

The foreigners flowing into the European Union have become a topic of political and public debate in Poland, frequently of a very emotional nature. However, it must be recognized that it is a rare occurrence in the political process for an issue that is in practice practically absent from the life of a given society to be such an important factor in election campaigns and political statements. Such is the case for Polish public opinion vigorously discussing the impact of the current refugee situation on Poland,<sup>1</sup> albeit without having any direct experience at all with the issue at hand. Quite indicatively, the agendas of political parties published on the Internet prior Poland's most recent parliamentary elections (such as those of the "United Left" coalition or "Kukiz'15" movement) were dominated by the "refugee" issue, while only secondarily presenting opinions on the issue of Poles emigrating abroad. The issue of migrant workers from Ukraine went essentially unnoticed in them, even though it is from there that Poland has seen a distinct increase in the influx of foreigners in recent months. Whereas the number of individuals filing for refugee status in Poland in 2014 was somewhat more than 8,000, the number of Ukrainians working or studying in Poland could be estimated at more than 300,000<sup>2</sup> – and while can assume that the refugee situation has remained essentially the same in 2015, the number of Ukrainians has further increased.

Based on these observations, we might conclude that debate about migration in Poland is quite detached from reality. Such a conclusion, however, would be a great oversimplification. As I see the issue, the true point of discussion, although probably one that is concealed, is not the influx of a greater number of foreigners into the EU than seen in recent years, but rather the way in which the member states and EU institutions are reacting to that phenomenon. To justify this assertion, I can cite, for instance, the example of Poland's reaction (on the part of both the ruling camp and the opposition, irrespective of their relative configuration prior to or after the recent elections) to proposals involving foreigners who seek refugee status being resettled (from camps for refugees in Lebanon) or relocated (from Greece and Italy). The question at issue lies not so much in the numbers themselves (as it is difficult to ascertain what methodology was used to specify the contingents), but in the sovereignty of the individual governments to make migration-related decisions. Even more broadly, we can state that the migration issue has also become a topic around

<sup>1</sup> This discussion has nevertheless shifted more into the social media, where immigration to the EU is one of the main focal points of the debate (perhaps more realistically described as an exchange of insults).

<sup>2</sup> This estimate includes various categories of individuals: those who entered Poland based on a so-called employer's declaration, a work permit, and those who have the right of permanent residence.



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# Between Migration and Integration



Every day, dozens of people line up in front of the Foreigners' Affairs Department of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship Office, seeking to legalize their stay in Poland.

which the notion of “European solidarity” is being brought down to a concrete level. In Germany’s view, at this point such solidarity means creating a mechanism for the automatic and obligatory distribution of foreigners among the member states. In the opinion of Poland and many other countries (including for instance France and Belgium), such a mechanism has little to do with solidarity, and will lead more likely to the disintegration of the EU than to its consolidation (which “European solidarity” should after all be expected to serve). If the mechanism of relocation or resettlement is meant to be based on giving a foreigner the freedom to choose his or her destination country, in practice we can presume that Poland will not be at the top of the list of countries most frequently picked as a destination. Rather, our main “advantage” will be proximity to Germany and Sweden, and so we will be chosen by individuals who, possessing an elementary knowledge of geography, will attempt to reach those countries via Poland. Yet if an obligation is further imposed on us to do our utmost to restrain these foreigners from departing for Germany or Sweden,

such a system could be deemed extremely inhumane, essentially involving several thousand foreigners being held prisoner in closed camps.

These mounting migration-related issues, particularly in terms of their significance for the functioning of the EU, prompt us to consider what potential solutions might be suggested by the vast scientific research that has been done in the field of migration studies and social integration. On the one hand, such proposals will have to be grounded in a solid theoretical foundation, while on the other they will also have to account for the results of social surveys pointing to changes in societal attitudes towards the influx of immigrants and a growing degree of support for anti-immigration (and simultaneously anti-EU) parties. The recent terrorist attack in Paris has further catalyzed support for extremist parties, and even the most thorough investigations performed by state security forces or political speeches will not change that.

The debate that has been playing out among the world research community concerning migration – attempting to answer the question of how we should react to processes



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of mass-scale migration so as to avoid social tensions that eventually become uncontrollable and lead to the wide-scale eruption of societal dissatisfaction<sup>3</sup> – is starting to be dominated by an approach that brings integration-related issues to the fore. Unfortunately as a result of unprepared discussion, we have again recently witnessed highly-publicized statements made by prominent politicians, asserting unequivocally that the “multikulti” policy, for instance, has failed.<sup>4</sup> Yet it makes no difference whether a given country takes an approach to integration that is based on respect for multiculturalism or opts instead for coercive assimilation (pursued more often informally rather than outright), while of course abiding by human rights. The key to this issue lies in the right combination of immigration policy and integration policy. More

3 Importantly, such eruptions of dissatisfaction do not have to be limited to the countries seeing the influx of immigrants. They may occur in countries what are homogenous (such as Poland), where politicians and the media nevertheless project the image of being under threat.

4 For example, see the statements by Angela Merkel (<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/integration-merkel-erklaert-multikulti-fuer-gescheitert-a-723532.html>) and David Cameron (<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-12371994>).

and more research results are indicating that countries should open up to foreigners only to the extent that they are capable of integrating those individuals to their own societies.

The approach combining immigration policy with foreigner integration policy is visible in the work of Thomas Hammar.<sup>5</sup> In his view, integration policy, in other words the efforts made with respect to immigrants in society, falls within the scope of immigration policy, which has been treated solely as a system regulating the influx of foreigners into a given country's territory. As such, Hammar's approach has challenged the assumption that the task of integration policy is merely to react to the influx of foreigners, a challenge it is indeed unable to meet for a variety of reasons (mainly due to the scale of the influx, limited resources, or limited integrative potential of the foreigners). The literature on the integration of foreigners exhaustively describes the process of societal integration, including its successes and failures. Here we can mention the work of Hansen & Weil,<sup>6</sup> Aleinkoff & Klusmeyer,<sup>7</sup> and Bauböck et al.,<sup>8</sup> and in the Polish literature also that of Łodziński (2003)<sup>9</sup> and Górny & Koryś (2007).<sup>10</sup> These writings highlight not only the diversity of approaches taken to integrating foreigners in individual countries, but also the mistakes that have been made, resulting not only in growing objections among the recipient societies about the influx of more immigrants, but above all a failure to harness the potential of foreigners and citizens that have migrant roots (the second and later generations). Analysis of the scientific literature and the political debate leads to the conclusion that the approach that has been applied to date, assuming that immigration policy essentially bears no relation to the integration of foreigners, has proven to be a failure. And so, in the reverse approach it is the effectiveness of integration policy – i.e. the capacity to integrate foreigners into the host society in a way that enables them to utilize their potential – that is

5 Hammar T. (1990). *European Immigration Policy: A Comparative Study*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and Hammar T. (2010). Introduction to *European Immigration Policy: A Comparative Study*. In: Martiniello M., Rath J. (ed.). *Selected Studies in International Migration and Immigrant Incorporation*, IMISCOE Textbooks, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2010.

6 Hansen R., Weil P. (2001). Introduction: Citizenship, Immigration and Nationality: Towards a Convergence in Europe? In: Hansen R. Weil P., *Towards a European Nationality: Citizenship, Immigration and Nationality Law in the EU*, New York: Palgrave.

7 Aleinkoff A., Klusmeyer D. (2002). *Citizenship Policies for an Age of Migration*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Migration Policy Institute, Washington.

8 Bauböck R., Ersbøll E., Groenendijk K., and Waldrauch H. (2006). *Acquisition and Loss of Nationality: Policies and Trends in 15 European States: Country Analyses. Vol. 2*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam.

9 Łodziński S. (2003). Globalizacja a instytucja “obywatelstwa narodowego”. Wokół dyskusji na temat zasad nadawania obywatelstwa imigrantom z krajów pozaeuropejskich w Unii Europejskiej [Globalization and the institution of “national citizenship”: Concerning the discussion on the principles for granting citizenship to immigrants from non-European countries in the EU]. In: J. Zdanowski (ed.). *Globalizacja a tożsamość* [Globalization and Identity], ASCON, Warsaw.

10 Górny A., Koryś P. (2007). *Obywatelstwo wielokrotnego wyboru* [Citizenship of Repeated Choice], Warsaw University Press, Warsaw.

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seen as crucial for formulating the objectives and instruments of immigration policy.

Simplifying things somewhat, we can assume that a given country or group of countries (such as the European Union) should take in as many foreigners as it is capable of integrating into its society. Of course, in this approach there exists the problem of refugees, in other words foreigners who leave their country of origin due to persecution or even the threat of losing their lives. This, however, can be resolved by providing them with locations, be it within the EU's territory or outside it, where they can safely wait to return to their country of origin or possibly move to a country that consents to take them in, with this latter scenario being distinctly more prevalent. A key aspect in this context is for integrative efforts to be made at those locations where the foreigners are situated (mainly in terms of raising their professional qualifications and in terms of human rights), so as to shorten the time it takes for them to enter the labor market and integrate with

society once they reach a host country. It is an unacceptable situation when individuals waiting for permission to enter and stay in a host country do not engage in any professional or educational activity, sometimes even for many years. That means that refugee centers, known as “hotspots” in the EU terminology, need to be reorganized and the conditions prevailing there have to be improved, irrespective of where they are located. In terms of human rights, integrative efforts must include elements showing foreigners that they will most likely be moving to countries with tolerant societies, but where certain standards of behavior and of acceptance for differences nevertheless prevail. They need to be made aware that in large part they will have to accept those standards. Otherwise they face deportation back to such centers or to their country of origin. It seems that this is the aspect of integration efforts that has so far been the most neglected.

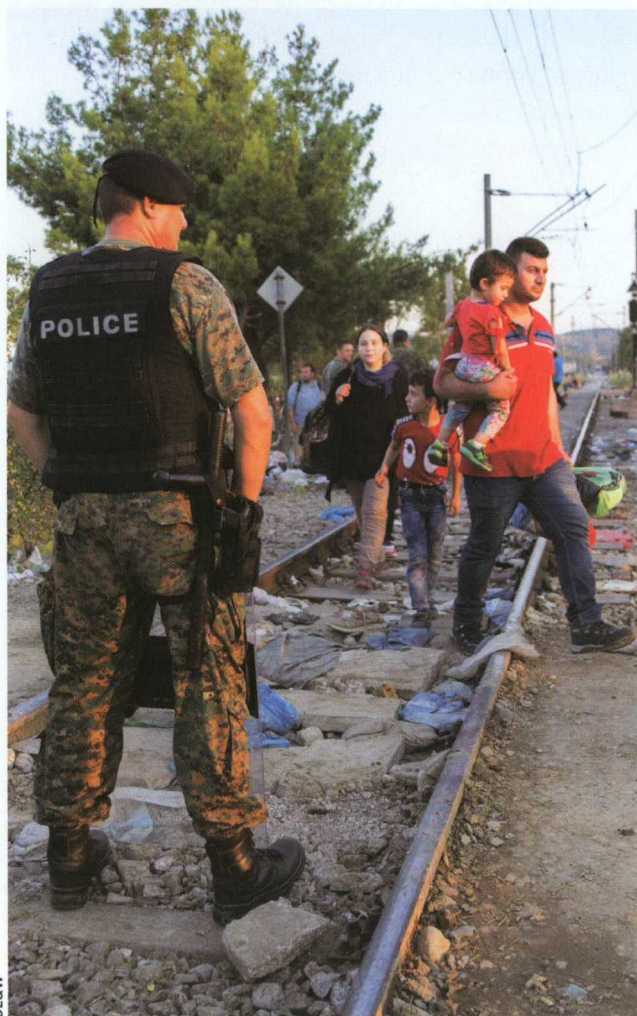
From this approach, a certain recommendation for Poland emerges. Even though we do not face the prospect, in the near future, of any deluge of foreigners who will have great difficulty integrating with Polish society, but can rather expect moderate growth in immigration from the countries of Eastern Europe, particularly Ukraine, placing a priority on integration policy nevertheless seems a very sensible move. However, Poland's strategic documents make little reference, or no reference at all, to integration. For example, the most important document adopted in this regard in many years, entitled “Poland's Migration Policy – Current Status and Proposed Course of Action”<sup>11</sup> devotes just 8 pages to the issue of integrating foreigners in Poland, and mostly speaks in

<sup>11</sup> Document adopted by the Polish cabinet (the Council of Ministers) on 31 July 2012.



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generalities. For example, on p. 70 the document states: “The integration of foreigners is currently not an important political or social problem in Poland, although that does not mean that the situation might not change in the future. Poland’s nationality structure is characterized by a very low percentage of foreigners. Moreover, significant immigration to Poland is not being noted.” The next paragraph asserts that “in view of the above factors, efforts towards foreigner integration in Poland are at an early stage of development.” Such an approach can be summed up in one sentence: let’s go ahead and repeat the mistakes made by other countries, which did not perceive any issues with integration yet today have very serious problem with it and have to take radical measures. As a consequence, we in Poland have not worked out even the basic fundamentals of a policy for integrating foreigners, and measures in this respect concentrate around so-called individual programs of foreigner integration, addressed to individuals who have been granted refugee status or supplementary protection. This applies to just several dozen individuals annually. We can conclude that Poland is not taking any measures in the field of foreigner integration, leaving such activity to NGOs that pursue integration programs with the support of funding from the EU budget. Tellingly, several of them, running the best



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programs, have failed to receive funding and will most likely terminate their activity!

The only published document concerning migration policy that deals with integration policy in a more concrete way is a report that was drawn up by the Presidential Chancellery under President Bronisław Komorowski, which perceives the problem of immigration as being among the set of demographic challenges.<sup>12</sup> It states: “Poland should have an interest in creating conditions for retaining a larger group of migrants who function well in our country. That is why one of the main objectives of migration policy should be to encourage and prepare migrants to settle in Poland.” At the same time, the main objective of integration policy should be to assure that “migrants attain self-reliance (especially economically) within the recipient society. This can be achieved by ensuring them equal access to education, culture, the job market, health care, and other social services in the broad sense, as well as by creating conditions for broader societal participation. At the same time, that entails an obligation for them to abide by the laws and fundamental values of Polish society.” Such an approach means that a foreigner in Poland should be given nondiscriminatory access to social services, so that he or she may gain employment or launch business activity as quickly as possible, but on the other hand he or she should unequivocally conform to the prevalent norms in Polish society. At the same time, the Presidential Chancellery document also writes about the need to prepare Polish society for an influx of foreigners in the longer-term perspective, something that has been sorely missing of late, giving rise to increased xenophobic attitudes, hostile to foreigners.<sup>13</sup>

To sum up, we can state that to date Poland has not experienced any serious problems with immigration or immigrants. At the same time, the position adopted by public opinion and most politicians, which has been shaped by the media, is often very radical. It is likely impossible for that state of affairs to be changed quickly, although that does not mean that we cannot talk about migrations differently than we have to date. The key to this change should involve devoting more space to the issue of integration. Raising its status in the discussion and arguing that foreigner integration can be effective would not only facilitate more substantive discussion in our country, but it would also enable Poland to play a more constructive role than it has so far in discussion on the EU forum – showing that “solidarity” does not have to entail consenting to the relocation of foreigners, but rather making a contribution to the real resolution of the problem. What appears to be at stake, after all, is the future of the European Union and more broadly that of the entire European continent. ◀

<sup>12</sup> *Polityka migracyjna Polski wobec wyzwań demograficznych* [Poland’s Migration Policy in the Light of Demographic Challenges]. *Biuletyn Forum Debaty Publicznej*. Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland, July 2015, Warsaw.

<sup>13</sup> Based on public-opinion poll results reported by CBOS.