



## INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

## REGIONAL FACT SHEET

# Eastern Europe/Russia

Eastern European workers and their families are moving by the hundreds of thousands to higher wage countries in Western Europe, spurred by the accession of ten new member States to the European Union, and the decision of several EU members to relax restrictions on migrant workers from Eastern States. Five countries from Eastern Europe—three new EU members as well as the Russian Federation and the Ukraine—now rank among the top ten countries of origin for migrants to Western Europe. *See table 1.*

But low population growth and rapid population ageing (18 per cent of the population of Eastern European was 60 years or older in 2005 and this share is projected to reach 34 per cent by 2050, according to the UN Population Division) suggest that migration outflows from these countries may not be sustainable in the long term. Already, there are signs that departures of younger workers from the new EU member States are creating a demand for migrants from nations from their eastern neighbours.

**Table 1: Ten major countries of origin for migrants to OECD countries in Europe** (Thousands)

Country	2000	Country	2004
Morocco	96	Romania	196
Ecuador	95	Poland	169
Poland	94	Morocco	121
Bulgaria	81	Bulgaria	88
Turkey	79	Turkey	73
Romania	76	Ukraine	68
United States	64	United Kingdom	67
Germany	60	Germany	65
France	60	Russian Federation	65
Italy	56	United States	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>964</b>

*Source:* International Migration Outlook 2006, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

*Note:* Data are not harmonized. Statistics from some countries may include many short-term migrants.

*Source:* OECD

In the Russian Federation, migration dynamics run on a two-way street. Outflows have been more than counterbalanced by the arrival of 3.7 million persons from other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (former republics

of the Soviet Union) and the Baltic States during 1992–1998.

In 2002, the Federation enacted a law allowing the issuance of work permits for persons wishing to work for up to one year, as well as permits for temporary residents who can stay and work for up to three years. Between 2000 and 2004, the number of such permits doubled, to reach nearly 400,000. Five of the eight major countries of origin of temporary migrants to the Russian Federation that year were members of CIS and accounted for nearly half of the work permits issued. Other important sources of temporary workers included China, Turkey and Viet Nam.

Growing migration to the Russian Federation is among the exceptions in Eastern Europe, where the overall migrant stock has been decreasing.

**Table 2: Migrants residing in Eastern European countries**

Country	Total Population (thousands)	Migrant stock	
		Number (thousands)	Percentage of population
	2005	2005	
Eastern Europe	297,328	22,378	7.5
Belarus	9,755	1,191	12.2
Bulgaria	7,726	104	1.3
Czech Republic	10,220	453	4.4
Hungary	10,098	316	3.1
Poland	38,530	703	1.8
Republic of Moldova	4,206	440	10.5
Romania	21,711	133	0.6
Russian Federation	143,202	12,080	8.4
Slovakia	5,401	124	2.3
Ukraine	46,481	6,833	14.7

(Data from UNITED NATIONS, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION 2006 October 2006)

Since the break-up of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, there have been large-scale movement of ethnic Germans, Jews and Pontian Greeks from the CIS and other Eastern European countries to Germany, Israel and Greece, respectively. During 1990–2002, Germany received over 4 million ethnic Germans from those countries.

The movement of temporary workers is now the most dynamic factor. In 2002, over 90 per cent of the labour migration directed to Germany originated in Eastern Europe, particularly in Poland. There is a growing presence of workers from Bulgaria and Ukraine in Portugal and Spain, and rising numbers of Polish workers in the United Kingdom. With the opening of the borders of Eastern European countries, the number of bilateral labour agreements in the region increased fivefold in the early 1990s. In many case—not reflected in official statistics because countries keep track of incoming migrants, but not their returns—workers return within a short period of time to their homelands in Eastern Europe and may repeat the cycle several times. □

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