

Original article

Outward migration of Poles after 2004 – its determinants, main directions, and influence on the economic security of the Republic of Poland

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study conducted for the purposes of this paper was to explore the scale, causes and directions of Polish outward migration (beyond national borders) after Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004, as well as to assess the impact of its increase on the economic security of the country. The subject of the study was the phenomenon of Polish outward migration after 2004.

A theoretical research method was applied in the research process – source analysis (using content analysis technique) of literature, strategic documents, and statistics.

The study shows that the main directions of outward migration of Poles after 2004 are the United Kingdom, Germany and Ireland, and the most important reasons for this migration include favourable economic conditions in these countries and the presence of Polish migrants who arrived there earlier.

KEYWORDS

outward migration, Republic of Poland, economic security, European Union, migration policy



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Introduction

The phenomenon of migration, understood as legal or illegal movement in search of better living conditions, is divided into emigration (in terms of the regions a person leaves) and immigration (in terms of the regions a person arrives in). It has accompanied man since the beginning of the civilisation. People have always moved to seek better conditions and a place to live. Depending on the motive, the migrations were motivated by a political factor (e.g. escaping from territories affected by military actions), by a social factor (e.g. avoiding minority persecution), or by a natural factor (e.g. due to the loss of property due to force of nature – floods, earthquakes, etc.) [1, p. 3-5].

As various studies [2, p. 362; 3, p. 3-4; 4, p. 3; 5; 6, p. 43] and statistics show [7, p. 19], nowadays the most common reason for migration is related to the economic factor. In terms

of immigration, this is particularly evident in the richest countries in the world, such as the United States, Great Britain, Germany and France, where foreigners are constantly arriving to improve their standard of living. From an emigration point of view, a number of countries are struggling with the phenomenon of native citizens leaving their territories. Both the first and the second phenomenon are related to the notion of the so-called economic migration, which may potentially be associated with a threat to the economic security of these countries, which is defined by K.M. Książopolski as “undisturbed functioning of economies and maintaining a comparative balance with the economies of other countries” [8, p. 28].

The economic dimension of migration refers to the probably most frequent reason for population migrations, which is the will to improve the standard of living in the material aspect – both in the context of external and internal migration (to another county or voivodeship within the country). This is confirmed by the multitude of migration theories referring to it, e.g. classical migration theory, world system theory, labour market segmentation or migration systems [5, p. 41-53].

An example of a country whose citizens have migrated a number of times in history in search of better living conditions is Poland. Throughout the history of the Polish nation, several key periods of increased external migration may be identified. Apart from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries (mass migrations of Małopolska Voivodeship inhabitants to the United States), the introduction of martial law in 1981, the period after 1989 (political transformation, one of the effects of which was a significant increase in the freedom of travelling abroad), one of them was undoubtedly also Poland’s accession to the European Union on 1 May 2004, which in turn was connected to significant facilitations in terms of employing Poles in its Member States.

In the context of the above considerations, it was reasonable to answer the following questions based on the analysis of the results of the conducted study:

1. What is the scale and what are the causes of Polish outward migration after 2004?
2. What are the main destinations of Polish outward migration after 2004?
3. To what extent has the increase of the scale of Polish outward migration after 2004 affected the economic security of the Republic of Poland?

For statistical purposes, data on temporary migration (not exceeding one year), which is the most frequent form of outward migration of Polish citizens, were used [9]. The study was carried out in 2020 within the framework of the research project No. 146/WNB/65/DzS, entitled “Migration policy of the Republic of Poland as a determinant of its internal security”, carried out at the Faculty of Security Sciences of General Tadeusz Kościuszko Military University of Land Forces, Wrocław, Poland (supervisor: Paweł Olbrycht, members: Witalis Pellowski, Marek Bodziany).

The study included four stages:

1. Collection and analysis of literature studies and statistics.
2. An exploration of the scale and main destinations of Polish outward migration after 2004.
3. Exploring the impact of post-2004 outward migration of Poles on the economic security of the Republic of Poland.
4. Development of final conclusions.

1. Outward migration

The external migration of Poles is undoubtedly a phenomenon that significantly affects the functioning of the state, including its security – primarily economic. Confirmation of the perception of this trend by public authorities may be observed based on the analysis of the content of Polish strategic documents, including the 2013 White Paper on National Security of the Republic of Poland, the Socio-Economic Priorities of Migration Policy, developed by the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development (MIiR), adopted by the Council of Ministers by resolution in March 2018, and the 2020 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland. An extensive part of the indicated documents was devoted to the phenomenon analysed in the paper. It should be noted, however, that in the context of widely understood migration (both emigration and immigration) and its impact on the security of the Republic of Poland, the authors of these documents attribute greater importance to the migration of foreigners to Poland than to the outward migration of Poles.

This is exemplified by the provisions of the White Paper on National Security of the Republic of Poland of 2013. Its authors attribute the greatest importance for Poland's security in the context of widely understood migration to migrants arriving in Poland, the negative consequences of which, in their opinion, may pose a potential threat to cultural security. In their opinion, the optimal situation is one in which the new citizens are integrated with the rest of the inhabitants, which will not be possible in the event of the emergence of migrant ghettos and of Poles' aversion to newcomers and xenophobic behaviour [10, p. 135-136].

On the other hand, the importance of the outward migration of Poles within the context of Poland's security was recognised by the authors of the Socio-Economic Priorities of Migration Policy. The document points out that in view of the prospect of a decrease in the number of Polish citizens, up to 20% of jobs may remain unfilled by 2030, therefore it will be necessary to constantly increase the share of foreigners in the Polish labour market [11].

The third example of Polish strategic documents highlighting the importance of migration is the 2020 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland. Its authors, in contrast to the authors of the two previously cited documents, present a sectoral (multifaceted) approach to the analysed problem, characteristic of the Copenhagen School of International Relations. They point out that in the aspect of migration it is necessary for the state authorities to develop and pursue a comprehensive migration policy, which is coordinated with the security policy and the economic and social policy and which takes into account both the current and projected needs of the labour market, the integration of migrants into Polish society, ensuring the maintenance of social cohesion and counteracting possible threats to public order and security related to migration processes [12, p. 32].

The significance of the issue of the outward migration of Poles in the context of the overall migration situation of Poland is also observable on the basis of the content analysis of source literature among scientific researchers.

M. Garapich, I. Grabowska and E. Jaźwińska distinguish three stages of Polish migration, as described by the authors – “post-accession”: the initial phase before May 2004, concerning persons freely undertaking employment in Ireland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, the peak phase at the beginning of the global economic crisis (2006-2008), the slowdown phase of migration after the aforementioned crisis (until 2012) and the normalisation phase [13, p. 208].

T. Homoncik, K. Pujer and I. Wolańska indicate that the most frequently manifested socio-demographic characteristics of Polish external migrants after 2004 are the following:

- relatively young age (range 18-37 years),
- domination of the number of men over women,
- coming from less urbanised areas (mainly cities with less than 100,000 inhabitants and voivodeships with the highest unemployment rates – Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Podkarpackie, or Podlaskie Voivodeship),
- childlessness,
- relatively good qualifications [14].

In addition to the cited socio-demographic characteristics, the authors attribute the following regularities to Polish outward migrants after 2004:

- they migrate to both metropolises (e.g. London) and smaller towns,
- usually perform low-skilled jobs (e.g. farm labourer, construction worker, domestic help, waiter), these jobs are frequently below the qualifications of the migrants, however, in their opinion sufficiently favourable employment conditions are a decisive factor,
- at the same time, due to the high level of skills and labour market shortages in the countries to which they migrate, they perform work within their own specialised professions (e.g. doctors, nurses, IT specialists), however often for lower wages than native residents,
- they transfer part of their earnings to their families who have remained in Poland.

The above-mentioned tendencies, with reference to the so-called classical migration theory of E.G. Ravenstein, which assumes that the basic determinant motivating people to change their current place of residence is the possibility of increasing their income thanks to obtaining better-paid employment and thus improving the standard of living [15], indicate that in the context of contemporary outward migration from Poland, the above-mentioned economic dimension seems to be the most significant.

This tendency may also be observed by reference to the *push-pull* theory by E.S. Lee (assuming the existence of factors “pushing” from a given place of residence and “pulling” to another) [16, p. 50] – the greatest importance of the economic factor in the decision on outward migration of Poles is confirmed, inter alia, by the research of J. Kozielska [17, p. 85], or A. Pawlak [18, p. 552]. In the context of the influence of the increased scale of outward migration of Poles after 2004 on the economic security of the Republic of Poland, J. Łazor also indicates that it undoubtedly led to a decrease in the scale of unemployment [19, p. 113]. P. Kaczmarczyk, on the other hand, points out that attributing the decrease in the scale of unemployment in Poland exclusively to its accession to the EU is a simplification, as it does not take into account, inter alia, the development of the labour market in Poland due to foreign investments as a determinant of the decrease in the scale of unemployment [20, p. 63].

The next phase of the study was to analyse the scale and main destinations of Polish outward migration after 2004. Due to research limitations and the desire to focus also on the aspect of economic security of the Republic of Poland, the paper will undertake an analysis on the basis of comparative indicators of the scale of outward migration, unemployment, and the two main national economic indicators (GDP – gross domestic product of the national economy and GDP per capita – average *per capita* income).

2. Migration of Poles after 1 May 2004

Poland's accession to the European Union was preceded by years of diplomatic activity in the international arena. The beginnings of this process may be found as early as during the political transformation of 1989, when the authorities of the Third Republic of Poland declared their intention to eventually join the ranks of "Western" international organisations, such as NATO (in the context of military security), or the European Communities, and then the European Union – after its establishment under the Treaty on European Union of 1992 (in the context of economic security).

In the context of the phenomenon of migration, one of the consequences of the political transformation was also the "opening" of the Polish borders, which benefited both foreign migrants (e.g. The Vietnamese, or citizens of former Soviet republics) [21, p. 108], and Polish outward migrants, who were given the opportunity for easier movement outside the country, e.g. for work purposes. An example of this phenomenon was the increase in migration to countries with a relatively high standard of living for their citizens, such as the United States, Germany or France.

As already mentioned, undoubtedly one of the turning points in the history of outward migration of Poles was also Poland's accession to the European Union on the 1st of May 2004. This was done together with Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus, as well as six countries with similar geopolitical conditions to Poland (former states of the so-called Eastern Bloc during the Cold War), i.e.: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary.

In the context of outward migration, then, due to the political and economic integration of these countries (including Poland) with the countries of Western Europe, their citizens faced the opportunity of significantly easier than before (due to the free movement of persons) external labour migration to other European Union countries.

2.1. Scale and main destinations of Polish outward migration after 2004

Since 2004, the year Poland joined the European Union, a steady increase can be observed (with the exception of 2018 compared to 2017) in the scale of outward migration of Poles – mainly to other European countries, as shown in Table 1. As it has been mentioned, for statistical purposes, data on temporary migration were used.

As may be observed from the analysis of the above statistical data, the greatest increase in the scale of outward migration took place between 2004 and 2005, which was determined at that time by the emergence of a new, simplified possibility of migration to the EU Member States.

Table 1. Scale of outward migration of Poles for temporary residence 2004-2018 (excluding 2006-2009)

Year	Scale of outward migration in thousands										
	2004	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
In total	1000	1450	2000	2060	2130	2196	2320	2397	2515	2540	2455
Europe	770	1200	1685	1754	1816	1891	2013	2098	2214	2241	2115

Source: Developed on the basis [9].

As already mentioned, the dominant dimension of migration is economic. The migration of Poles exemplifies this aspect, therefore the scale of outward migration after 2004 is closely related to the scale of unemployment, which is one of the “push” factors.

The scale of registered unemployment in Poland in 2004-2019 is shown in Figure 1.

As can be observed, Poland’s accession to the European Union resulted, due to outward migration of many persons affected by labour market difficulties, in a significant fall in unemployment – between 2004 and 2008 by as much as 10 percentage points, i.e. by half. At the same time, it should be noted that despite the fact that it is easier than before to migrate for work to Western European countries and its positive impact on economic indicators in Poland (mainly a decrease in the level of unemployment), this fact should not be equated with an immediate improvement in the living standards of citizens as a result of the internal policy of state authorities. The cited decrease in the level of unemployment was not determined by the actions of the authorities of the Republic of Poland at that time, but by an external factor, namely Poland’s accession to the European Union.

The increase in unemployment between 2008 and 2013 was caused by the global economic crisis, the effects of which, due to globalisation, were experienced by practically all countries in the world, including Poland, and one of its consequences was the intensification of negative trends in labour markets. This scale began to decline after the global economy gradually stabilised.

As may be observed on the example of Poland, economic migrations and their scale are closely related to economic indicators of a given country, or even region (in the case of internal migrations), including the scale of unemployment, as well as the level of salaries or demand for employment in specific sectors (e.g. services, industry).

This dependence is also visible on the example of external labour migration of Poles after 2004, since migrants, as the direction of their departure, most often chose countries with favourable economic indicators and high demand for foreign workers (who most often decide to migrate temporarily – with later return to their home country) on their labour markets, which is shown in Table 2. The statistics include the United Kingdom, which withdrew from

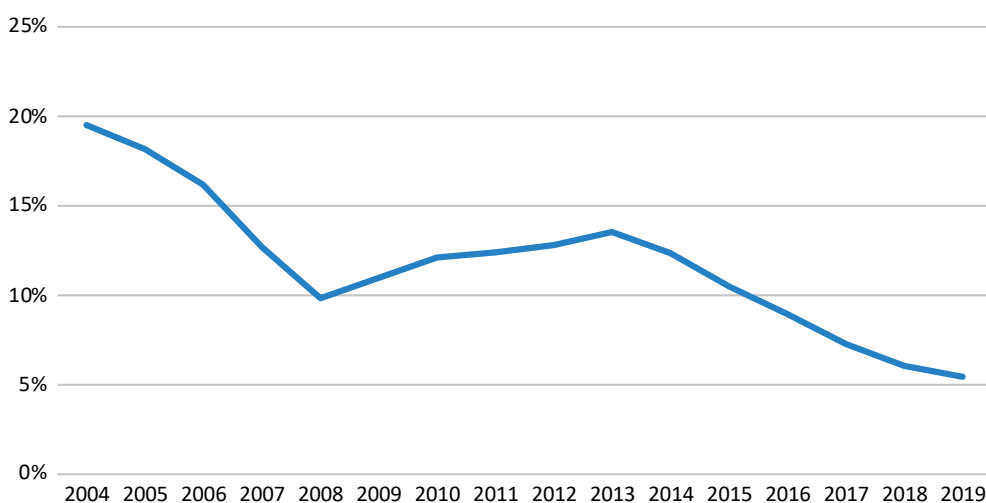


Fig. 1. The scale of registered unemployment in Poland in 2004-2019

Source: Developed on the basis of [22].

Table 2. Estimation of outward migration of Poles for temporary residence between 2004 and 2018 to European Union Member States (excluding 2006-2009)

Country	Year										
	2004	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	Scale in thousands										
Austria	15	25	29	25	28	31	34	36	39	40	41
Belgium	13	21	45	47	48	49	49	52	54	54	54
Cyprus	–	–	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Czech Republic	–	–	7	7	8	8	9	9	9	9	10
Denmark	–	–	19	21	23	25	28	30	32	33	34
Finland	0.4	0.7	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
France	30	44	60	62	63	63	63	64	64	64	64
Greece	13	17	16	15	14	12	9	8	8	7	7
Spain	26	37	48	40	37	34	32	30	29	28	28
The Netherlands	23	43	92	95	97	103	109	112	116	120	123
Ireland	15	76	133	120	118	115	113	111	112	112	113
Germany	385	430	440	470	500	560	614	655	687	703	706
Portugal	0.5	0.6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sweden	11	17	33	36	38	40	43	46	49	50	51
United Kingdom (until 2019)	150	340	580	625	637	642	685	720	788	793	695
Italy	59	70	92	94	97	96	96	94	93	92	90

Source: Developed on the basis [9].

the European Union in 2020 (which will probably reduce the scale of outward migration of Poles to that country in the long term) [23, p. 136].

On the basis of the analysis of the quoted statistical data, it may be observed that the scale of outward migration of Poles after 2004 has been increasing in most of the analysed countries. The most popular destinations were (in order): the United Kingdom, Germany and Ireland. The first of the two countries may be described as the “traditional” migration destinations of Poles, also during the existence of the Polish People’s Republic (at that time – before the reunification of Germany in 1990 to the Federal Republic of Germany – a capitalist country). Referring to E.S. Lee’s theory, the factors “pulling” Polish migrants to leave in these cases were (and still are), apart from the economic factor, theoretically easier conditions for adaptation in a new environment due to the presence of previously arrived compatriots (which is also

a reference to the migration network theory), as well as the absence of a language barrier for some migrants due to the widespread education in Poland of English and German [24, p. 222-223]. For Germany, the geographical proximity to Poland is also a “pulling” factor, which undoubtedly influences the easier possibility to move between the two countries, yet is also important in psychological terms. Theoretically, it may result in a smaller sense of separation from the relatives and a possible easier return in case of life failures (e.g. inability to find employment in the target country, problems with making a living, etc.) during the outward migration [25, p. 237-243]. Another example of a country characterised by a high percentage of Polish citizens in the labour market, also due to the presence of a significant number of Poles previously arrived there, is the Netherlands, which occupies the fourth position in the analysed ranking. However, the best example of the “new”, previously unpopular destination for outward migration of Poles – especially in the context of the cited “pull” factor of theoretically easier adaptation due to the presence of previously arrived compatriots – is Ireland.

As may be noted in Table 2, the scale of Polish migration to this country at its peak (between 2005 and 2010) almost doubled, only to gradually decrease in subsequent years. The reasons for this trend can be attributed to three factors. First, the significant increase in migration of Poles to Ireland in the second half of the first decade of the 21st century was determined primarily by economic factors. During the period analysed, the country was characterised by significant economic growth, hence it was colloquially referred to as the “green island” (due to the national colours and the green colour associated with the boom), which translated, among other things, into a high need for workers. This demand was so significant that the participation of foreigners in the labour market was necessary to maintain the mentioned high level, which, due to the lack of difficulties in employment, opened the possibility for relatively “easy” adaptation of migrants.

The second main reason was the “pull” factor, already mentioned several times, related to the popularity of this destination of outward migration among Poles. In the case of migration to Ireland, however, it was not only the temporary migration of one family member (sending earned money to Poland) that was characteristic but also the reunification of families as a result of the decision to migrate permanently.

This phenomenon, however, is related to the third reason, which is another “pulling” factor, not present, for example, in the case of migration to the United Kingdom, Germany, or the Netherlands, namely the cultural factor (which also includes the language aspect mentioned in the case of the United Kingdom and Germany – a significant number of Polish migrants use the English language used in Ireland) [26, p. 107-109]. Despite the apparent lack of cultural similarities between the Polish and Irish nationalities, several such “common” elements may be identified.

The first is the common dominant faith in both societies – in Poland and Ireland Catholicism is the most commonly declared religion [27, p. 269]. The second is the similar (though not shared) history of the two countries and nations. This is exemplified by the fact that independence was achieved at a similar time – after the end of the First World War: in the case of Poland in 1918 and Ireland in 1919. Another similarity was (in retrospect) the geopolitical situation, concerning complex relations with neighbours who had greater potential (economic, military). For Poland it was Germany and Russia, and for Ireland it was the UK. One of the historical similarities between the two countries is also the fact that in their history, both Poland and Ireland have experienced partition by their aforementioned neighbours [28, p. 111]. These factors may therefore contribute to the social sympathy of Irish society towards

Poles living in their country [29, p. 38]. This fact is undoubtedly another factor facilitating adaptation and therefore constitutes a “pull” factor.

Migration to Ireland began to gradually decline mainly due to the global economic crisis that began in 2008, the effects of which were significantly visible in the Irish economy. This was linked to the economic collapse, resulting in, among other things, a reduction in employment – including Polish migrants. This meant, therefore, that Ireland ceased to be (for Poles, among others) an equally “attractive” migration destination as before the global economic crisis, which for many persons resulted in the necessity to return to Poland.

Having indicated the scale and the most frequent destinations of Polish outward migration after 2004 (the so-called post-accession migration), it was reasonable to examine to what extent this phenomenon (including its increase) affects the economic security of the Republic of Poland.

2.2. Outward migration of Poles after 2004 and Poland’s Economic Security

In order to assess Poland’s economic security after 2004, including in the context of the scale of outward migration, it was reasonable to analyse Poland’s two main economic indicators: gross domestic product and gross domestic product *per capita* on the basis of an analysis of World Bank statistics. In order to examine the relationship between economic indicators and the scale of outward migration, it was decided to keep the time frames identical to those indicated in Table 1.

Table 3 presents the value of Poland’s gross domestic product in trillions of USD from 2004 to 2018 (excluding 2006-2009). In comparison, in 2006 it was USD 344.749, in 2007 it was USD 429.064, in 2008 USD 533.816, and in 2009 USD 439.796.

Table 4 shows the value of Poland’s gross domestic product *per capita* in thousands of USD from 2004 to 2018 (excluding 2006-2009). In comparison, in 2006 it was USD 8.460, in 2007 USD 9.940, in 2008 USD 11.990 and in 2009 USD 12.510.

As can be observed in the Table 3, Poland’s accession to the EU in 2004 was followed by a significant economic growth (expressed in terms of GDP), which was directly related to the “opening up” of the Polish economy and the free movement of goods, services and capital between Poland and the other EU Member States. The reasons for this should be seen in the recapitalisation of Poland from EU funds, as well as in the increase in investment by foreign entities (e.g. companies). During the analysed period, the only moments when the value of Poland’s GDP decreased were: 2009 (due to the global economic crisis), 2012 and 2015-2016. Despite these episodes, the average scale of Poland’s GDP growth after joining the EU in 2004 is clearly upward.

The situation is similar for the second key economic indicator, GDP *per capita*. However, in contrast to the overall GDP, the reduction in its value after 2004 was only recorded in 2015, which means that despite the global economic crisis of 2008-2009, the average earnings of Poles also grew during this period. The growth of Poland’s GDP *per capita* is also directly related to its accession to the EU, as, inter alia, due to the above-mentioned business freedoms and the increase in foreign investment, the level of unemployment has decreased (mainly due to the creation of new jobs), which has also resulted in an increase in income.

On the basis of the analysis of statistics included in Tables 1 to 4, it may be concluded that the increase in the scale of outward migration after 2004 did not have a negative impact on the economic security of Poland and its citizens, because despite the occurrence of this

Table 3. The value of Poland's gross domestic product in trillions of USD from 2004 to 2018 (excluding 2006-2009)

Poland's gross domestic product in trillions of USD											
Year	2004	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
In total	225.102	306.125	479.321	528.832	500.361	524.234	545.389	477.577	472.028	526.216	585.664

Source: Developed on the basis of [30].

Table 4. The Value of Poland's gross domestic product per capita in thousands of USD from 2004 to 2018 (excluding 2006-2009)

Poland's gross domestic product per capita in thousands of USD											
Year	2004	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
In total	6.260	7.340	12.730	12.900	13.220	13.480	13.640	13.320	12.710	12.730	14.100

Source: Developed on the basis of [31].

phenomenon, Poland in average (including the above-mentioned periods of a downward trend) recorded a steady economic growth.

At the same time, this does not mean that a steady, long-term increase in the scale of outward migration will not adversely affect Poland's economic security in the future. The permanent loss of potential employees (especially specialised ones) may contribute to the slowdown of economic growth. This, in turn, will result in the need to fill these gaps with workers from abroad. This problem and the mentioned necessity are also perceived by the authorities of the Republic of Poland in the aforementioned provisions of strategic documents. Steady growth trend (exception due to the outbreak of the global SARS-COV-2 pandemic, significantly affecting the decline in population mobility is 2020 – the investigation of this trend, however, is material for separate studies) of the number of citizens of other countries (including those present in the Polish labour market), residing in Poland permanently is already a fact (as of 2021), which is presented in Figure 2.

Therefore, it appears that, in the context of migration, a potentially greater threat than the outward migration of Poles may be the increasing scale of migration of foreigners to Poland, which, despite its positive impact on the economy, may entail risks in areas such as cultural disputes (with native inhabitants), or an increase in the scale of crime (on the part of foreigners).

Conclusions

As may be observed from the analysis of the literature, in the context of outward migration the economic dimension is currently the dominant trend in the phenomenon analysed. In addition to the desire of migrants to improve their standard of living in financial terms, the economic dimension of migration and the nature of the trade-off between potential opportunities and threats for the state authorities is also linked to the demographic aspect. It refers to both emigrants and immigrants, including

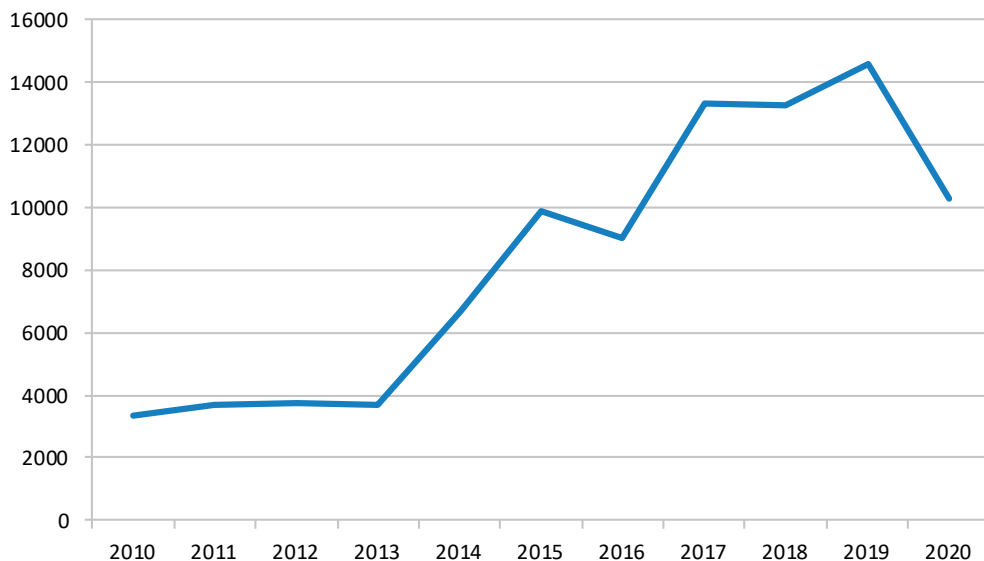


Fig. 2. Number of permanent residence permits issued in the Republic of Poland between 2010-2020

Source: Developed based on [32].

economic migrants. An ageing population and outward migration of workers may cause shortages in the labour market which, in turn, in the long term will have to be filled by foreigners.

This aspect can be seen, for example, in the case of the so-called north countries, which are to a large extent struggling with an excessively low birth rate that, due to labour market shortages, may have a long-term negative impact on the economic security of these countries. This, in turn, entails the need to fill job vacancies with people of other nationalities who, with the prerequisite of permanent residence in a country new to them, may also potentially have a positive impact on demographic security – by contributing to an increase in the birth rate. An important part of the economic dimension of migration is also the social aspect, associated with the need for the state authorities to organise a social policy system of which migrants are also beneficiaries.

As history indicates, outward migration has been an ever-present phenomenon in the case of the Polish nation on a significant scale since the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. On the basis of the statistical analysis, it should be stated that the last “wave” of Polish outward migration – after 2004 – was connected with Poland’s accession to the European Union, and the number of migrants can be recorded in millions of people. This migration is characterised by the dominance of the economic factor, related to the several percent scale of unemployment in Poland before 2004 and the lack of perspectives for changing the situation. As may be observed from the analysis of statistical data, the main directions of outward migration of Poles after 2004 were the United Kingdom, Germany and Ireland. The most important reasons for migration included favourable economic conditions in these countries, e.g. related to extensive needs in their labour markets (including seasonal work), as well as specific “migration traditions” associated with the presence of a high number of Polish migrants, which in theory might allow easier adaptation in the new environment. In a political context, however, migration to the UK is expected to decrease as a result of the country leaving the European Union (Brexit).

At the same time, it should be noted that, despite the fact that the outward labour migration after 2004 has significantly contributed to reducing the scale of unemployment in Poland, the state authorities should, through their actions, pursue a policy encouraging people to remain on the domestic labour market and, in the long term, also to return from outward migration to the country. Excessive outward migration from Poland may pose a threat to both economic and demographic security.

It therefore appears that despite the demonstrated increase in the scale of outward migration after 2004, it has not adversely affected Poland's economic security. As it can be observed on the basis of the analysis of the contents of strategic documents, in the context of the migration phenomenon in the coming years a greater challenge for the state authorities will be to strive for the maximisation of profits from the presence of foreigners in the domestic labour market and to mitigate potential threats resulting from the increase of the scale of migration to Poland, such as cultural disputes or criminal offences committed by persons who are not Polish citizens.

From the point of view of the state's development, as part of its migration policy it is necessary to develop a compromise between the benefits for the economy due to the participation of foreigners in the labour market (which is also a benefit for the migrants themselves) and the scale of outward migration of its own citizens, which if too high may, due to shortages in the domestic labour market, pose a threat to the state's economic security.

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Conflict of interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

Author contributions

The author contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethical statement

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

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Migracje zewnętrzne Polaków po 2004 roku – uwarunkowania, główne kierunki i wpływ na bezpieczeństwo ekonomiczne Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej

STRESZCZENIE

Celem badań prowadzonych na potrzeby artykułu była eksploracja skali, przyczyn oraz kierunków polskiej migracji zewnętrznej (poza granice państwa) po wstąpieniu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej do Unii Europejskiej w 2004 r., a także ocena wpływu jej wzrostu na bezpieczeństwo ekonomiczne państwa. Przedmiot badań stanowiło zjawisko polskiej migracji zewnętrznej po 2004 r.

W procesie badawczym zastosowano teoretyczną metodę badawczą – analizę źródeł (z wykorzystaniem techniki analizy treści) literaturowych, dokumentów strategicznych oraz danych statystycznych.

Jak wynika z przeprowadzonych badań, głównymi kierunkami migracji zewnętrznej Polaków po 2004 r. są Wielka Brytania, Niemcy oraz Irlandia, a do najważniejszych przyczyn tejże migracji należą korzystne warunki gospodarcze w tych państwach oraz obecność wcześniej przybyłych tam polskich migrantów.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

migracja zewnętrzna, Rzeczpospolita Polska, bezpieczeństwo ekonomiczne, Unia Europejska, polityka migracyjna

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