

The contemporary migration and population situation in Poland on the background of the European Union

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Abstract

We are currently observing significant changes in the world's population. Until World War II, we could see a constant increase in population in various parts of the world. Currently, in the selected countries of the eastern part of the EU, the population is decreasing, e.g. in Poland or Romania. Demographic indicators (fertility rate, mortality rate, migration rate) are affected by economic and social conditions. Various *en masse* pro-natalist policies are ineffective. EU societies are focused on expectations other than parenthood. These changes will require new actions by state authorities in the area of demography.

Keywords: Demography, population, migration, refugees, repatriates

Współczesna sytuacja ludnościowa i migracyjna w Polsce na tle Unii Europejskiej

Streszczenie

Aktualnie zauważamy głębokie zmiany w populacji świata. Do II wojny światowej mogliśmy dostrzec ustawiczny wzrost liczby ludności w różnych częściach świata. Obecnie w wybranych państwach wschodniej części UE liczba ludności maleje, np. w Polsce lub Rumunii. Na wskaźniki demograficzne (współczynnik dzietności, współczynnik umieralności, współczynnik migracji) mają wpływ uwarunkowania ekonomiczne i społeczne. Różne polityki pronatalistyczne *en masse* są nieskuteczne. Społeczeństwa [państw] UE są skoncentrowane na innych oczekiwaniach niż macierzyństwo. Wspomniane zmiany będą wymagały nowych działań władz państwowych w obszarze demografii.

Słowa kluczowe: Demografia, populacja, migracja, uchodźcy, repatrianci

The changes in population processes in Europe that began in the 1960s were the result of profound cultural, social and economic transformations. The development of modern, efficient technologies widely used in industry resulted in a sharp increase in revenues in EEC countries. At that time individual assistance programs for citizens began to be developed. It was not supposed that the significant development and expansion of the sphere of responsibility of state institutions for the well-being of citizens would change many spheres of social life, create new cultural phenomena and would affect the economy of individual countries. From the perspective of five decades, we can assess these changes as positive. The standard of living of the population has clearly improved due to widespread health protection programs and pensions, the dissemination of education at higher levels and the availability of housing. Finally, social rescue activities in critical life situations played a significant role, when citizens could not cope with fulfilling their social roles on their own.

This article presents the characteristics of population processes in the world, in Europe and in Poland. The aim was to show the diversity of occurrences of individual changes over the time, but also to alarm what would most likely occur in Poland with some delay.

In the light of the statistics presented, differences in population processes can be noticed between the rich North and the poor South. These data confirm the relations between overpopulation and poverty known since ancient Greece, but at the same time in modern terms they alarm prediction of the growing pressure of migration.

The individual chapters of the article present the situation of the world's population in the historical context. The process of demographic changes in the European Union is also based on the historical data, and the individual demographic indicators are discussed. The next parts of the article describe the population situation in Poland.

The image of migration processes in the European Union and Poland is complementing the picture of processes occurring in changes in natural traffic. This is an extremely important issue, having a direct (and quick) impact on the structure of the population in the selected countries.

The subject of discussion in this article are demographic changes that currently shape the population situation in the individual countries, but the sources of these changes in the past have been indicated.

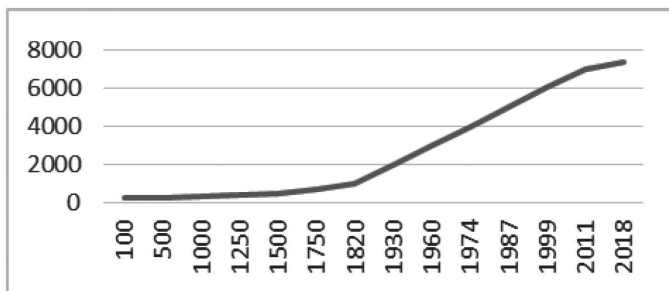
The discussion in this article is based on the existing sources, which are statistical summaries covering both changes in natural and spatial movement. In addition, the information obtained in the years 2004–2019 while performing the function of a member of the Council for Refugees and during meetings of the Government Population Council was used in a collective form, unpublished materials of the Department of Repatriation and Citizenship and the Department of Analysis and Migration Policy of the Ministry of Interior and Administration were also used to characterise individual phenomena in the aggregated statistical form.

Situation of population in the world

The structure of the world's population is shaped as a result of natural and territorial movements. Since the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century, there has been

a significant increase in population on the particular continents, which has attracted the attention of the researchers. However, scholars devoted attention to population issues already in ancient China, ancient Greece and the Roman Empire. In those days, the population constituted the strength of the state, its ability to develop faster and the protection of its own territory. The harsh conditions of the natural environment, the natural disasters (floods, fires, droughts), various diseases (epidemics) and constant wars have caused great havoc in the population.

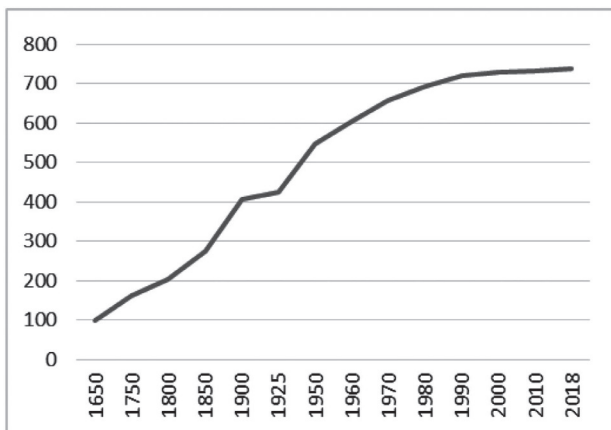
Figure 1: Population growth in the world in the years 100–2018 (mln)



Source: own study based on Holzer 2003: p. 117–121.

The dynamics of population growth slightly increased during hundreds of years. Only after technological inventions, changes in the ways of farming and breeding, as well as medical achievements, which led to a significant improvement in living conditions, which in turn resulted in a decrease in the number of deaths due to the prolonged duration of human life.

Figure 2: Population growth in Europe in the years 1650–2018 (mln)



Source: own study based on Holzer 2003: p. 117–121.

Particularly high dynamics of population growth occurred on the European continent during the industrial revolution, and it should be remembered that its individual parts developed with different pace. Economic and social changes taking place in Western Europe reached Central and Southern Europe with a delay, and at the same time they were practically imperceptible in the backward areas of the Russian Empire close to the Urals, where poorly developed agriculture dominated.

The population growth was also halted in the years of the World War I and II, when millions of people lost their lives.

In the years of the post-war reconstruction of the European economies, the number of European population increased again. As in earlier periods, these dynamics was not even in individual parts of the continent. In the western part, the growth rate began to slow down at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s. In Central, Southern and Eastern Europe a similar process took place only in the 1990s.

During this time, references to the population crisis in Europe began to appear in public discourse. Its most important signs are: low fertility¹, late motherhood, one child in a family and an increase in the median of age in the European societies². To counteract this situation, institutions and privileges were developed to encourage women to make reproductive decisions. These are: maternity and parental leaves, allowances, tax benefits, salary supplements, social care and educational infrastructure and counseling. The dimension of support for mothers and families varies from one country to another. The activity of institutions dealing with the protection of children's rights is also different³. In many social environments, the issue of admissibility of abortion is recognised as a natural element in counteracting the population crisis. Another solution is to develop immigration from overpopulated areas of the world (Hut 2009; p. 161).

Nowadays, the dynamic development of the Asian and African population, as well as South and North America, deserves a special attention. While Asia and Africa have always been characterised by a high population rate⁴, South and North America were not very populous continents and only the colonisation process caused an increase in the population rate. However, today the highest fertility rate is recorded in the undeveloped African countries and causes a significant increase in population.

Table 1: Countries with the highest fertility rate (2016)

Country	Fertility rate
Niger	7.1
Somalia	6.1
Democratic Republic of the Congo	5.9
Mali	5.9

¹ Total fertility rate – the number of live births per woman aged 15–49; above level 2.1 guarantees simple replacement of generations.

² A measure of demographic aging of the society.

³ There are many critical comments about the German *Jugendamt* and the Norwegian *Barnevernet*.

⁴ It means the nominal number of inhabitants, not the population density per sq. km in the area.

The Republic of Chad	5.7
Angola	5.5
Burundi	5.5
Uganda	5.4
Nigeria	5.4
East Timor	5.3

Source: own study based on *Fertility rate, total (births per woman)*, www.data.worldbank.org

It is worth emphasising the huge diversity in terms of population of individual countries in the world. As mentioned, Asia has traditionally been the most populous continent. Moreover, nowadays there are two countries in Asia whose population exceeds 1 billion inhabitants and covers a total of about 30% of the world's population. The most populous EU country, Germany, with its population of 82 million of inhabitants in the global ranking is on the 19th position, while Poland is on the 36th position in the world as for its population number (www.data.worldbank.org).

Table 2: The most populous countries in the world (2018)

Country	Population number (in mln)
China	1,379
India	1,281
USA	326
Indonesia	260
Brasil	207
Pakistan	204
Nigeria	190
Bangladesh	157
Russian Federation	143
Japan	126

Source: own study based on www.data.worldbank.org

It should also be noted – this is a process recorded by the demography scientists – that the overall growth rate of the world's population is falling down. Admittedly, there are areas with a high fertility rate whose population is increasing rapidly; however, the overall decreasing growth rate tendency in the world is generally noticeable nowadays. Moreover, as the emphatic example of the world's population decreasing tendency is the cancellation of the "one-child policy" by the People's Republic of China authorities.⁵

⁵ Actions of the China's authorities initiated in 1977, which aimed to regulate the number of births. According to its assumptions, the family could have one child. In the case of a larger number of children, additional financial charges were imposed on the family. The result of this situation was violation of human rights (including forced abortions) and upsetting the proportion of women and men in the society (parents decided to have a male child).

Population situation in the European Union

In total the territory of the European Union has 515,8 million of inhabitants⁶, and, although it is a joint body of international law, which is statistically the third largest entity in the world in terms of population, the population situation in the EU should be assessed negatively. Demographic aging, which characterises all Member States, is undoubtedly a factor which slows down development and limits economic opportunities.

Table 3: Population in EU Member States in 2016

Country	Population (in mln)	Country	Population (in mln)	Country	Population (in mln)
Belgium	11.3	France	66.7	Netherlands	16.9
Bulgaria	7.1	Croatia	4.3	Austria	
Czech Republic	10.5	Italy	60.6	Poland	37.9
Denmark	5.7	Cyprus	0.8	Portugal	10.3
Germany	82.1	Latvia	1.9	Romania	19.7
Estonia	1.3	Lithuania	2.8	Slovenia	2.0
Ireland	4.7	Luxemburg	0.5	Slovak Republic	5.4
Greece	10.7	Hungary	9.8	Finland	5.4
Spain	46.4	Malta	0.4	Sweden	9.8
Great Britain	65.3				

Source: own study based on Eurostat Regional Yearbook 2018.

A total of 356 million inhabitants live in the six most populous EU countries, which is 69% of the overall population. Particularly noteworthy is the increase in the population of France, which is growing due to the relatively high number of births, but also the influx of immigrants.

As in other countries of the prosperous North, the number of live births for several decades does not guarantee a level of simple replacement of generations. The aggregate fertility rate for the EU for the last time above two children per woman of reproductive age exceeded in 1976, while the lowest level (1.45) was achieved in 1995. In subsequent years there was a slow improvement and now it is 1.6 of a child per a woman of reproductive age⁷.

Table 4: Fertility rate in the EU Member States in 2016

Country	Fertility rate	Country	Fertility rate	Country	Fertility rate
Belgium	1.68	France	1.92	Netherlands	1.66
Bułgaria	1.54	Croatia	1.42	Austria	1.53

⁶ Data for 28 Member States, 2016 year (see: Rządowa Rada Ludnościowa 2017: p. 17, 72; Eurostat Regional Yearbook 2018).

⁷ The lowest is in Spain (1.32) and the highest in France (1.92). (Own study based on data.wordbank.org)

Czech Republic	1.63	Italy	1.34	Poland	1.39
Denmark	1.79	Cyprus	1.37	Portugal	1.36
Germany	1.60	Latvia	1.74	Romania	1.64
Estonia	1.60	Lithuania	1.69	Slovenia	1.58
Irland	1.81	Luxemburg	1.41	Slovak Republic	1.48
Greece	1.38	Hungary	1.53	Finland	1.57
Spain	1.34	Malta	1.37	Sweden	1.85
Great Britain	1.79				

Source: own study based on Eurostat Regional Yearbook 2018

Another important factor influencing the number of births in particular countries is the late age of a woman while giving birth to the first child. Although, the issue of teenage pregnancy is often raised in the media, it has a negligible share in the total number of births. The statistical EU citizen giving birth to a child is a 29-years-old woman⁸.

Certainly, social, cultural and economic changes that took place in the mid-1970s had an impact on attitudes to reproduction in the EU. During this time, the wealth and well-being of many Western European households increased significantly. Public institutions have taken over some of the responsibilities already assigned to family members. The development of welfare state and social security has changed the lifestyle and interpersonal relations. In the former Eastern Bloc countries, which joined the EU after 2004, these processes have been delayed since 1990, but also it happened rapidly.

Partnerships should be considered as a manifestation of new interpersonal relationships. In the most EU countries they are legally permitted. However, the scope of the rights arising from the conclusion of a partnership (e.g. social security coverage, inheritance, medical information) varies. It is difficult to assess the effects of this form of relationship on the population situation, as in many countries there is a high number of births outside marriage. In 2016, such births were over 40% of all live births in the EU.

Table 5: Births outside marriage in the EU Member States in 2016

Country	Share in the total number of births (%)	Country	Share in the total number of births (%)	Country	Share in the total number of births (%)
Belgium	49	France	59	Netherlands	50
Bulgaria	58	Croatia	18	Austria	37
Czech Republic	48	Italy	28	Poland	25
Denmark	54	Cyprus	19	Portugal	52
Germany	35	Latvia	40	Romania	31

⁸ The earliest the birth is given in Bulgaria (when a woman is 26 years old) and the latest is in Italy (when a woman is 31 years old).

Estonia	56	Lithuania	27	Slovenia	58
Ireland	36	Luxemburg	40	Slovak Republic	40
Greece	9	Hungary	46	Finland	44
Spain	45	Malta	31	Sweden	54
Great Britain	47				

Source: own study based on Eurostat Regional Yearbook 2018.

In the light of the above demonstrated data, it can be concluded that the phenomenon of births outside marriage are more characteristic for the countries located in the northern part of the EU. This assessment is also confirmed by the fact that births outside marriage reach high proportions in Norway (56%) and in Iceland (70%).

Another indicator that allows to characterise the population situation of a given country is the infant death rate per 1,000 of live births. It should be emphasised that it is very diverse in the world. Currently, it reaches the highest dimensions in the poor countries of the South. In Angola it is as much as 180, in Sierra Leone and Afghanistan it is above 150. This is a result of generally difficult living conditions in these countries and limited possibilities of receiving medical care. For the EU, this factor is 3.6.

Table 6: Infant mortality rates in the EU Member States in 2016

Country	Infant deaths per 1,000 of live births	Country	Infant deaths per 1,000 of live births	Country	Infant deaths per 1,000 of live births
Belgium	3.2	France	3.7	Netherlands	3.5
Bulgaria	6.5	Croatia	4.3	Austria	3.1
Czech Republic	2.8	Italy	2.8	Poland	4.0
Denmark	3.1	Cyprus	2.6	Portugal	3.2
Germany	3.4	Latvia	3.7	Romania	7.0
Estonia	2.3	Lithuania	4.5	Slovenia	2.0
Ireland	3.0	Luxemburg	3.8	Slovak Republic	5.4
Greece	4.2	Hungary	3.9	Finland	1.9
Spain	2.7	Malta	7.4	Sweden	2.5
Great Britain	3.8				

Source: own study based on Eurostat Regional Yearbook 2018.

Limitation of infant deaths is considered as one of the key indicators determining the level of development of a particular country. It is worth emphasising that, although, in Poland it exceeds the EU average, nevertheless, there has been a remarkable improvement in the recent decades – in 1990 it amounted to 20 infant deaths per 1 thousand of live births (in 2000, there were about 7 infant deaths per 1,000 of live births (Rządowa Rada Ludnościowa 2018).

A healthy lifestyle, availability of food and medical assistance, work that does not require physical effort and care for the natural environment cause a statistical increase in the average life length in the EU. It currently stands at an average of 81 years for the EU, with a clear difference in the length of this indicator for women (83 years) and men (78 years).

Table 7: Life expectancy in the EU Member States in 2016

Country	Number of years	Country	Number of years	Country	Number of years
Belgium	84	France	85	Netherlands	83
Bulgaria	78	Croatia	81	Austria	84
Czech Republic	82	Italy	85	Poland	82
Denmark	82	Cyprus	84	Portugal	84
Germany	83	Latvia	79	Romania	79
Estonia	82	Lithuania	80	Slovenia	84
Ireland	83	Luxemburg	85	Slovak Republic	80
Greece	84	Hungary	79	Finland	84
Spain	86	Malta	84	Sweden	84
Great Britain	83				

Source: own study based on Eurostat Regional Yearbook 2018.

The above data demonstrates statistical average life length in the EU countries, however, as mentioned, these are average data for both sexes, and there is also diversity in terms of place of residence. A statistical resident of non-urbanised areas may have less opportunities to benefit from the advanced medical assistance, nevertheless, the natural conditions, in which a person lives, result in a better overall health and, hence, a longer average life length.

Another issue is the fact that the above list does not take into account the health of living persons. There is a very large group of people in the EU who are unable to live independently (e.g. memory problems, mobility problems) and who require constant care. This is a significant change not previously noted due to statistically insignificant dimensions. The existence of a growing group of such people causes recurring discussions about ethically problematic euthanasia⁹.

The EU population situation is a major challenge for the Member States' governments. Low fertility rate, delaying the birth of the first child and the growing number of people in retirement age¹⁰ require taking various actions for the functioning of the state.

⁹ In the EU 'Active euthanasia' is legal in the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg; outside the EU in: Switzerland, Canada, Columbia and Japan. In the EU "Passive euthanasia" is legal in: Portugal, Spain, France, Great Britain, Germany, Ireland, Sweden and Italy; outside the EU in India and Argentina. In the US, regulations vary from state to state.

¹⁰ In Poland, the post-working age is 60 years old for women and 65 years old for men.

The key issue is the efficiency of the social security systems. In the 19th century, when their development took place in Germany, the proportion between the number of people entitled to benefits and the number of employed was much more favorable. The effect of the demographic age of the societies of the EU countries are the discussions that arise from time to time to delay the retirement age and to launch mass immigration processes from overpopulated areas of the world.

Population situation in Poland

Poland is one of the most populous EU countries¹¹. The structure of the Polish population has changed significantly over the recent 25 years. It is worth mentioning that, according to the research conducted by the Central Statistics Office in Warsaw in the 1970s and 1980s, before 2000 the population of Poland was to exceed by 40 million residents. As a result of deep social and economic changes that took place in 1989/1990, the current trends regarding the number of births have been stopped. Over the last 25 years, not only the fertility rate of women has declined dramatically, but there also has been a massive process of economic emigration of people of working age – including women of reproductive age. Only these two negative processes from a demographic perspective had to be reflected in the structure of the Polish population. It is worth underlying that one of the measures is the proportion between the number of children (0–14 years old) in relation to the number of people in post-working age. In 2005, there were 820 people in post-working age per 1000 children, however, in 2015 there were already 1092 people in post-working age per 1000 children. At the same time, two very favorable phenomena were noted in the discussed period. These include a 6 years increase of average life length (both for women and men), as well as a 5-times decrease of the infant mortality rate.

Mass internal migrations are characteristic features of the recent years. This migration flows include a large group of people leaving their hometowns for educational and work purposes. According to the forecasts, while maintaining current migration trends the population in the following cities: Warsaw, Cracow, Gdansk and Poznan, will increase. In the other Polish cities the population decreases. The challenge for the central and local authorities is the population decline in some regions of Poland.

Table 8: Population in voivodships in 2016.

Voivodship	Population (mln)	Voivodship	Population (mln)	Voivodship	Population (mln)
Masovian	5,5	Pomeranian	2,3	Swietokrzyskie	1,2
Silesian	4,5	Lublin	2,1	Podlaskie	1,1
Greater Poland	3,4	Subkarpatian	2,1	Lubusz	1,0

¹¹ In terms of population, Poland is on the 6th position.

Lesser Poland	3,3	Kuyavian-Pomeranian	2,0	Opole	0,9
Lower Silesian	2,9	West Pomeranian	1,7		
Lodz	2,4	Warmian-Masurian	1,4		

Source: own study based on reports: *Sytuacja demograficzna Polski* (see: Rządowa Rada Ludnościowa 2017, 2018)

The population structure in demographic studies is presented in the form of a pyramid (see: GUS 2018: p.24). The youngest years are placed at the bottom of the pyramid, while the oldest years are situated at the top of it. On the both sides of the vertical axis, the number of subsequent years is marked, separated by the gender. In the progressive model, the pyramid has a wide bottom part and a narrow apex. In the recessive model, the base is narrower than the middle part; the top is also wide. The pyramid prepared in the Central Statistical Office (see: GUS 2018: p.24) for the Polish population has an average bottom part, it is wide in the central part (people of mobile age), but its top part has also widened in the recent decades. A characteristic feature is the clearly marked demographic waving, presented by the widening of the pyramid for two high-pressure waves: the first from the 1950s and the second one – from the 80s of the last century¹². Currently, people born in the years of the so-called "post-war birth boom" are finishing their professional activities. However, a significant proportion of people who were born in the first half of the 1980s still remain on the labor market. Another special phenomenon is the number of male children and young men in the population structure up to 45 years old. After this period, the dominance of women is growing in subsequent years. As a result, a larger number of women (51.6%) than men are registered in the overall structure of the Polish population. In the cities, the share of women in the population structure is even higher and amounts to 52.6%. More balanced proportions of both sexes occur in the countryside.

As mentioned above, changes in marital status are also included in demographic analyses. Poland is a state where its legal system understands the institution of marriage only as a relationship between a woman and a man,¹³ in addition separations and divorces are also possible. After the changes of 1989/1990, the delay in getting married was clearly marked. Even in 1990, women entering their first marriage were on average 23 years old, while in 2016 it was 27 years old. Similarly, men entering into marriage at that time were almost 25 years old, and currently almost 30. There is also a noticeable tendency that in 1990–2016 the proportion of divorced persons entering into marriages increased – both among women and men. Another noticeable phenomenon is the decreasing share of denominational marriages in the overall structure of marriages concluded each year. Believers of 11 churches and religious associations have been

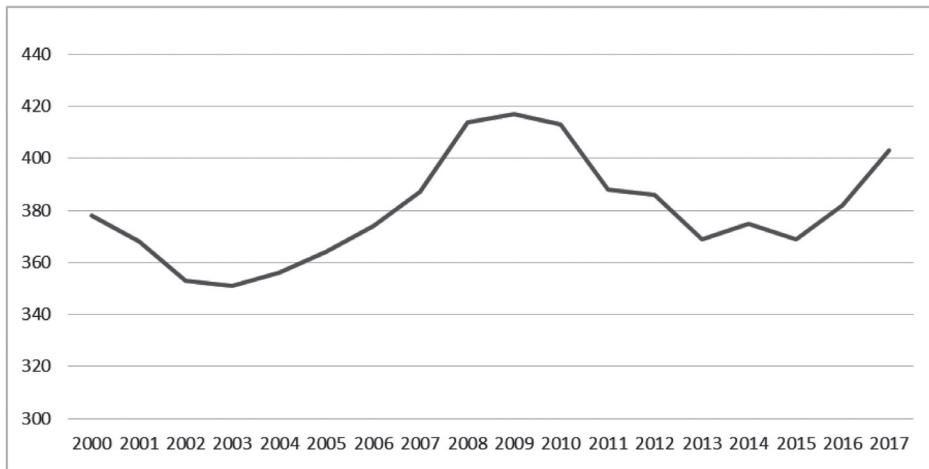
¹² Some of these people, after opening selected labour markets in the EU, decided to emigrate and to settle down abroad.

¹³ A big challenge for the national administration system is the situation of the Polish citizens who have formally married people of the same sex abroad. In the extreme left movements, the issue of introducing both same-sex marriages and partnerships into the national legal system is also raised.

able to enter into marriage having civil law effects only before a priest since 1999. At the beginning of the 90s, as many as 73% of newlyweds decided on such a ceremony, in 2016 only 63%. The number of divorces has also increased since 1990. In 1990 there were 42,000 divorces per year, and in 2016 – already 63,000 (the most divorces were made in 2004-2006 – around 70,000 divorces a year). In 1999, the institution of separation was also introduced into the legal system. Most separations were issued in the mid-2000s, currently the number of such decisions does not exceed 2,000 a year.

Over the past two decades there has been no expected boom echo from the 1980s. In 2000–2017, the fewest children were born in 2003 (351,000), and the most in 2009 (417,000). In 2017, respectively, 403,000 children were born, and this was an increase by 13,000 births in comparison to year 2016. These numbers, however, do not provide simple generational replacement.

Figure 3: Number of live births in Poland in 2000–2017 (thousands)



Source: own study based on reports: *Sytuacja demograficzna Polski* (see: Rządowa Rada Ludnościowa 2017, 2018)

It can be assumed with high probability that the processes described above will directly affect the future structure of the Polish population. According to the optimistic forecast of the Central Statistical Office (see: GUS 2014), it was expected that in 2030 over 37 million of people will live in Poland (including 21 million in cities, and 15 million in the countryside). A decade later, over 35 million (respectively: 20 million and 15 million), while in 2050 year – 33.9 million people, including 18.8 million in the cities and 15 million in the countryside.

Forecasting changes in the population structure is a huge challenge because it should take into account various factors directly and indirectly affecting population processes. The most difficult element is the assessment of the size and period of inflow

or outflow of migrants. As mentioned, in Poland and in the other EU Member States, the fertility rate does not guarantee simple generational replacement. In this situation, it was recognised that the solution to population problems could be the process of mass immigration from the third countries – including the culturally distant African and Asian countries.

Migration and migrants in the European Union

In the traditional EU immigration countries, the fourth generation of immigrants is already entering adulthood, whose connections with their countries of origin are limited to family transfers and religion. The specificity of immigration to the EU has changed dramatically within recent 70 years. In recent years, migrations and migrants have become the axis of public debate in the EU countries. The process of mass migrations, which began at the end of the World War II, never actually ended in Europe. Only the countries of origin of the immigrants changed. It is worth underlying that thousands of Central and Eastern Europeans resided in the West after the war. Another mass wave of immigrants came as a result of the decolonisation of African and Asian countries. Contract workers from developing countries began to come to Europe in the late 1960s. This picture of European migration can also be complemented by the constant outflow of people from the Eastern Bloc who chose to live in the West.

The territorial movement of the population describes migration as an element of shaping the structure of the population and it means the movement of a person or persons, for various reasons, from the current place of stay to another place of stay. It can take place in a legal or illegal manner, and it can be planned or spontaneous manner, as well as voluntary or forced. There is a number of migration typologies in which various circumstances are taken into account, such as: direction, area, duration, purpose (Hut 2016: p. 241).

The state on whose territory the most numerous group of immigrants residing in the Russian Federation (11 million). It is a remnant of dependence from the times of the Soviet Union, when the citizens of individual republics moved – also for professional reasons – to the other parts of the state. In contrast, in the EU, the largest immigrant groups have settled in the most developed and the most populous Member States. In the global list of countries that have accepted the most numerous groups of immigrants in the EU are: Germany (the 3rd position), Great Britain (the 5th position) and France (the 7th position).

Table 9: Immigrants in the EU Member States in 2013–2017 (in millions)

Country	Immigrants (mln)	Country	Immigrants (mln)	Country	Immigrants (mln)
Belgium	1.1	France	7.9	Netherlands	1.9
Bulgaria	0.08	Croatia	0.7	Austria	1.3
Czech Republic	0.4	Italy	5.7	Poland	1.1

Denmark	0.5	Cyprus	0.2	Portugal	0.8
Germany	12.2	Latvia	0.2	Romania	0.2
Estonia	0.2	Lithuania	0.1	Slovenia	0.2
Ireland	0.7	Luxemburg	0.2	Slovak Republic	0.04
Greece	0.9	Hungary	0.4	Finland	0.4
Spain	5.8	Malta	no data	Sweden	1.1
Great Britain	8.8				

Source: own study based on www.data.worldbank.org, *International Migration, International migrant stock 2017*, Population Division, UN 2018.

The above data do not provide a full picture of immigration to the EU, as they only concern people who do not have citizenship of the country of stay. There is, however – a group of thousands, difficult to estimate, who, after meeting the statutory requirements, have obtained the citizenship of one of the EU countries, and at the same time possess the citizenship of the country of origin and are culturally associated with it.

The most populous EU countries are among the countries where the largest number of immigrants resides. It is important to mention, that immigrants usually live in the cities, while in countries where there are numerous clusters of immigrants from the same country, they create very strong and able to defend their environmental goals.

Due to the process of marginalisation of immigrants that is difficult to overcome in new countries of residence, an importance of the integration of foreigners is increasing. Social services organize activities in the field of counseling, support on the labor market and social problems overcoming. Governmental institutions and non-governmental organisations run diverse programs addressed to children and adults. Increasingly, representatives of the majority group (indigenous people) are invited to learn about the culture of immigrants, through culinary meetings, presentations of artistic creativity from countries of origin of immigrants or overcoming problems in a given place, when their inhabitants are forced to act together for the good of the local community.

Immigrants in Poland

The number of immigrants legally residing in Poland is relatively small. Due to the modern means and communication possibilities, the number of migration flows will probably increase, but they will depend on political, social and economic factors. The labour markets of the individual EU Member States suffer from a labour deficit. Discussion about opening labour markets and liberalisation of the employment policies are on in contrast to the 1990s. This applies especially to the best and the least educated immigrants. Temporary stay is the first phase that can lead to stay in Poland. People often come for work or family purposes. They take up a job, obtain additional education, run their own business. The opportunity to live in Poland is attractive above all for the Ukrainian citizens. The existing migration network is probably the decisive factor, which allows this group of foreigners to enter the labor market and find themselves in a new reality.

After three decades, since the beginning of the transformation of the early 90s, Poland has become an increasingly attractive place for foreigners. Initially, due to significant differences in the standard of living, few immigrants tried to settle in Poland. However, the economic growth and successes of Polish business entities mean that the standard of living is increasing. At the same time, the sphere of various social services is expanding, which are important for foreigners. In accordance with the applicable regulations, a foreigner may stay in Poland legally after fulfilling certain conditions. There are two legal institutions regulating the rules of staying on the territory of the Republic of Poland. These are temporary stay and permanent stay.

In the years 2014–2016, each year the number of foreigners temporarily staying in Poland increased and it is worth emphasising that this group doubled in such a short period. First of all, this situation was the result of numerous immigration of the Ukrainian citizens, who after several months of paid work decided to stay in Poland. The stay in Poland is also attractive for immigrants from Asia who undertake economic activity (services, trade). For citizens of wealthy EU and EEA countries, coming to Poland is rarely attractive.

Table 10: Persons who have been granted a temporary residence permit in Poland, taking citizenship into account(in 2010–2016)

Year	Citizenship						Total
	Ukraine	China	India	Vietnam	Russian Federation	Others	
2010	8 428	2 236	1 138	2 198	1 379	15 071	30 450
2011	8 075	2 690	993	1 868	1 308	14 284	29 218
2012	9 845	2 794	1 045	3 813	1 604	15 142	34 243
2013	9 642	2 786	1 048	1 986	1 577	14 581	31 620
2014	17 103	2 962	1 398	2 962	1 894	16 228	42 547
2015	37 835	3 447	1 713	2 793	2 041	17 109	64 938
2016	57 247	3 583	2 691	2 689	2 189	18 210	86 609

Source: own study based on www.udsc.gov.pl.

Temporary stay often transforms into permanent stay in Poland for people who have their life center in Poland. Temporary stay is often associated with the need to complete all formalities, and very often foreigners who have been legally residents in Poland for several years, try to obtain permanent residence permit. In the light of the statistical data of the Office for Foreigners, similarly to the first institution of stay, Ukrainian citizens dominate in terms of the number of permits granted for permanent residence. The second group of interested people are Belarusian citizens. This is probably the result of marriages of Polish citizens with citizens of the post-Soviet area concluded by Polish citizens. Newlyweds most often decide to settle down permanently in Poland.

Table 11: Persons who have been granted a permanent residence permit, taking citizenship into account (in 2007–2017)

Year	Ukraine	Bielarus	Russian Federation	Vietnam	Turkey	Others	Total
2010	1 564	629	146	100	58	802	3 299
2011	1 688	625	232	78	71	970	3 664
2012	1 658	703	205	76	53	988	3 683
2013	1 711	640	204	82	55	977	3 669
2014	3 484	1 147	393	338	99	1 198	6 659
2015	6 730	1 389	351	206	81	1 123	9 880
2016	5 920	1 628	327	196	77	897	9 045

Source: own study based on www.udsc.gov.pl.

It should be emphasised, however, that in general the number of foreigners who have been granted a permanent residence permit is many times lower than in the case of temporary residents. For many foreigners, proving that their actual "life center" is in Poland is not an easy task. Nevertheless, an upward trend can be observed and the number of foreigners who have been granted permission for permanent residence in Poland is growing.

Statistical data collected by individual entities dealing with the examination of foreigners' cases clearly indicate a growing immigration to Poland. Our country is an attractive destination for citizens of other countries for various reasons. The example of mass immigration from Ukraine indicates a growing demand for low-skilled workers, which is partly the result of mass post-accession emigration of Polish citizens to the Western EU countries. Economic reasons (including demand for labour, demand for services, money for nothing) allow us to believe that in the upcoming years Poland will also be a country to which mainly immigrants will be arriving.

Refugees in the European Union

The problem of people who are at risk in their country of citizenship was already recognised in the pre-war period. At that time, work began on developing an institution that would protect people whose safety and well-being could be violated by the authorities of their country of citizenship. This mainly concerned representatives of minority groups who, for unrelated reasons, were subject to persecution.

In the post-war period, the number of people who would be at risk of returning to the country of citizenship would increase sharply – this mainly concerned citizens of the Eastern Bloc. However, first of all, the Poles, who (as a result of hostilities) found themselves in the West and additionally lost their homes as a result of territorial changes remained in Western European countries.

The problem of refugees put a shadow over intra-European relations for all decades of the Cold War. The first post-war international act was the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951. Already in the first article the reasons for granting international protection to a citizen of another country were indicated; threats arising from: political views, religion, racial affiliation or social group. Later, the Convention was extended to include the New York Protocol of 1967. On the basis of both these legal acts, refugee status is granted in the States who are parties to the Convention.

In the early years, this form of protection was primarily used by citizens of the Eastern Bloc. It has only been since the 1980s that foreign arrivals from other continents have been reported on a larger scale. However, this was not a major challenge due to the huge absorption of labour markets of affluent Western countries and the relatively low threshold of newcomers' expectations. Another factor affecting the reception of refugees was the widespread belief that asylum-seekers are indeed at risk in their countries of origin.

In 2006 year, 200,000 applications for international protection were deposited in the EU. Since then, the number of applicants has been increasing steadily. In 2010 year, it exceeded 300,000. Three years later it was already 431,000. In 2014 year, 627,000 foreigners sought international protection in the EU. During the "migration crisis" in 2015 year, foreigners deposited as much as 1.3 million applications for refugee status in individual EU countries. A similar number of applications were submitted in 2016 year. The number of applications for refugee status began to decrease to approximately 700,000 from 2017 year (Eurostat Regional Yearbook 2018).

What is important, young people (including children) usually apply for refugee status. Only in the Czech Republic and Estonia foreigners seeking protection who are over 35 years old constitute 30–40% of immigrants. In contrast, in Italy and Slovenia, their share is about 10% in the group of immigrants. Based on this data, it is evident that people aged over 34 years old decide to migrate. In addition, in Poland and Austria, the share of children in the refugee structure is over 40% (Eurostat Regional Yearbook 2018). This is a very favorable situation that gives great opportunities in shaping social attitudes and facilitates the integration of foreigners into society. From the labor market perspective, it is important that as many as 65% of the refugee population is male. Taking into account the needs of the labor markets of individual EU countries and difficulties in recruiting employees to professions that do not require qualifications; this is also a premise that should affect the effectiveness of the integration process.

It is also worth emphasising that the mere submission of an application for refugee status does not automatically lead to the recognition of a person as a refugee. It often happens that persons who have been refused refugee status legally or illegally remain on the territory of the country. In special cases that do not meet the requirements of the 1951 Geneva Convention, other forms of international protection are granted (e.g. consent for a tolerated stay, subsidiary protection) that enable long-term residence and normal functioning in the host country, with an important element that these decisions are for the good of the child.

Many leftist European communities operate for the benefit of refugees, which through associations and organisations help in arriving in the EU countries. They support

foreigners during the procedure for granting refugee status, as well as when arranging the necessary formalities in the host country – in finding a flat, working and learning a language, as well as in raising children. The integration of refugees is a huge challenge for themselves, for host societies and the state institutions. The effects of integration are assessed differently - depending on the political context. In fact, there is ample evidence of successful integration of refugees, but also of their confinement within their own group and dislike of European values. Undoubtedly, this is a very important task for decision makers responsible for the public policies of the host countries.

Refugees in Poland

Only in 1991 Poland joined the Geneva Convention of 1951 and assumed the obligation to provide support to persons whose safety was threatened in their country of origin. In the 90s, mainly foreigners came to Poland from the states formed after the collapse of the USSR: from the Russian Federation (Caucasus region), from Armenia, Ukraine or Belarus, as well as from the Baltic States. However, in the face of relatively more modest material assistance than in Western Europe, virtually all refugees from that period left Poland.¹⁴ In subsequent years, a stream of people from post-Soviet countries continued to flow to Poland. In the years 2010–2018, the largest group of people applying for refugee status arrived in 2013, and in large part they were the Chechens¹⁵ (Hut 2007: p.76).

Table 12: Number of persons applying for international protection in Poland, taking citizenship into account, in 2013–2016

Citizenship	Year			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Russian Federation	12849	4 112	7 989	8 994
Georgia	1245	726	394	124
Ukraine	46	2 318	2 305	1 306
Armenia	206	135	195	344
Tadjikistan	5	107	541	882
Others	902	797	901	672
Total	15253	8 195	12325	12322

Source: own study based on www.udsc.gov.pl.

¹⁴ Under the provisions of the time, foreigners could apply for international protection in another country; it was before the introduction of "Dublin procedure".

¹⁵ This statement results from the analysis of detailed data of foreigners applying for refugee status, including those appealing against the decisions of the President of the Office for Repatriation and Foreigners, and then the Head of the Office for Foreigners, for which the Refugee Board was a higher level office.

However, these people could no longer move freely to Germany or France, and attempts to lodge applications for protection there generally ended in deportation to Poland. The conviction popular among refugees about a sudden and significant improvement in their financial situation ended when they crossed the gate of the refugee centre. Modest conditions, small pocket money, difficulties in dealing with the Poles and the foreign environment of refugees from other countries made it difficult to adapt to new conditions. Another factor inhibiting finding yourself in a new place was the lack of professional preparation. Only subsequent generations of refugees – children who have benefited from education in Poland and mastered the language – are able to cope on the labour market.

Table 13: Number of persons granted refugee status in Poland, taking citizenship into account, in 2013–2016

Citizenship	2013	2014	2015	2016
Russian Federation	26	13	21	10
Syria	70	115	203	40
Belarus	21	14	14	4
Irak	2	8	24	3
Ukraine	2	0	0	16
Others	87	112	86	35
Total	208	262	348	108

Source: own study based on www.udsc.gov.pl

In common understanding, a refugee is a person who left the country of origin in fear of danger. In fact, a refugee is a person in relation to whom the authorities have decided to grant refugee status.¹⁶ Such a ruling is issued after a detailed verification and checking of all relevant circumstances in the proceedings. Many foreigners are disappointed that they have been refused refugee status. Some of them may be covered by another form of protection – subsidiary protection. It has a slightly more limited dimension however; it effectively protects the security of foreigners, and also allows them to stay legally on Polish territory.

Table 14: Number of persons who received subsidiary protection in Poland, taking citizenship into account, in the years 2013–2016

Citizenship	Year			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Russian Federation	85	107	104	57
Ukraine	5	6	6	51

¹⁶ In the Polish legal system, refugee status may be granted by the Head of the Office for Foreigners and the Refugee Board.

Irak	0	15	24	15
Syria	20	17	3	3
Somalia	19	3	2	1
Others	2	22	28	23
Total	131	170	167	150

Source: own study based on www.udsc.gov.pl

Another form of protection that is currently disappearing in the jurisprudence of the authorities of both instances is consent for tolerated stay. Similarly to subsidiary protection, it results from somewhat different reasons than refugee status, but it allows foreigners who have been refused refugee status to stay safely in Poland.

Table 15: Number of persons granted permission for tolerated stay in Poland, taking citizenship into account, in the years 2013–2016

Citizenship	2013	2014	2015	2016
Russian Federation	282	202	91	35
Georgia	65	39	6	0
Armenia	22	13	10	5
Ukraine	8	11	6	1
Belarus	3	2	0	3
Others	25	28	9	5
Total	405	295	122	49

Source: own study based on www.udsc.gov.pl

According to statistical data, a small group of people can count on one of the forms of international protection in Poland. However, it should be remembered that the statements of foreigners about their persecution and situation in the country of origin are verified in detail, and the refugee status granting procedure itself lasts several months. At the time, some applicants try to settle their lives outside the centre, take up work, their children attend school, but there are also those who very quickly move to Germany or France to join relatives or friends and actually improve their economic status. It should be emphasised once again that the procedure for granting refugee status is not an ordinary procedure for legalisation of the stay, but applies to persons whose continued stay in their countries of citizenship constitutes a threat to their security.

Since 1991, the Polish authorities have been providing shelter to all persons at risk in their countries. Poland is a party to the 1951 Geneva Convention. After the 2015 election, the Polish government refused to fulfil its obligations regarding the admission of immigrants from Greece and Italy. The European Commission has finally withdrawn from this project. This does not change the fact that there is currently growing opposition

in the EU to the mass reception of people applying for refugee status. The arguments indicate the possibility of assistance in foreign citizenship countries or in safe countries neighbouring countries affected by conflicts. An example would be financial support for Turkey in exchange for organising living conditions for refugees on its territory. However, it seems that in Europe, the discussion on organising a comprehensive and effective system of admission and integration of refugees has entered a new qualitative phase and requires the adoption of new institutional and legal solutions.

Foreign students in Poland

In many cases, it is studying in Poland – especially in large academic centres – that makes foreigners have no problems entering the domestic labour market: they know the language, have friends, and are able to complete the necessary formalities. Finding livelihoods, contacts with Polish colleagues and facilitating contacts with relatives in the country of origin result in the decision to stay in Poland. Initially only temporarily, then permanently.

Table 16: Number of foreign students in Poland in 2010/2011–2017/2018

Academic year	Number of students
2010/2011	21 474
2011/2012	24 253
2012/2013	29 172
2013/2014	35 983
2014/2015	46 101
2015/2016	57 119
2016/2017	65 739
2017/2018	72 743

Source: own study based on unpublished typescript the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

On the basis of statistical data, there is a clear trend to increase the number of foreign students. They study in both public and private universities. If they do not have a Pole's Card, they are obliged to bear the costs of education. Studying in Poland in general is attractive primarily for young people from the post-Soviet space. Students from the western part of the EU or South-East Asia rarely choose to study in Poland. This situation has not changed by the Erasmus program.

Repatriation to Poland in 2010–2017

In the light of applicable regulations, a privileged group of foreigners who can count on significant support from the Polish authorities and acquire citizenship are persons of Polish origin who, based on the Repatriation Act of 2000, settle in Poland. Contrary to

popular belief, the repatriate group is not large. After arriving in Poland, repatriates face similar problems as other foreigners. They often do not know the language and have difficulties entering the domestic labour market. There are known cases of re-patriation – in a situation where people after a certain time of stay in Poland decided to go back to Kazakhstan (Hut 2002: p. 235).

In its assumptions, repatriation was to be the answer to the expectations of thousands of Poles who could not leave the USSR in the post-war period. Unfortunately, this intention could not be implemented. Initially, the provisions in force transferred virtually all obligations related to the adaptation of repatriates to local governments. Only in 2017 a decision was made to increase the involvement of state institutions and better social assistance

Table 17: Number of repatriates settled in Poland in 2010–2017

Year	Number of repatriates
2010	147
2011	193
2012	123
2013	163
2014	165
2015	200
2016	282
2017	260

Source: own study based on unpublished typescript of the Ministry of Interior and Administration and the Council for Repatriation.

It is worth noting that the group of repatriates who have permanently arrived in Poland is many times lower than the number of the Pole's Card holders. In 2007–2017, Polish consular offices issued over 210,000 Pole's Cards, most often received by the Belarusian and the Ukrainian citizens (over 90,000 in each of these countries).

Assessing the repatriation process from the perspective of three decades, it should be emphasised that it was not possible to adequately respond to the expectations of Polish communities in the former Soviet Union. Due to the lengthy procedure, many Poles did not have the opportunity to settle down in Poland. Others were disappointed with the cold reception by their Polish neighbours. Adaptation and integration of foreigners – regardless of whether they are repatriates or refugees – is always a lengthy process that requires the involvement of all parties.

Conclusions

Contemporary population processes in Poland that have a direct impact on the demographic structure indicate the occurrence of negative trends. Overcoming them seems to be one of the most important challenges facing the Polish authorities.

1. The deepest changes were caused (and still are) by the mass post-accession emigration of Polish citizens to western EU countries. This group is estimated differently: from 1.5 million people up to 3 million people. Different numbers are given due to the diverse status of Polish emigrants who do not always complete the required formalities in individual countries of stay. Some migrants often change their place of residence – it depends on the needs of the labour market, the changeability of seasons in the economy, the competition of employers for an employee, etc. For 15 years, the Polish authorities have not prepared any effective programme that could encourage the re-emigration of people from this group. In some cases, the effectiveness of such a programme would be questionable because of the offspring of hetero-ethnic marriages, born abroad and not using the Polish language. The scale of this phenomenon escapes statistical summaries, but undoubtedly has a large dimension. At the same time, the economic and labour market situation changed significantly between 2004 and 2019. The increase in real employee wages, social programmes and the lowest registered unemployment rate since 1989 could be an incentive to return to Poland.

2. The Polish society is entering the phase of demographic old age. A low fertility rate, postponing the decision to give birth and internal migrations will pose a number of challenges in the near future related to people over 60. These challenges include both an increase in expenditure from the state budget for the payment of retirement benefits, as well as health benefits and finally organized forms of spending free time (e.g. Universities of the Third Age).

3. Immigration to Poland is temporary and economic, with a high probability that this trend will change in the near future in favour of long stays and settlements. Foreigners, due to a number of administrative barriers (visa system, legalisation of stay) adopted strategies based on short-term, several-month stays related to their paid work. This was caused by the need to compete to entrust work with Polish employees. Due to the deepening employee deficits on the domestic labour market, labour immigrants no longer have to compete for a job with Polish citizens. A special example is the service sector and the construction industry. As a result, employers are worried about the possible outflow of employees to wealthier EU countries.

The above conclusions regarding the demographic situation of Poland allow to state that similar problems affect all EU Member States. Probably over time, a number of programmes and activities will also be implemented in Poland to counteract the negative consequences of population processes that have been introduced in the other EU countries.

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