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## **The Faces of Polish Migration after 2004 with Selected Aspects of Emigration to Italy\***

### **1. Introduction: the faces of migration**

Migration is a unique and very dynamic phenomenon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In recent years, the ease of labour movement and its scale have increased considerably. According to the United Nations' estimates, migrants represent 3% of the global population. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of emigrants arriving in developed countries increased by 2.4%; between 1982 and 1990 by 2.9%, and between 1990 and 2000 by 3.1%, which means that the upward trend of migration has already been apparent for some time. Therefore, any country can be both sending and receiving migrants. As a result, labour mobility will play an increasingly important role for the long-term economic prospects of virtually every country, not only in the European Union, but also worldwide. In addition, in the decades to come, migration of labour will increase, in particular due to great demographic changes, including ageing and stagnating populations in developed countries. The UN analyses show, for instance, that the population of Italy will fall from 57 to 41 million by 2050, while the population of Japan will decline by 17%<sup>1</sup>. The high volatility and the dynamics of migration is easily observable if we analyse the data on migration to and from the UK.

According to R. Winnett, the British are now witnessing the most intense brain drain for 50 years. Out of 3.247 million people who were born in England but live abroad, more than 1.1 million are highly-skilled professionals. The group includes teachers, doctors, engineers, scientists, etc.<sup>2</sup> According to the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), more than three-quarters of these professionals have lived outside of the UK for more than 10 years. No other country from among other members of the OECD loses as many skilled citizens as England does. For instance, Germany has been left by 860,000 highly-skilled professionals, America by 410,000 and France by 370,000<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>\* This is as yet unpublished material. If quoted it should be referred to through its Polish original, as: MARKOWSKI, k. (2008): *Oblicza migracji Polaków po 2004 r. z uwzględnieniem wybranych aspektów emigracji do Włoch*. [In:] D. BRYK, B. ROŻNOWSKI and M. St. ZIĘBA (Eds.), *Migracja zarobkowa do Włoch. Próba podejścia interdyscyplinarnego*. („Studia nad migracją” t. 3) Lublin: KUL – EL-Press (ISBN 83-86869-30-5), p. 71-92.

Taylor, A. (2008). “Workers of the world on the move.” *Financial Times* 24 June 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Winnett, R. (2008). “Biggest brain drain from UK in 50 years.” *Daily Telegraph* 26 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1579345/Biggest-brain-drain-from-UK-in-50-years.html>>.

<sup>3</sup> Taylor, J. (2008). “Minority Report: Our foreign immigrant brain gain and the British immigrant brain drain.” 21 Feb. 2008. <<http://blogs.independent.co.uk/independent/2008/02/our-foreign-imm.html>>.

The most popular destinations among British emigrants include not only English-speaking countries such as Australia, the United States, Canada and New Zealand but also Spain, France and Germany. Among the most common reasons for British migration, the following are cited: better earnings, warmer climate, search for a better quality of life as well as high prices and taxes in the UK<sup>4</sup>.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), in 2006 as many as 510,000 people arrived to the UK to stay for at least 12 months, among whom only 14% were British nationals returning to their home country. In the same year, 400,000 people left England. Among them there were 193,000 foreigners who had lived in the UK and returned to their own countries, while the remaining 207,000 were British citizens. More than half moved to just four countries; namely, 32% moved to Australia and New Zealand, 24% to Spain and France, while 8% of Britons went to the United States<sup>5</sup>. As Morris has calculated 567 British people left the homeland of Shakespeare every day, which accounts for one every three minutes<sup>6</sup>. The ONS data indicates that only one sixth of 2006 immigrants came from the states that had joined the EU in May 2004. The biggest influx of more than 200,000 immigrants was recorded from Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka. The statistics do not include people who have left the United Kingdom or have come there to work for a period of less than 12 months<sup>7</sup>.

Although the wave of British nationals “fleeing” their homeland has been growing stronger for years<sup>8</sup>, it is by no means a sign of the UK depopulating; quite the opposite. Indeed, every year the British Isles welcome nearly half a million foreigners, for whom staying and working there is a dream of a better life and bright future come true. A large part of them applies for British citizenship. In 2006 alone, more than 164,000 foreigners became UK citizens. Out of this group, nearly 60% of the new Britons came from Africa and Asia<sup>9</sup>. In addition, as is clear from the report on the impact of labour migration on the economic situation of the West Midlands, as many as 71% of employers surveyed in that region find their experience with immigrants very satisfying, with 19% fairly satisfied, and only 4% dissatisfied. More than half of those employing workers from abroad appreciate, in the first place, their industriousness and sense of responsibility; 20% also

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<sup>4</sup> Morris, N. “Record numbers seek new lives abroad.” *The Independent* 16 Nov. 2007. <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/record-numbers-seek-new-lives-abroad-400566.html>>.

<sup>5</sup> See Office for National Statistics (ONS). “Emigration from UK reaches 400,000 in 2006.” 15 Nov. 2007. <<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/emig1107.pdf>>.

<sup>6</sup> Morris, N. (2007). “Record numbers seek new lives abroad.” *The Independent* 16 Nov. 2007. <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/record-numbers-seek-new-lives-abroad-400566.html>>.

<sup>7</sup> Johnston, P. (2008). “Emigration soars as Britons desert the UK.” *Daily Telegraph* 19 Apr. 2008. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1569400/Emigration-soars-as-Britons-desert-the-UK.html>>.

<sup>8</sup> In 2005, England was left by 185,000 British citizens, and in 1997 by 149,000 (Office for National Statistic (ONS)). “Emigration... op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> Morris, N. “Record numbers take UK citizens' pledge while Britons head abroad.” *The Independent* 21 May 2008. <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/record-numbers-take-uk-citizens-pledge-while-britons-head-abroad-831509.html>>.

stress reliability, whereas 14% emphasise their professional meticulousness. Over the past four years, the number of labour migrants coming to the West Midlands has doubled and in 2006 amounted to 48,000, of which Poles accounted for 70%<sup>10</sup>.

Emigration is perceived in terms of a brain drain in Germany too. In 2007, 165,000 people left the Federal Republic. According to the data of the National Statistical Office, the figure is almost 50% higher than in 2001. The German government estimates that in 2013 the country will have an approximate deficit of university graduates of 330,000. The German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (DIHK) confirms that the labour market gap already exceeds 400,000 thousand skilled workers. At the request of the German Ministry of Economy, Swiss consultancy firm Prognos carried out a survey among people who live abroad. The survey found that as many as 84% of the respondents are university graduates. On the other hand, it was established that skilled professionals and managers are mainly motivated to emigrate by better opportunities for professional development abroad but also by their desire to earn better money (68%). More than one third of the respondents also mentioned tax burdens in Germany. German emigrants are most prone to choose Switzerland, the United States and Austria. Emigrants are mostly young men, often married but usually childless<sup>11</sup>.

## **2. The scale of Polish emigration to the EU Member States**

Labour migration of Poles to the EU countries is a very dynamic and ever-changing process. It is primarily economic in nature. Those migrating to work in the EU are young, middle-aged and older, both men and women.

A factor with major impact on labour emigration is the level of economic development in individual countries, particularly the phenomenon known as convergence, i.e. approximation of both the standard of living and the level of prices in different countries<sup>12</sup>. For instance, Polish wages compare very unfavourably with German ones. Definitely, the possibility to earn more for similar work encourages migration. What is more, neither quality of life nor earnings in Poland will come up to the German level in the near future. Assuming that the annual growth of the Gross Domestic Product in Poland will continue to be three times faster than the GDP of its Western neighbours, Poland has a chance to achieve a similar level of development in, roughly speaking, 30 years<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Cragg, D. (2007). "The economic impact of migrant workers in the West Midlands." Nov. 2007. <[http://www.wmro.org/resources/res.aspx/CmsResource/resourceFilename/1788/Economic-Migrants-Final\\_V1.0\\_Report\\_SM.pdf](http://www.wmro.org/resources/res.aspx/CmsResource/resourceFilename/1788/Economic-Migrants-Final_V1.0_Report_SM.pdf)>.

<sup>11</sup> de Verges, Marie. (2008). "Drenaż mózgow w Niemczech." *Le Monde* 14 July 2008. Quoted in <[http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/1497766,2678,1,1,drenaz\\_mozgow\\_w\\_niemczech,kioskart.html](http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/1497766,2678,1,1,drenaz_mozgow_w_niemczech,kioskart.html)>.

<sup>12</sup> Duszczyk, M. (1999). "Swoboda przepływu pracowników – dylematy związane z integracją Polski z Unią Europejską." *Studia Europejskie* 2, pp. 91-104.

A similarly disadvantageous relationship exists between earnings in Poland and other European countries. According to Wagstyl, if fitters in Poland earn on average 1,500 PLN per month and in the West they can earn from four to five times more, for many people it is a sufficient impulse to emigrate<sup>14</sup>.

According to the Polish census from May 2002, at that time 786,000 Polish citizens had been staying abroad, with more than 626,000 for at least 12 months. This means, these people had already had the status of a resident of another country. In 2002, Poles were most numerous in the following European countries: Germany (294,000), Italy (39,000), UK (24,000) and France (nearly 21,000), while outside Europe they were staying in the United States (158,000) and Canada (29,000)<sup>15</sup>.

Since May 2004, directions of Polish migration abroad have been dependent on labour markets in different EU member states. Since the very beginning of Poland's membership in the European Union, only three labour markets were opened for them, namely the UK, Ireland and Sweden. On May 1, 2006 labour markets of Spain, Portugal, Finland and Greece became open too. The same happened on July 31, 2006 in Italy, and on May 1, 2007 in the Netherlands. What is more, starting from May 1, 2006, other old EU-15 countries started to relieve access restrictions for workers from the new members of the Community. This was particularly the case in France, Belgium and Denmark. These countries have made their labour markets more accessible by liberalisation of legal regulations applicable to particular economic sectors or groups of people i.e. professionals in specific fields. On July 1, 2008, France decided to open its labour market completely to workers from eight countries representing the 2004 accession. Since then citizens of these countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovenia and Slovakia) have fully enjoyed the freedom of movement, residence and work on the same terms as the French do.

The German market, on the other hand, is to remain closed to unskilled labour until 2011. However, due to shortages of professionals in some industries, which hinders the development of the economy, on November 1, 2008 Germany is going to open its job market to engineers from Poland and other new member states, namely those who specialize in mechanical engineering, vehicle engineering and electrical engineering. Starting from January 1, 2009, it will be easier to work in Germany for university graduates. For graduates from the new member states, Germany will abolish the requirement to check whether the employer has been unable to find a candidate from Germany or any other "old" member state of the EU<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Such calculations were made by the experts of the International Monetary Fund. Cf. "Schody do Europy." *Polityka*, special supplement, Nov. 1998. Quoted in Duszczyk M., ..... op. cit., p. 99.

<sup>14</sup> See: Wagstyl, S. "Labour market: Where have all my workers gone?" *The Financial Times* 19 Dec. 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Central Statistical Office (2007). "Informacja o rozmiarach i kierunkach emigracji z Polski w latach 2004 – 2006." <[http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/45\\_3583\\_PLK\\_HTML.htm](http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/45_3583_PLK_HTML.htm)>.

The Central Statistical Office (GUS) estimates that at the end of 2006 there were nearly 2 million Poles (about 1,950,000) staying temporarily abroad for more than two months, with more than 1,600,000 in Europe. This figure represents as much as 5.12% of the entire Polish population and almost 7.95% of the working age population. The vast majority of Polish emigrants (about 1,550,000) stayed in the EU member states. In 2006, the number of emigrants from Poland increased by 380,000 compared to the previous year (2005) and almost doubled compared to 2004 (see Table 1). The estimates of the Central Statistical Office also include Poles who have stayed in one of the EU countries for a long time, regardless of their residency status. Apart from Poles, only Italians are equally keen to work in other European countries. In the countries of the European Union there are 1,863,000 working Italians<sup>17</sup>.

After the accession of Poland to the European Union, the United Kingdom and Germany have been by far the most popular target countries for Polish emigrants, especially if we consider the scale of the phenomenon. According to the Central Statistical Office data, at the end of 2006 there were approx. 580,000 Polish emigrants in the UK and approx. 450,000 in Germany. Other migration destinations selected by Poles included: Ireland – approx. 120,000, Italy – approx. 85,000 and the Netherlands – approx. 55,000. At the same time – because of the scale of the emigration and its dynamics – we should also mention Ireland (compared to 2002 there was a 50-fold increase in the number of immigrants from Poland, and between 2004 and 2006 an 8-fold increase) and the United Kingdom (almost a 20-fold increase compared to 2002, and almost 4-fold in the past three years). The attractiveness of the United Kingdom and Ireland as a place of work probably stems from the fact that in Poland most school children and university students learn English.

Studies of the Polish Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS) show that preferences are changing as regards countries to work in. According to studies, since 2005 the attractiveness of the UK has greatly increased, while the attractiveness of Germany has declined. This trend will continue. While in March 2005, those interested in finding a job in one of the EU countries still most often declared that they would have liked to have one in Germany, at the end of 2006, the most popular destination mentioned by the respondents was the United Kingdom (39%). Germany was ranked second with half as many people willing to work in the EU choosing it as the targeted country (20%)<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> “Niemiecki rynek pracy nadal zamknięty; ułatwienia dla absolwentów.” 5 Aug. 2008. Quoted in <[http://praca.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/26608,niemiecki\\_rynek\\_pracy\\_nadal\\_zamkniety\\_umatwienia\\_dla\\_absolwentow.html](http://praca.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/26608,niemiecki_rynek_pracy_nadal_zamkniety_umatwienia_dla_absolwentow.html)>.

<sup>17</sup> See: Traser, J. (2006) “European Citizen Action Service. “Who’s Still Afraid of EU Enlargement?” *ECAS*. <[http://www.ecas.org/file\\_uploads/1187.pdf](http://www.ecas.org/file_uploads/1187.pdf)>.

<sup>18</sup> See: Rogulska, B. (2006). “Praca Polaków w krajach Unii Europejskiej. Raport z Badań.” <[http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2006/K\\_175\\_06.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2006/K_175_06.PDF)>.

The vast majority (80-90%) of Polish emigrants who left their home country between May 2004 and the end of 2006 stays or stayed abroad for gainful employment.

**Table 1 Emigration from Poland for a temporary stay between 2004 and 2006.**

Country of stay	Number of emigrants in '000			
	NSP 2002 *	2004	2005	2006
<b>Total</b>	<b>786.0</b>	<b>1000.0</b>	<b>1450.0</b>	<b>1950.0</b>
<b>of which Europe</b>	<b>461.0</b>	<b>770.0</b>	<b>1200.0</b>	<b>1610.0</b>
<b>EU25</b>	<b>451.0</b>	<b>750.0</b>	<b>1170.0</b>	<b>1550.0</b>
<b>of which:</b>				
Austria	11.0	15.0	25.0	34.0
Belgium	14.0	13.0	21.0	28.0
Finland	0.3	0.4	0.7	3.0
France	21.0	30.0	44.0	49.0
Germany	294.0	385.0	430.0	450.0
Greece	10.0	13.0	17.0	20.0
Ireland	2.0	15.0	76.0	120.0
<b>Italy</b>	<b>39.0</b>	<b>59.0</b>	<b>70.0</b>	<b>85.0</b>
Netherlands	10.0	23.0	43.0	55.0
Portugal	0.3	0.5	0.6	1.0
Spain	14.0	26.0	37.0	44.0
Sweden	6.0	11.0	17.0	25.0
United Kingdom	24.0	150.0	340.0	580.0

Source: Central Statistical Office (GUS). Demographic Research Department (2007). [http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/POZ\\_Informacja\\_o\\_rozmiarach\\_i\\_kierunk\\_emigra\\_z\\_Polski\\_w\\_latach\\_2004\\_2006.pdf](http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/POZ_Informacja_o_rozmiarach_i_kierunk_emigra_z_Polski_w_latach_2004_2006.pdf).

\* National Population and Housing Census

According to specialists of the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS), the most prone to migrate are Poles in the age group 25-34, while their main motive for leaving the country is hope for better career prospects abroad. Often they are also willing to accept a better paying job compared to what they might get in Poland, even if the job is below their qualifications. However, as Sullivan and Barney state in the *Financial Times*, more and more people from Poland are also employed in better paid positions in the sector of financial services, filling a gap of missing professionals not only in the City of London but throughout the UK <sup>19</sup>.

Between 2001 and 2006, almost 110,000 left Poland permanently, of which more than half (57.43%) were singles<sup>20</sup>. For comparison, in 2006 only, more than 46,000 Poles left their country permanently, of which almost half (46.41%) were singles. People between 20 and 34 YOA accounted for 52.41% of all persons who left Poland. Emigration figures were the highest in the

<sup>19</sup> Sullivan R., Jopson B. (2006). "Polish accountants multiply in Square Mile as red tape adds up." *The Financial Times*. 06 Oct. 2006.

<sup>20</sup> See: Demographic Yearbook of Poland 2007, p. 450-453. [http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/45\\_3697\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/45_3697_ENG_HTML.htm).

Śląskie, Dolnośląskie and Opolskie provinces, and the lowest in the Świętokrzyskie province. As for the Lubelskie province, 1,703 went abroad to stay in 2006, accounting for less than 4% of the local population. The highest number of people emigrated to the United Kingdom (1,039), Germany (127), the United States (111) and Italy (99).

Moreover, in 2006 almost 51,000 people notified the population records authorities that they were going to leave and stay abroad for more than three months. 75.6% of them were people between 20 and 34 YOA. Most of the people (7,104) who notified the authorities about their intent to leave and temporarily stay abroad came from the Śląskie province. The second most numerous group was from the Małopolskie province (6,500), followed by the Podkarpackie province (almost 5,500). As for the Lubelskie province, 1,503 reported the above intent. Received notifications show that those willing to stay abroad for more than three months went mostly to the United Kingdom (749 people) and Germany (131). Other destinations included the United States (125), Ireland (120) and Italy (84).

The data presented in Table 2 shows that in 2006 the population of the Lubelskie province decreased by 0.30%, i.e. 6,593 people. Emigrants were mainly inhabitants of urban areas (almost 85%). The data is additionally shown in Figure 1.

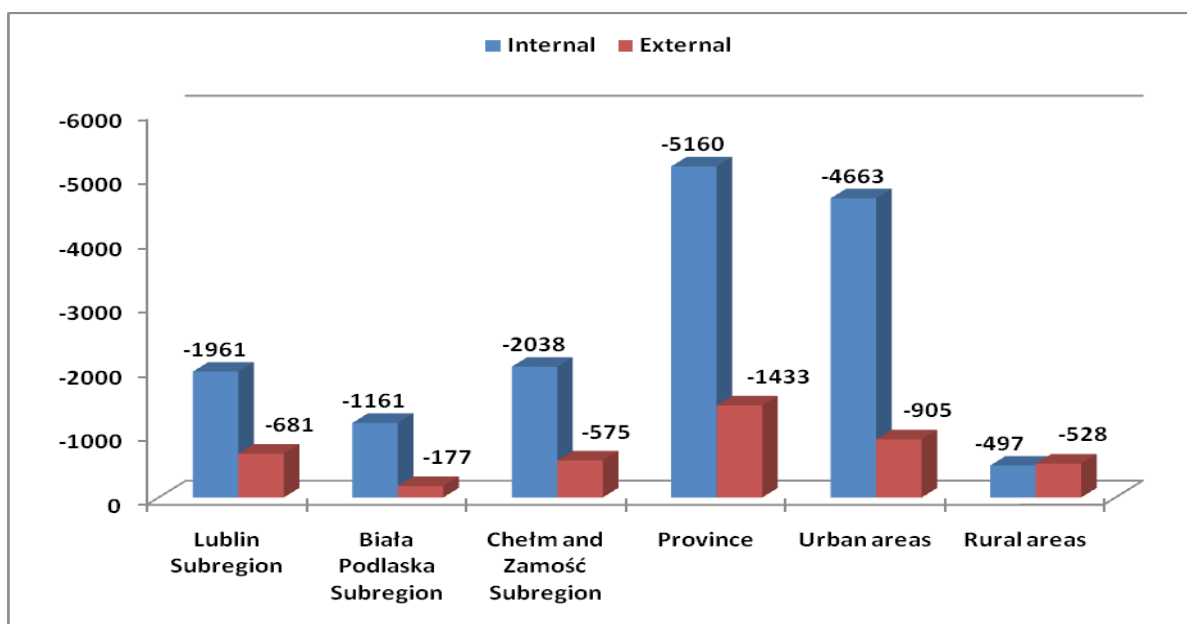
**Table 2. Net internal and external permanent migration in the Lubelskie province in 2006.**

<b>Migration</b>	<b>Internal</b>	<b>External</b>	<b>Total</b>	
<b>Subregion:</b>				
Lublin	-1,961	-681	-2,642	-0.22%
Biała Podlaska	-1,161	-177	-1,338	-0.43%
Chelm and Zamość	-2,038	-575	-2,613	-0.40%
<b>Province</b>	<b>-5,160</b>	<b>-1,433</b>	<b>-6,593</b>	<b>-0.30%</b>
<b>Urban areas</b>	<b>-4,663</b>	<b>-905</b>	<b>-5,568</b>	
<b>Rural areas</b>	<b>-497</b>	<b>-528</b>	<b>-1,025</b>	

Source: Own compilation based on the data of the Central Statistical Office (GUS)



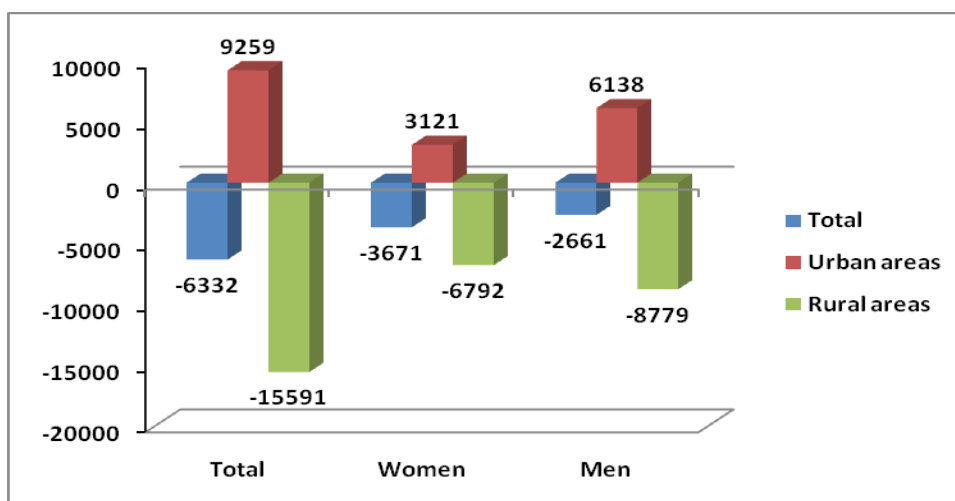
**Figure 1. Net internal and external permanent migration in Lubelskie province.**



Source: Own compilation based on the data of the Central Statistical Office (GUS)

The data presented in Figure 2 shows that in the case of rural areas in the Lublin Region, we have 15,000 more people leaving than coming. This means that farmers in the Lublin Region may have problems finding seasonal workers. The situation in the Region's cities is different but this is due to the influx of university students, particularly to Lublin. However, the overall net internal migration is detrimental to the Region, as more than 6,000 people temporarily leave it.

**Figure 2. Net temporary internal migration in the Lubelskie province.**



Source: Own compilation based on the data of the Central Statistical Office (GUS)

There is no sign that the scale of Polish emigration is going to decrease soon. Findings of the Polish Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS) show that 70% of the working adult population in Poland in the age group 18-65 years believe that the countries of the European Union offer not only



better money but also better working conditions. Moreover, in their opinion, the employee is treated better there, while work in the EU based companies is better organised and less stressful than in Poland<sup>21</sup>. More than 10% of the respondents say that they can do it: they know the language of the receiving country and have necessary skills so they would be willing to go and work in the EU countries. On the other hand, 23.1% of the interviewees believe that at the moment it is not within their capabilities to leave but as soon as they are able to, they will gladly go to west Europe to work there. These figures allow one to conclude that more than 1/3 of the respondents is ready to go abroad and perhaps sooner or later actually will. Table 3 shows the percentage of various professional groups among potential emigrants.

**Table 3. Potential emigrants.**

Socio-economic groups	Willing to go and work abroad	
	total	with adequate skills
Skilled blue-collar workers	43.7%	18.0%
Unskilled blue-collar workers	35.6%	5.0%
Grey collars	34.8%	7.7%
Directors and CEOs	31.3%	18.8%
White collars	30.5%	8.5%
Artistic professions and specialists with higher education	25.4%	9.6%
Farmers	23.1%	9.6%
Company owners using hired labour	19.2%	15.4%
Self-employed	7.9%	-

Source: Report from the CBOS Studies for the Polish Confederation of Private Employers "Pracujący Polacy 2007".

The data presented in Table 3 shows that nearly half of skilled blue-collar workers declare their willingness to leave and work abroad, and almost one in five assesses their own skills as adequate (including professional skills, good command of a foreign language, etc.). Too high a percentage of skilled blue-collar workers who are "skilled enough" to emigrate and who declare their willingness to leave the country combined with a boom in western European labour markets in numerous professions may significantly increase problems in the labour market in Poland.

In addition to skilled blue-collar workers, the highest number of potential emigrants can be found among unskilled blue-collar workers and grey collars: 35.6% and 34.8% respectively. Least prone to leave were the self-employed. Only just under eight out of a hundred would be willing to relocate.

<sup>21</sup> Polish Confederation of Private Employers PKPP Lewiatan (2007). "Pracujący Polacy 2007." <[http://www.pkpplewiatan.pl/upload/File/2007\\_09/Pracujacy%20Polacy%202007%20-%20raport%20do%20druku.pdf](http://www.pkpplewiatan.pl/upload/File/2007_09/Pracujacy%20Polacy%202007%20-%20raport%20do%20druku.pdf)>.

Willingness to seek employment in the European Union depends predominantly on age and the employment situation. The most keen to find a job in one of the EU countries are young people. The 2006 research of CBOS (Public Opinion Research Centre) showed that 32% of the respondents up to 24 YOA declared that they would make the appropriate effort, of which 21% assured that they would certainly take the action necessary to work abroad. According to the research, almost one third of all school and university students (31%) were going to try to get a job abroad, of which 18% were very determined<sup>22</sup>.

The CBOS research carried out between September and November 2007 shows that young people – up to 24 YOA – were still the most interested in leaving the country to work abroad, although slightly less than a year before. Out of this group, 4.4% had already been trying to get a job abroad, while a further 21.7% declared that they would take appropriate action. Considerably less interest in labour migration was expressed by people aged between 25 and 34. 4.1% of them were trying to find employment abroad, while almost one in ten argued that they would try to find a job outside of Poland in the future. Foreign employment plans are influenced not only by the respondents' age but also their employment situation. The interviewees who were the most interested in working abroad were school and university students: one in thirty (3.2%) was already trying to get a job abroad at the time of research, and one in four (26.3%) declared that they would start trying in the nearest future. The second group that was the most interested in working abroad was the unemployed group. Almost one in ten (8.9%) was trying to find employment in the European Union, while a further 13.6% were planning to make such an effort<sup>23</sup>.

At the end of 2007 almost one in six of the respondents (17.9%) was interested in taking a job abroad (see Figure 3). However, at the time of research, only 13.4% (2.4% of all respondents) were actively trying to find employment outside Poland. On the other hand, almost half (42.53%) of those interested claimed that they would start trying in the future, while the rest (45.55%) claimed that they would take a job abroad only if offered one, but they did not intend to take any steps to that end. Such efforts are planned, however, by 7.4% of the respondents. Furthermore, it appears from the surveys that more than three-quarters of the interviewees (76.3%) are not at all interested in going abroad to work, while one in twenty cannot say<sup>24</sup>.

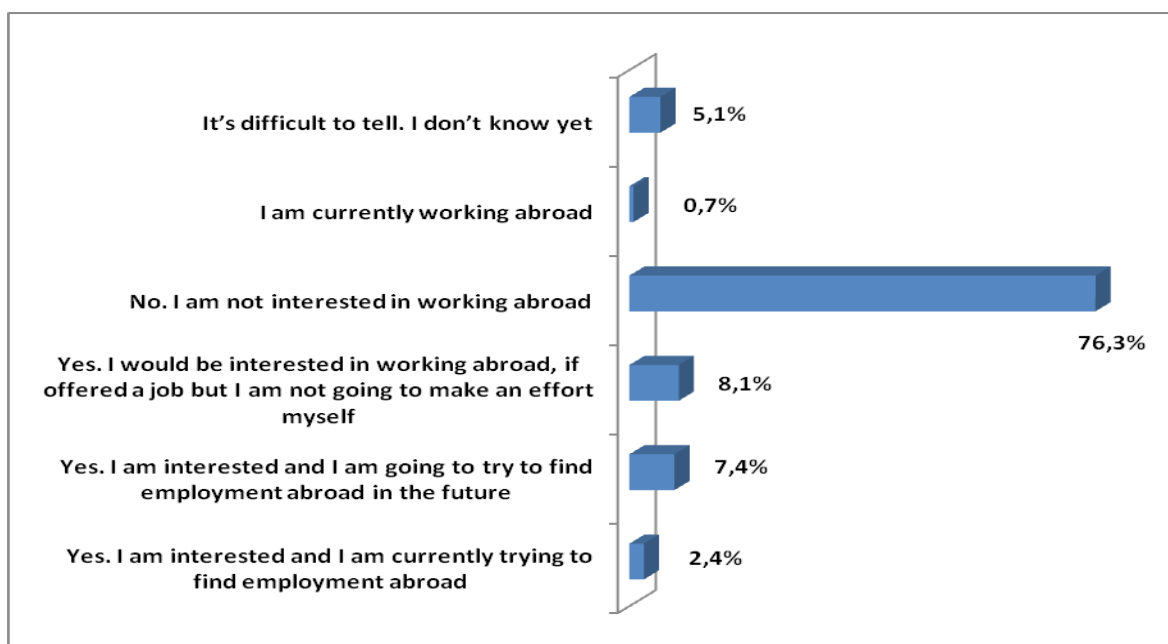
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<sup>22</sup> See: Rogulska, B. (2006). "Praca Polaków w krajach Unii Europejskiej. Raport z Badań." <[http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2006/K\\_175\\_06.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2006/K_175_06.PDF)>.

<sup>23</sup> See: Rogulska, B. (2008). "Doświadczenia i plany dotyczące pracy za granicą. Komunikat z badań: Warunki życiowe społeczeństwa polskiego: problemy i strategie." <[http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K\\_035\\_08.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_035_08.PDF)>.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, p.7.

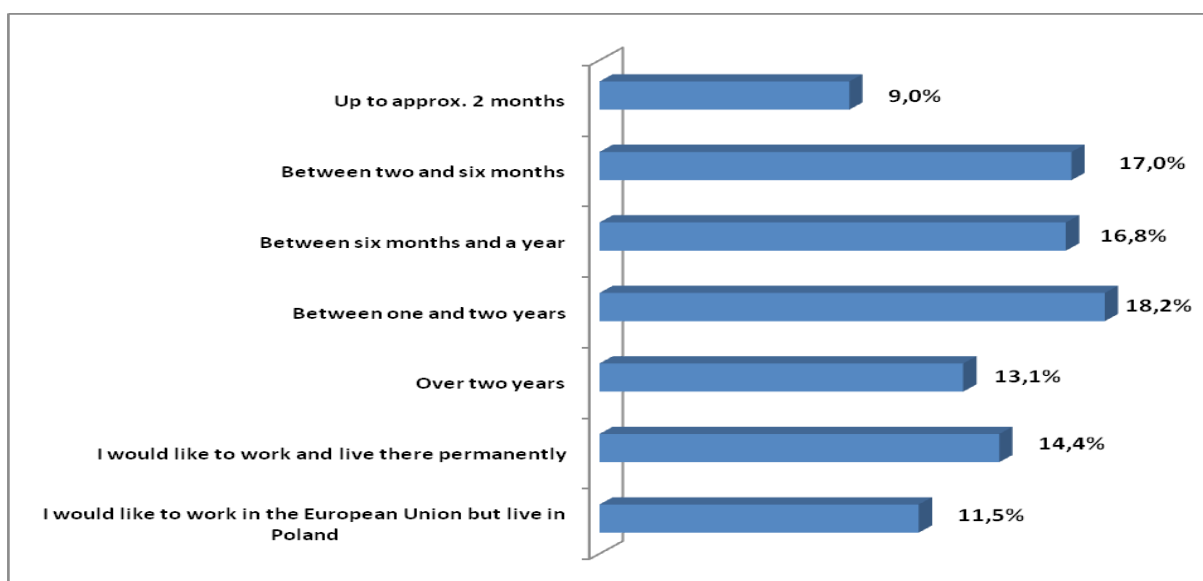
**Figure 3. The interest in working abroad expressed by Poles at the end of 2007.**



Source: Rogulska, B. (2008). Experience... op. cit.

Most people interested in employment abroad would only like to leave for some time (see Figure 4). Nearly half of the respondents (42.8%) would like to work in the European Union for less than a year, while one in four (26%) is interested in working abroad for less than six months. Only a relatively small number of the interviewees (13.1%) consider working abroad for a longer time (over two years). However, some respondents (14.4%) are willing to leave Poland and live abroad permanently, while one in ten (11.5%) declares that they would like just to commute abroad.

**Figure 4. Declared time of work in the countries of the European Union.**



Source: Rogulska, B. (2008). Experience... op. cit.

### **3. The consequences of labour emigration**

The effects of Polish migration are varied and diverse and can be examined from different perspectives. It can be analysed both on a micro and macro scale. In addition, each observable phenomenon has some advantageous and some adverse implications. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to make a full assessment of the impact that labour migration has on the migrant, their family and the Polish economy. Because of the unusual dynamics of migration and its volatility, drawing a comprehensive picture of the pros and cons related to mobility of Poles is virtually impossible. That is why this paper will further present only a selection of consequences, primarily economic in nature. First, it will describe positive effects of emigration, and then its negative consequences.

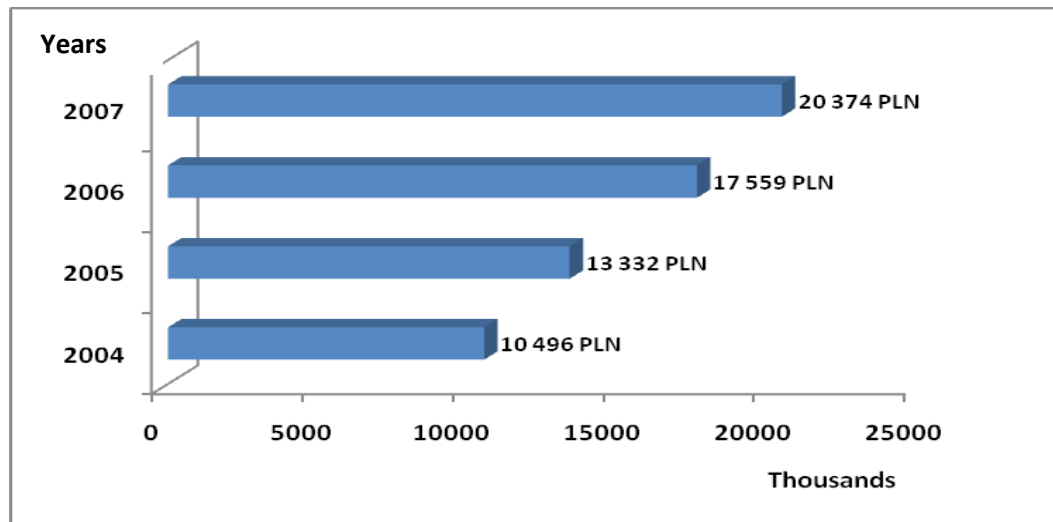
As such, labour migration brings numerous tangible benefits to migrants themselves. Those who leave the country to work abroad learn how to communicate in a foreign language or master their linguistic skills; they also get to know a different culture. Consequently, they can become more open to otherness, see the world from a different perspective or overcome their prejudices. At the same time they become more independent, acquire new knowledge and skills and improve their resourcefulness. People who are active like that are then sought-after by employers. The capital that they have managed to raise, both in terms of finance and professional experience, can then be successfully invested in Poland, contributing to the multi-level development of local communities. Obviously, this scenario will only occur if the capital is appropriately invested rather than “squandered” in the pursuit of consumption.

The money sent home increases the disposable household income, thus stabilising the consumption of families and reducing poverty. Increased spending on education and health lets us look to the future with confidence too. At least in the short-term perspective, labour migration of Poles is also beneficial to the entire economy, e.g. by fuelling economic growth through increased consumption.

According to estimates of the National Bank of Poland (NBP), the inflow of funds from Poles working abroad in 2007 exceeded 20 billion PLN and was almost twice as high as in 2004. Between 2004 and 2007 the most dynamic growth was observed in remittances sent home from the United Kingdom and Ireland. In 2007, the Poles working in these two countries sent home the most (5 and 4.6 billion PLN respectively). Germany ranked third in this respect with 3.9 billion PLN sent by Poles to their families home. According to experts of the National Bank of Poland, the United States is an important country from which remittances flow to Poland, although its share in the total

has been decreasing in recent years. On the other hand, other European countries gain in importance, including Italy, Netherlands, France and Norway<sup>25</sup>.

**Figure 5. Remittances sent home by Polish migrant workers in thousands PLN.**



Source: Own compilation based on the data of the National Bank of Poland <[www.nbp.pl](http://www.nbp.pl)>.

Despite these and many other tangible benefits, labour migration also has an adverse effect on both migrants themselves and their families, as well as, in the longer term, on the national economy (e.g. on the pension scheme). Emigration may lead to atomisation of families: sometimes being removed from a family weakens the family ties even to the point of complete split-up. If one or both parents work abroad for a longer period, children usually experience a separation anxiety disorder with all its consequences, including emotional disorders or discipline problems. If only one spouse works abroad for a long time, then the risk of divorce increases. Among other adverse consequences we can mention Polish migrants falling victim to rogue agents or employers. They can be robbed or exploited for very little or no money at all.

The impact of remittances on economies in migrants' countries of origin depends on the scale and purpose of remittances as well as the effectiveness of use. A natural difficulty arises in estimating their impact on the economy because, apart from direct effects associated with investment and consumption of funds, we also deal with indirect effects on different levels of the economy.

While analysing the effects of labour migration for the Polish economy, we should pay attention to its adverse impact on businesses. The problem is that more and more companies have trouble finding employees. KPMG studies carried out in 2006 among big manufacturing, service

<sup>25</sup> National Bank of Poland (NBP). Department of Statistics (2008). "Nowa metoda szacunku dochodów z pracy polaków za granicą – bilans płatniczy." *Balance of payments data verified since Q1 2004.* <[www.nbp.pl/statystyka/Bilans\\_platniczy/doch\\_pl.pdf](http://www.nbp.pl/statystyka/Bilans_platniczy/doch_pl.pdf)>.

and trade companies show that 52% of the companies had trouble recruiting staff, while 8% experienced the problem indirectly as their business partners found it difficult to recruit suitable staff. Only 40% of the companies involved in the study said that the problem of staff shortage did not concern them at the moment. However, some of them (22%) expect that the problem will surface within 2 years<sup>26</sup>.

Another adverse effect that is very closely related to migration is the problem of voluntary departures of employees who intend to go abroad. According to the KPMG studies, it is most frequently specialists who decide to take a better-paid job abroad with prospects for professional development. If they leave, the company faces operational problems and is forced to recruit new people to fill the gaps. Voluntary departures related to the employee going abroad happened in 59% of the companies participating in the survey<sup>27</sup>.

Employers are mostly experiencing shortages of specialists with university degrees (58%) but they also need staff with secondary vocational and basic vocational education (50% and 20% respectively<sup>28</sup>. In the group of the most sought-after professionals we find specialists in the fields of finance, insurance, marketing, logistics, engineering and IT. 71% of the companies are most interested in employing production workers and technical and sales staff.

Another adverse phenomenon related to mass labour emigration from Poland is a strong pressure on wage increases exerted on companies by those who stay. Unfortunately, wage increases are not correlated with improved efficiency. As a result, we will soon deal with a jump in inflation and its after-effects, including a rise in interest rates, etc. To quote only one example; in 2007 the average wage in real terms increased by 6.3% compared to 2006, and by 10.5% compared to 2005<sup>29</sup>. According to the Central Statistical Office (GUS), the average salary in the corporate sector in November 2007 increased by 4.8% month-to-month (m/m), while on an annual basis, it rose by 12.0% and amounted to 3092.01 PLN<sup>30</sup>. On the other hand, in March 2008, according to the Central Statistical Office (GUS), the average wage in the corporate sector increased by 3.7% compared to the previous month and on an annual basis by 10.2% to 3144.41 PLN, and as much as 3201.98 PLN in June 2008<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Wroński, L. (2007). "Migracja pracowników – szansa czy zagrożenie." KPMG Report 15 Apr. 2008. <[http://www.kpmg.pl/dbfetch/52616e646f6d4956977aa1721c4211b45569c07affdc1f14e3ca2385509adff/migracja\\_pracownik\\_w.pdf](http://www.kpmg.pl/dbfetch/52616e646f6d4956977aa1721c4211b45569c07affdc1f14e3ca2385509adff/migracja_pracownik_w.pdf)>.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, p.12.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, p. 15 and 17.

<sup>29</sup> Announcements of the President of the Central Statistical Office on the increase in the real average wage of 11<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

<sup>30</sup> Announcements of the President of the Central Statistical Office on the average real wage in the corporate sector for individual months. Quoted in <<http://www.rp.pl/temat/85170.html>>.

<sup>31</sup> Central Statistical Office. "Przeciętne zatrudnienie i wynagrodzenie w sektorze przedsiębiorstw w czerwcu 2008 r." <[http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/45\\_1786\\_PLK\\_HTML.htm](http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/45_1786_PLK_HTML.htm)>.

Increasing wages do not go hand in hand with improved effectiveness, which has slowed down from 3.1% in 2006 to 1.9% in 2007. Although such a drop was caused, among other things, by a sharp increase (by 4.6%) in the total number of hours worked in 2007, an unfavourable economic trend can be observed all the same. All the more so that, as it follows from the studies of the National Bank of Poland, almost half of businesses are planning to increase wages, and in one in three companies, they are already far above the effectiveness<sup>32</sup>.

Any economic phenomenon may have different effects both positive and negative. It is similar with remittances sent home by migrants. On the one hand, such funds improve the quality of life of migrants themselves and their families and facilitate economic development through increased consumption. On the other hand, they may be detrimental to the development of Polish businesses in the long-term. Three factors,<sup>33</sup> namely the inflow of funds earned by migrants, foreign direct investment and transfer of funds from the European Union have a material impact on the value of the Polish currency. Too “strong” an appreciation of the Polish zloty may prevent Polish companies from competing on the global market. Consequently, it may lead to a reduction in exports and production and the necessity to minimise costs, in turn resulting in layoffs. On the other hand, a considerable purchasing power of the Polish zloty is a buffer against higher prices of imported raw materials (including, above all, oil and gas). Moreover, the strong local currency makes it possible for Poles to buy products from abroad that have been unaffordable until now.

In a way, the money sent home by Polish emigrants goes against them. Firstly, it stimulates consumer demand on the domestic market for various goods, thus contributing to an increase in prices<sup>34</sup>. Secondly, it affects the value of the currency. Its “strength” contributes to a relative decrease in wages of Poles working in the United Kingdom and other European countries. This is not the result of any economic crisis or reduction of wages in these countries. The main reason for this state of affairs is the increase in the purchasing power of the Polish currency. Consequently, those who have adopted the strategy: I earn “there” but spend “here” (in Poland) are contributing to the family budgets to a gradually smaller extent. According to the data of the British-Polish

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<sup>32</sup> Fandrejewska, A. (2008). “Efektywność nie nadąży.” *Rzeczpospolita* 24 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.rp.pl/artykul/1,97469.html>>.

<sup>33</sup> According to A. Żołnowski, the average inflow of the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to Poland after the EU accession was 2.5 times higher than before. While the average FDI level between 2001 and 2003 was 5 billion EUR, it was as much as 12 billion EUR between 2004 and 2007. The biggest beneficiaries of the Community funds are farmers. Between May 1, 2004 and April 30, 2008 they received 7 billion 24 million PLN in direct payments. See: “Po wejściu Polski do UE 2,5 krotnie wzrosły inwestycje zagraniczne.” *Polish Press Agency (PAP)* 9 July 2008. Quoted in <<http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl>>.

<sup>34</sup> A perfect example is the increase in the price of one sqm of residential premises over the last few years. In 2005, the average price of one sqm on the secondary market in the biggest Polish cities (Wrocław, Krakow, Warsaw and Poznań) was 3,902 PLN; in 2006 – 6,303 PLN, and in 2007 as much as 7,702.40 PLN. In other words, the average price of one sqm in 2006 increased by 62% compared to 2005, and in 2007 by 22% compared to 2006 but by as much as 97% compared to 2005. Although the prices of residential premises in Poland were influenced by other factors too (including better earnings, improved availability of mortgage loans (lower requirements on borrowers and low interest rates)), we cannot underestimate the powerful role of the money sent home by Poles working abroad.



Chamber of Commerce, every month the average labour emigrant sends home the equivalent of £500. Four years ago the amount was equivalent to approx. 3,565 PLN. In 2008, the same amount of pounds is only worth 2,100 PLN, i.e. almost 40% less<sup>35</sup>. The situation is similar in other European countries. Between May 2004 and May 2008, the euro had depreciated by 29% (from 4.76 PLN to 3.38 PLN for 1 EUR). Therefore, it can be estimated that in terms of the Polish zloty, Poles in the United Kingdom now earn more than one third less, and in Germany, Italy, Spain and other EU countries – more than one fourth less.

In addition, the gap between earnings in pounds or euros and Polish zlotys is narrowing as the level of the average wage in Poland has been systematically increasing in recent years. Since May 2004 wages in Poland have grown by almost one third<sup>36</sup>.

Smaller profitability of working in the West is also the result of the extremely dynamic development of the Polish economy: in mid 2007 Poland recorded an economic growth which was twice as high as that of the United Kingdom. With the rapidly growing economy, the unemployment rate drops quickly. Before Polish entry into the European Union, it exceeded 20 percent, while in May 2008 it was already half that figure (see Table 6). That is why those looking for a job can afford to pick and choose and it is much easier for them to find satisfying employment in Poland.

**Table 4. The situation on the labour market in March between 2005 and 2008.**

<b>Years</b>	<b>04 - 2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>05 - 2008</b>
<b>Registered unemployment rate</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>10%</b>

Source: Own compilation based on the data of the Central Statistical Office (GUS) <<http://www.stat.gov.pl>>.

Improved purchasing power of the Polish currency, the increase of wages in Poland as well as better opportunities of finding more satisfying employment at home may reduce the scale of Polish labour emigration. The first symptoms can already be seen. According to the Institute for Public Policy Research, the number of Poles registering to work in Q1 2008 fell by almost 17% (compared to the same period of 2007) to reach approx. 30,000, and is now the lowest in three years. However, as Taylor says, we cannot already talk about the mass exodus of Poles from the United Kingdom, as the phenomenon has been exaggerated by the media. Moreover, the proverbial Polish plumber working in the United Kingdom still earns three times as much as his colleague in the same line of work in Poland. On the other hand, young Poles Poland will still be willing to go to England and

<sup>35</sup> Taylor, A. "Weak pound forces Poles to consider future in UK." *The Times* 26 May 2008. <<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/cba9b8d4-2abc-11dd-b40b-000077b07658.html>>.

<sup>36</sup> According to the Central Statistical Office (GUS), in May, the average wage in the corporate sector was 2424.28 PLN, while in May 2008 it was 3201.98 PLN. See: <[http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/index\\_PLK\\_HTML.htm](http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/index_PLK_HTML.htm)>.

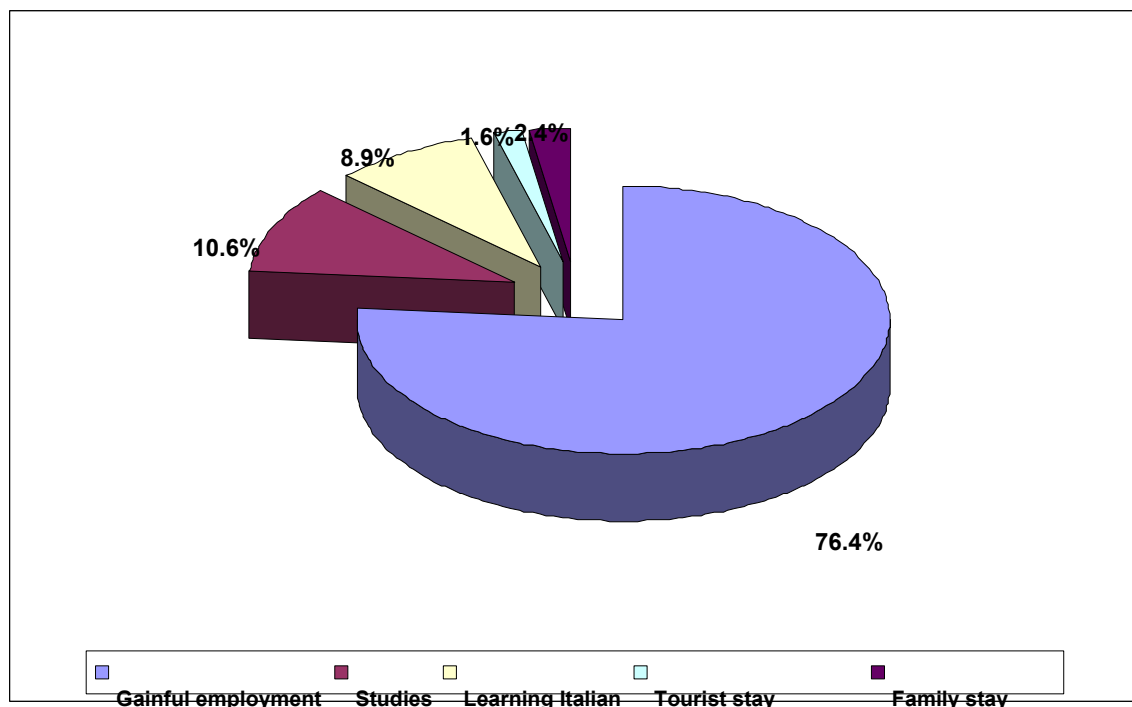
work there for the same reason as young British people want to work outside of the United Kingdom: for the adventure and to learn a foreign language<sup>37</sup>.

#### 4. The profile of Polish emigration to Italy

People of both sexes and of all ages decide to leave their country and work in various countries of the European Union. While choosing the destination country and the type of work they are driven by specific motives that are only known to them.

Below, this paper presents some selected findings of the surveys that have been carried out in mid 2006 among the Polish labour immigrant community in Italy. Due to the fact that the research was not representative in terms of the number of respondents, their sex, age and the type of work, its findings do not allow one to generalize about the entire population of Polish immigrants in Italy. Nevertheless, it is still possible to show some trends underlying the decisions to leave, as well as the perception of certain economic phenomena by the participants.

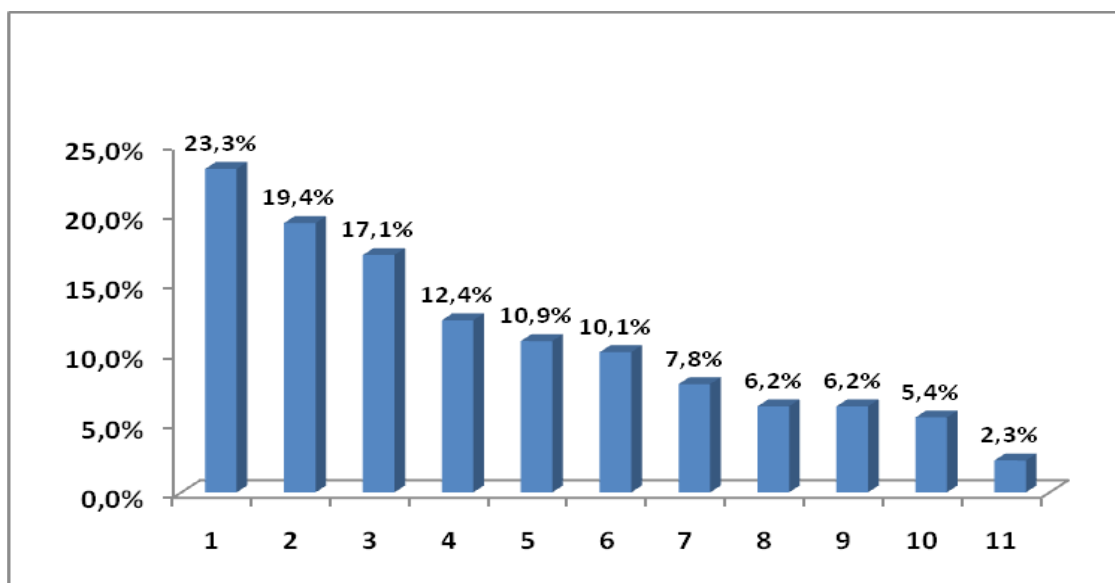
**Figure 6. Purpose of the stay in Italy.**



<sup>37</sup> Taylor, A. (2008) "Weak pound forces Poles" ..... op. cit.

Figure 6 shows goals of emigration as declared by Poles working in Italy. According to more than three-quarters of the interviewees (76.4%), their emigration is clearly oriented towards earning money. For the remaining respondents other motives were more important including studies (10.6%), learning Italian (8.9%), tourist stay – understood as learning about Italian culture and customs (1.6%) and visiting family (2.4%) . For them employment was of minor importance. Figure 7 illustrates the reasons for stay in Italy in more detail.

**Figure 7. Reasons for coming to Italy to work.**



*Legend to the chart:* 1. Looking for better money; 2 Own/family financial problems; 3. The opportunity to get to know another country; 4. Problems in finding a well-paid job in Poland; 5. The need to earn money for a specific purpose; 6. The opportunity to master a foreign language; 7. Problems in finding any job in Poland; 8. The desire to acquire new skills; 9. Escaping a problematic situation (at home/at work); 10. Breaking free from the control of the family (parents/spouse); 11. Supplementing the pension.

The most important driver to leave the home country (mentioned by 23.3% of the respondents) was looking for better money. Problems in finding a satisfying job in Poland were mentioned by 20.2% of the respondents. One person in sixteen emigrated because of a conflict at home or at work, while almost one in twenty was motivated by their desire to escape parental control.

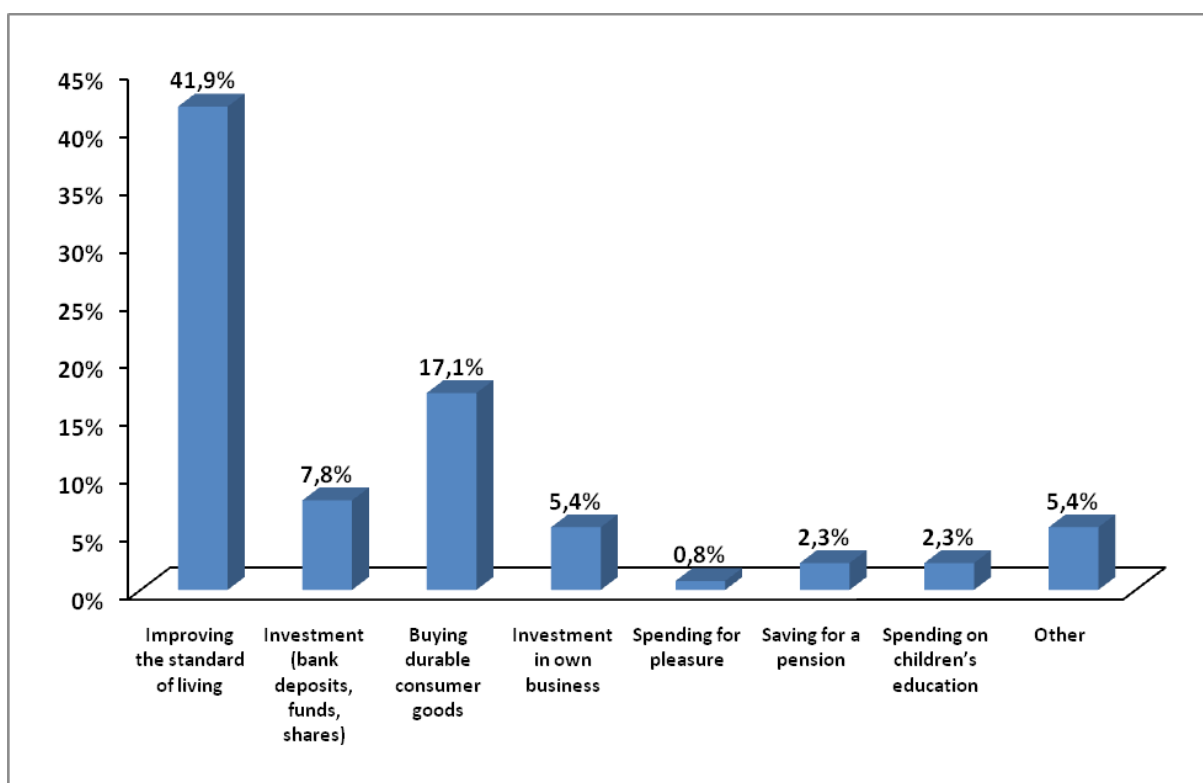
Half of the respondents (50.4%) claimed that their situation before leaving for Italy had been a good one as their family income in Poland had been well above the average; one in ten claimed that compared to other Polish families, their family income had been above the average. On the other hand, 38.8% of the respondents felt that their family income had been more or less average. Other interviewees claimed that the income of their families had been below the average, of which 21.8% maintained that it had been significantly below.

Only 7% of emigrants found no improvement in their living standards after leaving Poland. Of this group, 67% spent their savings in Italy, while others (33%) claimed that their debts were only growing. The circumstances in which other emigrants lived had improved: more than one-third of the interviewees had more than enough to live on, while almost half of the respondents (44.2%) were able to put something aside and 7% were able to save a lot (obviously, in their own subjective opinion).

A significant part of the respondents looked to the future with hope and optimism. More than half (53.5%) believed that within the coming year they would be able to put something aside. Almost a quarter of the respondents (24%) were deeply convinced that they would, while 29.5% of them were less certain. More than one third of the emigrants participating in the survey (34.1%) were not sure whether they would be able to save anything in the coming year. By contrast, only 7% of the respondents were convinced that they would not be able to save anything.

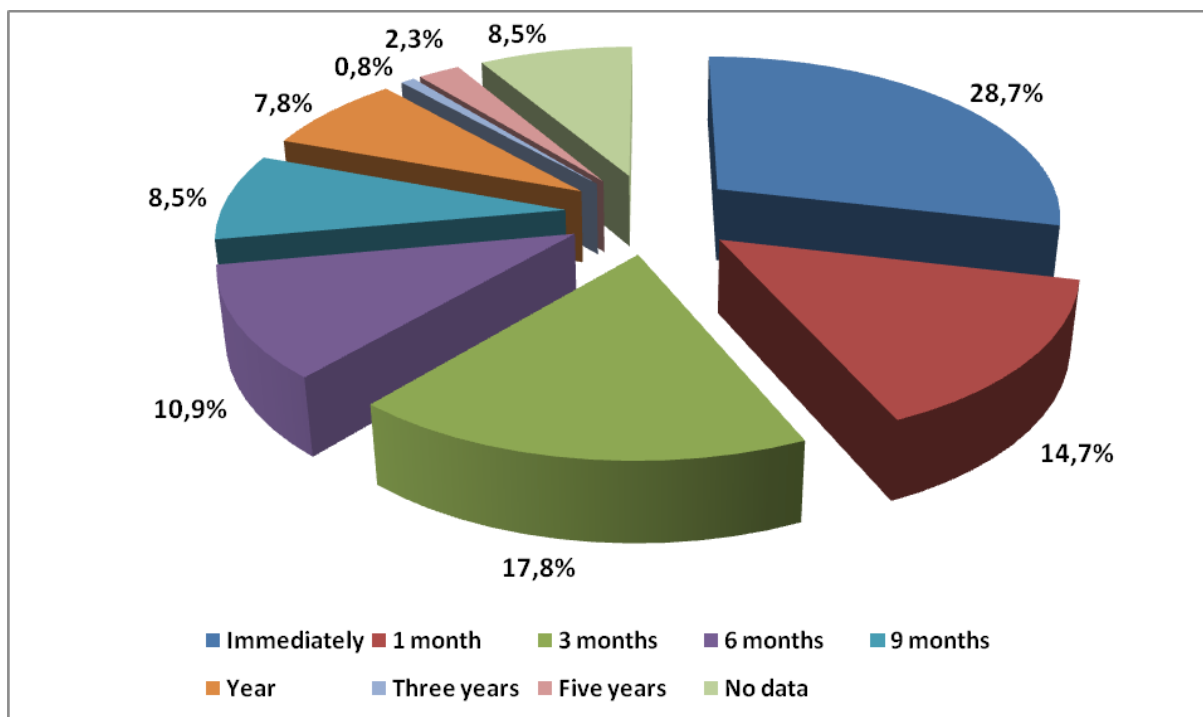
Having met their basic needs (food, accommodation, transport, etc.), a large part of Polish emigrants (41.9%) invest their funds to raise their living standards, while the second-largest group of the respondents, namely 17.1%, buy durable consumer goods (see Figure 8). Only just less than 8% of the respondents deposit the remaining money in a bank or save it in another way. One in 20 people invests the remaining funds in their own business. This means that the responding migrants spent mainly on consumption. This argument is also confirmed by the migrants' weak tendency to save (see Figure 9).

**Figure 8. The use of spare funds by immigrants from Poland.**



Nearly one third of immigrants, namely 28.7%, spend spare funds immediately. More than half of the respondents (51.9%) though, are those willing to postpone spending for not longer than a year. Only 7.8% of the immigrants from Poland are willing to defer consumption for a year, and only 3.1% for more than a year.

**Figure 9. Willingness of emigrants to postpone consumption (save).**

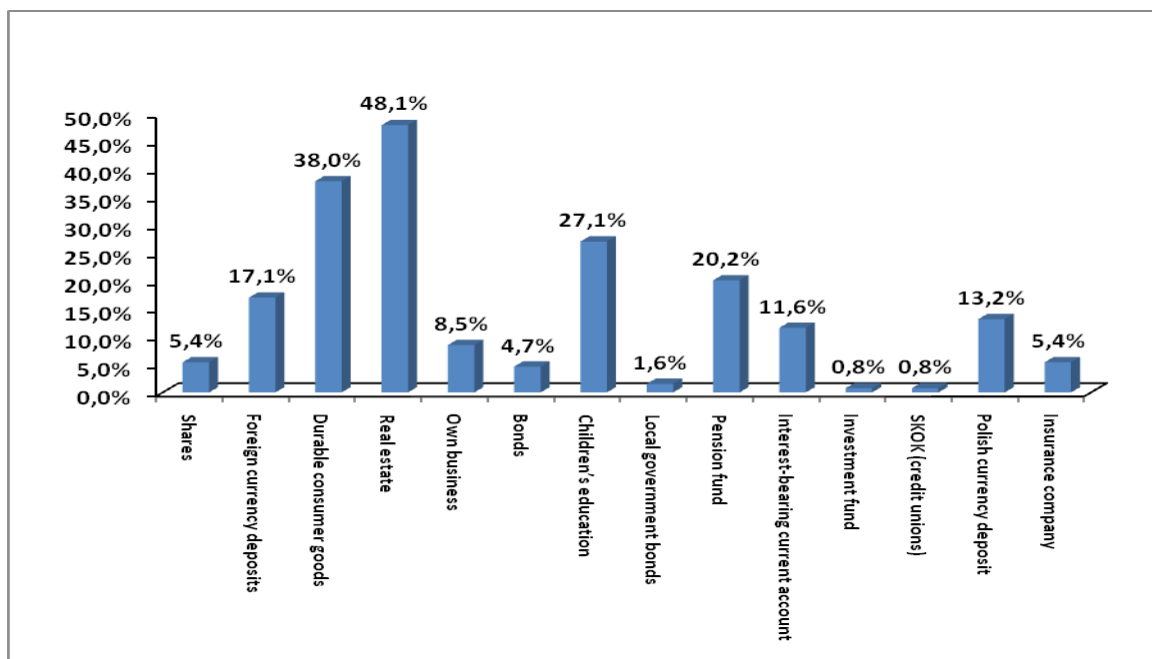


Despite the emigrants' weak tendency to save, nearly half of them (48.1%) would be most willing to invest spare funds in real estate, should they have some. The fact is illustrated in Figure 10. The second most attractive investment would be durable consumer goods (38% of respondents interested). Nearly one third of the emigrants participating in the survey (27.1%) believe that the best use of spare funds would be education of their own children, while one fifth (20.2%) find a pension fund an attractive option too. Other possible ways to invest available financial resources appeal to a considerably smaller group. Short-term liquid deposits are a prevailing choice.

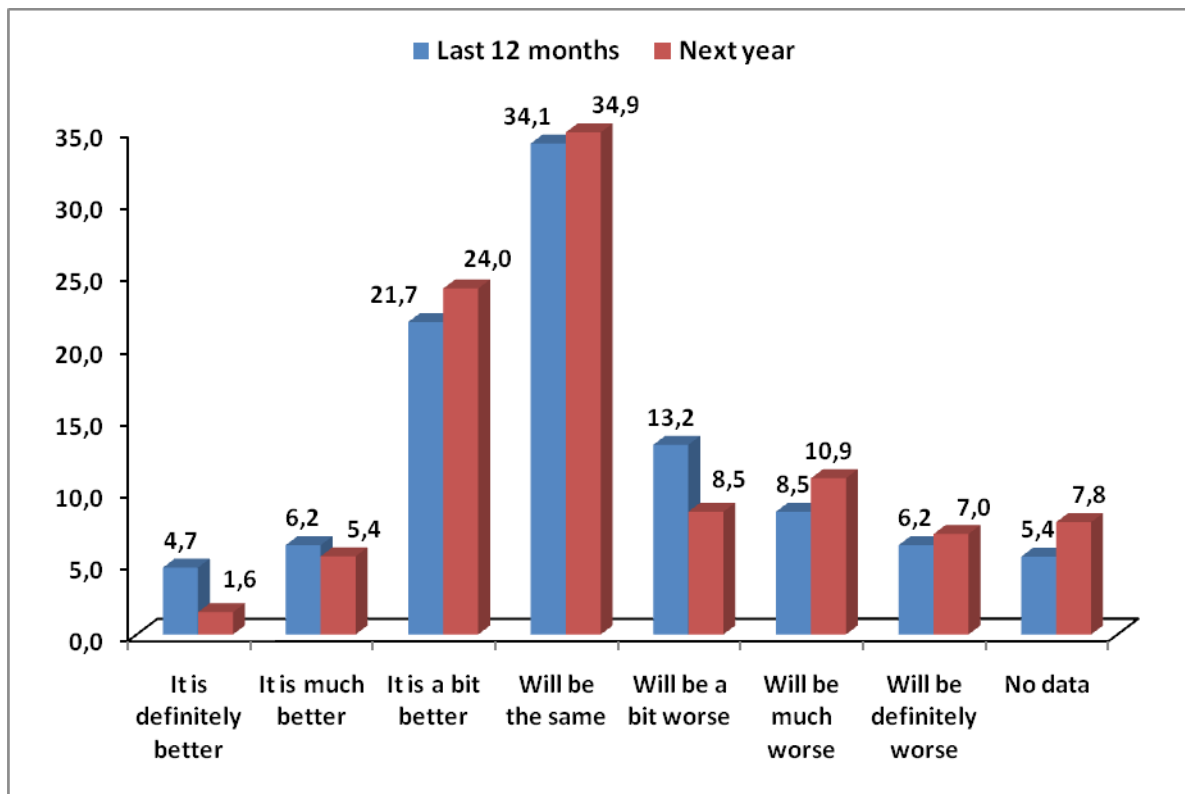
Whether Polish emigrants who work abroad would be willing to return home or not depends on very many factors. These could include homesickness, discomforts of everyday life, a sense of solitude, high costs associated with the stay, etc. A very important factor is migrants' expectations of what awaits them back home and perceived chances of entering the local job market. An important driver to return may be their hope that in Poland they would be able to earn the same or slightly less than abroad with the same effort, while not being separated from family. The research involving Poles working in Italy shows that they expect only a slight improvement in the economic

situation in Poland over the year to come. Unfortunately, lack of hope for economic improvement will definitely have an adverse affect on their wish to return. All the more so as they mostly learn about what is happening in Poland from other people coming to work in Italy or other working Polish immigrants or from what is said about Poland in the media (press, radio TV), provided, of course, that their command of Italian is good enough.

**Figure 10. Preferred investment of spare funds.**



**Figure 11. Expectations of migrants as regards the economic situation in Poland.**



## 5. Summary

In recent years emigration has become a multifaceted and ever-changing phenomenon. Its nature is quite different from the emigrations that we know from history. Those who decide to leave Poland may return practically at any time they consider the most opportune. Nowadays, it is much easier to change one's job and address. The development of transport as well as mass and easy access to information and various means of communications relieve the feeling of separation from the family and country. Frequently, emigrants return to their country at weekends, and during the week they stay in touch with their families using the phone or the Internet. They can also systematically monitor the labour market in Poland.

This paper shows that migration, like any other phenomenon, has some favourable and unfavourable implications. The most important thing is to evaluate it as a multifaceted process, from the angle of social science, psychology and economy. Only then will we be able to see its true face on both a micro and macro level. Seen from many perspectives, it will be much easier to monitor and manage. \*\*

\*\* Translated into English by Sławomir Nowodworski



