

The Challenges of Migration Policies in Croatia: Migration History, Trends and Prospects

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Summary

Traditionally a country of high emigration, with labour and political emigrants to overseas and western European countries, Croatia is expected to experience considerable changes in migration trends. Such a development will presumably include a reduction in emigration flows and gradual increase in immigration and transit flows after Croatia's accession to the EU. Homeland war (1991-1995) introduced new types of migrants in the area such as refugees or displaced population while recent processes of the EU accession open up space for labour immigration to Croatia and broader circular, transit and illegal migrations. Neighboring Central East European and South East European countries recorded similar migration trends after they joined the EU. These changes of migration trends along with the anticipated immigration surplus require the adjusting of Croatian migration policies to EU standards. Furthermore, they also urge the implementation of social measures in order to

prepare Croatian citizens for an increasing number of immigrants as a precondition for broader public acceptance of cultural and ethnic diversities, especially insisting upon the multiple benefits of immigration flows for Croatian society. Higher immigration will be most probably initiated by expected positive economic expansion in Croatia but also shaped by the extent of openness or closeness of receiving society towards new immigration groups with all the cultural varieties they can offer.

KEY WORDS: migration, migration policies, immigrants, Croatia, EU

Introduction

From the second half of the 20th century migration became more important issue in Europe, in both EU members and non-EU members. Aside from traditional and „old“ immigration countries like Great Britain, France or Germany, southern European countries and Central-East European Countries after the EU enlargement also transformed from

strictly emigrant to immigrant destinations. They recorded numerous and diverse movements of migration groups in recent two-three decades, with increasing heterogeneity in their ethnic, cultural or religious origin (European Council, 2001). Croatian accession to the EU will probably influence the changing of migration trends with gradual decrease of emigration and increase of immigration and transit movements.

All these changes will probably face Croatia with challenging implementation of new migration policies. While migration, namely emigration trends in Croatia in historical perspective will be analyzed at the beginning of this article, recent migration trends (2000-2010) and the development of migration policies is the core of this presentation. Special focus is put on net migration, labour migration, asylum seekers and illegal migrations.

Will migrations, as stated by Massey et al. (1997) develop the social relations in terms to act as a catalyst of overall changes? It will depend not only on migration policies and legal framework but also on some other factors, related on openness/closeness of receiving countries towards immigration flows. However, each country and its national policy is affected by public opinion, which resulted with immigration policies adjusted to country's own national interests.

Croatian (e)migration¹ history

Having a specific geo-strategic position between Central Europe, the Mediterranean and the Balkans, and being the bordering region in cultural, ethnic and

confessional way, Croatia has been a traditional emigration country for centuries on the one hand as well as the immigration destination on another. The intensity of Croatian emigration² during that time significantly marked Croatian society as a transnational one. Dating from the fifteenth century onward³, Croatian emigration can be divided into an "old" and "new" stage, i.e. the phase before World War I and the one afterwards. Historically speaking, the ambiguous pattern of Croatian emigration primarily concerned citizens of Croatia or other political units/states on the territories of present-day Croatia (Heršak, 1998: 78). In both periods economic migration dominated, primarily made up of labourers from the rural areas, forced to migrate due to crisis in farming and increasing rural over-population, and to a lesser degree by working forces from urban centers (Lakatoš, 1914: 65, Nejašmić, 1991: 64). Under-populated territories of America and Australia were inviting destinations for poor Croatian labourers, who were recruited by mining companies, shipyards and factories before the implementation of the immigration quota in the USA in the early 1920s took place. Generally, the unskilled population, usually men from 15 to 40 years of age, migrated mostly to overseas countries, while later on labourers sought employment in the countries of Central and Western Europe (Germany, France and Belgium) (Heršak, 1998: 88, Nejašmić, 1991: 68). However, during the time of the open door policies in the USA there was no significant Croatian emigration to European countries. Moreover, some European countries like Germany also

limited and restricted the labour influx on the basis of labour contracts and organised recruitment. The capacity and attractivity of the receiving destinations varied through time and depended also on entry policies shaping the profile of emigrants. On the time-scale, 1930's brought a change of direction for overseas migrants from Croatia, when the USA lost its previous "top" position among other destinations, while Argentina, Chile, Canada, Australia and New Zealand became new immigrant destinations. Besides new destinations, a new type of emigration and new motives occurred after the WW II. Along with economic migration, war-related migrations included also political migration, composed partly of displaced persons, refugees, defeated collaborators and ethnically "cleansed" ethnic groups. Comparing to first overseas migrants, who had been employed by steel and mining industries, latecomers in 1950-es turned to agriculture and trade. As to the various statistics and estimates⁴ about the number of emigrants from the Croatian lands until World War I, one cannot reliably determine a specific number, however according to some estimates this total is somewhere between 300,000 and 500,000 (Telišman according to Heršak 1993: 269). After the Second World War, especially in the first two decades after the war, the greatest emigration wave from Yugoslavia occurred between 1955 and 1958, when the annual outflow included between 40.000 and 57.000 persons. In spite of being mostly illegal, random, unorganised and spontaneous, net migration in the inter-census period 1948-1961 may have amounted to about 500,000

people. Croatia, in relation to the other Yugoslav republics at that time, had the largest emigration flows, and in 1960 accounted for 56% of all external migrants from Yugoslavia (Baučić, 1973: 43). After 1963/4 the attitude towards external migration began to change with the removal of travel restrictions to labour migrants. These so called "pasošari" (i.e. migrants with a passport) were not officially considered "emigrants", since they were expected to return. No matter whether they were seasonal workers or permanent emigrants, they were denominated as "workers on temporary work abroad" (compatible to the notion of *Gastarbeiter*). The Yugoslav political system was no longer able to solve accumulated economic problems and the growing rate of unemployment, and thus labour migration abroad became an "escape-valve" (Mežnarić, 1991) and a necessary evil to alleviate labour market pressure. In mid 1960's there were about 400,000 workers from the former Yugoslavia in Western Europe. From 1968-1981, according to some estimates, about 293,000 persons from former Yugoslavia were employed abroad. The political regime enabled the migration of workers. That was seen as an important "comparative advantage" of the Yugoslav system in regard to other communist systems. Reaching its peak in early 1970-s, emigration from former Yugoslavia was a combination of two factors: the relative openness of borders and also the inability of the socialist development model to achieve growth that could absorb labour surpluses. The labour contingent that migrated was significantly larger in number and also different in its structure and distribution. It was

not consisted only of low-skilled labour force, but rather of qualified workers and professionals (Baučić, 1973: 121, Živković et al., 1995: 15). These migration waves started to decrease after the oil crisis and recession in 1973/4, with the implementation of immigration and recruitment restrictions in the Western European countries. Among other parts of the former Yugoslavia, Croatia had one of the largest shares in terms of emigrants per head of total population. Specifically, migrants from Croatia made up 39 per cent of all Yugoslav migrant workers, while Croatian population was not larger than 22 per cent of total Yugoslav population (Baučić, 1973: 59, 116). Therefore, Croatian migrant workers represented the majority of Yugoslav migrants in overseas countries, Western Germany and Switzerland (Baučić, 1973: 94-95). The number of emigrants from Yugoslavia, namely Croatia, attracted bigger concern of Croatian intellectual but also political elites at the beginning of 1980-s. Besides, this issue started to be perceived as negative economic and socio-political phenomenon, causing drainage of educated people, demographic and multiple losses in human capital and weakening of domestic labour market (Grečić-Jovanović, 1978: 280-286).

Since the early modern Ottoman wars, besides being an emigration arena, Croatia was also an attractive destination for neighboring population, especially for migrants from other republics of the former common state.

The war events of 1991-1995 (i.e. the Homeland War) and the dissolution of Yugoslavia resulted in both emigration but also massive immigration flows to

Croatia. This particular wave of mass emigration included economic migrants and victims of forced migrations, namely of specific ethnic origin (Serbs and some other national minorities). On the other hand, during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and later in Kosovo, as well as during the crises in Macedonia, great numbers of refugees came to Croatia, and this, along with the presence of hundreds of thousands of displaced persons from occupied areas of Croatia itself, produced a burden for the state that it could barely support. Additionally, knowing that recent emigration waves engaged mainly young people, despite simultaneous immigration, emigration from Croatia led to a decrease in population growth (Lajić, 2002: 135-149). Last decade revealed economic security and political stability as the most important factors for making decision to migrate, with increasing importance of quality of life and career pathways, especially for highly educated people.

Given Croatia's geographic location along the so-called "Balkan route", numerous migration flows from the East to the West have passed through the country, owing to its long and indented border-line 2374,9 km (length of the land boundaries only)⁵ which are often difficult to control in order to prevent illegal crossings. Croatia, as a candidate country for EU accession, is becoming an increasingly more interesting destination for a number of immigrants who are attempting to find employment in the country and settle in it. It is certain that when Croatia gains its membership to the EU, migration to Croatia will receive a new dimension, character

and importance. In this context we can expect that spatial mobility and existing trends in numerous types of migration, which are already visible, will become even more emphasized, along with some new emerging migration issues. They are applied through the retention of possible emigrants, regulation of international retirement migration, improvement of the labour migrants' status in their host countries, social and political integration of labour and other kinds of immigrants to Croatia. All these problems require additional attention from researchers and also policymakers (Božić, 2007: 40).

The recent migration flows

A key feature of contemporary migration flows is variety. This variety is related to the country of origin of the migrants as well as their social, economic and cultural origin. Much more countries are participating in migrations but recent migration flows in those countries are different. However, the majority of contemporary worldwide migration flows is recently manifested with some general features defined by Castles and Miller (2003: 8) as general migration tendencies which are revealed primarily in the aspects of *globalization of migration, acceleration of migration, differentiation of migration* and *feminization of migration*.

Although to a smaller degree than in some "old" immigration countries, a trend towards increasing migration movements can be noticed in Croatia too.

From 2000 right until 2009 Croatia had a positive net migration. This means that the number of persons arriving was greater than the number departing from

Table 1
International migration of the population of the Republic of Croatia, 2000 to 2010

Immigrants	Emigrants	Net migration
29 385	5 953	23 432
24 415	7 488	16 927
20 365	11 767	8 598
18 455	6 534	11 921
18 383	6 812	11 571
14 230	6 012	8 218
14 978	7 692	7 286
14 622	9 002	5 620
14 541	7 488	7 053
8 468	9 940	-1 472
4 985	9 860	-4 875

Source: www.dzs.hr/Hrv-Eng/publication/2011/07-01-02_012011.htm

the country.⁶ From 2009 up until now this trend changed, and Croatia had a negative net migration. The number of immigrants in relation to 2008 and the previous years fell by more than 40%. The reduction in the number of immigrants in Croatia was primarily due to negative trends in the economy, since the demand for labour was reduced in such sectors as the construction industry, the hotel industry and tourism, which traditionally employed foreign workers. The gradual reduction of the number of arriving foreigners was partially also the result of the new *Aliens Act* which entered into force in 2008, and prescribed restrictive requirements for granting residence permits to foreigners.

In 2010 out of the total number of immigrants in Croatia, 51,8% were persons who had migrated from Bosnia and

Herzegovina. The largest proportion of emigrants departed for Bosnia and Herzegovina (36 %) and Serbia (30,9%). Therefore, we can conclude that the migration trends in Croatia have a *regional* character, given that most migration movements take place between neighboring countries.

The new *Aliens Act* which has been implemented since January 1st 2004, has tightened the conditions for granting the permanent residence of foreigners.⁷ Thus, in the period from January 1st 2005 until December 31st 2009 only 6,148 permanent residence permits have been issued to foreigners, whereas this number was much greater before enactment of the Act, and in 2004 amounted to 21,830.⁸ The most important reason for seeking permanent residence in Croatia is family reunification.

Illegal migration

The implementation of the Schengen regime on the Croatian borders after Slovenia and Hungary became the EU members increased the issues of illegal migrations to a significant extent. According to the evidences of the Public Relations and Media Office of the Slovenian government, the majority of illegal immigrants to Slovenia entered this country across the Slovenian-Croatian border. The number of illegal state border crossings began to increase from 1996, and notably increased in 2000. In recent years the number of illegal border crossings or transit illegal migrants through Croatia has significantly declined. In illegal state border crossings during those years were in most cases citizens of Albania, Macedonia, Turkey, Moldavia and Romania. In general, cit-

izens of South-East European countries (except for Greece), make up over 90% of all illegal migrations in the Republic of Croatia. The reduction in the number of illegal border crossings was primarily the result of the involvement of the Croatia police force in regional cooperation, aimed at securing better border control. The number of illegal border crossing suddenly fell in 2007 with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to EU membership and continues to fall until 2010 when it recorded a slight increase.

Table 2
Number of Illegal Border Crossing, 2000 to 2010.

Year	Number of Border Crossings
2000	24,180
2001	17,038
2002	5,415
2003	4,311
2004	4,438
2005	5,169
2006	5,665
2007	3,527
2008	2,119
2009	1,823
2010	2,221

Source: <http://www.mup.hr/UserDocImages/statistika/2012/pregled%20211.pdf>

Labour migration

International migrations depend on economic circumstances in receiving countries, like the economic growth, labour market structure, employment rate etc. Among the other neighbouring

countries which are still not EU members, Croatia is economically the most developed one with the lowest unemployment rate.⁹ Therefore Croatia became a traditional destination country for certain labour categories from the neighbouring countries.

According to the data of the *Croatian Employment Bureau*, the largest numbers of work permits in the period 1994-2003 were issued to citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia and Slovenia. In recent years there has been also a gradual increase in the number of work permits issued to citizens of other European countries: Austria, Germany, France, Italy and Great Britain. One of the reasons is certainly the growing number of multinational corporations, namely commercial firms entering Croatian market, with significant number of professionals in its' management structures. The qualification structure of foreign citizens to whom work permits have been issued has gradually changed. Whereas at the beginning of the 1990's most applications for work permits pertained to scarce (i.e. deficient) occupations requiring middle or low professional qualifications, from the mid-1990's there has been a gradual increase in the number of work permits issued to foreigners with higher or high professional qualifications, including university-level qualifications (*Migration policy strategies of the Republic of Croatia for 2007/2008*).

In accordance with the *Aliens Act*, authority to issue work permits from January 1st 2004 has passed from the Croatian Employment Bureau to the Ministry of the Interior, and an obli-

gation has been introduced to establish annual quota of work permits. The Government implemented its *Decision to Determine Annual Quotas of Work Permits for the Employment of Foreigners* for the first time in 2004. During the first three years of its application it turned out that work permits for particular occupations listed in the quota system were not utilised, whereas, on the other hand, in some activities a sufficient number of work permits was not foreseen. Most work permits to foreigners with middle qualifications (secondary school education) were issued for work in the construction industry, shipbuilding, tourism and the hotel sector. Most foreign employees with higher and university qualifications were employed in activities in management structures of commercial firms, in foreign branch offices, as professors in the education sector, and in jobs as foreign language lecturers and translators, cultural workers, etc.

As mentioned before, most foreign workers in Croatia arrive from neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the unemployment rate is exceptionally high, reaching even 40%. The latter is the reason for the high mobility of Bosnian workers towards Slovenia and Croatia. Other foreign workers in Croatia come from Serbia and Montenegro, Turkey, Macedonia, Slovenia and Austria (the HZZ, 2007)

In comparison to the EU-27 countries, Croatia has the lowest rate of employment, which in 2007, while the economy was still registering a positive growth rate, amounted to about only 55.6% (the HZZ, 2010). This, however, only partially explains why a very small

Table 3
Annual quotas for foreign workers in Croatia¹⁰

Year	Annual quotas for foreigns workers in Croatia ¹⁰
2004	2,589
2005	1,800
2006	1,037
2007	2,613
2008	8,397
2009	4,677
2010	968

Source: Croatian Employment Bureau (<http://www.hzz.hr/>)

number of work permits were approved to foreigners.

The reduction of the annual quota for 2010 definitely is the result of the economic crises which in Croatia was most strongly felt in the sectors of construction, shipbuilding and to a lesser extent in tourism, i.e. precisely in the sectors which employed the largest number of foreigner workers.

The annual quotas of work permits for newly employed foreigners in the period 2004-2008 were not adjusted with the real needs of the labour market. Until 2007 not one work permit was issued in the field of computing, although employers each year have been increasingly seeking IT specialists. However, in Croatia, apart from highly educated profiles, there is also a large deficiency of low-skilled and semi-skilled workers, especially of seasonal workers, in the tourist sector and in shipbuilding and in the construction industry (Obadić, 2008).

A large number of employers have

emphasized how it is increasingly difficult for them to find, on the Croatian labour market, highly qualified labour, an educated work force in suitable occupation groups. In the period 2004-2007, for instance, registered requests for construction engineers were five times greater than the number of newly registered unemployed, whereas the demand for doctors was twice greater than the newly registered unemployed (Obadić, 2008: 108). Labour shortages were also affected by negative demographic trends, the depopulation process and ageing of the population, which have reached alarming dimensions.¹¹

Asylum Seekers

As in other Central-East European (CEE) countries, Croatia was attractive destination for asylum seekers primarily as a transit country. By its direct borderline with the EU members and due to the fact it tends to become an EU member in relatively short time, Croatia is growing into a desirable destination to asylum seekers. The majority of those are using Croatia primarily as transit route, whilst their final destinations are still North-Western European countries. Usually, these are economic migrants with not legal ground for assigned asylum status, since they have not been subject to some form of persecution, due to which their lives were endangered. However, some of these persons did come to Croatia under justified suspects indicating that they were experiencing classical persecution. Since January 1st 2008 the new Asylum Act has been in force, which has been adjusted to EU regulations. According to this law, asylum seekers can count on

receiving access to the instrument of so-called subsidiary protection, which offers them protection from persecution in their countries of origin.

By the new law, the process of resolving applications has been accelerated and asylum seekers have received the right to employment (beginning one year after presenting their applications for asylum, if in that period the legal process has not been completed). The new law has also extended their right to education to the secondary school level, and definitions of family members have also been extended, as has been family reunification among asylum seekers and foreigners under temporary protection.

Table 4
Asylum Application, from 2004 to June 2011

Year	Asylum applications
2004	162
2005	186
2006	94
2007	195
2008	155
2009	146
2010	290
until June 2011	326

Source: http://www.mup.hr/UserDocImages/statistika/2012/Statisticki%20pregled_2011.pdf

The first registered case of recognised refuge status was recorded in the middle of November 2006. Until today, 22 persons have succeeded in gaining such a status, and 20 are under subsidiary protection, see *Table 5* and *Table 6*.

Despite the progress achieved and the advancement and standardisation of the

process of attaining asylum, or else regulation of the status of asylum seekers in Croatia, as yet little has been undertaken in the area of social integration of asylum seekers. The number of persons that have received protection is increasing, but the number with recognised status is not in accord with the measures and activities linked to their integration, based on satisfactory standards of reception, and to the integration of refugees into the social, cultural, educational and economic life of the society. It is necessarily to develop high-quality institutional mechanisms and to improve practices which will allow for a comprehensive and long-term integration of asylum seekers. It is also necessary to increase cooperation between government institutions and institutions at the local level, and non-governmental institutions, so as to develop the practice of an all-inclusive integration of asylum seekers into community life.

Migration policies

The majority of European immigration countries are receiving migrants of different economic, social and cultural origin. Besides, recent migration grows in quantity resulting with urgent measures and migration regulations (policies) by national governments. Contemporary migration policies are far developed in the North-Western than in the South European Countries, while migration policies in the Central-East European Countries¹² are still to be implemented. This development is further accelerated by the volume and structure of immigrant population, which does not contribute to the balance and programmed structure of migration and integration

Table 5
Recognized Refugees in the Republic of Croatia, from 2004 to June 2011.

Country of Origin	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	until June 2011	Total
AFGHANISTAN					1	1		1	3
ARMENIA						1			1
CONGO							3		3
MOLDOVA							2		2
RUSSIAN FEDERATION						5			5
TURKEY					1				1
SOMALIA					1				1
SUDAN			1						1
ZIMBABWE								1	1
UKRAINE						1			1
UZBEKISTAN						3			3
Total	0	0	1	0	3	11	5	2	22

Source: http://www.mup.hr/UserDocImages/statistika/2012/Statisticki%20pregled_2011.pdf

Table 6
Persons under Subsidiary Protection, from 2004 to June 2011

Country of Origin	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	until June 2011	Total
PAKISTAN					3				3
IRAQ							1		1
AFGHANISTAN						1	2	5	8
GEORGIA							4		4
UNKNOWN CITIZENSHIP								1	1
UKRAINE								1	1
SUDAN							1		1
KOSOVO							1		1
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	3	2	8	7	20

Source: http://www.mup.hr/UserDocImages/statistika/2012/Statisticki%20pregled_2011.pdf

policies While *programmed policies* provide responses for economic, political or social problems caused by more extensive migration movements, *ad hoc policies* acts upon migration pressures of the moment without further strategies

(Mármora, 1999: 47). We can divide migration policies into immigration and integration. While the immigration policies are usually involved in regulating entry, sojourn and employment of the immigrants, integration policies try to

provide a conceptual and organisational framework for including the newly-arrived groups of immigrants in society (Castles, 1995; Penninx, 2004).

Concerning its historical, cultural and socio-political background Croatia is to a great extent similar to Central-East European Countries. By the end of the 1980's CEECs were facing totally new challenges in their migration policies. After having been primarily migrant-sending countries, they suddenly became transit, as well as destination countries – and a new phase of development began following their incorporation into the EU (Laczkó, 2002, Iglicka, 2005).

It can only be presumed that migration policy that still to be implemented in Croatia will follow the experience of related countries, especially having in mind that Yugoslav migration policy, namely relating to the emigration from Croatia during the Socialist Regime was comparatively much more „open“ than in neighboring states. After entry into the EU, Croatia will become a border EU country, with greater possibilities of controlling migration flows. The similar situation was with the CEECs too, since in a certain sense they became a tampon zone between CIS countries and the EU (the Wallace et al., 1996). Mentioned countries have been involved in different forms of migration: returnee migrations, transborder migrations, temporary and transit migrations and permanent labour migrations. Although most immigrants do not see Central-East European countries as attractive destinations, some immigrants remain in these countries because they cannot enter “older” EU member states (Kreienbrink,

2004). The selective measures that Central-East European countries apply in their immigration policies make them variously attractive to different groups of immigrants. Similarly as to the CEECs' experience, the majority of Croatian immigrants are coming from the neighbouring countries with the lower economic growth and higher unemployment rate than in Croatia.

Questions regarding migration issues, have not received much attention in Croatian society. During the Homeland War, and immediately after it, the topic of migration was to a great deal reduced to the problems of refugees, displaced persons and expellees that had been the result of forced migrations of very many people on the territory of Croatia and in neighbouring countries.

Apart from these refugee issues, migration policy and the public political debates were also focused on the question of emigrants in the Croatian diaspora, and the possibilities for their return to their homeland. From the time that Croatia became a candidate country for full EU membership, the need arose to adjust the legal framework in the area of migration with the EU *Acquis Communautaire*. The Government, therefore, had to begin elaborating a *Strategy of migration policies* in relation to: the policy of managing migration flows, asylum policy and immigration policy (integration of immigrants). The development of migration policies in Croatia has not proceeded equally in all these areas, but a legal framework has been achieved. The fundamental acts that the *Croatian Parliament* passed, and which form the new legal framework, were the *Act on Croatian Citizenship* and

the *Act on the Movement and Sojourn of Aliens* (i.e. *Aliens Act*).

Due to the adjustment of Croatian immigration legislation with a series of EU directives and other regulations, in July 2007 a new *Aliens Act* and a new *Asylum Act* were passed. The new *Aliens Act* came into effect on the 1st of January 2008, and it reveals more and more the tendency of the legislator to view Croatia as an immigration country. Thus, foreigners are explicitly and very precisely guaranteed certain employment rights, as determined by the regulations of the Republic of Croatia, collective agreements and arbitral judgements. The new act stipulates that temporary residence for the purpose of family reunification shall not be approved if the marriage has been concluded out of interest, and it provides a very detailed listing of circumstance which may indicate that a marriage was concluded out of interest, i.e. for the purpose of gaining legal status in Croatia.

In Croatia the subject of asylum is regulated by the *Asylum Act* (NN no. 103/03) which entered into force on July 1st 2004. The current law is based on the 1951 *Convention on the Status of Refugees* and the 1967 *Protocol on the Status of Refugees* (i.e. *the Geneva Convention*). The Act was mainly adjusted to EU directives and regulations in this area. However, adjustment with the EU *acquis* required further changes, and thus the enactment of a new law was suggested. This law was passed in 2007 and entered into force on the 1st of January 2008.

Conclusion

Due to specific geopolitical circumstances and its position on the crossroads of Central Europe, the Mediterranean and the Balkans, Croatia became a traditional emigration country with an expanding society of transnational type. The mass emigration of labour and political migrants from Croatia to overseas and western European countries reached its peak in 1970s, introducing new types of war emigrants in the 1990s (refugees and ethnically motivated). Croatia was at the same time an inviting (labour) destination to neighbouring population from socialist Yugoslavia as well as to refugees and displaced persons, with high potential for transit, especially on the routes of illegal migrations.

Starting from 2009, a negative net migration in Croatia is recorded, primarily due to negative economic trends in both Croatia and the EU countries and the weakening of the (i)mmigration flows to Croatia. Expecting Croatian EU membership would open the possibility for increase of incoming migration flows to the country that could become an attractive destination for emigrants on their way to the core of the EU. Simultaneously, if Croatia does not improve economic conditions for its citizens and decrease unemployment rate one can expect increase of emigration from the country. However, higher mobility of labour forces is highly expected to occur, especially among younger population, along with increase of circular, and transit migration.

According to current trends in the most EU countries, we can assume that migrations will be less permanent and increasingly flexible, with a gradual shift

toward circular and transnational mobility. Besides the necessity for coherent and long-lasting migration policy that would stabilize Croatian economic and demographic growth and brings economic and cultural prosperity in the society, it is also required to prepare Croatian citizens to possible increasing immigration as a result of such a complex migration strategies. It is therefore important to raise awareness in society about the mobility of labour since the population and labour force in Croatia are small. On the other hand domestic populations should be educated about the importance and benefits of cultural diversity that immigrants bring with them.

In order that Croatia's role after accession to the EU will not be reduced only to one of guarding the borders of „fortress Europe”, it is necessarily that Croatia along with other South European and Central-East European countries take an active role in the negotiation and adoption of a new common European migration policy.

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Notes

- 1 In a respectable number of historical, demographic or economic researches on Croatian emigration (that was usually called Diaspora) made in the last five decades the importance of emigration communities and even more the number of Croatians emigrants has been quite a delicate political issue, engaging the public interest as well as the interest of policy makers. Due to specific political circumstances during the socialist regime in Yugoslavia and even in the post Yugoslav Croatia all these debates revealed the potential of migration becoming a politicized topic (Mlinarić, 2008:169).
- 2 Since their ethnic identification had changed through process of integration in their new home countries, counting emigrants of Croatian origin was highly speculative. Some migration records count all people who left Croatia, other record only ethnic Croats, making the definition of who the „Croatian emigration“ is rather vague. The practice of counting descendants of emigrants, who were born abroad, within the number of emigrants inflated the total size of the Croatian emigration (Škvorc, 2005: 26,181). This aspect of quantification was particularly used in politically motivated debates.
- 3 Early-modern Hapsburg-Ottoman wars initiated first emigration waves leaving region. These early migrations were the origins of the present-day Croatian ethnic minorities in Italia, Austria (Gradišće/Burgenland), Romania, Slovakia and Czech Republic. These wars also resulted with immigration of other ethnic groups, that have been invited as craftsmen (e.g. Germans) or soldiers (Ottomans refugees, including Serbs) on present-day Croatian lands, namely on the constantly war-engaged territory of the Military Frontier, under the direct Hapsburg rule (Roksandić, 1988).
- 4 Evidence on migration is one of the most poorly documented demographic phenomena in Croatia due to the lack of uniform official statistical records of emigration for all Croatian territories that were previously under different state jurisdictions. Moreover, Croatia still does not have a *Population Register*, which would be the most complete data base on migration (Mišetić, 2008: 83). This uneven empirical base resulted with a number of very different estimations about the number of Croatian migrants (Lakatoš, 1914; Nejašmić, 1991; Lajić, 2002).
- 5 The sea borderline is additional issue, since the length of the sea coast of the Republic of Croatia is 5835,3 km. Source: State Geodetic

- Administration, according to. *2011 Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Croatia*, Croatia Bureau of Statistics, Zagreb, 2011: 40.
- 6 Migration statistics in Croatia are still undeveloped. The exact number of persons that moved abroad is not known, since there is no legal obligation for persons leaving the country for a longer period to register his/her departure at the authorised institution (the Ministry of the Interior). Furthermore, Croatia still does not have a population register and stock data is available only every 10 years. It is necessarily, therefore, to develop migration statistics, or to revise existing statistical research according to international recommendations as well as to improve the quality and the volume of data on migrations and ensure international comparability.
 - 7 Permanent residence shall be approved to a foreigner which at the time of applying has had continuous temporary residence for a period of 5 years, or who has been married for 3 years to a Croatian citizen, or a foreigner with approved permanent residence, or condition of fulfilling other legal requirements.
 - 8 Source: <http://www.mup.hr>
 - 9 The officially registered rate of unemployment in Croatia in 2011. was 17,9% (<http://www.hzz.hr/default.aspx?id=6191>)
 - 10 The numerical sum of the quotas also includes work permits for seasonal work, which were issued as follows: for the year 2005: 400 permits, for 2008: 1,845 permits, for 2009: 410 permits and for 2010: 20 permits.
 - 11 The Croatian population today is among the top ten oldest populations in the world. In 1999, according to the UN data, in Croatia the average age of population was 38.5 years, which would place it in ninth place on the scale of the oldest populations of world. Due to depopulation trends (an increasingly smaller proportion of young people and increasing proportion of the older population) and a negative net migration Croatia's indigenous population does not even have the biological strength to assure mere reproduction. In addition, during the 20th century 1.269 772 more persons left the country than settled in it. Emigration flows dominated over immigration flows in as many as eight inter-census periods in the 20th century (Mišetić, 2008).
 - 12 Here we are referring to Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland, which became part of the EU on January 5th 200