

Reviews

Boris Divinský: The Migration Trends in the Slovak Republic after the Country's Accession to the EU (2004 – 2008)

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After having published the latest extensive monograph by Boris Divinský approximately a year and several months ago, International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Slovakia came out with another work by the same author. The author has thus again enlarged his anyway extensive publishing activity in the field of foreign migration using the experience drawn from the cooperation with IOM. The two main impulses for the publishing were firstly considerable changes in the development trajectory of foreign migration in Slovakia after 2004 and secondly (so the author) one of the lowest number of erudite professional outputs concerning migration after the accession among the countries of the European Union. Thus, an analysis of foreign migration in Slovakia is a fundamental aim, which the author is trying to achieve through partial goals. These form the basis of the publication dividing it into 4 main chapters (with a number of subchapters) beginning with a presentation of the development of international migration in general in the world and in the EU between 2004 and 2008, followed by the mapping of migration trends in Slovakia in the monitored period, then describing changes in the migration management of the country and finally giving a concise summary of the development in the given years. Even though the title could indicate author's liking for internal migration, it should be highlighted that it is the question of foreign migration he has been devoted to for a long time.

The second chapter is crucial. Here, the author gives a comprehensive overview of the development trends of individual foreign migration components in Slovakia in a span of five years between 2004 and 2008. Considering certain vagueness and a rather low power of migration data mainly in comparison with demographic data (such as vital statistics) his approach is very exact. In addition, author's erudition makes it possible to form a compact quantitative overview and offer a critical viewpoint, too. According to the author, there are two fundamental changes in the development of foreign migration in the country in the monitored period. In the first place, the migration interest in the Slovak republic was so intense that even the experts themselves might have been surprised. Although the profit makes approximately thousand inhabitants a year, these values cannot be considered trivial taking into consideration the context of the development of natural increase in population (discussed later on). The author gives proof of and comments on the significant modifications in the group of those that migrated

to Slovakia also from structural point of view. The share of „non-Slovak“ immigrants – reemigrants after 2004 - has fallen substantially particularly on the expense of residents from the old and new EU member states. Logically, the author is interested in the motives for migration. It is possible to fall in with the assumption that most „other reason“ immigrants probably migrate to find work. Highly interesting would be to predict the future structure of reasons for immigration as well as of those for emigration, where certain changes could be traced, too. The most significant is the decrease „for family reasons“, which has fallen to approximately one third from the former half. From our point of view, this partially sociological background of migration is one the biggest challenges in the study of foreign migration. Unfortunately, the work of researchers is complicated by inappropriate reasons given in the forms. Still, model surveys could be of help. Author does not evade the famous statement about the inaccuracy of data particularly regarding the emigrated people. Also important is his remark that despite the 2.5 higher increase of the number of immigrants, the positive numbers of migration balance are only virtual – „on paper“. In reality however, the numbers are still negative, since according to B. Divinský at least 15 thousand Slovaks per year change their domicile. Author might have explained the particularities of this estimation in more detail. We do not consider it realistic, too, though closer to the upper limit of the reliability interval.

Subchapters 2.2 and 2.4 give an exact picture of the development trends of various forms of legal migration. A valuable brief introduction of definitions is given together with an institutional and legal context. Based on the presented data, author states that Slovakia's accession to the EU meant a significant development impulse for the legal migration sphere. For example, there was an almost 2.5 higher increase in the number of foreigners with a residence permit living in Slovakia between 2004 and 2008. However, apart from the obvious quantitative increase the legal migration had gone through significant structural changes in that short period, which the author comments on by a series of data in well-arranged tables. Clear arrangement and delimitation of substantial facts in the text can also be highlighted. We do not become overloaded by a number of data, since the author only comments on the most important. Highly interesting are the spatial changes in the concentration of foreigners within Slovakia. Although we are not astonished by the growth of the share of foreigners in Bratislava from 25.5 to 30 %, the increase in the share of foreigners per district citizens from 0,94 to 2.58 % is major, despite the fact that the growth index of Trnava, Nitra and Trenčín districts are similar or at least equally high. From regional point of view, this information is of a great value. We think it indicates at least two facts. Firstly, it proves the exceptional irregularity of the regional development of Slovakia. Secondly, so the author,

changes in the concentration of foreigners with residence permit in the country are greatly influenced by foreign investment activities and so the spatial concentration can vary significantly in a relatively short period of time. Undoubtedly, districts of the west Slovakia will keep on playing the first fiddle in the medium term. It could have been expected that institutional linkage with the EU would result in an increased interest of the EU inhabitants to migrate to Slovakia. Still, the vigour (a threefold increase in five years) is astonishing. We dare to assume that at the expert survey in 2004 we would not have been able to find even a single Slovak expert, who would predict such an intense increase in such a short period of time. What we are indicating is that foreign migration might bring us many surprises in the future, although such a considerable impulse as the accession of the Slovakia to the EU will not come in the near future. Work migration is also dealt with in a rather detailed manner. This forms a substantial part of foreign migration from the viewpoint of migration (and emigration). However, he does not neglect the studies as the motive for migration. We think that this kind of migration will grow dynamically in the medium term and will influence the long term and permanent changes in the redistribution of population, because most students studying abroad will settle down in the place of study for good (family, work). Hence, to include this subchapter into the text and provide current analyses was very appropriate the more that this kind of spatial mobility has always been partially ignored in the research in the Slovakia.

Nowadays, interest of the media and possibly the lay public, too is awakened by the issue of illegal migration. Of course, B. Divinský does not avoid this topic and there is a separate subchapter dedicated to this. He has observed a positive tendency – an overall decrease (4,5 times) in the number of illegal migrants in the country since 2004. We are provided with an overview of external and internal factors that brought about the decrease. At first glance, it might seem as though the number of detained migrants should be on the increase thanks to a better guarding of the Slovak Republic's border after 2004. However, there are external factors such as weakened “interest” in our border highlighting just one of them, which has been caused by a redirection of the main transit routes from the Eastern European towards the Mediterranean area. Quite naturally, author points out an obvious fact, which is however neglected by the media. Illegal migration also involves a second component, namely unauthorized residence on Slovakia's territory (thus not only unauthorized border crossing). This component obviously predominated in 2008. Given the freedom of movement within the Schengen zone, further slow increase of this component can be expected. Besides, the author is devoted to describing territorial and structural attributes of illegal migration. In the last section of what we consider a key chapter author deals with asylum migration,

naturalization of foreigners and return migration. He brings a number of interesting and new findings. It is apparent that B. Divinský's long-term experience with this topic has allowed him to "do some cleaning" in the second chapter and interlink systemically the huge amount of data from various sources and with varying statement and interpretative value. From analytical point of view, this is the biggest grief of migration research; however, author has been successful in overcoming this obstacle.

Third chapter is devoted to a brief summary of changes in the migration management of the Slovak Republic, in which he makes use of and includes findings from a number of older as well as newer researches, and appraises existing concepts and relevant legal norms.

In closing, we can say that B. Divinský provided us with a very comprehensive and extensive picture of development trends of foreign migration in the Slovak Republic during the turbulent period after its access into the European Union. High quality of his publication activity was preserved from theoretical, empirical as well as applicative point of view. Taking also previous works of the author into account findings presented in this publication are of a unique value for better understanding of the character and dynamics of country's foreign migration.

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