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***EVOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL  
MIGRATION STATISTICS IN SELECTED  
CENTRAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES***

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International Organization  
For Migration



Foundation for Population,  
Migration and Environment



Institute of Geography and Spatial Organisation,  
Polish Academy of Sciences

## **EVOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION STATISTICS IN SELECTED CENTRAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

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**Abstract:** This paper presents a comparative overview of data collection methods currently used to produce data on international migration flows in the statistical systems of selected transition countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia. Specific characteristics of the data collection systems in post-socialist countries are identified and their impact on the data quality is discussed. A special attention is given to recent improvements towards better compliance with recommendations on statistics of international migration, mainly implemented in the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Based on the example of the Czech Republic the impact of the transition from the lifetime to long term migration concept is shown.

**Keywords:** international migration, statistics, data sources, Central Europe

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## **1. Introduction**

In the 1990s the Central European countries have undergone a fundamental change. They have been transformed from state socialist societies into democratic market economy societies. The transition had a profound influence on conditions of international migration. Over the course of communist times the migratory movement were shaped mainly by the restrictive exit policy. With the end of socialism, the strictly controlled borders were opened and international movements were subject principally to restrictions resulting from immigration policies of destination countries. The relaxed regulation on international movements resulted in increase in volume of migration flows. However, usually it was not reflected in the official statistics. The statistical data on international migration were based on the outdated concept that was inherited from the previous regime. Migration flows referred only to changes of permanent places of residence and permanent were understood literally as infinite duration. Those statistics did not cover new forms of international movements that should have been perceived as migration according to the international recommendations. In addition, when the exit visas were no longer required and passports were more easily accessible, the main basis for production of statistics on outflows of nationals to non-communist countries was no more valid. Therefore, production of international migration statistics in these countries required considerable changes. The main objective of this paper is to present how far the selected Central European countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia) are in achieving the goal of compliance with the United Nations recommendations on international migration statistics (United Nations, 1998) and what the impact of change in concept is on the level of registered flows. Firstly, the availability of statistics on international migration flows and data sources from which these statistics are derived are presented. Then, an in-depth overview of concepts of international migration flows that are currently in place in the countries considered is provided. The last section concentrates on the impact of different migration concepts on the level of international migration flows that are reported by the countries.

## **2. Availability of statistics on international migration flows**

The availability of statistics on international migration flows constitutes the essential basis to reconstruct the picture of the evolution of the phenomenon. However, the complex nature of migration process, leading to difficulties in conceptualization and measurement, hinders the creation of a reliable picture. Official annual statistics on overall international immigration and emigration flows are produced and disseminated in all Central European countries considered (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia).

As regards core characteristics of migrants (citizenship, country of birth, country of origin and destination), the scope of the currently available tabulations varies considerably across these

countries (see Table 1). Statistics on immigrants and emigrants by citizenship are available in all the countries except Poland. In Poland information about citizenship is collected but if this variable is not filled in by a migrant the Polish citizenship is assumed. Due to the low quality of the available data, i.e. unrealistically large share of Polish migrants, it has been decided not to produce such statistics. However, because of the perceived improvement in data reliability these statistics may be available starting from the reference year 2005 or even 2004.

**Table 1** Availability of statistics on international migration flows

Country	Total	By citizenship (age and sex)	By country of birth (age and sex)	By country of previous/ next residence (age and sex)
<b>Czech Republic</b>	+	+	[-]	+
<b>Hungary</b>	+	+	+	n:- f:- <sup>Q</sup> / -
<b>Poland</b>	+	[- <sup>Q</sup> ]	-	+
<b>Slovak Republic</b>	+	+	n:[-] f:+ (age, sex: -[+])	+
<b>Slovenia</b>	+	+(age: + / n:+ f:-[+])	[-]	n:+ f:-

Information referring to disaggregation by age and sex, unless otherwise indicated in brackets

+ available

- not available

n: information referring to nationals

f: information referring to non-nationals

.../... information referring to immigration/emigration

[ ] the responsible authority or data supplier has indicated that these data may be available at some point in the future

Q statistics are not produced due to the low quality of data

There are many gaps in data on international immigration and emigration by country of birth. Currently they are available only in Hungary for both nationals and non-nationals. Although in the Slovak Republic the statistics on immigrants and emigrants by country of birth are now not compiled, they may be produced for foreigners when requested. In the case of the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia the responsible authority has indicated that the missing statistics may be available in the near future. In Poland, where only information on place of birth is collected and derivation of country of birth is not straightforward, there are no concrete plans to produce these statistical data.

Statistics on immigration by country of previous residence and emigration by country of next residence are not compiled at all in Hungary and for foreigners in Slovenia. It results from the fact that the information is not complete (information on country of previous residence of foreign immigrants in Hungary) or is not collected at all (the other cases). In the Czech Republic, Poland and the Slovak Republic these tabulations are available for both nationals and non-nationals. However, in the Czech Republic in the case of emigration data based on expiry of residence permits, it is assumed that all foreigners emigrate to the countries of their citizenship. Besides, owing to change of data source of statistics on international migration of the Czech citizens the disaggregations by country of origin and destination will not be available for nationals for the reference year 2005. In the population register, which constitutes a new data source, the core variables are missing. The data should be again available since reference year 2006, provided the necessary amendments in the law and the population register will be introduced.

### 3. Data sources of statistics on international migration flows

The data collection systems that are currently used in the Central Europe to produce official statistics are characteristic of these countries and unprecedented in the other European Union member states. The countries in question use either statistical forms filled in by both nationals and foreigners when changing place of residence or they derive data from Central Population Register for nationals and from Alien's Register for non-nationals (see Table 2). Only small and transitional deviations from these data collection systems are observed.

**Table 2** Sources of data on international migration flows

Country	Statistical forms	Central Population Register	Register of foreigners or residence permits register
<b>Poland</b>	nationals and foreigners	-	-
<b>Slovak Republic</b>	nationals and foreigners	-	<i>foreigners</i>
<b>Czech Republic</b>	-	nationals	foreigners
<b>Hungary</b>	-	nationals	foreigners
<b>Slovenia</b>	-	nationals	foreigners

*italic* supplementary data source

Statistical forms are used in Poland and the Slovak Republic. Data on international migration for nationals and non-nationals are collected when a person registers or deregisters his or her permanent place of residence in the country. In Poland the statistical parts of the registration forms and copies of the administrative deregistration forms are sent to the Ministry of the Interior, where the data are input into a computer file and then sent to the Central Statistical Office. In the Slovak Republic special statistical forms are filled in and they are sent directly to the statistical office. The same forms, inherited from the times when Czechoslovakia existed, were used in the Czech Republic to produce statistics on international migration of nationals until the reference year 2004 inclusive. In the Slovak Republic the additional statistics on international migration of foreigners disaggregated by citizenship were produced for the reference year 2003 based on the alien's register. In Poland and the Slovak Republic the centralized population registers are in operation, but they are not used to produce statistics on international migration. It results from the lack or poor quality of some crucial characteristics of migrants. For instance, in the Polish central population register only current places of residence are stored, therefore statistics on international migration by country of previous and next residence cannot be produced. Historical information on places of residence is stored on municipality and voivodeship levels. In the Slovak population register there are a number of persons whose former Czechoslovak citizenship has not been replaced by the new one (Czech or Slovak), so statistics on flows by citizenship would not be reliable. However, the population register in the Slovak Republic is in reconstruction now and will be used for international migration statistical purposes in the future. A plan of reconstruction of the central population register exists also in Poland.

The second type of data collection system exists in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia. In these countries the central population register constitutes a source for the

statistics on international migration of nationals only and the statistics on international migration of foreigners are derived from the alien's register. In Hungary the central population register does not cover the whole target population of foreigners, since only those with permanent residence permits are included. In the Czech Republic and Slovenia the population registers theoretically have the full coverage. When the coverage of the population registers was extended to all major categories of foreigners the missing data have been transferred from the alien's registers. However, in the Czech Republic the data on foreigners in the population register are of inferior quality compared with those in the alien's database. It results from the fact that the transfer of data from the alien's register to the population register has not been completed. In Slovenia, some data on migration related events that are necessary to produce flow statistics are not available in the population register. Thus, in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia the statistics on international migration of non-nationals are derived from the alien's register. The registers of foreigners in these countries are centralised and both immigration and emigration statistics are compiled based on them. In the case of Slovenia the figures for emigration of foreigners are estimated on the basis of change in stock of foreigners, vital statistics and immigration data. In the Czech Republic and Slovenia the current state of affairs is treated as transitional and the population registers are to be used for both nationals and non-nationals in the future.

In general, the key distinctive features of the evolution of data collection systems in the Central European countries may be summarized as follows:

- old data collection systems based on the statistical forms are still in place because of the lack or poor quality of core characteristics of international migrants in the central population registers for both nationals and non-nationals (Poland, the Slovak Republic);
- data derived from the statistical forms are supplemented, when possible, by data from the central alien's register (the Slovak Republic);
- statistics on international migration of nationals are derived from the central population register but due to the limited information on international migration of foreigners in the central population register (limited coverage in Hungary and not completed development of central population register in the Czech Republic and Slovenia) the alien's register with more reliable data is used instead;
- central population register is the target source of data on international migration for both nationals and non-nationals (the Czech Republic, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia).

From the analysis of the data sources it is apparent that the countries are at different stages of the development of the data collection systems, but no country has managed to reach the target yet.



#### **4. Concept of international migration underlying official flow statistics**

Whatever the source of the data on international migration is used, the key issue is the concept of migration underlying these data. However, the use of various sources of data for different categories of migrants, e.g. population register for nationals and alien's register for non-nationals, usually entails discrepancies in concepts. The same refers to the changes of data sources for a particular group over time. In Poland where only one source of statistics on international migration is used, namely statistical forms, the definition is consistent for nationals and non-nationals for inflows and outflows. In the case of the Slovak Republic, the supplementary data from the alien's register are produced according to a different definition and the figures are incomparable with data obtained from the statistical forms. In the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia, where population registers and alien's registers are used for nationals and non-nationals respectively, the concept of international migrant for foreigners differs from the concept of international migrant for nationals. Besides, the definitions of international immigrant and emigrant are not consistent for foreigners and in Slovenia for nationals as well.

However, in the case of the Central European countries one feature of statistics on international migration flows is predominant. These statistics either already are or are expected to be inconsistent over time. The outdated concept of permanent migration inherited from the communist regime does not fit in with the contemporary migration phenomenon and, if not already abandoned, it should be changed in the near future.

Unlike in the Soviet period, the Central European citizens may now move within their countries and between countries. They have a guaranteed right to go abroad and to come back as well. Therefore, the migration may be either permanent or temporary. In most countries people are obliged to report all these movements. However, when the concept of coexistence of permanent and temporary place of residence in the registration systems is in place (all countries considered except the Czech Republic) people may choose whether their departure is reported as temporary or permanent, especially if there is no upper limit for a temporary stay and there is no advantage of giving up a permanent residence in the country. In such state of affairs, statistics on international migration flows for permanent residence cover only a minor part of migratory movement and are largely underestimated. There is also a third solution: to leave the country without reporting this fact, which is not a rare case. In fact, rules regarding mandatory registration are a dead letter in the Central European countries and a change of migration concept seems to be an insufficient remedy to improve international migration statistics. As migration of foreigners is more restricted, it refers in particular to migration of nationals.

Nonetheless, some improvements, aiming at compliance with the United Nations recommendations on statistics on international migration, are possible, which can be observed mainly in the Czech Republic and Slovenia. They may be introduced by only some adjustments of existing data collection systems or use of alternative data source. Usually, only slight amendments into the regulations on registration are required, if any. Below, the concepts of international migration applied in the statistics produced in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia are presented.

## 4.1. The Czech Republic

### *4.1.1. Statistical definition of international migration*

Data on immigration and emigration of Czech citizens refer to self-declared changes of permanent residence. Currently, a person may have only one place of residence in the Czech Republic. In the case of Czech nationals it is always called a permanent place of residence. Official registration of a temporary place of residence alongside a permanent place of residence was abandoned in the first half of the nineties. If nationals want to leave the Czech Republic to settle abroad and do not want to give up their permanent residence in the country they do not have to report their departure. Only a few nationals decide to give up their permanent residence in the Czech Republic. If Czech nationals go abroad for a temporary stay they do not have to report their departure either. However, such possibility is provided for in the law. Czech nationals coming for a temporary or permanent stay in the Czech Republic have to register their stay only if they do not have a permanent residence in the country.

Figures on immigration of foreigners are currently produced by the Czech Statistical Office based on the principle of the legal length of stay. Statistics refer to foreigners granted residence permits (long-term, temporary and permanent) in a reference year. Long-term and temporary residence permits are granted to non-EU citizens and EU citizens respectively.

As regards non-EU citizens with long-term residence permits their actual duration of stay is by definition longer than one year. Long-term residence permits are granted to non-EU citizens after one year stay in the Czech Republic based on long-term residence visas. They are valid up to one year and can be renewed repeatedly.

In the case of EU citizens with temporary residence permits their actual duration of stay could be shorter than one year. Temporary residence permits are issued to EU citizens if they intend to stay in the Czech Republic for more than three months. They are granted for up to 5 years but the validity of the permit may be repeatedly extended. The date of registration is taken as the date of immigration.

Persons granted permanent residence permits not conditional on preceding continuous stay are also counted as immigrants at the date of registering their residence. Permanent residence permits not conditional on preceding continuous stay are delivered mainly on humanitarian grounds or for family purposes (to close relatives of Czech citizens or refugees). Besides, refugees, who have the right of permanent residence in the Czech Republic, are automatically included and the date of granting the status is taken as the date of immigration. Therefore, duration of their stay is not taken into account.

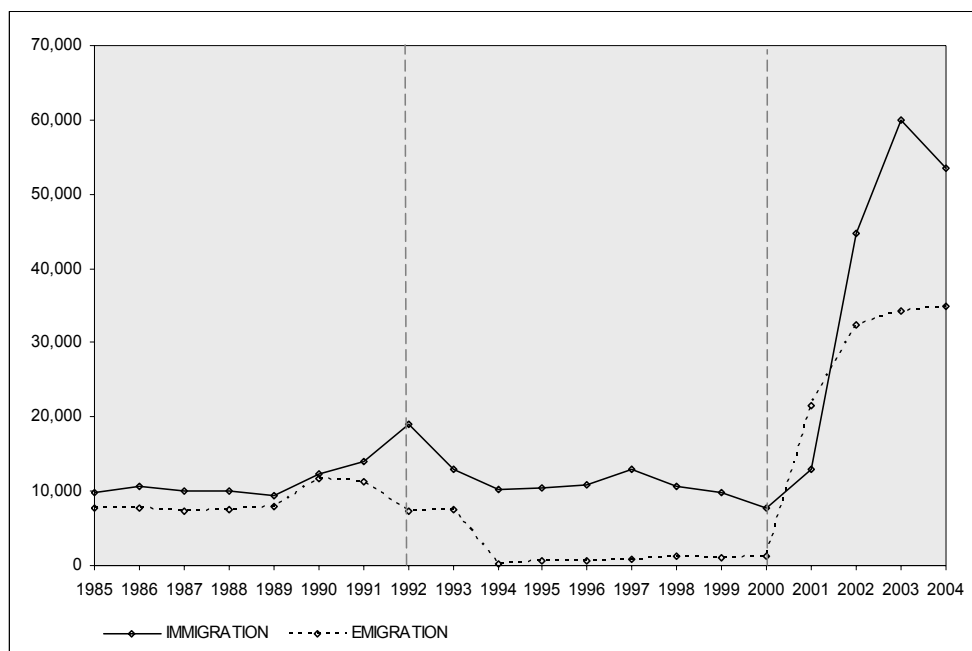
Foreigners are treated as emigrants at the date of cancelling residence in the country (date of deregistration) or at the expiry date of the residence permit or at the expiry date of card corresponding to the permanent residence permit (this certificate is valid for 10 years), provided they had not been renewed. Foreigners with a permanent residence permit should report to the district office of the Alien Police if they want to leave the Czech Republic to live permanently abroad. Foreigners with a temporary or long-term residence permit do not have to report when leaving the country. At the end of the validity of the permit they are considered to have left the country.

#### *4.1.2. Trends in international migration revealed by the official annual statistics*

There are two landmark dates that are reflected in the migration pattern (see Figure 1 and Table A1 in Annex 1). After the dissolution of Czechoslovakia on 1 January 1993, the previously internal movements between the territories of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic became international migration flows. The expected split of the common state evoked an increase in migration from the Slovak Republic to Czech Republic in 1992 (11 740). Then, immigration from the Slovak Republic started to decrease (7 276 in 1993 and 4 076 in 1994) and it levelled off at about 3 000 (1996–2001). In the case of emigration to the Slovak Republic a sharp decrease in the volume of migration took place in 1994. The emigration figure amounted to 56, whereas the average level in years 1980–1993 accounted for more than 6 thousands (7 232 in 1993). This decline is connected also with the fact that starting from the 1994 the Czech and Slovak Republic do not exchange information on migration between their countries, which was the case in 1993.

The second important change that took place in 2001 was connected with the change of migrant definition for foreigners. This change aimed at the closer compatibility with the United Nations Recommendations. Until 2000 inclusive the concept of permanent migration was applied to international migration of both Czech citizens and foreigners. Since 2001 long-term temporary migration of foreigners is included as well. Therefore data on international migration are not compatible over time and a substantial increase in figures for international immigration and emigration in 2001 reflects the change in definition and not a shift in migration trend.

**Figure 1** International immigration and emigration in the Czech Republic



Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic (various years)

The sudden rise is visible especially for the emigration figure in 2001. According to the Czech Statistical Office this was a special case of parallel change of definition and implementation of the new Act on Residence of Foreigners – much stricter than the previous one. In the case of immigration data a larger increase was observed one year later. As a result, in 2001 a negative net migration was recorded. It must be underlined that the concept of actual duration of stay for at least one year is applied. Before the implementation of the long-term residence permit (01.05.2004) foreigners with long-term residence visas for over 90 days whose actual presence in the country exceeded one year were covered. Besides, data for the year  $t$  are available in year  $t+1$ , so it means that long-term temporary immigration of foreigners that took place in year  $t$  is included in the figure on immigration with reference year  $t+1$ .

## 4.2. Hungary

### 4.2.1. Statistical definition of international migration

Official statistics on international migration of Hungarian citizens cover temporary (for more than 90 days) and permanent changes of place of residence. In Hungary a person may have a place of residence and additionally a place of stay. Place of residence (“permanent place of residence”) is the address of the dwelling where the person lives. Place of stay (“temporary place of residence”) is the address where a person stays longer than 3 months without an intention to leave finally a place of residence.

Data on immigration refer to Hungarian citizens who were born abroad or who have lived permanently abroad and returned to Hungary in order to settle down or stay temporarily and Hungarian citizens who came back after a temporary stay abroad. Nationals coming back from abroad for permanent or temporary stay in Hungary have to report this fact in the Register Office in the municipality only if they do not have an address in Hungary or want to have a new one.

Data on emigration refer to nationals who left Hungary with an intention to live temporarily or permanently abroad and gave notice of leaving. They are obliged by law to report their departure in the Register Office in the municipality. Persons that gave notice about leaving Hungary to live abroad temporarily stay in the register with their permanent address in Hungary, but a note is made that the person is temporarily absent.

Statistics on immigration of foreigners cover foreigners who arrived to Hungary and received residence permits, permanent residence permits (settlement permits or previously immigration permits) or residence permits for EEA citizen. Refugees and asylum-seekers are not included.

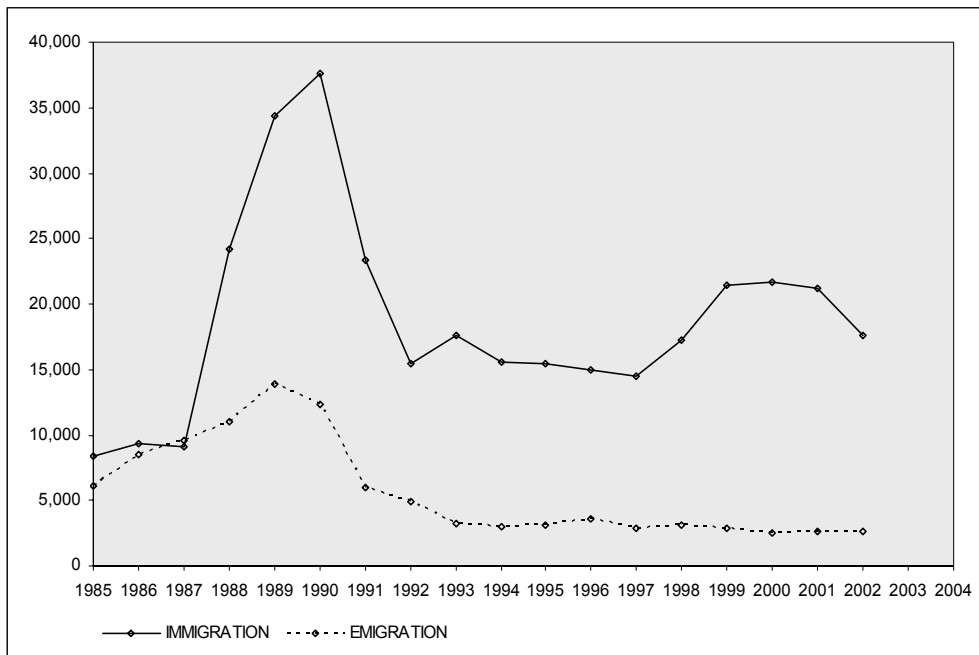
A residence permit is issued to foreigners staying in Hungary with a valid residence visa, which is granted for a stay exceeding 90 days but not exceeding one year. The validity of a residence permit is for a maximum period of 2 years (when the purpose of stay is the performance of work or any other income generating activity, it may be issued for up to 4 years). It may be extended repeatedly, each time for a maximum of 2 years. A settlement permit (equivalent of a permanent residence permit) may be granted after three years of continuous stay in the country. It gives the right to stay in Hungary for indefinite duration, but a document entitling stay in Hungary is valid for 5 years. A settlement permit replaced the previous immigration permit. However, the validity of the immigration permit issued prior to the entry into force of a new Aliens Act (Act XXXIX of 2001) has not been affected. As a result foreigners still may have a valid immigration permit. The nationals of the EEA are exempted from the visa requirement but in the case of a stay exceeding 90 days they have to request the issue of a residence permit (an EGT residence permit) certifying their entitlement to stay. The period of validity of the residence permit amounts to 5 years and it may be extended.

Data on emigration of foreigners include foreigners who reported their emigration for permanent residence abroad, foreigners who did not renew their residence permits or permit documents (in the case of foreigners with the permanent residence permits) and foreigners whose place of residence is unknown. Refugees and asylum-seekers leaving the country are not included.

#### 4.2.2. Trends in international migration revealed by the official annual statistics

In Hungary no substantial changes in definition of migration events have been observed. Since the first publication of international migration statistics in the 1992 volume of the Demographic Yearbook, the figures on international migration of foreigners have been produced based on the data on residence permits. The sharp increase in immigration figures in the late 1980s result from the liberalization of international movements (see Figure 2 and Table A1 in Annex 1).

**Figure 2** International immigration and emigration in Hungary



Source: Demographic Yearbook (various years)

It should be noted that there are many discrepancies between figures for total immigration and emigration flows available in various publications and databases (Hungarian Demographic Yearbooks, Eurostat, DG JLS reports, CoE). They are due to either one or both of the following reasons:

- different coverage – they refer to both nationals and non-nationals or only non-nationals; official statistics on international migration of Hungarian nationals and foreigners are published in Hungarian demographic yearbooks in separate tables;
- some figures are the preliminary estimates, instead of the final ones – final data are available with a considerable delay, e.g. data supplied by the NSI to Eurostat in 2004 refer to migration events in 2002 and despite this delay they are marked as preliminary.

## 4.3. Poland

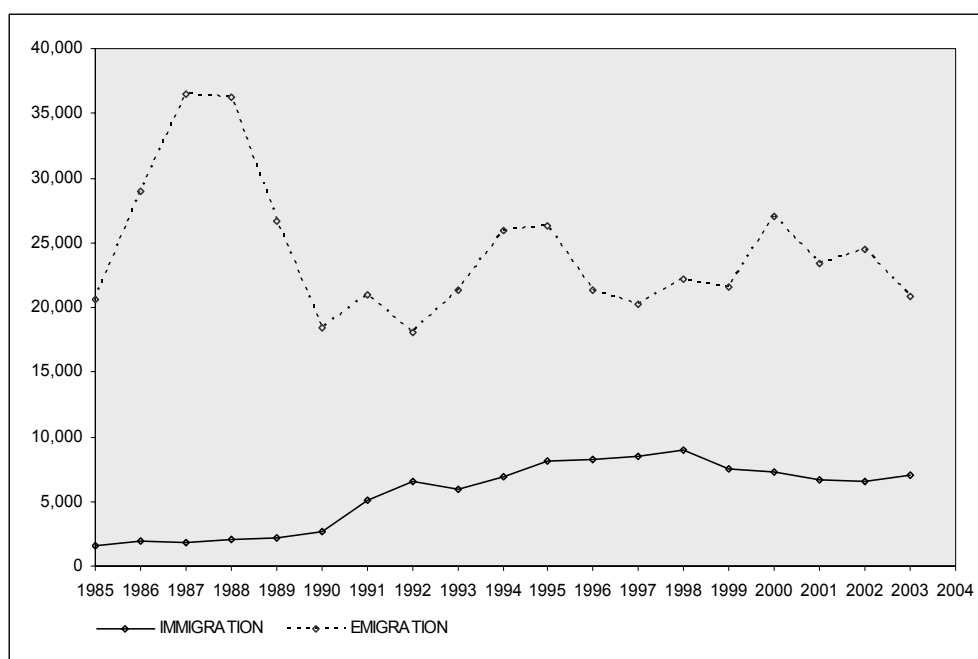
### 4.3.1. Statistical definition of international migration

Official annual statistics on international migration flows concern migration for permanent residence only. All registered changes of permanent place of residence of citizens and non-citizens are considered. All those changes have to be reported to the municipality. Although temporary absence exceeding 2 months due to stay abroad and temporary presence in the country regardless of its duration has to be reported as well, they are not included in the statistics on the international migration flows.

### 4.3.2. Trends in international migration revealed by the official annual statistics

International migration statistics in Poland are consistent over time, but reflect only a small and since 1991 quite stable part of actual flows – registered changes of permanent place of residence (see Figure 3 and Table A1 in Annex 1).

**Figure 3** International immigration and emigration in Poland



Source: Statistical Demographic Yearbook (various years)

The unreliability of the statistics is heightened by the under-registration of the permanent migration. The quality of the data on temporary (more than 2 months) migration is highly questionable as well. According to the administrative records permanent population temporarily absent above 2 months due to departure abroad amounted to 15 404 as at 31.12.2001 and according to the census – 786 085 as at 20.05.2002. Despite the legal

obligation for every person going abroad for over two months to de-register in his or her permanent place of residence, most emigrants do not declare their exit.

#### 4.4. The Slovak Republic

##### *4.4.1. Statistical definition of international migration*

In the Slovak Republic the official annual statistics on international migration flows of both nationals and non-nationals refer to moves from or to abroad of persons who change their place of permanent residence (lifetime migration). However, temporary migration of Slovak citizens for a stay exceeding 90 days has to be reported as well. The upper limit for a temporary stay is 5 years, but this period may be prolonged.

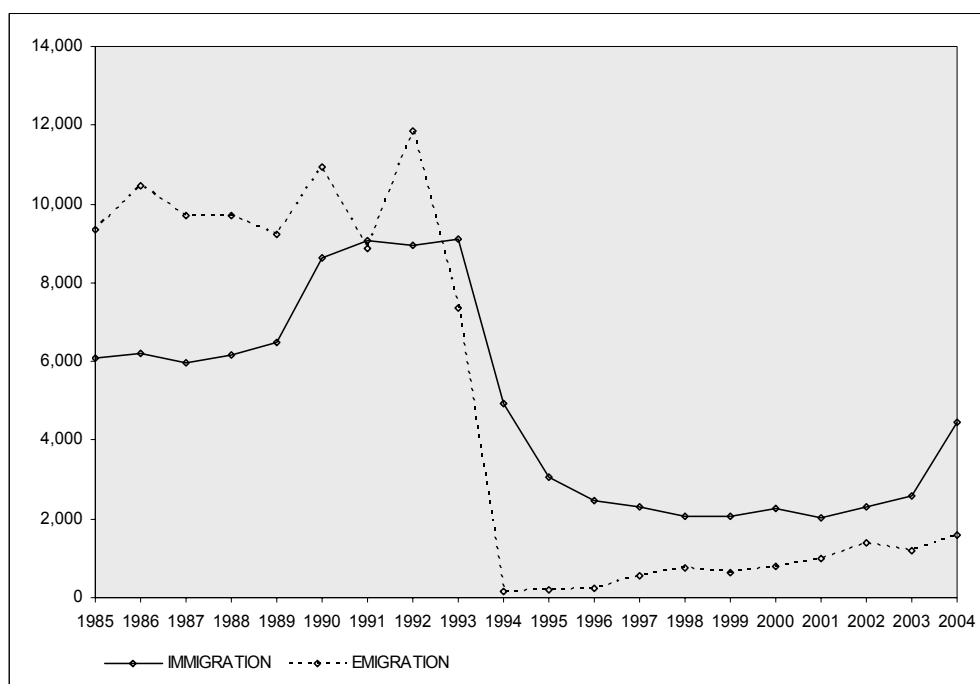
Data on international migration of non-citizens derived from the Alien's Register follow a different definition. Immigration data refer to all residence permits, irrespective of their validity, issued in a reference year to the foreigners who arrived to the Slovak Republic (a foreigner may have been granted more than one residence permit during a year). Emigration data cover residence permits expired in a reference year. Tabulations of such statistics are limited. Unless additional assumptions are made, emigration data cannot be disaggregated by country of destination. Statistics on international migration of foreigners for 2003 disaggregated by citizenship produced based on the Alien's Register were submitted as a reply to the Joint Migration Questionnaire. All statistics on international migration of nationals and statistics on international migration of foreigners by country of previous and next residence referred to permanent migration only.

##### *4.4.2. Trends in international migration revealed by the official annual statistics*

Definition of international migration has not evolved over time. Official annual statistics on international migration have always covered permanent migration only. Statistics on international migration of foreigners that are derived from the alien's database follow different definition but they are not included in the official figures for overall migration.



**Figure 4** International immigration and emigration in the Slovak Republic



Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Slovak Republic (various years)

Substantial decline in volume of movements in 1994 reflects the decrease in flows between the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic one year after the dissolution of the Czechoslovakia (see Figure 4 and Table A1 in Annex 1).

## 4.5. Slovenia

### 4.5.1. Statistical definition of international migration

Slovenian citizens are perceived as immigrants from abroad when they come from permanent stay abroad and register their permanent residence in Slovenia or when they give notice of their arrival for permanent or temporary (a stay for more than 60 days) stay at the administrative unit after returning from a temporary (more than 3 months) stay abroad that was reported at the administrative unit before their departure. Slovenian citizens with permanent place of residence abroad who came for temporary stay to Slovenia are not covered.

Slovenian citizens are treated as emigrants if they gave notice of leaving their place of residence in Slovenia with the intention of emigrating to live permanently or temporarily (for more than 3 months) abroad.

Foreigners are included in immigration statistics if they come from permanent stay abroad and register their temporary or permanent place of residence in Slovenia. All foreigners with temporary residence permits, even for less than one year, who registered their temporary

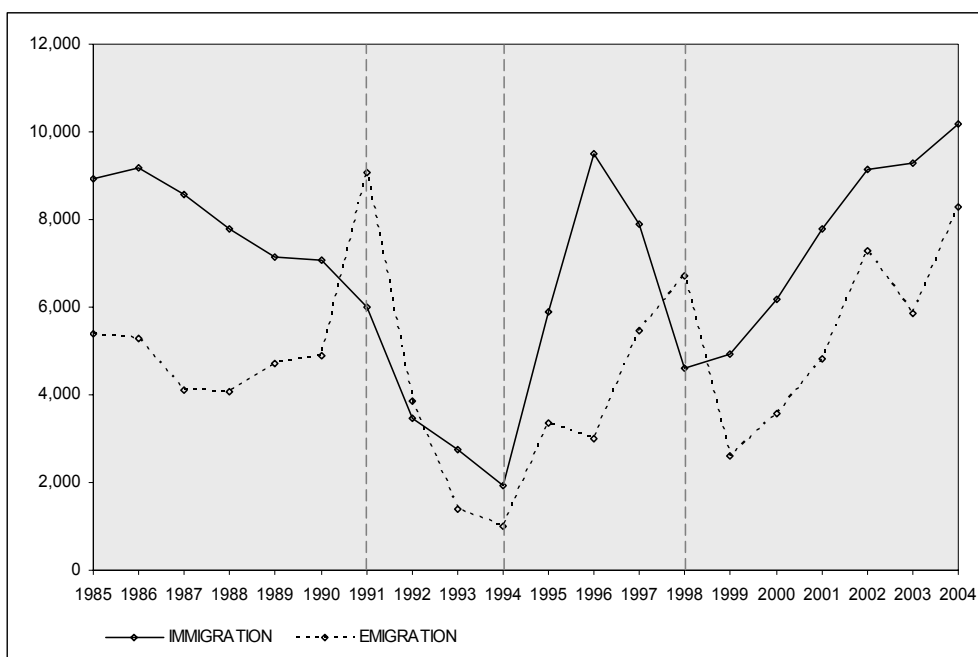
residence, are included. The temporary residence permits are required for a stay exceeding 90 days.

As regards foreigners, who normally do not declare their departure, their emigration is estimated on the basis of changes in foreigners stock, vital statistics and immigration data, as well as data on acquisition of citizenship. As foreigners are excluded from the stock figure after declaration of their departure for permanent stay abroad or after the expiry date of the residence permit, provided its renewal has not been requested, they are automatically included in emigration statistics. Foreigners with permanent residence in Slovenia who go for temporary stay abroad are not included, even if they go for more than one year.

#### 4.5.2. Trends in international migration revealed by the official annual statistics

The analysis of international migration trends (see Figure 5 and Table A1 in Annex 1) is complicated due to historical events of the country.

**Figure 5** International immigration and emigration in Slovenia



Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Slovenia (various years)

Since Slovenia gained independence in 1991, up to 1991 statistics cover permanent migration of the citizens of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Data for years 1992–1994 refer to permanent migration of Slovenian citizens. Starting from 1995 migration of foreigners (permanent and temporary) is also covered. From 1999 data on international migration of Slovenian citizens include also temporary absence from Slovenia because of departure abroad (for more than 3 months) and arrivals after temporary residing abroad.

## ***5. Impact of the duration of stay criterion on the recorded level of international migration***

International migration flows are shaped by a number of pull and push factors that are of social, economic and political nature. Changes in these factors and responses of migratory behaviour may occur gradually or abruptly. Sudden changes result in deviations from a long-term trend, which should be reflected in statistics on international migration flows. However, considerable break in series may result from changes in production of statistics only. It refers in particular to changes connected with revision of duration of stay criterion used in defining migrant and migration. The isolation of impact of a particular source of changes on statistics is not straightforward. A comparison of data on flows between pairs of countries that are reported by countries of origin and countries of destination enables to identify to some extent the influence of amendments in definition, provided the evolution of definition does not occur simultaneously in both countries. Ideally the compared figures should refer to exactly the same flows and they should be equal. Discrepancies in statistics may result from application of various concepts of international migration and/or from drawbacks of data collection systems. The role of the former factor is of great importance and therefore, significant changes in discrepancies between the statistics from two independent sources may imply changes in concept of migration used by one of them. However, in some cases this deduction is not valid. Statistics derived from the surveys are subject to high volatility and substantial changes of estimated values from year to year have nothing to do with definition issues. Besides, the short-term and long-term migration flows develop differently. If there is a considerable discrepancy in duration of stay criterion used by the countries, fluctuations may refer to one data set only.

The transition from the permanent (infinite duration of stay) to the long-term migration concept, which took place in the Czech Republic, is a good example illustrating the impact of application of different definition on the level of reported migration flows. It emphasises the serious limitations of statistics on permanent migration. They are apparent when the data on flows between a pair of countries (from and to the Czech Republic) published by the Czech Statistical Office are compared with those produced by the partner countries still using the concept of change of permanent place of residence. On the other hand, statistics of other EU countries applying concepts that are close to the United Nations recommendations on statistics of international migration show the limitations of improvements implemented in the Czech Republic. Firstly, the statistics of the Czech Republic are presented against a peer group of statistics of the other Central European countries still using the concept of change of permanent place of residence and then they are compared with the statistics of other selected EU countries.

The information on time criterion applied in definition of international migration in the Central European countries in question is summarized in the Table 3 and the information

referring to official statistics on international migration flows by country of previous and next residence is highlighted.

**Table 3** Time criterion in the definition of international migration

Country	Flow	3 months		One year		Permanent		Permit expiry	
		nationals	foreigners	nationals	foreigners	nationals	foreigners	nationals	foreigners
Czech Republic	immigration		x <sup>EEA</sup>		x <sup>non-EEA</sup>	x			
	emigration					x	x		p
Hungary	immigration	x	x <sup>EEA</sup>		x <sup>non-EEA</sup>				
	emigration	x					x		p
Poland	immigration					x	x		
	emigration					x	x		
Slovak Republic	immigration		p			x	x		
	emigration					x	x		p
Slovenia	immigration	x*	x			x			
	emigration	x					x		p

p migration data based on issued or expired residence permits

EEA information referring to EEA citizens

non-EEA information referring to non-EEA citizens

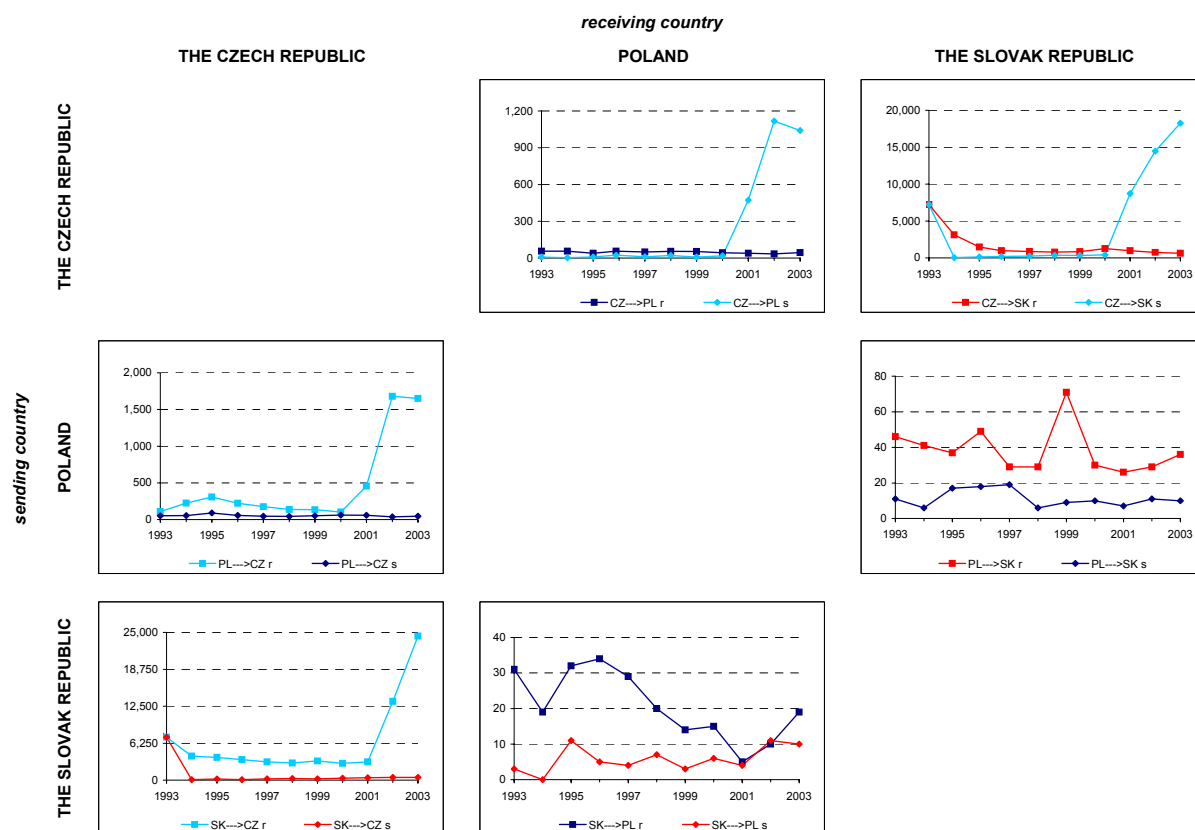
\* provided a person has a permanent place of residence in Slovenia

... time criterion used in the statistics on international immigration and emigration disaggregated by origin and destination country respectively

In the case of Hungary, the comparability of data produced by origin and destination countries cannot be assessed due to the lack of data on emigration by country of next residence and data on immigration by country of previous residence. Those tabulations available in Slovenia cover only international migration of Slovenian citizens except the data for 2000. The statistics for 2000 include international migration of foreigners as well. They were produced based on the assumption that foreigners arrive from/leave to the country of their citizenship. Thus, the comparability of data on flows between Slovenia and a particular partner country is highly limited.

The flows between the Czech Republic, Poland and the Slovak Republic reported by the sending and receiving countries are presented in Figure 6.

**Figure 6** International migration flows between the Czech Republic, Poland and the Slovak Republic



Source: Eurostat, CoE, UNPD (2001), national statistical yearbooks (various years)

- statistics according to the (r)eceiving country
- ◆ statistics according to the (s)ending country
- the Czech statistics
- the Polish statistics
- the Slovak statistics

It is apparent from the figures that there is break in series for the Czech data on flows between Poland and the Czech Republic and between the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic. The Polish and Slovak immigration and emigration statistics are still based on the concept of change of permanent place of residence. The international migration statistics of the Czech Republic cover long-term migrants from 2001 onwards. The increase in the statistics reported by the Czech Republic, resulting from the change of definition, is considerable. However, the sharp rise in immigration data took place in figures for the reference year 2002 only. According to the Czech Statistical Office it results from the introduction of amendments into Act on Residence of Foreigners (in force since July 2001), which makes arrivals of foreigners much easier. The relative difference between figures for flows from the Slovak Republic to the Czech Republic reported by the sending and receiving countries is even larger for 2000 than for 2001 (the Czech data are, respectively, 9.1 and 7.7 times higher than those of the Slovak Republic). In 2002 and 2003 the figures for flows from Poland and the Slovak Republic to the Czech Republic published by the Czech Republic are on average 41 times higher than those reported by the sending countries. Before 2001 the analogous average for

years 1996–2000 amounts to 3 for immigration from Poland and 18 for immigration from the Slovak Republic. In the case of figures for flows from the Czech Republic to Poland and the Slovak Republic for 2002 and 2003, the Czech statistics are on average 26 times higher than the Polish and the Slovak ones. The Czech statistics for 1996–2000 accounted on average for 33% of the data of the two destination countries.

The direct comparison of the data on flows between the Czech Republic, Poland and the Slovak Republic reported by sending and receiving countries reveals two main features of the statistics produced based on the concept of the change of permanent place of residence:

- permanent migration accounts for a minor part of the long-term migration (flows between: the Czech Republic and Poland since 2001 and between the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic since 2001);
- permanent emigration is underestimated – if both origin and destination countries use the concept of change of permanent place of residence the figures for migration flows according to a receiving country are higher than according to a sending country (flows between: Poland and the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic and Poland until 2000, and between the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic until 2000).

Application of a permanent migration concept and a very short-term migration concept to theoretically one flow leads to large anomalies. For instance, discrepancies between statistics reported by Germany, where any move into or out of a dwelling for 8 days or more is considered as migration, and those reported by Poland and the Slovak Republic are enormous. Immigration statistics of Poland and Slovakia account for around 2.85 % and 1 % respectively (averages for years 2001–2003) of the emigration figures reported by Germany. In the case of flows from Poland and the Slovak Republic to Germany the figures produced by the sending countries amount on average to 16.25 % and 1.68 % of the German data. There are also considerable discrepancies between figures for permanent migration and those produced by countries using the concept that is closer to the United Nations recommendations than the German ones, e.g. Denmark, the Netherlands and Finland (see Annex 2).

The concept of change of permanent residence applied to the international migration statistics has additional serious drawbacks. The trend in permanent migration is more stable contrary to changes in pattern of temporary migration. Besides, in the case of foreigners, who usually may be granted a permanent residence permit after several years of uninterrupted stay in the country, the registration of their immigration is delayed by an unspecified number of years. Thus, the comparison of data on flows between pairs of countries for a given year is questionable. The date of immigration of nationals and emigration of both nationals and non-nationals corresponds in principle to the date of their actual movement. Therefore, immigration and emigration data for foreigners are not compatible, which makes the total immigration and emigration flows incompatible as well.

The abandonment of the concept of permanent migration of foreigners in the Czech Republic should be recognized as a marked improvement. It has led to a significantly higher level of registered migration flows. The data are more comparable with the statistics produced by other origin and destination countries in the European Union (see Annex 3).

For the years 1996–2000 the Czech annual immigration statistics on flows from Germany, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Finland respectively account on average for 13 % of the official statistics of the sending countries (from 8 % for Germany to 21 % for the Netherlands). The decline in discrepancies between data reported by sending and receiving countries, which took place after the change of the concept of the international immigration in the Czech Republic, depends on the definition of international emigration in the origin countries. The figures for flows from Germany for 2002 and 2003 reported by the Czech Republic still account only for 12 % of the German ones that include very short term migration (not migrants). When the Czech immigration statistics are compared with the statistics of the sending country using the duration of absence criterion of 3 months (Austria) or 6 months (Denmark) the improvement of the Czech data are more apparent – from 10 % (1996–2000) to approximately 40 % (2002–2003). In the case of sending countries with longer duration of absence qualifying the movement as migration, the Czech immigration data for 2002 and 2003 are even higher than emigration data of those countries (the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden).

Before 2000 the official emigration statistics of the Czech Republic, produced based on the concept of change of permanent place of residence, included only a minor part of migratory movement. According to the Czech Statistical Office over the period 1996–2000 the emigration to Germany, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden was on average 34 times lower than according to these destination countries. After the implementation of the changes in the statistics production system the level of reported emigration is higher but the figures for 2002 and 2003 do not exceed 50 % of the values published by the reference destination countries (except for Finland): 10 % for Germany, 28 % for Austria and Denmark and 40 % for the Netherlands and Sweden.

The still existing discrepancies in statistics on international migration flows reported by sending and receiving countries are significant due to incomparability of international migration concepts used across the EU Member States. Moreover, statistics production system in the Czech Republic still have some drawbacks that in fact do not allow to compare Czech statistics on international migration flows with those produced by a particular origin or destination country for a given year. The immigration of foreigners (some exception exists) is registered with one-year delay due to application of the concept of actual duration of stay. Emigration figures are assigned to the right year but statistics on migration by country of next residence derived from data on expiry of the residence permits are attributed to the destination countries based on the country of foreigner's citizenship. Besides, migration statistics of nationals compiled using the concept of change of permanent place of residence need

improvements. The application of a new definition only to migration of foreigners distorts the citizenship structure of international migration flows. Percentage of foreigners in immigration accounted on average for 72.06% in 1996–2000 and 96.15% in 2002–2003. For emigration the discrepancy is much deeper: share of about 15.02% in 1996–2000 and 96.68% in 2002–2003. In the case of nationals, however, improvements are more difficult, as there is a low propensity to report any changes of place of residence.

## **6. Conclusions**

With the process of liberalization of international movements in the Central European countries in the 1990s, the migratory behaviour of the people has changed. There has been a considerable increase in international mobility, not necessarily being lifetime migration. Currently, in a globalized world, the migration for permanent residence is a minor part of all migratory movements. The concept of change of permanent place of residence applied to statistics on international migration is completely outdated and does not reflect the actual flows. The application of this concept has no justification. However, the very change of the concept will not solve all problems connected with the production of migration statistics in the Central European countries considered. Some incentives have to be created that will encourage people to report changes in their places of residence. It refers in particular to nationals, as international migration of foreigners may be controlled to some extent through residence permits. Therefore, full transformation of statistics requires far-reaching changes that will influence people's behaviour.

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## Annex 1: Official statistics on international migration flows in selected Central European Countries, 1985–2004

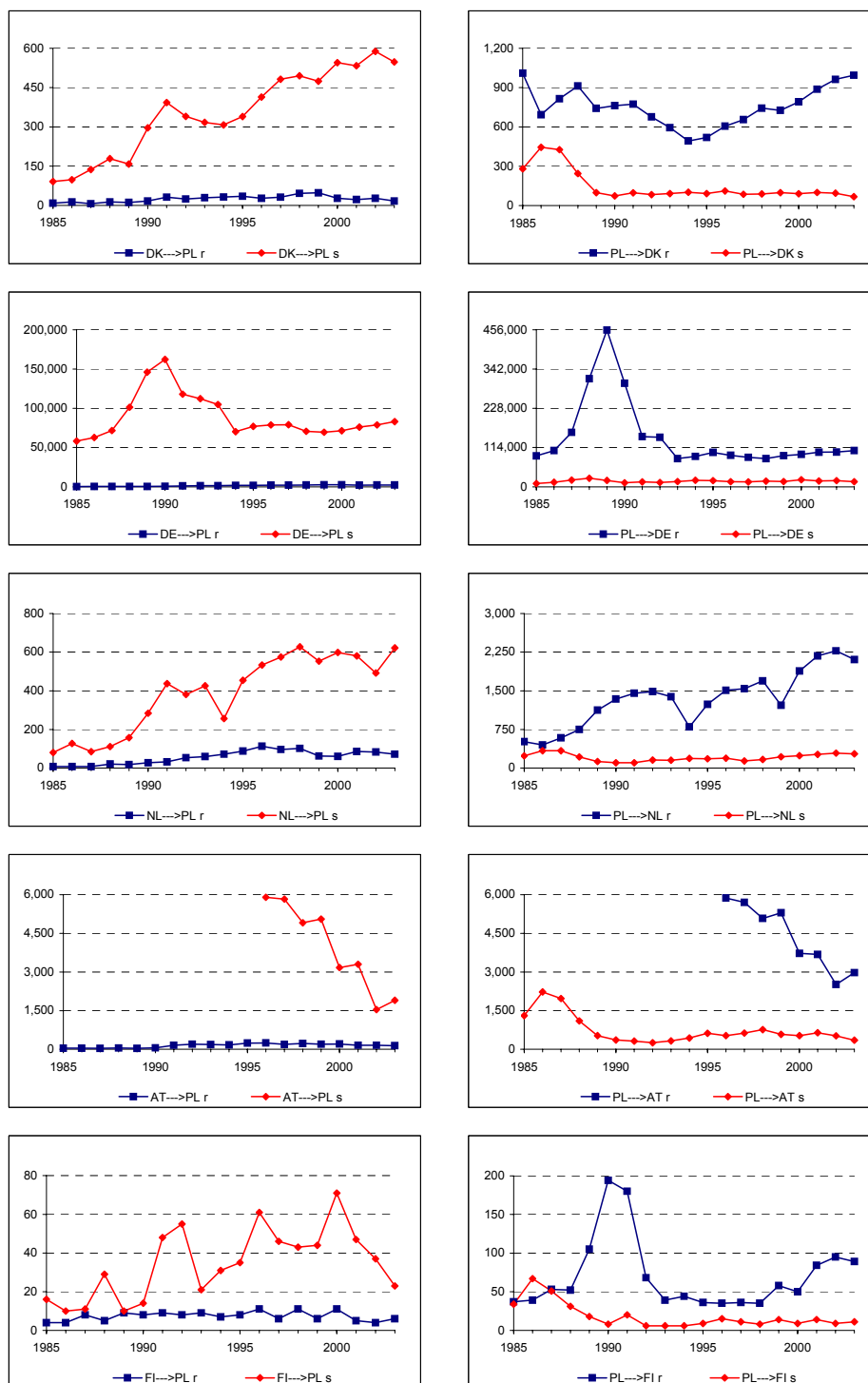
Table A1 Official statistics on international migration for 1985–2004 in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia

Country	Flow	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Czech Republic	immigration	9 918	10 712	9 934	9 984	9 400	12 411	14 096	19 072	12 900	10 207	10 540	10 857	12 880	10 729	9 910	7 802	12 918	44 679	60 015	53 453
	emigration	7 723	7 699	7 213	7 440	7 941	11 787	11 220	7 291	7 424	265	541	728	805	1 241	1 136	1 263	21 469	32 389	34 226	34 818
	net migration	2 195	3 013	2 721	2 544	1 459	624	2 876	11 781	5 476	9 942	9 999	10 129	12 075	9 488	8 774	6 539	-8 551	12 290	25 789	18 635
Hungary	immigration	8 430	9 319	9 107	24 203	34 338	37 639	23 297	15 481	17 617	15 553	15 435	14 984	14 442	17 269	21 422	21 726	21 233	17 558	:	:
	emigration	6 054	8 485	9 566	11 040	13 936	12 325	5 964	4 962	3 228	2 942	3 173	3 642	2 822	3 059	2 821	2 540	2 591	2 578	:	:
	net migration	2 376	834	-459	13 163	20 402	25 314	17 333	10 519	14 389	12 611	12 262	11 342	11 620	14 210	18 601	19 186	18 642	14 980	:	:
Poland	immigration	1 623	1 881	1 856	2 052	2 230	2 626	5 040	6 512	5 924	6 907	8 121	8 186	8 426	8 916	7 525	7 331	6 625	6 587	7 048	:
	emigration	20 578	29 008	36 436	36 291	26 645	18 440	20 977	18 115	21 376	25 904	26 344	21 297	20 222	22 177	21 536	26 999	23 368	24 532	20 813	:
	net migration	-18 955	-27 127	-34 580	-34 239	-24 415	-15 814	-15 937	-11 603	-15 452	-18 997	-18 223	-13 111	-11 796	-13 261	-14 011	-19 668	-16 743	-17 945	-13 765	:
Slovak Republic	immigration	6 067	6 196	5 958	6 182	6 475	8 618	9 076	8 929	9 106	4 922	3 055	2 477	2 303	2 052	2 072	2 274	2 023	2 312	2 603	4 460
	emigration	9 359	10 460	9 720	9 701	9 246	10 940	8 861	11 868	7 355	154	213	222	572	746	618	811	1 011	1 411	1 194	1 586
	net migration	-3 292	-4 264	-3 762	-3 519	-2 771	-2 322	215	-2 939	1 751	4 768	2 842	2 255	1 731	1 306	1 454	1 463	1 012	901	1 409	2 874
Slovenia	immigration	8 912	9 194	8 580	7 782	7 151	7 075	5 989	3 461	2 745	1 919	5 879	9 495	7 889	4 603	4 941	6 185	7 803	9 134	9 279	10 171
	emigration	5 386	5 294	4 124	4 089	4 730	4 908	9 060	3 848	1 390	983	3 372	2 985	5 447	6 708	2 606	3 570	4 811	7 269	5 867	8 269
	net migration	3 526	3 900	4 456	3 693	2 421	2 167	-3 071	-387	1 355	936	2 507	6 510	2 442	-2 105	2 335	2 615	2 992	1 865	3 412	1 902

Source: Eurostat, national statistical yearbooks (various years)

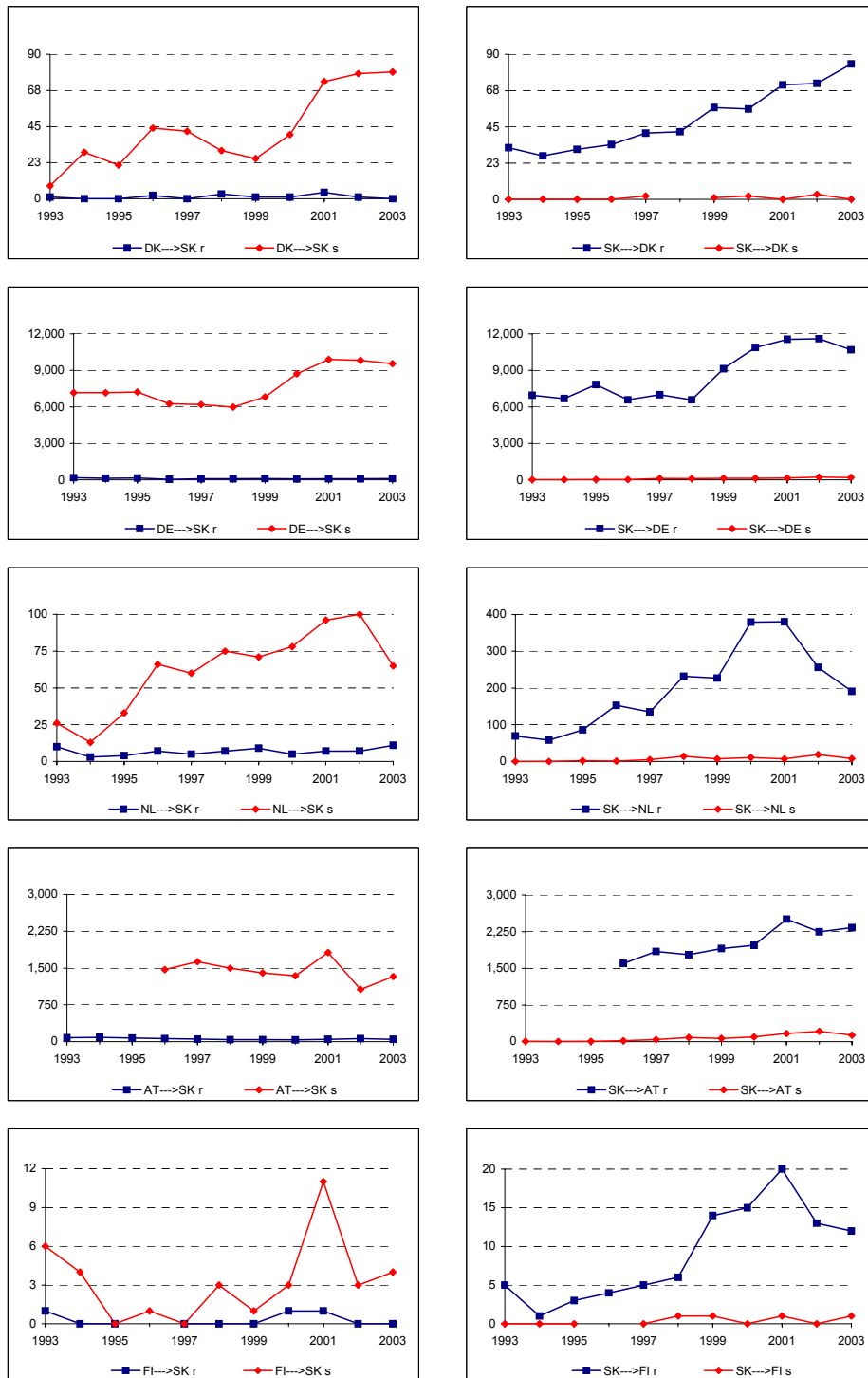
## Annex 2: Permanent migration vs. temporary migration

Figure A1 Flows between Poland and selected partner countries



Source: Eurostat, CoE, UNPD (2001), national statistical yearbooks (various years)

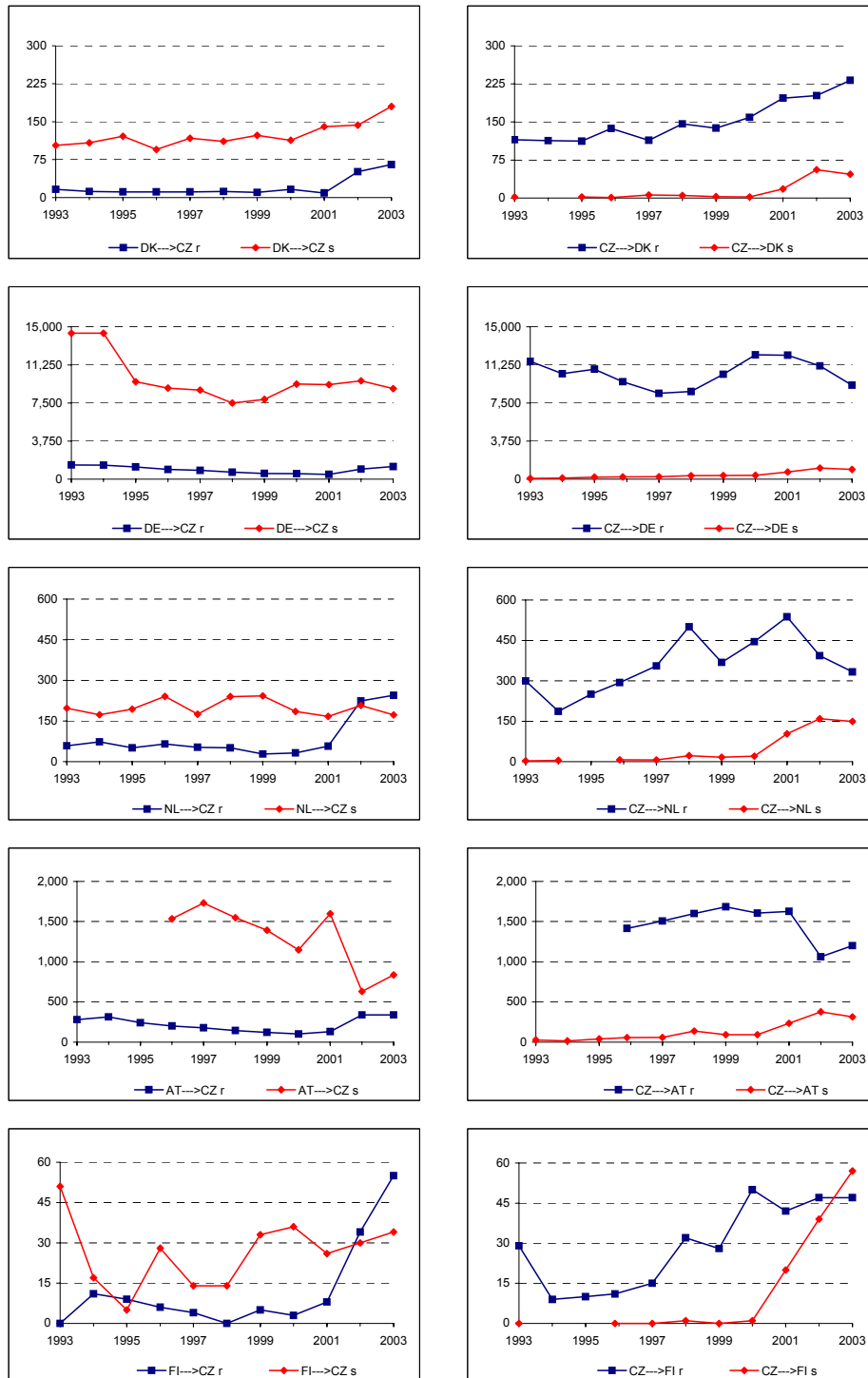
**Figure A2** Flows between the Slovak Republic and selected partner countries



Source: Eurostat, CoE, UNPD (2001), national statistical yearbooks (various years)

### Annex 3: Flows between the Czech Republic and selected partner countries

Figure A3 Flows between the Czech Republic and selected partner countries



Source: Eurostat, CoE, UNPD (2001), national statistical yearbooks (various years)

**Table A2** Immigration to the Czech Republic in 1993-2003

Country of origin		1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>Germany</b>	<i>r</i>	1 391	1 374	1 198	942	859	688	560	537	470	987	1 228
	<i>s</i>	14 375	14 375	9 598	8 963	8 776	7 500	7 864	9 368	9 304	9 691	8 909
<b>Denmark</b>	<i>r</i>	16	12	11	11	11	12	10	16	9	51	65
	<i>s</i>	103	108	121	95	117	111	123	113	140	143	180
<b>Austria</b>	<i>r</i>	281	314	241	201	178	144	122	102	131	339	339
	<i>s</i>	:	:	:	1 535	1 732	1 548	1 392	1 148	1 598	630	837
<b>Netherlands</b>	<i>r</i>	58	73	51	65	53	51	28	32	57	224	245
	<i>s</i>	197	173	194	241	175	240	243	185	167	207	172
<b>Finland</b>	<i>r</i>	0	11	9	6	4	0	5	3	8	34	55
	<i>s</i>	51	17	5	28	14	14	33	36	26	30	34
<b>Sweden</b>	<i>r</i>	70	82	77	69	85	43	25	32	46	70	83
	<i>s</i>	60	62	96	56	79	107	60	74	72	68	77
<b>Poland</b>	<i>r</i>	108	223	307	221	175	136	133	102	456	1 679	1 653
	<i>s</i>	50	53	89	55	47	43	50	59	57	38	46
<b>Slovak Republic</b>	<i>r</i>	7 276	4 076	3 845	3 450	3 088	2 887	3 235	2 826	3 078	13 326	24 385
	<i>s</i>	7 276	95	180	89	212	251	208	310	398	449	448

Source: Eurostat, CoE, UNPD (2001), national statistical yearbooks (various years)

*r* according to (r)eceiving country

*s* according to (s)ending country

**Table A3** Quality of immigration statistics in the Czech Republic (r/s ratio, where r and s are the flows reported by receiving and sending country respectively)

Country of origin	Time criterion in definition of emigration in country of origin	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>Germany</b>	none	0,10	0,10	0,12	0,11	0,10	0,09	0,07	0,06	0,05	0,10	0,14
<b>Austria</b>	3 months	:	:	:	0,13	0,10	0,09	0,09	0,09	0,08	0,54	0,41
<b>Denmark</b>	6 months	0,16	0,11	0,09	0,12	0,09	0,11	0,08	0,14	0,06	0,36	0,36
<b>Netherlands</b>	8 out of 12 months	0,29	0,42	0,26	0,27	0,30	0,21	0,12	0,17	0,34	1,08	1,42
<b>Finland</b>	1 year	0,00	0,65	1,80	0,21	0,29	0,00	0,15	0,08	0,31	1,13	1,62
<b>Sweden</b>	1 year	1,17	1,32	0,80	1,23	1,08	0,40	0,42	0,43	0,64	1,03	1,08
<b>Poland</b>	permanent	2,16	4,21	3,45	4,02	3,72	3,16	2,66	1,73	8,00	44,18	35,93
<b>Slovak Republic</b>	permanent	1,00	42,91	21,36	38,76	14,57	11,50	15,55	9,12	7,73	29,68	54,43

Source: own calculation

**Table A4** Emigration from the Czech Republic 1993-2003

Country of destination		1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>Germany</b>	<i>r</i>	11 602	10 377	10 832	9 596	8 448	8 632	10 326	12 252	12 206	11 150	9 258
	<i>s</i>	79	108	195	207	237	345	361	379	701	1 087	950
<b>Denmark</b>	<i>r</i>	115	113	112	137	114	146	138	159	197	202	232
	<i>s</i>	2	0	2	1	6	5	3	2	18	56	47
<b>Austria</b>	<i>r</i>	:	:	:	1 415	1 507	1 599	1 684	1 605	1 628	1 063	1 201
	<i>s</i>	26	16	41	57	59	137	92	93	235	377	315
<b>Netherlands</b>	<i>r</i>	299	187	250	293	355	500	368	445	537	393	333
	<i>s</i>	3	5	0	7	6	22	16	20	103	159	149
<b>Finland</b>	<i>r</i>	29	9	10	11	15	32	28	50	42	47	47
	<i>s</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	20	39	57
<b>Sweden</b>	<i>r</i>	25	72	104	62	82	115	107	115	130	151	123
	<i>s</i>	1	3	3	4	4	4	5	4	29	57	43
<b>Poland</b>	<i>r</i>	57	57	40	56	50	55	54	44	40	34	46
	<i>s</i>	8	3	10	23	11	22	8	19	473	1 117	1 040
<b>Slovak Republic</b>	<i>r</i>	7 232	3 144	1 479	993	867	777	856	1 268	990	749	650
	<i>s</i>	7 232	56	140	213	260	356	336	413	8 711	14 455	18 262

Source: Eurostat, CoE, UNPD (2001), national statistical yearbooks (various years)

*r* according to (r)eceiving country

*s* according to (s)ending country

**Table A5** Quality of emigration statistics in the Czech Republic (s/r ratio, where s and r are the flows reported by receiving and sending country respectively)

Country of destination	Time criterion in definition of immigration in country of destination	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>Germany</b>	none	0,01	0,01	0,02	0,02	0,03	0,04	0,03	0,03	0,06	0,10	0,10
<b>Austria</b>	3 months	:	:	:	0,04	0,04	0,09	0,05	0,06	0,14	0,35	0,26
<b>Denmark</b>	none/6 months/3 months	0,02	0,00	0,02	0,01	0,05	0,03	0,02	0,01	0,09	0,28	0,20
<b>Netherlands</b>	4 out of 6 months	0,01	0,03	0,00	0,02	0,02	0,04	0,04	0,04	0,19	0,40	0,45
<b>Finland</b>	none/1 year	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,03	0,00	0,02	0,48	0,83	1,21
<b>Sweden</b>	1 year	0,04	0,04	0,03	0,06	0,05	0,03	0,05	0,03	0,22	0,38	0,35
<b>Poland</b>	permanent	0,14	0,05	0,25	0,41	0,22	0,40	0,15	0,43	11,83	32,85	22,61
<b>Slovak Republic</b>	permanent	1,00	0,02	0,09	0,21	0,30	0,46	0,39	0,33	8,80	19,30	28,10

Source: own calculation

.../... information referring to immigration of nationals / non-nationals

.../.../... information referring to immigration of nationals / other EU citizens / non-EU citizens

■



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