Intra-EU labour mobility at troubled times: 
drawing a balance ‘ten years after’

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Structure of presentation

- Post-enlargement labour mobility: a new quality
  - free movement/freedom of residence – core value of the EU,
  - but under attack now
- parallel mobility channels
- Transitional measures with (side)effects
  - asymmetrical LM opening and its consequences
  - diversion effect
- Crisis as stress test for mobility and labour markets
  - Qualitative aspects: skills/occupation mismatch
- Contradiction: labour mobility is seen as a solution, but it creates most of the tensions also (EP elections)
- Benefit tourism??
- Drawing a balance
Why is East-West labour mobility different than previous migration waves

East–West post-enlargement EU migration is unique:
Large income/wage gaps in geographical vicinity (2004: cca 1:10; 2013: cca 1:5), but qualification levels of EU10 migrants similar to EU15 nationals
Various forms of mobility in a rapidly changing economic and regulatory environment (employment, cross border commuting, posted work, self employment).
The four mobility channels were subject to different regulation/standards
Transitional measures (up to seven years for NMS), only UK, IE, SE opened LM → resulted in geographical diversion but also in a shift to other mobility channels (Posted work, /bogus/ self employment) with adverse effects
Diverted migration routes: Polish pre\(^1\)- and post\(^2\)-accession migrants, in %

\(^1\)Aged 15 and over who have been abroad for at least 2 months in the period 1999-2003; 
\(^2\)Aged 15 and over who have been abroad for at least 2 months in the period may 1\(^{st}\) 2004-31\(^{st}\) December 2006. 
Source: CMR Migrants' Database, based on the Polish LFS.
The use of self-employment as a means of avoiding the transitional measures imposed by that country can be documented for a number of countries. Own-account EU2 self-employment in the Netherlands and Belgium had a share of up to four times higher than nationals when transitional measures for EU2 were in place. The case of the United Kingdom is also very illustrative. The proportion of self-employed amongst EU8 migrant workers with no transitional measures is broadly in line with natives, but among EU2 workers, who were subject to such measures, the proportion is more than three times as high.
Self-employed (without employees) as share of total employment, by nationality, 2011

Source of data: Eurostat LFS data 2012
Main trends of labour mobility during the crisis

The interaction of the timing of both the transitional measures and the crisis impacts in both sending and receiving countries were decisive.

The main trends during the period of the crisis (Eurostat LFS data, second quarter 2008 – second quarter 2011):
- Working age population – nationals vs EU10 citizens
- Employment
- Change of employment rate
- Unemployment rates and changes
- Skills/occupation match
EU8 migrants in population of receiving EU15 country (Stocks, 1000)

Source of data: Eurostat LFS data 2014
EU2 migrants in population of receiving EU15 country (Stocks, 1000)

Source of data: Eurostat LFS data 2011
Intra-EU migration dynamics at the time of the crisis

As regards receiving countries only Spain and Ireland showed a decrease of EU-10 nationals of working age population between Q2 2008 and Q2 2011 in line with expectations (severe recession/labour market tension in receiving country).

Surprising is however that all other major receiving countries saw an increase of EU-10 nationals, especially the continuous increase of EU-10 migrants in Italy, also the substantial increase in the UK (by about 100th) is remarkable.
The effect of the crisis: working age population of EU10 countries in the EU15 (1000-s)

Source of data: Eurostat LFS data 2012
Change of employment rate of nationals and of EU10 during the most intensive period of the crisis, 2008Q2 and 2010Q2 (%-point)
During the crisis EU10 migrants were harder hit in the majority of EU15 countries and at least partially acted as labour market buffers. Both nationals and EU10 migrants saw declines in employment rates in the majority of EU15 countries but the trend was stronger for EU10 migrants;

On the other hand unemployment increased and EU10 migrants were again disproportionately affected (more often in irregular and non-standard forms of employment and in branches severely affected by the crisis).

At the same time, as net inflow of EU10 migrants grew but jobs in receiving countries were generally lost, **on absolute levels**, **jobs by nationals shrank more, than those filled by EU10 workers**.
Qualitative aspects: skill levels and skills/occupation mismatch

- Skills–jobs mismatch among migrant workers is substantial in both the United Kingdom and Italy, with disproportionate shares of EU10 migrant workers in EU15 countries working in blue-collar jobs. While a minority of UK nationals and EU15 citizens are employed as blue-collar worker (44 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively, in 2010), the share of blue-collar workers is 82 per cent for EU8 and 79 per cent for EU2 nationals).
- In 2010, out of around 33000 tertiary educated EU-2 workers in Italy, 20400 performed low-skilled jobs.
- Around 97000 EU-8 tertiary educated (out of 150000) had low-skilled jobs in UK
- Over-education thus seems to be far more widespread across EU8 and EU2 immigrants compared to the other groups.
## Job qualifications of immigrants in the UK and in Italy, 2006-2010

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<th>UK</th>
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<td>White collars</td>
<td>54.6</td>
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<td>Blue collars</td>
<td><strong>45.4</strong></td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td><strong>83.1</strong></td>
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<td>White collars</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>64.2</td>
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<td>21.4</td>
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<td>Blue collars</td>
<td><strong>44.0</strong></td>
<td>35.8</td>
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Over-education proves to be a clear phenomenon for EU10 migrants. EU10 migrants characteristically have higher educational attainment than non-EU migrants and often also than the local population in the target countries. The jobs–skills mismatch and thus the under-utilisation of human capital points to one of the biggest challenges facing intra-EU labour mobility. We see little sign of improvement, as migration duration increases. This phenomenon can be seen also as a failure of migration related policies to improve the efficiency of cross-border labour mobility.
Policy implications, role of trade unions

The design and application of transitional measures was clearly not optimal and resulted in adverse effects.

Even if formal acknowledgement of qualifications exist, in practice it does not work.

The role of middle man and recruiting agencies was controversial.

Welfare migration was marginal, but it is over-dimensioned and results in tensions (UK, in certain German provinces).

Role of trade unions: in UK, IE, SE they supported the opening up of the LM for NMS, but it in 2011 this changed for RO, BG (IE, UK).

In DE, AT trade unions supported transitional measures up to the maximum of 7 years.

Trade unions are active in supporting migrants (info centres, brochures) and also recruit them as members (UK).

Cross-border co-operation between trade unions of sending and receiving countries (UK-PL, IE-PL, DE-PL, AT-HU).
New wave of South-North migration?

Germany witnessed a new wave of immigration from crisis ridden countries, especially from Southern Europe, although the absolute numbers are still limited, migration flows (and % increase since 2011) in 2012 were:

- Greece: 35,8 thousand (increase: 41,7%)
- Italy: 45,1 thousand (increase: 39,5%)
- Portugal: 12,6 thousand (increase: 39,5%)
- Slovenia: 5,3 thousand (increase: 60,3%)
- Spain: 37,6 thousand (increase: 33,9%)
- Hungary: 54,8 thousand (increase: 30,6%)

A similar trend can be seen in the UK, where Spanish registrations for a UK national insurance number had been doubled in two years (from 23th in 2010 to 45th in 2012) and the number of registrations “PIIGS” from countries has doubled since 2009 to çca. 120 thousand by 2012.
'Benefit tourism‘ - freedom of mobility under pressure

Freedom of movement of workers is core value of EU, not negotiable
Since the Maastricht Treaty also ‘Freedom of residence within the EU’,
this means not just for work!

Technochratic view: Mobility is an “adjustment tool” during crisis for
better labour allocation, AT the SAME TIME

‘Free mobility’ came under pressure in the last years fed mostly by
populist nationalistic parties, but at certain places at the edge of
getting mainstream (UK, NL, Germany at ‘Länder’ level, Swiss
referendum)

The claim of ‘benefit tourism’ (UK, Germany): this is a political
campaign; no evidence (on the contrary):

immigrants made a net contribution of 15.2 billion GBP to UK public
finances, which amounts to an annual average of 2,610 GBP per capita
over the 5-year period. Over the same time frame, the annual net fiscal
cost of UK natives amounted to about 1,900 GBP per capita.”
Brücker, 2013: EU10 migrants less likely than nationals to take unemployment and welfare benefit; particularly lower take-up from tax financed welfare and social services.

“about 48 percent of all Germans without a migration background receive some form of social transfers, and that only about 30 percent of A2 migrants receive any social transfer, including child allowances”

Higher employment rates/lower unemployment rates also support this.

Trade unions need to defend the value of ‘free movement’ but also take efforts to address local problems/tensions in a co-operative way (local tensions are more often related to cuts on local government budgets).
Conclusions

Given the catastrophic labour market situation in Europe with huge differences among member states,

- with dramatic developments in the southern periphery
- with continuing LM stress in the East
- free movement of labour in effect (exc. HR)

The expectation is that cross border labour mobility helps and contributes to better labour allocation.

The major evidence on post enlargement East-West labour mobility is the high level of skills/occupation mismatch and a massive under-utilisation of human capital – this is a huge policy challenge.

Is this a temporary phenomenon or a new South-North mobility wave can follow this pattern?
Book publication