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Shifting Migration patterns and policy reactions in East Central Europe

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1. Introduction

For many years in German social science, the analysis of population related phenomena in Central and Eastern Europe had an unpleasant taste. In the Nazi ideology, much of the area between Germany and Russia was seen in the context of the Lebensraum concept which was first developed by the German zoologist and geographer Friedrich Ratzel. Also Hitler (1933: 742), in "Mein Kampf", used the term Lebensraum (literally "living space") and connected it to a "spatial policy of the future". Against this background, no discussion of where the borders of certain countries or territories to the East belong to could possibly remain innocent. Notably the historian Karl Schlögel showed aspirations to overcome the ideological superstructure of a terminology which bears analytical depth beyond all historic burdens (Schlögel 2003; 2004). However, a clear distinction between incriminated popular mind maps and a would-be clean scientific language has not yet evolved.

The uneasiness starts with the central question of how to name the different subregions. Using the term "Eastern Europe" runs the danger of symbolizing a tacit acceptance of Russian hegemony to the region. This was especially true during the Cold War, but the debate of over- or under-estimating Russia – the heart of Eastern Europe – is well present in the public debate until today. The term "Central Europe" presents the same problem, but from another perspective. In 1915, the German liberal politician Friedrich Naumann connected his Mitteleuropa concept with German dominance in a potential order after World War I. Talking of Central Europe therefore almost inevitably leads to the idea of German guidance and Germany's neighbors handling their partial independence. Politically correct solutions to the dilemma lead to terms like "East Central" or "Central East" Europe. However, they in turn spread fuzziness to the respective Southern borderlands. Modern Romania and Yugoslavia found themselves within territories which had been under Habsburg rule until 1918, and simply allotting them to "South-Eastern" Europe carried the danger of being ignorant to one of the many examples of cultural diversity in Central/ South Eastern Europe.

Therefore, the treatment of East Central Europe – a term we use interchangeably with the ten new member states of the European Union[1] – within a borderline framework bears special significance. Focusing on borders and the space these borders divide does not only add a new scientific perspective as is expressed in the new terms of a "topographical" or "spatial turn" (respectively, Weigel 2002; Rumford 2006: 166). Rediscovering the space of Central Eastern Europe is also an examination of open or tacit prejudices by political actors, populations, and among them scholars. They do not necessarily have to belong to 'the West'. In a recent paper for the UN Population Division in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, two Polish authors do their best to confirm a derogative image of East Central Europe (Kaczmarczyk/Okólski 2005: 6). According to them, the region is marked by "relative economic and institutional backwardness (compared to the West); a relative abundance of labor; relative instability of state boundaries;

[1] Which are: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia (accession round of May 2004) as well as Bulgaria and Romania (EU entry: January 2007).

relative instability of an ethnic mix in the population". In themselves, these "historical factors" (ibid.) can of course hardly be denied. Much, however, depends on the point of reference. In the Habsburg Empire, both the openness of borders and ethnic diversity were rather seen as resources than as defects (Hobsbawm 1989). Also, a global comparative perspective on East Central Europe will readjust the all too general verdict of the region's backwardness.

The aim of the following paper is thus twofold. On the one hand, we try to map and make sense of migration flows into and out of the new EU member states and state reactions to them. On the other, we ask what these population movements can tell us about the image of East Central Europe as a borderland in the newly evolving European political order.

In order to reach these two aims, the borderland concept is referred to as a metaphoric entity. There is no firmly established definition. Rather, the term is used as an umbrella for a series of border related phenomena (Newman 2006: 181): the openness or closedness of borders, the interaction intensity across borders, the differential development on both sides of a border, the political and social handling of borders, in general border policies. Accordingly, the borderland question can not simply be reduced to the tension between open and securitized borders (Rumford 2006: 157).

Instead, borderlands are implicitly connected to a "double peripherality" (House 1980) which locates an area "in the geographic periphery of the country, in close proximity to the border, within which the residents of the region suffer from economic, social and political peripherality in terms of their economic status or their access to the power elites and decision-makers" (Newman 2006: 180). In that sense, the borderland concept falls into line with the popular image of East Central Europe as an underprivileged or bluntly backward region. It remains to be seen to what extent this blueprint is able to change with the process of European integration (Bort 2006).

The text is organized in the following way. In the next section, we present basic data on legal/work/family and asylum migration to East Central Europe and try to interpret these against the context of historic developments and transition challenges. Afterwards, we focus on state reactions to these migration flows with special attention to the interconnectivity of national policies and the process of European integration, notably on developments in the third pillar of the EU and with regard to the Schengen agreement. In the last section, we come back to the borderlands image of East Central Europe. In a tentative conclusion, we try to argue that the region is transforming from an outer to an inner borderland, turning the formerly peripheral region into a middle position, between an area with high migration pressure and the even more attractive migration target states in Western Europe. In the end then, East Central Europe should not be reduced to specific images originating in the West but be seen as a region with a specific status in the context of global migration flows.

2. Migration to and from East Central Europe

2.1. The background: transition challenges, historic legacies, and population setting

In accounts of contemporary history, Central Eastern Europe in the beginning of the 21st century serves as a transformational geographic region in several terms. First, it is far from consensual where the borders of Central Eastern Europe are to be determined. In some respects, the region is still accounted for as Eastern Europe because auf a common Slavic heritage which begins east of Germany, Austria, and Italy. Also alternative cultural categories play a role, for example the orthodox tradition or feelings of belonging to a non-Western European tradition. These distinctions do not subsume the entire region of Central Eastern Europe but rather introduce dividing lines within the territory between 'the West' on the one hand and 'Russia', as well as 'Turkey', on the other (e.g. Masaryk 1992 (1913)).

Apart from cultural institutions, long established socio-economic ascriptions have also started to crumble. This is the second point. Not even a decade ago, also an unsuspicious scholar like Andrew Janos did not hesitate to insist on the multidimensional "backwardness" of East Central Europe; what he meant were lower degrees of economic development, an extensive agrarian societal structure, clientelistic instead of 'Weberian' rational state administrations and an inferior infrastructure (Janos 2000). The lack of neutrality of the backwardness notion has already been discussed. There is another point, however – the perceived similarity or even homogeneity of the region. After Janos, the mainstream of communist studies has shifted towards the distinctions, not the similarities, of the cases concerned (East/Pontin 1997; Kitschelt u.a. 1999; Sakwa 1999). In the just cited literature, even the largely Moscow-led communist regimes are discussed according to their dissimilarities. Post-communist developments then lead into an even more heterogeneous landscape. Some post-communist states have seen extensive economic growth, others haven't. Some cases are characterized by elements of societal consensus and a consociational approach; others are the object of societal discontent or – in the 1990s – of ethnic wars. In societal terms, the mere declaration of a region called 'Central Eastern Europe' puts more questions on the table than there are answers (Ash 1999/2000; Schlögel 2000).

Third, political developments have challenged the idea of Central East European homogeneity. The major issue is, of course, European integration and the successive EU membership of most countries concerned. In 1998, the EU opened membership negotiations with five countries[2], putting pressure on neighboring countries this side of the Russian border. The first wave of Eastern enlargement in 2004 thus contained eight Central European States.[3] Bulgaria and Romania followed in 2007. Additionally, in 2000, the EU explicitly declared the Western Bal-

[2] Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia.

[3] Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

kan[4] a potential EU membership region and consecutively established associational rules which – at least in principle – differ from EU policy towards its other neighborhoods (Koopmann/Lequesne 2006).

Table 1: Population composition in East Central Europe

	(1) Total Population (=100.0%)	(2) Nationals	(3) Other EU Nationals	(4) Non-EU Nationals
Bulgaria (2001)	7,928,901	7903267 (99.7%)	3685 (0.0%)	15882 (0.2%)
Czech Republic (2007)	10,287,189	9990953 (97.1%)	102884 (1.0%)	193352 (1.9%)
Estonia (2006)	1,344,684*	1076458 (80.1%)	7067** (0.5%)	100729 (7.5%)
Hungary (2007)	10,066,158	9900128 (98.4%)	32970 (0.3%)	133060 (1.3%)
Latvia (2006)	2,294,590	1837832 (80.0%)	5490 (0.2%)	450996 (19.7%)
Lithuania (2006)	3,403,284	3370422 (99.0%)	1916 (0.1%)	30946 (0.9%)
Poland (2006)	38,125,479	38070596 (99.9%)	22677 (0.0%)	32206 (0.0%)
Romania (2006)	21,610,213	21584220 (99.9%)	n.a.	25993 (0.1%)
Slovak Republic (2006)	5,389,180	5363617 (99.5%)	14041 (0.3%)	11522 (0.2%)
Slovenia (2006)	2,003,358	1954390 (97.6%)	2540 (0.1%)	46428 (2.3%)

Source: European Migration Network (various publications, around 2008).[5]

* Number of total population- source Estonian Statistics. Because the Estonian Ministry of The Interior Population Registration Bureau provides data on the basis of valid residence permits and ID-cards (passports), the number of total population does not unify.

** Number of valid residence permits at the beginning of the year.

Both association and enlargement processes have strongly touched migration regimes between East, Southeast, East Central and Western Europe. Visa free travel

[4] Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, and (today) Montenegro.

[5] All sources: European Migration Network (2008), http:/emn.sarenet.es. There: Bulgaria National Report 2006, Annual Report on Asylum and Migration Statistics for the Czech Republic 2006, Estonian Migration and Asylum Statistics Report 2006, Annual Report on Asylum and Migration Statistics for Hungary (Reference Year: 2006), Annual Report on Asylum and Migration Statistics for Latvia (Reference Year: 2006), Lithuania. Annual Report 2004-05 Data, Annual Report on Asylum and Migration Statistics Poland (Reference Year: 2006), Romania Annual Report 2004-05 Data, Slovak Republic Annual Report 2004-05 Data, Slovenia Annual Report 2004-05 Data.

is one point, legal labor migration another.[6] Student mobility through the Socrates/Erasmus program has been extended beyond the EU border and today includes countries, who, in the long run are unlikely to become EU members.

As important as these threefold transition processes are, they have to be seen against developments and settings from before the post-communist period as well. The most important element consists in the late political nation-building in the region which is connected to the age of the Russian, Austrian-Habsburg and Ottoman Empires. Most nation states in the region were formed after 1918 only, and independence lasted only until the late 1930s.

Moreover, the breakup of Habsburg notably led to a patchwork of nationalities within the newly created states. Internal – and sometimes forced – migration within the Soviet Union augmented the size of Russian minorities in the Baltic States. As a result, in most East Central European states we know today of regions where a minority population outnumbers that of the titular nation (see Cumper/Wheatley 1999).[7] Within the region, different citizenship regimes influence the character of migration across borders. Notably Estonia and Latvia have introduced comparatively restrictive naturalization procedures for ethnic Russians (Poleshchuk 2003) whereas all other countries have by and large granted citizenship to their respective minorities.

Table 2: Overview on migration flows in new EU member states

	Total Population[8] (thousands)	Migrant Stock		Net migration (annual average, 2000-2005)	
		Number (thousands)	% of population	Number (thousands)	Net migration (rate per 1.000 population)
Bulgaria	7,726	104	1.3	-10	-1.0
Czech Republic	10,220	453	4.4	10	1.0
Estonia	1,330	202	15.2	-2	-1.5
Hungary	10,098	316	3.1	10	1.0
Latvia	2,307	449	19.5	-2	-1.0
Lithuania	3,431	165	4.8	-4	-1.2
Poland	38,530	703	1.8	-16	-0.4
Romania	21,711	133	0.6	-30	-1.4
Slovak Republic	5,401	124	2.3	1	0.2
Slovenia	1,967	167	8.5	2	1

Source: UN Report 'International Migration 2006'.

[6] There are a number of transition arrangements concerning the mobility of labor within the enlarged EU.

[7] Exceptions are Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

[8] Due to different data sources, the figures differ slightly from those in table 1.

The two background conditions which have just been described lead to peculiar population settings. First, the dissolution of Empires, and later, the breakup of historic artifacts like the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia led to numerous new states in the region. As table 1 shows, all but two of them have much less inhabitants than New York City. Citizenship policies are reflected in the fact that in Estonia and Latvia larger parts of the population do not have a regular citizenship of the titular state. However, these non-citizens are usually furnished with permanent residence permits which makes it hard to see them as migrants. In their case, the pertinent policy field consists in citizenship and integration policy and less in migration policy.

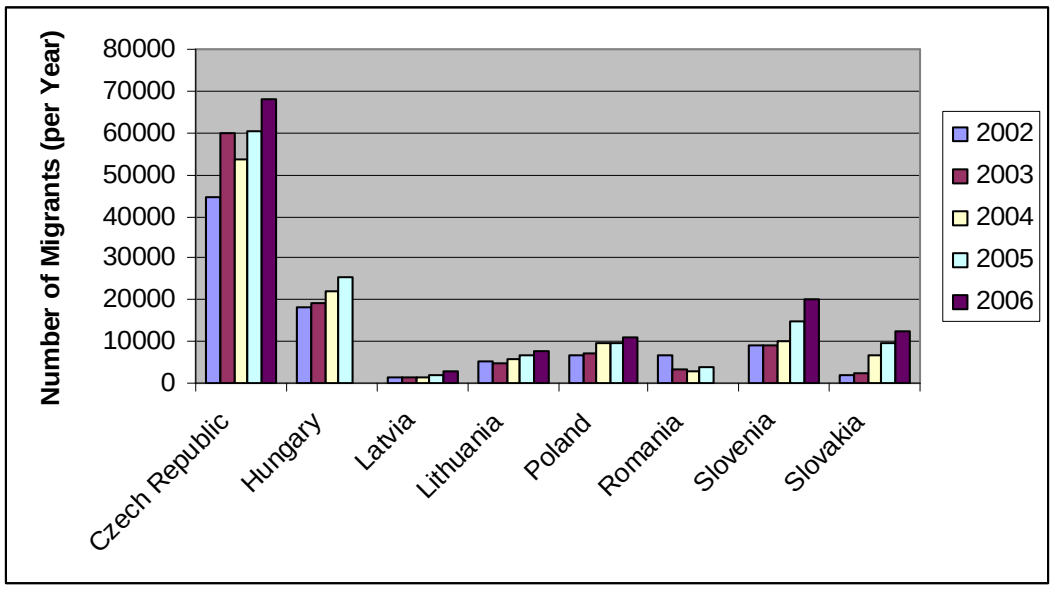
Not least because of their history of half a century of closed borders, most of the states in East Central Europe then are confronted with a comparatively low migration stock of usually well below 5% (table 2). If EU citizens within this migration stock are accounted for, the number is even lower. When discussing migration flows, we therefore have to take note of a phenomenon with an ultimately limited relevance for overall policy-making.

2.2 Migration Flows

Within the limited scope of migration, numbers are however rising. Graph 1 considers real migration flows and therefore views ethnic minorities – for example in the Baltics – as a virtual migration stock. If this caveat is made, the graph indicates that the big economic centers of Central Europe attract the highest degree of migration in the region. Although Poland and Romania are by territory and population the largest countries of the region, they attract very limited numbers of immigrants, often well below 10.000 per year. In contrast, the Czech Republic and Hungary with their capitals Prague and Budapest draw in more relevant numbers. As we know from other sources (Salt 2005: 10), most of these are migrant workers and do not belong to potential other categories like family, student, or asylum migration. This is highly plausible as the Prague, Bratislava and Budapest regions are the only ones in the new EU member countries which are not objects of aid by EU structural funds.[9] The growing economic attractiveness of the region, fuelled by an investment climate in anticipation of the European Common Market, is also reflected in growing numbers of migration from year to year. Except for Romania – the poorest economy of the region – this tendency holds in every new EU member state.

[9] See http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/atlas2007/index_en.htm; accessed 8.10.2009.

Graph 1: Migration to New EU Member States



Sources: European Migration Network (see table 1).

Migration flows into economically prosperous regions are not very surprising. Still, they deserve a second look in the case of East Central Europe. As a region which is historically marked by agrarianism, internal center/periphery relations are marked by big differences. During the transformation, and despite the beginning of the flow of EU structural funds a few years ago, disparities within East Central Europe have grown (EBRD 2003; Lippert/Umbach 2005). Accordingly, migration does not only take place by foreigners in the big centers and capitals. There is a corresponding domestic migration and, moreover, a considerable emigration out of some countries. Graph 2 shows that the three Baltic States as well as Bulgaria, Poland, Romania have been confronted with negative migration flows in recent years.

Therefore, we have to account for a clear distinction between the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia on the one hand and the Baltic States plus Bulgaria and Romania on the other (in Poland and Slovakia immigration and emigration flows are by and large balanced). Due to a mixture of domestic transition hardships and attenuating hurdles for emigration into Western Europe, the latter have to be characterized as emigration societies. The connection to economic potential is almost completely counter-intuitive – the higher average growth during the years 2000-2005, the lower the migration rate (again, see graph 2).

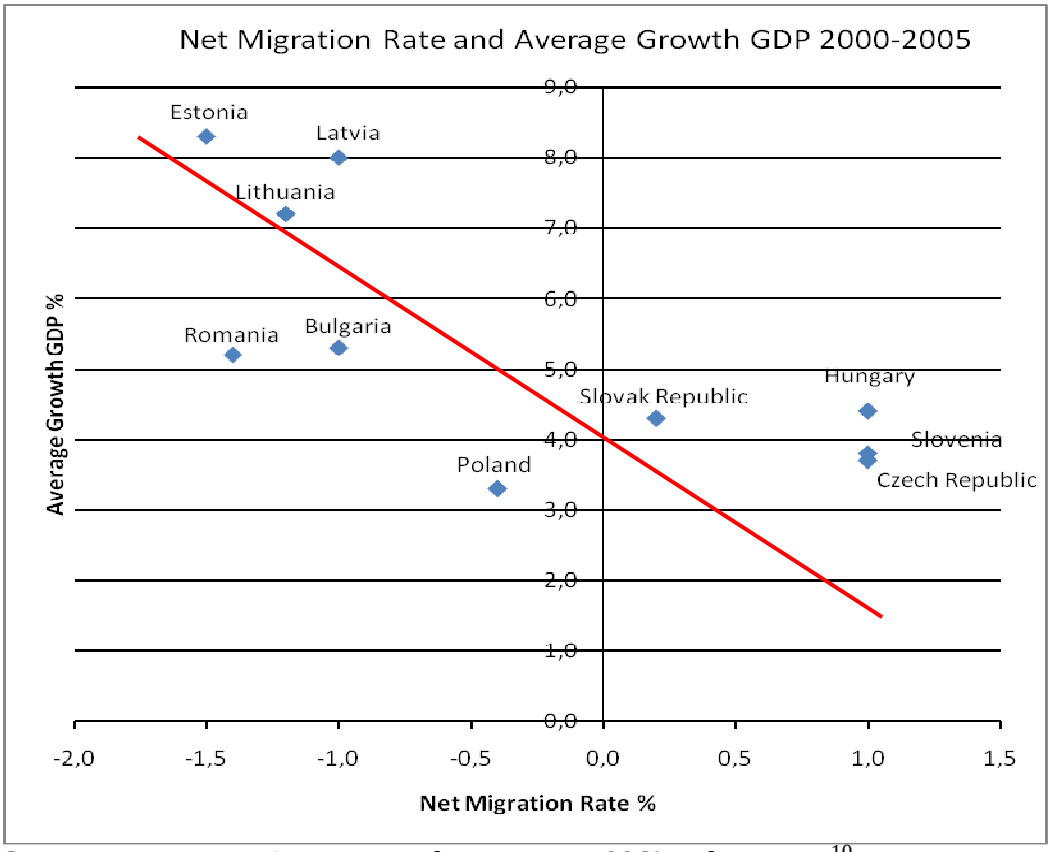
One explanation for the unexpected relation consists in differing absolute economic power. If we do not take into account growth rates but GDP levels, we find relativity wealthy countries – Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia (for the data, see EBRD 2008) – are faced with net immigration.

Another explanation can be found in an element of borderland regions which adds another dimension of peripherality to the two ones conceptualized by House (1980, see above). Peripherality does not only relate to the difference between a

border region and a prosperous center. Also the borderland itself is structured in a patchwork-like arrangement and offers significant disparities. Well developing knots of social and economic activity are surrounded by underdeveloped and therefore remote regions.

One reason consists in the relative artificiality of borders in Central Eastern Europe. Some economic magnets are not situated in a historic border region. For example, Bratislava is located some 60km from Vienna and has thus developed complementary to Vienna, the capital of the Hapsburg Empire. Nor its location in Czechoslovakia since 1918, nor even the completely closed border after 1945, have led to a complete meltdown of economic and social capital of one of the main economic hotspots of contemporary Central Europe. But we also find another pattern, namely towns or regions prospering because of their proximity to the border. One example would be Riga, one of the major ports for Russian exports. Another is the authors' university town of Frankfurt/Oder which receives an enormous input of social resources because of its perceived bridge function in German-Polish relations (Rottenburg 1997; Schlögel 2002). In both cases, the named towns can by far not be classified as wealthy as Bratislava or Prague. Still, they stand out in comparison to their local neighborhoods.

Graph 2: The uncoupling of domestic growth and migration flows



Sources: UN Report 'International Migration 2006' and Eurostat[10].

[10] See http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=de&pcode=tsieb020 (Accessed 18.09.2009).

Table 3: Legal Migration to New Member States from Non-EU Nationals

	(1) Total population	(4) Non-EU Nationals	Country of Origin; Total group size; (% of Non-EU-Nationals)		
			1	2	3
Bulgaria (2001)	7928901	15882 (0.2%)	Russia 9427 (59.4%)	Ukraine 2283 (24.2%)	Armenia 1649 (10.4%)
Czech Republic (2007)	10287189	193352 (1.9%)	Ukraine 86739 (44.9%)	Vietnam 38454 (19.9%)	Russia 17216 (8.9%)
Estonia (2006)	1344684*	236729 (17.6%)	Citizenship not determined 136000 (57.4%)	Russia 93027 (39.3%)	Ukraine 4443 (1.9%)
Hungary (2007)	10066158	133060 (1.3%)	Romania 66951 (50.3%)	Ukraine 15866 (11.9%)	Serbia and Montenegro 12638 (9.5%)
Latvia (2006)	2294590	450996 (19.7%)	Citizenship not determined 418668 (92.8%)	Russia 25353 (5.6%)	Ukraine 2621 (0.6%)
Lithuania (2006)	3403284	30946 (0.9%)	Russia 14177 (45.8%)	Citizenship not determined 8615 (27.8%)	Belarus 3714 (12.0%)
Poland (2006)	38125479	32206 (0.0%)	Ukraine 5182 (16.1%)	Russia 3291 (10.2%)	Vietnam 1906 (5.9%)
Romania (2006)	21610213	25993 (0.1%)	Moldova 5459 (21.0%)	Turkey 2188 (8.4%)	China 1898 (7.3%)
Slovakia (2006)	5389180	11522 (0.2%)	Ukraine 3703 (32.1%)	Russia 1246 (10.8%)	Vietnam 848 (7.4%)
Slovenia (2006)	2003358	46428 (2.3%)	Bosnia and Herzegov. 21943 (47.3%)	Serbia and Montenegro 9279 (20.0%)	Croatia 6955 (15.0%)

Source: European Migration Network (various publications, 2008).

* Number of total population- source Estonian Statistics Because of the Estonian Ministry of The Interior Population Registration Bureau provides data on the bases of valid residence permits and ID-cards (passports), the number of total population does not unify

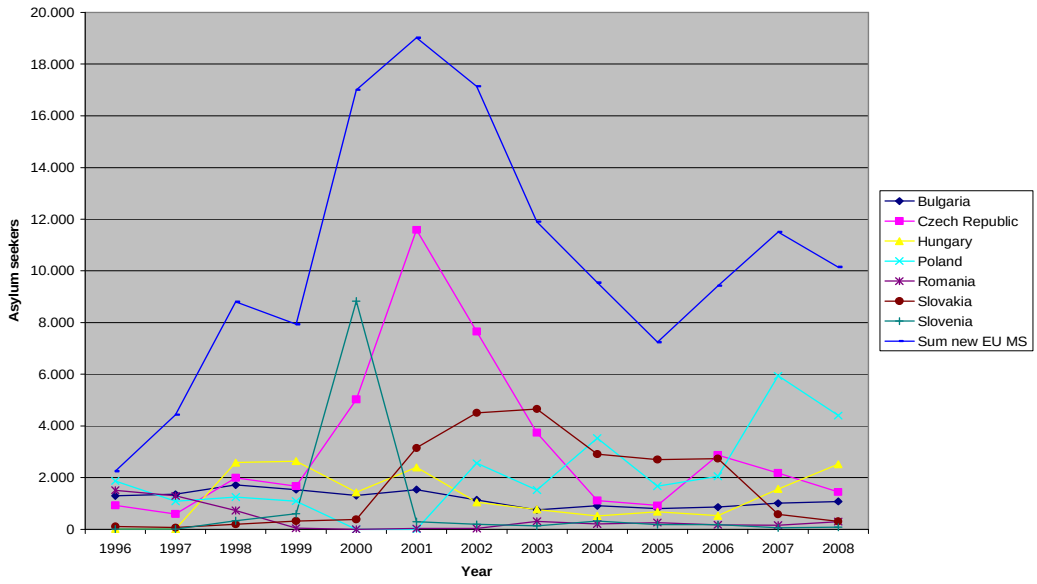
** Number of valid residence permits at the beginning of the year

It must be noted that the migration flows presented in graph 2 present net figures. Regardless of the net balance, every country in East Central Europe is confronted with immigration. Since the next section will take a look at state responses to this immigration, it is useful to analyze the origin of major migrant groups. Table 3 does so in concentrating on non-EU migration which is today the only migration that national immigration policies can relate to (of course, migration within the

EU is part of the four freedoms of the common market and can therefore float freely).

The evolving patterns hint into two directions. First, we find major elements of post-communist heritage in the composition of migration. The most important group of non-EU migrants to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are Russians; this goes beyond the mere presence of Russian minorities in all Baltic States. In the end, it depends on how sympathetic one is to either official Russian or Estonian/ Latvian positions on how to interpret the large number of persons without official citizenship. Russian foreign policy highly criticizes the alleged injury of citizenship rights to an ethnic minority whereas Estonian and Latvian officials insisted on the non-legitimate influx of ethnic Russians during Soviet occupation (Poleshchuk 2003). A related but not identical point is migration of Russian or other post-Soviet citizens into and out of the Baltic States. Data we have from Lithuania indicates that a good proportion of the migration is family related migration (Salt 2005: 10); an element which should be still stronger in Estonia and Latvia, where the Russian minorities are much more important.

Graph 3: Asylum seekers in new EU member states[11]



Source: UNHCR Statistical Yearbooks 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008.[12]

However, Russians in the Baltic States are not the only issue. Also the significant weight of Romanians in Hungary hints to a historic pattern as large parts of today's Romania were part of Hungary before the Treaty of Trianon (1920). The migration from several successor states of Yugoslavia into Slovenia falls under similar terms. Also, the migration of Vietnamese people into the Czech and Slo-

[11] The sum refers to all 10 new EU member states from East Central Europe.

[12] http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a0174156.html (access: 22.09.2009).

vak Republics has roots in international division of labor organized within the Soviet bloc.

Second, a typical pattern of asymmetric migration relations can be observed. Ukrainian migration notably in the economically richer countries of the region – Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia – is a phenomenon similar to the migration of Mexicans into the USA. Like in other countries of the EU, Ukrainian labor migrants can be found in the hotel and restaurant sector, in formal and informal health care, in the construction and cleaning businesses as well as in private home-related employment (Chindea u.a. 2008: 20-24). The point has already been alluded to – certain regions of Central Eastern Europe are in the process of losing their peripheral character and are turning into migration targets. With other words, the periphery is developing socio-economic pull factors for migration.

This finding is also reflected in a further element, namely asylum migration. During the association and enlargement processes with the EU, East Central European states undertook significant steps towards becoming part of the inner-EU visa and asylum regime (see next section). This basically means that the region has turned from a relatively pure transit region of refugees to harbor docks. Therefore, in most countries, the number of asylum seekers has generally been rising during the last two decades (see graph 3). Again, two important developments can be discerned. One is the vulnerability to major international crises, for example the wars in Kosovo (1999) and Iraq (2001). Figures explode throughout the region during both these conflicts, and again the richer countries are more attractive than, for example Bulgaria and Romania, which are placed on important migration routes. The second is the continuing relevance of the region for migrants around and after EU enlargement. Here, Poland as a classic border region to the new periphery of Eastern Europe comes into focus; the Bug River takes over the role the Oder River between Poland and Germany played during the 1990s.

3. Migration policies in East Central Europe

What do we expect the migration policies of countries in East Central Europe to look like? The previous section has shown that the region is marked by considerable heterogeneity, notably with regard to long-term historic experiences and to economic potential. While it seems plausible that theses factors influence both the scope and the character of migration to East Central Europe, it is hardly convincing to attribute patterns of migration policy to these factors alone. Beyond the individual setting of each country case there are several context factors which make similarities between East Central European migration policies highly probable. This section tries to take stock of them.

3.1 Introducing homogeneity: the influence of transformation and European integration

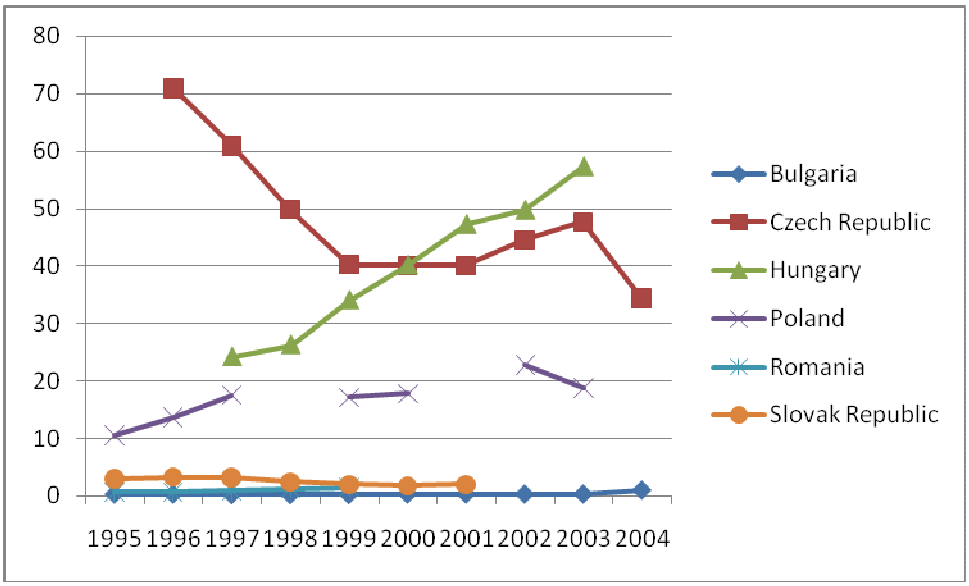
With regard to migration and migration related political reactions, the most basic political development consisted in a series of abrupt border openings between early 1989 and late 1991. We remember pictures of GDR citizens desperately trying to leave their country even until today. Changes in border regimes of other USSR satellite states were less spectacular but of similar importance. The Round Table in Poland started in February 1989, leading to a non-communist government and liberalized travel opportunities later in the year. Hungary demilitarized its border during the summer of 1989. Latecomers in this respect were the Baltic States which could not escape the Soviet – and particularly closed – border regime until after its collapse between August and December 1991.

All border openings set free a considerable emigration potential (Oswald 2007: 143-147). Because of the region's historical disadvantage in socio-economic terms, emigration to Western Europe and the United States had taken place long before Communism. Consequently, there existed a retained emigration potential beyond the hardships of post-communist transition.[13] The resulting family migration since 1989/91 is to be seen as a multi-directional flow. There is migration in at least two directions, and few movements are seen as final decisions. All this is in line with our general knowledge of late-modern migration – neither emigration nor immigration are necessarily of permanent nature, and processes are rather marked by networks and transnational social spaces than by unidirectional vectors and completely segmented societal groups (Schiffauer 2006).

Another implication of transition consists in the diverse structure of transition economies. The point, which has already been touched upon, can be further clarified by looking at labor migration into transformation states (graph 4). It shows the attractiveness of dynamic economic environments even in phase of rising unemployment in the migration target country. New areas of economic activity demand qualifications which are not necessarily present in a post-communist environment. Therefore, even transition countries during the recession phase are in need of a labor immigration policy for highly skilled workers. As graph 4 indicates, this is of special relevance for those countries with a relatively high influx of foreign capital – the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland were the relevant cases in the early phase of transition (see, for example, EBRD 1999). After EU enlargement became a firm expectation, foreign investment rose considerably in all new EU member states (EBRD 2008).

[13] During a semi-private meeting in 2004, then-president of Poland Aleksander Kwaśniewski expressed the view that there are „in fact 50 million Poles – 40 million on native soil and 10 million in the USA". In the same meeting, Kwaśniewski wondered if Warsaw or Chicago should be seen as the "real capital of Poland".

Graph 4: Inflows of foreign labor into selected European countries, 1995-2004 (in thousands)



Source: Salt (2006: 56).

When the perspective of European integration started to become real for East Central European countries in the second half of the 1990s, the idea of individual immigration policies became accompanied by a frame of pan-European regimes. Indeed we have to think in several dimensions as the EU politics were (and to some degree still are) highly fragmented in the first decade after the Maastricht Treaty of 1991.

The first arena concerns labor migration. In the EC Treaty, the ability to work in other EU member states was (and is) anchored as one of the four famous 'freedoms' of goods, persons, capital and services. In practice however, the implementation of the personal movement freedom remains perforated even today, mainly because labor market policy remains in the competency of member states. With regard to the labor force of East Central European States, the accession treaties introduced a number of transitional rules. Mainly, they refer to restrictions to low skilled labor and services for up to seven years after enlargement.[14] Many states of the EU-15 opted for an early end to the transitional provisions after the Commission offered evidence that they had produced net negative welfare effects on the side of the old member states.[15]

A second area concerns student migration. East Central European countries were included in the Erasmus lifelong learning program of the European Commission several years ago. According to data from the Commission, between 1% and 1.5%

[14] Information and further links can be found at http://europa.eu/legislation_sum-maries/internal_market/living_and_working_in_the_internal_market/free_movement_of_workers/l23013a_en.htm (accessed 30.09.2009).

[15] See http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0048:FIN:EN:HTML (accessed 30.09.2009).

of the student population of the following countries have migrated within the participant states during the academic year 2007/08: Czech Republic (1.54%), Latvia, Estonia, and Slovenia (1.03%).[16] While the information does not sound impressive at first, a second thought reveals a considerable potential for the establishment of a transnational European student body. Since the numbers refer to outgoing students by year, they have to be multiplied by years of study, which raises the figure of students having studied in other EU member states to around five to eight per cent, respectively. Additionally, not all international students at European universities are participants in the Erasmus program. For example, more than 12% of the students at German universities are non-nationals; some 9% are 'real' foreigners and another 3-4% are long-term German residents without citizenship, among them significant student bodies from Central and Eastern Europe.[17] Perhaps most important for these figures is that all cited numbers have been rising significantly during the recent decade.

A third type of migration which is exposed to Europeanization – a notion for the effect of EU policies on national political arenas (Börzel/Risse 2003) – is related to visa and asylum policy. The policy area has only gradually become a subject of the EC and EU treaties (see Müller 2003). At the same time, several institutions beyond the EU play a major role, for example the Schengen agreement, international police cooperation (Interpol and Europol) and the Council of Europe. Central European states have been successively included in all these institutions.

Of central relevance is the participation in the Schengen information system which allows for a common border regime. Contrary to earlier expectations, the new member states of East Central Europe were included rather rapidly into the Schengen structures. Internal border controls on land and sea routes were stopped shortly before Christmas 2007; passport control at airports ceased a few months later. Since then, nine of the twelve new EU member states of 2004/07 – namely the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia – are part of the Schengen area which now accounts for about 400 million EU citizens.[18] For the citizens of many third states, travelling to Estonia or Slovenia is therefore linked to a visa to the whole Schengen area.[19] In contrast, Bulgaria and Romania (and Cyprus) will join the visa regime at a later stage.

The interpretation patterns around these three developments are well known. On the one hand, the official praise that characterizes pertinent public relations material by the Commission seems well deserved as long as one examines EU internal developments. East Central Europe has beyond any doubt become closer to Western Europe; the iron curtain has been replaced by bridges, gateways, and

[16] See http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/table208.pdf (accessed 30.09.2009).

[17] See http://www.wissenschaft-weltoffen.de/daten/1/1/3 (accessed 30.09.2009).

[18] http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/07/619&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en (accessed 8.10.2009).

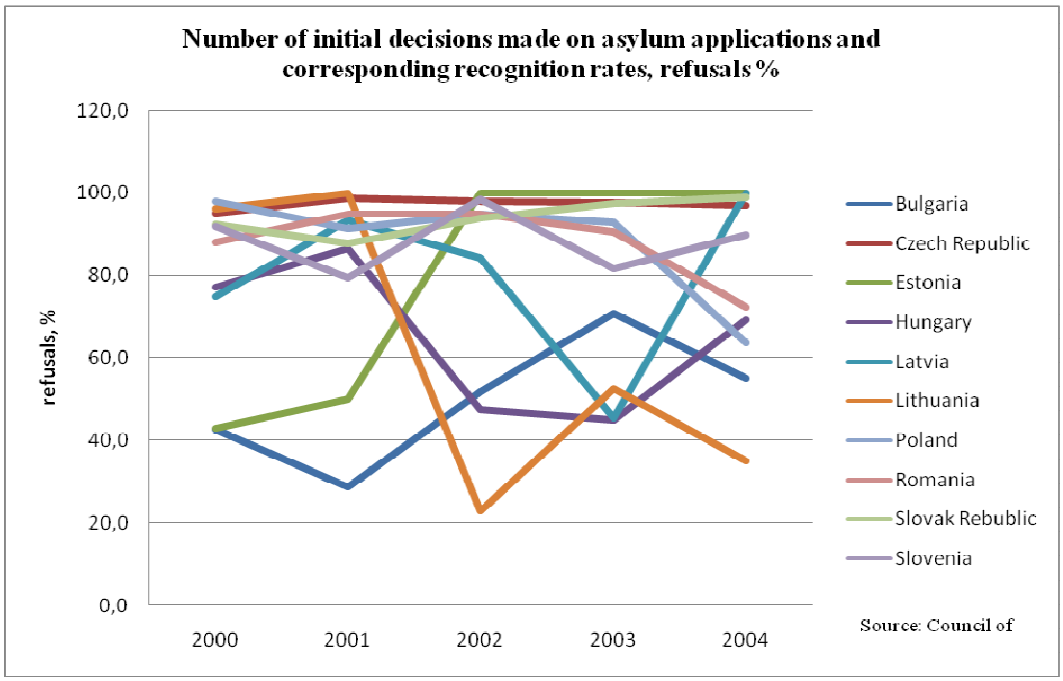
[19] At the moment (Fall 2009), two EU states (Ireland and Great Britain) are only very loosely linked to the Schengen regime. Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Romania only apply parts of the Schengen regime but not the information system. Thus, they will probably not be included into the common visa regime until 2011.

other means of transnational interaction. Already, value orientations and attitudinal openness of the citizens of East Central Europe are at similar levels as those in the long integrated countries of Western Europe (Laitin 2002).

On the other hand, the external management of the EU borders is more and more characterized by the mechanisms of securitization (see, for example, Jorgensen 1997). In that sense, the growing freedoms of internal movement induce an ever tougher and dispelling border regime which transforms questions of economic and social interaction into matters of (internal and external) security policy. Beyond normative aspects on how to judge a policy which produces a lot of human pain, the effect for East Central European states is ambivalent in another aspect. At the same time that these countries found their independence, their state autonomy and state capacity were heavily circumcised. This development has often been characterized as a process of alienation: "Hence they are forced to close borders and patrol the boundaries of Europe on account of external political pressure rather than in response to their own perceived needs" (Wallace 2002: 622).

While a more detailed description of migration and asylum policies of the countries of Central Eastern Europe will follow in the next subsection, it can already be stated here that empirical data to some extent rejects the assumption that Europeanization in the field of Freedom, Justice, and Security – as the EU now calls this policy-field officially – leads to a homogenization of asylum and visa policies. As graph 5 illustrates, the percentage of refusals of asylum applications differs widely between the new member states.

Graph 5: Decisions on asylum applications



Source: (Salt 2006: 59).

Further data also allows a preliminary statement on the specific impact of EU membership (as opposed to a general exposure to impulses from Europe). Table 4 sets up a relation between first instance decisions on asylum requests in 2003 – the last year before EU membership – and the first quarter of 2009 (the latest data available). There should be a homogeneity expectation. No big differences between the cases should be expected if EU level developments presumably determine the closedness or openness of a country. Also, degrees of closedness should become more similar during the course of EU membership if the securitization thesis applies.

Table 4: First instance decisions on asylum requests, first quarter 2009.

	Total number	Positive decisions	Rejections		2003 vs. 2009	
			Absolute numbers	%	2003 %*	Difference 2003-09
Bulgaria	n.a.	n.a.	65	n.a.	70.7%	n.a.
Czech Republic	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	97.7%	n.a.
Estonia	10	0	5	50.0%	100%	-50.0
Hungary	390	90	300	77.0%	44,9%	+31.5
Latvia	15	0	15	100.0%	45,5%	+54.5
Lithuania	70	30	40	57.1%	52,7%	+4.4
Poland	1,695	1,100	595	35.1%	92,9%	-57.8
Romania	205	40	165	80,5%	90,5%	-10.0
Slovak Republic	45	35	10	22.2%	97,5%	-75.3
Slovenia	45	0	45	100.0%	81,7%	+18.3

* Data is taken from graph 5.

Source: (Albertinelli/Juchno 2009: 7).

The data in table 4 seem to imply that the assumption is wrong. There are important differences between the new member states on how they handle the asylum issue, be there a growing basis for a common asylum policy or not. And, as the examples of Estonia, Poland and Slovakia show, differences between the cases may even grow over time. All three cases' position on the long Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian borders would make them clear cases for a decrease of openness for asylum seekers. Instead, the data from graph 5 and table 4 indicate that the asylum policies of those countries seemingly have become more permissive over time.

3.2. Patterns of migration policy

Shortly after the breakdown of the Soviet Union most of the newly independent states manifested their will to join the European Union, leading to political adjustments in order to fulfill the membership criteria laid down at the Copenhagen summit in 1993. In the aftermath of negotiation openings in 1997, the prospective member states not only had to meet the economic and political criteria but also to adapt domestic legislation to the European *acquis communautaire*. Thus, bringing in-line domestic laws with European Union requirements was part of the agenda, including also policies on immigration[20]. Hence, significant EU influence on domestic decision-making should be expected.

Migration policies in many Central and Eastern European Countries have been, and to some extend still are, described as comparatively incoherent, lacking clearly defined aims and objectives (cf. Drbohlav 2003: 213; Alscher 2008: 2). However, in light of the previous sections and in view of the aforementioned changes in the international context, at least two tendencies should be expected. First, it can be assumed that migration policies in CEE countries eventually mirror the respective economic situation. Second, an increasing interest in managing illegal migration may well be expected. Both could be read as a consequence of dealing with socio-economic developments during and after transition, and the aim to become a member state of the European Union. The latter also is likely to have forced East Central European countries to adopt specific measures in the field of border controls, asylum and visa policies. If these expectations are reflected in the policies adopted, the image of East Central Europe as borderland and the notions associated with the region as a European borderland region are very likely to be subject to a significant process of transformation (see below).

In order to map the field, we need to distinguish between several dimensions of migration policy. First, the prospects of citizenship and naturalization will be considered, followed by a paragraph on Visa and Asylum Policies. In a next step we look at policies on illegal migration as well as related spheres of activity like border control and readmission. The last section on Labor Migration Policies is included as we expect the policies to reflect the economic situation of the respective state. In general, we aim not at giving a detailed overview of each policy in every single state, but rather to filter out general tendencies.

[20] Concerning migration policies, competences situated on supranational level are first and foremost motivated by the removal of internal borders, resulting in the need for common policies regulating Asylum and Visa. Thus, migration policy in this context has to be understood also in the context of internal security and managing effectively EU-external borders (cf. Lavenex 2009). Recently, discussions about what in EU jargon is called the external dimension of Justice and Home Affairs are gaining weight (on the external dimension of Justice and Home Affairs see Wolff/Wichmann/Mounier 2009) Concerning labor migration the EU has not yet defined common standards; exceptions are two directives on admission of students and researchers respectively (Lavenex 2009: 5).

3.2.1 Citizenship and Naturalization – refocusing the nation

In recent years most of CEE countries modified legislation on citizenship and residence permits, on the whole seeming to reflect a trend towards establishing stricter measures. For instance, in the Czech Republic a language test for permanent residence applicants has been introduced in 2007 (OECD 2008: 236). Once having lived in the country for five years under permitted permanent residence status (and ten years holding a visa before) immigrants can apply for naturalization. Quicker access to permanent residence permits is granted to high skilled workers, who consequently can apply for naturalization more rapidly (Slykalikova 2005: 266, 270). Foreigners applying for naturalization in Estonia have inter alia to fulfill the requirement of previous permanent residence and to prove their basic knowledge of Estonian language and constitution (European Migration Network 2008c: 28ff.).

For being eligible for Lithuanian citizenship applicants are required to have held a permanent residence permit for ten years, to pass a language test and to verify financial means (Brake 2007: 3). In Poland previous temporal residence of five years as well as sufficient financial means are required in order to be qualified for permanent residence since 2003 (Alscher 2008: 4). Naturalization policies in the Slovak Republic are turning out to be stricter, by raising the required period of continuous residence and testing knowledge skills more strictly (OECD 2008: 276). In the case of Romania, it is interesting to note that an exception in the naturalization procedure is granted to entrepreneurs investing to a significant degree in Romania. Usually, the period one has to live in the country before being allowed to apply for citizenship is eight years, in their case the required time span can be shortened (Horvath 2007: 5). This measure presumably points to the tendency to connect migration policy to the countries' economic development.

Additionally, many CEE countries are encouraging return migration or at least have done so in recent years. The Czech Republic conducted a program to encourage the return of ethnic Czechs by offering incentives like financial assistance for accommodation as well as permanent residence permits between 1995 and 2001 (Slykalikova 2005: 265). Similarly, Hungary, where ethnic Hungarians returning from the neighborhood account for the largest part of immigrants (European Migration Network 2008a: 11), introduced legislation facilitating the naturalization of ethnic Hungarians from neighboring countries (OECD 2008: 248). Return migration is increasing also in Romania, along with the encouragement of return migration being a declared goal of Romanian migration policy (Horvath 2007: 8; OECD 2008: 274). The law on repatriation adopted in 2002 regulates return migration to Poland and defines the criteria to be fulfilled. Since 2008 the *Karta Polaka* grants certain advantages like access to the labor market without holding a work permit to ethnic Poles who are returning from successor States of the Soviet Union (Alscher 2008: 2f.).

3.2.2 Visa and Asylum – adaptation to the European framework

After the breakdown of the Soviet Union the respective policies on visa and asylum somewhat differed between the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. For example, while the Czech Republic was characterized by open borders (Slykalikova 2005: 265), Lithuanian immigration policy has been quite restrictive, especially vis-à-vis citizens coming from the former Soviet Union. The intention of this restrictiveness is mainly seen in the aim to foster independence (Brake 2007: 4). In the Czech Republic asylum policy became more restrictive after the Balkan wars, moreover 'Asylum Tourism' caused by the open borders led to a policy-shift (Slykalikova 2005: 257, 265). Until the adoption and entry into force (1997 and 1998 respectively) of the First Hungarian Asylum Act, Hungary solely accepted refugees from European countries (European Migration Network 2008a: 1). With Latvia ratifying the Geneva Conventions in July 1997 all of the new member states of the European Union are now contracting parties.[21]

Accession to the European Union implied the adaptation of national law to the *acquis communautaire* in the area of asylum. Subsequent changes were dependant on existing legislation and the fit or misfit with EU requirements. Most new member states had to introduce a further category into asylum legislation, which implies tolerating refugees without accepting them for asylum status (yet) but neither expulsing them to their respective countries of origin.[22]

Furthermore, new member states are requested to implement technologies as the Eurodac system for comparing fingerprints of asylum seekers and illegal migrants employed within the European Union.[23] Estonia, for example, regulated the fingerprint system in 2006 (European Migration Network 2008c: 9). Additionally, as they form the fringe area of the European Union, several new member states can be expected to increasingly become target states of asylum seekers and refugees. According to Council Regulation (EC) No. 343/2003 responsibility for Asylum applications lies in the hands of the member state an asylum seeker enters first. Owing to this provision and the anticipated rise in the number of refugees and asylum seekers Romania has built up new accommodation centers for asylum applicants (Horvath 2007: 6).

Similarly, visa policy had to be adapted to the European regulatory framework, not least since the entry into the Schengen zone. In the context of EU accession most of the new member states had to introduce visa requirements, often affecting citizens of neighboring countries who were previously not subject to visa re-

[21] Hungary ratified in 1989, followed by Poland and Romania in 1991, Slovenia (1992), Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic (1993) and finally Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (1997) (See: www.unhcr.at/fileadmin/unhcr_data/pdfs/rechtsinformationen/1_International/1_Voelkerrechtliche_Dokumente/01_GFK/04_Liste_der_Vertragsstaaten.pdf).

[22] For instance, Estonia introduced temporary protection in 2006 (European_Migration_Network 2008c: 4), Poland established an equivalent category in 2003 (Brake 2007: 6), the Slovak Republic in 2007 (OECD 2008: 276).

[23] On Eurodac system see http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/l33081_en.htm.

quirements. For example, in order to be in-line with the negative Schengen list Bulgaria had to finalize visa-free agreements with e.g. Georgia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine (European Migration Network 2008b: 9). Likewise, Poland introduced visa requirements for the citizens of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine inter alia and had to finalize agreements on facilitated border crossing (Piorko/Sie Dhian No 2003: 194). The visa-free travel between the Slovak Republic and Ukraine came to an end in June 2000, when the Slovak Republic introduced visa requirements in order to comply with the Schengen requirements (ibid.: 195). Taking a closer look at the relationship between Romania and Moldova, implications of the obligation to introduce visa requirements become even more obvious: In the context of EU-accession Romania established visa for Moldovan citizens, while previously a mobility agreement (coming close to repatriation in the case of Romanian descendents) had been in place[24] (Horvath 2007: 4f.).

Due to its geographical position as a Russian exclave surrounded by EU territory, Kaliningrad remains an extraordinary case. During accession negotiations Russia insisted on visa-free access to the Russian territory, a position that lead to conflicts between Russia and the European Union (Brake 2007: 7). Although facilitated transit regulations[25] are in place now, the issue points to the implications that visa and transit provisions may well have for the conceptualization of borderlands.

On the other side, visa facilitations or even the relinquishment of visa requirements can also be observed. One example would be Poland, where seasonal workers from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine can be employed in certain sectors without requiring a visa since 2007 (OECD 2008: 270).

3.2.3 Illegal Migration, Border control and Readmission – "prevention first!"

It was mainly in the context of accession to the European Union and the Schengen Area that the need to tighten controls at the eastern borders increased, thus capacities to effectively guard EU external borders had to be set up.[26] Almost all new member states seem to be primarily engaged with bringing legislation in-line with Schengen requirements, strengthening border controls and reinforcing measures to

[24] Hence, in 2007 Moldovan applications for Romanian citizenship increased significantly (Horvath 2007: 5).

[25] The Facilitated Travel Document allows for multiple border crossings through Lithuania, the Facilitated Railway Travel Document for return journeys. The latter is free of charge, the former accounts for five euro (www.delrus.ec.europa.eu/en/p_575.htm).

[26] The Tampere European Council decided to create an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ) in 1999 (cf. European Council (1999) including free movement of people within the Union and measures to control the external border. In 1999 a work program has been elaborated and transposed by 2004 (for an evaluation see European Commission 2004). In the follow-up the Hague Program set out ten priorities of action, including migration management and external border control (cf. European Commission 2005).

prevent illegal migration.[27] For instance, during the accession negotiations with Poland, the issue of border control was pivotal and financial means from the PHARE program were allocated to Poland in order to strengthen border controls (Alscher 2008: 7). Thus, overall controls are becoming stricter not only driven by the intention to prevent illegal migration but also to combat cross-border crimes.[28]

For the purpose of fighting against illegal migration, efforts are being made to enhance cooperation with third countries. Within the neighborhood policy framework, Lithuania and Austria are assisting Ukraine on legislative reforms in the ambit of migration (Brake 2007: 6). However, the measures introduced not only focus on preventing illegal migration by enhancing border protection but also on dealing with illegal migrants already having entered the country. In 2002, Lithuania augmented the fines for illegal entry, exit and transit, including sanctions for people supporting illegal stay, e.g. by providing work or accommodation (ibid.). Similarly, in Poland besides sanctions, which can be imposed on both employers and employees, foreigners working illegally run the risk of expulsion.

Lithuanian readmission agreements have been concluded with several countries like Moldova or Ukraine (Brake 2007: 6). In this context a significant influence of European pressure on the one hand and the will to enter of the prospective member states on the other is observable. So it was demanded of Poland that it strengthen readmission and expulsion measures during accession negotiations (Piorko/Sie Dhian No 2003: 184).

3.2.4 Labor Migration – from emigration to immigration policy

Transition and accession to the European Union not only changed the political environment but also the economic context. Most East and Central European countries had been experiencing economic growth until the world economic crisis broke out in late 2008 (see above). Thus, it is very likely that these changes are reflected in the respective migration policies.

The Czech Republic's policy after the breakdown of Soviet Union was characterized by the opening of borders to all asylum applicants and immigrants seeking to enter the country (Slykalikova 2005: 264) and the institutional and legislative set-up. After a quite successful economic transition, the country entered an era of economic imbalances around 1997, leading to a more severe migration policy (Drbohlav 2003). In 2003, migration policy in general turned into a more active approach, characterized by encouraging legal immigration mainly of skilled labor while striving to contain illegal migration. In this context, the pilot project "Active Immigration Policy" was launched in 2003. Initially including citizens from Bulgaria, Croatia and Kazakhstan, it has been extended to Belarus and Moldova as of

[27] On border controls see for instance Slykalikova (2005: 257) for Czech Republic, Brake (2007: 6) for Lithuania, Alscher (2008: 6) for Poland and Horvath (2007: 3) for Romania.

[28] For instance, combating organized crime and terrorism formed important motivations to include the AFSJ into European policies, see (Piorko/Sie Dhian No 2003: 187). The increasing significance is also observable in the Lisbon Treaty.

October 2004. Foreigners included in the program have the right to apply for permanent residence after a shortened period compared to the regular application process. Even though the declared aim of the program is to reduce illegal migration on the one hand and improve the demographic situation on the other (Slykalikova 2005: 265), the criteria prospective immigrants have to fulfill (qualification and integration potential) suggest that there are also economic considerations coming into play.

Similar patterns can be observed in Poland, where labor migration in agriculture was facilitated for temporal and seasonal workers from Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine in 2006. Already in 2004, accession to the labor market has been facilitated for specified groups like spouses of Poles. Nevertheless, the overall regulations for access to the labor market are relatively strict (Alscher 2008: 3f.), the protection of Polish workers being the superior aim. Along with this, in a so-called labor-market-test, employers have to prove that they have tried to engage a Polish or EU citizen before having recruited a third state national (Kicinger/Kloc-Nowak 2008: 218f.).

Likewise, Hungary seems to concentrate primarily on the protection of the national labor market and the promotion of economic development. As in the case of Poland, employers aspiring to recruit foreign workers have to demonstrate their previous intent to engage nationals. Moreover, facilitated work permits can be issued in certain sectors in case of labor shortages (Hars/Sik 2008: 108, 110). Lithuania as well is developing measures aimed at creating more relaxed immigration requirements for qualified migrants as well as in shortage sectors since 2006. Yet, the main aim seems to be to reduce net migration and for that purpose to promote return migration (OECD 2008: 258). Within the "National Migration Plan", adopted in 2004, Romania, amidst other concerns, is trying to manage labor migration. Due to the lack of labor force in certain sectors (like construction, clothing industry), companies started to recruit foreign labor, an opening of the labor market can be observed as well (Horvath 2007: 3f.).

In line with European directives 2004/114/EC and 2005/71/EC (both applying immediately upon adoption) on the admission of third-country nationals as students and researchers, relaxations of the regular requirements to enter the country are in place. The Slovak Republic, for instance, introduced the provisions in 2007 (OECD 2008: 276).

3.2.5 Overall Assessment

The overview of the different types of migration policy has revealed a wide variety of migration measures in the new EU member states. Beyond the obvious differences, however, a few main trends seem to be evolving. They have to be interpreted within the general context of a (West) European policy oscillation "between measures of 'integration and legal immigration' and 'repression of illegal immigration'" (Pajnik 2007: 852). First, historic legacies appear to significantly impact on migration policies, especially in terms of return migration. Second, the increasing focus on labor market implications in migration policies – be they re-

strictive or not – indicates a shift in the self-concept of CEE countries. The new trend consists in being responsive to economic developments in general and to the labor market in particular. Third, the increasing fostering of border controls points to an altered understanding of migration policy, primarily seen as "migration management before aliens enter the country" (European Migration Network 2008b: 10); a tendency mirroring the western model.

4. Outlook: Rethinking the borderlands character of Central Eastern Europe

Reflecting on borderlands is an exercise in many dimensions. Of the available distinctions and categorizations, we refer to a recent one by David Newman (Newman 2006). In a recent article, he identified four different foci of border studies: the focus a) on demarcation and delimitation, b) on binary distinctions versus networks, c) on the aspect of border crossing, and d) the identification of peripheral regions as frontiers or transition zones. In this last section, we will briefly discuss those four dimensions with regard to the 'traditional' perception of East Central Europe as a borderland.

a) Demarcation, or with other words the drawing of borders, is often seen as a phenomenon of the past. In the scientific sphere, the insights of structural linguistics (de Saussure, Foucault, Searle) led to the mainstream position that many real world phenomena are constructed. Whereas nations were widely regarded as firm entities during the 19th and 20th centuries, we today know that they can be seen as "invented" or "imagined" (Anderson 1983; Smith 1991). The process of invention does not completely depend on the activity of cultural entrepreneurs, but is closely connected to social developments and the context in which they occur (Gellner 1983). As a consequence, most authors in several scientific disciplines – like, for example, anthropology, sociology, or history – would only very reluctantly place processes of demarcation at the center of their interest.

   On the other hand, real-world developments of the early 21st century indicate that demarcation and border creation play a significant role for migration flows. East Central and South Eastern Europe are indeed particularly well suited world regions to illustrate the significance of border drawings. We are dealing with a region in which more than a dozen new states were created after 1989/1991;[29] many of them with the intention to halt migration developments that were not judged legitimate by majority populations. Furthermore, the process of European integration has, beyond any doubt,

[29] The Soviet Union fell apart into 15 new states (among them Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania). Czechoslovakia – a creation of 1918 – was peacefully and consensually divided into the Czech and Slovak Republics. Yugoslavia survived in the form of Serbia, but by today (2009) not only without Montenegro and Kosovo, but also without Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, and Slovenia.

built up new societal walls where state borders had started to lose a part of their significance. For example, the new EU border and particularly the Schengen regime have cut societal linkages with regard to family or work migration. Particularly Ukraine and all Yugoslav successor states, except for Slovenia, had to suffer from this development. Altogether therefore, the region of East Central Europe can serve as a primary example for the general trend of borderland studies to dismiss the category of demarcation as a "traditionalist or, at worst, (…) determinist" practice (Newman 2006: 174).

b) Should the borders East of East Central Europe be seen as binary distinctions or in the context of larger networks? Distinctions offered by Newman consist in "here-there, us-them, include-exclude, self-other, inside-outside" (Newman 2006: 176). Sections 2+3 of this text have shown that East Central Europe's position within such distinctions has changed in recent years. A traditionally remote European region has been redefined from an outer to an inner borderland of Greater Europe. Various instruments of identity creation – from European "culture capitals" over student exchange programs to an official fostering of language diversity in EU institutions – create signals of belonging. The border between inclusion and exclusion has been pushed eastwards: whereas waiting lines for obtaining a "European" visa were previously a phenomenon of West European embassies in Warsaw or Prague, the same is now the case in Moscow and Kiev.

   However, it is not completely clear yet if we will in the end be dealing with pure dislocation or with the evolution of a larger set of networks. The inclusion of many Ukrainians in the low skilled labor market of new member states may serve as one example to illustrate functional needs for social interaction across the new Eastern border. In the intellectual sphere, artists like the Ukrainian writer Yuri Andrukhovych or his Polish colleague Andrzej Stasiuk undertake major efforts to construct areas of inclusion that transgress the borders of the current EU. The great resonance they find beyond their national audiences shows that the delineation processes that began after the fall of the iron curtain are still under way.

c) The perception of border crossings is to be seen in a similar perspective. Are borders usually crossed into one direction, or do they rather serve as crossings into two (or more) directions? The experience of the Oder River between Germany and Poland may serve as an instructive example. During the cold war and the first subsequent years, the border – which mostly runs through the river – was usually identified as a major dividing line between East and West. Later, things changed completely. Linked to politically correct actions in order to facilitate German-Polish reconciliation, the Oder River is today seen as the opposite of a dividing line, namely a cultural construct linking historical landscapes (for example, see Rada 2009).

The same might happen to the Bug River, the Black Sea, or even the Bosporus.[30]

Accordingly, the different types of migrant border crossings at the edges of Europe are often interpreted in contradicting terms (Bort 2006: 193). On the one hand, the border divides local interaction. On the other, activities to resolve the practical difficulties created by the border may lead to intensified cooperation. One example beyond East Central Europe would be the Spanish enclaves in Morocco, Ceuta and Melilla. On the one hand, the fences and intense use of border surveillance technologies are a perfect example for the materialization of the 'fortress Europe'. On the other, increasing cooperation between Spain and Morocco can be observed, for instance in judicial issues concerning inter-ethnic marriages (Wolff 2007: 115). The point is reflected in those Schengen regulations which are designed for people from neighboring regions, which under certain circumstances are allowed to enter on daily basis mainly for work purposes (Ferrer-Gallardo 2008: 309). The example illustrates that it often depends on exogenous framing processes if a frontier is assessed by its dividing force or by elements of cross-border cooperation. Even extreme examples leave open space for contingent interpretation. Ceuta and Melilla may underline the fortress metaphor, but can at the same time be assessed as a territory with a semi-permeable or selectively open border (cf. Ferrer-Gallardo 2008: 318).

d) Lastly, we should not forget that East Central Europe continues to be a place of economic and political transition. As such, many societal borders have to be crossed in everyday life, and material frontiers between states appear within broader sets of obstacles to individuals. A borderland tradition may in such a context well develop into an asset – a mentality to cope with given problems by reaching out into areas beyond traditional action patterns. In that sense, the transformation from an outer to an inner borderland is not without risks. The flexibility of individuals to constantly react to unexpected developments may diminish. In some economic sectors, jobs in Germany have first been taken over by Polish migrants, then moved to Poland and then been taken over by Ukrainian migrants. A transition or borderland character is not inscribed to a region forever, and East Central Europe is undergoing a thorough image change. However, ascending out of an alleged 'backwardness' does not automatically lead to a social reality in which peripheral aspects do not exist any more. Rather, the perception of a region's "peripherality" (again, see House 1980) depends to a large extent on dominant frames in ever fluid interpretation patterns.

[30] The German-Turkish director Fatih Akin's movie „Crossing the bridge" (2006) might serve as an example.

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