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Intra-EU Migration 2010-2020

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Country abbreviations list

AT – Austria

BE – Belgium

BG – Bulgaria

CH – Switzerland

CZ – Czech Republic

CY – Cyprus

DE – Germany

DK – Denmark

EE – Estonia

EL – Greece

ES – Spain

FR – France

FI – Finland

HR – Croatia

HU – Hungary

IE – Ireland

IS – Iceland

IT – Italy

LI – Liechtenstein

LT – Lithuania

LV – Latvia

LU – Luxembourg

MT – Malta

NL – Netherlands

NO – Norway

PL – Poland

PT – Portugal

RO – Romania

SE – Sweden

SI – Slovenia

SK – Slovakia

UK – United Kingdom

Introduction

Intra-EU migration has been a much debated topic in the past decades and in particular between 2000 and 2010. During that time period several Eastern European countries became part of the EU and this spurred debates about the consequences it may have for EU migration patterns. With the accession of new member states to the EU in 2004 and 2007 and with the financial crisis in 2008 important drivers of migration were triggered and resulted in substantial flows across the EU. Despite this attention to intra-EU migration in the 2000-2010 decade, the public debate in the 2010-2020 seemed to be less dominated by intra EU migration but was heavily dominated by the 2015 refugee ‘crisis’. This paper which is part of the QuantMig project (deliverable 4.2) paints a broad picture of the developments, patterns and characteristics of intra-EU migration/mobility¹ in the past decade.

In his seminal work, King (2002) sketched a new research agenda for European migration and what questions and answers are needed in light of this. Now almost 20 years later we can actually evaluate what has happened since then in terms of studies that have been conducted and insights that we have gained. This paper and overview (in terms of literature and data) specifically focus on movements within the EU. While EFTA countries and recently the UK are not part of the EU, we do include migration from and to these countries as well as they are usually considered part of the EU migration system, which means that when we refer to intra-EU migration we mean migration between EU and EFTA countries and the UK. We thus do not cover migration from outside the EU towards the EU, whether these are migrants from other continents or from other non-EU European countries, as this is a whole different topic in itself. While most studies and data focus on mobility of EU citizens, in this paper we also touch upon the mobility of third-country nationals (TCN) moving within the EU. We do so in particular when it comes to asylum seekers arriving in the EU (with a peak around the years 2015-16). However, the latter is only a small part of the work presented here as data on mobility of TCNs is largely lacking.

This background paper consists of three (interrelated) parts. First, a literature review study was conducted covering studies on migration from multiple disciplines. Based on an extensive literature search we provide insights on the state of the academic knowledge regarding intra-EU migration in the past decade, covering studies that were published up until 2020 and showing results on intra-EU migration between 2010 and 2020. We used the findings of the literature review to distinguish a comprehensive list of broader themes, which in itself illustrate what topics have received much attention and which topics have not in the past decade. For each of the themes we then highlight the most prominent findings and results in order provide important insights on which developments there have been in the research on intra EU migration.

In the second part of the study we describe intra-EU migration using data from Eurostat and providing a descriptive empirical analyses of the main patterns and characteristics over time. Complementary to existing studies we shed light on these patterns between 2010 to 2018 (the most recent available data) using immigration and emigration statistics based on previous place of residence.

Given the potentially huge impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migration patterns within EU, we

¹ In this paper we will mainly use the word “migration” rather than “mobility”, when referring to intra-EU migration/mobility. We thus follow more the terminology used by migration scholars rather than the terminology used by policy makers.

added a third part to the study in which we analyse data from the Netherlands to show how migration was affected by the COVID pandemic in 2020. We use the Netherlands as a case study as comparative EU data on this topic are absent so far. The impact of policies around the containment of COVID-19, such as travel restrictions and border closures, have also had an impact on migration within the EU. Analyses of some of the most recent data on the Netherlands provide some first idea how COVID-19 measures and related policies may have impacted intra-EU migration.

1 Literature overview

1.1 Search strategy

As intra-EU migration is a multi-faceted phenomenon, a comprehensive overview of developments in intra-EU migration is not easily made. There are studies that focus on flows (e.g. East-West, South-North) while other studies focus on particular types of intra-EU migrants (e.g. labour, students, etc.). Furthermore, intra-EU migration is dynamic, it changes with new countries joining the EU, and with policies to either enhance mobility or discourage mobility, often as the result of national policies. Our goal here is to synthesize information on what research has been done regarding intra-EU migration and what insights these studies have provided. It is important to have an overview on what is known on what topics, so that one can identify what still is unknown and what needs to be studied in future.

In order to create an overview of findings from literature on intra-EU migration we followed several steps. First, we conducted a library search in the SCOPUS database, using broad search terms including combinations of 'intra', 'Europe', 'migration' and 'mobility'. We aimed to cover particularly studies that conducted country comparative studies, which indeed turned out to be the case. As a result some insights from individual country studies that bear relevance for intra-EU migration as a whole may have not been picked up. Apart from this search we included reports commissioned by the European commission, EASO and searched through the IMISCOE Books for relevant literature. Second, we selected the relevant search results. In order to be selected as relevant we used the following criteria: 1) data needs to be (at least partly) fall within 2010-2020 time period. 2) migration only within EU 3) either quantitative analysis or qualitative regarding drivers or obstacles for migration, i.e. articles need to relate to migration moves, not to integration. We do include studies on naturalizations as these can indicate the permanency of a move.

In the final step we analysed and clustered the studies that were found in the search and labelled them under some broader umbrella themes these studies covered. Thus, rather than creating a framework ourselves beforehand we had the literature search results guide and inform our overview of intra-EU migration. We distinguish different topics based on whether a substantial number of studies in our search results refer to that topic and whether studies, from different perspectives, provided insights on these topics. This leads to a relatively short comprehensive list of different topics, but at the same time allowing a more detailed overview of each of these topics. Naturally, as a result of this approach some themes and topics may not get the attention that perhaps they deserve. Yet, this in itself can be used as an insight on what themes and topics are relatively understudied, which can guide future research to focus more on these topics. The literature search topics also reveal that the attention for certain topics or themes fluctuated over time, with some topics studies reaching prominence early and losing their prominence later, while other topics

gaining their prominence in more recent years. Below we introduce each of these topics/themes. We present each of them in the order of when they reached prominence, presenting those topics who contain relatively older studies first and finishing with topics can contain mainly recent studies. At the end of this paper we also link the descriptive analysis part to this part and discuss which issues did not receive much attention in studies so far. We suggest ways ahead as well as what is needed for future data. First, a brief introduction of each of the themes/topics that were distinguished:

1. *EU expansion.* While only Croatia entered in the 2010-2020 decade, the impact of the accession of Eastern European countries in 2004 and 2007 was still a topic of research. The accession of these countries allowed a flow from Eastern EU countries to Western EU countries, often characterized as East-West migration. Studies conducted in the last decade mainly tried to create a deeper understanding on the drivers of this migration. What decides that there are (relatively) larger emigration flows from one Eastern EU country compared with the other and within an Eastern EU country, who migrates and who does not, and finally who stays in the destination country and who returns to the origin country.
2. *Financial crisis.* In 2008 Europe was hit by the credit crunch and in 2010 the Euro crisis. The economic consequences were still felt in the first half of the 2010 decade. On the one hand, it can be argued that the financial crisis discouraged migration, as EU citizens would have fewer means to migrate and fewer job opportunities in destination countries as a result of the financial crisis. On the other hand, the EU crisis hit harder in some EU countries than others, which arguably led to more migration from these countries to EU countries where the financial crisis had done less economic damage. The literature focusses on the impact that the financial crisis had on the East-West and South-North migration flows.
3. *Highly skilled and student migration.* The European union aims to encourage exchanges and flows of highly skilled labor and students between EU countries in order to exchange knowledge and increase connectivity between member states. However, when it comes to highly skilled labor migration there is a sensitive issue. Highly skilled migrants are considered high value migrants as they are relatively rare and can support an economy that increasingly relies on highly educated personnel. With increasing opportunities to migrate to other EU member states some member states are worried losing their highly skilled population, also known as “brain drain”. The topic of student mobility has received increasing attention as the number of student studying in another EU member state or that take part of an student exchange program has increased, making student mobility a substantial part of the total mobility inside the EU. Yet, student mobility is different from labor migration and thus understanding where students go for their and what motivates them to study abroad is important in understanding a substantial part of intra-EU migration.
4. *Welfare state, policy and politics.* In some of the Western EU countries there has been an increasing concern, raised particularly by populist political parties, that EU migrants would come to wealthier EU countries in order to benefit from better welfare provisions in these countries as compared to their origin country. This has sparked interest among researchers to investigate to what extent welfare provisions really attract migrants. We also discuss studies here on the impact of Brexit, which to some extent relates to this as the Brexit vote was at least partly due to negative sentiments towards intra-EU migrants. We close this section on other studies that have investigated the impact of policy and politics on intra-EU migration flows.

5. *Refugee crisis*. The arrival of larger numbers of asylum seekers to Europe (mainly, but not only related to the war in Syria in 2015-16) is much debated in the past decade. Yet, most studies focus on migration to the EU rather than the mobility of asylum seekers and refugees within the EU. We do touch upon this topic because there are some insights on mobility of these groups within the EU. This can also provide some insight into how TCN may move within the EU border, an issue that so far has not received much attention also due to a lack of suitable data. Even though actual data on movements of asylum seekers (apart from Dublin statistics) are scarce, these insights can help us increase our understanding on the intra-EU migration of refugees and asylum seekers and start the discussion on what should be studied when we refer to intra-EU migration

Below we elaborate on each of these themes and highlight some of the main findings on each of the themes in the literature. These refer both to understanding the type of migration as well as its determinants which both provide a good overview on what is known in this field so far.

1.2 Overview of themes and topics

1.2.1 EU expansion

At the turn to the 2010 decade there was still much research on the impact the accession of the Eastern European countries to the EU. Yet, most of the studies written in the early 2010s naturally cover data of flows mainly from the 2000-2010 decade. However, later on some studies started to take stock of what changed in the intra-EU migration system with the accession of these Eastern European countries in the EU. Balaz and Karsova (2017) use network analysis to show that, compared with the 1997-2004 period, particularly the intra-EU migrant stocks in the UK rose in the 2005-2013 period, with influxes from Poland, Czechia, Slovakia and the Baltic states, and to a lesser extent in Spain and Italy with influxes from Romania and Bulgaria. However, while these were the biggest changes, Germany, which was the main destination for intra-EU migrants before, did remain so in the 2005-2013 period. In terms of drivers of migration, Balaz and Karsova (2017) find that income and employment differentials between EU countries and the importance of English as a global language are important factors in explaining these new immigration trends. Focusing on the Eastern EU migration to the UK, Bahna et al (2016) also find differences in wage levels are important in explaining differences in per capita migration from the A8 countries to the UK. However, in terms of who returns and settles the authors suggest that migration networks may play an important role, with Poles being more likely to stay longer in the UK compared with Slovaks, because Poles can more easily rely on their migration networks given their larger presence in the UK. Privara (2019) examines the determinants of emigration from Slovakia, Slovenia, Lithuania and Estonia to Germany from 1998 to 2016. He finds that increases in diaspora populations, higher expenditure on education in the origin country and higher GDP in destination country (Germany) facilitate emigration, higher unemployment in origin country and higher GDP in origin country are found as factors decreasing the propensity to emigrate. While the author finds a clear impact of the EU enlargement in 2004, no impact is found of the 2011 lifting of work restrictions. Wagner (2016), however, do indicate a strong increase of intra-EU migration in Germany with particularly Romanians and Bulgarians entering Germany after the restrictions were lifted.

There are other studies that bring more detail into types of migrants and their motivations. Engbersen et al. (2017) states that there are also different types of migrants. Based on migrants from Bulgaria, Poland and Romania in the Netherlands, they indicate there are circular/seasonal migrants,

bi-national migrants, footloose migrants and settlement migrants. The first group has strong connection with the origin country in which the stay in the destination country is meant to be relatively short. These are usually low educated workers. The bi-national are both engaged with both the destination and origin country and engage in transnational activity, these include marginalized groups, but also students. Footloose migrants on the other hand do not appear to integrate in the destination country, but also don't have a strong attachment with their origin country, which tend to be expats. Finally, settlement migrants clearly plan their future in the destination country. Nijhof and Gordano (2017) synthesize different typologies and indicate that typologies distinguish different components 1) migration motivation 2) labour market participation 3) attachments and transnational ties 4) family composition and settlement plans.

Another aspect that comes back in the literature on EU expansion is the return migration of Eastern EU migrants to their origin country. Krisjane et al. (2018) find that for Latvians between the age of 15-34 return mainly because of nostalgia or family-related reasons. On the other hand, Saar (2018) points out in a qualitative study on Estonians that it is not as much a sense of belonging to the country, but more a construction of self-identity that shapes the decisions of returning back or not. Török (2017) notes the differences between Eastern EU countries from 2009 to 2012 between Eastern EU countries, with Lithuania, Latvia and Poland immigration consisting mainly of return migrants, while Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia have lower share of return immigrants as part of their migrant inflow. According to Török (2017) these differences show also within the Eastern EU there are some countries more central while others are more part of the periphery, but that also historical relations between countries have to be considered, for instance, Hungary having a Romanian community therefore attracting Romanian immigrants.

Finally, Ciobanu (2015) brings up the topic of multiple migrations, thereby going beyond the framework of one origin and one destination country. Based on interviews of Romanians in Portugal, concludes that migration policies and social networks, in which men are more likely to have multiple migrations compared with women who are more likely to stay behind at the previous destination.

All in all, research on EU expansion has demonstrated that while differences in economic development between the origin and destination country play an important role, also other factors, such as social networks and motivations for migration need to be considered, in order to get a better picture on who migrates, who stays at the destination country and who returns back to the origin country. This has also been found in international migration literature in general, but clearly also applies to intra-EU migration.

1.2.2 Financial crisis

Shortly after the accession of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007 the financial crisis hits Europe in 2008. It appears that given that Romania and Bulgaria had only just entered the EU, most research on the impact of East-to-West migration focusses on the impact that the financial crisis has on flows of Eastern EU migrants. Janicka and Kaczmarczyk (2016) find that due to the financial crisis the migration strategies of Poles in the UK, Ireland, Netherlands and Germany have polarized. Some returned back to Poland, but the ones who stayed become increasingly less mobile, compared with before the crisis when migration was much more circular. For the group that stays in the destination country, even economic incentives in the home country do not compel them to return. Furthermore, they are increasingly more likely to be with a family member in the destination country and even own real estate. In short, the financial crisis made some Poles return earlier while it made others more determined to stay. Similarly, Hazans (2016) finds regarding return intentions of Latvians that

around the time of the accession about two-thirds planned to return home in two years, whereas those surveyed post crisis only 16% indicated to (probably) return within 5 years and 16% indicating to plan to return upon retirement, demonstrating that East-EU migrants are increasingly planning longer stays in the destination country. McCollum et al. (2017) indicate there is the emergence of the “reluctant” migrants Latvians, who mainly migrate not because of their own desire but because of economic push factors in country of origin (such as unemployment in origin country), making them accept work in the UK below their skill level. Hazans (2016) indicates that the main reasons for those from the Baltic states post financial crisis are income differences between destination and origin countries, migration networks (network effect) and negative perceptions of economic conditions and opportunities in the origin country. There has also been an increase in the number of naturalizations in Western EU countries, with Graeber (2016) claiming that the financial crisis contributed to this increase, but Alarian (2017) contesting this, stating that naturalizations have increased as the result of an increasing migration rate towards these countries.

Yet, research on the impact of the financial crisis on intra-EU migration has not only focused on the East-West migration, but has also sparked a renewed attention on South-North migration. Consistent finding across all Southern EU countries is that not only outflows increase, but also inflows decrease (Lafleur and Stanek 2017a). A study of Manafi et al. (2017) is indicative in this respect. Their study uses a cluster analysis showing that before Spain was part of the cluster of core receiving countries and after the crisis it became part of the periphery country cluster, together with Eastern EU countries. Carretero et al. (2018) show using national statistics data of Spain and Italy, that emigration to other EU countries increased between 2009 and 2015, with the UK, France and Germany as popular destinations and for Italians also Switzerland. Carretero et al. (2018) also note a trend of particularly those of young working age (20-39) migrating to the UK and Germany. Increases in Italy due to slow economic growth, but also deregulation of the labour market, resulted in young adults having little job security and low paying jobs and therefore choose to look for employment in another EU country (Tintori and Romei 2017). While unemployment is thought to drive emigration from Spain, low-skilled migrants may not always be capable to leave, which could mean that the flows since the crisis are increasingly characterized by qualified workers (Bermudez and Brey 2017). On the other hand, Coletto and Fullin (2019) indicate that negative perceptions of the economic situations in Italy, Spain, Bulgaria and Romania as portrayed by media shape the decisions in creating a feeling of urgency to leave.

A country struck particularly hard by financial hardship is Greece. Since the financial crisis there have been larger outflows, with fewer Greeks returning from UK, Netherlands, Germany to Greece (Mavrodi and Moutselos 2017). However, the authors note that given the severity of the crisis one would expect perhaps an even higher outflow, but lack of skill recognition of skilled workers and relying on family-based safety nets rather than government welfare provisions may prevent young unemployed Greeks to migrate. Also Portugal has seen a strong increase in emigration due to the increase in unemployment as a result of the financial crisis in which migrant networks have been increasingly mobilized to facilitate migration (Marques and Góis 2017)

A way to assess potential future migration is to examine migration aspirations. Two studies one by Van Mol (2016) and one by Salamonska and Czeranowska (2019) use the Eurobarometer survey from 2014 in order to migrant aspirations and motivations of youth after the financial crisis. These studies also find factors such as unemployment and economic conditions in the host country to drive migration aspirations. Furthermore, Van Mol (2016) finds that those from urban areas have more aspirations to move and Salamonska and Czeranowska (2019) indicate that those who want to move are more likely to come from urban regions with respect to those who feel forced to move. The finding that those who aspire to migrate come mainly from urban regions is also echoed by Torok (2017) and McCollum (2017) who also report this tendency.

A question that can be asked is to what extent financial crisis induced migration bears resemblance with EU expansion based migration. Nijhoff and Gordano (2017) compare the motivations of Poles coming to the Netherlands (the Hague) interviewed in 2010 and Spaniards coming to the UK (London) interviewed in 2013. With this comparison they also to some extent compare the Eastern EU expansion migration with the South-North financial crisis induced migration. They find similarities in that both groups migrate in order to improve their economic situation, migrating at a time when not married (settled), remaining strong relations family in origin country. Differences included Poles relying more on social networks and Spaniards focusing more on career development whereas Poles choosing more easily accessible work not focusing on improving their skills. Finally, they found that Poles were more integrated in the destination country (contact and learning language) and were more likely to have started a family compared with Spaniards.

Glynn (2015) compares the emigration patterns of Ireland, a country also strongly impacted by the financial crisis, with the other “PIIGS”, i.e. Portugal, Italy, Greece, Spain and note that Irish mainly resorted to emigration outside from the EU (apart from the UK) going to other Anglo-Saxon countries, showing that the other PIGGS were more so resorted to intra-EU migration given that these countries do not have strong ties with these countries that were former British colonies.

Thus, studies on the impact of the financial crisis on intra-EU migration show that the financial crisis has sparked migration among those who are worried about the labour market situation in the origin country, making them not only migrate more often, but also stay longer in the destination country. Yet, some indicate migration flows could have been larger if not for the fact that some people may simply lack the resources to move to another EU country.

1.2.3 Highly skilled and student mobility

In the previous section we touched upon whether the financial crisis caused more so the high or lower educated to move. As many countries are concerned with their highly educated citizens leaving the country, or what is also called a “brain drain”, highly-skilled migration within the EU is also a topic that has been covered in the past decade. While in practice the EU promotes exchange and the attraction of highly skilled labor, the reality is not always clear cut. On the one hand, Capuano and Migali (2017) show that higher skill recognition of foreign qualifications is linked with higher attraction of skilled EU immigrants, thereby suggesting that EU regulations to improve skill recognition across EU member states increases mobility within the EU. On the other hand, Cerna (2013) shows that with Third-Country-Nationals, the Blue card initiative, which would allow highly skilled TCNs to move within the EU, is interpreted differently per EU member state, in order to keep control over the inflow of TCNs.

Regarding brain drain, Hazans (2016) shows that the brain drain from the Baltic states intensified during the financial crisis and that return migration is not likely to compensate, given that highly skilled may be more likely to stay abroad permanently. He also notes that “brain waste”, i.e. employment under someone’s educational level, is mainly found among Baltic migrants in the UK and Ireland. Lafleur and Stanek (2017) indicate that with the increase in South-North migration after the crisis relatively more highly skilled left the country, compared with the post-war South-North migration, where Germany appears to be mainly at the receiving end of southern EU highly-skilled migrants.

There are quite some studies who criticize the framework around highly skilled migration and “brain drain”. Tintori and Romei (2017) indicate that Italy does not have a brain drain problem, but more of a brain circulation problem in which it is unable to attract highly educated foreigners. Other studies question whether highly skilled migration is purely motivated by career advancement. Cenci

(2015) in a study on Southern EU highly skilled migration, indicates a “human capabilities” rather than a “human capital” view may be better at explaining this phenomenon, as highly skilled migrants do not only base their decisions to migration on economic factors, but also based on welfare and ethical considerations. Saar (2018) indicates that regarding return decisions of highly skilled migrants, the decision making is based on three types of comparisons: social, temporal and intra-subjective.

Regarding highly-skilled migration there are also some other insights worth noting. Coletto and Fullin (2019), find that highly skilled migrants also use their networks build by their academic experience, for instance through student exchange programs, whereas lower skilled migrants rely on transnational networks. Another finding is that highly-skilled migration is not always a smooth experience. Some highly skilled do not change their residence, but do work abroad, in what is called EU-commuting. Ralph (2015) studies Irish living in Dublin, working in another EU country and describes that while for some it is a voluntary choice, for others it is less voluntary and more of a “survival strategy”.

Apart from highly skilled migration there have been quite some studies interested in explaining student mobility. The European Union has aimed to stimulate student migration the “Bologna process” a set of policies/declarations to improve the quantity and quality of student mobility, and ERASMUS exchange programs. However, Teichler (2019) states that the “Bologna process”, did not increase the relative participation in studying abroad, but mainly improved the quality of studying abroad.

Then there is the question where students go and what drives student mobility. Balaz et al. (2018) show that student migration is highly polarized towards UK, Germany and France as main destinations. They describe how connectivity in terms of language similarity, spatial proximity, but also established labour, trade and knowledge exchange relationships are the main determinants of student migration patterns, while pull factors such as quality of tertiary education are less important. Van Mol and Ekamper (2016) also indicate a polarization, but in that student tend to move to capitals and larger metropolitan cities. Furthermore, they find that Northern European students tend to move to cities with the highest class tertiary education, whereas Southern European students tend to stay mainly in Southern or Eastern Europe, in which they authors note in line with Balaz et al (2018) that this may be due to cultural and language similarity. Balaz et al (2018) also find that the pull factors which are associated with labour migration are not associated with student migration, indicating that drivers for student and labour migration are different. Kmiotek-Meier et al. (2019) also indicate that the perceived obstacles for migration are different for work and education related mobilities, but that the lack of financial resources and guidance and the perceived incompatibility of institutional regulations within the EU are considered obstacles for all youths.

Van Mol and Timmerman (2014) show that not only educational goals or getting experience abroad are motivations, but also as an economic investment in career or even to have a part-time job next to studying that makes more money than in the country of origin (the case of some Polish students). National contexts also play a role, in which in countries such as Norway with a highly subsidized education system can support also students from lower class background can afford to study abroad, whereas in Belgium students depend more on their family background, while students from other EU countries those from working class background are less likely to be in tertiary education in the first place. Social networks also play a role, but more as biographies of friends that went abroad and the extent that the own family is open to studying abroad. Interestingly, Van Mol and Timmerman (2014) find that previous international experience (such as a “gap year”), does not increase the likelihood of studying abroad, but Van Mol (2016) does find that young adults are more likely to intend to move abroad if they had a previous mobility experience.

Studying abroad can be part of a long-term strategy. Marcu (2015) examining mobility experiences of Romanians and Bulgarians in Spain and the UK, finds three different strategies. One strategy is studying abroad as part of a broader strategy of settling and family reunification in the destination country, this was particularly the case in the UK. Another strategy is to return to the origin country to work in a family business or the idea to improve the development of their origin country using the knowledge obtained abroad. Finally, particularly in Spain, students seek to move across the EU gaining more experience, either by another study or labour mobility to increase experience and their international profile. This shows in line with Ciobanu (2015) the willingness of quite some EU migrants to move from one destination to the next, rather than returning to the origin country.

Finally, a study on post-graduation migration intentions of economics students from Romanians universities, shows that non-economic factors such as the idea that one has more freedom for professional advancement in more meritocratic societies outweighs economic incentives to move abroad after graduation (Plopeanu et al. 2018). This again demonstrates that migration of the higher educated cannot only be captured by economic factors only.

Overall, the studies on highly skilled and student mobility in the EU demonstrate that these groups have their unique drivers for migration, in which economic factors are less on the forefront compared with labour migration. Student and highly skilled mobility have been core elements in intra-EU mobility and related policies. Whether Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic will substantially reduce and or change moves across Europe remains to be seen, but if they do, this may have substantial impacts on the next generation of students/graduates and their related European experiences.

1.2.4 Welfare state, policy and politics

One strand of literature focuses on welfare state effects on migration. Originally started as studies on international migration to Europe, recent work has also focused on the potential role of welfare state and policies within Europe. One assumption that is posted in the literature is that more extensive welfare states (mainly Northern and Western EU countries) would be attractive destination countries as they would have relatively more financial safety nets compared with other countries (mainly Eastern and Southern EU countries). Hazans (2016) finds that economic and social security factors serve both as a push and pull factor for Estonian and Latvian emigrants. Yet, studies that focus on what role welfare and social security provisions play in migration find that there is mainly an impact of the welfare situation in the country of origin. De Jong and De Valk (2020) find in a study on migrants from Poland, UK and Spain in the Netherlands that migrants have little knowledge on the welfare system of the destination country, as often they migrate at a time in their life that they do not rely on welfare provisions. Moreover, the knowledge on welfare provisions mainly come from own experience or from experiences of people in their social networks. Finally, the authors indicate that welfare provisions in the origin country shape or enable migration decisions more than the welfare provisions in the destination country. D'Addio and Cavalleriz (2015) find that particularly those from EU-15, rather than those from the EU-12 countries, are concerned about the portability of social security when moving to another EU country. Finally, both D'Addio and Cavalleriz (2015) and De Jong and De Valk (2020) find that concern about welfare provisions increases with age.

Apart from the perception of the migrant there is also the perspective of the people in the host society. Studies point out that EU migrants have been increasingly perceived as “abusing the welfare system”, in which the negative perceptions appear to be increasingly similar to those on non-EU migrants (Lafleur and Stanek 2017b; Scholten and van Ostaïjen 2018). Yet, it is unclear to what extent

these negative perceptions on EU migration lead to lower levels EU migration. Also it has to be noted that while some countries have appear to not facilitate EU migration and protect their social welfare system from being used “unfairly” by non-nationals, this does not seem to apply to all EU countries, as in Germany policies have been introduced to facilitate South-North migration (Laubenthal 2017; von Koppenfels and Höhne 2017). Yet, Wagner (2016) finds that before Germany released restrictions for EU workers from outside of Germany, the restrictions caused more atypical labour migration and that this flow of atypical migration persisted after the removal of the restrictions as certain economic sectors had adapted to hiring atypical labour migrants in the form of subcontractors rather than employees, thus showing that past policies can have a lasting impact on the types of migrants that are attracted and the labour conditions they work in.

The case where anti-EU migrant sentiment appears to have most strong is the UK, particularly since the Brexit referendum. Lulle et al. (2018) finds in a study based on in depth interviews that Brexit has resulted in different strategies among Italian, Romanian and Irish in the London region. While some appear to more actively try to stay, others deliberately shorten their stay or make plans to move to another EU country. McCarthy (2019) similarly finds in a survey on Spanish in the UK finds that Spanish born in Latin America are more likely to take steps for permanent residency compared to Spanish born in Spain. Both studies clearly find a negative attitude towards the Brexit and it thus appears that becoming a permanent resident or leaving the country are different ways to cope with the uncertainty surrounding Brexit. Spain is not the only migration corridor in this sense. For instance, Della Puppa (2018) examined Bangladeshi acquiring Italian citizenship in order to move to the UK and notes that Brexit is likely to have an impact on these types of migration strategies.

Finally, there are two studies that examine the influence of the political context of EU countries on migration. Bygnes and Flipo (2017) finds on the basis of interviews of Romanians in Spain and Spaniards in Norway that the political situation in the origin country is often given as a reason for the decision to migrate, although the authors note that the political reasons are interwoven with economic reasons. Electoral cycles and emigration Mourão et al. (2018) find that emigration from EU countries with more regular elections tend to have lower emigration rates compared with countries that more irregular election patterns. The data they use cover the period 1999-2012, thus mainly the previous decade. Yet, these studies do indicate that the political situation in the origin country has an impact in the decision-making process on whether to emigrate or not.

Thus both studies on the influence of political context and the welfare state on migration appear to indicate that the decisions to migrate are particularly influenced by the situation in the origin country and much less by the destination country attractiveness of welfare state arrangements. A clear welfare state attraction magnet is not found and if welfare policies play a role at all than it is more related to the life course stage of the migrant and decisions to stay/not return (rather than migrate in the first place). Furthermore, it is unclear whether stigma towards intra-EU migrants makes people less likely to migrate, although drastic changes in political context, like for instance with Brexit, appear to polarize migration strategies with some emigrating/returning, while others deciding to stay permanently. Its only in the years to come that the effects of these changes can be fully understood.

1.2.5 Refugee crisis

There are several studies (Tazzioli 2020; Sobczykński 2019; Fernandez-Sebastian 2020; Hübl et al.

2017; Percoco and Fratesi 2018; Zaragoza-Cristiani 2017) and also reports (For instance FRONTEX²) that show the different routes that migrants take in getting to the Schengen area. However, much less is known on how migrants move within the EU and Schengen area after they managed to cross the border. Zaragoza-Cristiani (2017) notes that there are also borders within the EU as some countries such as Croatia are not part of the Schengen area, thereby making it at least to some extent an intra-EU issue as well.

Even though many immigrants move through several EU countries, one might argue that this does not constitute intra-EU migration, but rather that these immigrants get stuck either in a EU country or just outside the EU or Schengen area as part of their travel to their destination country of choice. Yet, Tazzoli (2020) demonstrates that EU countries governments, such as France and Italy, implement strategies to disrupt and divert the movement of immigrants, but also to disperse groups and keeping mobile in order to prevent them from clustering. Thus, as the move from one EU country to another can be challenging, one might consider a form of (attempted) intra-EU migration.

A documented form of intra-EU migration of asylum seekers are the Dublin transfers in which one member country asks another member country to take over the asylum seeker. The EASO 2020 report (EASO 2020) indicates that most Dublin transfers were of the following nationalities: Afghanistan, Algeria, Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia and Syria. In terms of flows, the most prominent flows are Nigerians from Germany to Italy and Syrians from Greece to Germany. The main receiving countries are Italy, Spain, Poland, Germany and the UK. The EASO 2020 report also notes that withdrawals of application can be an indication of secondary movement as most of these withdrawals take place in EU border countries. This could be a way to estimate the total number of asylum seekers moving within the EU if data on movements of asylum seekers and refugees within the EU does not improve.

An ethnographic study of Belloni (2016) on Eritreans in Italy in 2012-2014 seeking to move to another EU country does provide an interesting insight in secondary movements that occur outside of the Dublin agreement. She concludes that Eritreans are willing to continue “gambling” on achieving residence in what they would consider a more generous welfare state compared to Italy. Even though they know their chances are slim, they consider achieving a move to such a country as “winning the lottery”. Belloni (2016) therefore concludes that more restrictive policies on secondary movements are unlikely to have a large impact as in any case these types of migrants will persist on continuing to try.

Overall, the movements of refugees and asylum seekers within the EU is still an understudied issue in which limited data availability and the definition of what constitutes a move, play a role.

2 Intra-EU migration: a descriptive analysis

In this section we analyse and describe the trends in intra-EU migration that have taken place in the 2010-2020 decade. It is important to analyse and map flows for longer periods for multiple reasons. First, it provides an overview to what extent flows have been sustainable. Certain events or policies may cause new or changed migration flows, but it is important to monitor whether they continue,

² Publications by FRONTEX can be found at: <https://frontex.europa.eu/publications/>

decrease again, or perhaps further increase. Second, some changes are more gradual meaning that only when examining a longer time period, one can clearly observe that there has been a shift in mobility.

We use immigration and emigration data based on previous/next residence from Eurostat to describe the intra-EU migration trends of the past decade. We use these data for the following reasons. First, with data on previous residence and next residence we can capture most accurately migration within the EU. Immigration and emigration data based on citizenship shows what nationality people hold, but not where they came from. For instance, an EU national may have lived outside of the EU and then returned back to the EU. With data based on citizenship one cannot distinguish those who emigrated from another EU country versus those who emigrated from a third country. Using data based on previous residence, however, does come with a downside in that one does not know to what extent a flow consists of nationals, EU-nationals or third-country nationals. Nonetheless, intra-EU migration data based on previous/next residence can show a net migration only related to intra-EU migration, i.e. comparing how many EU residents enter and leave a country, which citizenship based data cannot do.

Apart from displaying the flows we will also show the demographic distributions in terms of age and gender, in order to understand a bit more the characteristics of intra-EU migrants and whether these characteristics are changing. We end this section by zooming in on the UK and Spain.

2.1 Main immigration countries and net migration

Figure 1 shows the countries with the highest inflow of migrants from other EU countries per year, ranked from high to low on the basis of the value of the year 2019. Visible from the figure is how particularly Germany experienced a surge in the inflow of EU citizens coming from another EU country. Whereas the inflow was around 200k in 2010, a peak of around 510k was reached in 2015, after which the inflow decreases to around 385k in 2019. The UK which had a slightly higher inflow in 2010 compared with Germany, follows the same pattern, but reaches a peak of just under around 295k in 2015, decreasing from there to around 208k in 2019. Spain and France are the third and fourth largest receivers, with Spain decreasing and increasing again (U-shape) and France being relatively stable over the decade. Poland and Romania are 5th and 6th receiving countries, which we assume to be mainly being the result of nationals returning from their stay in another

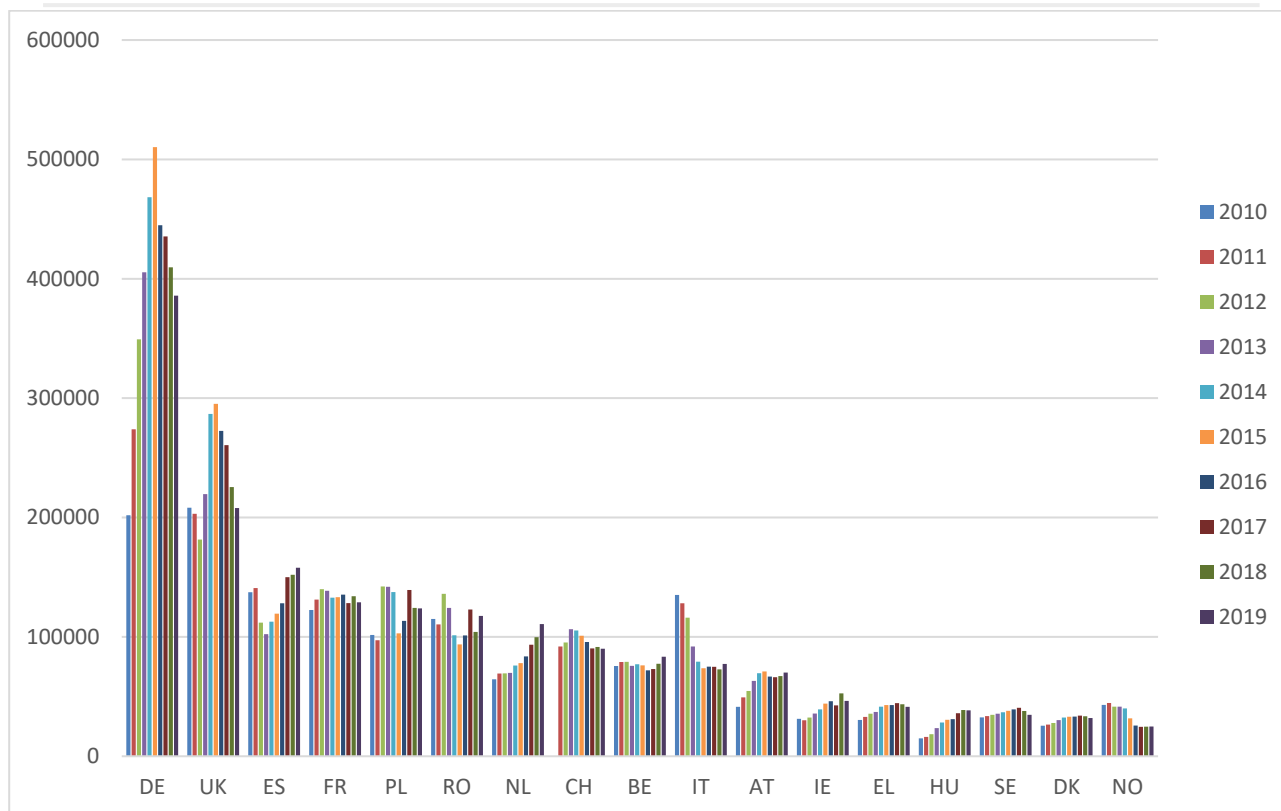


Figure 1. Countries with highest inflow per year from other EU countries

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

For country abbreviations, see country abbreviations list

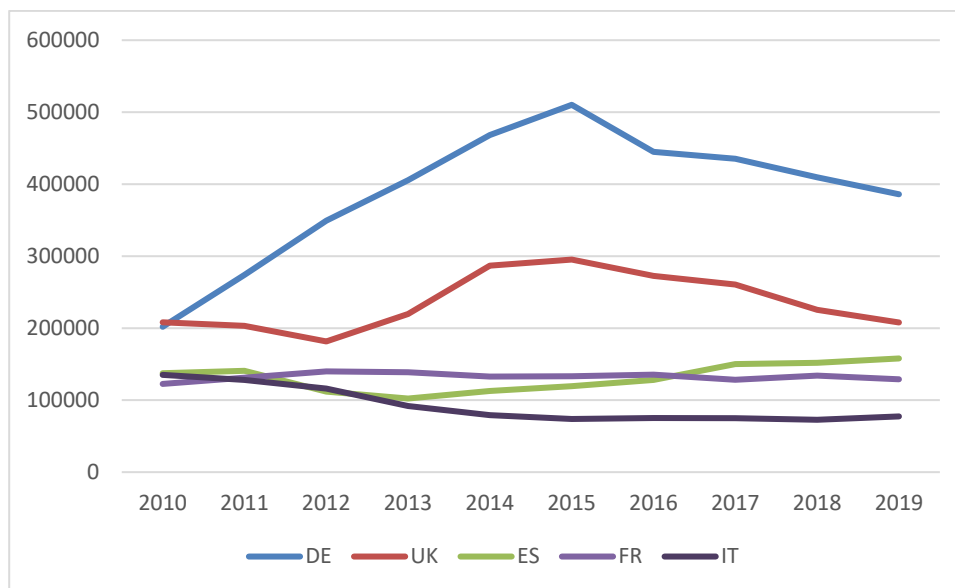


Figure 2. Selection of countries with highest inflow per year from other EU countries

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

For country abbreviations, see country abbreviations list

EU country. They both show a similar pattern of two peaks, one around 2013 and one around 2017. The Netherlands has shown a remarkable increase, as the yearly inflow increased from 64k in 2010 to 110k in 2019. Switzerland had slight increase, but after 2013 reaching a peak of 106k, the rate decreased again almost to the same level as in 2010. Belgium has been consistent around 75k annual inflow of EU nationals. Italy has shown a substantial decrease, having an inflow of around 135k in 2010, this decreased to around 77k in 2019. All the remaining countries in the figure (Austria, Hungary, Greece, Norway, Ireland, Sweden and Denmark) show a slight increase, with the exception of Norway, which shows a decrease in the inflow over the last decade.

Figure 2 summarizes the development of intra-EU inflow over time for a selection of high immigration countries. Germany shows a steady increase until 2015, whereas for the UK the increase started slightly later, but also reached a peak at the same year. For the UK the level of immigration in 2019 returned to roughly the same level of that in 2010, whereas for Germany this was still higher. France shows a stability of intra-EU immigration, but Italy and Spain show an additional decline until 2013. However, after 2013 immigration continues to decrease for Italy, whereas for Spain it starts to increase again.

Figure 3 shows the net EU migration flows, based on country of residence. The figure demonstrates that there are still clear sending and receiving countries with the EU, but that patterns are shifting. As expected, Germany and the UK are mainly receiving EU nationals, but whereas the surplus was around 330k in 2015 and around 107k in 2019 for Germany, these numbers were respectively 165k and 7k for the UK. In other words, the net EU migration for Germany was about half of that in 2019 and for the UK it almost completely vanished in 2019. For Germany the net migration returned to the level of 2010, whereas for the UK the lowest point was reached in 2019. Spain, being a sending country, shows the opposite pattern, in which in 2019 the net migration turned around to a positive 2k, where at its downward peak in 2013 it was around -113k. Romania is the largest sending country in 2019 with a net migration of around -92k. The net migration decreased in the beginning, but then rose again in 2014. Other countries that were sending countries in 2010 and increasingly became so during the decade are Bulgaria and Croatia. Other countries from Eastern European Union, including Poland, Lithuania and Latvia developed towards a lower negative net EU migration towards the end of the decade. Both Portugal and Greece became more pronounced sending countries in 2011 and 2012, but net migration since then progressed more

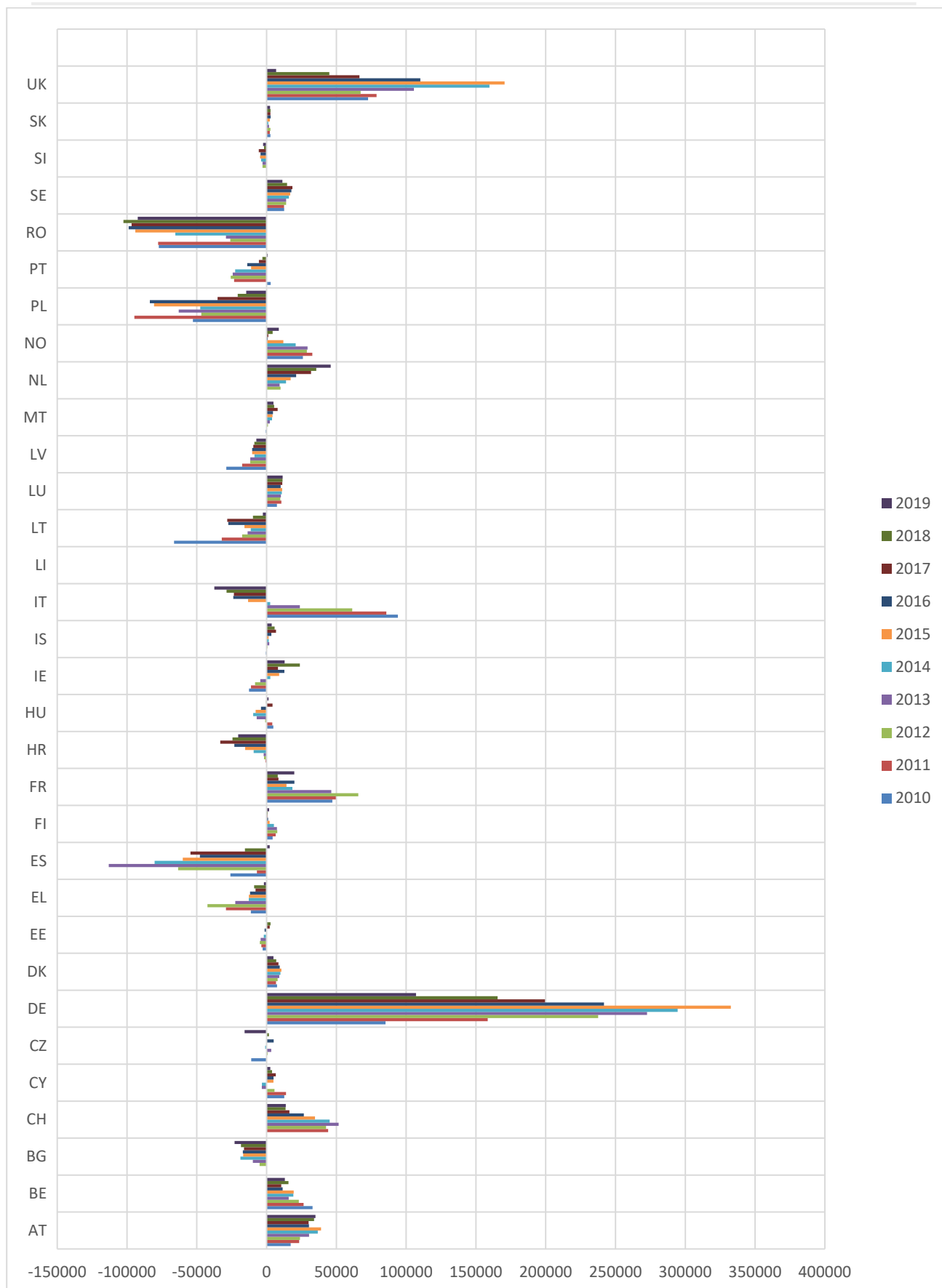


Figure 3. Net intra-EU migration based on previous/next residence

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

For country abbreviations, see country abbreviations list

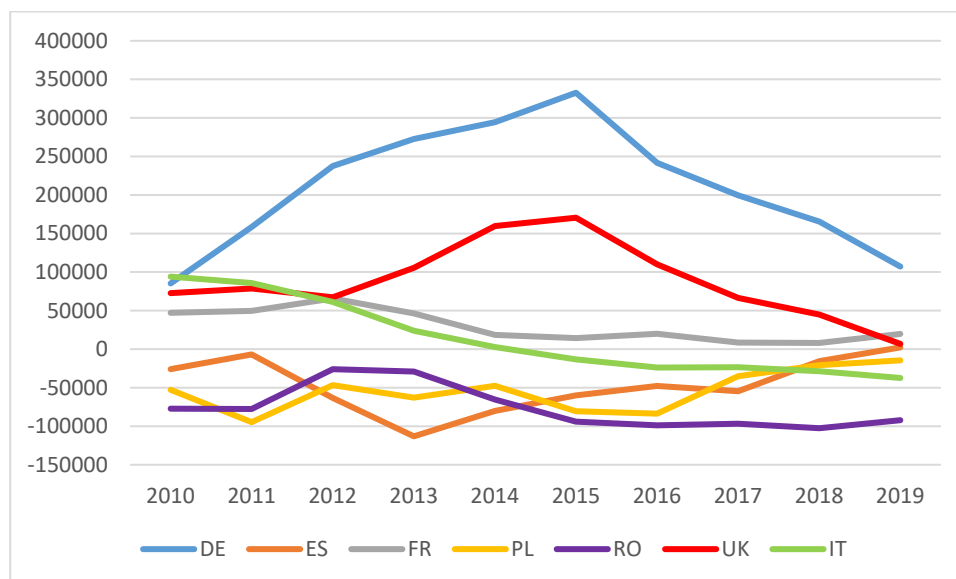


Figure 4. Net intra-EU migration based on previous/next residence for the main receiving and sending countries

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

For country abbreviations, see country abbreviations list

towards 0. For Italy the 2010 to 2020 decade marked the change from a relatively large receiving country (net migration 2010 = 94k) to a sending country (net migration 2019 = -37k). On the other hand, Ireland has become a receiving country in 2019, compared to earlier in the decade when it was a sending country. Belgium, France and Switzerland remain sending countries, but are less so compared with the beginning of the decade. Austria and to a lesser extent Sweden and Luxembourg appear to have become slightly more receiving countries. The remaining countries have either a net migration of around 0 or are low population countries (e.g. Liechtenstein, Iceland etc.).

Figure 4 displays the development of net migration over time for the main receiving and sending countries. In 2010, the UK, Italy, France and Germany are the countries with the highest net mobility, but in 2015 Germany and the UK have clearly diverged from Italy and France, with the former two countries becoming prominent receiving countries, whereas the latter two becoming less prominent receiving countries. After 2015 all of these countries, except France, show a decrease in net migration, with the UK coming close to 0 net migration in 2019 and Italy becoming increasingly a sending country, since 2015. With respect to the sending countries, Poland and Romania show generally the largest negative net mobility, except between 2012 and 2014, when Spain shows the lowest net intra-EU migration, also because the net migration becomes less negative for Poland and Romania during this time. After 2013 net mobility increases for Spain, with net mobility becomes slightly positive even in 2019. The net mobility of Poland after 2016 also moves towards 0 net mobility, but continues to be negative in 2019, whereas Romania continues to be a main sending country.

2.2 Age and gender composition

Age and gender distributions can provide a bit of an idea on the characteristics of migrants. Figure 5 displays the age distribution of intra-EU immigrants from 2010 to 2018. More than half of all immigrants are between the ages of 15 and 39, although this number slightly decreased from 65% in 2010 to 60% in 2018. The second largest age group is the 40-64 constituting about 21% in 2010 and 24% in 2018, thus showing a slight increase over the years. 65+ immigrants are the smallest group which appears to have increased slightly from 3% to 3.7%. Finally, the group of 0-15 have increased from 11% in 2010 to 13% in 2020. Thus, the general picture is that EU immigrants tend to be of young working age, but that there is a slight trend towards both movers of higher ages and of children moving.

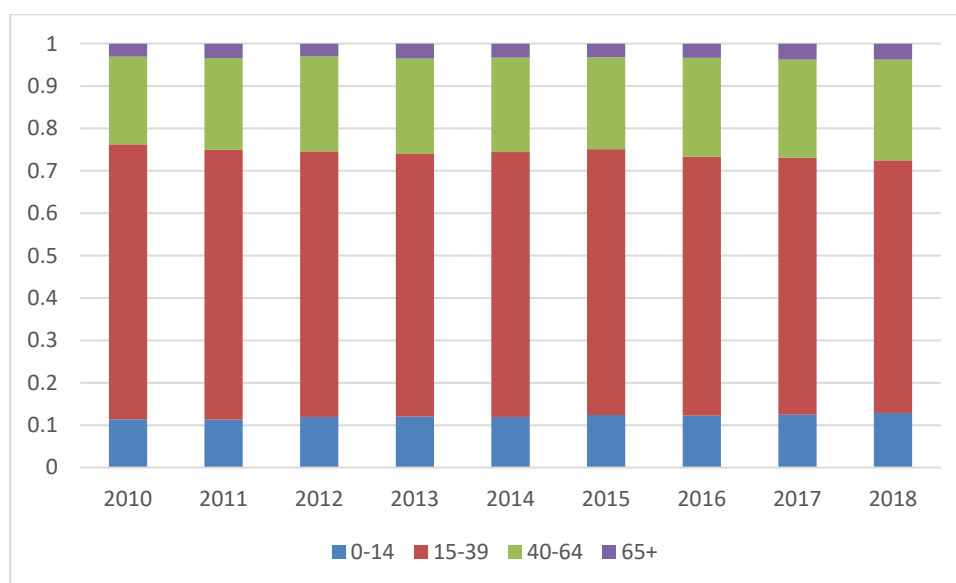


Figure 5. Age composition of intra-EU immigrants by age group, 2010-2018

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

Figure 6 zooms in more specifically on regions within the EU and EFTA and takes the average age distributions across these groups of countries. We distinguish three different regions East (including Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Croatia), South (Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal) and North-West-Central (Germany, UK, Belgium, France, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, Ireland), which we refer to as NWC. We exclude countries with a population lower than 1 million as these percentages can vary greatly given the relative low numbers of immigrants they receive. The Figure shows that there is an increase in the inflow of children (age 0-14) in the East region (from around 10% to 17%), whereas the inflow is stable in South and NWC countries (around 11-12%), which could indicate that Eastern EU migrants increasingly return to their origin countries as a family. Interesting is the decline in the inflow of young workers (age 15-39) in the East and South countries dropping respectively around 9 and 7 percentage points, which may be the result of more younger migrants permanently settling in one of the NWC countries, as the inflow of young migrants appears to be quite stable in the NWC countries. Across all groups of countries there is an increase of around 2 to 3 percentage points of those of older working age (40-64), although this increase appears to have stabilized in the East countries. When it comes to retirement migration (65+) the inflows increase particularly in the South (from around 5% to 9%) and to a somewhat lesser extent

in the East countries (5-6%), whereas it remains stable in the NWC countries (around 2.5%).

Given that there is some variation within these groups of countries and the fact that there has been relatively little attention on family and retirement migration in the literature we zoom in on countries that have either the highest absolute or relative numbers of inflows of 0-14 and 65+ age groups. Figure 7 shows the countries with the highest inflows of the 0-14 age group. The figure shows that Germany is that country with the highest 0-14 inflow in absolute numbers, reaching a peak of almost 76k in 2015 after which it decreases to 52k in 2018. However, Poland appears to be catching up 2018, reaching almost 48k in 2018. Poland is also the country for which the relative share of 0-14 has increased most going from 8% in 2010 to 39% in 2018, with the exception of Slovakia, who had an even more dramatic relative increase (from 10% to 51%). It appears that the increase in the inflow of children has particularly occurred in Eastern EU (Poland, Slovakia, Latvia), with the exception of Romania, which has seen an increase, followed by a slight decrease, both in absolute and relative numbers. The other countries are Spain and France, which appear to have, in terms of relative numbers, a steady inflow of 0-14 year-olds.

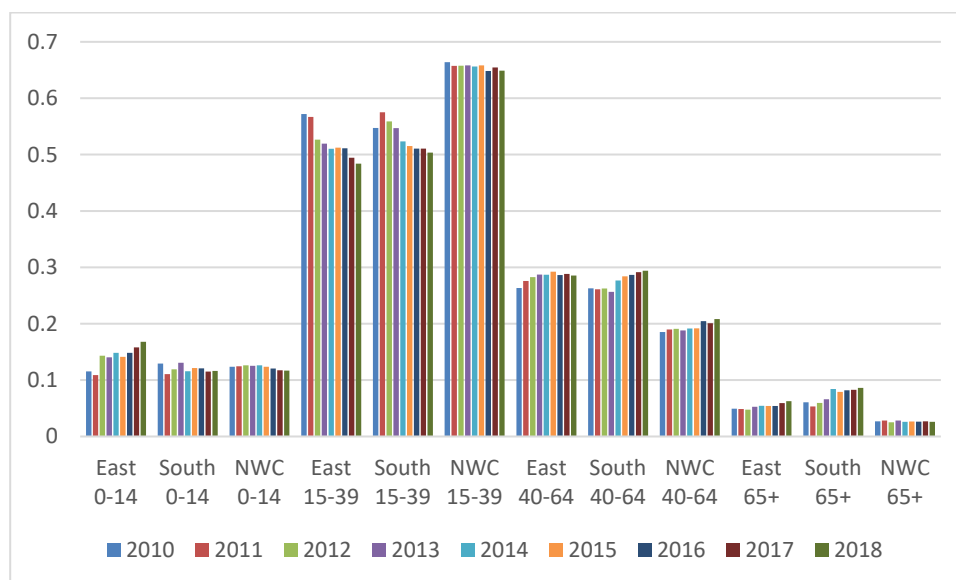


Figure 6. Age distributions per group of EU origin countries, 2010-2018

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

East = Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Croatia; South = Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal; NWC = Germany, UK, Belgium, France, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, Ireland

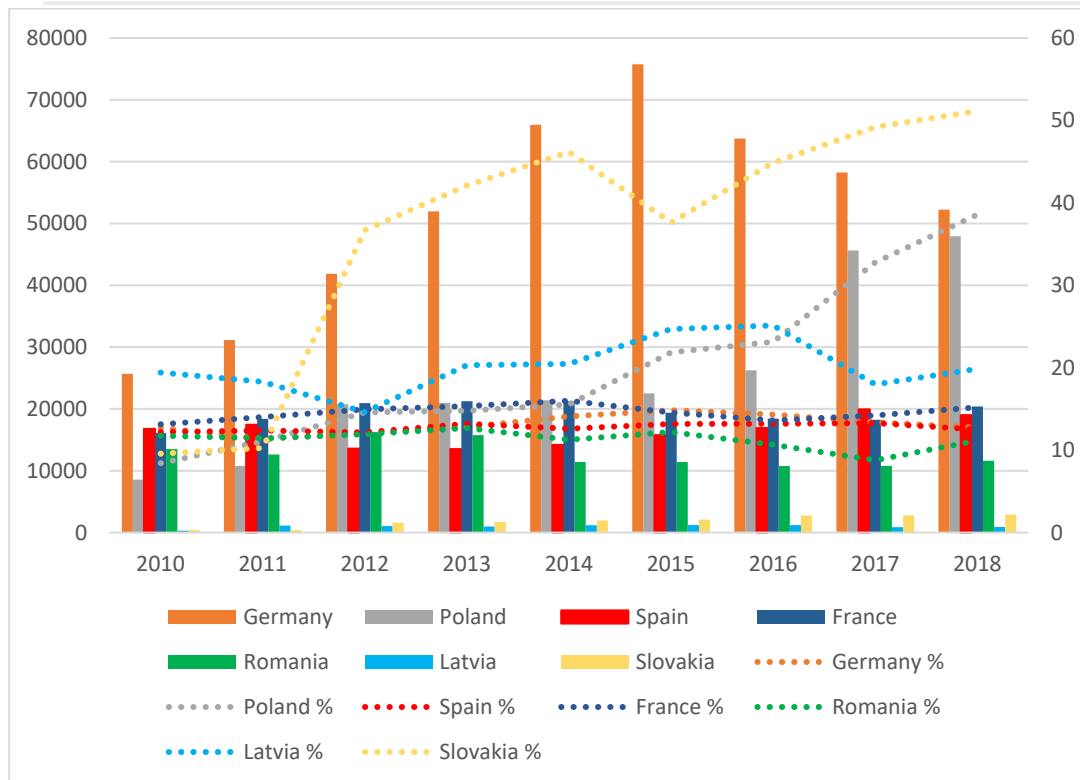


Figure 7. Top countries in terms of absolute and relative inflows of children (age 0-14)

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

Figure 8 shows the countries with highest inflows of 65+ migration. Except for Germany all countries are either Southern or Eastern EU countries. Spain has the most 65+ migrants in absolute numbers, reaching a peak of 20k in 2017, Croatia has the highest relative numbers (18% in 2018). Poland (from 2% to 8%), Croatia (from 14% to 18%) and Greece (from 8% to 12%) appear to have had a relative increase in the share of 65+ in their intra-EU inflows, which likely include mostly nationals that choose to return to their origin country for retirement. In the other EU countries in the figure the relative inflow of 65+ appears to be rather stable.

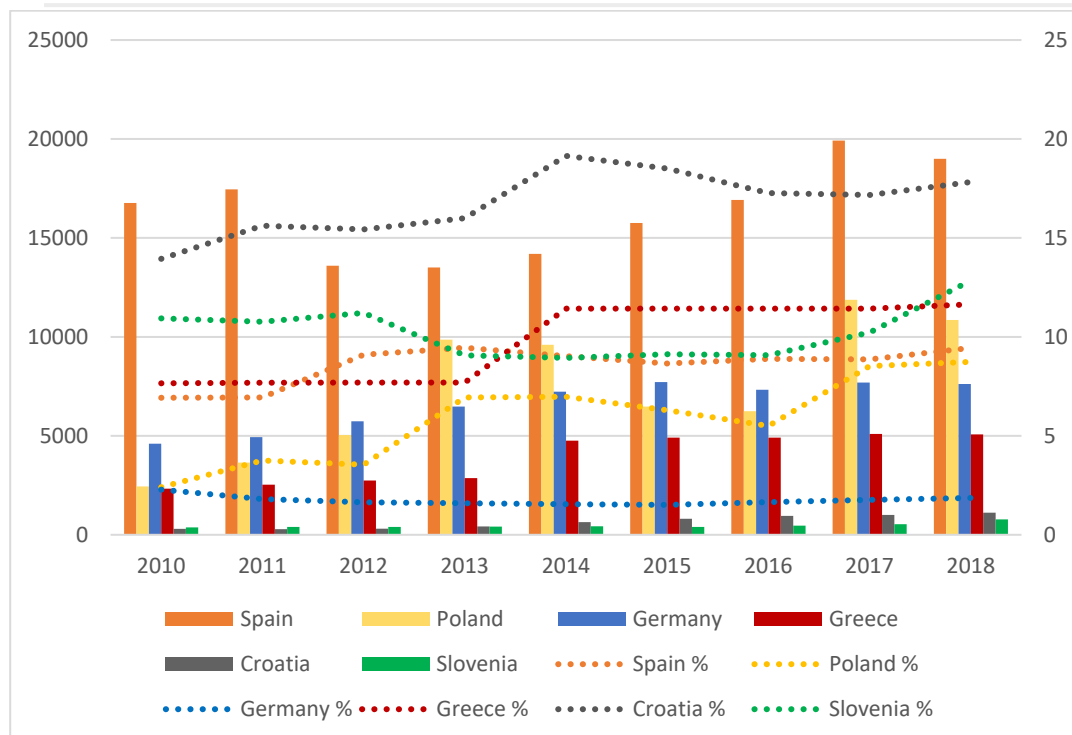


Figure 8. Top countries in terms of absolute and relative inflows of retired (aged 65+)

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

Figure 9 displays the distribution of men and women among intra-EU immigrants across from 2010 to 2018. The figure shows a remarkable stability in the distribution of men and women among intra-EU migrants, with men constituting around 55% the intra-EU migrants and women 45%. Yet, if we zoom in the different groups of countries, as shown in Figure 10, there appears to be an underlying variation. In Southern EU countries there are more female immigrants compared with male immigrants, although this appears to have developed more towards a 50-50 split over the years. The East EU countries have the opposite development, with only around 40% female immigrants in 2010, showing a slight increase to 43% in 2018. The NWC countries appear to be stable around 45% female immigrants. Thus, while the general numbers for the EU might appear to be stable, there appears to be a convergence ongoing between different EU countries. Some country variations are worth noting. Poland has seen a dramatic increase from the relative share of women moving (back) to Poland. While this number was 25% in 2010, this increased 43% in 2018. This increase together the increase of the 0-14 age group inflow, appear to signal a change of more Poles returning as a family. Another interesting difference is between France and Germany, with France having about a 50% share of female immigrants, although the share appears to have slightly decreased over time (52% to 50%), whereas in Germany the share of women is stable around 41%.

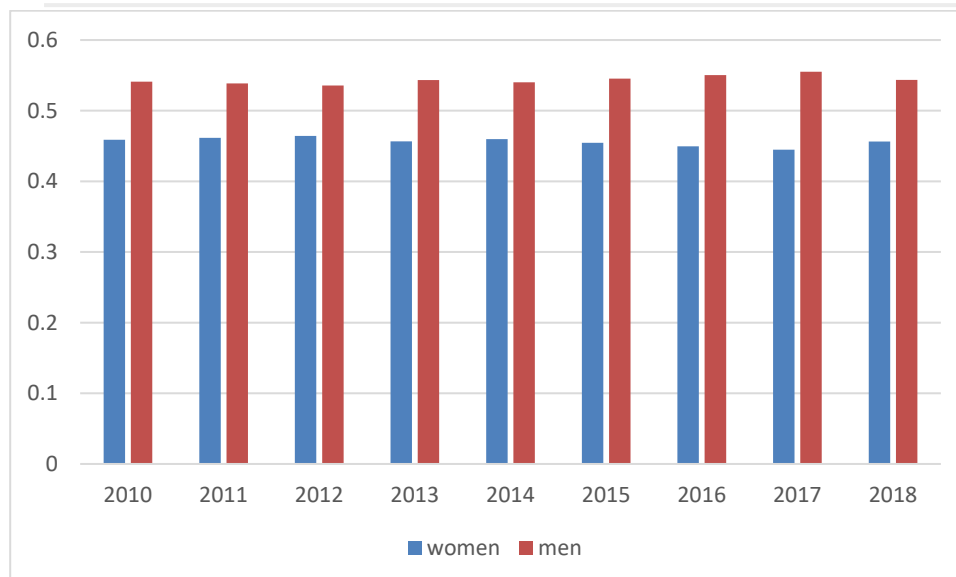


Figure 9. Gender distribution of intra-EU immigrants, 2010-2018

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

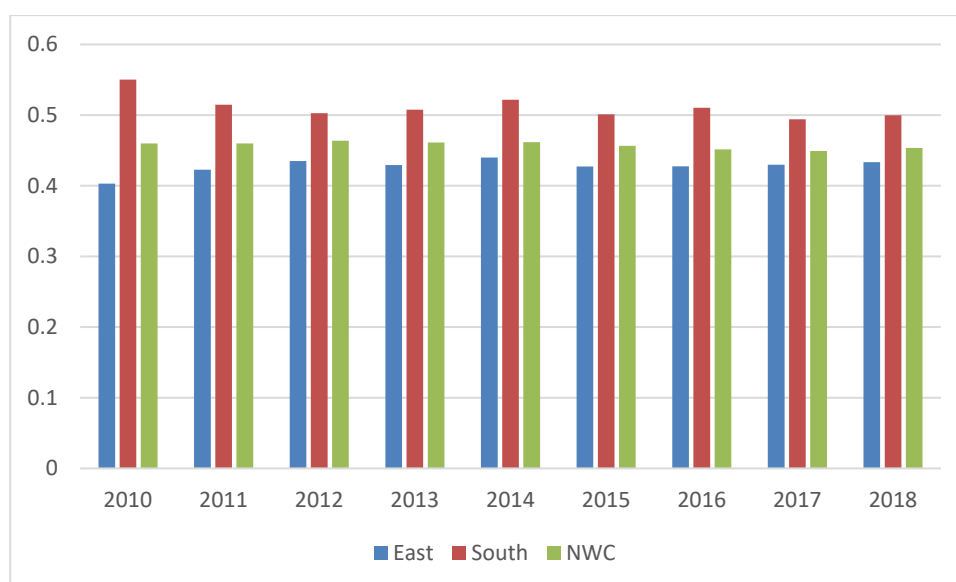


Figure 10. Percentage of women among intra-EU immigrants split for groups of origin countries, 2010-2018

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

East = Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Croatia; South = Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal; NWC = Germany, UK, Belgium, France, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, Ireland

2.3 A focus on the United Kingdom and Spain

Given the substantial differences as well as the fact that these two countries are among the key destination countries for EU migrants we focus in this section on the UK and Spain. The UK was the largest receiver of migrants originating from EU countries in 2010. The UK reached, as we could observe in Figures 1-4, a peak in 2015 after which inflows from other EU countries starkly decreased. Germany of course became the largest receiver of EU nationals, but unfortunately we cannot include a more detailed examination of Germany in this analyses due to lack of data available on Eurostat. Nevertheless the UK is an interesting case study given the fact that the Brexit debate and vote was heavily dominated by discussion on EU migration to the UK. This despite the fact that other origin countries of migrants (outside of the EU and often part of the Common wealth countries) are way more prominent in the UK then they are for many other EU countries. In a different way Spain forms an interesting case. The country was hit hard and suffered heavily from the financial crisis. Before that Spain actually just had turned into one of the key destination countries for migrants in the EU (Van Mol and de Valk 2016).

Figure 11 shows the relative inflows from the most common intra-EU origin countries to the UK. Most intra-EU migrants in the 2010 and 2018 time period arriving in the UK originate from Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Romania and Poland. At the same time the landscape of intra-EU immigration has changed quite dramatically between 2010 and 2018. In 2010 most intra-EU immigrants arrived from Poland and France, whereas in 2018 most come from Italy and Romania. The flows from Poland increased in the beginning of the decade, but after 2011/2012 there appears to be a turning point, after which the decline sets in. Interestingly, flows from Romania sharply increased after 2012 and reaching a peak in 2015/2016. More gradual, although with some ups and downs, has been the increase from Spain and Italy. The flows from Germany and France with some years as exception appear to be most stable. In short, the UK has seen an increase of flows from two East EU countries, Romania and Poland, but these flows have also substantially decreased again towards the end of the decade, whereas the inflows of Southern EU countries (Spain and Italy) has gradually climbed.

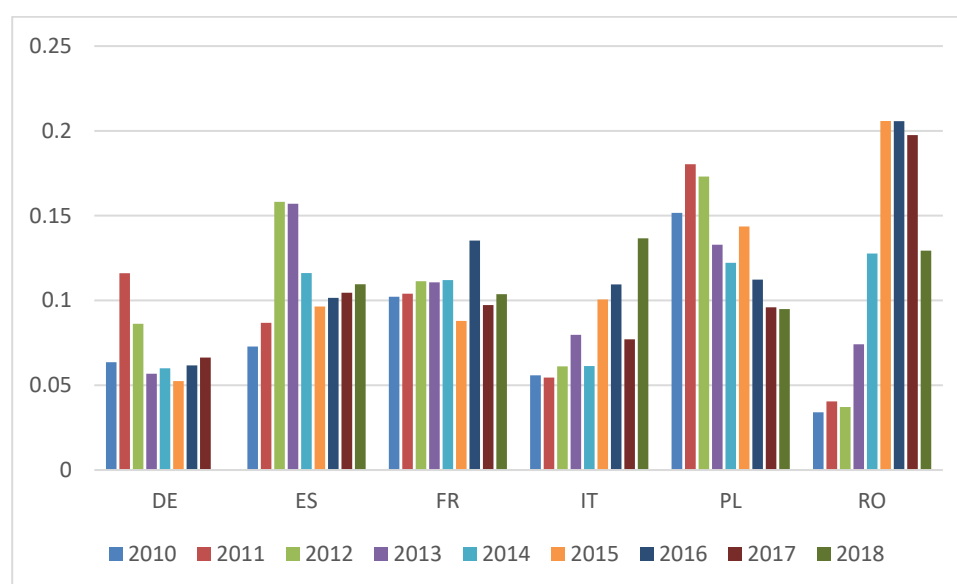


Figure 11. Main countries of origin for Intra-EU immigrants arriving in the UK, 2010-2018

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

For country abbreviations, see country abbreviations list

Figure 12 shows the age and distributions of intra-EU immigrants per year in the UK. Across all years the UK has received predominantly Intra-EU immigrants of young working age (15-39) and there is the country with the relatively highest share of young intra-EU immigrants. There appears to be a slight increase in the number of older age workers (40-64) whereas the share of 65+ appears to have diminished. Regarding gender, the appear to be some fluctuations bouncing between a 40% and 50% share of female intra-EU immigrants. In Figure 13 the age and gender distributions for the same years are displayed for Germany. Interestingly, the share of 15-39 is much low in Germany (around 60%) compared with the UK. Germany appears to have a relatively higher share of both older aged workers (around 25%) and children up to 14 (around 10%). What is also noticeable is that the age distributions appear to be even more stable across time compared with the UK. Finally, where the percentage of women fluctuated in the UK it appears to be consistently around 40% in Germany.

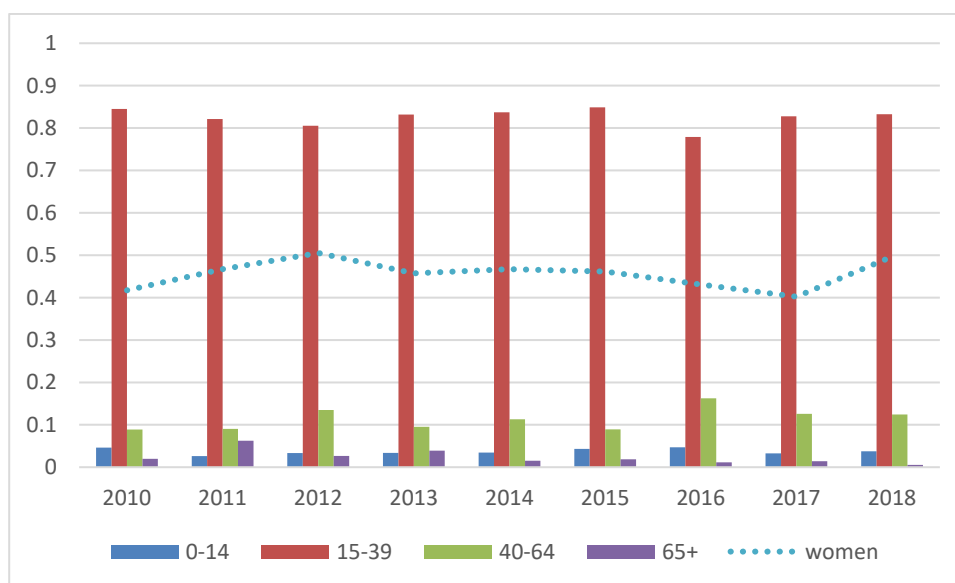


Figure 12. Age and gender distribution of intra-EU immigrants arriving in the UK, 2010-2018

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

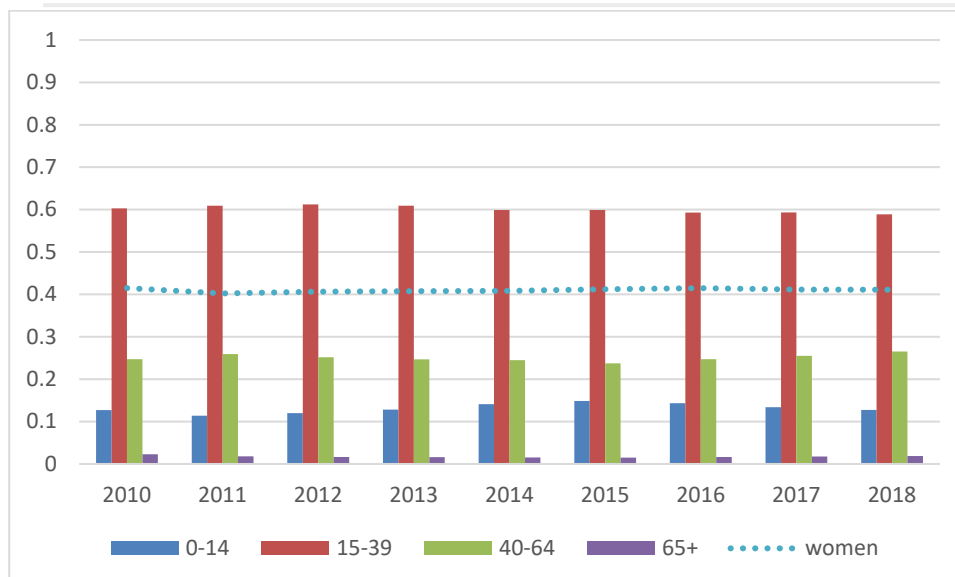


Figure 13. Age and gender distribution of intra-EU immigrants arriving in Germany, 2010-2018

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

Figure 14 displays the inflows of intra-EU migration to Spain from the top origin countries (from Spain's perspective). Also for Spain the patterns changed quite a bit from 2010 to 2018. Whereas in 2010 more than a third originated from Romania, by 2018 this number has decreased to under 20% and no longer being the largest origin country. The largest increases are from the UK, going from 14% in 2010 to 21% in 2018, and Italy going from 7% to 14%. The inflows from France and Germany increase slightly, whereas the inflows from Bulgaria and Portugal decrease slightly in that time period. Figure 15 shows the outflows from Spain to these same countries as in Figure 14. The outflows to Romania are in 2010 and 2011 still lower than the inflows, but that changes in 2012 and after. After reaching a peak outflow in 2012 the outflows do appear to stabilize though. The strongest increase in outflows is to the UK. Where in 2010 around 11% chose the UK as their destination, this increased to 24% in 2018. The strong inflow and outflows, combined with the inflow from Spain that we observed in the UK demonstrate the increasing linkages between Spain and the UK. McCarthy (2019) notes that many TCN naturalize as Spanish (around 20% of total flow) in order to move to the UK. Interesting is also the stable, but lower outflow than inflow towards to Italy. While the outflow to Portugal was higher in 2010 than the inflow, from around 2013 the outflow starts to match the inflow. Also for France and to a lesser extent Germany the inflows get closer to the outflows, but outflows do stay higher than the inflows in 2018. Although the outflow to Bulgaria decreases it continues to be higher than the inflow.

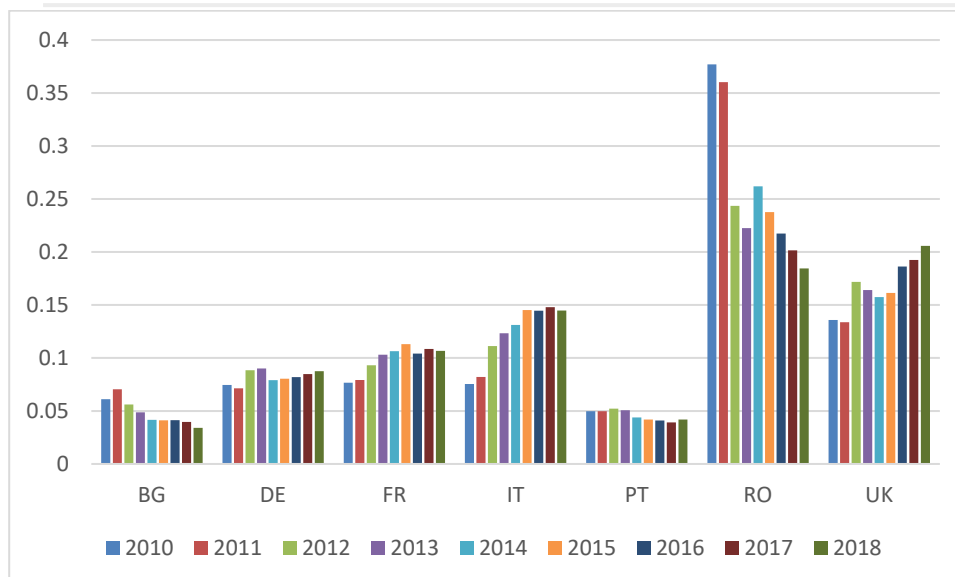


Figure 14. Countries of origin of intra EU immigrants arriving in Spain, 2010-2018

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

For country abbreviations check country abbreviations list

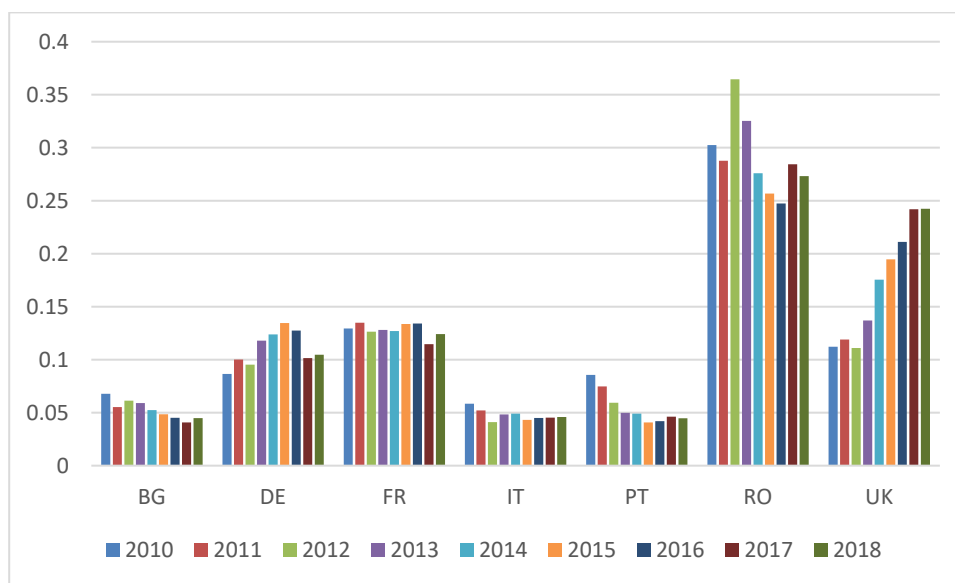


Figure 15. Spain outflows of intra EU emigrations leaving Spain, 2010-2018

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

For country abbreviations check country abbreviations list

All in all, these results show the flows from Eastern EU countries appear to be decreasing both to the UK and Spain, probably for different reasons. On the other hand, flows from Italy appear to increase in both countries. Finally, we observe an increasing connection between the UK and Spain, with higher inflows from Spain to the UK, but also from the UK to Spain. It could be that this was a temporary phenomenon, caused by Brexit in which Spanish nationals, particularly those born in Latin America, as indicated by McCarthy (2019) may have rushed their migration to the UK in order to become a UK national, which arguably has become harder now that the UK has left the European

Union. Perhaps this also works to some extent the other way around with British who have a connection with Spain choosing to live in Spain rather than Britain after Brexit.

The case studies of the UK and Spain have revealed more in detail the changing patterns that can take place in terms of intra-EU migration. We found that some flows increase, while others decrease, thereby showing the very dynamic nature of intra-EU migration that cannot be captured when just focusing on the net migration data as they were presented in the previous section.

As a final note on all the figures presented in this descriptive analysis section it has to be noted that there are figures on long terms trends in intra-EU migration that can be found in the Annual labour mobility reports³, with the latest report published in 2020 (Fries-Tersch et al. 2020). These reports primarily use data from official statistics and the EU Labour Force Survey. Most of their statistics use data on citizenship. While these reports mainly focus on those of working age (20-64) these reports do hold detailed information on intra-EU migration, including information on a variety of types of flows such as cross-border workers, posted workers, health professionals, but also information on migrant characteristics such as employment rate, occupational sector, educational level etc., therefore being a worthwhile source of descriptive information on Intra-EU migration.

3 Netherlands case study: impact of COVID-19 measures on Intra-EU migration

COVID-19 measures have had a serious impact on intra-EU migration. Not only have borders been closed for some periods between certain member states, making it harder to move, but with some businesses having to close because of the pandemic it has also had a profound impact on the labour position of migrants, leaving some EU-nationals even stranded in destination countries without employment. Given that not much data is available yet, an overview of the impact of COVID-19 measures on intra-EU migration as a whole is not feasible. We therefore focus on a particular case, the Netherlands, for which data are available from the population registers of Statistics Netherlands. The Netherlands forms an interesting case study as it has become a more pronounced intra-EU receiving country over the past decade, with increasing flows from particularly Eastern and to a lesser extent Southern EU. Furthermore, the Netherlands, although discouraging unnecessary travel towards the Netherlands, has not imposed a travel ban on EU nationals coming from the Schengen area (it has on nationals coming from the UK) during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. While there obviously have been various policy responses a brief summary of the COVID measures for the Netherlands is that lockdown measures were introduced in the middle of March 2020. Measures were somewhat relaxed from May until the end of the summer. After that measures were slowly increased, resulting in a partial lockdown in October and a full lockdown in December 2020 again.

The question is then to what extent the measures on containing the COVID-19 pandemic have affected migration flows. Although first results on the Netherlands can be shared here, one should

³ All Annual Labour Mobility Report publications can be found under EU publications at: <https://op.europa.eu/>

be aware of also the limitations of these data. First, results have to be interpreted with caution as it is impossible to know what would have happened if the COVID-19 pandemic had not taken place. Yet, by comparing the 2020 year to both 2018 and 2019 we can get an indication of what could have been the impact of covid-19. Second, we have only country of birth data, in which we assume that country of birth has a strong correlation with destination country when it comes to emigration. This is a too strong assumption for those born in the Netherlands, so we will not display the results here for those born in the Netherlands, which are described by De Jong et al. (2021). Finally, the numbers for 2020 are partly based on provisional statistics and thus present raw numbers for which administrative corrections still need to be carried out.

Figure 16 shows the general picture of monthly net migration of EU born (i.e. inflow of EU born – outflow of EU born, excluding Dutch born) in the Netherlands. We can observe a clear impact of the first lockdown starting in March. The inflows starkly decreased in March, April and May, when comparing the same months in 2019 and 2018. Also, a more general decline across the year is visible, with the exception of February, in which net migration was similar to that of 2019. While the net migration does increase again after May and throughout the 2020 year there is a similar pattern compared with 2019 and 2018 in terms of months in which net migration is highest, the net migration is generally lower in 2020. While the end of summer peak in net migration in September is comparable to that of 2018, the net migration in August and October is substantially lower compared with both 2019 and 2018.

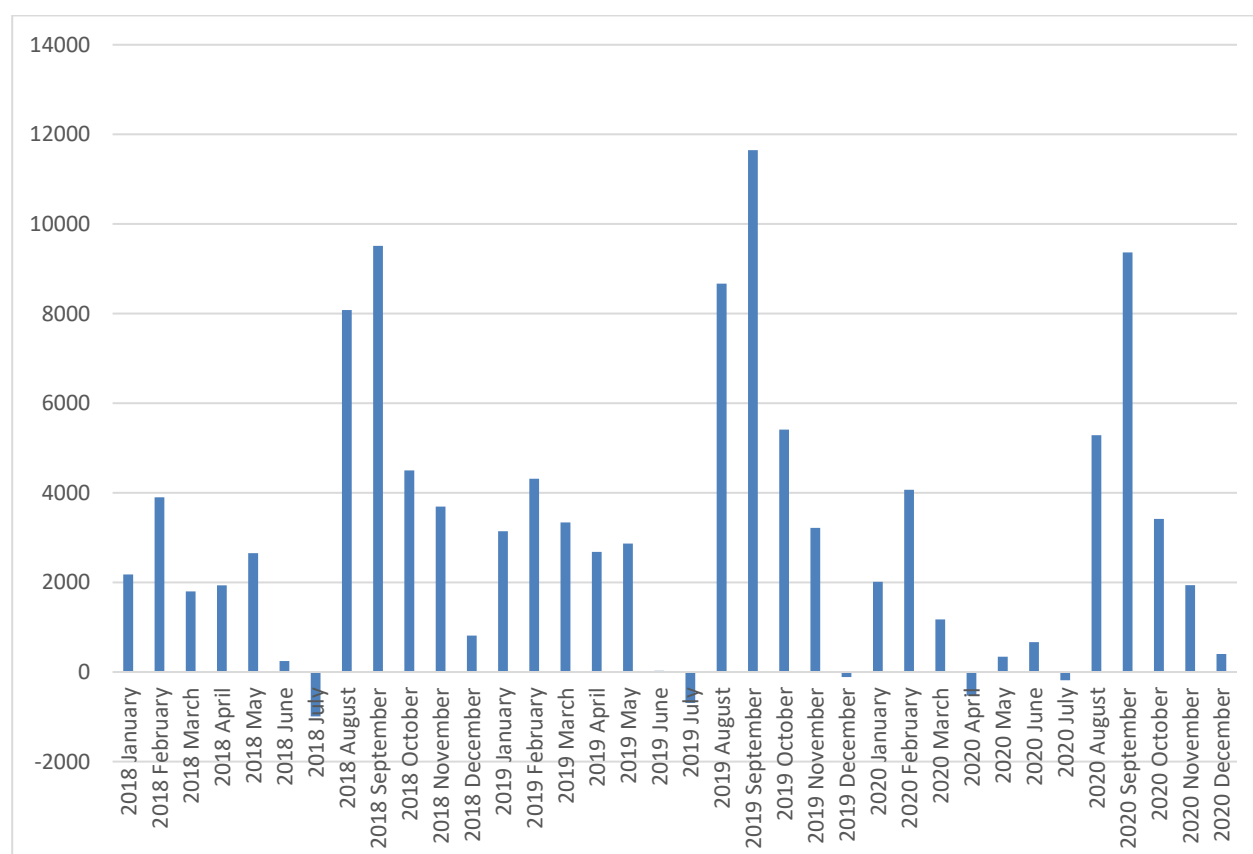


Figure 16. Monthly net migration of intra-EU in the Netherlands, 2018-2020

Source: own calculations based on Statistics Netherlands (CBS) data

Figure 17 displays the differences between EU origin groups in terms of yearly immigration figures

to the Netherlands. What is visible is that for most EU origin groups levels of immigration returned to the level of 2018 or slightly below that level. About half of the EU origin groups represent this pattern. In terms of absolute numbers Poland shows the largest decrease with roughly 25k and 27k Poles coming to the Netherlands in respectively 2018 and 2019, decreasing to an inflow of 24k in 2020. Other EU origin groups show a decrease compared not only with 2019, but also 2018, are Scandinavians, Italians and to a lesser extent French. Romanians and Bulgarians also form an exception as their levels of immigration in 2020 are higher compared with that in 2018, but are lower or equal of that in 2019. Finally, Belgium appears to be least affected, with a relatively stable inflow of Belgians across the years.

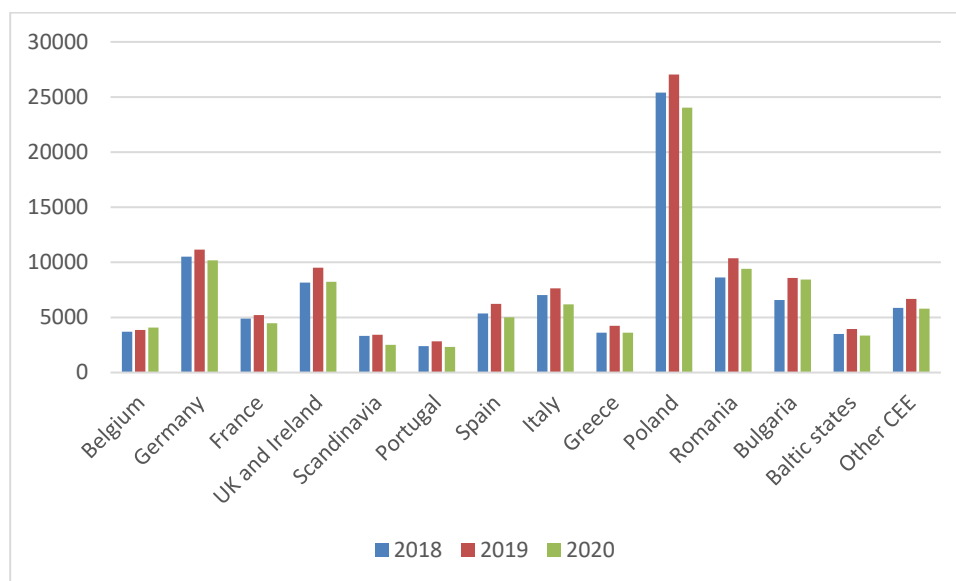


Figure 17. Inflows to Netherlands of main immigration groups, 2018-2020

Source: own calculations based on Statistics Netherlands (CBS) data

In order to understand to what extent the trend in immi- and emigration patterns changed, we show the relative change of inflow (those arriving in the Netherlands) and outflow (those leaving the Netherlands) compared with the previous year in Figure 18. Thus, the changes between the years 2018 and 2019 and the years 2019 and 2020 are compared. The figure shows that from 2018 to 2019 not only the immigration, but also the levels of emigration increased, indicating the circular nature of intra-EU migration in the Netherlands. While it differs between origin groups to what extent emigration and immigration increase, this holds true for all different origins, with the exception of France, which showed a slight decrease in emigration in 2019 compared with 2018. Yet, if we examine the relative changes in immigration and emigration the pattern is more diverse, particularly for emigration. While generally, there is a relative decrease in immigration comparing 2020 to 2019 (exception Belgium), emigration responses vary strongly. An interesting difference is that between Italy and Greece, on the one hand, and Portugal and Spain on the other. The former show higher emigration, whereas the latter are more likely to stay: 20% more Italians emigrated in 2020 compared with 2019, whereas 10% less Portuguese emigrated out of the Netherlands. With respect to the Eastern EU countries, we observe immigration dropping harder than emigration rates are dropping. This is particularly the case for Bulgaria, where in 2019 immigration increased with roughly 30% compared with 2018 and decreased about 2% comparing 2020 to 2019. Yet, Bulgaria's difference in emigration growth is much smaller, with an increase of 21% emigration from 2018 to 2019 and an increase of 14.5% from 2019 to 2020. Thus, while immigration has dropped, those with different EU

origins vary strongly in their responses to COVID-19 pandemic it seems, with some being increasingly likely to leave the Netherlands and others increasingly likely to stay in the Netherlands.

In short, there appears to have been a strong immediate impact of the first lockdown and an overall dampening effect on migration throughout the rest of the year. Interestingly, the response has not been uniform with different EU origins showing different strategies. Neighbouring countries appear to be least affected, but while immigration has declined across the board countries differ in the extent to which they responded with increasing or decreasing emigration. What exactly causes these differences is unclear and cannot be assessed with the data at hand, but may be related to individual life course stage, employment situation and the situation in the origin country.

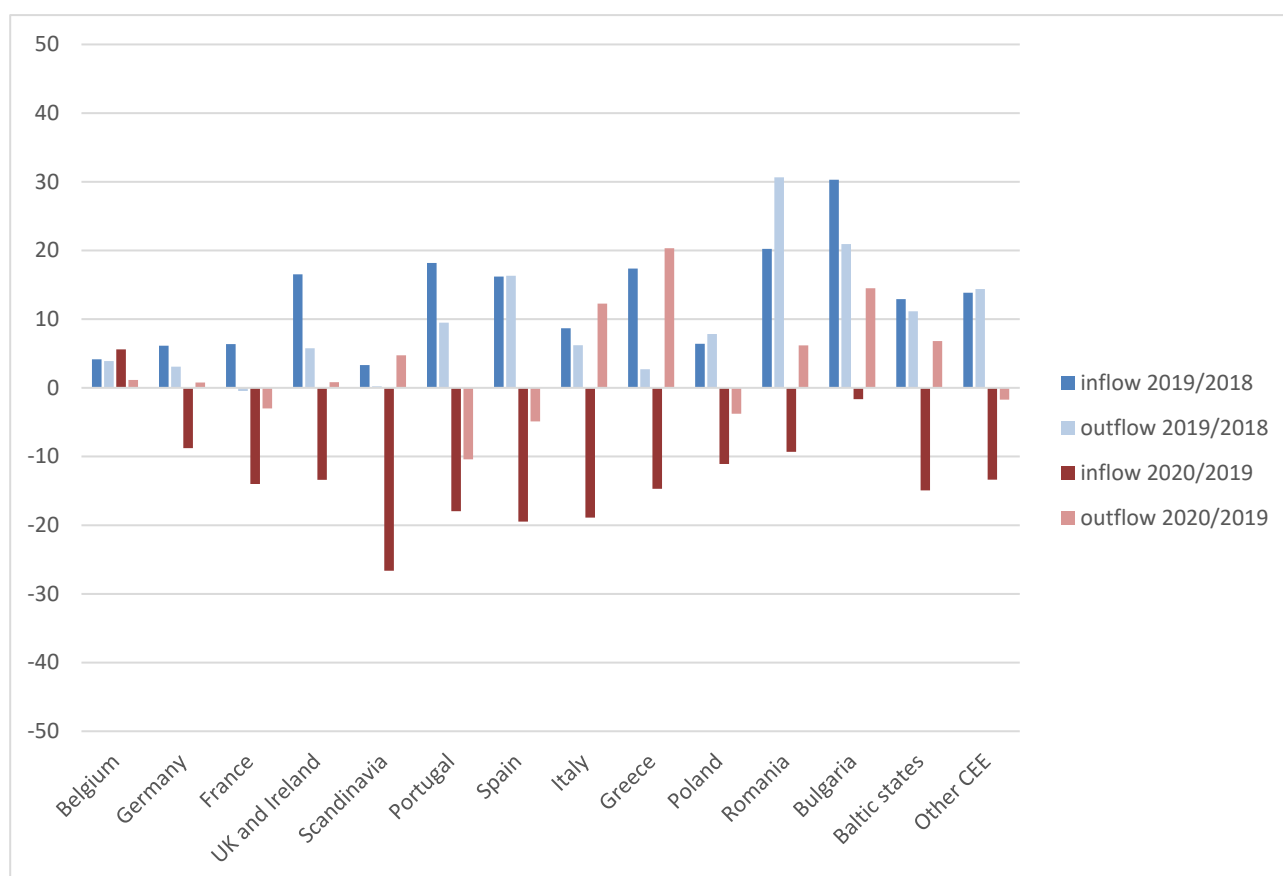


Figure 18. Relative increase in inflow and outflow compared with previous year for 2019 and 2020 split per EU origin group

Source: own calculations based on Statistics Netherlands (CBS) data

Discussion

The aim of this paper was to provide an overview of intra-EU migration patterns in the 2010-2020 decade. We conducted a comprehensive literature review and descriptive analysis, including also a case-study of the Netherlands on the impact of COVID-19 on intra-EU migration. Combined they provide some main conclusions that we want to highlight and further discuss here.

First of all, the literature review revealed that migration studies appeared to cluster around some

clear key intra-EU migration topics. We uncovered five distinct topics 1) impact of the EU expansion 2) impact of the financial crisis 3) highly skilled and student mobility 4) impact of welfare, policy and politics 5) the refugee crisis. What was apparent from the literature review is that the primary focus has shifted from the impact of EU expansion and the financial crisis on intra-EU migration to the impact of the refugee crisis on mainly migration towards the EU. This is quite surprising given the large and continuous importance of intra-EU mobility across Europe. Second, the link between migration towards the EU and mobility within the EU has hardly been made and studied yet, which has likely the limited data availability on the movements of TCNs. The data that is available, such as Dublin statistics for asylum seekers and Blue card and intra-company transferee data for highly skilled migration, all have clear limitations and do not allow studies to provide a comprehensive overview of TCNs movements between EU countries. Third, certain groups of migrants are studied extensively (like those moving for work or studies) while important migration motives related to family and union formation are by and large overlooked in the literature.

In addition to these general findings of the literature review we can also conclude based on the findings of studies in the literature review, that although intra-EU mobility is characterized by its circularity there seems to be an increasing group of EU migrants that settle more permanently. It may not only be those who want to stay remain, but in some cases also those who are unable to return to the origin country. Not only studies in the literature review pointed out to this phenomenon, but also in our descriptive analysis showed that inflows of young working age decreasing in Southern and Eastern EU countries, which is likely to be the result of higher share of young workers settling in the destination country rather than returning to their origin country. This polarization may also be the result of increasing stigma towards intra-EU migrants, in which particularly in the UK as the result of Brexit flows from Eastern EU have decreased. However, Germany appears to have instead promoted intra-EU migration, particularly highly skilled from South EU. Interestingly though, a consistent finding is that mobility from Southern and Eastern EU countries to Northern and Western EU countries is mainly driven by the economic conditions, welfare and the political situation in the country of origin rather than the conditions in the destination countries. This calls for a more inclusive focus on origin and destination countries when studying intra-EU mobility rather than focusing exclusively from the destination country's perspective, which appears to be currently still the dominant approach.

Our literature review also provides good insight into the different types of intra-EU migration and related characteristics of migrants. There have been some studies attempting to create typologies (Engbersen et al. 2017; Nijhoff and Gordano 2017), but also studies focusing on a particular type, such as student and highly-skilled migrants have provided insights on drivers of migration for these particular groups. As mentioned above, family migration appeared to have had relatively little attention. There were only few publications all related to the same study on partnering between EU nationals in comparative perspective (see e.g. Schroedter, De Winter, and Koelet (2015), picked up in the literature search, and a special issue, not picked up by the literature search, on intra EU partnering edited by de Valk and Diez Medrano (2014)). While some other studies in our search results touched upon this topic, it was not on the forefront in any of the other studies, and too little insights were provided in order to have a separate theme on this in the literature part. Naturally, this is partly because of our search terms not capturing all the relevant literature that is out there. Yet, while there may be some studies capturing intra-EU family migration, we can conclude that this has received relatively little attention. This is surprising as we could observe in the descriptive analysis section that children constitute a substantial part in flows between EU countries. Similarly, retirement migration, except for one study by Percival (2013), was not mentioned in the literature. While less prevalent than family migration, our descriptive analysis showed increases of 65+ aged migration particularly in South and to a lesser extent East EU countries. Naturally, with the

increasing aging of EU societies this may become a more prevalent phenomenon in future.

The short and long term impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on migration towards and within the EU has been widely discussed, but so far few empirical studies could be conducted due to data limitations. In this paper we presented figures on intra-EU migration for the Netherlands as international comparative data are lacking. The Netherlands, however, is an interesting case study since intra-EU migration is historically important with border migration (Belgium, Germany and UK) as well as a migration from all different regions of Europe and a clear stable migration destination country for Eastern European migrants (in particular Polish). Unsurprisingly, our data analyses show that the levels of immigration decreased in 2020. A very immediate effect of the first strict COVID-19 measures in March could be observed on the net migration in the same month, but also April and May. Net migration in 2020 was not only lower compared with 2019, but also compared with 2018. This suggests a substantial impact of the COVID-19 measures, especially taking into account the increasing trend of intra-EU migration that was visible before the COVID-19 pandemic. More surprisingly are the differences between origin groups. While mostly there was a decrease in immigration across origin groups, we found huge variation in emigration responses, with an interesting divide between Southern EU country origin groups, with those of Italian and Greek origin more often emigrating (leaving the Netherlands) and those of Spanish and Portuguese origin less often leaving the Netherlands. This raises interesting questions for future research in investigating how the COVID-19 measures have impacted different migrant groups.

When thinking of suggestions for future research on intra-EU migration it is also interesting to assess to what extent earlier pleaded issues have been addressed. The article by King (2002) on new forms of European migration, in which he pleaded for a new agenda and outlined recommendations on how the study of Intra-EU migration could be improved allows us to evaluate the research on intra-EU migration and pinpoint where improvements can still be made. King (2002) gives four recommendations. First, he argues for more interdisciplinary research and mixed methods. It appears that there has been a diversification of methods, although not necessarily part of the same paper, but there have both been improvements in modelling, while at the same time there appears to have been an increased emphasis on more qualitative studies understanding drivers as well. With respect to interdisciplinary, it is more difficult to judge to what extent research has really crossed borders of multiple disciplines, but migration models do appear to include a varying set of factors, not only including economic factors, but also geographic and demographic factors. Second, he argues for more comparative studies. Both in quantitative and in qualitative studies comparisons are drawn. The quantitative studies still tend to compare within a certain group of countries, for instance, Eastern EU countries, but more qualitative studies draw comparisons increasingly across countries and nationalities. Third, he states that migration should be more embedded in the life-course. There have indeed been developments with this respect, although mainly in qualitative studies. Finally, he argues for less reliance on Eurostat, OECD and such data and more on surveys. Many quantitative studies indeed point out that their models could not account for certain important factors and that as a consequence their results had to be interpreted with caution (e.g. Balaz and Karasová 2017; Iancu et al. 2017). Unfortunately, there have been relatively little surveys conducted of the type that King (2002) recommends. The Eurobarometer is such an example of a survey that could and perhaps should include more often surveys on migration. These surveys could be informed by qualitative studies or smaller scale surveys, such as a survey conducted in the REMINDER project, that allows respondents to indicate multiple reasons for migration (Dubow et al 2018). What comes back in several studies is the move from one destination country to the other. These insights come mainly from qualitative studies, but it would be important to know how many of these multi-destination country migrants are out there and what patterns of migration they follow. This could be asked in the form of retrospective life-histories. Furthermore, more attention

needs to be paid to the dynamic nature of migration, and for that reason it is important to continuously monitor. Longitudinal cross-national data infrastructures are needed to really assess migration dynamics among individuals, and between countries. These kind of infrastructures are even more needed if one wants to understand and react (in terms of policy) to external events, as the recent COVID-19 pandemic has shown. The lack of comparative data for a range of countries across Europe makes it difficult to fully understand the effects on migration. This is concerning, given that we know migration can have profound impacts on the EU population as a whole, for instance, on the demographic compositions of regions in the EU. Improvement and expansion of official statistics that are collected could also be of great value. If, for instance, Eurostat would collect information that would entail both citizenship and previous/next residence this would provide not only a more clear and precise picture of the movements of EU nationals, but also the movements of third country nationals within the EU.

Apart from the points raised by King (2002), there are a few other ways that would enrich our understanding of intra-EU migration. So far the literature is primarily “event based”, and at best looking at before and after the event, or studying cross-sectional migration patterns. More longitudinal analyses over the individual life course in which migration events and episodes may (re-)appear would be an enormous step forward and would allow to assess the impact of these events as well as its drivers and consequences both for the individual and the society at large. The recent COVID-19 crisis may just be another example of an event that will receive much attention on the short term, yet attention could waver away after. It is important to monitor also the long-term impacts of this crisis, while at the same time examine how strong the impact was or continues to be with respect to other events or more gradual changes in politics, economics etc. Furthermore, as networks play an important role in migration moves also within the EU new data including those from e.g. social media data can be used in understanding intra-EU migration from a macro perspective but also on who is (potentially) mobile.

Overall our work has shown the diverse nature of migration within the EU. It has highlighted the importance of looking at characteristics of the individual and the life course for understanding also future migration patterns. More information on the movements of third country nationals and innovative use of new sources, such as social media, should be considered. Yet, also longitudinal data infrastructures or repetitive cross-sectional surveys on a more regular basis in order to monitor reasons for EU nationals to move to another EU country are important in increasing our understanding of intra-EU migration. In other words, not only improvements need to be made in order to distinguish different types of flows, but also there needs to be an investment in quantitative data that can reveal *why* people migrate. At the same time intra-EU mobility has many similar characteristics as those found in the literature on international migration to the EU. This is important to realise when addressing intra-EU migration also from a policy perspective where it is too often perceived ‘frictionless’ or ‘easy’ migration. For EU countries the future of intra-EU mobility of in particular also international migrants (third country nationals) should receive much more attention than currently is the case both in terms of coverage in data and in research. This asks for more attention to diversity of migration experiences, examining migration more from a life-course perspective. Furthermore, research should not only compare migrants from different countries, but also focus on distinguishing between different types of migrants from the same country, in which also, with the emergence of multiple move migration trajectories, research could benefit from having less of a destination country perspective. In times of ageing EU populations in combination with regional population changes and decline we need to keep on studying also movements within the EU to be ready to respond to these population changes in an accurate way.

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