



Synthesis Report: Supply of remigrants and demand of businesses

Darja Boršič (University of Maribor)

Polona Pašič (University of Maribor)

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Re-Turn

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Series editor and project coordination:

Dr. Thilo Lang

Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography

Schongauerstraße 9

04328 Leipzig

T_Lang@ifl-leipzig.de

Tel.: +49 341 600 55-159

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1. Supply of remigrants

This report brings together results from different activities that were carried out in the analytical part of the Re-Turn project. As information on the phenomenon of return migration is not available from census data or public registries, an online survey was conducted among emigrants and returned migrants from Central European countries. These results will be highlighted in section 1.1. Subsequently, we decided to mirror these online survey results in a series of workshops with returned migrants in the Re-Turn case study regions. This feedback will be reported in section 1.2. The overall aim of the Re-Turn project is to provide original knowledge to 'home regions' about efficient ways of capitalizing on return migration. Therefore, also a look on the local labour demand was necessary. Methodologically, we gathered information through expert interviews with representatives of local businesses as well as business intermediaries (e.g. labour office representatives, chambers of trade and commerce, business associations etc.). The results of these interviews are provided in section 2.1. Additionally, a set of feedback workshops was organized in the Re-Turn case study regions, during which other business representatives commented and discussed the former interview results. The feedback of this workshop series is presented in section 2.2. A final conclusion will discuss the findings and derive some recommendations for the further pilot activities in the Re-Turn project.

1.1. Online survey results

The online survey was conducted during a period of eight months from December 2012 to August 2013. The main purpose of the survey was to identify motives for emigration and remigration, considerations and decision making that emigrants and return migrants are facing when moving abroad or returning home. The survey focused on potential problems in returning, needs and expectations of emigrants when considering return to their home region or home country.

The sample covered the following countries (regions): Germany (Harz Region and Görlitz Region), Czech Republic (Ustecky Region), Poland (Lodz Region and Swietokrzyskie Region), Hungary (Mid-Pannon Region), Slovenia (Podravska Region), Italy (Piedmont Region), Slovakia and Austria. Over 3,000 participants answered the survey, resulting in 2,000 valid cases in the sample ensuring information about the main variables in our analysis. Despite differences in the number of participants regarding their nationality and above average educational level, important information about motives, prerequisites and labour market performance was obtained. Migrant groups were classified as returnees, potential returnees and permanent emigrants.

Overall, the survey results regarding remigration have shown that most emigrants return successfully and consider return as easy, even easier than expected, and

that return is mostly driven by private and social motives and not so much by economic reasons. Comparing returnees, potential returnees and permanent emigrants, the return is a result of different qualifications of emigrants, different experiences abroad and different considerations concerning the (potential) return. Returnees on average obtained higher education compared to potential returnees and permanent emigrants.

Most returnees improved their job and income situation upon emigration but they had lower positions and income levels compared to other migrant groups in their host country. Only one third of the returnees in our sample lived on the same or worse conditions in the host country, showing these returnees might return because they failed abroad. Yet, the majority returns successfully and for other reasons. Among all migrant groups, returnees are most likely to maintain a household in their home country and usually emigrate temporarily.

As for motives for emigration, all three migrant groups emigrated in order to improve their careers, education and income. Our results show that return is not driven by dissatisfaction with the life abroad since all migrant groups are similarly satisfied with their conditions abroad. However, returnees are feeling less integrated and less socially accepted in the foreign environment. Thus, emigrants decide to return due to private and social reasons and are willing to take a job with worse work conditions at home compared to their position abroad, substituting better professional position abroad for improved social life at home.

Detailed results of the Re-Turn migrant survey results and a literature overview in the area of return migration can be found in “Re-Turn Migrant Survey Report: The Migrants’ Potential and Expectations” provided as output 323 of the Re-Turn project. It can be downloaded from the project’s website under:

http://www.re-migrants.eu/download/323_Migrant-Survey-Report.PDF

1.2. Regional workshops with migrants and remigrants

All eight case study regions (Ustecky Region-CZ, Görlitz Region-DE, Harz Region-DE, Mid-Pannon Region-HU, Lodz Region-PL, Swietokrzyskie Region-PL, Piedmont Region-IT and Podravska Region-SI) conducted workshops with remigrants and potential remigrants in order to present findings of the above mentioned Re-Turn online survey. The aim was to get feedback on the results of the survey and to discuss about migrants’ needs and experiences when returning to their regions or/and countries. These workshops took place in the period of May 2012 to October 2012.

1.2.1. Views about motivation for emigration

Main motivations for emigration from Ustecky Region were to get new experiences, to enjoy something new, something different, and better wages. Other reasons were to succeed abroad, for younger and low-skilled people to be independent, to improve professional skills, and for highly skilled people to advance their careers.

In Görlitz Region the participants agreed completely with the survey results. The participants in Harz Region of the meeting agreed to the results of the survey about the most relevant reasons for emigration. They mentioned that almost all left the region because of a new job and better career perspectives. Most of them left the Harz Region between the years 1995 and 2005, in a time when suitable jobs in the region were hard to find. Finding an apprenticeship or university education were other important reasons for emigration: At that time some of the demanded educational possibilities could not be found in the region. Additionally, the participants also mentioned that some of them left the region for their individual development, meaning that they wanted to live in a big city or just stay in another region for a couple of years for living new experiences. Not all of the participants planned to come back when they left. The wish for going back has often grown over the years or significant events bring changes in the personal life. Some of the participants who already returned to their home region mentioned that they moved away because they were forced to do so due to the lack of jobs and apprenticeship/training positions in the home region at that time. It was not really a wish or goal to move away; rather it was a necessity. Some of the other returned participants, and also some of the students who still live in their host regions, mentioned that they migrated because they wanted to. It was their wish to live away from the home region for a while.

The remigrants of Mid-Panon named the following reasons for emigration: higher salaries, career possibility, better working conditions, better transportation and infrastructure, international environment, attractive bigger cities and urban areas. Similarly in Poland, in Swietokrzyskie Region the following factors caused emigration: searching for jobs, the desire to earn more money, improving personal qualifications, gain a new profession, curiosity about the conditions in foreign countries. The most common causes in the Lodz Region were: lack of work in Poland, low salaries, family problems, poor health care system in the country, a willingness to learn about new cultures, gaining experience abroad, better living conditions abroad, the relationship between employers and employees, and the willingness to study abroad.

In Piedmont Region the participants pointed out that the Ossola valleys provide a specific spatial context regarding emigration, since there is the proximity to labour markets in Switzerland with high salaries and many job opportunities which give strong incentives to emigrate after finishing the education at home. Additionally, many people commute abroad on a daily or weekly basis, causing constraints to actual economic and productive development of the region. The participants in Podravska region agreed with the survey results. Their reasons to migrate were similar to those expressed in the survey.

1.2.2. Overview of remigrants' experiences with emigration

Generally the most participants (returning migrants) in Ustecky Region have had good feelings and experiences from emigration - all participants emigrated only for 'short' time with the return vision in a few years - regarding work conditions and people's behaviour abroad. Positive experience was reported with (high-)quality work being valued more than in the Czech Republic; less bureaucracy abroad; several everyday life issues working better (health care, bank institution, etc.); improving of foreign languages; higher professionalism in high-skills jobs; better chance for expert growth and further education and human development. Negative experiences were linked to difficult access to local networks (mainly in smaller villages in Ireland); sometimes closed groups of foreign workers; sometimes lower chance for professional growth mainly in low-skilled positions. Overall, the majority of the participants have positive experiences with their emigration.

In Görlitz Region most of the participants emigrated for studying or looking for better work positions with higher salaries and more opportunities. They pointed out that they missed their family and friends. The majority of participants in Harz Region had positive experiences related to their emigration. The experiences show that they found a new job easily and also have had only small difficulties to integrate to professional teams and companies. Almost all participants migrated within Germany, from their home region to the western parts of the country. That is why they did not have any difficulties regarding the language which reduces a lot of obstacles for the integration in the host regions. Nevertheless, the participants did mention minor difficulties and negative individual experiences with respect to the behaviour and mentality of the people in the host region compared to their home, which sometimes made it difficult for the participants to feel at home and integrated in the host region. This was not as relevant for those who stayed in a region where more people came out of the same home region or Eastern German regions. They easily found new jobs which were often better and more qualified than those in the home region. Although the participants moved away from home, they retained close contact to the home region via family and friends, constant visits and continuous information and updates.

The Mid-Pannon remigrants had good experiences with emigration from the point of view of career and working environment. On the other hand, the integration to the new community was harder than they expected. For some people, it was difficult to find a good apartment. They also felt discriminated because of their origin. Despite the decent jobs they had, in the everyday life they always felt they did not belong to the community.

Workshop participants of the Swietokrzyskie Region are the people who worked within the territory of European Union, Canada and the United States of America. Their experience of migration is mainly focused on the difficulties of language, and barriers caused by the mental and cultural differences. Respondents have shown, however, that after arriving in a particular country, usually they met with a friendly reception, good care and assistance in finding work and improving skills. The migrants said that their trip abroad was a challenge for them. They get to

know the world and other cultures. They learned English language. Migrants have gained experience, new contacts etc. One of the migrants said that working abroad enabled him to pay off credits and buy property in Poland. Another migrant pointed out that abroad relationships between employees are different. There is a nice atmosphere, less nervous.

Participants in Podravska region explained their positive and negative experiences. For them it was not difficult to adjust to new cultural environment and in general there were better working conditions abroad as compared to their home regions. On the other hand, in some cases they were not welcome abroad: People in the host country made them feel they do not belong there, they were experiencing difficulties getting new friends and social network, and health insurance and education are much more expensive abroad as compared to Slovenia.

1.2.3. Discussion about motivation for returning to home region/country

In general participants agreed with the Re-Turn online survey results when discussing some of their personal issues. One main motivation for returning home among returned migrants in Ustecky region was the economic crisis which reduced the number of job opportunities for foreign workers due to growing unemployment of local people. Furthermore the family situation was an important driver for return: Particularly relatives (e.g. partners in CZ or abroad but desiring to create a family at home), children (if parents want them to go to Czech schools) and parents (if old or ill and in need of care) made migrants go back to Ustecky Region. Other migrants returned simply because they never got accustomed abroad.

In Harz Region, the most important aspects for the return migration were family and friends. Although family and friends were a huge motivation for the return migration, almost all participants mentioned that job possibilities were elementary. The participants pointed out that only a new job in the home region has made it possible to move back. The job market has changed since their emigration and new and better job offers in the home region made it possible to move back.

In Mid-Pannon Region the participants explained that the reasons for returning were almost exclusively private or personal issues. For example the lack of integration to the new community abroad or home-sickness influenced the return decision. The new occupation they found in Hungary was less attractive in terms of salary. So none of them found a better professional position in Hungary; but they wanted to go back home because of family and friends.

The participants in Swietokrzyskie Region defined the following reasons for returning: Inability to find work abroad which is adequate with Polish qualifications, prolonged separation from family, health reasons, and disappointment with the conditions of everyday life. While in Lodz region, all participants returned to Poland, because they missed their family, they also wanted to send their children to kindergartens and schools in Poland.

Participant in Piedmont Region mentioned difficulties in professional growth in Switzerland, where Italians are usually occupying lower positions in companies while management is reserved for Swiss employees. The other reasons for returning are the desire to work near home and to exploit experiences gained abroad in their home region.

1.2.4. Overview of remigrants' experiences with return migration

The Czech participants had no major problems when returning to home or other regions in Czech Republic. Generally returnees were surprised that the return was not as difficult as they expected. The high-skilled returnees were prepared for the return. They took care of their accommodation and jobs in advance, and they were able to save or invest money earned abroad. Yet, the low-skilled people experienced quicker return without preparation, resulting in problems with labour market reintegration, needing more help from families, friends, and the state's social security.

In Görlitz Region, finding an adequate and fairly paid job is a challenge for returning migrants. While living costs are lower, summarized information about all infrastructural issues is missing. In Harz Region, family is what made it easier for the returned migrants to reintegrate. They had almost no difficulties concerning the social reintegration. Some difficulties and obstacles were mentioned belonging to job and work aspects. All participants found a new job within the home region; almost everybody had a new job when they finally decided to move back. Most of the participants mentioned that they earn less money back home as compared to the host regions. Some also work in a less or differently qualified job just to be back in the home region. One specific difficulty that was mentioned was related to find possible job offer in the home region while living in the host region. Institutions such as job centres were often not able to support willing return migrants. Namely, job centres in home region are mainly responsible for people living in the home regions; job centre in the host region cannot offer jobs in the home region. This problem is relevant for those people who try to find a new job while still having a job. The most relevant tools and methods that were used to find a new job in the home region were personal contacts, one's own initiative and consultant services.

Main difficulties for returned migrants in Mid-Pannon Region were the bad infrastructure, bad healthcare system, different working style, higher discrimination and general behaviour in the workplace in Hungary.

Participants in Swietokrzyskie Region expressed the importance of lessons learned abroad such as gaining new experience about new technologies, organizational structures and innovation. Migrants also showed that the major problems after a long residence abroad are the change of mentality, the difficulty in readjusting to the Polish bureaucracy and the problems of long lasting business procedures. Returned migrants in Lodz Region even believe that in Poland nothing has changed. There is high unemployment. There is a very large bureaucracy. One of the

migrants said that the problem is the fact that in order to get funding for your business, you have to be 12 months unemployed. And he now has to wait two more months.

Italian experiences show that people are willing to move back to their home region as quick as a job opportunities appear at home. Yet, the workshop's participants expressed difficulties in finding such jobs in their home region. In Podravska Region participants indicated a need for better information about key procedures and formal obligations upon return, e.g. assistance in obtaining information about the legal framework regarding work and social security. The problems they faced were connected to arranging documents in various locations, which is confusing and time consuming, difficulties in finding new employment in the home region, and difficulties for children in adapting to new environments back at home.

1.2.5. Needs and suggestions for improving conditions in home regions/countries for return migrants when returning

Participants in Ustecky Region have not experienced problems when returning. However, they do suggest (1) to provide information at one point (preferred through a web point under any ministry websites - ministry of interior or ministry of foreign issues or ministry for work and social issues or regional authorities), and this one point information should be linked with Czech embassies, labour offices, health insurance companies, as well as municipalities; (2) to improve procedures for foreign skills recognition; and (3) to work on better connected labour/social office systems in order to enable getting unemployment benefits in another country than where the social insurance was paid at the first place.

In Görlitz Region the following needs were pointed out: Establishing welcome culture in public institutions, changing minds towards an open attitude and against the belief that returned migrants failed abroad, introducing adequate instruments and tools to support remigration and international migration in general, promote a positive image of the home region and offer a high quality of life. There was also a vivid discussion about different target groups. Highly paid people, who can work independently from location and fixed offices, can live perfectly in the region, but they need fast internet. Other groups such as 'working class' people have to be attracted by fair and competitive salaries and a decent supplementary framework providing housing grounds, flexibility to combine family and professional life etc.

The returnees in Harz Region mentioned that they have not received or used any additional support besides family and friends. That is why some of them mentioned difficulties with services and the bureaucracy that could be improved. One aspect is the problem of finding appropriate job offers in the home region while living abroad and being informed about the labour market in the home region. The continuous information about the region, including information about the labour market or the social life and infrastructure should be improved. The aspect of a regional 'culture of welcome' and the creation of a return migration and immigration friendly culture was often mentioned. This should include providing

different services and support as well as continuous information about the region. Possible services that were mentioned include the support in finding a child care, a house or a flat.

Participants in Mid-Pannon Region suggested a free psychologist to help to deal with problems faced during re-integration and alleviated administration for returnees related to housing issues and health care. Creating new jobs, adequate to education, skills and knowledge of migrants was the argument most frequently raised by workshop participants in Swietokrzyskie Region. The result of the project should be a change in the negative image of the migrants, and a change in the negative attitude of the society towards people returning from abroad. Returned migrants mention a facilitated reintegration would be good for business improvement through increased discipline, performance, accuracy and aesthetics of the work, the introduction of new technologies, materials and technical solutions. Migrants in Lodz Region suggested quick access to funds, help from Labour Offices, information points for migrants only, training courses which present changes in the country, non-repayable loans for migrants, programs which will help to implement migrants' ideas (because they have the experience gained abroad), and better cooperation with the authorities with employers regarding returnees.

In Piedmont Region participants expressed pessimism about the current economic situation and huge differences among Italian and Swiss job offers and salaries. However, they pointed out that it would be helpful, if initiatives were created regarding tax reduction and providing information about job opportunities in the future when economic conditions will improve. According to the participants' opinion in Podravska Region the following would be helpful for migrants when considering an option for returning to their home regions or countries: An online guidance providing returning migrants with all relevant information regarding housing, employment, social security, schools, kindergarten; and an office or institution (a one-stop shop) where migrants could get all relevant information and also arrange all necessary documentation at the same place, enabling no need for arranging documents in different places and even cities.

2. Demand of businesses: Business needs and experiences with return migration

2.1. Business survey results

Within the Re-Turn project 109 interviews were conducted with managers, business owners, representatives of business associations and human resource managers in eight case study regions (Usti Region-CZ, Görlitz Region-DE, Harz Region-DE, Mid-Pannon Region-HU, Lodz Region-PL, Swietokrzyskie Region-PL, Piedmont Region-IT and Podravska Region-SI). These regions share common characteristics: A massive emigration and structural problems of labour markets, often characterized by below average salaries, long-term structural unemployment combined with labour

shortages. The interviews focused on employers' experiences with return migration as well as with their attitudes towards returned migrants as potential employees. There was heterogeneity in the interviews regarding economic sector and size of companies.

The results show that businesses appreciate migrants' knowledge, experience and skills. However, if their experience abroad was not in a specific area related to their education and companies' profile, the potential returnee is not considered as special added value. Still, companies do value non-specific skills, such as language skills, intercultural adjustment, and personality and character development.

To some extent, companies are cautious employing a returnee, since managers expect returnees will leave the home country soon again, if they were not completely satisfied with working conditions, or if they were offered better positions elsewhere. Thus, companies are not willing to invest in such a risky group of employees. Additionally, the interviewed companies do not support the hypothesis that returnees are willing to accept a lower wage and worse working conditions. On the contrary, the companies reported that returned migrants often have higher standards than non-migrant locals, and they pointed out that they cannot afford to pay higher salaries just for the fact that somebody has experience from abroad.

It is obvious from the answers that return migration is not included as specific area in companies' strategic human resource plans, including very low awareness of return initiatives in their regions. Detailed results of the Re-Turn business survey can be found in "Business Survey Report: The Companies' View on Return Migrants and Foreign Work Experience" provided as output 323 of the Re-Turn project. It can be downloaded from the project's website under:

<http://www.re-migrants.eu/download/Business%20Survey%20Report.pdf>

2.2. Regional workshops with business representatives and multipliers

All eight case study regions (Usti Region-CZ, Görlitz Region-DE, Harz Region-DE, Mid-Pannon Region-HU, Lodz Region-PL, Swietokrzyskie Region-PL, Piedmont Region-IT and Podravska Region-SI) conducted workshops with business representatives and multipliers in order to present the Re-Turn business survey results and to get feedback on the results of the survey. During these feedback workshops, participants discussed about businesses' needs and experiences with return migration in their regions. These workshops took place in the period of June 2012 to October 2012.

2.2.1. Views about motivations of migrants to return home

Overall, the participants agreed with the results of the Re-turn business survey. It was mentioned that those positive aspects and the reasons for a return migration should be used for the regional marketing, e.g. to use these factors as a regional advantage in attracting also other groups of migrant workers. An interesting point was also the necessity to provide support for social networks and restoring social infrastructure, as well as creative solutions in more and more sparsely populated areas.

The participants in Ustecky Region discussed about the lack of personal experience with return migrants or their motivation for return. Business representatives also mentioned that it would be better if return occurred because of job offers, attraction and good conditions in the Czech Republic instead of bad conditions abroad. Furthermore, the fear of businesses and intermediaries is that returning emigrants are going back because of a generous social system in the Czech Republic in times of crisis abroad.

In the eyes of the business representatives in Görlitz Region, job opportunity is the most important motivation for return, followed by the quality of work, the life perspective in general and the social life possibilities and networks. Being involved in the regional society is a major reason, too. In Harz Region, the discussion was a bit different. There, workshop participants agreed that family and friends as well as the good social infrastructure (e.g. many kindergartens) within the region are the most important reasons for a migrant to return. Furthermore, they mentioned that the economic situation - with the growing shortage of skilled workers - is also a very important factor for the decision to return. Nowadays, it is easier for (young) people to find good apprenticeship/training position or a job in the region as compared to the past. An emigration is no longer that relevant or necessary to find a job. These improved conditions regarding job perspectives also influence the willingness to return to the region. That is why career aspects also can be and will be important for return. It was also mentioned that often the wages in Harz Region are still lower as in urban regions or the western part of Germany. Therefore, income and financial aspects often hinder people to return.

In Hungary the companies agreed that the most important factors for remigration are connected with family life and private issues. So the fact that somebody returned should not be judged as a 'failure' in professional life. Companies should not have prejudices just because somebody returned to the home country. The business representatives in Lodz Region think that returning to Poland is because of the family situation, the lack of jobs abroad, illness, personal issues and the overall crisis in the European Union. Similarly, the businessmen of Swietokrzyskie Region showed that the most important ways to motivate the return are financial motivation, creating a suitable work environment, allowing traineeships and life-long learning courses, and creating of a favourable political and economic climate.

Regarding the Italian Piedmont Region, the influence of Swiss attractive high-salary job offers was emphasized. On the one hand, the region benefits from commuting

since more than 50,000 people from Northern Italy work in Switzerland. However, it is difficult to compete with the Swiss economy in order to foster the development of the Italian regions as these commuters are lost human capital for Italian companies. Thus, governance for the return migration is of utmost importance, but in the present economic framework it is difficult to proceed in this direction. The discussion in Podravska Region went into the direction of possible difficulties when returning such as: Adapting back to Slovenian society, life style, and complex bureaucracy, if opening a company in the home region or country.

2.2.2. Reflection about business needs and interest in return migrants

Czech business representatives do not care about previous foreign experiences of their current or potential employees (all participants agreed with this point) and the main needs are the language skills if needed in the specific position. Business representatives in Görlitz Region discussed about needs for (1) proving attractive, flexible and secure jobs also for returned migrants' partners, for (2) enabling personal development of returned migrants, and (3) helping them with quick reintegration. Companies are aware of low wages in the region, and consequently competition from other regions, but they see no solution at the moment. A better cooperation with schools and universities was emphasized in order to strengthen the contact with graduates. Participants pointed also to a need for the social responsibility of local companies and a better cooperation with other companies as well as with the local administration.

In Harz Region, the participants of the workshop agreed that the companies need return and other migrants to fight the growing shortage of skilled workers. The companies are also interested in return migrants due to their experiences and knowledge. The return migrants' needs and interests are - in the view of business representatives - not much different from other applicants or migrants. It was once more mentioned that the individual knowledge, experiences and willingness are important factors, no matter where the person lives or has lived before. The return migrants are therefore no special target group in human resource management. Nevertheless, the participants agreed on the fact that it is easier for local companies, and the region as a whole, to recruit return migrants and former inhabitants than other migrants from Germany or abroad. That is why the efforts to reach and recruit return migrants have to be strengthened. The views of businesses' about return migrants as a special and valuable target group should be developed and improved.

In Mid-Pannon Region, the general opinion of the companies is that experiences gained in another (more developed) country can be very useful since Hungary is usually a step behind in the use of new technologies compared to western parts of Europe, and it is good to know what the next technologies will look like. The companies have not been putting returnees in the focus of their attention when hiring a new professional. Yet, returning migrants are welcome at the companies since they can have an up-to-date knowledge on the recent technology

developments and excellent language skills. Both characteristics can be very important, especially for companies with foreign partners of multinational companies.

According to the belief of business representatives in Lodz Region, people who return to Poland want to start a 'second' life in Poland. They usually come back for family reasons, but they are also looking for work and in many cases they set up their own business. Workshop participants observed that returned migrants have difficulties with the procedures in Poland, few are employed, many are discouraged and not familiar with the rules. There is no one who can help them. Often they are considering going abroad again, when they become frustrated with the situation back home. Migrants also have comparably high expectations in the national labour market.

Representatives of Swietokrzyskie Region businesses stated that in case they would have to employ migrants, a higher state aid would be required. Not all companies are prepared to meet the increased financial expectations of returned migrants. Generally, large firms declare the desire to employ people with foreign work experience, as they dispose of the necessary financial resources and social security. In the current situation, small-sized companies are struggling to stay in the market and they show no particular need to improve employment or replacement of the personnel.

In Piedmont region business representatives from dairy, vivarium and tourism sectors disclosed high interest in return migrants, which is currently limited by the economic crisis. The Italian companies are facing difficulties and thus they are striving to maintain the current number of employees. So, basically they do not plan to employ new workers. The representative of Piedmont Labour Office presented the initiative called 'Talents' which supports return migration of higher educated people born after 1969, providing them with a reduction of fiscal charge between 70% and 80% when starting their own business.

In Podravska Region business representatives are worried that return migrants could have problems in getting an employment at home, especially if they are highly educated and skilled. There are no job vacancies for technologically advanced workers in Slovenia, or the few existing positions are already occupied. Businesses expressed their interest in returning migrants by asking about what kind of education and experience a return migrant might bring from abroad. They emphasized that both companies and returning migrants should be aware of these opportunities. Both groups should work on awareness raising when it comes to highlighting the advantages that return migrants can bring into a company back at home. The discussion went on about who would be willing to settle in empty regions: Slovenians or foreigners? Participants concluded that actions related to the attraction of migrants could also be focused (at least partially) on foreigners, who would migrate to these regions and contribute to the economic development in the same way as returning Slovenians would do.

2.2.3. Overview of businesses' experiences with return migration

In the Czech case only a few participants have had immediate experience (personal or in family) with emigration and return migration. There was no discussion regarding the direct experiences with return migration. Some positive experiences were discussed in Görlitz Region. The participants emphasized that returnees are known as entrepreneurs with innovative ideas. One company presented an example of good practice: A returnee accepted a lower wage position compared to his previous job abroad, and after a few months, he is regarded as highly valued employee.

In Harz Region, the participants pointed out that the group of return migrants is not (yet) seen as a special target group. The business representatives often do not ask, if the future employees are returnees. That is why the business representatives often only know by chance about a return migration. Yet, the experiences with returned migrants are positive so far. These people were happy about being back, the willingness to change or emigrate again is low and the integration was relatively easy.

In Mid-Pannon Region, most of the participants had experiences with return migration. The good experience was that they represent an open-minded, young and flexible workforce. Furthermore, they are very good when it comes to negotiating or cooperating with foreign partners. They are usually very creative, so they can bring new 'impetus' for the business and for the companies' business relations. On the other hand, there were also bad experiences. If the reintegration takes longer time than expected, it might influence their professional life as well. It can also be difficult to adapt to the Hungarian working environment, which, in many cases, is less developed as compared to Western Europe. Some companies have experienced that returnees have the tendency to emigrate again when circumstances get worse. So, there is the possibility that they stay at the company only for a shorter time.

When asking the businessmen in Lodz Region, if the remigration phenomenon is positive, negative or neutral, five businessmen answered that they are indifferent, because, for example, if a person with an average level of qualifications is returning, it is indifferent to them where they were living. Others believed that return migration is a good thing, because returned migrants can compare living standards in Poland and abroad, they can propose changes and they have more experience than people, who stayed at home. Furthermore, they have the knowledge and expertise to contribute to the development and progress of the home region by developing new trends.

The invited entrepreneurs of the Swietokrzyskie Region currently employ people with experience of working abroad. During the discussion, managers of these companies pointed out that employees with experience from abroad are more disciplined, willing to use new technologies and technical solutions. Most of the participants emphasized the high professionalism of returned migrants, satisfaction

with their work, but also a noticeable demand for higher wages, which the regional companies (in some cases) have not been able to meet.

In Piedmont Region nearly all participants had direct experiences with return migration. The most interesting cases gave priority to language skills in order to be able to communicate within international network of clients and suppliers. On the other hand, a case of a difficult return was presented: One returnee with language degrees and experience in cultural mediation was confronted with the fact that his skills were not sufficiently valued and understood. Participants concluded that in Italy specific qualifications are generally more valued than foreign work experience.

Only a few participants in Podravka Region had direct experience with return migration. Those, who do have, had mainly positive impressions and experienced positive benefits of returned migrants. However, the participants expressed their concern about increasing trends of (daily) migration from Podravka Region to Austria. Companies in the city of Graz are actually inviting educated and highly skilled workers to work there. That is particularly true for IT experts and software engineers.

2.2.4. Needs and suggestions for improving conditions in using the return migrants' potential in the home region

In Ustecky Region participants were at first indifferent about the problem, thus stimulating the discussion was a bit difficult. The main points of discussion were the problems with returning migration (e.g. if there is any problem) in relevant levels of Ustecky region or the Czech Republic as a whole, the benefits of returned migrants for regional companies, the need to integrate the returning migrants to the labour market as soon as possible, and declining their numbers at labour offices. For example, participants suggested arranging special courses for returning migrants for quick adaptation to the Czech labour market because of special requirements from Czech employers in terms of writing CVs, motivation letters, or how to use relationships from abroad for future jobs, etc.

For improving the conditions and services for potential returning migrants, business representatives in Görlitz Region suggested cooperative actions of municipalities, local businesses and actors of the civil society with already returned migrants and the Re-Turn project team. The aim should be to create a network of enterprises interested in returnees, with face-to-face contacts and regular meetings and updates. In Harz Region, one of the most mentioned aspects was to raise the awareness about the opportunities in the region among potential return migrants, who are still in Western Germany or abroad. The advertisement of the advantages and possibilities of a life in the region has to be improved. The marketing of the region to the target group of new inhabitants as well as the regional marketing with respect to local people has to be intensified. It was pointed out that a closer contact between potential return migrants and already returned migrants as well as former inhabitants is necessary. In addition to these aspects of addressing

potential new inhabitants, possible services to support these people are necessary and have to be developed and offered.

Some suggestions were also provided from the Hungarian business representatives. First, an agency should be set up, which would provide services for highly qualified and experienced returnees. Such services might include e.g. fast administration, VIP services, tailor-made recruitment services or creating a club of returnees and foreign employees, who work in the region. Through the organization of joint leisure activities, the multinational and multicultural environment might be brought back to their lives after they had left this upon return. Finally, sharing success stories of returned migrants could positively influence decision making of potential return migrants, who are still abroad.

The businessmen in Lodz Region think that the labour costs for returned migrants are very high. For returned migrants, they offered preferential conditions of employment for a specified period, for example, a 6-months exempt from contributions to the social insurance. One of the business representatives believes that there should be incentives or tools for this specific target group. Another said that there should not be special funds for returned migrants, as he believes it would be better to fund new jobs, because in Poland there are a lot of unemployed people.

The main topic in the Swietokrzyskie Region was the need to create a central system to support services for returnees at the country level. It was further mentioned that the regional economy is too weak to work independently in this field. It is necessary to support migration by diverting funds from the state budget-oriented activities. At present, measures to get experienced staff by regional entrepreneurs are scattered and less coordinated. In their opinion better social conditions should be created, but also increased salaries might be deployed in individual cases.

In Podravska Region representatives of companies highlighted that they are interested in highly qualified personnel with experiences of working abroad. They emphasized the positive effects of remigration since returnees can bring fresh, new knowledge, new methods of work, new experiences and useful information, which can help enhancing the economic development and the competition in the economy.

3. Conclusion

This report showed that both surveys' results are in accordance with the opinions expressed by workshops' participants. This is true for migrants' points of view as well as for businesses' needs and expectations in the home regions of return migrants. The migrant survey showed that the awareness of existing return initiatives is limited. Although they are in regular informal and formal contact with their home country, only 10% of respondents knew about existing return initiatives in their home countries/regions. Moreover, also workshops' participants pointed

out a need for better marketing of home regions to potential returnees as well as a need for improving awareness of the companies for the benefits which returnees could provide to local enterprises and the economy in general. Thus, raising awareness in both levels is necessary for enabling a better efficiency of existing return initiatives and helping (home) regions to better capitalize on return migration. The workshops' participants listed a few possible ways of doing this. And this is also the next step for Re-Turn project: Namely, the establishment of a system of awareness raising in and by the home regions (and home countries) for the attractiveness for potential returnees. Furthermore, awareness must be raised about the returnees' assets, such as experience and knowledge acquired abroad, for local businesses and the economy back home in general.

Regions benefitting from returning migrants

After 1989 Central Europe has gone through important political, economic and social changes. The entry of many CE countries to the European Union during first decade of 21st century enhances the European integration. Joining European space accelerated economic growth of these countries and opened work migration flows, mainly from Central Europe to North-Western Europe.

Economically motivated migration of in particular young and well educated people from the New Member States to high-income countries is currently dominating international migration flows in Europe thanks to the free right to work in any other EU Member State. This is intensifying a brain drain process for many regions in Central Europe and certainly for the Re-Turn case study regions.

On the other hand statistics show the willingness of these people to come back to their countries. However, this process is often associated with significant problems of reintegration. Often the home regions neglect the returning migrants' contribution to regional economic development of these countries, and they do not support migrants in their return. It is estimated, that up to 50% of these outmigrants would return to their home countries within 5 years after emigration - a huge potential for

Project message:

“Re-Turn perceives returning migrants as a key factor for innovative regional development and therefore it creates new services and tools in order to facilitate their return and reintegration in their home region.”

regional development as these people gained new social, cultural and professional competencies while being abroad.

Re-Turn's main objectives are linked to the development and implementation of services needed to support migrants in their wish to return, the promotion of returning migrants as a human capital resource for innovative business development, the creation of framework conditions for reintegration into their home countries' labour markets and social communities. The project aims at developing, testing and implementing joint strategies, new support policies, tools and services in the participating regions.

Target groups:

1. decision takers, senior officers from regional authorities and labour market organisations
2. training and qualification organisations
3. business associations and economic development organisations
4. social groups representing migrants
5. returning migrants

Further information:

www.re-migrants.eu

Dr. Thilo Lang

*Leibniz-Institut für
Länderkunde (Leibniz
Institute for Regional
Geography)*

Tel: +49-341 60055-159

email: T_Lang@ifl-leipzig.de

The project seeks to gather original knowledge on the specific situation of returning migrants. Therefore an online survey is available under <http://return.ifl-leipzig.de> until July 2012 addressing emigrants who have already returned home, or who want to do so in the future. This knowledge will be used to push the topic of 'return migration' on the political agenda, providing an account of the specific motivations and problems of returning migrants, and offering solutions for regional stakeholders to support them in their return.

Project information:

Project partners:

Countries involved: Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, and Italy

Case Study Regions:

Ústí Region (CZ)

Görlitz Region (DE)

Harz Region (DE)

Mid Pannon Region (HU)

Lodz Region (PL)

Swietrzykie Region (PL)

Piemonte Region (IT)

Podravska Region (SI)

Main outputs:

1. *CE remigration online visualisation platform*
2. *Toolkit with methods and instruments of success stories*
3. *Handbook with Transnational joint planning and management tools*
4. *Tools and services to re-attract emigrants*
5. *Transnational Strategy for attracting and reintegrating migrants*

Project duration: 5/2011 - 4/2014

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