

# **Exporting services - - exporting people**

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# ...after May 1st 2004

- only 3 OLD 15 countries open labour markets for the A8 - Sweden, UK, Ireland
- immediate movement as if „gold rush” of the XIX century in the USA
- “they thought they went to countries with streets paved with gold. On the spot it turned out the streets were not paved at all, and it was their job to pave them”
- hard reality did not cause mass disillusion among the migrating workers
- new states opening their labour markets in following years did not attract large numbers of Poles

## ... by the end of 2007

- storks – 20%
- hamsters – 16%
- pioneers – 42%
- settlers – 22%
- total number of migrants ca. 2 million – no official data reliable
- all countries openly satisfied with the labour force from Poland

# main sectors

- construction - bricklayers, carpenters, electricians
- bus drivers
- nurses and medical staff (doctors too)
- welders
- waiters and hotel personnel
- seasonal agriculture
- retail trade

# who is migrating?

- educated and skilled workers
- fresh graduates
- low skilled
- mostly between 25-35 of age
- **SO GENERALLY EVERYONE WHO DARES TO SEEK HIS FORTUNE ABROAD**
- but **shortages** at home labour market become more and more visible in some sectors
- and the **brain drain** - skills acquired and paid for by Polish tax payers do not serve domestic economy

# is the migration permanent?

- some 20-30% of migrants claim they want to stay in the host countries
- the economic crisis did not reverse the direction of migration, no mass returns
- long-term commuting (6/2 weeks pattern)
- major Polish cities campaign – come home, come to us – shortages on local labour markets?

# NSZZ “Solidarnosc” approach

- “Solidarnosc” has never been advocating or encouraging migration
- dissemination of reliable information about the conditions in host countries
- co-operation with local trade unions (UK, Ireland, Norway)
- case by case interventions on a limited scale, often when the damage is already done

# case: Polish workers in Italy

- agriculture, southern Italy
- withholding of passports, scandalous living conditions, 14+ hrs of work/day
- organized crime, links between Italian and Polish mob groups
- missing witnesses

# case: Polish workers in Norway

13 industrial workers left without payment by an employer near Bergen

- Unionen Fagforening organised a special fund to help them return home
- the case was brought to local court
- UF declared to defend Polish workers as long as they're "Solidarnosc" members

# bilateral co-operation

- UK – Polish organizers, various policies (GMB vs. T&G)
- Ireland – Polish organizers (SIPTU)
- Norway – network of interpreters (Fellesforbundet)
- France – hiring a Polish officer for fixed time (FO)

# recently

- visible decline in public interest of the migration
- economic crisis – migrant workers still competitive – possible xenophobia (“they’re stealing our jobs” – now it may be for real)
- number of Poles leaving the country visibly lower, not a media story anymore
- increase of wages in Poland much slower than 2 years ago, plus increasing number of jobless

## ...but what about services?

- „Solidarnosc” was involved in the discussion on the Services Directive (Bolkenstein)
- from the very beginning - protesting against the country of origin clause (and the others)
- strong **national disagreement** expressed in the mass media attacking the „S” position

# therefore, three ways exist

- **individual** - you go abroad, look for job, sign your contract - you're on your own and good luck! -all you need is an open labour market
- through **domestic companies** - are they selling services and posting their workers?
- through **foreign companies** (e.g. labour agencies - Polish company hiring Slovaks to work in Norway - an opportunity for beautiful chaos if not properly regulated)

# exporting services often means also exporting labour

- banking, IT, consulting - services easy to be exported **without** movement of people
- but: selling services e.g. in construction **includes selling labour** (French „campaign against Polish plumber” only partly reasonable)

# case: Polish workers and EdF

- Polish workers employed by a Polish company for re-construction and maintenance of an EdF plant near Paris
- French unions (CGT) protested against lower remuneration and longer working hours of Poles
- and now - question of posting of workers - method to bypass limitations in movement of labour

# ...there's always a problem...

- labour contracts - signed at home for work abroad
- working conditions - overtime acceptable or not? (question of competition)
- safety and health at work - no space for compromise and cost-cutting
- differences among national systems - collective agreements vs. labour code

# competition: yes, but...

- labour costs in Poland are relatively lower than in the OLD 15, especially when Swedish minimum is Polish high
- further cost-cutting may cause social dumping
- obeying local regulations and laws is a must
- ultimate threat - downward spiral if short perspective prevails