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# International Migration in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and the Outlook for East Central Europe

DUŠAN DRBOHLAV<sup>\*</sup>

Faculty of Science, Charles University, Prague

**Abstract:** The contribution is devoted to the international migration issue in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Czechoslovakia). Besides the contemporary trends, the international migration situation is briefly traced back to the communist era. The probable future scenario of international migration development - based especially on migration patterns that Western Europe has experienced - is also sketched, whilst mainly economic, social, political, demographic, psychological and geographical aspects are mentioned. Respecting a logical broader geopolitical and regional context, Poland and Hungary are also partly dealt with. Statistics are accompanied by some explanations, in order to see the various „faces“ of international migration (emigration versus immigration) as well as the different types of migration movements namely illegal/ clandestine, legal guest-workers, political refugees and asylum seekers.

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## 1. Introduction

The aim of the first part of this contribution is to describe and explain recent as well as contemporary international migration patterns in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (and the former Czechoslovakia). The second part is devoted to sketching a possible future scenario of international migration development. In order to tackle this issue Poland and Hungary have also been taken into account.

In spite of the general importance of theoretical concepts and frameworks of international migration (i.e. economic theoretical and historical-structural perspectives, psychosocial theories and systems and geographical approaches) the limited space at our disposal necessitates reference to other works that devote special attention to the problem of discussing theories<sup>1</sup> [see e.g. Bach-Schraml 1982, Wood 1982, Drbohlav 1993].

However, although contemporary theories of international migration are not of direct significance to this contribution, they are given partial and indirect consideration.

A completely new situation emerged in the Central and Eastern European countries after the collapse of the communist regimes in the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s.

The new reality reveals a relative similarity in international migration patterns within the above-mentioned countries, since migration itself mainly springs from political, economic and social factors. Moreover, from the sociocultural, geographical,

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<sup>\*</sup>) Direct all correspondence to RNDr. Dušan Drbohlav, CSc., Department of the Social Geography and the Regional Development, Faculty of Science of the Charles University, Albertov 6, 128 43 Praha 2.

<sup>1</sup>) The issue is a rather „hot“ one, also because of the questionable applicability of contemporary international migration theories to international migration movements from and within Central and Eastern Europe.

demographical and ecological points of view (which constitute other important migration determinants) these countries are more similar than they are different.

What, then, do Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary share in common with regard to the international migration issue? In the case of these countries practically all the former restrictions and barriers regarding international population movements have been abolished.<sup>2</sup> These countries border on the „classical“ Western World. This, connected with the socio-economic and political transformation, will probably mean that besides the migration of their own citizens westward, noticeable immigration movements will occur. Viewed from all perspectives this trend is fairly evident nowadays. Thus, these countries have, to a certain extent, operated as a migratory buffer between the „real West and the real East“. They are often labelled as transit countries. Some of the immigrants, however, have also stayed longer on these „transit territories“ for pragmatic reasons.

## **2. The recent history of international migration in the Czech Republic, Slovakia (Czechoslovakia)**

After the Second World War approximately 2.3 to 2.8 million Germans were transferred from Czechoslovakia. Chesnais [1992] states, for example, that 1.57 million Germans left the country in 1946. This exodus was only partly compensated by the reimmigration of the Czech and Slovak citizens who had left because of the war. These moves account for about 200,000 persons.

The second mass emigration followed the political events of February 1948 and saw a loss of about 250,000 people in the years 1948-1950.

The third mass exodus occurred in the wake of the political situation of 1968 and continued in tandem with the resulting „normalisation“ process; a figure of 200,000 emigrants, though high, is an accurate estimate. According to the former Federal Ministry of the Interior there were about 70,000 emigrants in 1968-1969. In addition, the estimates for the following two decades (1971-1980, 1981-1990) suggest there was an exodus of about 50,000 emigrants for each of the two periods (see also table 1). Chesnais [1992] states, for example, that „only“ 15,380 Czechoslovak citizens arrived in Germany as asylum seekers in 1981-1989.

In contrast to illegal migration, the data on „legal net international migration“ published by the official statistical bodies ranges between 1,000 and 3,000 per year for the whole of Czechoslovakia. The only exception was at the end of the 1960s when the net international migration officially reached a level of almost 8,000 per year. Between 1981-1989 there were officially 25,746 emigrants (77% for Europe) and 12,171 immigrants, that is, a 13,575 net migration loss [Marešová 1991].

Stated briefly, Czechoslovakia lost around 500,000 people from 1948 to 1990 due to international migration.

Reasons for emigration were mostly political and economic. Some people could no longer bear the anti-democratic and totalitarian regimes, others were dissatisfied with

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<sup>2</sup>) As far as access to „hard currency“ and a visa policy - an important means of controlling travel abroad in the past - are concerned, nowadays a citizen of the Czech Republic can obtain „hard currency“ to the amount of 12,000 Czech crowns a year and can travel without visa to any European country (except for Albania, Andorra, Gibraltar, Turkey, Cyprus and Serbia) and Montenegro and stay there for a minimum of 30 days.

their general standard of living. Very often, the bureaucratic decision-making of authorities concerning housing, working, travelling or a total disillusionment in the political climate resulted in emigration. Emigration itself was a serious act involving the rupture of all family ties and social networks. There was almost no way back (emigration was considered a criminal offence and was followed by the confiscation of possessions, and sometimes the persecution of relatives); there seemed little reason to hope for a democratic and „prosperous“ future for the country.

Table 1. Illegal Emigration from Czechoslovakia according to Various Data Sources (1981-1989)

|      | A     | B     | C     | D     |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1981 | 6,050 | 6,365 | -     | 7,276 |
| 1982 | 6,180 | 7,007 | -     | 6,903 |
| 1983 | 5,462 | 6,401 | -     | 5,793 |
| 1984 | 4,882 | 4,352 | 3,895 | 5,051 |
| 1985 | 5,007 | 4,644 | 3,997 | 5,226 |
| 1986 | 4,457 | 4,493 | 3,105 | 4,696 |
| 1987 | 5,054 | 4,320 | 4,110 | 5,061 |
| 1988 | 4,737 | 4,960 | 4,865 | 4,792 |
| 1989 | 5,053 | 6,776 | 4,920 | 5,515 |

A - Unpublished materials of the former Federal Ministry of the Interior.

B - „Statistická ročenka kriminality“ 1983-1990 („Statistical Yearbook of Criminality“).

C - „Ilegální emigrace z ČSSR, ČSR a SSR podle krajů v letech 1984-1988 a okresů v roce 1989. Praha, FSÚ 1990 (dle podkladů FMV)“. (Illegal Emigration from CSSR, CSR and SSR by Regions in the Years of 1984-1988 and by Districts in 1989).

D - Unpublished materials of the former Federal Ministry of the Interior - according to the registration of exit visa permits.

Source: [Uhlíř 1993] (Abridged).

Examining official statistics, it is possible to glean some basic personal characteristics amongst emigrants [Srb 1990]. One can assume that most of them (about 80%) were active (with an average age of 35) and were predominantly more skilled than the average, blue-collar worker or professional. The ratio of men compared to women was around 2:1. During the 1980s it was clearly indicated that the metropolitan and urban population was the main driving force behind emigration.<sup>3</sup> It seems that geographical positioning was an important factor, to the effect that the population of districts close to or bordering on the

<sup>3</sup>) The relationship between illegal emigration from the Czech Republic and various geographical, economic, social and demographical characteristics was investigated by means of a stepwise regression analysis by the Czech districts in the period of 1981-1983. The resulting model based on all 17 independent variables accounted for a substantial degree of variance ( $R^2 = 0.78$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ). Thus, it explained the causality and conditional aspects of the emigration fairly well, while confirming a close link between emigration and highly urbanised areas. The variables such as the share of people working in agriculture (the standard regression coefficient  $SRC = -0.339$ ), the share of people living in urbanised areas ( $SRC = 0.406$ ), the divorce rate ( $SRC = 0.445$ ), the environmental („natural“) quality ( $SRC = -0.451$ ) and the „centrality“ ( $SRC = 0.174$ ) came into the equation.

East-West border zone (e.g. Karlovy Vary, Cheb and Sokolov) emigrated much more often than others.

Western European countries, especially Germany, but also traditional immigration regions such as the USA, Canada and Australia were likely targets for emigrants from Czechoslovakia. Unfortunately, a regional picture of legal/official emigration provides insufficient information for establishing the truth concerning illegal movements (table 2).

Since the beginning of 1993 former internal migration movements between the two parts of Czechoslovakia have become international, this being a result of the creation of the two independent subjects - the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

It is perhaps worth mentioning the difference in intensity of the illegal emigration between the Czech and Slovak Republics. While the population ratio between the two republics was more or less 2:1, the ratio of illegal emigration was about 4:1 in 1968-1980, and somewhere between 2 and 3:1 in favour of the Czech Republic in 1981-1989 (estimated according to the internal data sources of the former Federal Ministry of the Interior).

Table 2. Legal Emigration from Czechoslovakia according to Country of Destination (1981-1989) - Selected „Western“ Countries and Continents

|                | 1981  | 1983  | 1985  | 1987  | 1989  | 1981-1989 |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Europe         | 3,048 | 2,584 | 1,684 | 1,830 | 2,004 | 19,729    |
| Germany        | 1,264 | 982   | 481   | 619   | 936   | 7,301     |
| Greece         | 482   | 445   | 232   | 201   | 159   | 2,998     |
| Austria        | 194   | 151   | 142   | 207   | 161   | 1,455     |
| Italy          | 103   | 106   | 90    | 104   | 128   | 982       |
| Sweden         | 71    | 77    | 50    | 46    | 66    | 564       |
| Switzerland    | 73    | 54    | 40    | 53    | 81    | 503       |
| France         | 64    | 71    | 46    | 41    | 40    | 458       |
| United Kingdom | 65    | 41    | 43    | 37    | 49    | 426       |
| Asia           | 135   | 303   | 204   | 84    | 75    | 1,592     |
| America        | 295   | 251   | 252   | 283   | 324   | 2,505     |
| Australia      | 93    | 103   | 77    | 93    | 130   | 786       |
| Africa         | 142   | 114   | 106   | 30    | 34    | 799       |
| Total          | 3,733 | 3,404 | 2,399 | 2,337 | 2,590 | 25,746    |

Source: [Marešová 1991] (Modified).

As far as internal migration movements are concerned, there were rather substantial flows from Slovakia to the Czech Republic in the first half of the 1950s, altogether about 33,000 people a year (the counter flows were about 21,000 - [Häufler 1984]). The numbers were 16,500 and 10,300 a year for the period of 1965-1969 [Häufler 1984]. Over time this migration has continued to diminish, with the net migration loss for Slovakia falling to approximately 3,500 in the 1970s and 1980s [Dzúrová, Rychtaříková, Drbohlav 1992]. For the years 1991 and 1992, official net migration rates represent 1,010 and 4,917, respectively, in favour of the Czech Republic.

Prior to the split of Czechoslovakia, there was some indication of mass movements, including the gypsy population, from Slovakia to the Czech Republic. For

the time being, however, such expectations seem to be exaggerated and one can only wait for more accurate data.

### 3. The current migratory situation

A completely new era in the migration process started in the 1990s. The state actually observed universal human rights and embodied a freedom of movement in various forms in its legislation. In addition, the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees were passed (and ratified by the President in October 1991). Various levels of co-operation with organisations dealing with international migration has been accomplished - e.g. with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organisation for Migration. It became possible to abolish visa duty (within Europe) as well as to conclude several agreements on employing Czechoslovak citizens abroad. Negotiations are continuing, especially concerning the „asylum seeker“ issue.

Migration movements have also continued since the „Velvet Revolution“. The precise statistical recording of emigration is very difficult. In 1990 and 1991 there were officially 4,980 and 3,237 emigrants from Czechoslovakia (preliminary data). About 83% of them emigrated from the Czech Republic.

In 1990, the main target areas were Germany (1,261), Switzerland (742), Australia (430), Canada (389) and Austria (334) [Marešová 1991]. This data is likely to be an underestimate because it does not cover all illegal „economic“ and long-term emigration - not to mention illegal shorter stays - nor does it include some of the movements of those with real intent to stay in the West.

Legal (official) post-Revolution immigration is a fairly interesting and relevant phenomenon for analysis. In the course of time - from 1990 (table 3), through 1991 to the first half of 1992 - increasing numbers of immigrants 3,282, 7,392 (preliminary data) and 4,851 (preliminary data) respectively, show that Czechoslovakia offers an attractive environment for settlement. This concerns perhaps mostly people of Czech or Slovak origin (nearly 60% of the all immigrants in 1990), including the „false immigration“ connected with the restitution process.<sup>4</sup>

#### 3.1. Illegal immigration

Illegal „economic“ rather than „political“ immigration is another feature of the contemporary migration situation. Various sources suggest that at the end of 1992 from 150,000 to 200,000 migrants were staying illegally in the former Czechoslovakia [e.g. Soldiers 1993, *Interni* 1993] - as compared to about 41,000 foreigners who were officially granted permission to stay either for a long-term period or permanently [Marešová 1993]. It is estimated that about 40,000 of these illegal immigrants were citizens of the former Soviet Union [*Interni* 1993]. These were accompanied by others both from Central and Eastern European countries and from the Third World. Only a minority of these immigrants applied for refugee status (see below). For most of them, the Czech Republic and Slovakia serve as intermediate stations on their journey to the West. According to the latest data from the Czech Ministry of the Interior altogether

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<sup>4</sup>) Returning property confiscated under the communist regime in the former Czechoslovakia is confined only to persons who live permanently in the territory of the Czech Republic or Slovakia. Sometimes this prerequisite is overcome by living on the territory „de jure“ rather than „de facto“.

32,759 illegal attempts to cross the Czechoslovak border were recorded in the first 9 months of 1993 (nearly 93% of them tried to enter Germany). Most of these failed migrants came from former Yugoslavia (52%), Bulgaria (13%) and Romania (12%). However, the number of successful emigrations is likely to be many times higher.

Table 3. Official Immigrants Who Came to Czechoslovakia in 1990 - Breakdown by Personal Characteristics

|                       |                       |       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| To the Czech Republic |                       | 2,338 |
| To Slovakia           |                       | 944   |
| Czechs by origin      |                       | 1,430 |
| Slovaks by origin     |                       | 432   |
| Males                 |                       | 1,865 |
| Females               |                       | 1,417 |
| Active                |                       | 1,840 |
| Dependent             |                       | 980   |
| Retired               |                       | 459   |
| Basic education       |                       | 709   |
| University-educated   |                       | 690   |
| Age:                  | 0-14                  | 309   |
|                       | 20-49                 | 2,136 |
|                       | 60 and over           | 428   |
| Coming from           | Europe                | 1,928 |
|                       | Germany               | 471   |
|                       | Soviet Union          | 358   |
|                       | Poland                | 274   |
|                       | Austria               | 186   |
|                       | Yugoslavia            | 158   |
|                       | America               | 500   |
|                       | USA                   | 205   |
|                       | Canada                | 169   |
|                       | Asia                  | 310   |
|                       | Australia and Oceania | 99    |
|                       | Africa                | 84    |
| Total                 |                       | 3,282 |

Source: „Pohyb obyvatelstva v Československu“ (1992). Praha: Federální statistický úřad. (Yearbook of Population Statistics).

Nevertheless, some of the illegal immigrants have remained longer in the Czech Republic or Slovakia. A number of them work illegally, with some engaged in dubious activities.

A „legislative solution“ to the problem of illegal immigrants is contained within the „cascade policy“ where those who were not accepted by Germany, for example, could be „cascaded“ onward through Slovakia to their respective countries [*Refugees* 1993]. However, this policy depends on co-operation and re-admission agreements between the countries involved. As for the Czech Republic, such agreements came into effect with Austria (1992), Slovakia and Poland (1993) and with Romania (1994). The signing of further agreements, namely with the Ukraine and Hungary can be expected soon.

Negotiations on the key agreement with Germany are under way. Other Western countries should also participate.

### 3.2. Guest-workers

The Czech Republic and Slovakia are trying to regulate the numbers of labour migrants in their countries. At the same time they are also attempting to legally control - through bilateral or multilateral agreements - the possibility for their citizens to work abroad.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the number of foreign workers legally employed („relics“ of the former regime) has sharply diminished in Czechoslovakia (table 4). While there were 95,450 foreign workers registered at the end of 1990 (most of them from Poland - 54,813 and Vietnam - 33,970 - [Marešová 1991]) only several thousand remained in the beginning of 1993 [Interní 1993]. Official contracts signed in the past with former communist countries could not be extended and workers were obliged to return to their home countries. However, some of them have remained on the basis of individual work permits or trade licenses, while others try to go westward illegally.

Table 4. Ethnic Structure of Foreign Workers in the Territory of Czechoslovakia (1991-1992)

|                     | 1991 (31. 12.) | (%)   | 1992 (30. 6.) | (%)   |
|---------------------|----------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| Poland              | 16,777         | 56.2  | 7,168         | 49.5  |
| Vietnam             | 9,808          | 32.9  | 5,483         | 37.8  |
| former Yugoslavia   | 1,899          | 6.4   | 1,307         | 9.0   |
| former Soviet Union | 308            | 1.0   | 193           | 1.3   |
| Bulgaria            | 279            | 0.9   | 106           | 0.7   |
| Hungary             | 283            | 0.9   | 96            | 0.7   |
| Mongolia            | 151            | 0.5   | 37            | 0.3   |
| Romania             | 136            | 0.5   | 28            | 0.2   |
| Cuba                | 100            | 0.3   | 24            | 0.2   |
| Others              | 100            | 0.3   | 52            | 0.4   |
| Total               | 29,841         | 100.0 | 14,494        | 100.0 |

Source: [Marešová 1994].

Several „new“ official agreements have been concluded between Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary; new agreements have been established concerning topics such as the „guest-worker“ issue in general, the regulation of border workers, specific sector recruitment of manpower and the quota of those working on a contract basis [Hönekopp 1992]. Thus, with regard to Germany, there is some possibility of a rather limited number of Czechs and Slovaks (1,400 in 1993) being legally employed there as a means of increasing their skills and language abilities. Other possibilities are linked to inter-firm co-operation (mostly construction or craftsmanship), to seasonal work (mostly construction, agriculture and services - see table 5) or to regular commuting across the border zone (within an area of approximately 50 kilometres) [Marešová 1991].

At the same time, there is a weekly, even daily and mostly „illegal“ movement from the Czech Republic across the Czech-German and Czech-Austrian borders. With the present exchange rate, the earnings, though considerably less than the domestic ones, are

very lucrative for Czech workers.<sup>5</sup> It is estimated that such movement may represent something around 16,000 commuters [Marešová 1993]. Even given the necessity, it will, however, be very difficult to access the real numbers of these migrants until the German and Austrian bodies are willing to co-operate by, for example, releasing the appropriate data. The socio-economic structures of some of the districts or cities in border areas seem to be affected by this exodus, not to mention the losses inflicted on the Czech Republic by income-tax evasion or „false unemployment“.

Table 5. Seasonal Workers - Czechs Who Obtained Work Permits in Germany from April 1991 till the End of July 1992

|                            |        |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Total number of applicants | 20,959 |
| Males                      | 17,287 |
| Age:                       |        |
| under 20                   | 2,313  |
| 21-30                      | 6,937  |
| 31-40                      | 6,319  |
| 41-50                      | 3,930  |
| 51-60                      | 750    |
| 61 and over                | 138    |
| unidentified               | 572    |
| Sector and branches:       |        |
| agriculture and forestry   | 3,452  |
| restaurant sector          | 3,231  |
| construction               | 7,900  |
| other                      | 6,376  |

Source: [Marešová 1994].

Note: The total rose to nearly 41,000 by the end of June 1993.

Worthy of note is the fact that the Czech Republic itself has become a rather attractive workplace. Out of the more than 77,000 legally staying foreigners (either on a long-term basis or permanently) in the Czech Republic at the end of 1993, about 28,000 were provided with work permits and a further 10,000 with trade licenses (preliminary data from the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Economy). Most of them came from the „East“. Besides those who work legally, the number of illegal foreign workers is probably mushrooming. The number of workers coming from the advanced Western World has thus far been limited. They are mostly experts and advisers

<sup>5</sup>) Regarding contemporary earnings of Czech seasonal workers in Germany, it is worth mentioning the results of Horáková's study [1993]. Based on a sample of 27 respondents she informs us that their monthly earnings range between 400 DM and 2,880 DM (from about 7,000 Czech crowns to about 50,000; with an average of 28,000 Czech crowns), whilst the lowest earnings went to unqualified young girls who work only as baby-sitters or au pairs. By contrast, the average monthly nominal wage of a person employed in the sectors of the Czech national economy was 5,809 Czech crowns for the second half of 1993. The minimum wage was 2,200 Czech crowns.

working for foreign firms and companies as well as English teachers staying for predominantly shorter periods.<sup>6</sup>

### **3.3. Refugees and asylum seekers**

Refugees and asylum seekers constitute a new migration feature in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. As early as November of 1990 a bill concerning refugees was passed by the Czechoslovak Parliament.<sup>7</sup> The Ministry of Interior is responsible for dealing with this issue.

In contrast to other types of migration, statistics in this area seem to be quite reliable. However, the „objectivity of the data itself“ is affected by many migrants who misuse the refugee status under the guise of political reasons, when in fact they are merely looking for a better environment in which to live. Thus, about 50% of asylum seekers who have applied for official refugee status in the former Czechoslovakia „disappeared“ before their applications were investigated<sup>8</sup> [Interní 1993]. They sought or still seek the opportunity to reach a Western European country. The same is characteristic of those whose applications were rejected by the official bodies.

All in all, about 90% of those seeking refugee status in Czechoslovakia did not intend to stay. Even those who were granted this status do not want to stay [Sýkorová 1993].

Altogether 4,859 asylum seekers passed through refugee camps in Czechoslovakia between July 1990 and November 1992 [Sýkorová 1993]. In November 1992 alone, 445 people were officially seeking refugee status and staying in refugee camps [Sýkorová 1993]. Sýkorová's [1993] analysis sheds light on some more detailed characteristics pertaining to asylum seekers (table 6).

In this period as a whole, the majority of asylum seekers came from Romania (48%), Bulgaria (20%) and the former Soviet Union (18%). The percentage of those coming and officially seeking refugee status from the Third World countries was very low. As for composition by sex, almost 75% were males. This is also valid for the three main source countries. 65% of those from Romania, 61% from Bulgaria and 47% from the former Soviet Union were staying in the camps for periods of up to four months. The percentage of those staying longer than one year ranged from 5% (Bulgaria) to 9% (Romania).

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<sup>6</sup>) What is interesting, however, is that according to some unofficial sources there are more than 20,000, mostly young North Americans, residing in Prague. Although temporary, their stays last generally for a longer period of one year.

<sup>7</sup>) According to the law, refugee status is granted for a five-year period. A foreigner can be granted the status on the basis of his/her well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality and membership to a particular social group or adherence to a particular political opinion. Humanitarian reasons can also be taken into account when granting the status. The status guarantees „equal treatment“, that is the enjoyment the same rights as domestic citizens with the exception of the right to vote, conscription and some aspects of employment and property ownership [Marešová 1991].

<sup>8</sup>) According to the refugee law, applicants for this status are obliged to stay in camps until their applications have been investigated and processed.

Table 6. Asylum Seekers Who Passed through Refugee Camps in Czechoslovakia between July 1990 and November 1992 by Selected Countries of Origin and Sex

|              | Male  |       | Female |       | Structure by Sex (%) |        |
|--------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|----------------------|--------|
|              |       | (%)   |        | (%)   | Male                 | Female |
| Afghanistan  | 64    | 1.9   | 27     | 2.2   | 70.3                 | 29.7   |
| Angola       | 183   | 5.5   | 33     | 2.6   | 84.7                 | 15.3   |
| Bulgaria     | 641   | 19.4  | 251    | 20.0  | 71.9                 | 28.1   |
| Iraq         | 44    | 1.3   | 23     | 1.8   | 65.7                 | 34.3   |
| Yugoslavia   | 56    | 1.7   | 40     | 3.2   | 58.3                 | 41.7   |
| Pakistan     | 9     | 0.3   | 0      | 0.0   | 100.0                | 0.0    |
| Romania      | 1,648 | 49.9  | 529    | 42.1  | 75.7                 | 24.3   |
| Soviet Union | 500   | 15.2  | 308    | 24.5  | 61.9                 | 38.1   |
| Vietnam      | 138   | 4.2   | 34     | 2.7   | 80.2                 | 19.8   |
| Zaire        | 23    | 0.7   | 12     | 1.0   | 65.7                 | 34.3   |
| Total        | 3,306 | 100.0 | 1,257  | 100.0 | 72.5                 | 27.5   |

Source: [Sýkorová 1993] (Abridged).

Among the 440 asylum seekers in the camps in November 1992, 37% were from the former Soviet Union, 28% from Romania, 12% from Bulgaria and 8% from Yugoslavia [Sýkorová 1993]. Thus, in comparison with the general picture based on all asylum seekers passing through during 1990-1992, the most contemporary data revealed the shift towards an increasing number from the former Soviet Union. In addition, more women (over 40%) and younger people (33% between 0 and 19) were registered.

All in all, there is quite a clear indication of what has been discussed above: „asylum seekers“, individual males or even whole families, try to escape westwards as soon as possible with „economic“ motives tending to dominate, sometimes being interwoven with political ones. According to the questionnaires filled out by every person going to the camps, the pull of the traditional immigration countries such as Canada, Australia and the USA, highly exceeds that of Western European countries and the rest of the world as the target areas [Sýkorová 1993]. However, the reliability of these statements is questionable.

Altogether 920 asylum seekers (about 19%) were granted refugee status in the former Czechoslovakia from the mid 1990s until the end of 1992. The attempt to curb the inflow of asylum seekers during that time is rather evident.

The latest figures on foreigners seeking refugee status in the first half of 1993 revealed that of the 359 new applicants, 75% came from the former Soviet Union. Nearly 65% of them were Armenians. About 24% asylum seekers have been granted refugee status in this period. Thus, the state accept well-founded reasons (especially war) for fleeing the mother country.

#### 4. What can be expected in the future? Possible scenario

The past and current situation in Central Europe as well as the experience of Western European development can serve as a suitable platform for pinpointing some features and formulating a possible development scenario as regards international migration in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. However, in doing so, one must keep in mind that to foresee the future of such a complex phenomenon is a highly

difficult, even hazardous, task. There is absolutely no certainty, only the probability that such a scenario will be realised.

First, it is necessary to formulate some of the prerequisites predetermining the environment of the scenario to come. Of course, they are in fact again only presumable, even if obvious, predictions:

- 1) The current political and socio-economic development is „irreversible“.
- 2) Despite various difficulties the future political and socio-economic development towards prosperous democratic societies with market economies will be fairly smooth and will go hand in hand with a close co-operation with Western European countries in particular.
- 3) The negative consequences of the possibly unfavourable political and socio-economic development in Eastern European countries (including the former Soviet Union) will not have a catastrophic impact upon the countries in question in the future.

We will briefly outline the probable migration picture of the above four countries for approximately the next decade. After emphasising the common features we will present the probable migration patterns in the Czech and Slovak Republics.

As the four countries of the Visegrad group are, economically and politically, fairly stable, there is absolutely no inclination of a mass exodus of emigrants from this area. In addition, „the peak phase of emigration seems to have already passed“ [Korcelli 1992]. Thus, the two very important factors determining emigration are likely to be almost out of the question.<sup>9</sup> However, unless the overall living standards in the given countries come closer to those of the West, there will always be that temptation „to eat sweeter fruits“ abroad.

The demographic and ecological parameters of these four countries - another set of important migration („push“) determinants - are unlikely to trigger emigration, although in some cases they cannot be completely ruled out.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>) Deep-seated economic and social inequalities in the quality of life seem to be the main determinants for general international migratory movements. A second main determinant is the complex factors connected with political instability, political oppression, persecution, lack of freedom, eviction, civil unrest, or even wars and battles, especially on ethnic and religious grounds.

<sup>10</sup>) Generally there has been a „deterioration of demographic parameters“ as one proceeds from Poland, over Slovakia, the Czech Republic to Hungary. Hence despite projected ageing and declining fertility factors and thus a growing likeness to the Western demographic behaviour, „according to most scenarios the proportion of 20-64 year olds in Central and Eastern Europe shows a significant increase, especially in the first decade of the next century“ (including Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Romania, - [Hablicsek 1992]). This fact could perhaps have a slight influence on international migratory patterns, especially in Poland.

Appalling environmental degradation in the given countries could propel migration, be it more often within the specific country than abroad.

With regard to the environment, „the difference between the longest and shortest life expectancy was 3.48 years for women and for men even 5.02 years“ by district in the former Czechoslovakia in the second half of the 1980s [Dzúrová 1991]. „It is in the context with quality of environment in relevant regions“ [Dzúrová 1991].

It is also likely that the possible demographic „pull“ migration factor (attracting people from Central and Eastern Europe as well) - the demographic ageing of Western countries which results in an inability to meet the demands of their own economies<sup>11</sup> - will be restrained by restrictive migration policies. Western countries will „protect their own population“<sup>12</sup> and will mobilise their own resources. Nevertheless, the total impermeability of their borders seems wholly unrealistic.

Indeed, there are other factors easing East-West European migration contacts: for example, geographical and cultural similarities, historical ties, existing social networks (especially to Poland), similar climates, the possibility of relatively cheap travel and a great deal of information on possible target areas.

One can assume that the propensity to emigrate will be higher in the case of Poland where emigration is linked to national history: „the people of Poland have been unable to put down roots in a specific country, as they have been affected by territorial changes and moves over the centuries, giving them a strong tradition of mobility, which may make them more likely to leave“ [Chesnais 1992]. In addition, there is the large Polish diaspora in the West, which is potentially beneficial to those Poles considering emigration.

The trend „to stay at home rather than emigrate“ is confirmed by both the current and the past migration situations as well as by some of the public opinion surveys such as that of Hungary [Szoke 1992]. „Hungarians prefer to stay, irrespective of the country's troubles“ [Szoke 1992].

The Czechs and Slovaks also seem to be deeply rooted and prefer to stay in their own countries (see below).

These conclusions are more or less in accordance with the opinions of 63 experts on migration issues from all over Europe who have taken part in a „Delphi“ survey dealing with the topic of international migration between Eastern and Western European countries.<sup>13</sup>

Future westward outflows from the given countries will probably be more short-term, and increasingly linked to bilateral and multilateral agreements or exchange programmes.

With the growing co-operation between the West and East there will be a decreasing „necessity“ to emigrate „for ever“ from the East. This co-operation requires a

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<sup>11</sup>) „Demographic trends and labour force projections indicate that by the year 2000 employment in the EC member states is likely to have risen faster than labour force growth, causing labour supply shortages. The most recent estimate, for example, envisages a contraction of the European Community's labour force by 5.5% - from 145 million in 1990 to 137 million - in the next three decades“ [Ghosh 1992].

<sup>12</sup>) It seems very realistic that immigration in Western Europe will continue to be a highly selective process. „Doors“ will likely only to be opened for some of the more highly educated people, for family members of labour immigrants who came in the past and for specific depleting labour force types.

<sup>13</sup>) Research on this topic is being compiled by the author of this contribution under the auspices of the Catholic University Leuven - see table 7.

minimum human presence „to guarantee the authenticity and quality of the relationships“ [Chesnais 1992].<sup>14</sup>

Further moves to the West will comprise of high-performance students and specialists from the capitals and larger urban areas. Although at present there is a continual exodus of intellectuals this may decrease in the future. State intervention in response to this cannot be completely ruled out.

It is likely that more qualified and active people who often commute or those seasonally involved in services, agriculture and construction or in other „deficit branches and sectors“ in the West will also be on the move. This means that some of the border regions will become rather important.

However, despite increasing organised and legal flows of people and in spite of the evident restrictive migration policy of Western European countries, the illegal flow of workers towards the West is likely to continue, although in the course of time the numbers will decrease.<sup>15</sup> It will not only be intellectuals but also unqualified people and those who yearn for adventure. Citizens of other Eastern European countries as well as those from Third World countries are trying and, despite various restrictive methods, will enter the Western World with the help of the transit buffer countries in question.

All bear witness to the fact that especially males (but, for example, in the case of illegal circular movements more and more females) and younger adults constitute the majority of those who migrate.

Germany, followed by Austria, seem to be the most popular targets by far for emigrants from the four given countries (see also table 7). Nevertheless, Benelux, Italy, Denmark and, to a smaller extent, perhaps Sweden, Switzerland and France are likely to become more involved. On the other hand, Portugal, Spain, Ireland and the United Kingdom seem to be more or less „out of reach“. There are also traditional immigration countries such as the USA, Canada and Australia. They will continue to serve as the countries of destination for a rather limited number of people (with perhaps the exception of Poland). On the other hand the traditional immigration countries could become more attractive targets for those migrants using Central Europe merely as a transit area.

In the meantime, it seems the mutual migration circulation among the countries in question will increase.

As far as the psychological aspects connected to emigration are concerned, negative consequences, with perhaps the exception of „dual morality“<sup>16</sup> [Okolski 1992],

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<sup>14</sup>) Japan, by way of example, had about 83,000 people working in various firms all over the world in 1988 [Russell-Tietelbaum 1992].

The further development of contacts between Eastern and Western Europe „should give rise to greater human mobility and to the establishment of networks of people from the West in the countries of Eastern Europe (examples being engineers, technicians, teachers, administrative staff and businessmen) and, conversely, by East European nationals (such as students, research workers and managers) in the countries of the West“ [Chesnais 1992].

<sup>15</sup>) It seems that despite any state intervention in the form of restrictive policy and the curbing of immigration, the „pragmatic attitudes“ of Western employers welcoming and taking advantage of the very cheap immigration manpower will continue to exist.

<sup>16</sup>) Okolski [1992] singles out migrant workers, who very often experience contradictory situations when living in the West as opposed to living in the East, examples of this being regular versus irregular work; discriminatory treatment versus preference; living and working in

will be limited. This is a result of those more short-term moves which do not include separation from their families on one hand or integration and assimilation on the other.

In the course of time the given countries themselves will increasingly become immigration targets. According to the migration „law of succession“ [e.g. Korčák 1969] that has become operational since the artificial barriers were demolished, Third World immigrants will probably enter Central and Eastern Europe on a larger scale. In addition, other Eastern Europeans, especially from Romania, Bulgaria and some republics of the former Soviet Union, will likely join inflows to Central Europe. However, there is some indication that at least some of the four countries in question (including perhaps the Czech Republic) will further curb immigration through restrictive policies. Nevertheless, the excess numbers that already exist will split into two parts: those who will seek the simplest and shortest way of reaching the real West and those who either have been rejected by the West or will be „satisfied with the territory“. On the other hand, some opportunities for legal work will presumably exist for immigrants. Those will mainly depend upon the economic situation of the particular country.

The host societies will have to face immigrant problems similar to those of the Western European countries - including, for example, rising xenophobia and racism and the potential immigrant ghettoisation in some of the large cities.

Looking at it from an „economic and political“ point of view it does not seem realistic that Poland and Hungary will support the immigration of large amounts of Poles and Hungarians by origin and currently living in other Central and Eastern European countries as ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, one can assume that a rather noticeable number of them, especially Poles from the former Soviet Union and perhaps Hungarians from Romania, are likely to reach their motherlands.

Poland, in contrast with the other countries in question, will further develop contacts with its large Western diaspora. This will result in further return migration.

Everything mentioned should more or less touch the Czech Republic and Slovakia in some degree. Nevertheless, some more concrete comments concerning these countries are valuable.

1) Czechs and Slovaks seem to be deeply rooted in their own country. Although there is a tradition of emigration there are, however, factors curbing the numbers of those leaving their respective countries. First, there is the not altogether unrealistic hope of a „better tomorrow“. Secondly, people were and are even more tied to their own country.<sup>17</sup> Thirdly, there is a heritage of the last forty years in which nearly all aspects of „personal activity“ (a very important factor to emigration) were subjugated. Fourthly, this typical of the Czech mentality in particular not to solve a situation „directly and drastically“.

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humiliating conditions versus displaying „millionaire manners“; operating in an irregular situation versus aspiring to the status of a respectable citizen.

<sup>17</sup>) It is worth mentioning in this context that in 1991 flats in family houses represented 41% and 50% of the entire number of flats being used as domiciles in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, respectively [Kučera 1992]. In many cases the effort (work, money and time) required to build such a house may mean that people are perhaps more emotionally tied to their property and place than in other countries.

Table 7. Calculated Burden of International Migration on the Given Countries in Absolute Terms over the Next Five Years

|  | Mean* |
|--|-------|
| <i>Immigration to Western from Central and Eastern Europe</i>  |       |
| Germany  | 1.38  |
| Austria  | 2.21  |
| Sweden   | 2.81  |
| France   | 2.96  |
| Italy  | 3.08  |
| Finland  | 3.10  |
| Switzerland  | 3.28  |
| Benelux  | 3.31  |
| Denmark  | 3.54  |
| Greece   | 3.55  |
| United Kingdom   | 3.68  |
| Norway   | 3.74  |
| Spain  | 4.04  |
| Portugal   | 4.35  |
| Ireland  | 4.62  |
| <i>Emigration from Central and Eastern into Western Europe</i> |       |
| former Yugoslavia  | 1.66  |
| Albania  | 2.30  |
| Romania  | 2.32  |
| Belorussia, Ukraine, Moldavia                                  | 2.50  |
| Poland   | 2.60  |
| The rest of the former Soviet Union                            | 2.69  |
| Bulgaria   | 3.06  |
| The Baltic republics   | 3.47  |
| Slovakia   | 3.48  |
| Hungary  | 3.93  |
| The Czech Republic   | 4.09  |

\*) Respondents were to rank the countries according to the calculated burden (in absolute terms) of the immigration/emigration flow: ranking from one to six - very high to very low.

Source: Preliminary results of a Delphi study on international migration between Eastern and Western European countries. The research is being conducted under the auspices of the Catholic University Leuven. 63 participants have taken part in the first Delphi round. Politicians and officers as well as top scholars, especially sociologists, economists, geographers and demographers from all over Europe (37 from Central and Eastern Europe) constitute the participants dealing with the migration issue.

Nevertheless, it is likely that in the next ten or fifteen years there will be a slight - as opposed to a great - net international migration loss per year in the settlement migration of both of the countries.

2) One can assume that for various reasons (e.g. the disadvantageous economic structure, the „relative immaturity of the political arena“) Slovakia is not likely to go through the transition process as „easily and quickly“ as the Czech Republic. Yet,

despite the rather obvious process of socio-economic equalisation between the two republics after the second World War, differences in the standard of living, even if slight, do exist.<sup>18</sup> The discussion thus far bears witness to the continuing migration loss from Slovakia to the Czech Republic. After the initial „derangement“ this loss could reach, at least in the foreseeable future, a slightly higher level than in the 1980s.

- 3) A high return of immigrants cannot be expected. It seems that people who emigrated from Czechoslovakia in the past are fairly well-settled in their host societies and may have family commitments there. Furthermore, since the Revolution, political mistakes have been made which would have discouraged rather than persuaded the emigrants to return to their home countries.
- 4) The transformation process is likely to influence the regional picture of internal migration movements which may follow, in particular, the changing „economic micro and mesoclimate“. Besides the capitals - Prague and Bratislava - Western Bohemia seems to have rather promising prospects in terms of pulling capital and people, including those coming from the West. In addition, almost the entire zone bordering on the Western World, considered in the past a periphery, should benefit from its geographical position and, thus, from circulating and „enriching“ mutual movements.

If, however, due to the collapse of the transformation processes, political upheaval, civil wars and the like, the development as a whole does not respect the four above-mentioned prerequisites to some degree, one may also expect disorderly and huge migration outflows from the countries in question.

DUŠAN DRBOHLAV held a research position at the Geographical Institute of the Czechoslovak/Czech Academy of Sciences (1987-1992). He spent a year at the Catholic University Leuven (Belgium) working on the study, *International Migration (Theory and Selected Aspects of the European East-West International Migration)*. He is now a researcher in the Department of Social Geography and Regional Development of the Faculty of Science, Charles University, Prague. Major research areas include population geography (especially internal and international migration), social geography and behavioural geography (preferences and the space mobility of the population).

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<sup>18</sup>) According to the Czechoslovak Census of March 1991, the selected facilities of households were as follows: an automatic washing machine (46.1% in the Czech Republic versus 34.2% in Slovakia); a colour television (58.9, 48.9 respectively); a personal automobile (45.7, 38.5) and weekend-house or cottage for relaxing (12.2, 5.4).

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