

Zbornik radova

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Migracije i identitet: kultura, ekonomija, država

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Predgovor

Međunarodna znanstveno-stručna konferencija *Migracije i identitet: kultura, ekonomija, država* posvećena temama migracija, identiteta i društvenih promjena okupila je istraživače iz različitih područja društvenih i humanističkih znanosti te predstavnike institucija i organizacija iz Hrvatske i inozemstva. Rezultat tih rasprava i izlaganja jest ovaj Zbornik, koji donosi pregled aktualnih istraživanja i uvida u širok spektar migracijskih i demografskih procesa, kulturnih i identitetskih transformacija te suvremenih političkih i društvenih izazova.

Zbornik sadrži 69 radova, od kojih je 65 na hrvatskom, a 4 na engleskom jeziku. Radove potpisuje ukupno 105 autora iz različitih znanstvenih i stručnih institucija. Svi su radovi prošli postupak recenzije te predstavljaju originalne znanstvene i stručne doprinose unutar svojih tematskih područja. Važno je napomenuti da tekstovi nisu jezično i grafički usklađivani, nego su objavljeni kako su ih autori napisali te doradili prema primjedbama i komentarima recenzenata nakon čega su lektorirani.

Tematski radovi su raspoređeni u devet cjelina koje obuhvaćaju migracije i povijest, migracije, gospodarstvo i održivi razvoj, migracije, kultura i identitet, migranti, azilanti i integracijske politike, nacionalne manjine – povijesni i suvremeni aspekti, otočne migracije i mobilnost – utjecaj na lokalne zajednice, baštine i razvoj, suvremeni aspekti iseljavanja i povratak, suvremeni demografski trendovi, tržište rada, izazovi zapošljavanja i integracije stranih radnika. Riječ je o interdisciplinarnom korpusu radova koji povezuju demografiju, sociologiju, antropologiju, politologiju, povijest, komunikologiju, filologiju i srodna područja, čime Zbornik dobiva širinu i dubinu nužnu za razumijevanje migracija kao složenog društvenog fenomena.

Cjelina *Migracije i povijest* prikazuje migracijske procese kroz dužu povijesnu perspektivu, analizirajući promjene u kretanju stanovništva, demografske obrasce, povijesne granice, kulturne interakcije te razvoj identiteta kroz stoljeća.

U cjelini *Migracije, gospodarstvo i održivi razvoj* radovi istražuju odnos migracija i gospodarskih trendova, utjecaj demografskih promjena na ekonomske procese te izazove održivog razvoja u kontekstu globalne mobilnosti.

U središtu su cjeline *Migracije, kultura i identitet* kulturne transformacije, identitet-ski procesi, uloga kulturne baštine i interkulturnih kontakata u oblikovanju pojedinačnih i kolektivnih identiteta.

U cjelini *Migranti, azilanti i integracijske politike* radovi se bave suvremenim migracijama prisile, pristupima integraciji stranaca, pravnim okvirom, izazovima javnih politika i percepcijama lokalne zajednice.

Cjelina *Nacionalne manjine – povijesni i suvremeni aspekti* donosi analize položaja manjinskih zajednica, prava, kulturne autonomije, političkog predstavljanja i društvenih odnosa uz komparativne uvide u regionalnom kontekstu.

Cjelina *Otočne migracije i mobilnost – utjecaj na lokalne zajednice, baštine i razvoj* poseban fokus stavlja na otočna područja, sezonske i trajne migracije, mobilnost stanovništva te odnos migracija i očuvanja kulturne baštine.

Cjelina *Suvremeni aspekti iseljavanja i povratak* razmatra aktualne trendove iseljavanja, motivacije i posljedice emigracije kao i mogućnosti povratka te reintegracije povratnika.

U cjelini *Suvremeni demografski trendovi* radovi prikazuju analitičke uvide u mortalitet, natalitet, starenje stanovništva i druge demografske pokazatelje koji oblikuju razvoj Hrvatske i susjednih država.

Fokus je cjeline *Tržište rada, izazovi zapošljavanja i integracije stranih radnika* na stranim radnicima, radnoj migraciji, položaju radnika na tržištu rada, integracijskim praksama te percepciji stranih radnika u lokalnoj zajednici.

Zahvaljujemo autorima na njihovim doprinosima, recenzentima na stručnoj i savjetnoj evaluaciji te svima koji su sudjelovali u organizaciji konferencije i pripremi ovog izdanja. Nadamo se da će Zbornik biti poticaj daljnjem istraživanju, dijalogu i boljem razumijevanju tema koje oblikuju suvremena društva u Europi i svijetu.

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The Dynamics of Migration from Romania, Serbia and Ukraine to Slovakia in the Context of Statistical Data

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to clarify the dynamics of migration flows, analyse, and interpret key trends in migration from Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine to Slovakia. The research is based on statistical data, supplemented by findings from our own field research. The introduction provides a description of a migration situation in Slovakia. Migrants from Ukraine, Serbia, and Romania are characterized in terms of socio-demographic indicators, type of residence, and reasons for migration. Particular attention is given to labour migration, along with an analysis of the integration processes of migrants. The findings indicate that migration from these three countries to Slovakia is primarily driven by economic and political-power factors. Within the integration processes, we highlight the most significant barriers and emphasize the role of cultural and linguistic proximity, which is particularly pronounced among migrants with the status of foreign Slovaks. We assume that these groups of migrants will continue to significantly contribute to the overall structure of Slovakia's foreign population in the future, especially in the category of labour migration.

Keywords: *migration, Slovakia, Serbs, Ukrainians, Romanians*

INTRODUCTION

Slovakia, historically a country of emigration, has experienced significant changes in migration patterns in recent decades, gradually transforming into an immigration

destination. This shift is primarily linked to the country's accession to the European Union in 2004, economic transformation, and an increasing demand for labour. In terms of country of origin, Ukrainians, Romanians, and Serbs constitute the largest foreign populations. Each of these groups has specific migration motives and distinct integration experiences. Many migrants arrive in search of better employment opportunities, while others migrate for educational purposes or family reunification. The differences among them primarily stem from their legal status and EU membership. While migrants from Ukraine and Serbia, as third-country nationals, face certain restrictions and barriers, Romanian migrants have enjoyed unrestricted access to the labour market since 2007 as EU citizens. Additionally, since 2022, Ukrainian migration has been significantly driven by the need for refuge due to the ongoing war.

The issue of migration in Slovakia has become a regular subject of public discourse, particularly in relation to the growing number of foreigners, labour shortages, the necessity of migrant integration, and demographic and security challenges. Examining migration flows and the composition of migrants, especially those from the most numerous groups—is therefore highly relevant and urgent.

This study is part of the APVV project *“Labour Migration from Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine to Slovakia and Its Cultural and Social Impacts.”* The project investigates the consequences of these migration movements not only at the national and regional levels but also in the migrants' countries of origin. This text serves as a foundational study for the project, introducing the issue of Romanian, Serbian, and Ukrainian migrants in Slovakia, primarily from a statistical perspective. Its main goal is to identify, analyse, and interpret the dynamics and trends of migration from these three key source countries. The presence of migrants will be explained in the context of Slovakia's evolving migration situation over recent decades, with a particular focus on labour migration patterns, as well as the specifics of integration processes.

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

For our research, scientific studies focusing on migrants within broader cultural, demographic or economic contexts are particularly relevant. In the following text, we will concentrate exclusively on studies that examine Romanians, Serbs, and Ukrainians in Slovakia, as they constitute the primary subject of our interest. Given their numbers and their economic and cultural significance, we consider the scholarly attention devoted to these migrant groups to be insufficient.

Sekulová (2010) examines Romanian migrants, who, following Romania's accession to the EU, became one of the most dynamically growing groups of labour migrants

in Slovakia. She focuses on the recruitment of labour migrants in Romania, emphasizing the role of social networks in migration decision-making. She identifies the Slovak minority in Romania as an important source of economic migration to Slovakia. The topic of the Slovak minority in Romania, as well as the issue of ethnic identification and the integration of Slovaks from Romania into Slovak society, is further explored by Bošelová (2017).

The motivations, circumstances of arrival, and integration processes of Serbian migrants in Slovakia are investigated by Zlatanović and Marušiak (2024), with a particular focus on the migration of Slovaks from Vojvodina. In their study, *“Co-Ethnic Migration of Vojvodina Slovaks to Slovakia: Institutional Frameworks and Everyday Interaction Practices”*, they examine legislative changes concerning Slovaks abroad, as well as ethnic self-definition among Serbian Slovaks in Slovakia and their sense of non-recognition. Stojšin et al. (2021), in their study *“Characteristics of Migration from Serbia to Slovakia”*, analyse Serbian migration to Slovakia based on research conducted in the Serbian municipality of Kovačica. Their findings indicate that both long-term and seasonal migration are predominantly driven by economic factors. Migrants tend to favor Slovakia, particularly due to the advantages offered by the Slovak Expatriate Card.

The issue of Ukrainians in Slovakia has been examined in greater depth, with studies primarily focusing on the social and cultural integration of individuals who arrived before or after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in 2022. Hábel and Veselková (2023) investigate the employment of Ukrainian migrants one year after the war began. According to their findings, migrants who arrived in Slovakia before 2022 have been more successful in the labour market. In contrast, the group of post-2022 refugees consist predominantly of women, who face greater challenges in securing employment and tend to work in low-skilled occupations. Their integration is often hindered by caregiving responsibilities for family members. Similar conclusions are drawn by Seresová and Štefančík (2024). In their study *“Experience of Ukrainian Migrants with Integration in Slovakia”*, they focus on Ukrainian migrants who arrived before February 2022, highlighting that cultural and linguistic proximity, as well as favourable labour market conditions with demand for low-skilled workers, facilitate their integration.

The employment integration of Ukrainians is also explored by Papcunová et al. (2023). Their research, conducted in the Košice region, reveals that refugees face language barriers, limited job opportunities, and discrimination. Voluntary migrants encounter labour competition, bureaucratic obstacles, and increased discrimination against Ukrainians after 2022.

Kazmyrchuk investigates the religiousness of Ukrainian refugees as an indicator of their adaptive potential to cultural integration. In the study *“The Religiousness of Ukrainian Refugees in Slovakia as an Indicator of their Adaptive Potential to Cultural Integration”* (2024a), she examines how forced migration has influenced religious practices and cultural adaptation. She identifies their adaptive potential in their pragmatic approach and flexibility in performing religious practices, which allows them to adjust to the dynamics of the host country while preserving their religious identity. Based on interviews and survey research, she identifies several adaptation barriers, including language differences, bureaucracy, expectations of returning to Ukraine, and prejudices of Slovaks. Kazmyrchuk also examines the role of employment in the cultural adaptation of Ukrainian refugees in her 2023 study, arguing that obtaining employment significantly influences integration into the new environment, shapes cultural ties with other Ukrainians, and facilitates the acquisition of new cultural norms.

Among international sources addressing the topic of Ukrainian, Serbian, and Romanian migrants in Europe, notable contributions include Leontiyeva and Kopecká (2018) *“Migration of Ukrainian Students to the Czech Republic: Human Capital Perspectives”*; Buzarov (2023) *“Tendencies of Adaptation and Integration of Immigrants from Ukraine in the EU After the Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine”*; Rašić and Antonijević (2023) *“Aspects of the Integration of the Third and Fourth Generation of Serbian Migrant Workers in Vienna”*; and Noja et al. (2018) *“Turning Points in Migrants’ Labor Integration in Europe and Benefit Spillovers for Romania and Serbia.”*

METHODOLOGY

The data necessary to achieve the research objectives were obtained through an analysis of statistical records from both national and international institutions. These include the Statistical Office, the Ministry of the Interior, the Bureau of Border and Foreign Police, the Office of Labour, Social Affairs, and Family, the Ministry of Education, Eurostat, and others. These data are further supplemented by information gathered through field research conducted in two different settings.

The first study examines the situation of Ukrainian female refugees who arrived in Slovakia following the outbreak of war in Ukraine. This research was carried out in December 2024 in Košice through semi-structured interviews with 31 Ukrainian women and six staff members from centres. The interviews were conducted in collaboration with the Integration Centre of the Košice Region and the Leisure Centre of the City of Košice. All interviews were voluntary and anonymous and were conducted in Slovak, Ukrainian, or Russian. The main topics explored arrival and adaptation in Slovakia, labour market integration, and cultural participation.

The second study focused on the migration experiences of Slovaks in Romania and Serbia. This research was conducted between September and December 2024 in Vojvodina (Serbia) and in Nadlak and Bihor (Romania). Interviews were carried out with local representatives and key actors involved in migration to Slovakia. Respondents were selected based on recommendations from local authorities. The primary topics discussed included migration motivations, the process of relocation to Slovakia, and the impact of migration on Slovak communities.

Migration situation in Slovakia after EU accession

Slovakia's accession to the EU in 2004 and its entry into the Schengen Area in 2007 marked significant milestones in the country's migration landscape. These events facilitated new employment opportunities, simplified administrative procedures, and enhanced the country's attractiveness, leading to a substantial increase in the number of foreigners.

In 2004, Slovak authorities registered over 22,000 foreigners with valid residence permits, accounting for 0.41% of the total population. By 2023, this number had risen to 311,406, and in 2024, it further increased to 337,140 (PPZ ÚHaCP, 2019; ŠÚ SR, 2023, 2024). Although the number of foreigners has been growing dynamically, Slovakia still has a relatively low proportion of foreign residents compared to other EU countries. In 2021, the share of foreigners in Slovakia's total population was the third lowest in the EU (Eurostat, 2021).

Table 1. Foreigners with a residence permit in Slovakia (Letavajová, Divinský, 2019; PPZ ÚHaCP, 2004 – 2023)

Category/Year	2004	2008	2012	2016	2018	2021	2023
Number of foreigners	22,108	52,706	67,877	93,247	121,264	167,519	311,406
Share of foreigners (%)	0.41	0.97	1.25	1.72	2.22	3.08	5.7
Share of EÚ + EFTA nationals (%)	49.5	63.1	63.1	55.8	46.1	33.5	17.9

In 2004, the largest foreign communities in Slovakia consisted of citizens from neighboring countries – Ukrainians, Czechs, Poles, and Hungarians (PPZ ÚHaCP, 2004). By 2024, however, third-country nationals (266,898) outnumbered EU citizens (55,508) among the foreign population. The most significant groups include Ukrainians (197,004), Serbs (17,508), Czechs (12,690), Vietnamese (10,186), Hungarians (9,843), Russians (8,746), and Romanians (6,478) (PPZ ÚHaCP, 2024).

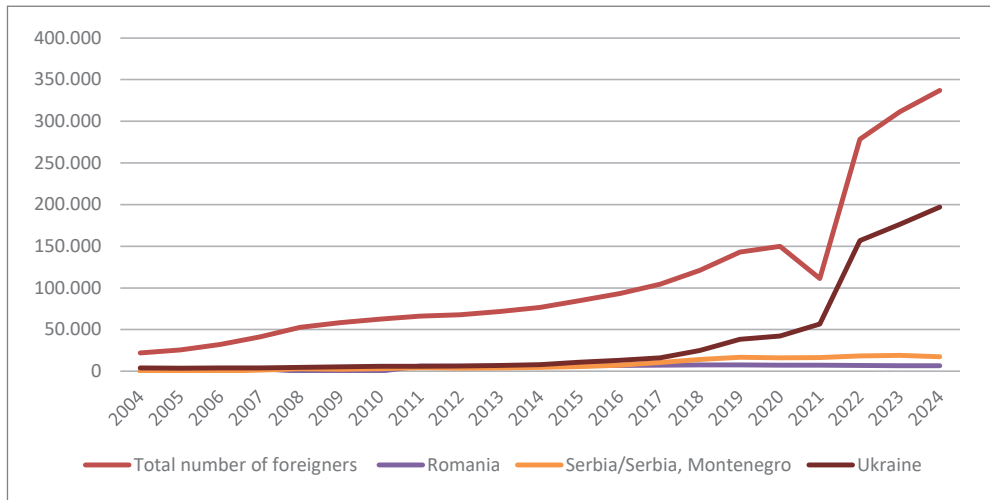


Chart 1. Number of permitted residence for citizens of Romania, Serbia and Ukraine, 2004 – 2024 (PPZ ÚHaCP, 2004 – 2024)

In the case of third-country nationals, authorities also record the type and reasons for their stay. In 2024, more than half of all temporary stays were granted for business purposes (39.6%) and employment (25.7%), followed by family reunification (13.6%), study (12.4%), and the status of Slovak expatriates (7.6%). The Ukrainian population in Slovakia primarily receives tolerated stay status, which grants them temporary refuge. Among the Serbian population, temporary residence is predominant. (PPZ ÚHaCP, 2024)

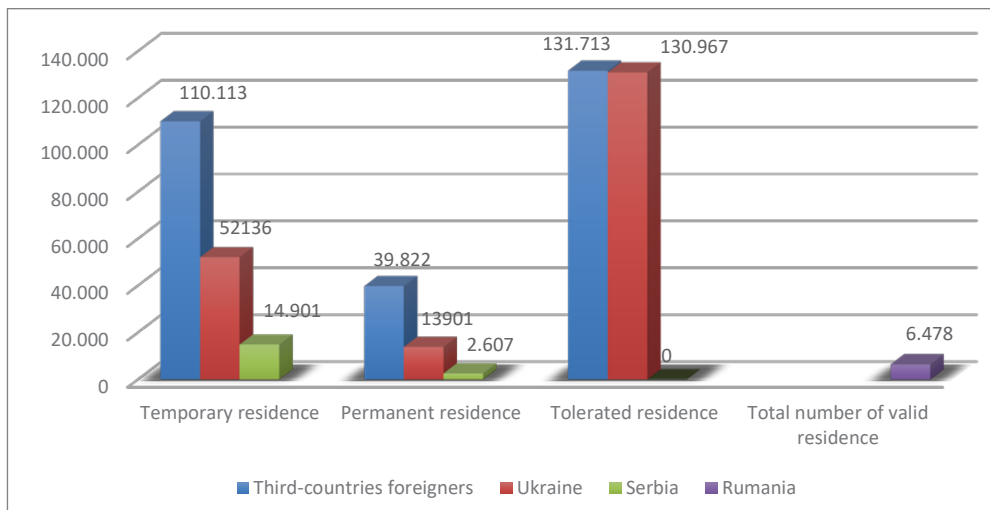


Chart 2. Types of residence of foreigners from Serbia, Ukraine and Romania, 2024 (PPZ ÚHaCP, 2024)

Labour migration

The number of labour migrants in Slovakia has been growing dynamically since 2004, including during the global economic crisis (ÚPSVaR, 2004, 2009). EU citizens have the same status in labour relations in Slovakia as citizens of the Slovak Republic. Their employers are only required to fulfill a reporting obligation. Foreign nationals from third countries must obtain an employment permit. Since 2011, they have been able to apply for a so-called blue card. The aim of this change was to simplify economic migration and employ highly qualified migrants. In 2023, 100,583 foreign nationals were employed in Slovakia, of which 32,770 were EU citizens and 78,632 were citizens of third countries. By September 2024, this number had increased to 111,402. Labour migrants in Slovakia are primarily employed as operators and assemblers of machinery and equipment, including both third-country nationals and EU citizens (ÚPSVaR, 2023, 2024).

Table 2. Working foreigners in Slovakia, 2004 – 2023 (Letavajová – Divinský, 2019; PP ÚHaCP, 2004 – 2023)

Category/Year	2004	2008	2012	2016	2018	2021	2023
Number of foreigners	22,108	52,706	67,877	93,247	121,264	167,519	311,406
Number of working foreigners	3,417	13,979	11,547	35,090	69,116	68,188	100,583
Of which men	2,656	11,303	8,672	25,381	51,138	48,176	61,812
Share of working foreigners out of the total number of foreigners (%)	15.5	26.5	17.0	37.6	57.0	40.7	32.3

The most significant groups of labour migrants in Slovakia come from Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine. While in 2004, only 65 Romanians were employed in Slovakia, their number increased to 2,018 following Romania's accession to the EU in 2007, and a year later, with 2,515 individuals, they became the largest group of labour migrants in the country. By 2024, there were 7,068 Romanians employed in Slovakia (ÚPSVaR, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2024).

Serbian labour migration was minimal in 2004 (5 employed). However, it increased annually, and by 2014, several hundred Serbian workers were recorded. After 2015, due to the deepening economic and political crisis in Serbia, their number grew to 1,700. The peak of their immigration occurred in 2018, with 13,561 individuals. Since then, their numbers have gradually declined, and in 2024, there were 8,949

employed Serbs. Approximately two-thirds of both Serbian and Romanian labour migrants are men (ÚPSVaR, 2014, 2015, 2018, 2024).

After Slovakia's EU accession, only 354 Ukrainians were employed in the country. By December 2021, 19,453 Ukrainians were registered. Three years later, 44,363 Ukrainians were employed in Slovakia (ÚPSVaR, 2021, 2024). This figure should be supplemented by Ukrainian refugees who can also seek employment. In 2022, 15,000 Ukrainian refugees were employed in Slovakia. Estimates from 2023 indicate that approximately 40% of all refugees are active in the Slovak labour market. It is expected that their employment will continue to rise, although compared to the Czech Republic and Poland, the rate of employment and overall employment is about half as high (Klíčik and Kubala, 2023).

Foreign nationals from Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine employed in Slovakia primarily work as operators, helpers, and unqualified workers, as well as skilled workers and craftsmen. An additional approximately 10% are employed as skilled workers and craftsmen or in services and trade. Less frequently, they are employed as managerial staff. The education level of these groups of foreign workers is most often secondary vocational or complete secondary education (ÚPSVaR, 2024).

Students

After a period of stagnation in the number of foreign students, an increase began to manifest in Slovakia during the 2006/2007 academic year (Divinský, 2005). However, in international comparison, the number of foreign university students remained very low, ranking third from the bottom among EU countries in 2006 (Divinský, 2009: 55). The growing number of international students can also be demonstrated by their share of the total student population at Slovak universities. In 2004, foreign students enrolled in full-time studies at the first and second levels accounted for 1.5% of the total, and by 2023, their numbers had increased seventeen fold (CVTI SR, 2023).

In the 2023/2024 academic year, public universities in Slovakia registered 17,216 foreign students at the first and second levels and 433 students at the third level of full-time studies. Approximately half of them are women. The greatest interest is shown in Comenius University in Bratislava (3,034) and the Technical University in Košice (4,615). The majority of these students are from Ukraine, with their numbers rising dramatically after 2022. Currently, 10,072 Ukrainians are studying at the first and second levels, of which 4,552 are women. Additionally, young people from Serbia (291) and Romania (30) are also enrolled at universities in Slovakia (CVTI, 2024, 2024).

Table 3. Romanian, Serbian and Ukrainian university students in the first and second cycle of full-time studies at Slovak public universities (CVTI, 2003 – 2024)

Academic year	Nombre of foreign students	Romanians	Serbians	Ukrainians
2002/2003	1 499	74	205	108
2005/2006	1 604	66	199	83
2010/2011	3 391	68	287	98
2015/2016	5 092	42	365	663
2020/2021	10 839	33	477	4 666
2023/2024	17 216	30	291	10 072

Refugees

Slovakia is not a typical destination country for refugees. In 2001, the number of asylum seekers exceeded 1,000, and in 2004, it reached 11,395. The applicants mainly came from India, Afghanistan, Iraq, Bangladesh, and Russia (MÚ MV SR, 2020). Even though the “migration crisis” of 2015 and 2016 significantly impacted public discourse, the number of refugees in Slovakia did not substantially change.

Another peak was marked by the arrival of Ukrainian nationals following the outbreak of the war in February 2022. This event radically increased the number of Ukrainians in Slovakia and altered the overall structure of foreign nationals. By the end of 2022, the number of Ukrainians in Slovakia had risen to 156,881, representing an almost 280% increase within a single year (MÚ MV SR, 2022). By mid-2024, tolerated residence permits for temporary refuge had been granted to 122,868 individuals, of which 122,165 were Ukrainians (PPZ ÚHaCP, 2024). In terms of gender, the majority are women (65%), with approximately one-third consisting of children (38,274 individuals) and 8% being persons over 60 years old (MV SR, Temporary Refuge, 2024). From 2010 to the present, Slovakia has received 5,326 asylum applications. Among the applicants in 2024, there were 24 Ukrainians and 2 Serbs (MÚ MV SR, 2024).

Integration

Romanians, Serbs, and Ukrainians, as individuals and groups, are also involved in cultural and social activities in Slovakia. Newcomers have the opportunity to utilize existing social networks created by their fellow countrymen or to establish new ones. The integration process is supported by various local institutions. A notable example of successful collaboration between the city, state, and NGOs is the city of

Nitra and the ComIn contact centre, as well as the Integration Centre of the Košice Region. The Nitra and Košice self-governing regions are among those with the highest numbers of foreign nationals, including Ukrainian refugees. In 2024, 36,638 foreign nationals were registered in the Košice region, and 30,926 in the Nitra region (PPZ ÚHaCP, 2024).

Official associations, such as the Union of Rusyns and Ukrainians in Slovakia or the Serbian Association in Slovakia, also contribute to integration. Informal groups on social networks are also numerous, uniting thousands of members from across Slovakia or specific regions (e.g., the group “Romani in Slovakia” – 9,000 members, “Serbs in Trnava and Surroundings” – 3,000 members, “Ukrainians in Slovakia” – 18,500 members). According to testimonies from Romanian and Serbian Slovaks, informal groups were also created by Slovaks from Vojvodina (Serbia) or Bihar (Romania) who studied or worked in Nitra. Their integration was facilitated primarily by their knowledge of the Slovak language.

Research on the integration processes of Ukrainian women refugees in Košice provides additional insights. They consider finding employment as the most crucial aspect of integration. Many of them are in Slovakia without their husbands and become single mothers. Our research suggests the following findings:

1. In the initial period, female refugee mainly encounter the following barriers to labour market integration: insufficient language skills and childcare responsibilities. “I have three children, and my husband is in Ukraine. I need a job because I have three children to feed, clothe, and take care of.” (Ukrainian woman, born 1976)
2. The necessity to secure any job that can support them. Many works in low-skilled positions that do not match their education and previous work experience. Their professional and social status is significantly diminished. “I worked at a factory as a production operator. It was hard, 12 hours. The night shift was particularly difficult for me.” (Ukrainian woman a university degree, born 1983) “Today, I need to survive and earn money. As they say, there’s no time for learning the slow dances.” (Ukrainian woman with a university degree, born 1979)
3. Due to work-related exhaustion and the necessity to take care of their families, many close themselves off to tight family circles. The need to address primarily pragmatic issues prevents (or only minimally allows) them from participating in cultural or social activities, which they consider supplementary.

Status of a Slovak living abroad and citizenship

Many of the labour migrants from Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine come from Slovak minority communities, utilizing the status of a foreign Slovak, which provides them with simplified access to the labour market. According to Act 474/2005 Coll., Slovaks living abroad have the right to education, employment, or entrepreneurship without the need for a work permit, the right to own or acquire property, eligibility for social assistance, and access to social services. After three years of permanent residence, they can apply for Slovak citizenship. Applications for certificates of foreign Slovaks are issued by the Office of Slovaks Living Abroad. From 2012 to 2024, a total of 15,552 documents were processed, the majority for citizens of Serbia (11,600) and Ukraine (3,598). In the case of Romania, only 7 people were issued certificates. (Office of Slovaks Living Abroad, 2024)

The final stage of the integration process is the naturalization of foreigners. Between 2009 and 2018, Slovak authorities granted an average of 363 citizenships per year. The naturalization rate in Slovakia, compared to other EU countries, is dramatically low, ranging from 0.36% to 0.99%. (Eurostat, 2018; Bargerová, 2016) In 2023, Slovak citizenship was granted to 552 individuals, including 108 Ukrainians, 32 Serbs, and 24 Romanians. (Statistical Office, Granting of Citizenship, 2024)

As our research shows, after Romania's accession to the EU in 2007, Slovak identity cards are not of interest to Slovaks in Romania. On the other hand, they are widely requested by Slovaks in Serbia, as Serbia is not part of the EU. Another alternative that allows them to work in EU countries is acquiring citizenship from one of the EU member states. We have documented cases where Serbian Slovaks preferred Hungarian citizenship, as the requirements for obtaining it are simpler than for acquiring Slovak citizenship. "My daughter has Hungarian citizenship. She is both Serbian and Hungarian citizen. The Hungarians grant citizenship immediately, but the Slovaks only after years." (Serbian Slovak, born 1960) Respondents among Ukrainian refugees do not consider acquiring a Slovak identity card or citizenship necessary at this point, due to the opportunities provided by temporary asylum.

DISCUSSION

The study of statistical data and the results of field research confirm that Romanian, Serbian, and Ukrainian migrants belong to the most dynamically developing foreign groups in Slovakia. Their numerical and long-term dominance is particularly noticeable in the category of labour migrants. Although the initial situation for these three groups differs due to political and economic conditions and the reasons for their migration, the current or future integration into the labour market is the most signif-

icant element for all groups. They perceive work both as a source of income and as a means of integration into the new environment. We identified simplified labour and cultural integration primarily among foreigners from culturally and linguistically similar backgrounds. In this context, the importance of Slovaks from Romania and Serbia must be emphasized. Zlatanovič and Marušiak (2024) refer to “coethnic migration”, where migrants share the same ethnic background as the population of the country to which they migrate. This population benefits from institutional support for integration through the status of a foreign Slovak. Despite the obvious advantages of their arrival for Slovakia, it is necessary to focus on the problems they face. Zlatanovič and Marušiak (2024) mention issues related to ethnic identification and (non)acceptance by the Slovak population, the need to simplify the bureaucracy for obtaining citizenship, and the depopulation of Slovak minorities due to migration. These findings align with the results of our own research.

Regarding the Ukrainian population, migrants who arrived in Slovakia before the war show a greater degree of labour market integration. Ukrainian refugees face multiple barriers, primarily the need to care for children. Our findings in this area correspond to the research conclusions of Kazmyrchuk (2023, 2025), who identifies education and child-rearing as critical components of primary adaptation strategies for Ukrainian refugees in Slovakia. According to her, the main strategies for overcoming this barrier include enrolling children in local schools, parallel educational systems (enrolment in Slovak schools and online education in Ukraine), private education, and the use of support networks and adaptation classes.

CONCLUSION

Our findings suggest that the arrival of migrants from these three countries, which are among the largest groups, is primarily determined by political and economic factors. The main reason for their migration is employment. The Ukrainian and Serbian populations are also significantly represented in Slovakia as foreign university students and refugees. The presence of these populations may have an impact on various areas of life in Slovakia. Their arrival is particularly significant for the economy (e.g., the automotive industry), which has been facing a long-term labour shortage. In the cultural sphere, it enriches life and increases majority-minority interactions. As part of the integration processes, Romanians, Serbs, and Ukrainians must overcome several barriers and new challenges. Many of them utilize their knowledge of the Slovak language and cultural norms, which they acquired as members of Slovak ethnic minorities abroad. Their integration into the labour market may be facilitated by the higher education they obtained in Slovakia. Through these individuals, Slovakia can partially compensate for the brain drain that the country has long been

facing, as well as address the unfavorable demographic balance. We anticipate that these migrant groups will continue to play a significant role in the overall structure of the foreign population, particularly in the category of labour migration. Understanding the processes and challenges associated with the arrival of migrants in Slovakia, particularly from Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine, is of great importance for the country. It can contribute to the development of an effective migration policy, prevent negative consequences of migration, and improve the quality of life for both the domestic population and the foreign population.

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Dinamika migracije iz Rumunjske, Srbije i Ukrajine u Slovačku u kontekstu statističkih podataka

SAŽETAK

Cilj ovog istraživanja je razjasniti dinamiku migracijskih tokova te analizirati i interpretirati ključne trendove migracija iz Rumunjske, Srbije i Ukrajine u Slovačku. Istraživanje se temelji na statističkim podacima, nadopunjenima nalazima vlastitog terenskog istraživanja. U uvodu se daje opis migracijske situacije u Slovačkoj. Migranti iz Ukrajine, Srbije i Rumunjske prikazani su kroz sociodemografske pokazatelje, vrste boravišnih statusa i razloge migracije. Posebna se pažnja posvećuje radnoj migraciji, uz analizu procesa integracije migranata. Rezultati pokazuju da su migracije iz ovih triju zemalja u Slovačku prvenstveno potaknute ekonomskim i političko-moćnim čimbenicima. U okviru integracijskih procesa istaknute su najsnažnije prepreke te je naglašena uloga kulturne i jezične bliskosti, koja je posebno izražena među migrantima sa statusom stranih Slovaka. Pretpostavlja se da će ove skupine migranata i ubuduće značajno doprinosti ukupnoj strukturi stranog stanovništva Slovačke, osobito u kategoriji radne migracije.

Ključne riječi: migracija, Slovačka, Srbi, Ukrajinci, Rumunji