

MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The migrant problem in OECD Member countries is now seen in terms of 'stocks' rather than flows, says the 1979 report of OECD's SOPEMI (1). Unless there is a change in policy, these stocks seem likely to remain at a constant and minimal level, with small variations above or below. (See table).

Apart from the refugees, whose numbers have increased appreciably in certain countries, national markets are thus being supplied mainly by internal "foreign" labour which has to a great extent offset the diminished flows from outside. The size of the

foreign population in and outside the labour force is continuing to increase in most host countries as a result of families being reunited and the birth of their children.

However, there are important differences between the two kinds of flow. The main feature of internal flows is the appearance on the labour market of wives and children of migrant workers already established in the host countries so that the foreign labour force tends to have more and more women and young people in it. It is also becoming more "diluted": it is moving into a greater number of industries and geographical areas.

This is in line with the changes taking place in the pattern of demand for workers, as manufacturing declines and services grow.

What exact role do these domestic "foreign" workers play in the labour markets of the more industrialised countries? The question is also relevant for certain traditional emigration countries, such as Italy, Greece or Spain, where the number of foreign workers is far from negligible. In Italy, for

(1) The initials for "Système d'Observation permanente des migrations" which in English is Continuous Reporting System on Migration.

FOREIGN WORKERS IN EIGHT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Thousands

Country of origin	Receiving country							
	AUSTRIA	BELGIUM	FRANCE	GERMANY	LUXEMBOURG	NETHERLANDS	SWEDEN	SWITZERLAND
Algeria	—	2.4	361.0	—	—	—	0.3	—
Austria	—	3.7	—	76.0	—	—	2.0	19.5
Finland	—	—	—	2.9	—	—	104.5	—
Greece	—	9.6	—	153.3	—	2.0	8.1	4.8
Italy	2.0	106.4	175.8	305.1	10.8	10.4	2.7	240.1
Morocco	—	22.2	181.4	—	—	31.0	0.6	—
Portugal	—	3.9	385.0	59.9	12.9	5.4	0.9	4.9
Spain	0.2	27.3	184.5	95.8	2.2	17.6	1.7	61.6
Tunisia	—	1.9	73.7	—	—	1.2	0.4	—
Turkey	26.2	17.0	36.3	540.5	—	45.1	4.5	16.7
Yugoslavia	121.1	3.0	43.1	380.2	0.6	8.1	24.6	26.2
Other EEC Countries	12.7	87.7	66.2	131.6	20.7	52.6	32.0	83.7
Non-EEC Countries	14.5	18.2	135.8	216.6	1.9	23.0	42.2	31.9
TOTAL	176.7	306.3	1,642.8	1,961.9	49.1	196.4	224.5	489.4
<i>Change 1974-1978</i>	<i>-18.9%</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>-17.8%</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>+20.2%</i>	<i>+12.3%</i>	<i>-17.5%</i>

Notes Where no figure is given the nationality in question is not identified separately.

Austria Figures based on number of current work permits.
Belgium The same figure as last year, based on the April 1977 census. Frontier workers not included.

France New estimates by the Interministerial Working Party which met in May 1979. The figures, however, represent the situation at October 1976. They refer to all the active population, i.e. unemployed and self-employed included.

Germany Foreign workers, including frontier workers, employed and unemployed in Germany at 30th June, 1978. The self-employed, which at the April 1978 microcensus were some 75,000, are not included. The figures for Austrians and Finns

are from Austrian and Finnish sources.

Luxembourg Figures from official sources for October 1977. Frontier workers included.

Netherlands As at 31st December, 1978. Figures for nationals of non EEC countries from the Ministry of Social Affairs; those for EEC countries, including Italy, are the correspondent's estimate. The unemployed are included, but not the self employed.

Sweden Figures for 31st December, 1978 based on Labour Force Survey. They refer to all the resident active population.

Switzerland Number of foreigners at 31st December, 1978 holding annual or established permits "with gainful activity". Seasonal and frontier workers are not included; in August 1978 there were 83,800 of the former and 89,400 of the latter.



example, there would appear to be on the order of 500,000 such workers.

As yet no accurate or representative data is available (2) to answer some important questions: Does the population of foreign origin constitute a source of "marginal" manpower? Are foreign workers more willing than others to take relatively insecure jobs in terms of length of employment and working conditions? Do the foreign workers help the economic and social system to get around the institutional constraints and employment rigidities and hence to meet the exigencies — and the uncertainties — of the economic situation?

Some of the SOPEMI correspondents have provided interesting, though fragmentary, information on this matter. For example, while the rate of unemployment for foreigners hardly differs from the overall

rate, their long-term unemployment rate seems to be lower than that of nationals in certain countries. A possible explanation is that unemployed foreigners may behave differently from nationals when seeking work; they may be less particular in their choice of job even though they have the same rights to income maintenance as nationals. In addition, for the majority of foreigners, leaving the labour force means, in practice, returning to their home country.

As to policy, the trend noted in previous years is becoming stronger: governments of countries which in the Sixties made considerable use of foreign workers, even on a temporary basis, are increasingly realising how much people of foreign origin can contribute to the economy both in the immediate future, given their labour market structure, and in the longer term, given their demographic

prospects. As a result governments are assailing with growing force their desire to hasten with integration of foreigners and their families.

Towards the end of 1978 for example the German government decided to appoint a commissioner for the integration of foreigners, giving him responsibility for strengthening co-operation between the various authorities and working with the home countries as well as inculcating in the local population an awareness of the problems faced by residents of foreign origin.

At the same time, governments take the position that efforts being made to promote integration must not impede voluntary return to the home country. And measures are in fact being taken by certain countries to facilitate the return. Preliminary surveys made in France to assess the results of such measures show that they are less an incentive than a supportive action: the availability of assistance does not bring about a decision to return when socio-economic influences in the home and host countries counter-indicate such a decision. On the other hand, such a decision can precipitate action on a decision that has already been taken in theory. This conclusion seems plausible: it has been observed that there is a connection with domestic geographical mobility.

Reports from national correspondents show that in a good many host countries increasing awareness of the problems involved in integrating foreigners has improved information about the problem itself. The paradox — that information on migrant workers is improving while migratory flows are decreasing — is only an apparent one. The organisation of flows is essentially an administrative matter while the establishment of structures for integration poses infinitely more complex political, economic and social questions and requires a resolutely "horizontal" approach.

It is interesting to note that there is more coordination between emigration countries and host countries in thinking about these matters over the past few years. In the Nordic countries for example there is a long standing tradition of joint research, encouraged by the existence of a common labour market. This example is worthy of emulation not only to improve factual knowledge, but also because co-operation in research is one way to initiate co-operation on policy, on actual operations and on promoting the multi-disciplinary approach now increasingly seen to be necessary. The SOPEMI can contribute to this process by disseminating information about such co-operative action.

(2) A survey on the employment of second generation migrants now being completed by OECD should further knowledge of this problem

CIVIL EMPLOYMENT BY SECTORS OF ACTIVITY

1979

<u>Country</u>	<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>Industry</u>	<u>Services</u>	<u>Total</u>
Germany	6.2	44.9	48.9	100.0
France	8.8	36.3	54.9	100.0
Italy	14.8	37.7	47.5	100.0
Netherlands	4.8	32.7	62.4	100.0
Belgium (1)	3.1	35.5	61.3	100.0
Luxembourg	6.1	44.7	49.2	100.0
United Kingdom	2.6	39.0	58.4	100.0
Ireland	21.0	31.9	47.1	100.0
Denmark	8.3	30.2	61.5	100.0
Greece	30.8	30.0	39.2	100.0
EEC 10	8.4	38.6	53.0	100.0
Spain	19.5	36.4	44.1	100.0
Portugal	30.6	35.0	34.4	100.0
USSR (2 (3)	21.2	38.3	40.6	100.0
United States	3.6	31.3	65.1	100.0
Japan	11.2	34.9	53.9	100.0

(1) Situation on 30.6.1979.

(2) 1978.

(3) Excluding persons exclusively occupied in private agricultural exploitation.

FOREIGN WORKERS

1979

Foreign workers in member countries of the Community according to nationality

<u>Country of origin</u>	<u>FR Germany</u>	<u>France</u>	<u>Italy</u>	<u>Netherlands</u>	<u>Belgium</u>
	1)	1) 2)	1) 2)	1)	1) 2)
FR Germany		24.400	8.955	13.094bc)	10.500
France	47.290		5.763	2.000b)	38.000
Italy	300.442	175.800		12.000b)	90.500
Netherlands	40.106	5.300	1.543		19.000
Belgium	9.424	21.200	771	17.245a)	
Luxembourg -	1.338	1.300	41	60b)	2.000
United Kingdom	30.898	12.400	6.305	10.000b)	9.500
Ireland	1.649	900	177	2.000b)	600
Denmark	3.269	700	360	180b)	700
Greece	140.139	4.000	983	226	10.250
EUR 10	574.555	246.000	24.898	57.000b)	181.050
Spain	89.992	184.500	2.286	1.085	30.750
Portugal	59.145	385.000	1.493	1.462	5.900
Turkey	540.471	36.300	384	11.987	21.000
Yugoslavia	367.301	43.100	4.354	1.605	2.900
Algeria	1.604	361.000	3.100
Marocco	16.214	181.400	..	6.297	35.000
Tunisia	10.000a)	73.700	..	215	4.500
Other non-member countries	274.369	131.800	25.623	15.595	37.250
Total of non-member countries	1.359.096	1.396.800	34.140	38.246d)	140.400
Grand Total	1.933.651	1.642.800	59.038	95.000	321.450

Foreign Workers (Contd/...)

Country of origin	Luxembourg	United Kingdom	Ireland	Denmark	Total
FR Germany	4.500	71.000r)	..	5.117	137.500
France	8.100	16.500	..	984	119.000
Italy	11.000	72.000r)	..	1.045	663.000
Netherlands	700	10.500r)	..	1.002	78.000
Belgium	7.500	7.500r)	..	181	64.000
Luxembourg		500	..	4	5.200
United Kingdom	300		..	5.582	75.000
Ireland	0	452.000r)	..	479	458.000
Denmark	100	2.000a)	..		7.300
Greece	0	10.000r)	12	395	166.000
EUR 10	32.200	642.000r)	12	14.789	1.773.000
Spain	2.200	37.000r)	73	671	349.000
Portugal	13.300	10.000a)	11	162	476.000
Turkey	..	3.000a)	8	8.149	621.000
Yougoslavia	600	4.000a)	5	4.759	429.000
Algeria	..	600a)	5	186	366.000
Marocco	..	2.000a)	17	1.155	242.000
Tunisia	..	200a)	3	107	89.000
Other non-member countries	2.100	966.205rb)	2.235	16.339	1.471.000
Total of non-member countries	18.200	1.023.005	2.357	31.528	4.043.000
Grand Total	50.400	1.665.005	2.369	46.317	5.816.000

Source: Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs, Commission of the European Communities