

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

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MAIN FINDINGS

- » Current immigration to Hungary has been shaped by the country's accession to the European Union in 2004 and the Citizenship Act that entered into force in 2011. The number of foreign-national immigrants has slightly decreased in recent years, however the number of foreign-born Hungarian immigrants has increased considerably since 2011. This latter group consists predominantly of naturalised Hungarian citizens from neighbouring countries who acquired citizenship via simplified naturalisation.
- » The diversification of immigrants by country of origin has been observed since Hungary's accession to the EU; the share of immigrants from the EU15, particularly from Germany, has increased and to a lesser extent those from Asia, too.
- » Compared to traditional Western European host countries, in Hungary both the number and rate of immigrants per thousand inhabitants is low; however in many East Central European countries (Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and the Baltic States) these are even lower.
- » The number of asylum seekers has increased substantially also in Hungary since 2013 (as in the EU as a whole), however less than 500 people have been granted refugee status or other form of international protection each year. The majority of asylum seekers consider Hungary a transit country and are heading towards Western Europe.
- » From 2011 – the introduction of simplified naturalisation – the number of naturalisations among foreign citizens residing in Hungary has increased significantly (from 6–8 thousand in previous years to 18–20 thousand), and among them the share of people from neighbouring countries reached 95–97%. Furthermore a large number of people with Hungarian ancestry living outside Hungary has also acquired Hungarian citizenship (nearly 550 thousand), which might have implications for future trends in immigration.
- » The number of foreign citizens residing in Hungary has slightly decreased in recent years, in 2014 it was approximately 140 thousand people (that is 1.4% of the total population). The share of people from the four neighbouring countries has fallen among them from 56–68% to 36% due the naturalisations. Meanwhile the proportion of foreign-born population residing in Hungary has been steadily increasing and it stood at

4.5% on January 1, 2014 (11.3% in the EU27). More than 70% of the foreign-born population are from neighbouring countries and two thirds have Hungarian citizenship.

» The increase in emigration and employment abroad started in 2007 and it accelerated from 2011. The United Kingdom has caught up with traditional destination countries – Germany and Austria – and a number of “new destination countries” have emerged too. The increase in emigration slowed in 2013.

» Although return migration is substantial, the number of Hungarian citizens residing in European countries has been steadily increasing. According to mirror statistics it stood around 330 thousand on January 1, 2014 (nearly three and a half times their

number in 2001): 38% in Germany, 23% in the United Kingdom, 14% in Austria. Among Hungarians residing abroad the share of men – especially in Germany – as well as younger age groups and graduates – primarily in the United Kingdom – is higher than in the total Hungarian population.

» Taking into account destination countries outside Europe, Hungarian citizens residing abroad (who left the country after 1989) represented approximately 3.5% of the population of Hungary at the beginning of 2013, and the Hungarian-born population represented 5%. These percentages are still below those of the main emigration countries in the region. However the rising trend of emigration and its growing intensity in younger age groups are increasingly turning Hungary into an emigration country.

INTRODUCTION

Immigration and emigration are topics which stand in the centre of interest and they are recurrent subjects of public and political discourse in Hungary. While immigration has come to the centre of attention due to the large number of asylum seekers arriving in Hungary, the rapid increase in the number of people leaving the country and the broad – and sometimes contradictory – estimates in absence of accurate data have put emigration in the focus of professional and public debates (and at the same time it has attracted an increased media attention).

The analysis of international migration is often faced with limitations in the comparability of data over time and across countries that arise on the one hand from the conceptual problems in defining migration, and from difficulties of measurement (recording) on the other. The variety and complexity of different forms of migration, as well as its reversible and repeatable nature – as opposed to fertility and mortality – make it difficult to identify and record migrants in a uniform way. Despite recommendations from the United Nations¹, there are substantial differences in the methods of data collection and the availability of data on migration across countries. Particularly, the measurement of emigration is difficult (for countries of origin), therefore a country of origin and a country of destination often have different data on migration between the two countries.

This chapter examines the major immigration and emigration trends in Hungary, the number and main characteristics of foreign nationals residing in the country as well as naturalised citizens, partly in a European comparison.²

IMMIGRATION

Immigration to Hungary over the past decade has been influenced by the country's accession to the EU in 2004 and related changes in regulations and legislation, as well the new Citizenship Act that entered into force in 2011. Looking back to the recent history of immigration, the first large wave started in the late 1980s – with approximately 37 thousand immigrants in 1990 – and dropped back by 1992. Following this, in the 1990s the number of *foreign-national immigrants*⁶ fluctuated at a lower level (13–16 thousand people per year) and later, around the turn of the millennium it again reached 20 thousand people per year (*Figure 1*). The period between the late 1980s and 1993 was characterised by the establishment of the institutional system and legal framework of migration that was consolidated by the turn of the millennium. The alignment of Hungarian migration legislation with the EU rules started in the early 2000s and resulted in a fundamental transformation of the legal and institutional system of migration. After accession to the EU immigration gained a new impetus: the number of registered immigrants was over 25 thousand in 2005 and – unlike in previous years – with a large share of arrivals (nearly eight thousand) from the EU15. Since then the number of foreign-national immigrants has been fluctuating between 20–25 thousand people per year apart from 2008 when the number was exceptionally high: more than 35 thousand people. However, this latter was mostly due to changes in legislation in the previous year. On July 1, 2007 a new Immigration Act entered into force that made it much easier for *EEA citizens*⁶ (and their family members) who

¹ According to the UN recommendation adopted in 1997 a (long-term) immigrant is a person who moves to a country other than that of their usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months).

² For international comparison mainly Eurostat data are used but any major differences with national statistics are clearly indicated.

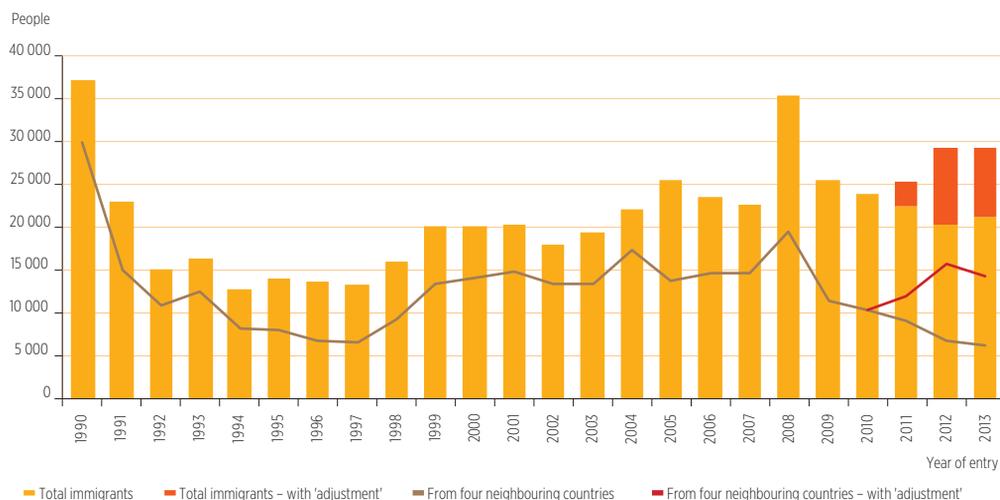
otherwise have the right of free movement and residence to obtain long-term residence (permanent address): only registration was required. In 2008 nearly 20 thousand people took advantage of this opportunity (whereas in 2007 less than seven thousand), then their numbers declined somewhat in the years that followed.³

The number of foreign immigrants declined steadily between 2009 and 2012. The economic recession might have contributed to this, however there was another key factor: since 2011 some of the immigrants arriving from neighbouring countries are no longer registered as foreign nationals but Hungarian citizens because they obtained Hungarian citizenship via simplified naturalisation in their country

of origin (see more on this later). If the number of people born in neighbouring countries and arriving as Hungarian citizens is added to the time series of foreign-national immigrants (“adjustment”) then the decline in immigration is reversed after 2011 (Figure 1). It is unclear whether the increase would have happened without the new Citizenship Act and if so, to what extent. It is possible that in many cases the acquisition of Hungarian citizenship led to the decision to settle in Hungary.⁴

Alongside foreign-national immigrants, *immigrants with Hungarian citizenship*⁶ have also been arriving in the country since the regime change, although in much smaller numbers: the number of Hungarians born in Hungary and returning after residence

Figure 1: Foreign citizens immigrating to Hungary and the share of arrivals from four neighbouring countries, 1990–2013



Source: HCSO, Demographic Yearbooks.

Note: The “adjustment” takes into account the number of Hungarian nationals arriving from the four neighbouring countries (Romania, Ukraine, Serbia and Slovakia) after the introduction of the simplified naturalisation.

³ There is no information on the length of stay of EEA nationals settling in Hungary in this way, however it is assumed that the registration of an address often doesn't involve actual permanent settlement.

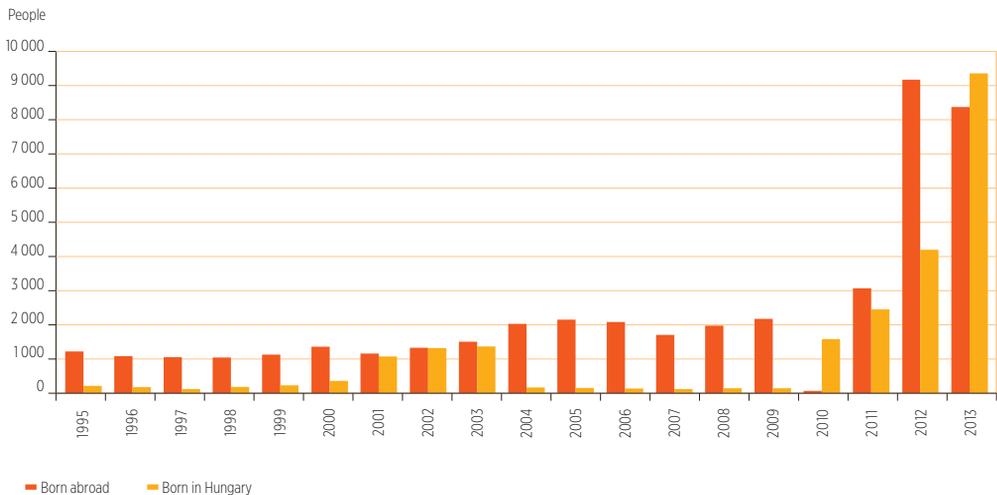
⁴ Similarly to EEA nationals “immigrating” to Hungary with a registration certificate, there is no information as to how many naturalised Hungarian citizens who register an address in Hungary actually settle in the country (and for how long and in what form).

abroad was minimal, and that of Hungarians born abroad was around a thousand people per year until the turn of the millennium (Figure 2). For a few years after 2000 the number of *returning Hungarians* officially registered also reached a thousand people per year, then after EU accession the number of registered returns (similarly to the registered leaves) dropped to a minimal level due to the free movement.⁵ With increasing emigration after 2010, the number of returns has also risen (see sub-chapter later); however, the main source of data is no longer the registration of addresses but the register of social security identification numbers (in HU: TAJ) that is more likely to reflect actual trends.

With EU accession there was also an increase in the immigration of *Hungarian citizens born abroad*: their number fluctuated

at around 2,000 people per year between 2004 and 2009 (Figure 2). The share of children born to Hungarian nationals abroad was very high in this group (for example in 2008–2009 80–85% were under the age of five), which suggests that people who had left the country – without notifying the authorities – and had children abroad registered them at addresses in Hungary. From 2010 (due to the change in the source of data) this form of “immigration” no longer appears in the data, therefore in 2010 the number of Hungarian immigrants born abroad dropped to 60 people. Since 2011 the majority of the growing number of foreign-born Hungarian-national immigrants has been made up by those who acquired Hungarian citizenship via the simplified naturalisation procedure and decided to settle in Hungary. Between 2011 and 2013

Figure 2: Hungarian citizens immigrating to Hungary by place of birth, 1995–2013



Source: HCSO, Demographic Yearbooks.

Note: Data up to 2009 are based on the Personal Data and Address Register of KEKKH (the Central Office for Administrative and Electronic Public Services) and from 2010 on the Social Security Identification Number (TAJ) register of OEP (National Health Insurance Fund of Hungary).

⁵ The number of Hungarian citizens returning from residence abroad was probably higher than this because only those registered their return who had previously notified the authorities of their move.

96–97% of Hungarian immigrants born abroad came from four neighbouring countries (represented as “adjustment” in *Figure 1*). Due to this new form of immigration 45.5% of people immigrating to Hungary in 2013 were Hungarian citizens but only 24% were born in Hungary.

WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

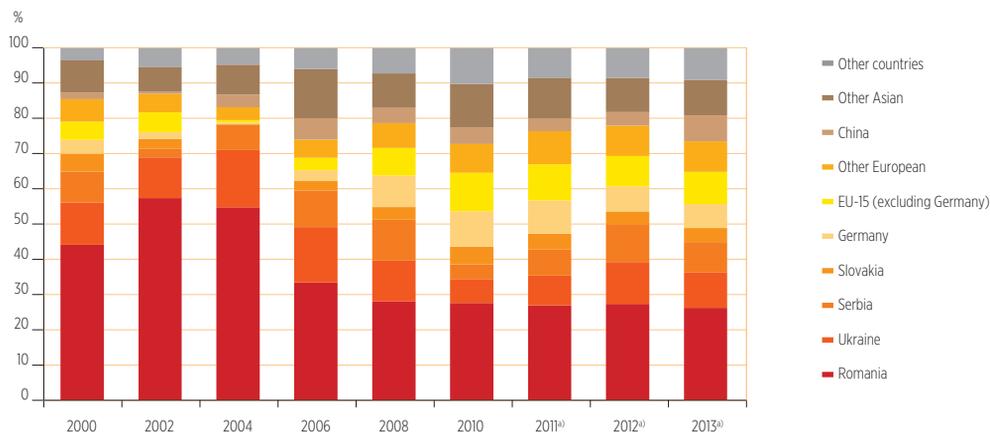
There was a change in the composition of immigrants by country of origin after Hungary’s accession to the EU: the share of arrivals from neighbouring countries (with the exception of Slovakia) steadily declined and that of people from the old EU Member States, particularly Germany, and Asia (mainly China) increased. Whereas in the early 2000s 70% of foreign-national immigrants came from Romania, Ukraine, Serbia or Slovakia, in 2013 only 29%. The share of immigrants from Romania fell from 57% in 2002 to 19% in 2013. In addition to increasing migration from Romania to Western Europe, the fact that some of the immigrants from neighbouring countries were no longer recorded as foreigners but

as naturalised Hungarian citizens after 2011 also contributed to this. If the number of immigrants in recent years is adjusted in line with this, it appears that the share of arrivals from Romania has been stagnating while the share of people from other neighbouring countries has increased slightly (*Figure 3*).

Since 2005 German citizens have made up nearly half of the arrivals from the old EU Member States; their share reached 10% of total immigration in 2009 but has fallen to seven per cent more recently. The number of immigrants from more distant countries has also been growing: in 2013 approximately 17% of immigrants came from Asia – mainly China (7%) – and nearly a tenth from other continents. Nonetheless the majority of immigrants originate from Europe; although their share has decreased slightly over recent years: whereas in the first half of the 2000s it was around 85%, in 2013 only 74%.

All in all, Hungary receives immigrants from all over the world, more than a hundred countries; however, the majority comes from only a few main countries of origin. Between 2001 and 2007 80–90%

Figure 3: Distribution of foreign citizens immigrating to Hungary by country of citizenship



Source: HCSO, Demographic Yearbooks.

^{a)} For 2011–2013 the number of immigrants includes the “adjustment” described previously.

of all immigrants came from the 10 main countries of origin, however by 2013 their share fell to 72%. This indicates the *diversification of immigrants by countries of origin*.

WHO ARE THEY AND WHERE DO THEY ARRIVE?

There have been no major changes in the *demographic composition* of foreign-national immigrants to Hungary over recent years. The slight overrepresentation of males (between 52–59%) observed in the 2000s still characterised immigration in 2013, however there are sizeable differences according to country of origin. The share of males was particularly high among Romanian, Serbian and Italian nationals (67–70%), meanwhile among Russian, Polish and Slovak nationals, females represented the majority (55–68%). Men were also slightly overrepresented (53–55%) among immigrants arriving as Hungarian citizens from neighbouring countries. However, the share of males and females was generally balanced among immigrants from Asia.

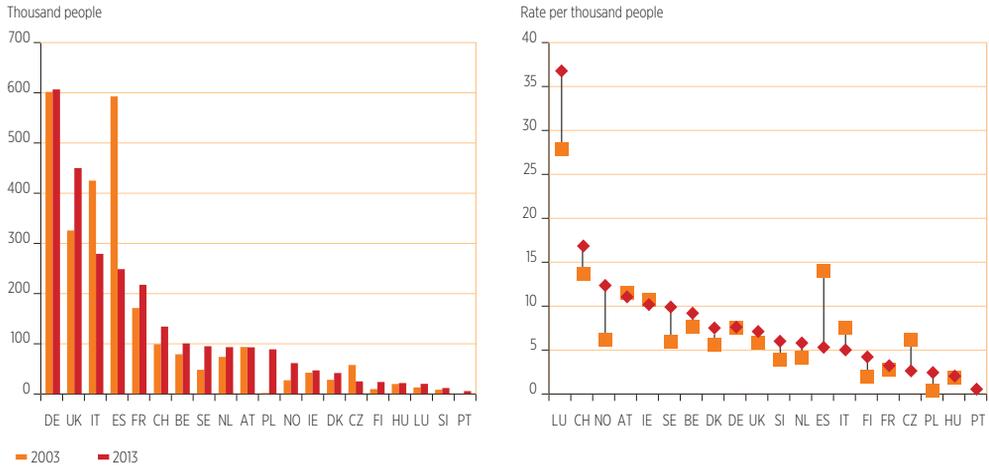
Immigrants are still characterised by a *younger age composition*, more than half of them are aged between 20 and 39 years. Although since EU accession the number of older, retired immigrants from the old Member States (mainly Austrian, German and Dutch nationals) has also been increasing, the largest share (between 30–40%) was represented by 20–29-year-olds for both sexes. In 2013 nearly a fifth of immigrants from the EU15 were aged over 60 years, among immigrants from Asia this was only two per cent. Hungarian citizens immigrating from neighbouring countries also tend to be older than the average, with a higher share of over-40 age groups.

The spatial distribution of immigrants is heavily concentrated: between 1990 and 2013 44% settled in Budapest and a further 11% in Pest County. The share of immigrants settling in the Southern Great Plain region was relatively high (13%), meanwhile it was minimal (3–5%) in the economically disadvantaged Northern Hungary region. After 2008 – due to immigration from the old EU Member States – the number of people who arrived in Southern and Western Transdanubia regions also increased. The territorial preferences of immigrants differ considerably according to country of origin. Asian immigrants are most likely to head for the capital: in 2013 89% of newly arrived Chinese nationals settled in Budapest. The region of Central Hungary is also the main destination for Romanian citizens, meanwhile immigrants from other neighbouring countries also show a preference for counties that border their countries of origin. This tendency is even more marked among Hungarian citizens immigrating after 2011 who are less likely to settle in Budapest (22% as opposed to 33–38% of foreign-national immigrants).

INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

Immigration to Hungary is still modest in European comparison: both the number of immigrants and immigration per 1,000 population remain well below those in most Western European countries (*Figure 4*). Particularly, countries in a better economic situation, with a colonial past, or those that had guest worker programmes in the 1960s continue to receive high numbers of immigrants nowadays, as well as Italy and Spain that also became major destinations for Eastern European migrants in the 2000s.

Figure 4: Number of foreign citizens immigrating and crude immigration rate in European countries, 2003, 2013

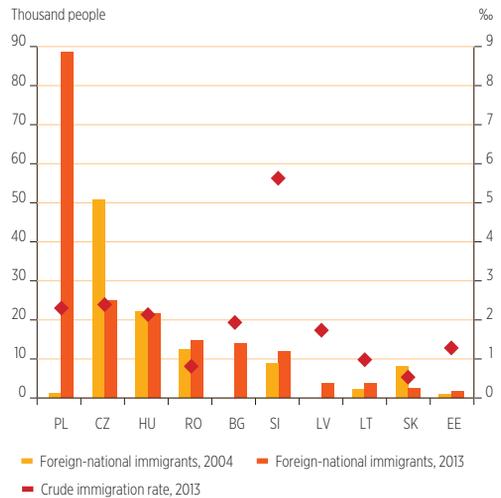


Source: Eurostat database (updated on May 25, 2015); author's calculation.

Note: France: data from 2006 used for 2003; Portugal: immigration data not available before 2008; Germany: according to national statistics there were 1108 thousand foreign immigrants in 2013 (as opposed to 606.8 thousand according to Eurostat); Austria: registered 135.2 thousand immigrants (as opposed to 92.6 thousand by Eurostat); Hungary: the number of *foreign-national immigrants* is used (without "adjustment").

Out of the new EU Member States Poland (from 2009) and the Czech Republic (from 2002) have the highest number of immigrants, meanwhile the *crude immigration rate*⁶ (the number of immigrants related to the size of population in the destination country) is highest in Slovenia (Figure 5). The latter indicator has been fluctuating between 1.8 and 2.6 in Hungary since 2000 (with the exception of 2008 when it reached 3.5 per thousand); if the number of Hungarian-national immigrants from neighbouring countries are also taken into account it was around three per thousand in 2012–2013. Meanwhile, in the majority of Western European countries this rate is over five or in some cases over 10 per thousand. In Luxembourg the volume of immigration is similar to that of Hungary, however it means a very high rate due to the small size of the population.

Figure 5: Number of foreign citizens immigrating and crude immigration rate in countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2013



Source: Eurostat database (updated on May 25, 2015); author's calculation.

Note: Bulgaria and Romania: data from 2008 used for 2004. Latvia: foreign-nationals' immigration data not available before 2011.

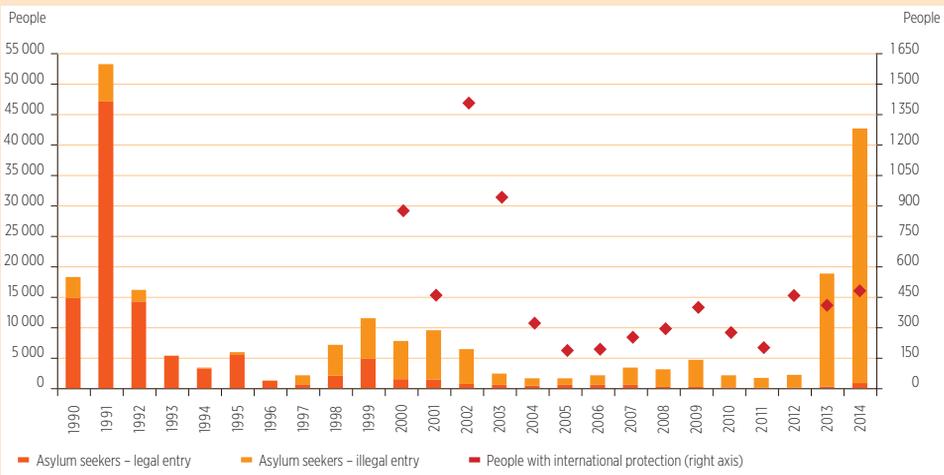
ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Hungary ratified the 1951 UN Geneva Convention on Refugees in the spring of 1989⁶ – due to the wave of refugees from Transylvania, the Office of Refugee Affairs (Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs from 1993, then reorganized as Office of Immigration and Nationality since 2000) was established, and the refugee law also entered into force in October. In the 25 years since then (between 1990 and 2014) nearly 235 thousand asylum applications have been submitted to the Hungarian authorities, a fourth of these in the last two years.

Changes in the number and composition of *asylum seekers*⁶ by country of origin reflect the different waves of refugees set off by a range of political and economic crises as well as wars. The last wave

of refugees from Transylvania arrived in 1990, and already from 1991 tens of thousands were forced to flee the former Yugoslavia due to the war – initially Hungarians but later a large number of Croats and Bosnians crossed the border, many of them illegally. Towards the end of the decade the number of asylum seekers started to increase again as a result of the war in Kosovo, then mainly the Roma and Albanians arrived in Hungary. However, around this time refugees also started to arrive from outside Europe. At the beginning of the 2000s, the majority of asylum seekers were from Afghanistan, Iraq and Bangladesh, and more than 80% of them entered the country illegally; with the help of people smugglers or walking across the border. Their number fell in the mid-2000s but started to increase again from 2007. By 2008–2009 refugees from the Republic of Kosovo represented the

Asylum seekers by mode of entry and people granted international protection in Hungary, 1990–2014



Source: 1990–1999: Office of Immigration and Nationality; From 2000: STADAT tables, HCSCO.

⁶ The Convention was originally ratified with a reservation on the exclusion of refugees from territories outside Europe, this geographical restriction was lifted in 1997.

largest group, however the number of refugees from Afghanistan remained high and between 2010 and 2012 they were at the top of the ranking.

The number of asylum seekers – with the majority (98.4%) arriving illegally – soared in 2013: 18,900 claims were submitted, a third by Kosovars but there were also large numbers of refugees from Pakistan (16%), Afghanistan (12%), Algeria (6%) and Syria (5%), and also there were hundreds of people from different African countries (Morocco, Nigeria, Tunisia, Somalia). The fact that asylum seekers could not be detained during the first half of the year (because *alien policing detention* was stopped) probably contributed to the large increase; two thirds of the claims were submitted during this period. In the second half of the year, after the introduction of *refugee detention* the number of claims decreased. However, in 2014 there was a significant increase again: nearly 43 thousand asylum seekers were registered, 50% from Kosovo, 21% from Afghanistan and 16% from Syria.

While more and more people are leaving Kosovo because of the dire economic situation and high unemployment, those from Afghanistan and Syria are fleeing because of the insecure political situation and civil war. The increase in the number of asylum seekers in recent years is not only a Hungarian issue but it is a global phenomenon.

Between 2000 and 2014 more than 110 thousand asylum applications were submitted in Hungary, however only a fraction of these – 7,200 people in total – were granted international protection: just over two thousand people were granted *refugee*⁶ status, 1,200 people received *subsidiary protection*⁶, and nearly four thousand were granted *tolerated status*⁶. The majority of claimants (70%) consider Hungary a transit country and moves on to the West before a decision is made on their application. However, according to current legislation the Member State where the asylum claim is first submitted is responsible for the case, therefore it is likely that many of these asylum seekers will be returned to Hungary.

NATURALISATION AS A HUNGARIAN CITIZEN

From the entry into force of the Citizenship Act in 1993 until the end of 2013 more than 183 thousand immigrants in total acquired Hungarian citizenship, 26% in the last three years. Considering the whole period, 90% of new citizens came from four neighbouring countries, the majority (69%) from Romania and were ethnic Hungarians. People from outside Europe represent 1–4% of naturalised citizens each year.

The new Citizenship Act that entered into force on January 1, 2011 introduced the *simplified naturalisation procedure* that allows foreign nationals of Hungarian origin

living in Hungary to acquire Hungarian citizenship irrespective of the duration of their residence in the country. As a result the number of naturalisations increased steeply since 2011, and the share of people from neighbouring countries among them reached 95–97% (*Figure 6*).

However, the simplified naturalisation also allows Hungarians (those with Hungarian ancestry) residing outside Hungary to acquire Hungarian citizenship. Between January 2011 and September 2013 more than 500 thousand people (from nearly 100 countries) applied for Hungarian citizenship under these criteria (66% were Romanian, 18% Serbian, 13% Ukrainian citizens) and more than 430

Figure 6: Foreign citizens naturalised in Hungary and the number of people from neighbouring countries, 1993–2013



Source: HCSO, Demographic Yearbooks.

thousand people made the oath of citizenship (in Hungary or abroad). This latter number reached 500 thousand in December 2013 and 670 thousand by February 2015. This makes it more difficult to estimate emigration from Hungary on the basis of mirror statistics: since 2011 immigrants with Hungarian citizenship can arrive not only from Hungary but also from neighbouring countries in the different countries of destination. Therefore in addition to citizenship, it is also necessary to have information about the country of birth and the last country of residency before migration for the estimation.

Foreign citizens naturalised in Hungary differed from immigrants in that the share of females was slightly higher, around 55% in the 2000s, however this dropped to 47% by 2013. They are much younger than the host population: while nearly one fourth of the total population was aged over 60 in 2013, among naturalised citizens this fluctuated around 10% over recent years. Due to their

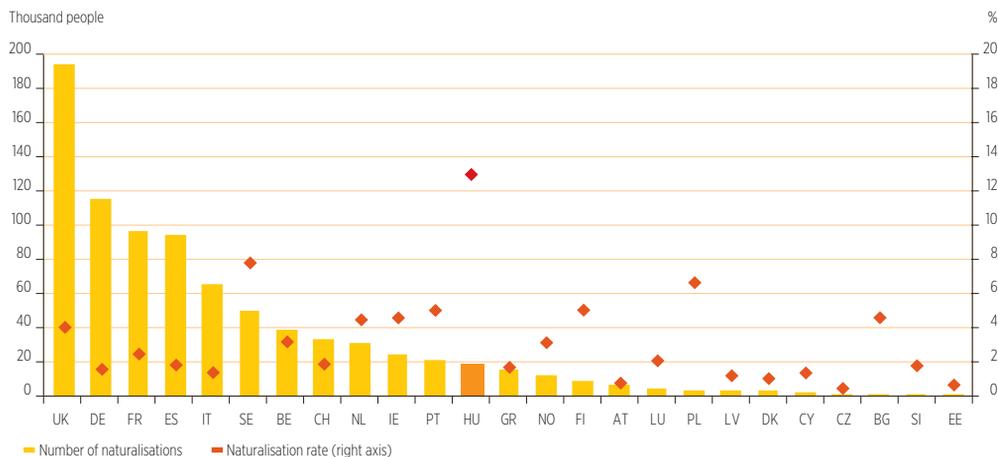
younger age composition the share of unmarried people is higher and the share of graduates is much higher than in the Hungarian population as a whole. The latter (although to a lesser extent) also applies to older age groups.

Despite the increase the number of naturalisations in Hungary was still moderate in European comparison in 2012. However, in terms of the *naturalisation rate*⁶ Hungary was top of the ranking: those who acquired Hungarian citizenship represented 12.9% of the foreign population residing in the country at the beginning of the year. This rate was under three per cent in the EU27 and under six per cent in the majority of countries – with the exception of Sweden and Poland (*Figure 7*). Another important difference is that only 19% of naturalised citizens were from a third country⁷ in Hungary in 2012, compared to 87% in the EU27.

Naturalisation rates also reflect differences in the naturalisation policies of

⁷ Within the EU third country nationals are those who are not citizens of another EU Member State, or Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland.

Figure 7: Foreigners having acquired citizenship and naturalisation rate in European countries, 2012



Source: Eurostat database (updated on December 16, 2014); author's calculation.

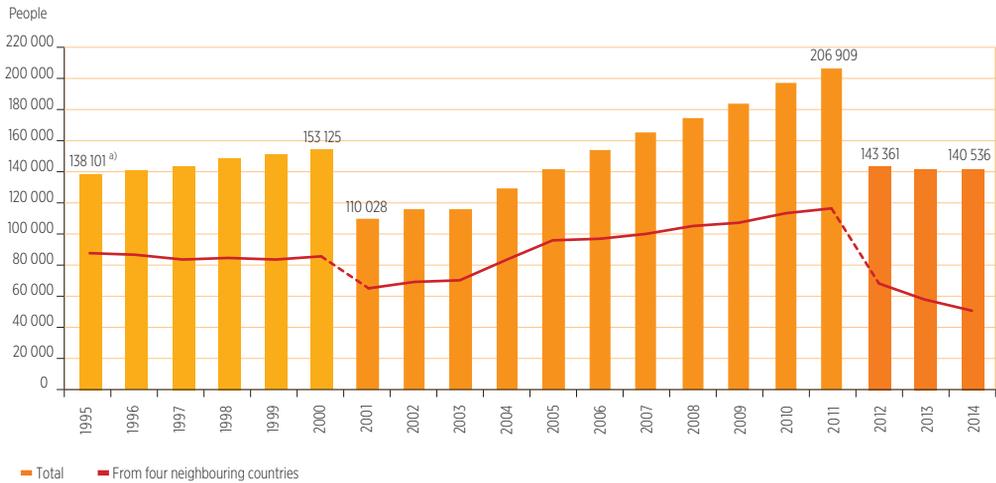
Note: For Hungary the figure indicates the number of naturalised citizens residing in Hungary.

countries, and comparison is made more difficult by variations in legislation as well as by conditions of naturalisation, and the fact that not all foreign residents in the country are eligible to apply for citizenship in any given year. The conditions of naturalisation in Hungary can be considered strict in international comparison, however the application of the “right of blood” (i.e. taking into account Hungarian ancestry) creates easier conditions for a sizeable group of immigrants (for example shorter residency requirement). This was further enhanced by the introduction of the simplified naturalisation that made it possible for ethnic Hungarians to apply for Hungarian citizenship without any of the previous requirements (i.e. duration of residency and proof of self-sufficiency, and even without residing in Hungary). As a result, the rate of naturalisation was high in European comparison in 2011 and 2012, and people from neighbouring countries represented a large group among naturalised citizens.

FOREIGN POPULATION RESIDING IN HUNGARY

The number of *foreign citizens residing in the country*⁶ is determined by immigration and emigration, natural increase or decrease, as well as the number of naturalisations. Because the *emigrating foreign citizens*⁶ also include those whose residence permits have not been extended or have been withdrawn, this somewhat increases the accuracy of the data but emigration is still underestimated even in this group. As a result, the time series of foreign citizens residing in Hungary – that showed a slight increase between 1995 and 2000 and then a more marked rise between 2001 and 2011 – was adjusted twice (Figure 8). The decline in 2001 was due to administrative reasons: from January 1, 2001 foreigners without a valid residence permit were removed from the database; and 2012 data was adjusted by the Population Census on October 1, 2011. According to this, on January 1, 2012 there were approximately 143 thousand

Figure 8: Foreign citizens residing in Hungary and the number of people from four neighbouring countries, 1995–2014 (January 1)



Source: HCSO, Demographic Yearbooks, ^{a)} Data from April 1, 1995.

Note: The registration system of the Office of Immigration and Nationality (Bevándorlási és Állampolgársági Hivatal) (BÁH) changed in 1995, therefore previous data are not comparable. From 2012 data also include refugees and persons under humanitarian protection.

foreign citizens residing in Hungary long term, which represented 1.4% of the total population; since then their number has decreased by nearly 3,000 people (to what the high number of naturalisations have also contributed). Of foreign citizens the share of people from the four neighbouring countries fluctuated between 56–68% in the 2000s, however – due to naturalisations – it declined considerably (to 48%) by 2012 and it continued to fall until 2014 (to 36%). German (13%) and Chinese citizens (9%) also represent sizeable groups within the foreign population.

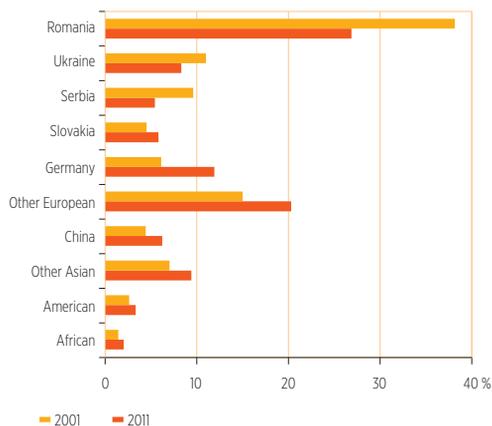
According to the 2011 Population Census – that registered foreigners who had been residing in Hungary for at least 12 months or were intending to live in the country for at least a year – there were 143,197 foreign nationals residing in the country, and 88,906 people with dual (Hungarian and other) citizenship.⁸ Seventy-nine per

cent of foreign nationals and 84% of dual citizens were from Europe; 46% and 59% respectively from neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, five per cent of foreign nationals were born in Hungary (as children of foreign parents), therefore cannot be considered immigrants.

Changes in the composition of foreign nationals residing in Hungary by *country of origin* between the previous two population censuses illustrate the developments related to immigration and naturalisation presented earlier. The share of foreign nationals from neighbouring countries – with the exception of Slovakia – declined (*Figure 9*) because fewer people were arriving as foreign nationals and many of those already residing here acquired Hungarian citizenship. Meanwhile the share of people from other European countries – primarily Germany – increased substantially, and to a lesser extent those from Asian countries (mainly China) as well.

⁸ The 2001 Population Census – that recorded foreigners residing in the country for more than three months – registered 93,000 foreign nationals and 17,600 people with dual citizenship.

Figure 9: Foreign citizens residing in Hungary by country of citizenship, 2001 and 2011



Source: HCSO, Population Census 2001, 2011.

The *foreign-born population* is nearly three times the size of the population of foreign nationals: the 2001 Population Census recorded 283,951 people born outside Hungary that represented 2.8% of the total population; by 2011 their number reached 383,236, a share of nearly 4%. Within this group the share of people born in the neighbouring countries is higher (72%) than among foreign nationals. Nearly two thirds (65%) of the foreign-born population are Hungarian citizens.

According to the Population Census there is a *gender balance* among foreign nationals, however migration statistics show a male majority of 53% in 2010–2011 and 56% in 2012. For some nationalities (Ukrainian, Russian, Polish and Slovak) both sources indicate a very high proportion of women (59–66%). Distribution by age groups reveals a *young age composition*: 41% are aged 20–39 years as opposed to 28% of the total population, meanwhile the share of over-60s is lower (16%) than in the total population (24%). The proportion of younger people is higher among Romanian, Slovak and African nationals, while the share of older people (over 60) is particularly

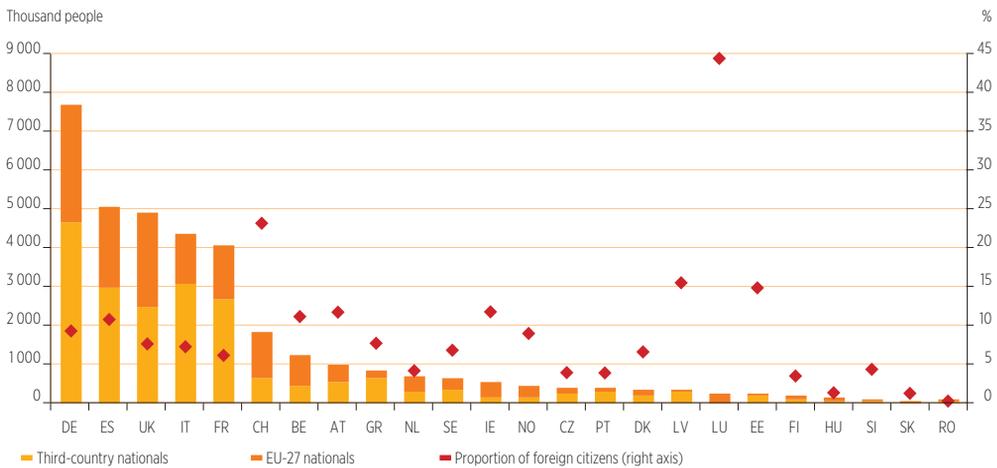
high among Austrian and German citizens (33–34%). The age composition of foreign nationals residing in the capital is particularly young: 46% are aged between 20 and 30 years and only 12% are over 60. The foreign-born population is much older: only 5% are aged under 15 (as opposed to 11% of foreign nationals and 15% of the total population) but 31% are aged over 60 years, and there is a slight majority of women (55%).

The Population Census shows that the *level of education* is higher in the foreign population than among Hungarian nationals: while 19% of the total population aged 25 or over had a higher education degree in 2011, this was 28% in the same age group among foreign nationals. The share of graduates was particularly high among Slovak and EU15 nationals, as well as among those from American and African countries.

Hungary is one of the few countries (alongside Luxembourg, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland) within the EU where the *employment* of foreign nationals is higher than that of the host population. According to the labour force survey the *employment rate* of Hungarian nationals in 2013 was 63% in the 20–64 age group, meanwhile it was 65% among foreign nationals (within this the employment rate of EU nationals was slightly higher at 66%, and that of third country nationals somewhat lower at 63%). However, by gender the picture is very different: while the employment rate of foreign men (83%) was much higher than that of their Hungarian counterparts (70%), the employment of foreign women (48%) was well below it (57%).

An important indicator is the *rate of foreign nationals per thousand population* that increased from 9.1 to 14.4 per thousand between the two population censuses. The rise was greatest in Budapest and Pest county, as well as in settlements along the borders and around Lake Balaton. The latter is preferred by older

Figure 10: Number of foreign citizens and their proportion in host population in European countries, 2013



Source: Eurostat database (updated on April 23, 2015); author's calculation.

(retired) Western European foreigners. The share of foreigners – mainly Serbian citizens – remained the second highest in the Southern Great Plain (Csongrád County), after Central Hungary. The share of foreign nationals in towns and villages was less than a third of that in Budapest (33 per thousand). In 2011 half of the foreign nationals residing in the country lived in five settlements and their concentration in “wealthier” settlements increased more than in the total population (Kincses 2014).

Nonetheless, both the number and share of foreign nationals within the total population in Hungary is below that in most European countries (Figure 10). In 2013 nearly 7% of the population in the EU27 was a citizen of another country (4.1% were third country nationals and 2.7% were citizens of another EU Member State). In most Member States the majority of foreigners are third country nationals, however in Hungary they make up just over 40% of the foreign population. The share of foreign-born population is also much higher in Western European countries: they represented more

than a tenth (11.3%) of the EU27 population in 2013, while only 4.3% of the population of Hungary.

EMIGRATION OF HUNGARIAN NATIONALS

Trends in emigration have undergone major changes only in recent years in Hungary. The regime change – although it lifted the previous barriers to emigration⁹ (the political control of migration ended and borders became permeable) – resulted only in a minor increase in the number of emigrants and many of those who left returned later. The large decline in employment and the employment rate stagnating at a low level for years did not result in a substantial increase in emigration. According to experts this was partly due to the relatively high levels of welfare assistance in Hungary in regional comparison, although the low levels of foreign language skills in the population also could have acted as a barrier to migration.

⁹ The introduction of the right to a passport and freedom to travel abroad in 1988 can already be seen as steps in this direction.

The next milestone was the enlargement of the EU in 2004 that widened the opportunities of labour migration by gradually opening up the labour markets¹⁰ of old Member States (and EEA countries) to citizens from new Member States, including Hungary. Naturally, actual opportunities were shaped by labour demand, linguistic relationships and personal networks from previous migration flows in the destination countries. However, after EU accession Hungary did not see an upturn of emigration and labour migration similar to other new Member States (outflow was lower only from the Czech Republic and Slovenia).

This started to change towards the end of the 2000s: since 2007 both the Hungarian Labour Force Survey¹¹ and mirror statistics in host countries show an increase in the number of Hungarians taking up employment abroad or emigrating. Various factors contributed to this – “delayed” compared with other countries in the region – increase. On the one hand Hungary had been characterised by worsening economic and labour market trends already in the years prior to the 2008 crisis that deteriorated further as a result of the crisis (employment fell, unemployment increased). On the other hand there was an increasing demand for East Central European labour force in the main destination countries for migrants. This trend accelerated when Germany and Austria – traditional destinations for

Hungarian migrants – fully opened their labour markets to citizens of EU8 countries¹² in 2011. The absence of economic growth and a fall in real wages also contributed to this, alongside the difficulties faced by young people when entering the labour market and the reform of the higher education system in Hungary. In 2012 youth unemployment was very high in European comparison (28% among 15–24 year olds) and 50% of young people aged 18–29 experienced serious material deprivation (according to a survey by Eurofund¹³). The resulting uncertainty and a negative vision of the future have contributed to an increase in the number of young people considering migration. In 2013 one third of 18–40 year olds considered employment abroad for any length of time or emigration, and more than 12% were “serious” planners¹⁴ that represented 370 thousand people in this age group. The widening opportunities to study abroad and more widespread knowledge of foreign languages also contributed to the increase in migration intentions among young people.

Changes in emigration observed in mirror statistics are only “vaguely” reflected in national emigration statistics – as it is generally the case for countries of origin. Although people moving abroad from Hungary are required to report this to the authorities¹⁵, this does not happen in the majority of cases. As a result the number

¹⁰ The United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden opened their labour markets immediately, then Finland, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Portugal and Spain in 2006, Netherlands and Luxembourg in 2007, France in 2008, and Belgium, Denmark and Norway in 2009. Germany, Austria and Switzerland used the full transitional period of seven years and lifted the restrictions only in May 2011.

¹¹ According to Hungarian LFS data the number of Hungarian citizens who were working abroad (and were part of a household in Hungary) was still under 30 thousand in 2007, however it averaged 51.4 thousand in 2010, 62 thousand in 2011, 82.3 thousand in 2012, 98 thousand in 2013 and 100.5 thousand in 2014.

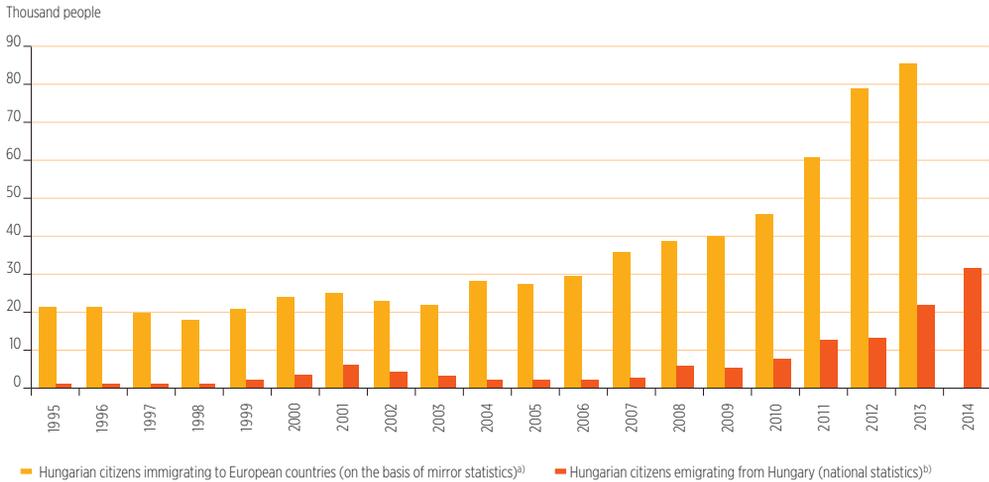
¹² Certain groups of workers from the EU8 countries (the accession countries of 2004 namely the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia) who were highly qualified or had specialist vocational skills had been exempt from these restrictions for some time.

¹³ *European Quality of Life Survey*.

¹⁴ *Survey Migration plans among the 18–40 year olds in Hungary* (HDRI).

¹⁵ As of March 1 2013 only permanent settlement abroad must be registered at any district office or consulate (previously this provision also applied to temporary residence abroad that exceeded three months). The law does not define a duration for permanent settlement, it is left to the intentions of the citizen. Any employment abroad longer than three months must still be reported to the social security and tax authorities.

Figure 11: Emigration from Hungary and immigration of Hungarian citizens to other European countries (flow), 1995–2013(2014)



Source: ^{a)} Eurostat database (updated on May 25, 2015), with additional German (DESTATIS) and Austrian (Statistik Austria) data from 2009; author's calculation; ^{b)} HCSO, Demographic Yearbooks. (until 2009 based on Personal Data and Address Register of KEKKH and from 2010 on the Social Security Identification Number (TAJ) register of the National Health Insurance Fund of Hungary).

Note: No data available for the United Kingdom from 2006 and for France from 2000.

of *emigrating Hungarian citizens*⁶ in the official national statistics is well below that reported by mirror statistics (*Figure 11*), although the increase in the number of registrations in recent years also signals the growing trend of emigration. However, the 31.5 thousand emigrants registered last year do not necessarily reflect the true number of people who left the country during the course of the year but only the number of those who de-registered themselves from the National Health Insurance Fund (the prospect of sanctions might have also contributed to this).

The total number from mirror statistics – which shows that more than 85 thousand Hungarian citizens migrated to European countries in 2013 – is only a lower estimate for emigration. On the one hand, Hungarian citizens could have moved to

countries outside Europe¹⁶ – although this has probably been less and less common since 2004, and on the other hand the total does not include data from the United Kingdom that has become an increasingly important destination since 2006. However, data from other countries (Ireland, Austria) also indicate that the number of workers is higher than the number of immigrants in the statistics.

In the United Kingdom – despite the incomplete mirror statistics – approximately 55 thousand Hungarian nationals were registered in the Workers Registration Scheme and around 80 thousand people were issued a National Insurance Number (NINo) between 2004 and 2011, and a further 66 thousand by March 2014. The number of Hungarian emigrants to Ireland was below seven thousand between 2004 and

¹⁶ According to OECD estimates the number of immigrants from Hungary to OECD member countries (that also include some countries outside Europe) was 37 thousand in 2007, 43 thousand in 2009, 68 thousand in 2011 and it reached 87 thousand in 2012 (OECD 2014).

Figure 12: Hungarian citizens registered in different statistics in the United Kingdom and Ireland (flow), 2004–2013



Source: Department for Work and Pensions (UK); Department of Social and Family Affairs (Ireland).

Note: The United Kingdom’s Workers Registration Scheme for EU8 nationals ended on May 1, 2011.

2012, however approximately 26 thousand people were issued a Personal Public Service Number (PPS) that foreign workers were required to obtain. After 2008 the number of Hungarian workers fell considerably in Ireland that was worse affected by the recession, however in the United Kingdom, following a minor setback it has been growing steadily (Figure 12). Apart from the language, the expansion of

migrant networks also plays an important role in this.

In addition to a large increase in emigration over recent years, the *diversification of destinations* can also be observed: the United Kingdom “has caught up” with the two traditional destinations – Germany and Austria (Figure 12) and with the gradual dismantling of labour market restrictions an increasing number of

Table 1: Number of Hungarian citizens immigrating to main European destination countries (flow), 2004–2013

Destination country	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Germany	17,411	18,574	18,654	22,175	25,151	25,270	29,286	41,132	54,491	59,995
Austria	3,156	3,424	3,567	4,492	5,195	5,768	6,412	9,250	13,066	14,935
United Kingdom	4,062	1,088	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ireland	-	-	2,093	1,605	914	794	714	725	743	710
Netherlands	565	594	571	975	1,721	1,668	1,820	1,904	2,173	2,075
Switzerland	391	359	485	751	1,073	1,140	1,194	1,751	1,819	1,364
Spain	597	759	1,270	2,051	1,203	886	854	995	997	938
Italy	602	545	613	1,409	1,144	1,054	921	871	853	710
Sweden	228	269	462	776	1,018	893	770	706	857	907

Source: Eurostat database (updated on May 25, 2015); with additional German (DESTATIS) and Austrian (Statistik Austria) data from 2009; – missing data.

Hungarians are arriving in new destinations – Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain and Italy (*Table 1*). In the case of Germany and Austria patterns of migration were also perpetuated by historical relations, the language and migrant networks. However, Hungary had no previous migration relationships with the United Kingdom or the other new destinations; migration to these countries started mainly because new opportunities opened up.

In the mirror statistics only people who intend to reside for at least 12 months and with an officially registered address in the host country appear as migrants. However, nowadays a large part of migration flows consist of temporary, circular or commuting moves. These forms of migration – especially those within the EU – are only registered if they are accompanied by legal employment and in that case they appear in labour statistics. These differences are clearly illustrated by the case of Austria: while the number of Hungarian immigrants increased from about three to 15 thousand per year between 2004 and 2013 (*Table 1*), the number of registered Hungarian workers was much higher. According to Austrian social security data, the yearly average of Hungarian workers (legally) employed in Austria was 26 thousand in 2010, it approached 35 thousand in 2011 after restrictions on the free movement of labour force were lifted, and increased to 58 thousand by 2013. These numbers are much higher than the number of Hungarian citizens immigrating to Austria and they also increased more substantially.

Another source of inaccuracy in mirror statistics – mentioned previously – in terms of recording Hungarian citizens arises from the simplified naturalisation introduced in 2011; as a result Hungarian citizens can potentially come from other (mainly neighbouring) countries as well. The effect of this can already be observed

in the main destination countries. There were approximately a thousand Hungarian citizens born outside Hungary immigrating in Austria between 2004 and 2010 (a period of seven years), between 2011 and 2013 (three years) this reached nearly three thousand. In 2013 2,776 immigrants with Hungarian citizenship arrived in Germany from outside Hungary. In the United Kingdom, the number of Hungarian nationals was estimated at 72 thousand in 2013 (based on the Annual Population Survey), however only 62 thousand of these Hungarian citizens were born in Hungary, therefore ten thousand people originated from other countries.

RETURN MIGRATION

Alongside emigration, return migration is also an important issue because those who emigrate will return to Hungary sooner or later with new skills and experiences – according to the optimistic approach. However, our knowledge about this has been very limited thus far. Based on mirror statistics there is considerable return migration but often this is revealed only by census data due to the lack of deregistration. In the case of Hungarian citizens “emigrating” or simply “missing” from host countries it is impossible to tell whether they have returned home or moved to a third country. Moreover the first group can potentially include those who were born in the given destination country, in their case it cannot be considered “return”.

With regards to the two traditional destination countries – Austria and Germany – there has been an increase not only in the number of Hungarian citizens arriving in these countries but also the number of those returning (or moving elsewhere) (*Table 2*). However, if the number of those returning is compared

Table 2: Number and rate of Hungarian citizens emigrating from Germany and Austria, 2004–2013

Destination	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of Hungarians emigrating from Germany	16,254	15,669	15,036	16,950	21,454	22,125	20,485	24,227	28,099	34,319
As a proportion of immigrants (%)	93.4	84.4	80.6	76.4	85.3	87.6	69.9	58.9	51.6	57.2
Number of Hungarians emigrating from Austria	2,168	2,377	2,525	2,711	3,191	3,831	4,249	5,310	6,457	6,479
As a proportion of immigrants (%)	68.7	69.4	70.8	60.4	61.4	66.4	66.3	57.4	49.4	43.4

Source: DESTATIS (2015); Statistik Austria (2015).

to the number of new immigrants in a given year, it appears that the rate of return or forward migration was higher at the beginning of the period than in recent years. The declining trend came to a brief halt during the years of the crises (2008–2009) but continued later.

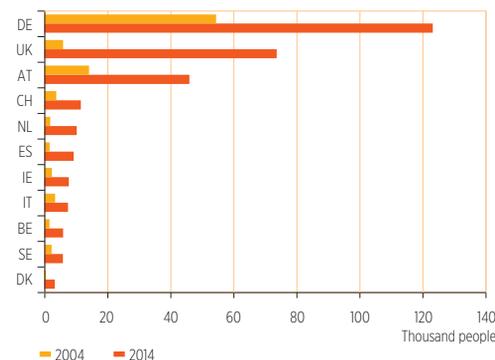
Only half of the Hungarian nationals who were allocated a national insurance number in the United Kingdom after EU accession appeared in the 2011 Population Census, slightly more (63%) among those who had arrived at the start of the period (between 2004 and 2006) (Moreh 2014). This suggests that with growth of migration the share of short term moves have also increased.

In addition to data from host countries, the group of return migrants (present in Hungary at the time of the Population Census) can also be examined using Census data. According to this there were some 204 thousand Hungarian-born people in the country who had previously lived abroad for at least a year: 82% returned after 1980 and 63% after the regime change. Among those returning during the 1990s the share of older age groups and graduates was higher than in subsequent cohorts. Until 2006 Germany was top destination country and the USA was at the second place among returning migrants, then since 2007 the United Kingdom has been at the top of the ranking and since 2009 more than a quarter of returning migrants have come from here.

NUMBER AND COMPOSITION OF THE HUNGARIAN POPULATION ABROAD

Despite return migration there was a large increase in the number of Hungarian nationals residing in the major European countries of destination between 2004 and 2014 (Figure 13). In addition to traditional destinations, the growth was also substantial in new destination countries, particularly in the United Kingdom. Despite their growth, the number of Hungarians residing in Austria remains well below that of workers as mentioned earlier; this suggests that the majority of Hungarians who work in Austria do not move their residence officially but circular migration and commuting are common due to the proximity of the two countries.

Figure 13: Number of Hungarian citizens residing in major European destination countries (stock), 2004 and 2014



Source: Eurostat database (updated on May 25, 2015); Austria 2014: Statistik Austria (2015).

In 2014 approximately 277 thousand Hungarian citizens (registered officially) were residing in the EEA countries according to Eurostat data based on mirror statistics. However, data were missing for Austria and some other minor destination countries, so we used data from the Austrian Statistical Office, as well as from the Census Hub (containing data of the latest European Population Censuses). It appears from the data that *330 thousand Hungarian citizens were residing in European countries at the beginning of 2014*: 38% in Germany, 23% in the United Kingdom, 14% in Austria (*Table 3*). This was nearly three and a half times their number in 2001. The greatest increase was in the United Kingdom, meanwhile the “share” of Germany declined significantly after the turn of the millennium. However, the data only include people who are officially residing in these countries (or counted in the Population Census) and those who have already acquired citizenship are not represented.

The size of the *population born in Hungary* generally exceeds the number of Hungarian citizens in most host countries. For example in Austria the number of Hungarian citizens residing in the country increased from 14 to 46 thousand between 2004 and 2014, meanwhile the number of those born in Hungary grew from 32 to 55 thousand. In Sweden there were six thousand Hungarian citizens residing in the country in 2014, however the number of those born in Hungary was 16 thousand.

The above summary (*Table 3*) is limited to EEA countries and Switzerland and it does not include Hungarian citizens living in countries outside Europe, such as the USA, Canada, Australia, Russia or Israel. However, according to UN data in 2013 36% of the population born in Hungary but residing

Table 3: Number (stock) and distribution of Hungarian citizens residing in European countries in 2001 and 2014 (January 1)

Destination	2001		2014	
	N	%	N	%
Austria ^{a)}	12,729	14.0	46,264	14.0
Belgium	1,534	1.7	5,996	1.8
Bulgaria	95	0.1	148	0.0
Cyprus ^{b)}	–	–	513	0.2
Czech Republic	418	0.5	1,522	0.5
Denmark	391	0.4	3,311	1.0
Estonia	–	–	45	0.0
Finland	654	0.7	1,784	0.5
France ^{b)}	2,961	3.3	4,183	1.3
Germany	54,437	59.8	123,736	37.5
Greece ^{b)}	538	0.6	748	0.2
Iceland	49	0.1	155	0.0
Ireland	–	–	7,765	2.4
Italy	2,817	3.1	7,483	2.3
Latvia	13	0.0	21	0.0
Liechtenstein	–	–	37	0.0
Lithuania	8	0.0	18	0.0
Luxembourg ^{b)}	143	0.2	935	0.3
Malta ^{b)}	12	0.0	133	0.0
Netherlands	1,538	1.7	10,280	3.1
Norway	291	0.3	2,653	0.8
Poland ^{b)}	403	0.4	537	0.2
Portugal	158	0.2	424	0.1
Romania	269	0.3	1,632	0.5
Slovakia	–	–	8,134	2.5
Slovenia	51	0.1	279	0.1
Spain	778	0.9	9,285	2.8
Sweden	2,988	3.3	5,911	1.8
Switzerland	3,559	3.9	11,596	3.5
United Kingdom	4,273	4.7	74,495	22.6
Total	91,107	100.0	330,023	100.0

Source: Eurostat database (updated on May 25, 2015; ^{a)} Austria 2014: Statistik Austria (2015); ^{b)} 2014 data complemented by data from 2011 (Census Hub); – missing data.

HOW MANY HUNGARIANS LIVE ABROAD?

Different data sources and estimates can be used to answer this frequently asked question, however, it is important to define exactly the coverage of each.

According to the Hungarian *Population Census* 143,422 people resided abroad *long term* (at least 12 months) and another 70,059 *temporarily* (less than 12 months) on October 1, 2011. These numbers are for the total population (without limitations on age groups), however they represent the minimum number of people living abroad because “the Population Census did not always have information about households where everyone lived abroad and their home in Hungary was either unoccupied or occupied by tenants” (HCSO 2013).

According to *mirror statistics* the number of Hungarian citizens residing in European

countries – and registered as immigrants – was around 290 thousand on January 1, 2013, which increased to 330 thousand by January 1, 2014.

HDRI's *Turning Points of Life Course* (TPLC) study has found that 7.4% of Hungarian citizens aged 18–49 years and with a registered address in Hungary (approximately 335 thousand people) resided abroad on a long-term basis at the beginning of 2013.

The *SEEMIG project*¹⁷ has estimated – based on findings from the *Hungarians abroad* study, mirror statistics and data from TPLC – that there were 350 thousand Hungarian citizens living abroad at the beginning of 2013 who had left the country after 1989 but at least a year prior to the study.

According to *UN data* the number of people born in Hungary but residing abroad – irrespective of when they left the country – was 528 thousand in 2013.

abroad lived in these five countries (26% in the first two), nearly as many as those in Germany, Austria and the United Kingdom together. As far as Hungarian citizens living abroad, the “share” of countries outside Europe is likely to be smaller because in recent years European countries have become the primary destination of emigrants.

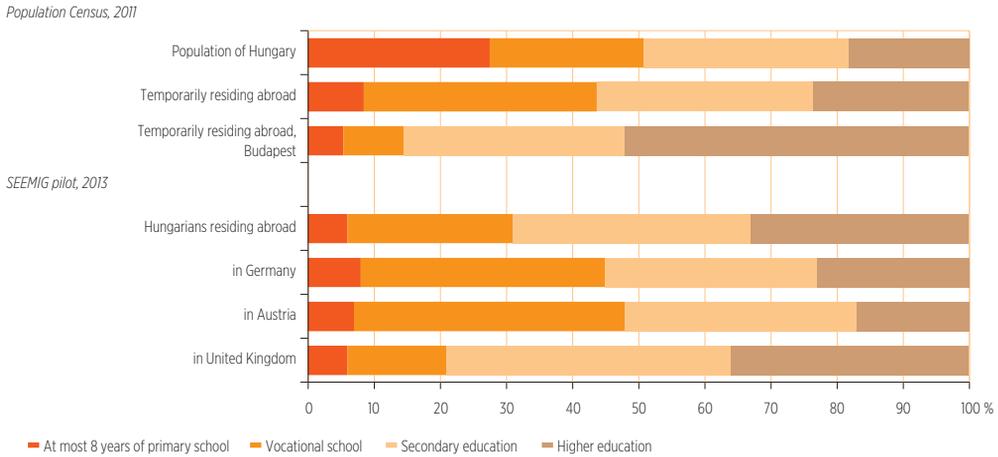
As far as the *socio-demographic composition* of Hungarian citizens living abroad is concerned, the picture of a younger and more educated group emerges from the different sources of data; the majority are unmarried and there are slightly more men than women. These characteristics – with the exception of education – are more prominent among more recent emigrants. According to the Population Census two

thirds of those who had been residing abroad for less than 12 months were male. However, mirror statistics indicate great variations across destination countries: while there was a marked male majority among Hungarian citizens in Germany (62%), this was only slight in Ireland, the United Kingdom and Sweden (52–55%). On the contrary, the large majority (72%) of Hungarian citizens in Italy were female and there was also a small female majority (53–54%) among those residing in Austria, Switzerland, Netherlands and Spain.

The *young age composition* can be observed in all destination countries. According to mirror statistics more than half (53%) of Hungarian citizens residing in European countries in 2013 were in

¹⁷ See: www.seemig.eu

Figure 14: Distribution of the population aged 15–74 years residing abroad and in Hungary by level of education



Source: HCSO, Population Census 2011; SEEMIG – Hungarians abroad (2013).

their 20s or 30s (meanwhile only 28% of the population in Hungary). The share of young people was especially high in “new” destination countries: the Netherlands (73%), Ireland and Denmark (68–69%), as well as Italy and Spain (58%), whereas in the more traditional destination countries – Germany, Austria and Sweden – it was slightly below average (47–51%). According to the Population Census 63% of people who had been residing abroad for less than 12 months were aged between 20–39 years.

There are differences between the *education level* of the population residing abroad and the total population in Hungary according to both the Population Census and the SEEMIG project. The share of graduates is higher, especially among those who had moved from Budapest and are residing abroad on a temporary basis (Figure 14). Out of the three main destinations, the

share of graduates is highest among those residing in the United Kingdom (36%) while people with vocational qualification are overrepresented in Germany and Austria.

The estimated number of 350 thousand Hungarian citizens who left the country after the regime change and were residing abroad at the beginning of 2013 represent approximately 3.5% of the total population of Hungary. According to the UN estimation the share of Hungarian-born population residing abroad was 5.1% in 2013. This is much lower than their share in the major emigration countries (Lithuania: 16.1%; Bulgaria: 15.9%; Romania: 14.3%; Latvia: 14.2%; Poland: 8.7%). Over recent decades 10% of working age population have emigrated from Romania, 9% from Lithuania, and 6.9% from Latvia. However, the rising trend of emigration and its growing rate in younger age groups are increasingly turning Hungary into an emigration country.

GLOSSARY:

Immigrant foreign citizen: Foreign national who enters Hungary and obtains a residence document in the country according to existing legislation in a given year.

Immigrant Hungarian citizen: Hungarian citizen who was born or residing abroad and moves to Hungary with the intention to settle down there, or returns from temporary residence abroad.

Crude immigration rate: The number of immigrants who enter in the given year divided by the number of mid-year population of the host country (per thousand population).

EEA citizens: Citizens of the European Economic Area (this includes EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). Switzerland is not part of the EEA, however Swiss nationals have the same rights as EEA nationals.

Emigrant foreign citizen: Foreign national with a valid residence or settlement document who leaves Hungary without the intention to return, or who has not extended their expired residence permit or the permit has been revoked.

Emigrant Hungarian citizen: Hungarian citizen who leaves Hungary with the intention to settle permanently or temporarily (for at least 12 month) abroad in a given year.

Foreign citizen residing in Hungary: Foreign citizen with a valid residence or settlement document who is residing in Hungary on January 1 in a given year.

Person naturalised in Hungary: An individual who acquired Hungarian

citizenship either via naturalisation (if born as foreign citizen) or re-naturalisation (if his former Hungarian citizenship was abolished).

Naturalisation rate: The number of naturalisations in a given year divided by the number of foreign citizens residing in the country at the beginning of the year.

Asylum seeker: Foreign national or stateless person who has applied for international protection, but has not yet any form of international protection – refugee, subsidiary protection, tolerated – status.

Refugee: Foreign national or stateless person who has been granted refugee status (that is granted to applicants who can – in accordance with the Geneva Convention – prove that their fear of being persecuted is substantiated). The refugee status is valid for an indefinite period. Refugees can apply for Hungarian citizenship after three years of residence in Hungary.

Person with subsidiary protection (Oltalmazott): Foreign national or stateless person who does not fulfil the criteria of recognition as a refugee but there is a risk that, in the event of their return to their country of origin they would be exposed to serious harm. The risk of serious harm is reviewed at least every five years.

Person with tolerated status (Befogadott): Foreign national or stateless person who is not entitled to refugee status or subsidiary protection but temporarily cannot be returned to their country of origin for fear of facing death penalty, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. This status is reviewed annually.

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