

# **MIGRATION TO HUNGARY**

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**Immigrants, policies and migration systems:**

**An ethnographic comparative approach**

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## Introduction

Migration is a central parameter in Hungary's relationship to EU (Brochmann, 1999a:17) and the control of immigration was ranked high in EU accession negotiations. The sudden increase of the importance of this issue put the countries of Central- and Eastern Europe in a relatively new situation for them, namely the necessity to regulate immigration. How they are responding to this challenge, influenced by what factors and involving what consequences is of particular importance for the future development of this region, and it is yet to be fully understood.

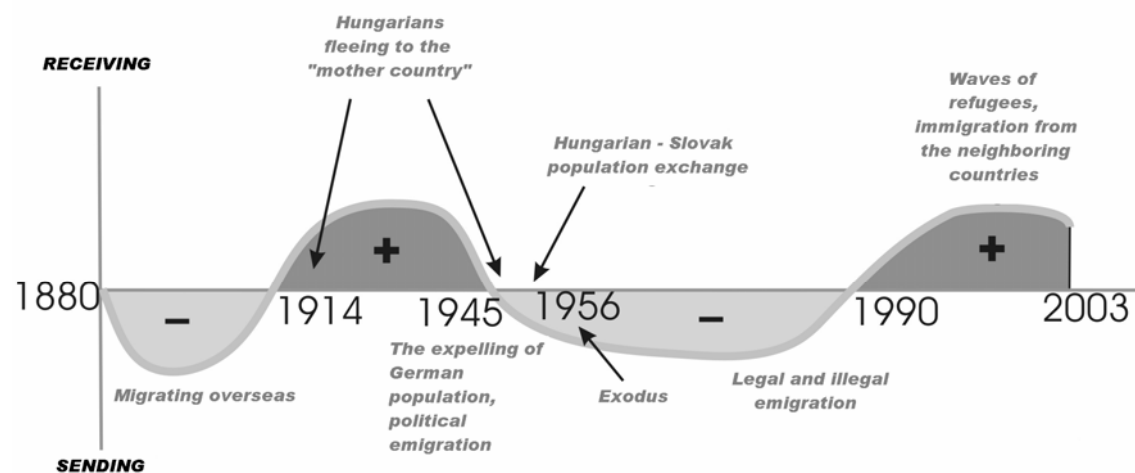
In this perspective the international context serves as frame of reference for national policy making. The countries of the EU, the membership of which these countries aspire or aspired to achieve, is especially important for CEE. In Western Europe unskilled immigration is generally not wanted. Brochmann (1999a:17) talks about building policies to avoid the "magnet effect", the effect that immigrants go to the easiest accessible country. This leads each country to look at the others to see whether or not it itself belongs to the most restrictive group. While debates are going on on several levels about the harmonization of immigration policy in the EU, the newly included countries are expected to line up to the existing (national) Western European policies.

Among countries in post-socialist transformation what makes Hungary an interesting and peculiar case to study in this matter is a relevant aspect of the Hungarian history. After the Treaty of Trianon in 1918 roughly one third of Hungary's former territory together with the population living there, were annexed to the neighboring countries. Until the present the highest number of people immigrating to Hungary are ethnic Hungarians migrating from these countries. Commitment towards immigrants and refugees was therefore traditionally influenced by sentiments of ethnic solidarity, but –according to Kristóf (1999:261)- this is increasingly being balanced by economic considerations.

The history of immigration and the country's "control culture" (Brochmann 1999a:16) are two important factors in explaining the approach to immigration of a country. The following sections present Hungary's migration history together with the policies and regulations that have been adopted in the last two decades. The actual effects of migration policies are discussed on the specific case of the Ukrainian immigrants to Hungary. In the case of Ukrainians, it is possible to observe the twofold influences on Hungary's migration policies –EU accession on the one hand and support for ethnic kin living in neighboring countries on the other. The introduction of visas (as a measure of compliance with EU expectations) influences the development of transnational communities over the Hungarian-Ukrainian border. Among Hungary's neighboring countries Ukraine and Serbia seem to be furthest away from EU integration, and therefore immigrants from these two countries might have a bigger weight as targets of immigration policies. However, due to the recent war in Serbia, immigration from Serbia could probably be based and explained by conflict based, specific factors. For this reason this report will focus on the immigrants coming from Ukraine.

## 1. Hungary and its migration history

The migration history of a country, the tradition of immigration and/or emigration from a country has a decisive impact on its policy formulation (Brochmann, 1999). Hungary's position in the world system of migration has been a rapidly changing one over the last century (Sik and Zakariás 2005:6). Periods of inflow and outflow have followed each other, and the present situation of an immigration surplus is a relatively new position for Hungary (Kristóf, 1999, Sik and Zakariás, 2005, Dövényi, 2005).



(after Dövényi, 2005)

In the turn of the nineteenth century a large number of emigrants (mainly poor young males) left Hungary for the United States (Salt in Sik and Zakariás 2005:6). One and a half million people emigrated in this period from Hungary. According to Dövényi and Juhász (in Kristóf 1999:262) only a third of these were ethnic Hungarians and roughly every fourth returned. We have less data about other population movements from this period because migration flows within the vast Austro-Hungarian Monarchy were considered as internal flows and most of these were not registered (Kristóf 1999: 262). There was free and frequent movement within the Austro-Hungarian empire. Between 1899 and 1913 for example more than 100 000 Hungarians moved to the (present day) Romania, about 36 000 to Germany and smaller numbers to Italy, Russia and Serbia. (Kristóf 1999:262). A large proportion of these later returned.

The break-up of the empire with its territorial changes brought about important migratory movements. The peace treaty at Trianon after the First World War divided the empire into several smaller states, and the territory previously regarded as Hungary was divided as well. Two thirds of Hungary's territory and 60 percent of its population became part of the neighboring states. About 3,2 million Hungarians became residents of the new neighboring countries of Hungary with this change of borders. (Kristóf 1999:263) As an immediate consequence 350 000 ethnic Hungarians moved to the reduced Hungarian territory in the aftermath of the First World War period, most of them fleeing from Transylvania (which had become Romanian territory) (Dövényi 1995 in Kristóf, 1999). The redrawing of borders strongly influences migratory movements to Hungary until the present day. The presence of Hungarian minorities outside Hungary proper is an

important precondition for subsequent migration flows to the country (Tóth in Kristóf, 1999).

The Second World War turbulences also caused large-scale movements of population. More than 300 000 people fled temporarily to Hungary, most of them being Polish soldiers. Meanwhile thousands of Jews fled or were deported and numerous prisoners of war were sent to the Soviet Union. (Kristóf, 1999) There was also a population exchange with Czechoslovakia during which 70 000 Slovaks left. 200 000 Germans either voluntarily or through forced resettlement left Hungary as well. A large number of ethnic Hungarians were also resettled or moved on their own to Hungary (Dövényi, 1995).

During the Cold War Hungary was made part of the communist bloc. In the period between 1949 and 1989, for forty years Hungary was practically a closed country, population in- and outflows were drastically reduced. Emigration was considered as an act of disloyalty to the state and thus declared illegal (Kristóf, 1999). The one historical occasion to migrate, the revolution in 1956 stimulated a number of 200 000 migration decisions (called “temporary exodus” by Kristóf). In the period between 1957 and 1987 annual legal emigration was estimated at 2000-4000, illegal emigration was estimated was around 4000-5000 (Redei in Kristóf). In the late 1989 a law was adopted that lifted the limitations on free exit for Hungarians. However, this did not result in a large-scale emigration wave (Juhász in Kristóf). Before 1989, immigration to Hungary was basically by a small number of refugees or students who were admitted to Hungary on the basis of ideological reasons, like supporting the worldwide struggle for communism (Kristóf, 1999). Within this frame groups of Greek and Chilean communists, but also groups of refugees from Africa, Asia, the Middle East and South America were admitted to Hungary. A few thousand Cubans and Vietnamese were employed in the textile industry, Chinese were working in Hungary’s major truck factory and Poles worked in the mines (Szöke in Kristóf, 1999). Until 1985 an average of 1500 migrants per year came to Hungary (Tóth, 1995).

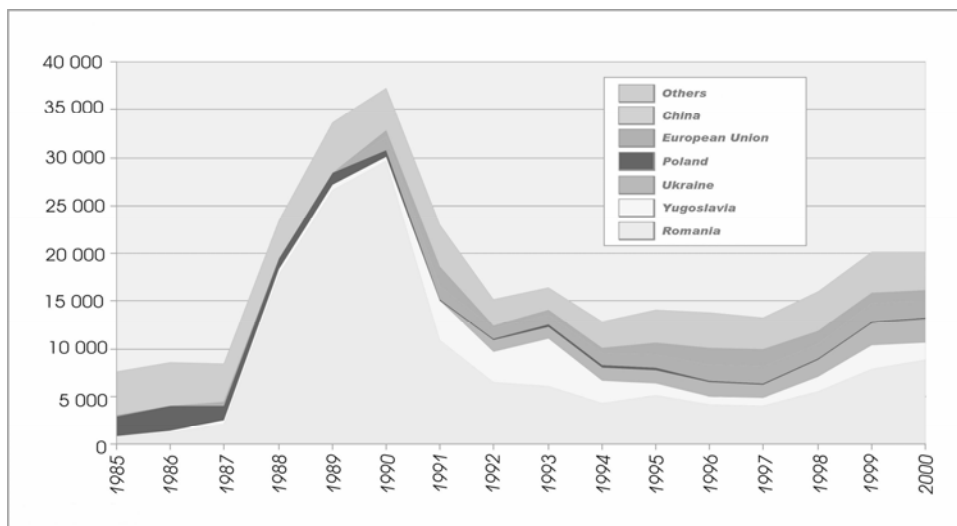
Immigration restarted in 1988 with a “quasi-refugee regime” (Sik and Zakariás, 2005), however what was understood by this term was not refugees per se (by this time Hungary had not yet signed the Geneva Convention so formally there were no refugees), but the integration of ethnic Hungarians fleeing the neighboring countries. In 1988 almost 14 000 asylum applications by Romanian citizens were registered. Between 1988 and 1991, 80% of immigrants were ethnic Hungarians from Romania, Ukraine and Yugoslavia. By this time Hungary had become an immigrant receiving country, with positive net immigration (Kristóf, 1999).

In 1991 the percentage of ethnic Hungarian refugees dropped (among the total number of refugees) due to the large number of people arriving in Hungary because of the war in Yugoslavia, starting and peaking in 1991. Hungary eventually signed the Geneva Convention in 1989, but –partly because of the communist years and of the former refugees being largely ethnic Hungarians- there was no institutional framework to process asylum applications or to administer settlement (Kristóf, 1999:264). The refugee-flow from Yugoslavia was the second large-scale influx of people to Hungary: temporary protection or asylum status has been given to 75 000 people from former Yugoslavia, notably Croatia (Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs, 1996, in Kristóf). However, they did not stay. Most of this group has already left Hungary either going back home or further to other settlement countries in the West (Pataki in Kristóf, 1999). In 1996 there

were only 6000 people from former Yugoslavia with temporary protection in Hungary (Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs, 1996, quoted by Kristóf). However, the actual figure is much higher. It is estimated that in Hungary there were 20 000 refugees from Serbia and Yugoslavia. But they were either not registered or only registered as tourists (Kristóf, 1999). The refugee flow from Yugoslavia had a major impact on shaping the legislation and infrastructure for migration regulations. After this period of inflow of Yugoslav refugees the issue of migration became increasingly politicized (which will be discussed in the next section).

In 1991 there was also a large number of Chinese immigration to Hungary: according to the Ministry of Interior data 27 330 Chinese entered Hungary in 1991. Although it is not very clear how many of these stayed in Hungary for a longer term, in 1995 it was estimated that 10 000 Chinese are living in Hungary. According to Nyiri (1999:5) their number has remained around this figure as migrants spread over other countries in Eastern Europe but maintained businesses in Hungary. As the “reform and opening up” of the People’s Republic of China accelerated, Chinese have become one of the biggest groups settling in Hungary, who mostly worked in small business (Nyiri, 1999:2, Juhász, 1997:27). In Hungary the members of the Chinese community quickly accumulated wealth, working predominantly in trade. The community consolidated and developed a sophisticated organizational structure, including the establishment of the Hungarian Chinese Association in 1992 (Nyiri, 1999:6).

According to statistical data (Time series of the international migration 1990-2000, Hungarian Central Statistical office, 2003) the number of immigrants increased in Hungary between 1995 and 2000. This was followed by a period of decrease. Dövényi (2005) summarizes the nationality of persons entering Hungary (which does not necessary mean all immigrants but on the other hand it is indicating the volume of illegal migration):



As we can see, throughout the whole period between 1987-2000 the largest number of foreigners was coming from Romania, peaking in 1990 (possibly as a result of ethnic tensions accelerating in this year in Transylvania), and sharply declining afterwards. Also, Chinese migration to Hungary is not a new phenomena, it was present throughout the communist period, and continuing after 1989. However, after 1989 the nature of this

migration changed. Polish immigration suddenly stopped in 1990. Starting from 1991 Immigration from Ukraine on the other hand is showed a steady increase. After 1987 the highest number of foreign citizens entering Hungary was coming from Romania, followed by Ukraine, Yugoslavia and China. This is still the case in 2005 when of the 142 000 foreign citizens residing legally in Hungary, 60.7 percent is coming from Romania, 14 percent from Ukraine, 6.1 percent from former Yugoslavia followed by the Chinese at 3.3 percent (Hungarian Central Statistical Office).

Some migration scholars (Sik, 1999, Hárs, 1997) emphasize another aspect of Hungarian society, which gave an impetus to migration: the peculiar history of and legacy of a locality, the tradition of “human markets” (Sik, 1999). In the period prior to communist times there was a well-established practice of “human markets”. In the mornings land owners and people needing help around the house would meet people offering their help in these “markets” and negotiate wages for one or a few days’ work. Sik argues that this practice is still alive (illegally). Since the beginning of the 90s the most famous site of such a labor market in Budapest is being the Moszkva Square. These markets facilitate illegal immigrants to find jobs, mainly in construction business or as domestic workers. However this form of informal labor is not specific to illegal immigrants but has been a common practice since the end of the socialist period Kristóf (1999:280). Many worked in their free time with a second and even third job in the informal labor market. Thus this kind of informal labor has been a well-established characteristic of the Hungarian labor-market in general and is not particularly related to migrants and migration.

The informal sector has played an important role in Hungary’s post-1989 development. Juhász (1997:28) suggests that 30% of the GDP is generated through labor and trade in the informal economy. In this context the illegal employment of foreign workers is only one, but a rather visible and sensitive aspect of the informal economy and the irregular labor market. Juhász presented an estimate of 70 000 to 100 000 foreigners, mostly from Romania and Ukraine, working on the illegal labor market.

It is also important to assess that since 1989 there has developed a widespread phenomenon of cross-border commuting and trade with the neighboring countries. In the case of Romania, researchers (such as Horváth, 2003) underline the newly developed life-style of commuting based on circular migration. Migrants come to Hungary for a period of three (previously it has been only one) month during which they engage in labor activities, but they have no intention to stay, and continue to have their home (and family) outside Hungary. By being simultaneously incorporated into the Romanian and Hungarian societies at different levels, these migrants became part of a transnational social field (Glick-Schiller, 1999).

However, despite this form of migration no formal or consistent policy of importing or regulating cross border flow of labor has been developed Kristóf (1999:280). One of the reasons behind this failure might be the contrast between the legacy of the planned economy, where unemployment was unheard of and even illegal, and the open unemployment of the transition period. Two categories of labor migrants have been developed, which reinforce the division between the legal and illegal migrants. The former refers to desired and the latter to the unwanted categories of labor migrants (Kristóf 1999:281). The investors, entrepreneurs and managing directors of foreign enterprises fall into the desired and encouraged labor migrants’ category. More than half

of the legally employed aliens in the beginning of the 90s have been of Hungarian ethnicity (IOM, 1994, quoted by Kristóf).

A specificity of the Hungarian statistical data is the particular meaning of “foreign born population”. Many of the (elder) people falling into this category have actually been born in the Hungary before 1920 or between 1940-1944 and they became “foreign-born” because of the redrawing of borders after the First and Second World War. Therefore this category cannot be well used for comparative analysis with other countries. Data concerning the education and employment skills can be less relevant because of the highly skilled people getting a preference in the accordance of Hungarian citizenship (an example is the case of the large number of doctors and nurses coming from Romania). Furthermore data on immigrants and refugees entering Hungary exists, but data on their return rates is rather unreliable (Juhász, 1997:23).

These aspects put together represent the background on which migration policies are/should be built in Hungary. The tradition of Hungary as an emigration country, the presence of a high number of ethnic Hungarians in the neighboring countries and the development of transnational communities along the borders are factors specific to Hungary that differentiate it from many other countries.

## **2. Regulating migration**

At the end of the 90s most research predicted an increase in Hungary’s importance as an immigration and transit country (Juhász, 1997:29), and the attention given to migration regulation has increased accordingly. After presenting the most important influencing factors in the field this section will give an overview of the migration regulation provisions adopted in Hungary during the last two decades, including a discussion on specific aspects of the labor market, illegal migration and refugee issues. The problem of the responsible institutions and implementation will also be addressed, concluding with a forecast on expectable trends.

While before 1989 international migration was practically forbidden in Central and Eastern Europe and only a few population flows were tolerated (like that of students within the frame of supporting communism), after 1989 regulation of migration became an important topic high up on the political agenda. However the first years of transition brought about many challenges for these countries and it was generally considered that more important aspects of the societies needed to be regulated first. Therefore effective measures were mostly taken after the second half of the ’90-s, when the prospect of European integration increased the pressure to regulate this area.

In Hungary the legislative framework has developed gradually, starting from the end of the 1980s, when the need for a new administrative and legislative framework to cope with migration manifested itself. In 1989 the law on emigration, which abolished all administrative obstacles for Hungarian citizens to freely enter and leave their country was adopted. The first immigration regulation acts entered into force in 1993-1994: the Act on Hungarian Citizenship and the Act on Entry, Stay and Immigration of Foreigners in Hungary (also known as the Aliens Act). While the first one states that eight years of residence in Hungary is a prerequisite for naturalization, the second

defines the immigrant as a person who has spent a minimum of three years working and living in Hungary with a residence permit. Rules guiding the employment of foreigners were put into effect in 1991. In 1997 the Act of Borders and Border Guards, giving more power and resources to border guards, addressed the issue of illegal border crossings. The final regulation of refugees only happened in March 1998: this is the time when the Act on Asylum entered into force. Hungary joined the Geneva Convention already in 1989 but with a geographic reservation limiting its application to European events. Other than lifting this limitation, the Act on Asylum established three categories of refugees, with different decision-making procedures and rights: “convention” refugee, asylum seeker and “refugees given shelter/accepted refugee”. (Juhász, 2003)

## ***2.1. Factors shaping migration policies in Hungary***

There are three main factors that have had an impact on policymaking in the field and continue to influence today. The first one, Hungary’s accession process to the European Union, the new role ascribed to Hungary as a “gatekeeper” of the European Union. The second is the large proportion of ethnic Hungarians among the immigrants in Hungary, which makes migration policies very closely linked to Diaspora politics. The third factor is the public opinion, which, like in other post-socialist countries, approaches to the phenomenon of immigration in relation to the problems of economic transition and unemployment. It is generally not very supportive of liberal policies.

### **2.1.1. EU Accession**

European influences in policy making are observable in various policy areas in Hungary, including the regulation of migration. Jef Huysmans (1996) states that the general European approach towards migration policy is moving towards a restrictive, control-oriented one, relating migration to the fluctuations of the labor market, economic recession and security issues. There is general consensus among analysts saying that Hungary is striving to follow this trend thus complying with the extra pressure as a new border country of the EU. There have been several discussions about this compliance. Böröcz (2000), among others, has filed an extensive critique on the requirement to harmonize the country’s migration policy to the EU standards, referring to the fact that there are no clear EU standards in this respect, and thus the country is expected to complete some requirements that are not sufficiently clear. Nevertheless this critique supports the observation that Hungary is making efforts to adjust its legislation on migration in line with the ones practiced by the preceding legislation existing in the EU countries.

In 2002 the legislative package on migration, which had the aim to harmonize Hungarian regulations with those of the European Union, entered into force (Juhász 2003). The requirements continue to be a minimum of three years of working and living in Hungary with a residence permit for a settlement permit (i.e. immigrant status) and eight years of residence for naturalization. Visa regimes were introduced for several neighboring countries like Serbia and Ukraine, also as a measure of compliance with EU expectations. However, this measure became a specifically debated one because of the Hungarian minority living in these countries. This measure made travel to Hungary a more complicated process.

### 2.1.2. Immigrating ethnic Hungarians

The specificity of immigration to Hungary is that the majority of migrants are ethnic Hungarians. There are around 3 million Hungarians living in the neighboring countries of Romania, Ukraine, Serbia, Croatia, Slovakia and Austria today.

As Bauböck (2005) and Bibó (in Kristóf, 1999) have pointed out, the nations in Central and Eastern Europe have been based on linguistic nationalism and identity more than on historical, territorial developments. If in the Western states the concept of civic nation is prevailing, in Central and Eastern Europe ethnicity plays a more important role in the foundations of a state. This is the case even when they claim to have a civic citizenship, like Romania, who (notwithstanding this claim) is offering citizenship to Romanian ethnics living in Moldova. In the case of Hungary as well, the boundaries constituting Hungarian identity have been overwhelmingly based on cultural, linguistic and ethnic markers than the historical shifts of the geographic and political borders of the Hungarian state. Rather than a territorial idea of citizenship, citizenship is a kin-based one in Hungary.

Bauböck (2005) argues that in most of the cases trans-border minorities that have been historically cut off from a neighboring kin are torn between the options of emigration and assimilation. This is certainly the case for Hungarians living in Ukraine for whom other possible ways like autonomous self-government, struggle for secession are not open due to their relatively small number. However the fact that they are living close to the border opens some other, “in-between” options. They might develop diasporic identities retaining a strong orientation towards the external kin-state while postponing the actual decision of emigration.

Other than the established practices of migration and naturalization that differ in the case of ethnic Hungarians, in Hungary there has not been an explicit policy to differentiate Hungarian ethnics from other immigrants. However there are several countries that have established such a policy, among which Germany is the most well known example. The German state’s policies clearly differentiate ethnic Germans and other immigrants to Germany. In Hungary, on the contrary, various governments declared themselves unwilling to encourage mass migration of ethnic Hungarians to the mother country. However, some less explicit provisions exist. It is stated that in the case of ethnic Hungarians, citizenship is based on a parent’s Hungarian citizenship under the principle of “jus sanguinis”. It is the same case for those born in Hungary (during the second World War between 1940-44 various territories became again part of Hungary, this provision is particularly useful for those born in these territories in this period). Likewise, former Hungarian citizens can re-obtain their citizenship on request, without a waiting period (Juhász 2003). An example for the consequences derived from this provision and picked up extensively by the media afterwards is the case of pensioners who continue to live as ethnic Hungarians in the neighboring countries but requested Hungarian citizenship in order to benefit from the higher pensions in Hungary.

Because of the large number of ethnic Hungarians immigrating to Hungary the naturalization processes became subject to lively public debates. There have been some attempts to differentiate between ethnic Hungarian immigrants and others but so far there is no differentiating policy adopted. In practice this means that ethnic Hungarians have to

pay fees for education and other public services (there are many ethnic Hungarians who come to Hungary to study in Hungarian). However, in terms of practices of naturalization, differences could be identified as there are no language or cultural barriers in their case.

The most widely publicized attempt of implementing different policies towards ethnic Hungarians and other immigrants was the adoption of a Status Law. This is a law, which is meant to give a special status in Hungary for ethnic Hungarians, entitling them to a series of benefits and assistance on the territory of Hungary and that of their native country. This law incorporates the ethnic Hungarians simultaneously into two societies. According to Balázs (2003:39) the Status Law is clearly one of the mechanisms that attempted to regulate the phenomenon of ethnic migration, by promoting the continuity of Hungarian presence in the neighboring countries. This law stirred up lively debates in international forums, being without precedence in European policy-making. Before and around its adoption there were many studies addressing its effect on immigration to the country (Sik and Örkény, 2003). Its opponents feared a new wave of massive immigration. As a result of internal and international pressure, the most controversial (i.e. the most substantial) provisions of this law were dropped and consequently it did not produce a major impact on migration practices or in other areas of the relationship with minorities.

A few years later another debate was set around this topic: that of giving Hungarian citizenship to ethnic Hungarians in the region. This debate boomed when in 2004 the World Federation of Hungarians collected enough signatures to ask for a referendum (a right provided for by the Constitution of Hungary) on this question. The main political parties took different sides. The right side (who initiated the Status Law before) started a campaign for granting the dual citizenships, while the left side, now in power, campaigned for a “resounding no” in the name of responsible citizenship. Finally the referendum was unsuccessful due to the low turnout, and no law providing for easier access of Hungarian ethnics to Hungarian citizenship was created.

The debates around the Status Law and the dual citizenship not only took place in Hungary but acquired a vivid interstate dimension as well. The inverse relationship between the protection of ethnic kin and the good neighborly relations with the countries where these minorities reside has become evident; Hungary has been put once again between two opposite influences. Especially Slovakia and Romania strongly opposed both the introduction of the Status Law and the granting of dual citizenship, turning to various international forums to prevent Hungary from introducing either of these. It is important from the perspective of interstate relations that after long negotiations Hungary has concluded a bilateral agreement with Romania in 2002 and that both Hungary and Slovakia became members of the European Union in 2004.

Recently, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2006, there is a new provision adopted in favor of ethnic Hungarians. Namely, the possibility of asking for a residence permit to stay in Hungary more than three months on the basis of maintaining family ties (other than family reunification) and cultural development purposes. However it is still too early to judge what effects this provision will have on the development of relations (and immigration rate) between ethnic Hungarians and mother country.

### 2.1.3. Public opinion and politics

Due to the specific situation in Hungary that a majority of immigrants are in fact ethnic Hungarians from the neighboring countries, Diaspora-politics is closely related to migration issues. There is a traditional presence of ethnic solidarity in the society with the immigrants coming from the neighboring countries who speak Hungarian. However the events of the last five years, the lively debates about the introduction of favorable conditions for the settlement of ethnic Hungarians in Hungary have proved that the 40 years of communism when the nationality issue was off the agenda, as well as the negative image of the cheap and undocumented labor migrant has divided the Hungarian society in this respect. As the two main Hungarian parties (the young democrats and the socialists) have taken the two opposite positions in this question, this issue has suddenly become one of a political nature.

Bauböck (2005) discusses the cases when the kin-state supports its minorities. Regarding emigration, the kin-state can either promote return or provide an exit option for its minorities from their home-countries to the kin-state. If the alternative is assimilation, the mother country can still provide for cultural support. Or it can go further to providing political support in the autonomy struggles of its minorities living abroad. Hungary stated already in the beginning of 90s that it does not wish to encourage migration of ethnic Hungarians to Hungary and has maintained this position ever since. However, in terms of the next steps to be taken the political parties chose to represent different stand-points: socialists would offer cultural support to the ethnic Hungarians, while the young democrats would go further in providing support-to them (including the possibility for short-term employment in Hungary on the basis of the Status Law).

Hungary's specific situation in terms of ethnic kin living abroad had consequences also on the general attitudes towards immigrants other than ethnic Hungarians. According to Sik and Zakariás (2005) the events of the two World Wars, as well as the creation of a smaller and ethnically highly homogenous Hungary, made Hungarians sensitive towards patriotic, and even chauvinist ideologies. This aspect on its own might be an explaining factor for Hungary's reluctance to introduce measures to facilitate naturalization of foreigners.

## ***2.2 Immigrants on the labor market***

In 2002 100 000 foreigners worked legally in Hungary. This figure is a proof that there is a demand for a specific kind of immigrant labor from the point of view of the Hungarian economy. Immigrants possessing a permanent residence permit can take up employment under the same conditions as Hungarian citizens, with the exception of jobs in the civil service. Juhász (2003) estimated to 40 000 the number of permanent residents who are taking up employment in Hungary.

Temporary residents on the other hand need to apply for a work permit if they wish to take up legal employment.<sup>1</sup> In order to get legally employed, both the applicant and the employer have to undergo a scrupulous procedure. Work permits are issued to the employer, while the employee needs a special employment visa. In order to enter Hungary for employment purposes, employment visas must be obtained from abroad through Hungarian embassies or consulates. In practice however, a large proportion of the work permits issued come from within Hungary, from people who are already

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<sup>1</sup> The employment of foreigners is regulated by the Employment Act (1991) and the Aliens Act.

established in the country (Kristóf 1999:281). An alien can only fill in a vacancy after it has been properly advertised and if there is no other Hungarian citizen who qualifies for the job (Juhász, 1995). However there are several practices to get around such provisions and requirements. For example employers may demand specific language skills or other qualifications that Hungarians are likely not to have, in order to hire (cheap) foreign labor. Another common deviance is that after being granted a work permit for a specific job, the applicant will simply use it to move freely in the labor market – this being a practice hardly detectable (Kristóf 1999:281).

A category that constitutes an exception to the above requirements is the category of investors and senior executives of foreign companies. Many self-employed foreigners and small family-run enterprises fall into this category as well. It has been noted that establishing a company to facilitate living and working in Hungary is often easier than obtaining a work permit (Juhász, 2003). This is a common practice for example in the Chinese community in Hungary. Chinese newcomers invest or start a small business in order to gain immigrant status Kristóf (1999).

Juhász (2003) draws attention to the fact that foreign residents with long-term permits on average have higher occupational status than Hungarian citizens, and permanent residents (most of which are ethnic Hungarians from neighboring countries) are less qualified than temporary immigrants. One third of the total immigrant population and more than 40 percent of temporary immigrants are highly qualified. The proportion of non-manual workers among the active foreign population is around 50 percent, however, this includes experts of foreign companies and immigrants from Western Europe (Juhász, 2003).

In Hungary there is a quota on work permits issued, which is correlated to the number of vacancies. In 2002 for example this quota was 81 320 and it was not filled: 42 000 valid work permits were issued in this year (Juhász, 2003). On the other hand it is estimated that there is a large number of foreigners working without a work permit (i.e. illegally). They are mostly migrants coming for seasonal work from neighboring countries (notably Romania and Ukraine), and returning home when their legal right to stay as tourists (three months) expires. During summer, i.e. in the “high season”, the number of illegal immigrants might double of the number of foreign workers with permits.

## ***2.2. Irregular migration***

The secondary economy still plays an important role in Hungary, and –together with many local workers- illegal labor migrants contribute to its survival. As has been emphasized before Hungary is a fertile ground for undocumented employment in certain sectors, and thus offers an easy way for migrants to work without the required work permit. However, the opportunities for unskilled temporary labor have limited chances for advancement (Kristóf 1999:282). The sectors generally most affected by (both legal and illegal) foreign labor are construction, agriculture, textile, clothing, retail, catering and entertainment (Juhász 2003).

Although illegal work in Hungary is not limited to migrants, illegal migrant workers have an increased visibility in this respect and are often subject to media/political

discourse. In public discourses illegal migrant work is discussed together with the question of increasing unemployment, a phenomenon developed after 1989. The fact that immigration to Hungary “started” after 1989 facilitates linking unemployment to illegal migrant work. Migrants can be easily made scapegoats for the hardships of transition such as high unemployment. One example for the institutional acknowledgement of this link is that the fines to be paid by the employer if an employee is caught working without a work permit go into the Hungarian Unemployment Fund (Migration News, 1996 in Kristóf, 1999). The presupposed link between immigration on the one hand and economic regression on the other is thus taking the form of policy linkages.

Many of the migrants who fall into the illegal worker category are commuters from the neighboring countries (Romania, Ukraine etc.). Since the 1990s these migrants have developed a specific lifestyle on the basis of circular migration (Sík, 2005). Workers enter legally as tourists and acquire regular or occasional work. But in most of the cases they will continue to be based in their sending countries and will strive to send their money home (for example in many villages in Romania remittances take shape in bigger houses and create a new social differentiation within the local communities). They usually return home when the period of legal (tourist) stay has expired. They will come back and search for employment regularly. Thus they are incorporated both in their host and home countries. This is the case typically in the area of construction and in domestic labor (cleaning ladies, gardeners etc.). With this lifestyle becoming more and more popular specific agencies have developed in the sending countries in order to facilitate the periodic migration of workers (Gereöffy, 2003). These agencies -on different levels of professionalism- gather information, for example about work opportunities in Hungary and recruit workers in their home-countries on the basis of this information. This process of institutionalization is likely to have positive effects on regularizing the migrants’ worker status. On the other “side of the border” however, because of the lengthy and complicated procedure that the employer has to undergo in order to obtain a work permit for the immigrant, temporary immigrants have low for obtaining regular, formal employment Juhász (2003).

Irregular migration is a major political issue in Hungary. Stricter immigration rules and tighter regulation of the employment of foreign workers might even have had the boomerang effect and have resulted in the growth of illegal migration (Juhász, 1999:10). Although the government initiated a few “clean-up operations” and raised the fee for employers who hired workers without valid work permits, there hasn’t been any action aiming for the legalization of illegal immigrants until today (Kristóf, 1999).

In addition to Hungary increasingly becoming a country for illegal labor immigration, it has also become a transit country for illegal migration. Another aspect that is to be emphasized is Hungary’s transit role played in illegal migration. Human trafficking is frequently being discussed with regard to women recruited for prostitution (who are either taken to Hungary from Romania, Moldova, Slovakia and Ukraine or being sent from Hungary to France, Austria and other destinations). To a large extent, the real scale of this phenomenon is still unknown (Juhász, 2003).

### **2.3. Refugees and asylum seekers**

Refugee policy in Hungary before 1989 was primarily favoring those who shared the ideology of state socialism (Szöke 1992:307). The first group not falling into this category were the ethnic Hungarians fleeing from Romania (about 30 000 in number) who were accepted as refugees even before Hungary adhered to the Geneva Convention in 1989. In the 90s the influx of refugees was relatively limited as Hungary had a geographic limitation that has been lifted only in 1997 with the new Refugee Act (Kristóf, 1999). After 2000, with Hungary being a full member of the Geneva Convention and armed conflicts in the region having ceased, almost all of the asylum applications came from outside of Europe.

If the first wave of immigrants was made up of Hungarian ethnics, the second big wave of refugees coming from the territory of former Yugoslavia drew attention to Hungary being unprepared to accept refugees and put this topic on the political agenda. Numerous complaints and critiques have been registered about the bureaucracy and about the incompetence of border guards and police in dealing with the refugees and refugee matters. Such critiques are still widespread today (Kristóf, 1999).

The lack of integration policy is another common critique addressed to Hungary mainly with regard to refugees. Although the Refugee Act of 1997 lists integration as one of the responsibilities of the refugee reception centers, Hungary still has no formal integration policy until today. One of the reasons behind this is the predominance of the issues related to the economic transition in the government's agenda (Kristóf, 1999:284). Of course, it should not be forgotten that ethnic Hungarians constitute a large group among immigrants, and they are not seen as a group that requires explicit integration policies were needed.

Hungary remains primarily a transit country for refugees. According to border guard officials (quoted by Juhász) 75 percent of those trying to leave the country are former inhabitants of the refugee camps who wanted to leave for the West with the help of human smugglers. Economic forces are only part of the push-factors and equally important factors include lengthy asylum procedures, low chances for long-term and effective protection for asylum-seekers as well as scarce opportunities for integration (Juhász, 2003).

### **2.4. Implementation and institutions**

In the 1990s, during the first decade of immigration regulation, the institutions established to administer and implement the various Refugee Acts functioned in an ad-hoc and inconsistent way and were widely criticized for their inefficiency (Kristóf 1999:269). Still until today, there are several ministries and authorities dealing with refugee and migration issues. For example, the Border Guards and the National Police are responsible for control at borders and internally. The National Police has an Aliens Control Department, dealing with short and long-term residence permits. It is the customs authority's task to check if people have enough money when crossing the border, an aspect that is ultimately within the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, although sparingly, is responsible for

providing background information on the situation in the countries of origin of the asylum-seekers. The Ministry of Labor issues the work-permits. The remaining aspects of the migration issue are under the control of the Ministry of Interior (Kristóf 1999:269). The Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs, situated within the Ministry of Interior has the responsibility to coordinate between the various authorities dealing with migration affairs. It is often accused of ad-hoc role and a lack of formalized co-ordination (Kristóf, 1999:269). However there are some efforts made to improve this situation: the Office has been recently reorganized under the name of Office of Immigration and Nationality (established on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2000). A number of Regional Directorates of the Office have been established. Improvements include some practical measures, for example many of its services are now available via the Internet (downloading of forms, information requests etc.). The welcoming message reminds us that by the amendments of previous laws in 2001 in the process of EU accession the legislative barriers in the way of “developing a unified migration organization” were removed.

Next to the different governmental agencies and bodies a number of NGOs active in this field have developed as well. However international organizations such as the Red Cross, Amnesty and UNHCR have complained about difficulties to establish cooperation with local counterparts (Kristóf 1999). The first refugee-camps in the beginning of the 90s were state-run. The attitude is slowly changing and NGOs are becoming more established. The Hungarian Interchurch Aid was among the first to run a private refugee camp (with state support).

### ***2.5. Recent developments and trends***

Hungary has become a member-state of the European Union on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004 and its borders have become the borders of the European Union. Since this date a number of factors had an influence on the migration policies and their implementation, including preferential treatment for EU citizens and reforms in immigration regulations. The last years have seen an effort from the part of government to address the critiques of incoherence of migration policies and lack of institutional co-ordination. One way of answering these critiques was that Hungary opened several new Consulates in the regions of the neighboring countries inhabited by ethnic Hungarians, which somewhat facilitates the process of obtaining visas, work- and residence permits. As a new trend, several cross-border cooperation programs are now working and developing in the border region between Ukraine and Hungary. Although in a less visible manner than direct border regulations, these might have effects on trans-border migration in the future.

However, some scholars (Wallace and Stola, 2001) question the relevance and sustainability of “imported” western policies for the central European migration landscape. While the migration phenomenon seems to be linked to societal, political and economic characteristics specific to the region, migration policies introduced in Hungary and other central European states rather follow an “external” dynamic, the dynamic of adaptation to Western European standards. To what extent the specificity of CEE in terms of migration space is related to the transition process and to what extent it has its own dynamics is hard to be decided yet.

For the near future migration is likely to remain a grey area without a clear line of policy in Hungary. The inflow of immigrants is not (yet) seen as a complex social and economic issue but rather a deviant phenomenon affecting public order. This approach explains the ad hoc character of the majority of measures. Most of these measures are defensive and aim at a short-term solution to the problems. (Juhász, 2003)

### **3. Ukrainian migration to Hungary**

Ukraine is seen as one of the biggest exporters of labor in Europe (Wallace, 2000). It is also a neighboring country of Hungary, and one of the countries to which territories were annexed after the Trianon peace treaty in 1918. In this way, immigration to Hungary from Ukraine can both be explained on ethnic and economic grounds.

According to Khomra (2003:89) there are three forms of migration characteristic to Ukraine: first, illegal transit migration destined for the countries of Western and Central Europe, the second is the movement of Ukrainians to highly developed countries for employment purposes, the third form being shuttle migration to neighboring countries. He estimates the foreign emigration potential of the western Ukrainian borderland as varying from 232 000 to 1 165 000 people, and for Ukraine as a whole from 981 000 to 4 904 000 people. Hungary is not a primary destination: preferred destinations include Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic, USA, Canada, Russia and Belarus, only then comes Hungary and other European countries. However, for the emigrants from the Western border areas Hungary, together with Poland, is the main destination country. Specifically, up to 90 percent migrants from Ukraine to Hungary come from Zakarpattya region (Malynovska, 2006) (characteristics of the border zone to be discussed further in this section).

In Hungary it is slightly problematic to trace back Ukrainian immigration for a longer period as in statistics it is most often mentioned under the heading “former USSR” even after 1989. In fact, on Hungary’s eastern border a person could have never moved and had five passports since 1920, as land shifted to one country to another. According to the demographic data of 2001, there are 5000 people belonging to the Ukrainian minority in Hungary. However, people coming from Ukraine and having Hungarian or Ruthenian ethnicity would not identify themselves with Ukrainians in Hungary. Ruthenians form another officially recognized minority group of about 1100 persons. Most of the ethnic Hungarian immigrants from Ukraine would not identify themselves as a minority in Hungary. Labor migrants, shuttle migrants are not included in these figures either, so the actual number of immigrants coming from Ukraine is much higher than this. Another figure that might serve as a basis for calculations is the number of actual border crossings. According to the State Frontier Service of Ukraine (in Malynovska, 2004) the peak of the entry rates was reached in 2003 at 2,2 million visits. Other research (Khomra 2003:107) suggests that the movement of Ukrainian citizens to Hungary is showing a growing tendency: by 22 percent by 2001 if compared to 1997. The reasons for this increase in this period should be searched in the European integration process, in the fear of “re-closure” of borders and in the introduction of visas. Visas were introduced by Poland and

Hungary in autumn 2003, which eventually led to the decline of the actual number of Ukrainian immigrants to Hungary and to Poland (although not the numbers of those willing to migrate).

As regards the destinations of the Ukrainian citizens within Hungary, the main destinations are Budapest (with one third of Ukrainian immigrants living here) and the counties along the Ukrainian border: Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg. The latter probably have a more important role than that showed by statistics because the shuttle migration (or “incomplete migration” as Wallace and Stola (2001) call it) is taking place over the border.

### **3.1. Transborder migration**

Sassen (2001) argues that the nation-state can no longer be seen as the container of social processes. The border-zone between Hungary and Ukraine might serve as a good example for this.

What Khomra (2003) calls “border-land effect”, the intensive exchanges of people and goods over a border –in this case the Ukrainian-Hungarian border- is extensively addressed by Malynovska (2006). In the border region between Ukraine and Hungary this exchange is especially lively, facilitated by developed transportation and close historical ties. Furthermore, until 2001 population living in frontier areas benefited from a simplified border crossing procedure: inhabitants of the frontier area settlements were allowed to visit the neighboring country without a foreign passport, only with a special enclosure in the national passport (in Zakarpattya region only 65 500 such enclosures were issued in 2001). The daily number of border crossings with this simplified procedure reached up to 13 500 individuals in 2001 (Malynovska, 2006).

A specificity of the border regions is the high percentage of national minorities. In Zakarpattya, the region bordering Hungary, there are 151 000 ethnic Hungarians, comprising 96 percent of Ukraine’s Hungarian minority population. As already mentioned, efforts exist on both sides of the border to maintain and develop these links. Returning to the idea of Bauböck (2005) discussed before on the options of ethnic minorities either to migrate or to assimilate, shuttle or transnational migration across the border might be a solution in-between: while maintaining and developing ties and searching for better possibilities within their kin state migrants do not actually leave their home country.

In times of severe economic regression trans-border links generate extra income. The western regions of Ukraine were especially severely struck by the hardships of the country’s economic transition; the GDP in the Western regions of Ukraine still remains well below the national average. In the years of economic crisis, with decreasing income of population and growing unemployment, numerous Ukrainians made their living by carrying small amounts of goods through the border to receive income due to differences of prices. Malynovska’s calculations show that with border crossings to Hungary or Poland with a block of cigarettes and 2 liters of alcohol allowed by the customs rules, or with a full tank of gas, one could have earned up to

20 USD per day; being employed at the other side of the border, one could earn about 200 USD per month which is a higher income than working in Ukraine would provide. Thus a specific transnational lifestyle was developed, and a group of “professional” commuters was established. They regularly went abroad and had no other source of income (Malynovska 2006a:3). This kind of “shuttle-business” has remained significant in border areas until today. Malynovska also notes that this business is justified from the economic point of view, due to geographic proximity, developed transportation, access to direct information in Hungary and close personal ties with their citizens.

In addition to this type of business, the population of the frontier areas practices temporary, seasonal and even long term foreign employment (Malynovska, 2006a). According to estimates of the Zakarpattya Oblast State Administration (in Malynovska, 2006a), at least 150 thousand people from the region, or 13,4 percent of the economically active population, work abroad; in rural areas, this share might reach 23 percent. It is characteristic for a significant part of those seeking foreign employment to go in the neighboring countries, Hungary and Poland.

Therefore, the area of free travel that was established after 1990 and lasted about a decade (Slovakia and Czech Republic introduced visas for Ukrainian citizens in 2000) was of a great importance not only for the development of friendly relations between neighboring countries, but also for the survival strategy of a certain category of Ukrainian citizens. Hungary introduced the visa regime (together with Poland) in 2003. Although there were provisions that facilitated the process of obtaining visas (extensive negotiations between these countries preceded the introduction of the visa regime, visas were offered free of charge, later on new Hungarian and Polish embassies were opened in Ukraine), this provision meant a considerable obstacle for the commuters or foreign labor. In 2003, if not an iron curtain, but a paper barrier was re-established on the Western border of Ukraine (Malynovska, 2006b).

### ***3.2. Ukrainians on the Hungarian labor-market***

The number of foreign workers employed with work permits in Hungary at the end of 90s was equivalent to only 0,5 percent of the working population in Hungary. Around 10 percent of the foreign work permit holders are coming from Ukraine (Juhász, 1999). As has been suggested before, the motives of Ukrainian migrants for coming to Hungary are (at least) two-fold. On the one hand, there are ethnic Hungarians with Ukrainian citizenship coming to Hungary, who also have their reasons rooted in cultural and language matters. On the other hand (and most importantly) the poor working conditions of Ukraine are pushing labor migrants towards the West.

By the information of the Ukrainian Embassy in Hungary labor migration to this country is of a typically seasonal nature. As discussed in the previous section most of the illegally employed come from the border areas of Ukraine, and stay legally in Hungary for one month without visas. Taking up seasonal employment is also facilitated by the fact that the majority of migrants are ethnic Hungarians who have a good command of the language and usually have the possibility to reside in the homes of their relatives and acquaintances. The overwhelming majority of those legally employed, with permanent or long term employment permits, is also of Hungarian

ethnicity who came to Hungary with the purpose of staying here, and therefore are interested in legal residence and employment (according to the same source).

By the number of work permits issued since the 90s, Ukrainians rank after the nationals of Romania, Poland, China and the countries of former Yugoslavia (Juhász, 1999). Their number dropped about 20 percent after 1995 with because of the tightening of regulations, particularly due to the requirement of registering vacancies. The tendency to grant work permits for professionals in whom there is a shortage of labor or for people with a special knowledge and expertise is also observable in Hungary (Juhász, 1999).

Migrants coming from Ukraine and other neighboring countries (notably Romania) for employment purposes characteristically take on seasonal employment in the sectors of agriculture and construction. However, the highest number of work permits issued for citizens of former USSR in 1997 was in manufacturing (538 valid work permits compared to 120 in mining, 99 in construction and only 14 in agriculture). Moreover Ukrainian and Russian illegal workers are becoming “increasingly evident” in the entertainment industry (Juhász 1997:29). However, with the development of labor migration there has been a gradual increase in highly educated labor migrants as well. It has been underlined that many of the foreign workers are over-qualified for the work they are doing in Hungary (Juhász, 1999). Already in 1997 the majority of long-term immigrants coming from Ukraine had managerial or professional (non-manual) professions. With the increasing recovery of the neighboring economies migrants tend to refuse to accept unfavorable working conditions. However, no matter what the qualifications of the newcomers are, in the Hungarian public opinion, labor migrants coming from the Eastern neighbors of the country have a negative image and are easily associated with cheap and illegal labor.

Ukraine on the other hand actively promotes the work abroad of Ukrainian nationals. Foreign work is regarded as a means of dealing with the deep economic crisis, unemployment and budget deficit. The “Law on Exit and Entry” and the “Law on Employment of the Population” adopted in 1994 safeguarded the right of Ukrainian citizens to maintain work abroad. Furthermore, in 2003, the Ukrainian Parliament ratified the “Treaty on Temporary Labor Migration” which allows Ukrainian citizens to be placed in jobs offered by Portuguese employers and Ukraine has initiated negotiations on similar agreements with Italy, Spain and Greece (Malynovska, 2006a). State support for employment abroad is widely regarded as a means to deal with high and/or increasing unemployment (Khomra 2003:93). According to some calculations, there would be a need for several million Ukrainian citizens working abroad in order to balance the country’s budget deficit. This situation parallels to what happened in Romania in terms of the relationship between the balance of payments and remittances.

### ***3.3 Community life of Ukrainians in Hungary***

Given that there is such a great number of ethnic Hungarians living in the neighboring countries for whom there is a public concern, Hungary most probably wishes to be a model in what regards the treatment of national minorities. Already in 1993 an act was signed (act LXXVII), which allowed the main nationalities living in Hungary to

create their National and Ethnic Minority Self-Governments already (Mysak, 2005). Thus the Ukrainians in Hungary were recognized as an ethnic minority in Hungary and were given conditions by law to create their self-government. However this provision of the Hungarian law was often criticized on various grounds, among which most often for the problems of implementation. This provision had significant consequences to the life of the Ukrainian minority who began to exercise these rights in 1998 (interview with Jaroslava Hartyányi in Mysak, 2005).

Although in Ukrainian communities in other Western societies (such as USA) religion seems to play an important role, and research on this topic also suggests that religion is reinforced in migrant communities, this is not the case in Hungary (Mysak, 2005). Here, religious life among Ukrainians is less organized than in other places. For example, although it is quite common for Slavic minorities (Bulgarian, Russian etc.) to have their own church and priest, there is no permanent Ukrainian, orthodox priest in Budapest. Ukrainians in Budapest do not have their own Church, either as building or organization, and do not attend weekend liturgies as a single community. Rather they go separately to different churches or attend religious rituals only rarely (Mysak, 2005). However, common celebrations for religious feasts are organized, not only on the major holidays (Easter, Christmas) but for several other religious events as well.

On the other hand, organizational life is strong. There are two active Ukrainian organizations, the Ukrainian Cultural Association and the Ukrainian Capital Self-Government, both led by the charismatic leader Jaroslava Hartyányi. They have their own permanent office in downtown Budapest (Fő utca 88.), and take a stand in every matter concerning Ukrainians or Hungary's relationship to Ukraine. A significant example might be their intensive lobby for the non-inauguration of the statue of the Ukrainian poet Sevcenko by the Municipality of Budapest because they considered inappropriate the statue and the place designated for it. Their lobby in the name of the Ukrainian community of Hungary was successful despite the Ukrainian Ambassador's approval to the statue.

In this case the networks that newly arrived migrants seek for from fellow-nationals are not provided by the organization of the church (like the literature on migrant communities concludes in many cases), but the two Ukrainian organizations, of self-government and the Cultural Association. In the absence of strong religious institutions among migrants, other institutions remain in power and structure the migrants' life and practices (DiMaggio and Powell in Mysak, 2005).

### **3.4. Transit role and illegality**

The most characteristic form of illegality among migrants in Hungary is that of seasonal work without a work permit. However, with regard to other forms of illegal migration, Hungary's transit role is often emphasized. This might be stemming from the fact that the most concrete evidence for this transit role is the number of those attempting to leave the country illegally being much higher than that of those attempting to enter. This discrepancy is explained by the fact that migrants from different countries (among which Ukraine) can enter Hungary but face more difficulties in obtaining the necessary visas to enter the Western European countries.

Juhász (1999:11) notes that many minors between the ages of 14 and 18 are trafficked from neighboring Eastern European countries through Hungary. According to a representative of the Ministry of the Interior (in Juhász, 1999), the Hungarian authorities estimate that approximately one-third of women engaged in prostitution in Hungary are migrants from Romania, the Russian Federation and the Ukraine, while part of prostitution in Hungary is being controlled by the Ukrainian Mafia. (Juhász, 1999:11)

Hungary's growing role as a transit country between East and West, as a stepping-stone towards other (generally Western European) countries is not only perceived as such by the immigrants coming from Ukraine. Romanian and Ukrainian citizens (notably of ethnic Hungarian origin) often see Hungary as a suitable country to work temporarily and accumulate capital in order to depart for other destinations Juhász (1999:10). Even the citizens of more remote countries see Hungary as a transit country. Ukraine itself is said to have a transit role for migrants coming further from the East, and many transit migrants arrive to Hungary through Ukraine. It is often emphasized that from the transit migrants many end up trying their luck in the legal and informal economies of Hungary. (Juhász, 1999)

### **Conclusion: topics for further research**

Although general emigration from Ukraine is shrinking, the share of those leaving for the West (as compared to Russia and other destinations) is increasing. Hungary had to acknowledge its new role as a gate towards Western Europe – a role mostly exercised on its Eastern borders. This has had a number of concrete influences to the life of those –mainly Ukrainian and Romanian citizens- whose life depended largely on trans-border commuting or circular labor migration. There are some specific issues that can be addressed and analyzed on the basis of the Ukrainian community from Hungary. Given, that there are both ethnic Hungarians and ethnic Ukrainians immigrating to Hungary from Ukraine, the naturalization patterns and practices of the two groups very likely significantly differ despite some similarities. The contrast between the identical formal requirements of integration and the differing naturalization practices can be the topic of further research. The relationships maintained among people of different ethnicities coming from Ukraine, after their settlement in Hungary might be interesting to look at as well. From the point of view of policy-making it might be valuable to focus on the migrants who have a destination further in Western Europe, but decided to stay.

The effects of different policies could be best observed among shuttle migrants: this is the group most sensitive to border regulations. Shuttle migration in border areas of Hungary is a migration form characteristic to the immigrants coming from the Ukraine. It has been affected by Hungary's EU accession and the regulations it that came together. However, it also brought about Cross-border Cooperation Programs, which on a medium or long run might play a role in the life of shuttle migrants as well. The question of what happens to the shuttle migrants in the EU context, if whether they will continue their transnational life style or alter it remains as a topic of further research.

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