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## Border and Migration Management in the East: The Cases of Norway and Poland

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*The migration and refugee situation in Eastern Europe receives comparatively little attention in the EU for a simple reason: the people displaced by the fighting in eastern Ukraine have tended to stay close to home or travel to Russia rather than head to the European Union. But eastern migration deserves attention. Migration issues, including questions of population loss, diaspora loyalty and border management, are gaining real geopolitical significance across Eastern Europe. Moreover, the EU's technocratic efforts to leverage access to its labour markets in return for political reform in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia are becoming increasingly politicised there. This paper therefore sets out some basic data on the issue. It takes as its case studies the receiving countries Norway and Poland, both located at the external border of the EU, EEA and Schengen zone and next to Russia, and pays special attention to the question of border management, including small border traffic and migration control, looking particularly at the gender dimension of migration.*

### Introduction

In June 2014, in the wake of the European elections, EU leaders updated their strategy on justice and home affairs, immigration and mobility. This impetus carried through to the incoming European Commission, as detailed in the political guidelines set out by its president, Jean-Claude Juncker. In May 2015, the European Commission duly launched work on a comprehensive European “Agenda on migration,” a strategic review of the EU's efforts to secure its borders, provide jobs, live up to its protection commitments and re-engage with voters dissatisfied with the current management of immigration. Migration also looks set to drive the work of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini as she deals with relations with the EU's southern Mediterranean neighbours.

The spur for all this activity is not hard to identify. Since the onset of the global financial crisis seven years ago, intra-EU free movement has been causing friction between Europe's traditional receiving and sending countries. The UK government has recently put the issue of EU citizens' access to welfare benefits in another Member State at the heart of its agenda for EU reform. On top of that, Europe is now faced with serious problems of migration across its southern border: approximately nine million individuals have been displaced by the fighting in Syria, many of whom are now stranded in precarious situations in neighbouring states such as Lebanon and Turkey, and key actions are being identified and stepped up in the EU's efforts

to manage these migration flows. There is also increasing concern for the impact the ongoing armed conflict and economic and social crisis in Ukraine may have on migratory flows in Europe. The question of intra-EU mobility and forced and illegal migration from beyond EU borders has thus become a part of the broader and increasingly more politicised European migration agenda. At this point, the EU migration/visa dialogue with Russia and the discussion on management of the external, eastern EU/EEA border, including small border traffic (SBT) with Russia, have become somewhat contentious issues.

Differences in regulation and economic strength mean that Norway and Poland have rather different interests in the current debate about European free movement: Poland is the most significant sending country to Norway, having long since overtaken Sweden, but it receives few Norwegian immigrants of its own. Warsaw and Oslo are also on opposite sides of the divide on immigration and asylum flows from the south, too: whilst Norway plans to take up to 8,000 refugees from Syria in the next three years, Poland is much more reluctant to open its borders to this group because the issue has been strongly politicised in the ongoing debate prior to the upcoming elections. There are, however, some signs that the Polish government is about to adopt a more flexible approach to the issue and that Poland can take more Syrian refugees than planned at the outset of the current crisis. In fact, the prime minister of Poland has already said that the country could take even more, linking this however with the possible impact of the crisis in Ukraine on Poland.

There is, though, one partly migration-related issue the two countries have in common—namely how to address the question of transborder cooperation with Russia in a situation in which Russia has decided to undermine the very basic principles of cooperation in post-Cold War Europe by its actions in Ukraine, which have already triggered the gravest humanitarian catastrophe on the European continent since the crisis in the Balkans in the 1990s and may in the short term release a new wave of forced migration that will reach the EU. Norway and Poland's shared geography of the EU/EEA eastern border and their recent decisions to open to more people-to-people contact with the introduction of a more flexible small-border-traffic regime along the border with Russia have made them reconsider how to react to the developments in Ukraine in this regional context and how to approach a new and more challenging Russia.

## **Managing the Eastern Borders: Norway and Poland**

Since the Russian actions in Ukraine have been presented officially as a measure to protect ethnic Russians in the country—and protection of Russian citizens, ethnic Russians and even Russian speakers has been high on Russia's official agenda since at least the war in Georgia in 2008—the situation in Ukraine and Russia's more bellicose approach have put the issue of hosting Russian diaspora higher on the security policy agenda in Europe and even more on the security agenda in countries directly bordering Russia or those having Russian diasporas on their territory.

This brief report will therefore address this issue in both the Norwegian and Polish context. With a substantial part of the Russian diaspora in Norway composed of Russian women who married Norwegian men during a period of deep economic and social crisis in Russia, we will pay special attention to this gender-related issue, which has contributed greatly to the rise of an ethnic Russian diaspora in Norway. We will, however, also address some other important aspects of this question. As for Ukrainian migration, we will examine another strategy involving women that has put its mark on the European migration map, namely the fact that many Ukrainian women, even before the outbreak of the recent conflict, had chosen to use various legal and illegal channels to find a place in Europe's legal or gray-zone labour market, not least in Poland.

Although the question of Ukrainian migration has been rather ignored in Brussels because the majority of the one million or so displaced by the fighting have tended to go east not west, various forms of eastern migration should be put higher on the agenda: tensions in Eastern Europe are now being caused in part by migration-related issues that include the treatment of diaspora populations, population loss to the west, and the geostrategic challenge posed by the EU's visa relations with Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

The tensions are also raised out of fear of hybrid warfare and the potential for diaspora support for pro-Russian "little green men" that have served to melt and move borders, especially in Ukraine. In addition, there is growing competition between two mobility models—one proposed by the EU and the other

launched as part of the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union. Mobility, previously seen as a positive vector of globalisation, is now becoming a source of old-fashioned geopolitical tension.

Faced with this “return to history” in migration relations, Poland and Norway have to face not only a more challenging Russia but also rethink how to manage the border with Russia in this new situation, fearing that Russian actions may trigger a new wave of forced migration in Europe that can reach both of them. This paper therefore examines how the geographical proximity of Russia binds the two countries together on this question. It focuses in particular on their approaches to border and migration management in relations with both Russia and, in more broad terms, the eastern border of the EU/EEA, and it pays special attention to the issue of the migration of women from Eastern Europe to Poland and Norway.

## **The European Union / EEA and Contemporary Transborder Traffic and Migration from the Eastern Neighbours**

When researching how the eastern borders of the EU/Schengen area are managed, one needs to examine the volume of regular and irregular transborder traffic and see how the current border regime and other factors influence various migration flows to the areas in question. The countries in the region deal with different neighbours in different ways and their choices are influenced by both political and economic factors.

According to Frontex, the total number of border crossings (both entry and exit) in regular cross-border traffic with the Russian Federation reached about 77 million in 2013. That meant about a 10% increase compared to 2012. Moreover, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine reported more than 54 million crossings at their borders.<sup>1</sup>

In 2014, the situation drastically changed. According to Frontex’s own assessment, the following factors had a major impact on regular border traffic between the EU and its eastern neighbours: (a) the number of visas issued by EU Member States; (b) movement under a small-border-traffic regime; (c) fluctuation of shopping-related cross-border travel by both EU and EB-RAN countries and the Russian Federation; (d) the economic situation of the EU’s eastern neighbours; (e) entry restrictions. In addition, the economic sanctions imposed on Russia and its counter sanctions that led to economic problems there and the economic downturn in Ukraine had a clear effect on the volume and profile of regular transborder flows. The most important trend in 2014 was a decline in traffic at EU Member State borders with the Russian Federation and growth in flows at the border with Ukraine.<sup>2</sup>

When it comes to irregular border crossings, the eastern border is not perceived as posing a serious challenge by responsible bodies. In 2013, detections by Member States of illegal border crossings in that area remained low in comparison with other parts of the EU: only 1.2% of all illegal border crossings reported by Member States at external borders were reported from the EU’s 6,000 km-long eastern borders. In 2014, the situation even improved to 0.5% of all reported illegal border crossings. There were, however, some new trends visible in 2015 compared with previous years. In 2014, EU Member States detected more illegal border crossings by transiting non-regional migrants than regional nationals, and irregular migration was clearly the main purpose of the illegal entry by the non-regional migrants.

In 2014, indicators of irregular migration at the common borders showed mixed trends. There were fewer detected attempts of illegal border crossings, but clearly more asylum applications and refusals of entry, which indicates a rising risk of the abuse of legal travel channels. In 2014, EU Member States detected more illegal border crossings by transiting non-regional migrants than regional nationals. The ongoing crisis in Ukraine is by far the most important source of current and future population movements in this part of the EU. Apart from the physical security threat in the conflict zone in the east of the country, most inhabitants

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<sup>1</sup> *Eastern European Borders Annual Risk Analysis 2014*, Frontex, Warsaw, 2014, p. 13, [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/EB\\_ARA\\_2014.pdf](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/EB_ARA_2014.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Data on border traffic is from *Eastern European Borders ... 2014*, *op. cit.*, and *Eastern European Borders Annual Risk Analysis 2015*, Frontex, Warsaw, 2015, [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/EB\\_ARA\\_2015.pdf](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/EB_ARA_2015.pdf).

of Ukraine are also negatively impacted by grave economic problems, such as high inflation (nearly 25% in 2014) and devaluation of the national currency.<sup>3</sup>

### *Eastern Migration to the EU*

In terms of quantity, most immigrants to the EU from Eastern Europe actually reside in Germany and Italy, where around one third of all immigrants from the EU's six Eastern Partners as well as from Central Asia and Russia reside. Other important destination countries are Poland, the Baltics, Spain and the Czech Republic, each with at least some 100,000 immigrants from the east. The most important countries of origin are Russia and Ukraine, comprising more than half of all immigrants in the EU/EFTA. As for emigration from the EU to eastern Member States, this is notoriously hard to measure, but according to one recent study Russia features as a top destination country only for Estonians, Latvians and Greeks. This kind of eastern emigration out of the EU, moreover, principally affects populations of migrant origin, particularly in the Baltic States.<sup>4</sup>

Migration between East and West still bears the patterns of history. During the Soviet period, migration to and from it was largely limited to the territory of the USSR, whilst initial post-Soviet migration flows were mainly directed to the U.S., the EU, the Russian Federation and Israel and were dominated by formerly Soviet citizens of Jewish and German origins and by ethnic Russians moving to Russia. More recently, both Russians and Ukrainians have taken advantage of bilateral labour agreements with particular EU states, as well as the increased liberalisation of border controls in local regions along the EU/EFTA's eastern border, implanting small-border-traffic regimes on borders; but immigrants have also fled conflict in the east, notably Chechen refugees from Russia, who were especially numerous in the first decade of the 2000s. This follows overall patterns of immigration in Europe: most immigrants who have arrived in the last 20 years are economic migrants, having come voluntarily (or in some cases, been trafficked) to enter the labour market.

In every year between 2008 and 2011, around 47,000 citizens from Eastern Partnership countries, Central Asia and Russia obtained citizenship in an EU/EFTA country. Most of the naturalisations took place in Germany, followed by UK and France. Since 2002, most of the naturalised citizens have been former Russian citizens (150,000 acquisitions of citizenship). Ukrainians come in at around 92,000, Moldovans at 48,000 and Kazakhs at 28,000. As for the population of eastern immigrants in an irregular situation, this is exceedingly difficult to estimate. Estimates of the overall population fluctuate wildly: from 3.8 million to 6 million immigrants in the EU are thought to be unauthorised, split in half by gender. The gender issue is, however, clearly sharpening: earlier waves of female migrants integrated into the regulated labour market with relative ease; new female migrants face significant challenges to economic and social integration.<sup>5</sup>

### *Gender Balance in Migration*

As regards the overall gender balance of eastern immigrants, migration to the EU and EFTA tends to be female-dominated, and Eurostat reports more female migrants than male (although there are exceptions such as the Czech Republic and Portugal). Of the 1.6 million Russian immigrants in the EU, more than 60% are women. And the change in these flows to more women than men is broadly in line with the general trends in female migration worldwide: women are first movers or come for work, in particular driven by demand for personal caretakers and domestic help. There were 14.9 million female immigrants in the 27 countries of the EU in 2009, constituting 47.3% of the foreign-born population. The majority (63.2%, or

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<sup>3</sup> *Eastern European Borders ... 2015, op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> A. Weinar, *Emigration policies in contemporary Europe*, CADMUS Carim paper, European University Institute, 2014, [http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/31208/CARIM-East%20RR-2014\\_01.pdf?sequence=1](http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/31208/CARIM-East%20RR-2014_01.pdf?sequence=1).

<sup>5</sup> "World Migration in Figures, A joint contribution by UN-DESA and the OECD to the United Nations High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, 3–4 October 2013," [www.oecd.org/els/mig/World-Migration-in-Figures.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/World-Migration-in-Figures.pdf). See: C. Timmerman (ed.), *New Dynamics in Female Migration and Integration*, Routledge, London–New York, 2015.

9.4 million) of female migrants in the European Union are not from Europe, and a large part of these third-country nationals are from Africa, Latin America and Asia.<sup>6</sup>

Without doubt, the rising female labour-force participation in Western economies, the transition from industrial to post-industrial economies, growth of the information society, collapse of socialist economies with historically strong levels of female labour market participation and new frameworks for social relations in a globalising world are to be regarded as important reasons for changes in the gender pattern in migration on the macro level. The recent economic downturn has also had an impact: recent female migrants experience higher inactivity rates than men in all immigration categories, with more pronounced gaps among family migrants, asylum seekers and other migrants. Yet, the participation rates of migrant women are also known to vary widely by country of origin. Female migrants from Muslim countries of the Southern and Eastern parts of the Mediterranean and South Asia are generally found to have lower levels of economic activity while Eastern Europeans have a far better record.

## NORWAY

Norway is still a very attractive place to live, even with an economic crisis in 2015 brought on by lower oil prices. This has made Norway quite a popular destination country for European citizens, including those from the Baltics (especially Lithuania, and Latvia), and Poland. Since the question of labour migration to Norway—and especially the growth of the Polish community in Norway—is discussed thoroughly in other GOODGOV publications, this text will focus on Norwegian border management in the High North and on the impact of the ongoing crisis in Ukraine on the perception of Russia as an important neighbour and sending country. Bearing in mind the fact that the border with Russia in the north is once again being viewed as posing some strategic challenges, it would be therefore interesting to see whether the recent political crisis in relations between Russia and the West has had any impact on small border traffic in this specific geographical context.

### *Norwegian Border Management and Small Border Traffic with Russia*

Although Norway is not a member of the European Union, it has adopted a wide range of EU standards in recent decades, also in the fields of border management, mobility and migration control. However, due to a special interest in improving transborder cooperation with Russia in the High North, Norway has introduced some special rules for small border traffic for people living on both sides of the 196 km-long Russian-Norwegian border. The Norwegian-Russian visa agreement that came into force in December 2008 is practically the same as the EU-Russian agreement, signed in 2007. Norway requires invitations for most Russians going to Norway, and the majority of issued visas are so-called single-entry visas. In 2010, the number of border crossings increased to 140,855 and rose to more than 190,000 in 2011. The number of border crossings was expected to increase to about 400,000 in 2014, with about 80% of the cross-border travellers to be Russian citizens. The rapid increase can be explained by the visa facilitations, as well as by relaxed Russian customs regulations on goods purchased by private shoppers.

From 2006–2007, the community and municipality of Sør-Varanger, with support from the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, opted to establish a local cross-border industrial and economic zone with neighbouring Pechenga. The development of the so-called Pomor Zone was meant to carry special regulations for local cross-border travel and to facilitate joint Norwegian and Russian petroleum initiatives in the strategically important coastal areas. The Pomor Zone did not materialise as planned due to several factors. Still, the idea sparked debate and became a stepping stone in the process that followed. In 2008, Sør-Varanger signed a twin-city cooperation agreement with Pechenga and in 2012 an SBT agreement came into force. The decision to introduce the regime was formally announced during President Dmitry Medvedev's state visit to Norway in April 2010, and the agreement was subsequently signed in early November the same year. It was the first agreement of its kind on Russian territory. The area covers a 30 km-wide belt on both sides of the border and the visa-free zone includes practically all the inhabited areas of Russia's Pechenga

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<sup>6</sup> M. Kontos, *Between Integration and Exclusion: Migrant Women in European Labor Markets*, [www.migrationpolicy.org/article/between-integration-and-exclusion-migrant-women-european-labor-markets](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/between-integration-and-exclusion-migrant-women-european-labor-markets).

Rayon, as well as the Norwegian municipality of Sør-Varanger. About 40,000 Russians and 9,000 Norwegians inhabit the area. With the exception of lands located adjacent to military facilities, the whole zone is open to travel by permit holders. With its first-ever SBT agreement with Russia, Norway aspired to move to the fore of progressive states in European East-West relations and by early September 2012, 475 Russians and 1,100 Norwegians had obtained the cross-border documents.

The SBT agreement was indeed officially presented as a stepping stone in the process towards fully-fledged, visa-free travel between European East and West. Moreover, in Norway, this bilateral agreement was seen as a natural continuation of several previous initiatives that were to improve cooperation with Russia in the High North, defined as a strategically important area for bilateral cooperation.<sup>7</sup> Since Norway liberalised its visa regime for Russians living in the Barents region in 2010, traffic at the Norway/Russia border has been constantly on the rise. Indeed, the Russian Consulate General in Kirkenes cites the issuance by Norway of so-called Pomor visas through a simplified procedure as one of the main reasons for the rather low number of applications for SBT permits on behalf of Russian border residents. According to statistics collected since 2009, traffic at the Storskog-Borisoglebsk BCP has almost tripled, with nearly 300,000 border crossings in 2013. In their forecast, the Norwegian police, with assistance from the Norwegian Barents Secretariat, concluded that by 2014 the number of border crossings could reach 400,000 yearly. The rise in traffic was partly boosted by the SBT, launched in late May 2012. By November 2013, some 4,200 SBT permits had been issued and about 50,000 border crossings by SBT permit holders had taken place. Nearly 80% of the border crossings were undertaken by Russians, but the SBT regime prompted more Norwegians to visit Russian borderlands, such as the urban centres of Zapolyarny and Nikel. It is reported that more than half (54%) of the Norwegians who crossed at Storskog in November 2012 were SBT permit holders.

However, due to the scope and impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict it is hard to imagine that the next step would be an expansion of SBT to include the whole territory of Russia's Murmansk Oblast (which has a population of 780,000) and of Norway's Finnmark county (74,000 inhabitants), as proposed by some Russian and Norwegian politicians in early December 2013. Moreover, after years of booming border traffic, in October 2014 a slide in the number of people crossing the Russian-Norwegian border was seen. Just after the Ukraine crisis peaked, shopping tourism became less attractive as the rouble hit an all-time low. The weak rouble meant shopping had become more expensive for people travelling from Russia's Kola Peninsula to Norway's north-eastern border town of Kirkenes. After an annual increase of around 30% in border traffic since 2009, October 2014 showed a remarkable decrease in border crossings.<sup>8</sup> According to the last available Frontex data, in 2014 there were some 200,000 border crossings from Russia to Norway.<sup>9</sup>

### *Migration from Russia to Norway*

At the beginning of 2015, Norway had almost 670,000 foreign-born inhabitants in total and more than 135,000 persons born in the country to immigrant parents. Together, they represented almost 15% of the population. According to official statistics, as of 2001 there were 4,524 persons classified as "Russians" living in Norway (discussed in more detail below), and by 2015 this had risen significantly to 16,803 people. In the period between 2003 and 2014, net migration from Russia to Norway reached almost 11,000 people.<sup>10</sup> In the period between 1992 and 2014, more than 7,000 former Russian citizens had received Norwegian citizenship<sup>11</sup> but by 1 January 2015 there were still 11,515 Russian citizens living in Norway—65% of them female and 35% male Russian citizens.<sup>12</sup>

Since the early 1990s, the Russian community has grown continuously. There is one caveat, however: because Russia is a multi-ethnic country, not all migrants coming from Russia to Norway are of Russian

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<sup>7</sup> *Ex Borea Lux? Learning from the Finnish and Norwegian Cross-border Cooperation Experience on their Eastern Borders*, ISD, Prague, 2012, <http://exborealex.isd-network.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/EXBOREALUX2012.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> The number of passages to and from Russia through the Storskog border station plummeted by nearly 18% in May 2015 compared to the same month in 2014. Earlier, there had been longer queues to get across the border between Norway and Russia. Now however, there is a dramatic decrease in the number of passages here.

<sup>9</sup> *Eastern European Borders ... 2015*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> "Tabell 05476: Innvandring, utvandring og nettoinnvandring, etter statsborgerskap," SSB.

<sup>11</sup> "Tabell 04767: Utenlandske statsborgere som har fått norsk statsborgerskap, etter kjønn, alder og tidligere statsborgerskap," SSB.

<sup>12</sup> Data on citizenship from: "Tabell 05196: Folkemengde, etter kjønn, alder og statsborgerskap," SSB.

ethnic origin. The data collected and produced by the Norwegian statistical office (SSB) and Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (Utlendingsdirektoratet, UDI) are based exclusively on political and not ethnic geography. The picture the data gives is open to dispute. The “official” Russian community in Norway, a community defined by its formal Russian citizenship will include not only ethnic Russians but also persons with other ethnic background who—or whose parents—formally have or have had Russian citizenship. This means that many persons with other ethnic backgrounds, although formally Russian citizens and classified as “Russian” by the Norwegian authorities, do not identify with this group and have no wish to be classified that way.

This is the case when analyzing the situation of the almost 5,000 Russian citizens of mostly ethnic Chechen origin who have received protection in Norway, especially since the outbreak of the second Chechen war in 1999. They self-identify as ethnic Chechens coming from an independent country invaded by Russia, but are defined by the Norwegian authorities as part of the Russian community in Norway. In practice, we thus have at least two distinct communities—both defined from the purely practical and statistical point of view as “Russian” but who live more in parallel than together. The existence of two separate “Russian” communities can pose serious conceptual challenges to Norwegian policymakers, especially when it comes to immigrant integration and practical decisions on opening another migratory gate with Russia, that is, family reunification.

Russian citizens have apparently embarked on various strategies to come to Norway—ranging from seeking asylum in the case of victims of Russian policy in the Northern Caucasus to “marrying Norwegian,” with many other strategies in between these two bookends.<sup>13</sup> The number of asylum-seekers from Russia grew from 32 in 1992 to 1,718 in 2002 and then to 1,923 in 2003. In 1991–2003, more than 4,500 applications for asylum were registered in Norway by citizens of Russia. Most of these applications, especially after 1999, were somehow linked to the deteriorating situation in the Caucasus. About one third of these were filed by women.<sup>14</sup> By 1 January 2012 there were 7,566 persons with a background from Russia who moved to Norway for family reasons, 4,404 persons with a background from Russia who received refugee status in Norway, 1,618 Russians who settled in Norway after studying in the country, 3,854 Russian women who moved to Norway to marry, 158 Russian men who settled in Norway for the same reason, as well as 1,042 persons with a background from Russia who settled in Norway because of work.<sup>15</sup>

### *The Gender Element and “Russian Brides” in Norway*

In 2015, Russian women represented more than 66% of all persons with a background from Russia living in Norway and 65% of Russian citizens living at that time in Norway. For the post-Soviet period to date (that is, between 1992 and 2015) the share of women among persons with a Russian background living in Norway averaged 66%.

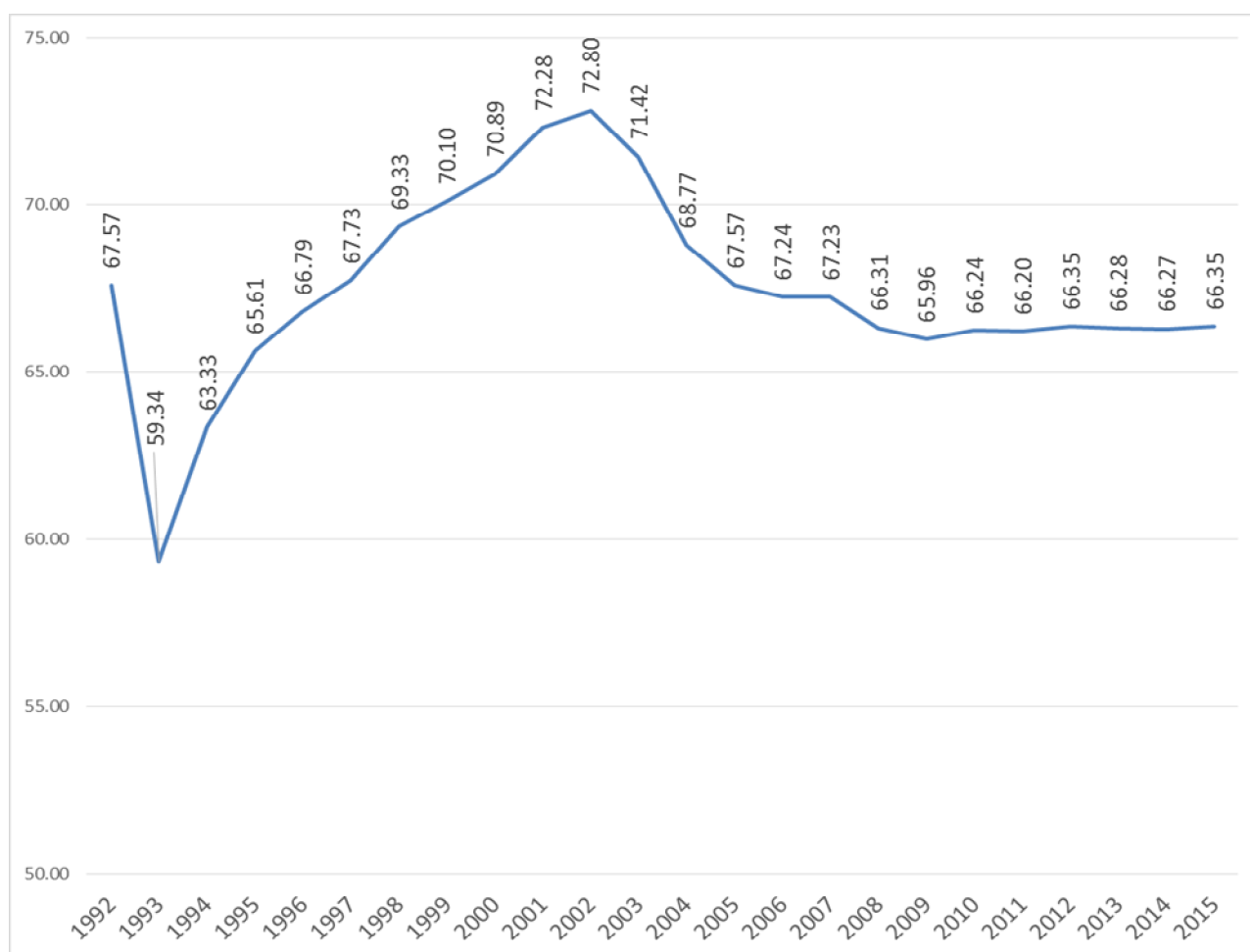
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<sup>13</sup> For more on the recent development of the Russian diaspora in Norway, see, e.g.: J.M. Godzimirski, *Tackling Welfare Gaps: The East European Transition and New Patterns of Migration to Norway*, NUPI, Oslo, 2005, p. 284, [www.nupi.no/Norsk/Publikasjoner/NUPI-rapporter/2005](http://www.nupi.no/Norsk/Publikasjoner/NUPI-rapporter/2005). For more on various reasons for migration to Norway from Russia in a broader historical and geographical context, see also: M.T. Dzamarija, *Innvandringsgrunn 1990-2011, hva vet vi og hvordan kan statistikken utnyttes?*, SSB, Oslo, 2013, [www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/\\_attachment/135482?\\_ts=140bf5cf4f8](http://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/_attachment/135482?_ts=140bf5cf4f8).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*. See also: [www.udi.no/globalassets/global/forskning-fou\\_i/visum/visitors-visas-in-connection-with-family-visits-comparative-study.pdf](http://www.udi.no/globalassets/global/forskning-fou_i/visum/visitors-visas-in-connection-with-family-visits-comparative-study.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> All data from M.T. Dzamarija, *op. cit.*

**Figure I. Share of women among the “Russian” population in Norway, 1992–2015**



Source: SSB Norway. Note, see the discussion in the text above this figure for more about the term “Russian” as defined by Norwegian authorities.

One clearly gender-related migration strategy involves marrying into Norway. This seems to be the approach adopted by many Russians who decided to leave their country and settle in Norway during the period of economic and social turmoil in Russia; it was also one of the few legal strategies available. Not that it is exclusive to Russians, of course: during the so-called “first wave” of family and marriage migration to Norway in the 1980s, partners also arrived from developing countries, mainly Thailand and the Philippines. It was only after the collapse of the Soviet Union that Nordic countries became a destination for new groups of migrants from the post-socialist countries. In the transborder Barents Region, which stretches through provinces in Finland, Russia, Sweden and Norway (notably Finnmark), economic and cultural cooperation has made people-to-people contacts and trans-cultural Russian-Nordic marriages possible.

Between 1989 and November 2003, the Norwegian Directorate for Immigration (UDI) registered 905 instances of visa applications for Russian citizens who married either Norwegian citizens or other persons living permanently in Norway.<sup>16</sup> And in 2000, every fourth marriage in Finnmark was said to involve a Russian citizen. The nuptial strategy proved especially successful in areas with specific male-dominated

<sup>16</sup> In addition, there were 44 cases in which a Russian citizen applied for a visa in connection with a planned marriage to a person residing in Norway. In the vast majority of these cases (849 out of 905, or 94%) the bride was Russian. Only in 56 cases (6%) was the groom Russian and the bride of Norwegian background.



demographic characteristics, including Finnmark. But geography is nevertheless key: the proportion of Russians in Norway (and Sweden) is substantially lower than in Finland. As Finland shares a long border with Russia, Russian immigrants outnumber all other immigrant groups and make up 25% of all immigrants (about 27,000<sup>17</sup>). In Norway, this group amounts to less than 2% of the total number of all immigrants.

Thus, we see that the nuptial strategy has been used by Russian women in particular as a means to settle permanently in Norway. Some 79% of all married Russian women in Norway were married to ethnic Norwegians (compared to just 13% of all Russian married men). Already in 2002, 83% of the nearly 2,300 married persons with Russian background living in Norway were women. Russians in these bi-national marriages also formed a substantial part of Norway's nascent Russian community. In 2002, 1,550 Russians were married to ethnic Norwegians. Together, they comprised almost a third of the whole civic community of 4,442 people of Russian background registered as first-generation migrants. According to official Norwegian data, there were 3,334 marriages involving a husband from Norway and a wife from Russia between 1990 and 2010.<sup>18</sup>

The UDI lists a range of historical “push factors” in Russia, such as unemployment, wage and pension arrears, poverty and ethnic tension. These were clearly related to welfare gaps that existed between Russia and Norway, especially in the 1990s when many Russian women chose the nuptial strategy to migrate to Norway. The Nordic states are famous for their attachment in their welfare systems to egalitarianism and redistribution to the advantage of weak social groups,<sup>19</sup> and the Nordic welfare system is usually viewed as an important “pull factor.” Between 1998 and 2003 there were between 200 and 300 Russian women per year who were attracted and moved to Norway to marry. With the economic differences between Norway and Russia diminishing, this number went down to about 100 women per year in 2013.<sup>20</sup> However, the level of integration into the welfare system and labour market by Russian women immigrants is lower than for many other female migrants from Eastern Europe: in 2014, slightly more than 62% of Russian women aged 15 to 74 were active on the Norwegian labour market—a share much higher than for many other migrant communities, but lower than among the population in general and among migrant women from other East European countries.<sup>21</sup> This is especially interesting from the perspective of the Nordic countries, where immigration of women from Russia has been at the forefront of the multiculturalisation of the societies there and the question of gender equality and women's empowerment has been very high on the political and social agenda.

## POLAND

Generally, Poland has for years seemed to be the case of the state with a lack of practical migration policy or at least having one *in statu nascendi*, lacking thus an effective system of migration management. The strategy in place now has been so only for a short time and still needs to be updated. Recent news and polling data show Poles in general seem to be not willing to welcome foreign refugees or to accept a more open migration policy. This scepticism is partly driven by various stereotypes, especially of religious and cultural character, but there are also clear economic elements in the picture. However, immigration to Poland is still a very marginal issue in terms of numbers. According to the latest estimates published by Eurostat, the share of non-nationals to the population of the country is very low at just 0.3% of the whole population—the lowest in the whole EU. In addition, only 71,500 people, or 0.2% of the whole population, were non-nationals from countries outside of the EU. Some 1.6% of the population of the country, or 620,000 people, comprise those born in countries other than Poland. Here again, only Romania and

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<sup>17</sup> Statistics Finland 2008.

<sup>18</sup> “Familieetableringer til menn/kvinner uten innvandrerbakgrunn, største grupper. 1990–2010,” SBB, [www.ssb.no/a/magasinet/slik\\_lever\\_vi/tab-2012-04-13-07.html](http://www.ssb.no/a/magasinet/slik_lever_vi/tab-2012-04-13-07.html).

<sup>19</sup> J. Sverdljuk, *Russian Women Immigrants in the Nordic Countries: Finland, Norway, Sweden—Gender Perspective on Social Justice*, ARENA Working Paper No. 15/2002, pp. 4–5.

<sup>20</sup> T. Sandnes, L. Østby, *Familieinnvandring og ekteskapsmønster 1990–2013*, SSB, Oslo, 2015, [www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/\\_attachment/228459?\\_ts=14d70308ab8](http://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/_attachment/228459?_ts=14d70308ab8), p. 22.

<sup>21</sup> See: “Sysselsatte innvandrere, etter utvalgte fødeland og kjønn. Absolutte tall og i prosent av personer i alt 15-74 år i hver grupp. 4. Kvartal,” SBB, [www.ssb.no/arbeid-og-lonn/statistikker/innvregsys/aar/2015-06-18?fane=tabell&sort=nummer&tabell=230326#tabell](http://www.ssb.no/arbeid-og-lonn/statistikker/innvregsys/aar/2015-06-18?fane=tabell&sort=nummer&tabell=230326#tabell).

Bulgaria have a lower share of inhabitants in this category. At the same time, those born in Poland or otherwise Polish citizens are very strongly represented in other EU and EEA countries, being the most numerous group in terms of citizenship in Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, the UK, Iceland and Norway, second in Germany and Sweden, and third in Slovakia.<sup>22</sup>

A brief study analyzing official data on migration provides more detail about those who have decided to settle recently in Poland as well as the share to the population and role of migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia in the migrant community in Poland.<sup>23</sup> According to official Polish data, of 121,219 immigrants, Ukrainians amounted to 31%, Russians to 11%, and Belarusians to 9%. Some 46% of the Ukrainians and 32% each of the Russians and Belarusians had time-limited residence permits, while 48% of the Ukrainians, 38% of the Russians and 63% of the Belarusians were permitted to settle permanently in Poland.

In addition to more or less permanent migration, Poland seems to attract more and more labour migrants from surrounding areas. The table below presents official data on work permits issued to citizens of the three neighbouring non-EU countries in the period between 2008 and 2014, with the trends in the table continuing into the first half of 2015 when a total of 20,092 Ukrainians, 800 Belarusians and 260 Russians received work permits in Poland.<sup>24</sup>

**Table I. Work permits issued in Poland to citizens of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia**

|  | 2008  | 2009  | 2010  | 2011  | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Ukraine  | 5400  | 9504  | 12894 | 18669 | 20295 | 20416 | 26315 |
| Belarus  | 1325  | 1669  | 1937  | 1725  | 1949  | 2004  | 1834  |
| Russia   | 420   | 540   | 491   | 549   | 719   | 822   | 654   |
| Share of total work permits issued in given year |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Ukraine  | 29.96 | 32.39 | 35.21 | 45.75 | 51.85 | 52.24 | 59.02 |
| Belarus  | 7.35  | 5.69  | 5.29  | 4.23  | 4.98  | 5.13  | 4.11  |
| Russia   | 2.33  | 1.84  | 1.34  | 1.35  | 1.84  | 2.10  | 1.47  |
| Total number of work permits issued              | 18022 | 29340 | 36622 | 40808 | 39144 | 39078 | 44583 |

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Poland.

### *Managing the Eastern Border: Small Border Traffic with Russia and Ukraine*

In 2013, the Polish-Ukrainian border was the busiest in terms of crossings, with roughly 16.7 million crossings (11% higher compared to 2012) followed by the Finland-Russian Federation border, with 12.9 million crossings (up 8%). The highest growth in traffic was reported at Poland's border with the Russian Federation's Kaliningrad region, where there was 52% growth, from roughly 4 million to 6 million

<sup>22</sup> All data here from [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration\\_and\\_migrant\\_population\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics).

<sup>23</sup> J. Konieczna-Sałamatin, *Imigracja do Polski w świetle danych urzędowych*, Instytut Społeczno-Ekonomicznych Ekspertyz, Instytut Socjologii UW, Warszawa, 2015, [www.i-see.org.pl/strona/uploads/ngrey/Documents/Raport\\_imigranci\\_rozdzialy/RI-2-Dane-urzedowe.pdf](http://www.i-see.org.pl/strona/uploads/ngrey/Documents/Raport_imigranci_rozdzialy/RI-2-Dane-urzedowe.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> Data for the first half of 2015 from [www.mpips.gov.pl/gfx/mpips/userfiles/\\_public/1\\_NOWA%20STRONA/rynek%20pracy/statystyka/Pierwsze%20polrocze%202015%20r..xls](http://www.mpips.gov.pl/gfx/mpips/userfiles/_public/1_NOWA%20STRONA/rynek%20pracy/statystyka/Pierwsze%20polrocze%202015%20r..xls).

border-crossings. The growth at this section of the border may be explained by an increase in the number of visas issued and especially the implementation of an SBT agreement in July 2012.

The number of border crossings by citizens of the Russian Federation with SBT permits increased from 27,000 in 2012 to 1.15 million in 2013.<sup>25</sup>

The same trends continued in 2014. According to Frontex, the Polish-Ukrainian border remained the busiest in terms of crossings and amounted to 25% of all crossings at the EU's eastern border, followed by the Finnish-Russian border (16%), Polish-Belarusian border (9%) and Polish-Russian and Lithuanian-Belarusian borders (9% each). There was a drop in traffic at EU Member States' borders with the Russian Federation, while at the borders with Ukraine the flows were still growing in 2014.

EU Member States are authorised to sign SBT agreements, with approval from the European Commission, with neighbouring non-EU countries. Under these agreements, local residents living within 30 km (or, in special cases, within 50 km) of their countries' boundaries can receive permission to cross the border and even remain in the other country's border area for social, cultural, family-related or warranted economic purposes.

Poland has so far signed three SBT agreements: with Ukraine (which took effect on 1 July 2009), the Russian Federation (in effect since 27 July 2012), and Belarus (in 2010, although Poland has been waiting to receive the ratification note).<sup>26</sup>

The legal arrangement for an SBT zone for the entire Kaliningrad region and nearby areas in Poland was a joint initiative of both countries. Poland and the EU agreed that the exclave's special status warranted transgressing the confines of EU Regulation (EC) No 1931/2006 of the European Parliament and Council of 20 December 2006, which set rules for SBT at the external land borders of the Member States, and amending provisions of the Schengen Agreement. The area included in the Kaliningrad-area SBT between Poland and Russia covers up to 2.8 million people, including 941,500 Russians and 1,900,000 Poles.

Within three years of the entry into force of the SBT, the consulate-general in Kaliningrad had issued over 280,000 documents permitting Russians visa-free entry to the north-eastern part of Poland. The consulate-general of the Russian Federation in Gdansk has not provided official statistics, but according to various SBT estimates it has issued permits to between 40,000 and 50,000 Poles.

The SBT agreement has had profound consequences for people-to-people contacts, local cooperation, commerce and tourism. One direct result of the SBT agreement is an increase in consumer trade in the border areas covered by the agreement.<sup>27</sup> A positive result of the introduction of the SBT is an increase in trade turnover in the parts of the Warmia and Mazury and Pomorskie voivodships covered by the agreement. The Kaliningrad Customs Service's tax refund system has registered more than 400,000 claims, amounting to around 335 million PLN, since the SBT agreement came into force. The average expenditure of tourists from Russia during a visit to Poland in 2014 was estimated to be nearly \$400. Despite the size limits, the SBT is the only tool currently available for shaping a positive image of Poland in Russian society, which holds a negative image of the country because of official Russian propaganda.

In the social dimension, the SBT has raised interest in Poland in the exclave's population. The biggest beneficiary proved to be Gdańsk (and more broadly, the Tri-Cities area), especially after Russians began noticing historical similarities between Gdańsk and their region's capital. Gdańsk inhabitants, likewise, have been taking an interest in Kaliningrad, even if to a somewhat lesser degree. Tourist information data indicate that the inflow of Russian visitors to Poland rose three and half times after July 2012 (the peak of the holiday season) and stayed at increased levels through winter. Moreover, there was a threat that after Russia's annexation of Crimea that bilateral cooperation between Poland and Russia in this regional dimension would deteriorate. Nevertheless, it seems in practice that, even when taking into account the small tensions and public discussions, this SBT is viewed as a successful project by both Poland and Russia.

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<sup>25</sup> *Eastern European Borders ... 2014, op. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> Reply by the Polish Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to MP question No 21819 concerning the consequences of the whole territory of the Kaliningrad/Królewiec region being covered by the agreement on small border traffic, <http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/IZ6.nsf/main/4D8F5EF0>.

<sup>27</sup> K. Dudzińska, A. Dwyer, "Small Border Traffic with Kaliningrad: Challenges, Opportunities, Threats," *PISM Policy Paper*, no. 29 (77), October 2013, [www.pism.pl/files/?id\\_plik=15094](http://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=15094).

Poland has also launched an SBT agreement with Ukraine. Such traffic at this border has been growing constantly since its entry into force in 2009. In 2010, it reached 3.6 million (48% of all border crossings), in 2011 it was 5 million, and in 2012 it was 6 million. In 2013, the Polish Border Guard Headquarters registered 7.5 million crossings of the Polish-Ukrainian border under the SBT agreement (an increase of 25.0% compared with 2012). This represented 51.7% of border crossings at this section by foreigners (in 2012 it was 48.0%).<sup>28</sup> The majority of applications for the Poland-Ukraine SBT permit are filed by Ukrainian residents who aim to travel to Poland to shop or for shuttle trade purposes. The historical developments in the Polish-Ukrainian border areas, with forced resettlement in 1947 of Ukrainians who had lived on the Polish side of the border, has resulted in a low proportion of claims of family reasons in the distribution of SBT holder priorities.<sup>29</sup> Most Ukrainians who obtain SBT permits make frequent use of them. In 2012, 74.6% of SBT passport holders were reportedly crossing the Polish border a few times a week, while 6% used their permits daily. Just 0.9% of SBT passport holders made use of the SBT document only a few times a year or less. The remaining 18.5% of Ukrainians holding the respective permits travelled to the Polish border area a few times a month.

Recent political signals, such as an announcement by Prime Minister of Ukraine Arseniy Yatsenyuk in January 2015 at a press conference following Ukraine-Poland intergovernmental consultations show that there is the political will to increase the number of people allowed to benefit from the SBT agreement to one million. This would increase people-to-people contacts across the border during the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, sending a signal to both communities and to other actors that Poland and Ukraine are willing to strengthen both political and social ties in this time of turmoil.

### *Is Migration from the Eastern Neighbourhood Countries a Preferred Option Due to Cultural Similarities?*

Poland itself has not yet fully developed a complex immigration policy, and administrative decisions usually are made reactively to cope with an ongoing situation. Nevertheless, it is possible to point to a number of longer-term policy trends. Most obvious is that although Poland remains a net emigration country, its status is changing and its transformation from a sending country to a mixed emigration-immigration country is becoming noticeable. One result is Poland's growing openness to immigrants—especially immigrants needed by the Polish economy—with the most noticeable policy shifts coming in the years 2009–2011. At the same time, according to the government's new migration strategy,<sup>30</sup> Warsaw intends to pay more attention to the issue of immigrant integration. This comes in response to fears about the negative impact of the mass emigration of Poles and the risk of a demographic crisis in the country's long-term socio-economic development.

Despite a recent flurry of legislation, Warsaw's new emphasis on immigration regulation and an immigrant integration policy has yet to significantly affect the types of migration flows typical for Poland. Immigration to the country is mainly temporary and circular in character—as opposed to settlement migration—with most migrants coming from nearby countries in the east, although increasingly also from other parts of the globe, most noticeably China and India. Indeed, many migrants from Eastern Europe and Asia still view Poland as a transit country or gateway to Western Europe, usually crossing the eastern Polish border from Ukraine or Belarus. As such, the government in Warsaw has for many years had to make immigration into Poland more difficult, largely to meet the requirements for its 2004 accession to the EU and its 2007 accession to the 22-member Schengen zone, the passport-free area largely covering most of the territory of the European Union.

Reflecting the temporary nature of most of the migration cases, the number of foreigners in Poland remains small in overall terms, constituting less than 0.3% of the entire resident population.<sup>31</sup> The largest groups of

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<sup>28</sup> [https://stat.gov.pl/download/gfx/.../pl/.../5466/8/2/1/ruch\\_graniczny\\_2013.pdf](https://stat.gov.pl/download/gfx/.../pl/.../5466/8/2/1/ruch_graniczny_2013.pdf).

See also: A. Yeliseyeu, *Keeping the Door Ajar: Local Border Traffic Regimes on the EU's Eastern Borders*, FFIA, 2014, [www.fiia.fi/en/publication/429/keeping\\_the\\_door\\_ajar](http://www.fiia.fi/en/publication/429/keeping_the_door_ajar).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>30</sup> K. Slany, A. Malek, *Integration of new female migrants in Polish labor market and society and policies affecting integration*, Working Paper No. 9 – WP4, December 2006.

<sup>31</sup> *Migration and migrant population statistics*, Eurostat, 2015, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration\\_and\\_migrant\\_population\\_statistics#Migrant\\_population](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics#Migrant_population).

these foreigners, or at least those with permission to stay, come mainly from neighbouring countries in the east, with immigrants from the countries of the former Soviet Union accounting for more than half of all foreigners in Poland.<sup>32</sup> The single largest group, constituting nearly one third of all foreigners, are Ukrainians, of whom 37,500 are legally resident in Poland. Russians are also well represented (12,500), though the majority of them are in fact ethnic Chechens who came to Poland in the wake of the second Chechen war as refugees. Belarusians (11,000) and Armenians (nearly 5,000) also are among the migrants who have come from the post-Soviet space.

Due to the recent events in eastern Ukraine, the importance of humanitarian migration has grown immensely. But the conflict is making itself felt primarily in the scale of recent Ukrainian labour immigration to Poland and in a substantial increase of almost 2,700% in Ukrainian citizens applying for asylum in Poland and other EU border states.<sup>33</sup> In more general terms, the EU noted in 2014 a 1,200% increase in asylum applications filed by citizens of Ukraine—from 1,055 in 2013 to 14,060 in 2014.<sup>34</sup>

By comparison, in 2013 only 46 asylum claims were made by Ukrainian citizens in Poland. In 2014, the total for the whole year reached 2,275, or almost a fifty-fold increase.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, although not as steep an increase, by the end of October 2014 a total of 707,166 visas had been issued to Ukrainians, compared to 720,125 for all of 2013. It seems the majority of Ukrainian migrants are thus aiming to earn money and return home. Although this trend may ease the burden on Poland's asylum system, it obviously hinders the integration of immigrant workers into Polish society. The issue is sharpened by the historical connections between Poland and Ukraine in terms of society and culture as well as geographic proximity, as compared to other migrants. This makes it easy for Ukrainians to dip in and out of life in Poland—a phenomenon that has both advantages and disadvantages from the perspective of the Polish government, which is increasingly interested in attracting more permanent migrants who can easily integrate into Polish society. The top priority for Poland is indeed repatriation of ethnic Poles living abroad, but permanent migration from Ukraine is viewed as more advantageous in this context than permanent settlement of migrants from more distant—geographically and culturally—parts of the world.

### *Social Welfare by Remittance: Solving Some Problems and Creating Others?*

According to the results of a recent survey, immigration from Russia to Poland is structurally different than that from Ukraine to Poland.<sup>36</sup> Of the Ukrainian newcomers, an overwhelming majority constitute classic labour migrants (this finding is supported by other data sources as well<sup>37</sup>), whilst the second most important category (family reunification) is of much less importance. In the case of Russian citizens, by contrast, the structure of incoming migrants is far more diverse and more evenly split, with about 20% of them coming to Poland for family reasons, 21% for work-related reasons and 20% for humanitarian reasons (the majority of those people are Chechen asylum seekers<sup>38</sup>). The number of Russian short-term labour migrants to Poland increased as well, from 491 in 2010 to 822 in 2013, but fell to 654 in 2014. However, the share of Russians in labour migration to Poland is not very impressive, as they represent only 1.47% of those who received a work permit in Poland in 2014, compared with more than 59% of Ukrainian citizens in the same category.

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<sup>32</sup> The second largest group of immigrants in the country are Vietnamese (13,500), and among the many nationalities represented there are also Chinese (over 5,000), Turks (2,700), Indians (2,600) and U.S. citizens (2,600) as well as South Koreans (1,800). See: [http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/WydBAS.nsf/0/B154060C37557E78C1257DCB004C62C3/\\$file/Infos\\_184.pdf](http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/WydBAS.nsf/0/B154060C37557E78C1257DCB004C62C3/$file/Infos_184.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> *Eastern European Borders ... 2015*, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>34</sup> Eurostat data from the table "Asylum and first-time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex, Annual aggregated data (rounded)."

<sup>35</sup> <http://udsc.gov.pl/statystyki/raporty-okresowe/zestawienia-roczne/>.

<sup>36</sup> M. Lesińska, "Corridor Report on Poland: the case of Ukrainian and Russian immigrants," [http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/34601/Interact\\_KF\\_2015\\_02.pdf?sequence=1](http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/34601/Interact_KF_2015_02.pdf?sequence=1).

<sup>37</sup> On 31 December 2013, the difference in the number of valid residence permits issued for citizens of Ukraine was 37,600 versus 12,600 for Russians. See also: [www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/publ/2532/](http://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/publ/2532/).

<sup>38</sup> In 2010, the number of Russian nationals declaring Chechen nationality granted international protection in Poland dropped abruptly compared to the previous year. While in 2009, Chechens obtained 101 positive decisions granting refugee status and 2,338 positive decisions granting subsidiary protection, one year later there were only 43 (less than half) positive refugee decisions and 222 subsidiary decisions (less than 10%). The sharp decline started in April 2009. See: [www.ceemr.uw.edu.pl/vol-1-no-1-december-2012/research-reports/recent-trends-international-migration-poland](http://www.ceemr.uw.edu.pl/vol-1-no-1-december-2012/research-reports/recent-trends-international-migration-poland).

According to various estimates, at present there are anywhere between 1.3 million and 3.25 million Ukrainian women working abroad, but almost 90% of them do so illegally, which may also explain the relatively low share of female Ukrainian applicants for work permits in Poland in recent years. In 2013, less than 44% of the work permits issued in Poland to Ukrainian citizens were issued to Ukrainian women. In 2014, this share fell to 39.1%, and in the first half of 2015, it dropped to 32%.<sup>39</sup> However, remittances sent by both legal and illegal Ukrainian labour migrants play an important part in propping up the precarious Ukrainian economy, with their contributions reaching \$9 billion in 2014, according to World Bank estimates—equivalent to 5.4% of the country's GDP and eclipsing foreign direct investment.<sup>40</sup> The majority of female migrants (35% of total migration) are of reproductive age (between 20 and 39 years old) but have husbands and children in Ukraine.<sup>41</sup> To put it bluntly: Ukrainian migrants left 200,000 children behind and sent home the largest amount of remittances in the region. As a result of significant out-migration, the phenomenon of “caretaker drain” is a serious concern. The elderly in Ukraine have traditionally been cared for by their families, as was the case across the former Soviet countries; institutionalising the aged simply was not done.<sup>42</sup>

The remittances sent by Ukrainian women are highly oriented towards social spending, with women positively contributing to Ukraine's development, social welfare and well-being. Generally, however, the share of female migrants from Ukraine has decreased over the last 20 years, and their patterns of mobility have been evolving. Ukrainian women willing to migrate commonly are now divorced or widowed. Nevertheless, they leave their children and families behind, and as a consequence nearly one quarter of all children (the majority of whom are adolescent) are raised by one parent. The care gap is thus felt keenly by both minors and the elderly, as children are left with aging grandparents who are often unable to take over caring for the children, the household and themselves.

Under Poland's immigration policy and in its attempt to provide legal channels for entry, the case of women migrating from the eastern neighbourhood continues to confound. The numbers show most of them do not try to legalise their entry, something which poses a challenge to Warsaw as it aims to focus more on the social and demographic aspects of migration. For prospective Ukrainian migrants, the entry procedure remains—even after recent amendments—still too long and laborious: migrants need to find an employer who wants to legally employ them, which is not an easy task, even taking into account amendments to Polish labour law that especially simplifies rules for those coming from Ukraine. In effect, in 2014, of Ukrainians who were issued a positive decision on a temporary residence permit there were 2,564 men and 3,553 women. The fact that more positive decisions are issued to women is caused by their easier access to legal and taxable work in Poland.<sup>43</sup>

## Conclusions

At a time of heightened East-West and South-North tension, demography and migration are becoming increasingly “weaponised”: population size, cross-border flows of people and services, and diaspora loyalties are all playing out in a battle of one-upmanship. This fundamentally challenges the post-Cold War framework for managing migration, as well as the humanitarian logic underpinning refugee law. For the EU, which has traditionally leveraged access to its Schengen Area and Member States' labour markets in return for political reforms across its eastern neighbourhood, the growing sensitivity within Ukrainian, Moldovan and Western Balkan societies towards demographic decline will challenge its existing model. So, too, does the imminent introduction of “smart border” schemes across the West, since these create a liberal visa model tailored to the individual rather than blanket visa rules that can be leveraged politically.

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<sup>39</sup> Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy data on work permits.

<sup>40</sup> L. Yanovich, “Children Left Behind: The Impact of Labor Migration in Moldova and Ukraine,” 23 January 2015, [www.migrationpolicy.org/article/children-left-behind-impact-labor-migration-moldova-and-ukraine](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/children-left-behind-impact-labor-migration-moldova-and-ukraine).

<sup>41</sup> A.V. Tolstokorova, “Gender Implications of Care Migration for the Operation of Care Diamond in Ukraine,” *International School for Equal Opportunities*, Kyiv, *Female Migration Outcomes II, Diversities*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2013, pp. 37–50.

<sup>42</sup> Z. Dąbrowska, “Migracja sfeminizowana: Ukrainki wyjeżdżają, żeby zarobić, a Polki, by lepiej żyć,” *Gazeta Prawna*, 22 March 2015, <http://serwis.gazetaprawna.pl/praca-i-kariera/artykuly/860539,migracja-sfeminizowana-ukrainki-wyjezdza-by-zarobic-a-polki-zeby-lepiej-zyc.html>.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*.

The use of smart border schemes, such as small border traffic in the case of Norway and Poland, was meant to facilitate people-to-people contacts and serve as a confidence- and understanding-building measure at the regional level in relations between EU insiders (Poland) and almost insiders (Norway) and non-EU and non-Schengen members. However, Russia's undermining of the whole post-Cold war system of cooperation in Europe has made some call for a revision of the approach to transborder cooperation with Russia. The growing tensions in relations between Russia and the West, combined with the economic crisis in Russia that has changed the transborder "terms of trade," have already contributed to reducing the scope of transborder cooperation in both cases, and there is therefore no immediate need to introduce any additional, formal measures to put an end to this form of cooperation, which still should serve its primary purpose.

As far as migration is concerned, it's time to "normalise" migration relations and prevent them from becoming so politically loaded. One basic lesson from recent years is that migration tends to be in the interests of both sending and receiving countries if immigrants are supported in their local integration (through language training and skills recognition) but also permitted easy scope to return to their countries of origin. Failure to achieve this balancing act, which requires close cooperation between sending and receiving countries, leads to otherwise mobile people becoming trapped in precarious situations—well-qualified workers take low-paid work in a high-wage economy and become de-skilled; migrant workers fall into irregular employment so they can continue to send remittances back to dependent family members; migrants worry that if they leave the labour market of a Western country they risk forfeiting their ability to return.


In addition, it is also important to efficiently address migration-related problems caused by conflicts in the immediate European neighbourhood that have pushed several hundred thousand desperate people on the move, challenging EU and national migration policies and governance, and contributing to not only politicisation but also to securitisation of the migration question in Europe.

It seems that neither Poland nor Norway has managed to create a balanced framework to address this complex set of migration-related challenges. Warsaw is trying to set greater emphasis on the social integration and regularisation of migrant workers, but its unwieldy rules and the proximity of its major sending countries work against this. Its informal migration relations in turn mean that many of its EU partners underestimate Poland's contribution to the management of refugee flows at a time when the question of migration-related burden-sharing is high on the EU agenda. Norway, meanwhile, is struggling to create the requisite flexibility in its welfare system to make it able to address a new set of challenges caused by greater internationalisation of the country's labour market. In 2012, it introduced greater nuance to its rules on family unity, updating them to include unmarried but cohabiting couples but also increasing the income-requirement level.<sup>44</sup> But it seems there is still much to do. Its success matters because Polish policy reflects both its status as a receiving country for countries such as Ukraine, and as a sending country to states such as Norway.

When addressing migration-related questions, policymakers at both the national and EU levels have to be aware of various possible domino effects that can change the framework conditions for policy formulation and implementation. In the case of Poland, this domino effect has already forced the Polish policymaking community to pay more attention not only to the question of Polish emigration but also to the question of how to address long-term problems caused by the outflow of migrants from Poland—and by the worsening demographic situation in the country—by embarking on a more active policy of making Poland more attractive to some groups of immigrants who are supposed to fill the demographic gaps. Norway may face another domino effect, namely the possible impact of the current economic crisis on the Norwegian debate on labour migration and the country's form of affiliation with the EU. In the case of the EU, the decisive question for the time being is its ability to address the immediate challenge of a massive inflow of migrants forced by outside circumstances, which has already undermined the credibility of the EU's border-and-migration management regime and may in the mid- and long-term perspectives deal a lethal blow to the whole European integration project, with unintended consequences for cooperation in Europe.

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<sup>44</sup> European Commission, "Country factsheet: Norway," European Migration Network report, 2012.



The GoodGov project explores how Poland and Norway can learn from each other in the crucial policy areas of security, energy and migration. This paper is one of three analyses devoted to the problem of migration and mobility in the European Union and the European Economic Area. It is one of the core issues in relations between sending countries, like Poland, and receiving countries, like Norway. The project is conducted by PISM in cooperation with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs and the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

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