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Migration flows from Southeast Europe in the last decade of the 20th century (with a special reflection on Bosnia and Herzegovina)

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Abstract

Phenomenon of migration from the area of SouthEast Europe has a character of the long-term process whose intensity changes depending on different circumstances. It has been resulted in, developmental disproportions between countries of European Union and transitional countries before all. In the last decade of the past century, this process has been specially intensified and it becomes a very actual theme for scientific and political investigation.

The aim of this research is to, on the basis of available data, look through consequences of earlier migration flows from SouthEast Europe and analyze the most important causes of this process in time and area dimension. Besides, this research should, on the basis of estimation of expected migration flows, point to the possibility of its slowing down even, as well as taking certain actions towards that end by governments of foreign countries of European South East. In focus of research is Bosnia and Herzegovina, of course, in where migration processes are the most intensified.

Key words: migration, SouthEast Europe, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Introduction

International migrations of an interregional character from Southeast of Europe into developed countries never were a subject of intensive research neither of regionalists nor demographers although they were a continuous escort of economic and then political, cultural and social development of European continent. They, as a component of area mobility of population were, before all, a special predistribution of available working resources between the countries on a different level of economy growth and development and different demographic situation while intensity of migration of people from the area of South East Europe was mostly dropping with a migration distance.

Political changes in SouthEast Europe since the end of 1980 of the last century had a special reflection on conditions and intensity of international migrations in this area. Barriers which disabled population mobility and the process of democratization of society and harmonization of home norms with international standards in the area of human rights and awareness about regional – developmental disparities between European West and East resulted in significant increase in population mobility on European continent. Absolutely, different factors and characteristic conditions depending on achieved level of transition dictated active involvement in generating of migration flows and their specific variation forms and dynamics in certain countries.

A big territorial redistribution of population of Southeast Europe, which has happened in the end of 20th century due to the war discords, resulted in impressive scope of immigration currents from these areas, the biggest in its recent history. That is how this migration is different from earlier migration flows, which were resulted by geographic distribution of economic activities before all. It was of such intensity, so it became not only a new significant factor in narrow territory of the Balkans but also it gained such an economic – social and political character so it influenced political relations in wider European area. The real dimensions of this phenomenon, although it was taken into consideration even on the highest level of OUN and on other relevant institutions and instances, were only partially investigated therefore, adequate solutions for elimination or at least partial relief of its consequences were not found.

Traditional directions of international migrations from South Eastern Europe to the Western Europe in new conditions

International migrations from the area of SouthEast Europe are not new phenomenon considering that the export of labor force from this area has been going on intensively throughout the whole last century. That classic economic migration, here as well as in other parts of the world was, in last decades resulted by “internalization of production which has destabilized traditional economy thus creating reasons for migration, military operations, activities in the area of free trade etc., and that has brought about “a journey

with no return”¹. It has been developing in different social and economic regimes and it prolonged in more or less legal or illegal forms depending on realized level of development of human rights in a given societies.

According to the OECD² data hundreds of thousands of people, motivated by employment in the period from 1991 – 1999, were moving from European South East towards developed countries. In that period, in Bulgaria for example, international migrations “stabilized to approximately 35 – 40 000 of people per year, unlike the period from 1989 – 1990 when they were massive”. According to the same source in the period from 1988 – 1998 approximately 65 thousands of Turks per year entered Germany, over 6 thousands entered Netherlands, around 4 thousands went to Switzerland etc. At the same time Australia was permanently settled and over 5 000 of people migrated to Switzerland what makes 10 000 of people per year from FR Yugoslavia. According to the data presented on Demobalk conference³ in some Balkan countries, Romania and Bulgaria primarily, in the beginning of the year 1990, ethnic or religious nature of international migration was evidenced (0.4 million of Germans from Romanian Carpatian arch has moved to Germany, over 0.5 million of Muslims from central Bulgaria moved to Turkey etc.), areas of intensive migration were formed, certain countries were preferred for migration. At that time, ethnic segmented labor markets were formed in Western Europe which were “reserved” for emigrants from South Eastern Europe (which, in its most parts are kept up to day). “Even with higher level of education, those migration groups usually could not pull out from the lower segments of labor markets.”⁴ After the trend of expressful growth of migrations in some countries of observed area (Romania, Bulgaria), somewhat falling course in immigrant flows follows, while in its other parts (FR Yugoslavia, Macedonia, Albania, BiH) higher or lower increase has been noticed. At that time, intensity of population movements towards foreign countries (documented and non-documented, legal and illegal, seasonal and non-seasonal etc.) is especially evident in Macedonia (250 000 of people left Macedonia after her independence) and in Albania. Political, economic and social changes in Albania were followed by wide scope of migration towards developed countries. It has been estimated that since 1992 over 220 000 of Albanians migrated to foreign countries and that number has increased in 1995 to over 350 000 and in 1999 to over 495 000 of people. A huge number of those people migrated to Greece, after it Italy, Germany, Turkey and Belgium follow. That way, Albania has become the country, the biggest migrator in Europe (around 16 % of the whole population migrated to foreign countries) and over 70 % of Albanian immigrants are men, age between 19 and 45. A common cause of all aforementioned migrations is push factors and destinations are mostly developed Western countries. It is important to point out that with time, the structure of migrants has significantly changed. Namely, after the first elemental immigration flows, European SouthEast has been even more characterized by “brain drain” migration. How much influence it has on economic development of this area, it is a separate question.

Population movements towards foreign countries can be analyzed even from the aspect of evidenced number of applicants for asylum from particular SouthEast European countries. In that context, in mentioned migration nations, according to the available data from UNHCR⁵ for period from 1991 –1999, number of these applicants mostly increases while in other countries (Slovenia, Croatia, Greece) it is relatively small. In that period,

¹ “Histoire (s) d’imigration” prema: prema: Le monde diplomatique”, Paris, April , 2002.

citizens of FR Yugoslavia have applied for asylum in Germany the most (approximately 45 000 of applications a year), for Switzerland (approximately over 8 000 applications a year) and then in Austria, Netherlands, France etc. Such sequence of countries in which asylum was demanded from the area of South East Europe is almost identical for Turkey (asylum was demanded in Germany the most, approximately 25 000 of applications per year), Bulgaria (the biggest number of applicant also in Germany, around 11 000 per year) with an exception of Romania whose citizens in observed period, next to Germany, demanded asylum in France, Austria, Spain. According to the UNHCR data for period from the year of 1999 – 2001 among 40 countries whose citizens demanded asylum in foreign countries (28 developed nations) the following countries are:

Table 1 Applicants for asylum from SouthEast Europe

No	Country	Total number of applications			Total
		1999	2000	2001	
1.	FR Yugoslavia	122258	46332	28713	197303
2.	Turkey	20384	28818	31999	81201
3.	Bosnia and Herzegovina	6222	11271	11015	28508
4.	Romania	9125	9478	7868	26471
5.	Albania	4816	7256	6209	18281
6.	Bulgaria	2054	3121	3246	8421
	Total	164859	106276	89050	360185

Source: UNHCR. 2001 (adapted)

Although applications for asylum represent only documented “desired” migration, presented data still have certain migration validity as well as wider social content considering that they point to particular intensity of push factors in this area and to the continuity of migration pressure to certain developed countries. That implies an urgent need for higher rates of economic growth in migration countries as well as a suitable migration politics in developed European economies, which would also contribute to its faster development. That is reduction of migration levels to the needed one by satisfying of the long-term needs of migration as well as immigration countries.

2. The main characteristics of forced migrations from Southeast Europe at the end of 20th century

Migration flows, which we have mentioned, are mostly resulted by labor mobility and as such they represent distribution of labor resources or allocation of “surplus” of the SouthEast manpower to suitable resources in the region of the Western Europe. Their effects were quite visible and relatively easy quantifiable in migration countries (reduction of unemployment in agrarian over populated economic structure, amplification of the payment balance by unilateral transfers etc.) as well as in nations of migration (insurance of the suitable level of economy growth, keeping wages on a low level,

surplus of the qualified labor force etc.). Observing this aspect historically and not considering all specifications of migration flows, it can be concluded that phenomenon of international migration of the labor especially the “temporary” one on this area, had its recognizable economic and social contents. According to the population register from 1991. From the area of today’s Yugoslavia over 302 000 of the people were on “transitory” work overseas, from Croatia over 285 000 of people, from Bosnia over 234 000 of people, from Macedonia over 130 000 of people. That migration level has, in its most part, stabilized and incorporated into structure of economy and markets of Germany, Austria, Switzerland and France prevalently.

What has to be especially kept in mind in this analysis of migration flows from the area of South East Europe at the end of the last century are big, by war forced migrations from the area of ex Yugoslavia. Collapse of this nation, begun in June 1991 (by announcement of Croatian and Slovenian independence) and in march 1992 (announcement of Bosnia independence) resulted in the largest refugee crises in Europe after the World war II. According to UNHCR⁶ estimations, over 20 000 of people were killed in Croatia while 200 000 of the people escaped and over 350 000 were internally displaced.

Bosnia and Herzegovina as the biggest national “mixed” Republic in ex Yugoslavia (Bosniaks 44%, Serbs 31%, Croats 17% of the population) was also attacked by the Serb paramilitary forces and Yugoslav army. According to the same source (pg. 219) “until the end of the war, in December 1995, over cca 4,4 million of Bosnia population was displaced. It is estimated that, around 1, 3 million of the people, as a result of “ethnic cleansing” were internally displaced and around 0, 5 million of the people fled into neighboring countries. Besides, around 700 000 of the people (out of that 345 000 in Germany) became refugees in western Europe”. Directions of the forced migrations from BiH just partially reflected directions of former migration movements towards “home” Republic considering that, a huge number of the “war immigrants” was registered in many other world nations even (Appendix 2). During the war in BiH, over 250 000 of the people were killed and as a result of the war activities, demographic portrait of the nation has changed (Appendix 3).

Forced, by war caused migrations in Croatia and BiH resulted enormous demographic and economic outcomes especially in BiH which was know as demographically dynamic nation since long ago. Her migration history characterizes different era as well as demographic vitality and ability of demographic reconstruction. BiH, a small country by its area and population, in contemporary time of globalization of international migrations, is however in especially difficult position. Namely, due to the war and “forced migration transfer”, this country today has devastated and underdeveloped economy so, with relatively high growth rate of 6 to 8 %, could only in ten years gain its value of prewar GPD. Next to that, inability to solve the main existential problems (accommodation, employment) brings into a question a perspective of living in these areas. A lack of trust and toleration among Bosnia population which was in war up to recently as well as always present secessionists’ influence from neighboring countries, should be added to that.

All aforementioned, as a consequence, has a fact that even six years after signing the Dayton peace accord, more than half of the displaced and refugee population of BiH still does not live in its pre war home and still awaits for some solution (Appendix 5).

However, not even the essential, economic before all, and then safety conditions are not provided yet, especially in rural areas.

Table 2. Dynamics of return of refugees and displaced persons in BiH

	REFUGEES					DPs				
	BOS	CRO	SER	OTH	Total	BOS	CRO	SER	OTH	Total
1996	76,385	3,144	8,477	33	88,039	101,402	505	62,792	42	164,741
1997	74,756	33,568	11,136	820	120,280	39,447	10,191	8,452	205	58,295
1998	78,589	23,187	6,765	1,459	110,000	15,806	4,325	9,139	300	29,570
1999	18,440	6,299	6,332	579	31,650	24,907	6,760	11,315	403	43,385
2000	7,633	4,834	5,303	837	18,607	36,944	7,779	14,175	449	59,347
2001	4,642	4,244	9,155	652	18,693	48,042	5,960	25,734	436	80,172
2002	961	552	1,329	69	2,911	4,294	1,070	3,409	133	8,906
Total	261,406	75,828	48,497	4,449	390,180	270,842	36,590	135,016	1,968	444,416

The source: UNHCR, 2002.

Unlike the Kosovo crises, when an enormous number of this population from this province coercively migrated (Appendix 6) but its repatriation was relatively fast realized in new conditions, in BiH that process slowly goes on. The question of how much is return to this country in interest to the International community has been put. If, recent conclusion of the ministers of the EU in Luxembourg that, return of the population to the South East Europe is a financial matter of the nations of the region, would be realized, then results of the war conflict and “ethnic cleansing” would be surely completely verified. It is to expect that this would not happen.

3. Perspectives of migration flows from South East to the West of Europe

Eventhough migrational process in its essence, in its theoretical and empirical aspect, is constitutive part of demography and regional science, it namely is “mostly (in peacefull conditions) a racional response to interregional differences on the level of economy development”⁷ and as such it is, in its most part economically motivated in time and space. Western part of the European continent is traditionally a center of international migration of labor from South East starting from classic economic migration up to the contemporary massive “brain drain” migration. Comparing certain economic and demographic points in this area, much can be concluded on the topic of actual migration happenings and possible projections of the future migration flows:

Table 3. Some characteristic economic and demographic parameters in Southeast and Western Europe in the year 2000.

A: SouthEast Europe

No.	Country	GDP per capita	Unemployment rate	Rate of population growth	Birthrate	Mortality rate	Fertility rate	Rate of Net Migration	Average life length
1.	Albania	3000	16	0,9	19	6,5	1,1	-3,7	71
2.	BiH	1700	40	1,4	12,9	8	1,7	8,9	72
3.	Bulgaria	6200	18	-1,1	8,1	18,5	1,1	-4,9	71
4.	Croatia	5800	22	1,5	12,8	11,4	1,9	13,4	70
5.	Greece	17200	11	0,2	9,8	9,7	1,3	2	81
6.	Macedonia	4400	32	1,4	13,5	7,7	1,8	-1,5	74
7.	Slovenia	12000	7	0,1	9,3	10	1,3	2,1	75
8.	Romania	5900	12	-0,2	10,8	12,3	1,4	-0,6	70
9.	FR Yugoslavia	2300	30	-0,3	12,6	10,5	1,8	-4,7	74
10.	Turkey	6800	10	1,2	18,3	6	2,2	0	71

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1.	Austria	25000	5	0,2	9,7	9,8	1,4	2,5	78
2.	Belgium	25300	8	0,2	10,7	10,1	1,6	1	78
3.	Denmark	25500	5	0,3	21	10,9	1,7	2	77
4.	Finland	22900	10	0,2	10,7	9,8	1,7	0,6	78
5.	France	24400	10	0,4	12	9,1	1,8	0,6	79
6.	Germany	23400	10	0,3	9,2	10,4	1,8	4	78
7.	Ireland	21600	4	1,1	14,6	8,1	1,9	4,7	77
8.	Italy	22100	10	0,1	9,1	10,1	1,2	1,7	79
9.	Luxembourg	36400	3	1,2	12,3	8,9	1,7	9,3	77
10.	Netherlands	24400	2,5	0,6	11,9	8,7	1,7	2,3	78
11.	Norway	27700	3	0,5	12,6	9,8	1,8	12,1	81
12.	Portugal	15800	4	0,2	11,5	10,2	1,5	0,5	76
13.	Spain	18000	14	0,1	9,3	9,2	1,2	0,9	79
14.	Sweden	22200	6	0,2	9,9	10,6	1,5	0,9	80
15.	Switzerland	28600	2	0,3	10,1	8,8	1,5	1,4	80
16.	Great Britain	22800	5,5	0,2	11,5	10,4	1,7	1,1	78

Izvor: CIA- The World Factbook, 2001 (adaptirano)

Although presented indicators have only a framed character, they still point to existence of prerequisites for continuity of earlier migration flows from Southeast towards European West in their, here given geographic surrounding (Southeast of Europe in its traditional area with Euroasial Turkey and European West in the frames of EU without Greece but with Norway and Switzerland). Data about the structure of economy in these geo-areas as well as estimation about the real GDP for the next couple of years point to that even more.

Economic, social and political examination of contemporary migration currents from Southeast to the West of Europe point even more, that stationed population (beside emigration) in Western Europe becomes limiting factor of social and economic development. Research shows that fertility rate for example, in this part of Europe decreases at the time of the first and especially after the second demographic transition⁸ so the “import” of certain quantity and quality of the labor resources imposes itself as a necessity for realization of developmental aims and keeping up the level of the social standard of the home population. For that reason, having in mind today’s condition and estimation of the UN⁹ demographers, it is necessary in conception of rational migration politics, to start from the premise “rich countries have economic benefit because workers from poor countries come in and do the real job which, in rich world everyone tends to avoid, except some maybe”¹⁰. So, the question of migration should not be asked primarily as a political problem but the problem in the context of defined standards of human rights and individual social and political freedom.

Although perfectionism in this domain could not be achieved, the problem of migration in European area should be observed in the context of work offer in developed countries and manpower offer in underdeveloped countries. “If construction of the European house is a positive side of equation and prevention from migration is its negative side”¹¹, then this topic deserves pan European plan of action for sure. That plan means for example, urgent solution of the trafficking trade problem (sale of woman for sexual use) whose roads have become more or less known (Appendix 7).

Mentioned plan would mean more free population dynamics in European area but also a common approach to planning of area and demographic development as well as much intensive cooperation in this region. That would also result in change in Europe which today “barricades” itself in its fears: crises of the right for asylum while European states shift responsibility to the third countries, a new border guards¹². That anyway includes the change of economic structures that already exists and even more regional development in Europe. That way, a problem of any kind of illegal or half-legal migrations as well as more expressed xenophobia in some European nations would be put to significantly lesser extent.

Conclusion

Traditional migration flows on relation Southeast – West of European continent are namely result of push factors which manifest itself through huge differences in realized level of development of these European geo-area. A special influence on conditions and intensity of mentioned population movements had political changes in Southeast Europe, started in the end of the eighties in the last century. However, at this time, enormous forced migrations are intensified due to the collapse of former Yugoslavia, which result in specific demographic and economic outcomes especially in BiH which is in long term observed as migrationaly active nation. Intensity of return flows of refugee population from this country is conditioned by economic help from abroad considering that the economy of BiH is in its most part, devastated due to the war destruction. For now, this help is insufficient and if it continues with this dynamics, it will for sure be one of the main influencing factors on the change of demographic portrait of Bosnia Herzegovina region.

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