcomed as freedom fighters and refugees (Münz 1997).

The first years after the fall of the communist regime in Bulgaria and after German reunification can be labelled as a transition period in their migration relations (1989–1993). A law which came into force in September 1989 and which liberalised travel opportunities, meant that Bulgarian citizens could apply for five-year passports, enabling them to travel abroad (UNHCR 1994). This, combined with further legal changes

such as the decriminalisation of non-return after legal departure from the country, may have encouraged the large migration flows after 1989.¹ The legal and political changes in Bulgaria coincided with historic circumstances in Germany. The reunification of the two German states into one – the Federal Republic of Germany – in October 1990 led to *de facto* open Eastern borders where control was virtually absent (Kraler, Dzhengozova, Reichel 2009). However, very few legal options for migration were made available to the citizens of the former communist countries and the entry of Bulgarian migrants was mostly considered illegal. The magnitude of migration was not as great as for other Central European countries, due in part to the geographical distance to Germany. Nevertheless, for the first time in the migration relations between Germany and Bulgaria, a quantitatively substantial community of about 30 000 persons emerged which paved the way for future migrations.

In the transition period 1989–1993 the migration dynamics were turbulent and characterised by large numbers of in- and outflows. The unstable economic and political situation in the first years after the fall of the communist regime pushed many people to seek for a better and more secure life in Germany, which became their main destination country (Bobeva, Chalukov, Markov 1996). Although political asylum had been used in the Cold War period, it was not until the early 1990s that it became the main migration channel for Bulgarian citizens to unified Germany.² Of all Bulgarian applications in Europe, 87 per cent were submitted in Germany (UNHCR 1994). Thus 96 000 Bulgarians applied for asylum between 1989 and 1993 and most applications were registered between 1991 and 1993, with a peak of 31 540 applications in 1992 (Dietz 2004). Furthermore, the transition period was marked by the large-scale emigration of Bulgarian ethnic Turks.³ Following the adoption of the new laws in May 1989 and their coming into force in September 1989, 300 000 Bulgarian ethnic Turks were allowed to leave the country (UNHCR 1994: 9). The vast majority of them moved to Turkey but some migrated further – to Germany and Austria (Sultanova 2006). Two reasons may explain this more-distant migration. On the one hand, Bulgarian Turks who migrated to Turkey and were disappointed by the situation there moved on to Germany (Vasileva 1992). On the other hand, after the Turkish border was closed on 22 August 1989 by decision of the Turkish authorities, migration to Turkey became difficult and migrants headed to Western European countries (Mancheva 2008). Considering the large community of people of Turkish background in Germany – which constitutes an important social network – the country became an attractive destination for Bulgarian citizens from the Turkish minority.

Two events marked the start of a new phase in Bulgarian migration to Germany: the so-called ‘visa requirement period’ (1993–2001). First, the mobility of Bulgarian citizens was restricted by the Justice and Home Affairs Ministers of the European Community, who put Bulgaria on the ‘black’ visa list of Schengen countries. This was an ‘unusual situation,’ as such a requirement was not imposed on other EU candidate countries (Apap, Tchorbadijska 2004; Tchorbadijska 2007). Between January 1995 and March 2001, Bulgarian citizens needed a mandatory visa for short-term entries into all Schengen countries, including Germany. Second, as a reaction to the tremendous flow of asylum-seekers to Germany and the suspicion that economic migrants were circumventing restrictive legislation in European countries under the guise of seeking political asylum (Bobeva 1996), the new German asylum law came into force on 1 July 1993. It complicated the recognition of political asylum and excluded persons who came from so-called ‘safe countries’ from the asylum procedure (Dietz 2004). As Bulgaria was declared a safe country in 1993 through a decision of the Federal Council of Germany, the asylum system as a migration channel for Bulgarian migrants was eliminated.

The visa requirement period was characterised by a severe economic and political crisis in Bulgaria in 1996–1997 when the national currency devaluated drastically and the inflation rate was officially at 310.8 per cent (Markova 2010). The unstable political and critical economic situation triggered migration mainly to Southern European countries like Greece, Spain and Italy, whereas official migratory movements to Germa-

ny were at modest levels. The lifting of some restrictions for foreign nationals to study in Germany opened up a further migration channel – the education policy – and correspondingly a new form of migration for educational purposes. The number of Bulgarian students at German universities grew from 991 in 1993 to 7 321 in 2001, turning Bulgaria into a major sending country of students to Germany in the visa requirement period.⁴ For the first time in German–Bulgarian migration relations, labour migration was regulated by a bilateral agreement that enabled the temporary migration of three categories of migrant workers: contract workers, guest employees and seasonal workers. Whereas, in the 1990s, posted contract workers prevailed, the relevance of seasonal workers increased in the 2000s.⁵ The quota for guest employees of 1 000 per year was rarely exploited. The registered migratory movements increased and temporary labour migration gained predominantly in importance (Haug 2004). Apart from the officially registered cases, there was also a non-negligible number of irregular migrants who were not covered in the official statistics. Irregular migration to Germany and the involvement of criminal organisations in smuggling were highly debated issues in this period (Bobeveva *et al.* 1996).

In 2001, Bulgaria was removed from the black Schengen list that marked the beginning of the so-called EU pre-accession period (2001–2006). Bulgarian citizens were granted visa-free entry and three months visa-free residence in Schengen countries. In the context of a free entry and an enduring requirement for an official work permit, many Bulgarian citizens used their stay as tourists to work in the shadow economy. Undocumented work under the guise of tourism was a main pattern of temporary labour migration for CEECs (Fihel 2007). Yet, for the 1990s, there were indications that seasonal labour migration to Greece and Turkey took place under the guise of tourism (Bobeveva 1996). After 2001, tourism emerged as a form of labour migration to Germany although this was not captured in administrative data as these people generally did not register with the local authorities.⁶

Economic growth and decreasing unemployment characterised the Bulgarian economy. Economic instability as a push factor was less relevant in that period than in the previous phases of migration. A main form of mobility in the 2000s remained migration for educational purposes, with 2002 and 2003 being the years with the highest numbers of first-year students. With 11 816 Bulgarian students at German universities in 2006, Bulgaria was the second-biggest sending country of so-called *Bildungsausländer*, persons who obtained their secondary education outside Germany (Bundesregierung 2007). Besides the EU-level regulation that had a great impact on Bulgarian migration in the 2000s, Bulgarian citizens benefited from the changing political stance towards migration in Germany. Since the 2000s, German migration policies started displaying an increased acceptance of migration (Vogel, Kovacheva 2014). The German government introduced the Green Card programme in 2000 which sought to attract 20 000 IT specialists to Germany. The programme was open to both new migrants and foreign students who had obtained their degree at a German university. Between 2000 and 2004, 469 Bulgarian IT specialists received work and residence permits (Bundesregierung 2005), which corresponds to 2.6 per cent of about 18 000 IT specialists. Applications from some countries exceeded expectations (Liebig 2004) but Bulgaria was not considered a country of special interest and did not attract public or political attention.

A new period in migration relations started with Bulgaria's accession to the European Union on 1 January 2007. Bulgarian citizens obtained EU citizenship status, which provided them with the right to free movement. The possibility of introducing transitional provisions was stipulated in the Accession Treaty from April 2005. As one of the main initiators of the first transitional rules introduced for Greece in 1981, Germany restricted access to its labour market for seven years for Bulgarian citizens, applying the so-called 2+3+2 rule. In practice this meant that the employment of a Bulgarian citizen as a dependent worker or as a service provider in construction, building, cleaning or interior decoration was bound to a work permit. Liberalisation

for three groups of workers – skilled workers with a university degree who take up a corresponding qualified job, seasonal workers and persons in vocational training – was announced as of 2012.

The migration of Bulgarian workers to main destination countries such as Spain, Italy and Greece was also restricted. In contrast to the eight countries which joined the EU in 2004 (the EU8), the UK made use of transitional periods for Bulgarian and Romanian citizens. Only Sweden and Finland among the old EU15 member states did not apply restrictions on labour market access. The redirection of migration flows due to a differential application of transitional rules did not take place to the same extent as with the EU8 countries (Holland, Fic, Rincon-Aznar, Stokes, Paluchowski 2011; Kahanec, Zaiceva, Zimmermann 2009). Migration flows were, instead, redirected in the course and in the aftermath of the global economic crisis of 2008 which severely hit the classic destination countries for Bulgarian migrants – Spain, Italy and Greece.

Economic disparities remain an important push factor in the post-accession period. The positive economic development in Bulgaria before EU accession was ended by the economic crisis in 2008. The unemployment rate reached 13 per cent in 2013 compared to 6 per cent in 2008 (Hanganu, Humpert, Kohls 2014). Income differences between Bulgaria and Germany are still substantial, although the GDP *per capita* has increased over time. Almost half of the Bulgarian population was at risk of poverty in 2013 compared to 25 per cent on average for the EU27 (Hanganu *et al.* 2014).

Data and method of analysis

The post-accession period of Bulgarian migration to Germany is characterised by specific patterns in terms of dynamics, forms and composition of migration. As migration patterns are captured in administrative data, these were analysed with the aim of identifying changes after 2007. The main data sources were the Central Register of Foreigners, providing information on the stock of foreign nationals, and data from local registration offices on in- and outflows of foreign nationals.⁷ However, administrative data are limited to the main demographic characteristics of age, gender and length of stay and do not contain further relevant aspects such as ethnicity, multiple migrations and reasons for migration.

New data were therefore collected through a migrant survey in Hamburg. The city state of Hamburg was selected for the case study due to an increasing scale of migration there since EU accession. With Duisburg, Munich and Frankfurt am Main, Hamburg ranked as one of the four cities with the highest net migration from Bulgaria and Romania in 2013 (Hanganu *et al.* 2014). Since 2007, the number of registered Bulgarian citizens in Hamburg has more than tripled, with 6 000 residing there in 2013 and 4.1 per cent of the total Bulgarian population in Germany (Statistisches Amt für Hamburg und Schleswig-Holstein 2014).

Based on the so-called time–location sampling (Baio, Blangiardo, Blangiardo 2011; Marpsat, Razafindratsimab 2010), a small-scale survey was carried out between December 2012 and March 2013 among Bulgarian migrants at selected migrant-oriented meeting points such as religious, cultural and commercial centres. The data collection at meeting points was complemented by an online version of the questionnaire, sent out *via* the mailing lists of Bulgarian migrant organisations. In all, 401 persons of Bulgarian background in Hamburg gave information about their migration experience and integration situation in Germany.⁸ As the initial sample was biased due to the different probability of inclusion of individuals in the survey, the sample was weighted in a statistical procedure by taking into account self-declared information on the frequency of visits to the places of interview. Weighted results may thus be generalised to the total Bulgarian population in Hamburg – the sample size corresponds to 6.7 per cent of the registered Bulgarian population there in 2013.

Migration patterns before and after 2007 were compared by looking at administrative and survey data. Administrative data were mostly analysed for the time frame 2000–2013 and, for certain issues, for a longer

period of time. Survey data were analysed by dividing the sample into two groups – EU pre-accession migrants who moved to Germany before 2007 and EU post-accession migrants who migrated after 2007 – and comparing the results.⁹ Of the respondents in the sample, 71 per cent were post-accession migrants and 29 per cent – pre-accession.

Migration patterns under EU freedom of movement: empirical evidence

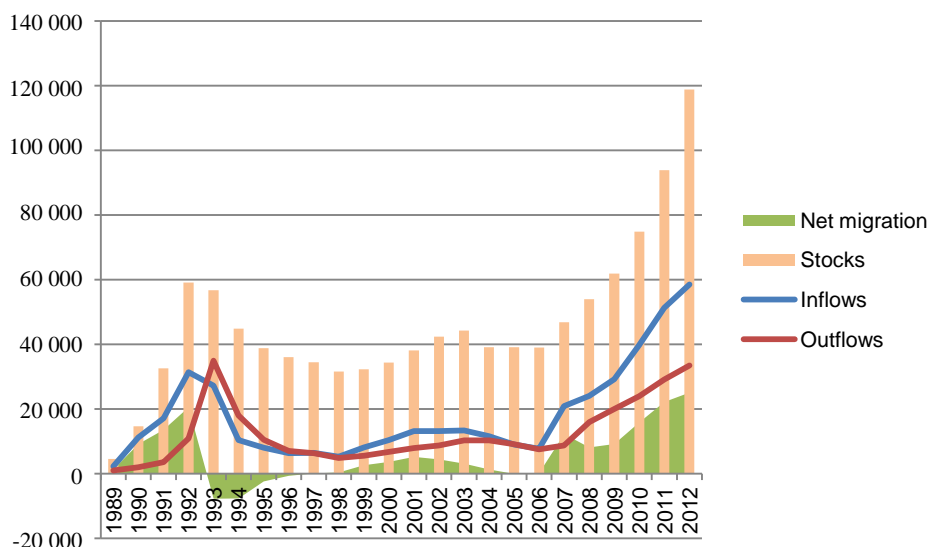
Based on available administrative data and survey results from Hamburg, three main changes in migration are explored: migration dynamics related to flows and stocks, forms of migration related to duration of stay and reasons for migration, and the composition of migration according to migrant characteristics such as age, gender, education and ethnicity.

Migration dynamics

Migration data give an impression of the scale of Bulgarian migration to Germany since the 1950s and reveal a tremendous change after EU accession. In accordance with the few legal opportunities for migration in the Cold War period, migration to East and West Germany was at a modest level. A mere 145 Bulgarian citizens came to Germany and 86 left the country in 1962. Since then, both flows and stocks increased but remained at a quite modest level, well below 2 000. No more than 5 000 Bulgarian citizens were registered in the Federal Republic of Germany between 1967 and 1989 (Gächter 2002). Although it was a negligible phenomenon from a quantitative point of view, these migrants were the pioneers of Bulgarian mobility who might have provided crucial support to newcomers in subsequent periods.

Migration dynamics considerably changed after 1990; since then, Germany has evolved into a preferred destination country for Bulgarian migrants. Except for the period 1994–1996, when more Bulgarian citizens left than came to Germany, there has been a positive migration balance (see Figure 1) – altogether 26 200 persons during the transition period (1989–1993), 6 700 persons in 1997–2000, after the economic and political crisis in Bulgaria in 1996–1997 and 14 100 persons in the pre-accession period (2001–2006). In line with these migratory movements, the number of Bulgarian citizens registered in Germany has also increased, rising from 5 000 in the late 1980s to 42 000 before EU accession.

Migration statistics reveal accelerating migratory movements in the post-accession period (2007–2013), comparable to the boom in the early 1990s. The number of Bulgarian citizens coming to Germany doubled within one year and reached 20 900 in 2007. Since then, the inflows have been steadily growing and reached a peak at 58 500 persons in 2012. In spite of the increasing number of people leaving the country, which counteracted the large number of newcomers, the migration balance has stayed positive and even risen: from 8 100 persons in 2008 to 25 000 persons in 2012 (Federal Statistical Office 2009–2014). Overall net migration in the post-accession period (2007–2012) accounted for 92 500 persons. The migratory movements contributed to a large increase in the resident Bulgarian population, with the number of Bulgarian citizens registered on the Central Register of Foreigners rising spectacularly from 39 000 in 2006 to 146 800 in 2013. Bulgaria became a main sending country and the Bulgarian community is one of the fastest-growing migrant groups in Germany. In 2012, Germany became the second-largest immigration OECD country after the US, caused mainly by migration from CEECs (OECD 2014). Survey results for Hamburg mirror these migration dynamics over time – half of the respondents migrated to Germany after 2007 while only 3.3 per cent came before 1990.

Figure 1. Inflows, outflows, net migration and stocks of Bulgarian citizens in Germany (1989–2012)

Source: Data on inflows, outflows and net migration stem from local registration offices (Federal Statistical Office 2009–2014); data on stocks stem from the Central Register of Foreigners (Federal Statistical Office 2005–2014); own compilation.

EU accession did not change the trend of increasing migration from the early 2000s but resulted in accelerated migration with rising in- and outflows and a correspondingly increasing Bulgarian population. Different reasons can explain this development. On the one hand, increasing migration can be attributed to new migration from Bulgaria to Germany, facilitated by better migration opportunities attached to EU citizenship status. On the other hand, it could also be a one-time statistical effect of the legalisation of irregular migrants after EU accession. Furthermore, the increase can also be attributed to a redirection of migration due to a worsening economic situation in the main destination countries of Spain and Italy in the aftermath of the global economic crisis in 2008 (Bertoli, Brücker, Fernández-Huertas Moraga 2013; Brücker, Hauptmann, Vallizadeh 2013).

Since 2007, 78 per cent of migration to Germany can be attributed to changes in the economic and institutional conditions in other receiving countries (Bertoli *et al.* 2013). Whether this holds true also for the Bulgarian case was one of the issues explored in the migrant survey in Hamburg. Survey respondents were asked whether they had lived in another country before they moved to Germany. A redirection of migration flows was expected from Greece, Spain and Italy, which constituted the main destinations for Bulgarian migrants and which were severely hit by the economic crisis. Even before the economic crisis, Bulgarian migrants with migration experience in Greece, Spain and Italy moved to Germany; however, after the economic crisis, their share increased – the survey revealed that 38 per cent of the post-accession migrants reported that they had lived in one of these Southern European countries before coming to Germany, as opposed to only 13 per cent of pre-accession migrants. It can thus be argued that the redirection of migration flows in the aftermath of the economic crisis may partly explain post-accession migration and that Germany is probably a stopover until the economic recovery of other main destination countries. Another explanation for this increased migration is an assumed legalisation of irregular migrants. EU accession served as a *de facto* legalisation for migrants who were previously illegally residing in Germany (Vogel, Kovacheva, Prescott 2011). In the UK, 30 per cent of those who applied for the Worker Registration Scheme in the first six months after the EU accession of 2004 had already been living in the UK (Gilpin, Henty, Lemos, Portes, Bullen 2006). In

line with this finding, the number of Bulgarian citizens registered in Germany after 2007 could thus also be partly attributed to the regularisation of existing migrants already living in the country (Holland *et al.* 2011).

In spite of the expectation that the freedom of movement granted by EU accession would trigger immense flows of new migrants from Bulgaria, the rise is, to a great extent, due to the redirection of migration from other destination countries and the legalisation of pre-accession migrants who had been living in Germany without a regular residence status. Direct migration can be assumed to apply almost undoubtedly to the 14 per cent of post-accession migrants in the survey sample who declared migration for educational reasons. Although EU citizenship is linked to more favourable legal regulations of migration and thus may facilitate mobility, it is more those with migration experience who contributed to the increase than new migrants from Bulgaria.

Forms of migration

Migration can be of a temporary, circular or permanent nature and motivated mainly by labour, family, educational or humanitarian reasons. Changes in both the time frame of migration and the main migration categories are expected to take place under the free movement regime.

Strict border control promotes the permanent migration of irregular migrants, as moving to and leaving the country is risky, a phenomenon known as the ratchet effect (Vogel, Cyrus 2008). Where there are barriers to mobility, regular migrants also tend to stay permanently in the receiving country rather than to move repeatedly, as the costs of migration are higher than in case of unrestricted mobility. The lack of mobility barriers generally reduces the likelihood of permanent migration and facilitates temporary and repeated stays abroad, as the migration opportunity after return is guaranteed (SVR 2013). Thus, from a theoretical perspective, in a situation of free movement granted by EU citizenship, increasing short-term and circular migration is to be expected.

In line with this assumption, Bulgarian migrants seldom practiced multiple migrations between 1990 and 2000, when a visa for entry and a residence permit were required, and border crossing to and from Germany was difficult for both regular and irregular migrants. Migration barriers promoted permanent migration in the 1990s. The abolishment of visa requirements for entry and permits to stay for up to three months in 2001 created more incentives to these back-and-forth movements to and from Germany. Circular migration was a response to the legal framework and constituted an indispensable part of migration strategies. Data from the Central Register of Foreigners reveal a trend for increasing temporary migration to Germany in the post-accession period. Based on the legal concepts of temporary and permanent residence in Germany, a stay of up to four years is considered to be temporary migration whereas a residence longer than five years is defined as permanent. The share of Bulgarian migrants who left Germany in the first four years of their stay increased from 64 per cent in 2006 to 86 per cent in 2012 (Federal Statistical Office 2005–2014). Whereas only one in four newcomers in 2006 left the country within the first year, more than half did so in 2012.¹⁰

Increasing temporary migration combined with the recent nature of Bulgarian migration which has developed mainly since the early 1990s result in a relatively short duration of stay for emigrants. Data for 2012 show that Bulgarian emigrants spent 3.3 years in Germany before moving to another country, compared to 10.3 years on average for all foreign nationals and that the average length of stay of Bulgarian migrants in Germany declined from 7.6 years in 2006 to 5.1 in 2012 (Federal Statistical Office 2005–2014) – far below the 18.3 years which are the average length of stay of all foreign nationals.

Increasing circular migration can be expected when we deal with freedom of movement and the geographic proximity of countries (EMN 2011). Circular migration is defined as at least two back-and-forth movements between country of origin and country of destination (EMN 2011). Administrative data capture

very little information on multiple migrations. With the aim of shedding light on this issue, participants in the migrant survey in Hamburg were asked how often they had been absent from Germany for more than three months after their first entry into the country – 40 per cent declared that they had left Germany at least once; however, circular migration is assumed for the 27 per cent who left Germany more than twice. A high incidence (44 per cent) of repetitive movements to and from Germany was found for persons who migrated in the visa-free pre-accession period 2001–2006. In contrast, a mere 12 per cent of newcomers in the post-accession period 2007–2012 practiced circular migration.

The lower incidence of circularity among post-accession migrants compared to that among pre-accession migrants contradicts the expectations shown in the literature. One explanation could be that only permanent-residence rights provide migrants with the security they need to leave the destination country and be confident that they can subsequently return (EMN 2011: 29). The vast majority of post-accession migrants do not have the right to permanent residence in Germany and probably do not want to jeopardise it. Another plausible explanation could be that EU accession, which is associated with simplified conditions of residence, changed migration strategies. As permanent residence status could be achieved more easily than in the past, the need to leave Germany after the expiration of a visa or a residence permit was eliminated. This probably led to an adaptation of migration strategies to the new situation. Findings from the migrant survey in Hamburg pointed to changed migration strategies with regard to circularity under the free-movement regime. A high number of migrants had migrated to Germany before 2007 but had settled permanently after EU accession, and a further 82 per cent of those who practiced circular migration settled permanently after 2007. The legal need for circular migration in order to comply with residence law regulations fell away due to EU citizenship, which seemed to transform previous circular movements to much more permanent residence in the destination country.

Whether Bulgarian migrants are going to settle in the long run in Germany is hard to predict. Asked about their intention to remain in Germany, many respondents (41 per cent) in the survey did not know how long they were going to stay. The high level of uncertainty is in line with findings from other studies about the intention to remain. Of the respondents, 40 per cent intended to stay permanently in Germany and 14 per cent a couple of years, while 5 per cent intended to leave within the next year. The intention to stay permanently was higher among pre-accession (50 per cent) than post-accession migrants (36 per cent). This is not unexpected, as the likelihood of emigration declines with an increasing length of residence because ties to the destination country multiply in line with the duration of residence.

Apart from the time frame, the reasons for migration seem to change after 2007 and led to a greater predominance of other migration categories than in the past. Changes in migration channels may lead to a substitution of categories, for instance, when there is a lack of channels for low-skilled labour migration, family, asylum or student migration of people, who migrated to work, takes place (de Haas 2011). Following this assumption about the role of migration channels for migration categories, different categories predominated over time: humanitarian migrants from Bulgaria arrived in Germany mainly in the early 1990s, whereas many educational migrants and temporary workers, in the framework of bilateral agreements, went there in the late 1990s and 2000s. Labour migration gained in importance before 2007 but not until the post-accession period did it become the predominant migration category, as the survey results revealed.

Survey participants were asked about their main reason for migrating to Germany. Self-declared reasons may differ from the actual channel of migration used. For instance, a person might have gone there as an asylum-seeker but might have declared economic reasons as the main migration driver in the questionnaire. Nevertheless, reasons for migration can be considered, with a high level of confidence, as indicators for migration categories. Looking at the responses of pre-accession and post-accession migrants, a clear shift in migration categories is observed. The share of educational migration dropped considerably from 48 per cent

to 14 per cent. Family migration also declined from 21 per cent to 12 per cent. Migration for economic reasons rose substantially from 25 per cent to 69.5 per cent and economic reasons were thus the most important motivation declared by migrants in the sample. The main migration categories in the Bulgarian migration pattern were labour migration (56.9 per cent of the sample), educational migration (23.4 per cent), family migration (14.2 per cent) and political migration (0.7 per cent). Compared to EU27 countries in 2008 (SVR 2013), Bulgarian migrants went to Germany more often for economic (57 per cent of Bulgarian migrants *versus* 43 per cent of EU27 migrants) and educational reasons (23 per cent *versus* 8 per cent) and more rarely to join family members (14 per cent *versus* 32 per cent).¹¹ The change in migration reasons can be explained by EU citizenship, which granted Bulgarian citizens improved opportunities for labour market participation. In spite of the restricted access to the labour market for dependent workers, self-employment was an accessible way to work in Germany. This is reflected in the main activity of migrants in the receiving country. The survey results showed that the share of workers increased from one- to two-thirds, with a high number of self-employed migrants in the post-accession period. Whereas half of the migrants before 2007 were pupils or students, half after 2007 were dependent workers. The main migration category for a decade – students – was replaced by workers.

Composition of migration

Administrative data on the registered Bulgarian population in Germany reveal changes in migrants' characteristics such as gender, age and education after EU accession. Since the early 2000s, the Bulgarian migrant population has been dominated by women. After EU accession, the gender structure changed and the proportion of male migrants rose from 43 per cent in 2006 to 54 per cent in 2013 (Federal Statistical Office 2005–2014). This change in gender composition is due to the rapidly rising immigration of men. Two-thirds of the newcomers in 2011 and 2012, and respectively of the net migration, were men (Federal Statistical Office 2009–2014).

A clear shift in the age structure of the Bulgarian migrant population occurred. The relevance of two age groups increased: children aged under 15 and persons of working-age, i.e. 25 to 65 years.¹² The share of children grew from 5 per cent in 2006 to 13 per cent in 2013, whereas that of persons of working age increased from 63 per cent to 72 per cent. The group of young people aged 15 to 25 who accounted for almost 30 per cent in 2006 dropped to 14 per cent in 2013 (Federal Statistical Office 2005–2014). Two developments contributed to these shifts. On the one hand, more children were born in Germany than in the past (Federal Statistical Office 2005–2014). On the other hand, student migration lost its leading position as a main migration channel for Bulgarian citizens. Whereas in the past it was easier to obtain a residence status for educational than for economic purposes, which triggered the migration mainly of young people, the free movement of persons attached to EU citizenship opened up further opportunities, particularly for labour and family migration, practised by those of working age.

Changes took place in the qualification structure of the Bulgarian migrant population. In 2005 the proportion of university graduates among Bulgarian and Romanian newcomers to Germany accounted for two-thirds and that of persons without vocational training for one eighth. Data for 2010 showed that those with a university degree made up 25 per cent of the newcomers from Bulgaria and Romania, 40 per cent had vocational training and 35 per cent had none (Brücker *et al.* 2013).

Both institutional and economic conditions influence employment opportunities and thus the qualification structure of migration. The transitional periods for the free movement of workers led to a concentration of migrants in certain types of employment such as seasonal work and self-employment. Illegal work and legal and semi-legal activities such as posted work and (bogus) self-employment became coping strategies for

overcoming the restricted right to work by transitional arrangements (Cyrus 2006). The number of Bulgarian migrants involved in seasonal work (only the hotel and catering industry) rose rapidly from 1 290 in 2006 to 7 750 in 2012 (Bundesregierung 2014). The increasing relevance of seasonal work and the redirection of low-skilled migrants from important destination countries such as Spain and Italy to Germany led to an increase in low-skilled migration (Brücker *et al.* 2013). At more than 25 per cent, the self-employment rate of Bulgarian migrants was extremely high (Schaland 2012).

As a rule, high-skilled migrants migrate first and are later followed by low-skilled migrants (Stark, Wang 2002). Considering the recent nature of Bulgarian migration to Germany, which has been evolving since the early 1990s, the increasing relevance of low-skilled persons is consistent with theoretical expectations about migration. In spite of this growth in the migration of persons with low education, the qualification structure of the overall Bulgarian migrant population was more favourable; 23 per cent of Bulgarian citizens in Germany in 2010 had a low educational level whereas the vast majority had medium (43 per cent) or high (34 per cent) educational levels (Holland *et al.* 2011). In comparison to other EU member states, Bulgarian migrants in Germany were highly skilled and worked in occupations which, to a large extent, corresponded to their qualification (Holland *et al.* 2011).

Results from the migrant survey in Hamburg are consistent with the transforming structure of the Bulgarian migrant population. As administrative data indicate, after 2007 this population in Germany became more diverse in its main socio-demographic characteristics of age, gender and education. Post-accession migration, characterised by a dominance of male migrants, is mirrored in the gender structure of the sample: 57 per cent male and 43 per cent female respondents. The vast majority of the respondents (88 per cent) were of working age, 25–64 years, but no children under 15 were included in the sample. The proportion of university graduates was higher among pre-accession (61.5 per cent) than among post-accession migrants (27.8 per cent). Correspondingly, the sample comprises 37.4 per cent high-skilled migrants with tertiary education, 37.8 per cent medium-skilled with secondary education and 27.4 per cent low-skilled with primary education.

As the administrative data do not provide information on ethnic groups, no official data on the ethnic composition of Bulgarian migration were available. Apart from the majority of the Bulgarian population of so-called ethnic Bulgarians, there are two big ethnic groups: Turks, accounting for 10 per cent of the population and Roma, who make up 5 per cent. With the aim of finding empirical evidence of this issue, participants in the migrant survey in Hamburg were asked about their religion and language skills. Persons with Turkish language skills or who were Muslims were considered to belong to the Turkish ethnic group, whereas those with Romanes language skills were deemed to belong to the Roma ethnic group. Those who only had Bulgarian language skills and were of Orthodox religion were considered to belong to the majority group of ethnic Bulgarians. As Table 1 shows, whereas pre-accession migration was clearly dominated by Bulgarian-speaking persons at 84 per cent, the group made up only 53 per cent of post-accession migrants. Turkish-speaking migrants gained in importance in the post-accession period, when their proportion increased from 14 to 38 per cent. Similarly, more people in the Romanes-speaking group migrated in the post- rather than pre-accession period (3 and 8 per cent respectively). The second variable of ethnic belonging – religion – points to a similar trend. Whereas the pre-accession period was clearly dominated by Christian-Orthodoxy – the main religion of ethnic Bulgarians – the relevance of Muslims increased in the post-accession period. Both indicators of belonging to an ethnic group reveal an increasing relevance of ethnic minorities in the post-accession period.

Despite this, the vast majority of migrants were still ethnic Bulgarians. The share of the Turkish ethnic group in the Bulgarian migrant population in Hamburg was deemed to be between 26.2 and 31.4 per cent and that of the Roma ethnic group about 6.5 per cent. As expected, given the large Turkish community in Germany which may attract migrants from the same background, an over-representation of the Turkish ethnic

group in relation to their share in the total Bulgarian population is found. In line with the expectation – derived from socio-economic data on qualification structure and labour market participation – that there is no over-representation of Roma among the Bulgarian and Romanian migrants in Germany (Brücker *et al.* 2013), the share of the Roma ethnic group is comparable to that in the total Bulgarian population.

Table 1. Ethnic composition of respondents by language skills and religion

| Characteristic | Pre-accession migrants (in per cent of subsample) | Post-accession migrants (in per cent of subsample) | Impact of EU accession | Total sample |
|-------------------------|---|--|------------------------|--------------|
| Language skills | | | | |
| only Bulgarian-speaking | 83.7 | 53.4 | ↘ | 62.1 |
| Turkish-speaking | 13.8 | 38.5 | ↗ | 31.4 |
| Romanes-speaking | 2.6 | 8.1 | ↗ | 6.5 |
| Religion | | | | |
| Christian-Orthodox | 73.5 | 57.1 | ↘ | 61.8 |
| Muslims | 13.8 | 31.2 | ↗ | 26.2 |
| Other religion | 1.3 | 3.7 | ↗ | 3.0 |
| No religion | 11.5 | 7.9 | ↘ | 8.9 |

Source: Migrant survey in Hamburg, weighted results, sample size = 401 respondents.

Both administrative and survey data showed that the composition of migration changed after 2007. The increase in male and low-skilled migration could, to a great extent, be attributed to labour market opportunities which became available following the acquisition of EU citizenship. During the transitional periods, it was mainly men and those with low educational levels who were attracted by the free movement of workers from 2007 to 2013, and self-employment in the construction sector and seasonal work. Thus restricted EU citizenship during the transitional periods seems to have impacted on the profile of new migrants.

Concluding remarks

Bulgarian migration to Germany is a relatively new phenomenon that emerged during the Cold War but developed mainly in more recent times after 1990. It can be divided into five periods: the Cold War period, the transition period, the visa-requirement period, and the EU pre- and post-accession periods. Over time Bulgarian migrants have used a mixture of migration channels to move to and settle in Germany. The predominant channels were asylum policy in the 1990s, education policy in the 1990s and 2000s, visa policy which prevented legal migration and encouraged irregular migration in the 1990s, visa policy which facilitated regular migration in the 2000s and the free-movement policy with its restricted freedom to work after 2007.

Migration patterns, i.e. the dynamics, forms and structure of migration, have also changed over time and particularly under the regime of free movement. The scale of migration rose rapidly, thus supposing an accelerating effect of EU accession on migration dynamics. However, other factors such as the redirection of migration after the economic crisis of 2008 and the legalisation of irregular migrants appear to have greatly contributed to the rapidly increasing scale of migration from 2007 to 2013. The expectation of immense new emigration flows from Bulgaria seems not to be sustainable and to have opposed the accelerating effect of EU accession in the initial phase after status acquisition.

With regard to the duration of migration, the expectation that there would be increased temporary migration under a regime of free movement was confirmed. Remarkably, contrary to assumptions, circular migration declined. This can be explained by changed migration strategies as a result of EU accession. EU

citizenship abolished the requirement for a residence permit, so that the legal need for circular migration fell away and paved the way for more permanent residence and settlement in the long run. For the first time, labour migration became a predominant form of mobility which can, to a great extent, be related to EU citizenship, which opened up more labour market opportunities for Bulgarian migrants in spite of the transitional periods. Labour migration replaced educational migration as the most relevant category for more than a decade. Nevertheless, the high relevance of educational migration remains a distinctive feature of Bulgarian migration patterns to Germany. After 2007, migrants' characteristics became more diverse in terms of age, gender, education and ethnicity, thus demonstrating transformations in the composition of migration. Male and low-skilled migration can be related to the transitional periods which restricted access to the labour market for dependent workers for seven years.

Changed migration patterns may, in turn, impact on labour market integration. Changes in the socio-demographic characteristics of the migrants, in particular, may reshape their overall integration situation. The high presence of groups who perform better on the labour market – such as men, migrants of working age and university graduates – facilitates successful economic integration. At the same time, limited economic opportunities through transitional arrangements for the free movement of workers hamper labour market participation. Even though EU citizenship is an inclusive institution at the EU level, its contextualisation in the nation-state in terms of national policies may reduce its potential effects on integration, as is presupposed for the area of labour market integration. With the expiry, as of 2014, of transitional periods in the free movement of workers, a new era of unmanaged migration began which should unfold new migration dynamics, forms and structures of migration from Bulgaria to Germany. This new phase should show more sustainable trends with regard to the relation between freedom of movement and migration patterns.

Notes

¹ A person is subject not to criminal penalties but to administrative measures and fines.

² Legal regulations aimed at managing migration, e.g. visa policy, are considered as migration channels (EMN 2012).

³ There are two main minorities in Bulgaria: Turkish (8.8 per cent of the population) and Roma (4.9 per cent) according to the Census conducted in 2011 (National Statistical Institute 2011).

⁴ Educational migration is not a new phenomenon in the migration relations between Germany and Bulgaria. It is even probably the oldest migration pattern which can be traced back to the nineteenth century, although the scale of migration was at a modest level. In the past there had been well-established relations between Germany and Bulgaria and Bulgarian citizens went to Germany to study.

⁵ Initially, a fix contingent of 2 000 work permits per year for posted workers was set up, which was enhanced and accounted for 2 500 in 2010. For Bulgarian citizens, the agreement on seasonal work contained only two sectors – hotel and restaurants – in which workers might be employed for up to six months. There was no annual quota.

⁶ In Germany, all individuals – irrespective of citizenship – are obliged to register their residence with the local registration office.

⁷ Data on foreign nationals stem from the Central Register of Foreigners. Probably inflows of individuals with a short period of stay are less covered, leading to lower numbers compared to data from the population projections of the Federal Statistical Office (Brenke, Neubecker 2013).

⁸ Applying the concept of people with a migration background, those with a Bulgarian background refers to Bulgarian citizens, former Bulgarian citizens who acquired German citizenship and persons with at least one parent born in Bulgaria or with Bulgarian citizenship. Apart from those registered with the local

registration offices, which is compulsory for everyone in Germany irrespective of citizenship, unregistered migrants were also captured.

⁹ Two questions were asked related to residence: year of first entry to Germany and year of uninterrupted stay.

¹⁰ Levels of temporary migration may be much higher, due to an assumed undercoverage of outflows in the statistics (Brenke, Neubecker 2013).

¹¹ Data for Bulgaria stem from the TLS survey in Hamburg; those for the EU27 from SVR (2013).

¹² According to the German definition, the working-age population comprises those aged between 15 and 64. However, as people aged 15 to 24 are often engaged in education, they are considered as a separate group of young people. The working-age population in this article is defined as those aged 25 to 64.

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