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ASPECTS OF WORKING UKRAINIAN CITIZENS IN HUNGARY

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Abstract: The primary focus of the joint survey, by the National Employment Foundation (OFA) and the researchers of the University of Debrecen in 2009, was to identify the employment characteristics of Ukrainian citizens in Hungary in relation to their impact on the labour market. Our research activities implied the analysis of existing data, relevant scientific literature and a survey questionnaire. For all the target groups, we were guided by the principle of representativity. Statistical analyses and the survey questionnaire were supplemented by in-depth interviews.

Our research findings are instrumental in simplifying the administration of the Foreign Affairs Police, the process of issuing work permits for foreign employees and their access to employment.

The responses given by employees revealed that access to employment in Hungary posed several administrative and official problems for both Hungarian and Ukrainian citizens. Moreover, Ukrainian employees felt a kind of negative discrimination regarding their wages and the conditions of employment as compared to Hungarian employees and they sought remedy from Hungarian official bodies for this problem. The authors hope to call the attention of competent authorities to structural problems and loopholes in the employment of foreign citizens. If these are corrected, it will not only improve employment conditions for foreign workers, but for Hungarian ones as well.

Keywords: Ukrainian employees, illegal workers, survey, wage level, establishment objectives

1. Introduction

Employees have arrived in Hungary in growing numbers since the second half of the 1990s out of more than 110 countries in the world (László Gulyás 2008/a; László Gulyás (2008/b). In Hungary, foreign citizens may take up employment in various ways. The first group includes those who were obliged to obtain their work permit in compliance with prevalent regulations or those who came into contact with labour centres due to registration processes or green card applications following 01 May 2004. If certain conditions of the *Regulation of 8/1999. (10.XI.) SzCsM* (Ministry of Social and Family Affairs) were fulfilled, employment was also accessible without work permit.

There had been considerable modifications in the regulation of employment for foreigners since January 2008. Under the most significant one, the employment of EGT (European Economic Area, EEA) citizens and their relatives had become basically exempt from authorization in jobs requiring qualifications or at least the successful completion of secondary studies. The other modification which is relevant in terms of statistical recording shall specify that employers are bound to notify labour centres of foreigners who need no work permit to have access to the labour market under relevant regulations; thus making available data on foreign employees more comprehensive.

As a result of Hungary's geographical location, our country is one of the borders of the EU and as such, it is primarily significant for Ukrainian workers (Adler *et.al.*, 2006). The most favoured Hungarian regions are in the North-East, in the capital and its agglomeration.

The above mentioned justified our research project, which won the support of OFA, to study the employment characteristics and the labour market impact of Ukrainian citizens in Hungary.

2. Material and method

In processing the literature, a situation report of the European labour market was developed, a general survey was prepared of international workforce migration and competitiveness, a summary was compiled of foreign employees in Hungary; moreover, we discussed the development of cross-border regions, Euro-regions and cross-border commuting.

We started our investigations with the statistical analysis of secondary data – the most significant markers of Ukrainian and Hungarian labour market, alternative income, Ukrainian demographic data, migration data from certain counties and the data base of research in Kárpát-Panel. Moreover, we made interviews to identify the employment characteristics of Ukrainian citizens and their labour market impact in Hungary for all the target groups.

Among several sampling techniques, we used the technique of random sampling, including stratified sampling. Our investigations used hypothesis examinations and cross-table analysis. The latter was supplemented with a non-parametric test to explore correlations.

Recommendations by *Babbie* (2003) and *Malhotra* (2005) were taken into account when the questionnaire was compiled. As for its structure, it consisted of questions drafted on the basis of hypotheses postulated for a certain target group. The questionnaire primarily included structured, multiple choice questions, whereas unstructured, open questions were placed at the end of the questionnaire, depending on certain target groups. With the recommendation of *Bruce* (2003) and *Darlene* (2002), control points were integrated in the questionnaires. Based upon *Barbel* (1998), control questions were also included to find out how well-informed respondents were in certain questions and to establish the credibility of other issues in potential uninformed answers.

The first type of questionnaires was prepared for employers and the second one was filled in by citizens who applied for jobs at missions. The questionnaire for the third target group was prepared for employees having already obtained their work permit. A separate questionnaire was compiled for students of Ukrainian citizenship at the University of Debrecen.

During primary data collection, the questionnaires drawn up and tested by our research group were filled by the 4 separate test groups.

1. From among the 30000 students studying at the University of Debrecen there were approximately 2390 foreign citizens, including 251 Ukrainian students. The survey questioned all the Ukrainian students and finally the results of 65 questionnaires proved to be suitable for analysis, representing the population statistically.
2. Questionnaires for employers included questions designed for Ukrainian citizens with valid work permits. The sample included 225 people in total.
3. Questionnaires for employers were sent to enterprises employing Ukrainian citizens through the Regional Labour Centre. Directorates could support our research goals in different ways. Enterprises filled in the questionnaires and sent them back to our research group voluntarily. In this way 41 enterprises informed us about their viewpoints. It is noteworthy that the consulted enterprises included several firms which employed a high number of Ukrainian employees.
4. Ukrainian citizens who lodged visa applications to missions in order to pursue occupational activities accounted for a significant segment of the research: 122 people filled in the questionnaires at various missions. This body was selected as each and every employee turned to this office at first if they wanted to take up employment

in Hungary. The questionnaire respondents included employees representing several entry categories, in contrast with the category of people who had already taken up employment. As a result, illegal workers could have been removed. Statistical data indicated that in the framework of the related question, employees did not make a statement of their unauthorized employment.

In the survey questionnaire respondents were granted the opportunity to express their own opinion. Depending on the target groups, questions of variable number and structure were drafted with approximately the same content. Open questions provided information on employees' everyday problems, including those regarding employment. Opinions were presented simultaneously with completing the questionnaires, according to target groups.

Statistical analysis and the survey questionnaire were complemented with in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews were made with Ukrainian employees living in Hungary. The 6 interview subjects included 2 university students, one entrepreneur, two intellectuals (employees), and one electrician. 5 of the interview subjects spoke Hungarian and 1 needed the help of an interpreter. Their age ranged from university students in their twenties to employees in their fifties. The respondents had typically stayed in Hungary for several years, each of them more than 5 years.

The research group of the Debrecen University participated in our research. Besides processing the relevant scientific literature, secondary data analysis and larger than projected data collection were carried out, as it is presented on the Figure below. Our qualitative and quantitative findings provided a sound basis for research.

Secondary data were analyzed on the basis of statistical data and research findings (Kó, 2001; Balcsók and Dancs, 2001; Balcsók and Dancs, 2004; Baranyi and Balcsók, Baranyi, 2008; Dancs and Szabó, 2004; Gyurgyik, 2005; Kincses, 2008; Kruppa, 2003; Meyer and Solt, 1999; Molnár, 2005; Molnár and Orosz, 2007; Viszt, 2005).

More impacting on the value of research was the variety of primary data collection and the selection of several target

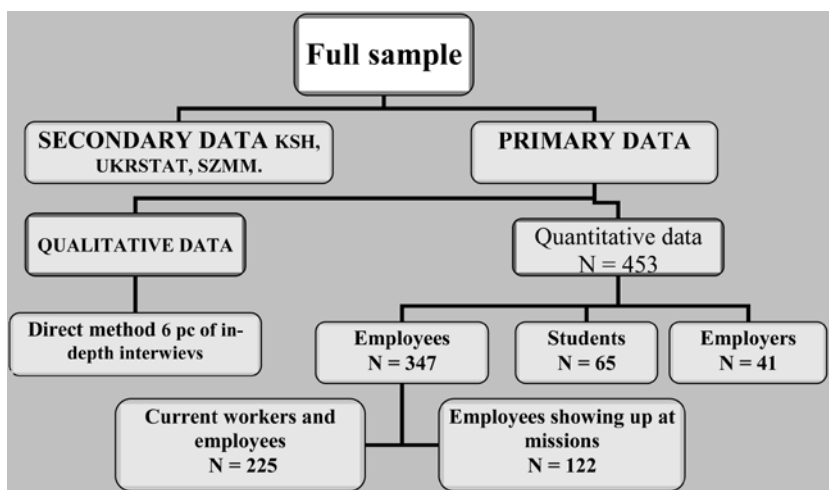


Figure 1: Introduction of the investigated sample
Source: Authors' own work

groups. The special feature of our research was given by the fact that it was not exclusively restricted to actual Ukrainian citizens who took up jobs in Hungary, but we interviewed current and prospective employers as well. We separated the students of the Debrecen University in a group which allowed for the in-depth presentation of Ukrainian citizens' employment characteristics in Hungary.

In our research we gained information on relevant legislation, as follows:

- Labour legislation and legislation for the employment of foreign citizens
- Legislation related to procedures of missions and the Foreign Affairs Police
- Social insurance legislation
- Tax legislation
- Legislation on public administration processes and services

Table 1. presents the research hypotheses as follows:

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Research findings of hypotheses

3.1.1. The number of employees from Ukraine is likely to grow

In the investigation of the first hypothesis primary and secondary analyses were used. The fact that the number of Ukrainian employees would not grow was supported by several factors. One of the main reasons was economic activity, as the rate of Ukrainian economic activity was considerably higher in Ukraine than in Hungary. At the beginning of the 1990s, after the change regime, the employment strongly decreased in Hungary (Juhász, 2010). Whereas unemployment rate had been continuously growing from 6.4% to 10% since 2000, in Ukraine it had dropped from 11.4% to 6.4%. The index of unemployment rate showed a rather stagnant tendency in Hungary; however, in Ukraine there was a slight growing

Table 1. Hypothese

Name of hypothesis		Data base for the study of the concerned hypothesis
1	The number of employees from Ukraine is likely to grow.	Primary research (q- N=453)
2	The low share of Ukrainian workers in the East-Hungarian region is due to the high employment rate of illegal workers.	Primary research (questionnaire survey- N=412) Primary research (in-depth interview- N=6)
3	Ukrainian employees are mostly employed by building construction enterprises	Employment and Social Affairs Office, 2008: Internal data. Central Statistical Office, 2008 Primary research (questionnaire survey- N=453) Primary research (in-depth interview- N=6)
4	Ukrainian employees are mostly employed as physical workers.	Employment and Social Affairs Office, 2008: Internal data. Central Statistical Office, 2008 Primary research (questionnaire survey- N=453) Primary research (in-depth interview- N=6)
5	The employees are overqualified for their jobs.	Employment and Social Affairs Office, 2008: Internal data. Primary research (questionnaire survey- N=387) Primary research (in-depth interview- N=6)
6	The willingness of Ukrainian workers to do physical work is higher than that of Hungarian ones	Primary research (questionnaire survey- N=453) Primary research (in-depth interview- N=6)
7	The wage level of foreign workers is lower than that of Hungarian ones.	Employment and Social Affairs Office, 2008: Internal data. Central Statistical Office, 2008 Hungarian National Bank, 2009. Primary research (questionnaire survey- N=453) Primary research (in-depth interview- N=6)
8	Ukrainian workers are mostly employees	Employment and Social Affairs Office, 2008: Internal data. Primary research (questionnaire survey- N=453) Primary research (in-depth interview- N=6)
9	Ukrainian workers primarily arrive from Sub-Carpathia.	Primary research (questionnaire survey- N=453) Primary research (in-depth interview- N=6)
10	Ukrainian workers dominantly go to work by public transport vehicles.	Primary research (questionnaire survey- N=453) Primary research (in-depth interview- N=6)
11	In the employment of foreign workers, enterprises are mainly motivated by low staff costs	Primary research (questionnaire survey- N=41)
12	Those employees who find jobs officially mostly arrive in the country to settle down.	Primary research (questionnaire survey- N=453)
13	Established Ukrainian workers mainly arrive from Sub-Carpathia.	

tendency. The next significant fact was that average Ukrainian salaries grown by almost 4.5 times higher between 2001 and 2008, although the rate of change in the Ukrainian minimum subsistence figure was not considered as significant. Bearing this in mind, employment in Hungary was far from being so promising. As a result of the economic crisis a high number of Ukrainian employees lost their jobs and returned from abroad, especially young people. Many of them joined the army and became professional soldiers to get a safe job despite the relatively low salary. The head of the ÁFSZ (Public Employment Service) counterpart office in Ukrainian claimed there was demand for experts in the Ukrainian labour market.

Hungary's share of Ukrainian workforce is minimal as compared to other countries. The consideration of those countries where Ukrainian citizens work in large numbers indicates that Hungary is very often used as a springboard. In total, access to employment in Russia is the most promising for Ukrainian citizens. Most of Ukrainian new graduates do not even think of working in Hungary; they would rather take up employment in Western Europe, the US and Russia, or stay at home.

The majority of Ukrainian students at the Debrecen University would like to settle down in Hungary. As they are native speakers of Hungarian, they may exert a positive influence on the labour market. Most of the questionnaire respondents knew employees in the circle of their acquaintances who would take up jobs in Hungary in the near future. This fact suggests that the number of Ukrainian employees will not go through considerable changes before long.

Enterprises generating demand are one of the key drivers of the labour market. The majority of enterprises in the survey questionnaire did not intend to create the appropriate (subject to authorization) employment conditions for the employment of not yet employed Ukrainian citizens, whereas they expressed their wish to keep their existing employees.

Therefore, we suggest the hypothesis should be rejected.

3.1.2. The low share of Ukrainian workers in the East-Hungarian region is due to the high employment rate of illegal workers

The analysis of statistical data revealed that most work permits for Ukrainian citizens were issued in the Mid-Hungarian region and the number of Ukrainian workers reaches top values there.

Members of the two target groups – employees and students – were asked about the above statement. The question was, if there were employees in the circle of their acquaintances who commuted to work to Hungary daily or seasonally on the grounds of local border traffic permit, short-stay visa or national residence permit. The majority (60-65 %) did not have acquaintances from the above mentioned category who would illegally take up employment in Hungary. The findings were greatly affected by the labour inspection law, the rate of labour inspection penalty, the control and inspection activities of labour authorities and their associated bodies.

Therefore, we suggest the hypothesis should be rejected.

3.1.3. Ukrainian employees are mostly employed by building construction enterprises

The hypothesis was clearly verified as both the primary and secondary data collection had unveiled that the majority of Ukrainian employees worked in the construction industry.

Therefore we suggest the hypothesis should be accepted.

3.1.4. Ukrainian employees are mostly employed as physical workers

This hypothesis is somewhat intertwined with the previous one, as the majority of employees worked in the construction industry. However, agricultural work and cleaning are also physical activities and there were similar activities in several other areas. Besides secondary data, questions were formed to investigate the given hypotheses in the questionnaire. Answers from the target group of employees verified this presupposition as most employees worked in the physical sector.

Therefore we suggest the hypothesis should be accepted.

3.1.5. The employees are overqualified for their jobs

As for the over qualification of employees we can assert that although two workers claimed that their qualifications were not acknowledged by their employers, the majority worked in appropriate jobs for their qualifications. In total, the number of employees was 387 in our data base and the number of those who did not work in appropriate jobs for their qualifications was merely 7.

Therefore, we suggest the hypothesis should be rejected.

3.1.6. The willingness of Ukrainian workers to do physical work is higher than that of Hungarian ones

This hypothesis formed a very special part of our questionnaire and the issue where to insert it posed a problem: the research group could not predict how respondents would react to certain questions. 70% of the respondents claimed that the willingness of Ukrainian citizens to do physical work was more favourable than that of Hungarian ones.

Therefore we suggest the hypothesis should be accepted.

3.1.7. The wage level of foreign workers is lower than that of Hungarian ones

The comparison of the wage level was performed on the basis of statistical data and the survey questionnaire. The monthly salary average of Ukrainian employees amounted to 100 000HUF (~370 EUR). The findings of our survey questionnaire somewhat differed from this average as 61 % earn 50 000 - 100 000 HUF (~185 - 370 EUR), 28 % earn about 100 000 - 150 000HUF (~370- 555 EUR), and 8 % more than 150 000HUF (~555EUR) on a monthly basis. We support the above hypothesis, as the wage level of foreign employers was lower. KSH (Central Statistical Office) data reveal that the average wage of physical workers was 130 821 HUF (~489

EUR), including the average wage of 115 634 HUF (~432 EUR) in the construction sector. If these figures are compared with the limit value of 50 000 - 100 000 HUF (~185 – 370 EUR), shocking differences emerge. If account is taken of the expectations of employers, it is evident that the wage level of foreign workers was lower.

Therefore we suggest the hypothesis should be accepted.

3.1.8. *Ukrainian workers are mostly employees*

Statistical data indicate that regarding their numbers Ukrainian workers are one of the most populous layers of employees among foreigners. The answer for the question about occupational activity was indicative of the fact whether Ukrainian citizens worked legally or illegally. This question was supplemented by another one about the type of entry into the country, which proved to be a kind of screening question. In total, answers to the questions suggested that the majority of interviewees worked as employees.

Therefore we suggest the hypothesis should be accepted.

3.1.9. *Ukrainian workers primarily arrive from Sub-Carpathia*

Research included all the Hungarian missions in Ukraine, of which two are located in Sub-Carpathia (Beregszász and Ungvár) and one office is in Kiev. The answer for the concerned hypothesis was provided on the basis of employees' birthplaces. The first example might be the layer of students of which less than 50% took up jobs; however, after graduation they would boost the Hungarian labour market. 96.9% of students were born in Sub-Carpathia. The same rate is observed in the layer of employees: 96.9% of them were born in Sub-Carpathia as well. The distribution of those who turned up at the mission was rather different, 75% of them were born in Sub-Carpathia. The rate of those who were born in Mid-Ukraine was 23%.

Whereas the questionnaires sent by the mission in Kiev were fulfilled by merely Ukrainians or other foreigners, those ones which arrived from Sub-Carpathian missions were mostly filled in by Hungarian native speakers.

Therefore we suggest the hypothesis should be accepted.

3.1.10. *Ukrainian workers dominantly go to work by public transport vehicles*

The mode of commuting depended on employees' scope of work, companies and the location of jobs. The question was answered by the help of in-depth interviews. In most cases employees used public transport vehicles, but the area of the capital differed from rural areas in this respect. In Budapest e.g. public transport vehicles make it easy for employees to get to work whereas in rural areas, to reach animal or apple farms, public transport was not easily available. For most rural employees employers arranged transport facilities for their workers and this was also true of some Mid-Hungarian firms, or employees find a joint solution and they used private

vehicles (cars) in groups. For rural employees it was typical that they either rode bicycles or walked to work. It can be claimed that the as majority of Ukrainian employees (80%) used public transport to get to work and the remaining 20% were transported to work by other means of transport.

Therefore we suggest the hypothesis should be accepted.

3.1.11. *In the employment of foreign workers, enterprises are mainly motivated by low staff costs*

Hypothesis 7. further supports Hypothesis 11. Moreover, it may be taken into account that in the questionnaire for employees a considerable number of respondents ranked their need for equal payment with Hungarian employees first among questions about employees' needs. In the questionnaire for employers more than 50% of enterprises ranked the same answer first for the same question. All these suggest that it was clear for the enterprises that foreign labour force was cheaper and it is evident that this is their primary motivation.

Therefore we suggest the hypothesis should be accepted.

3.1.12. *Those employees who find jobs officially mostly arrive in the country to settle down*

3.1.13. *Established Ukrainian workers mainly arrive from Sub-Carpathia*

Hypotheses 12 and 13 are discussed jointly as they closely correlate. Most employees worked legally, therefore the two hypotheses lent themselves for joint assessment. 82% of students wanted to settle down including 82% of those who came from Sub-Carpathia.

As for employers, this rate was different compared to students: merely 32% of employees wanted to settle down. All who wanted to settle down were from Sub-Carpathia.

The third target group, those employees who turned up at missions, showed similar rates: 28% of respondents liked to settle down, out of which 94% had come from Sub-Carpathia.

Hypothesis 12 should be rejected as merely a part of the studied employees wanted to settle down in Hungary.

We suggest Hypothesis 13 should be accepted as more than 80% of those who wish to settle down were Sub-Carpathians.

3.2. *Experience gained through in-depth interviews*

The interviewed students came to study in Hungary mostly because their Ukrainian language skills were so poor that they could satisfy Hungarian education requirements easier. In contrast with Ukrainian diplomas, they thought they could benefit from their Hungarian diplomas in several ways. On one hand, the level of education was higher and their diploma would be generally acknowledged in other countries in the European Union as well. The students were closely tied to Hungary, but they regarded Ukraine as their home country. Regardless of this fact, they found it significant to obtain Hungarian citizenship with the advantages of greater

freedom, transit opportunities between countries and potential employment. It was typical of Ukrainian students that they worked as members of the University student association; therefore they could get jobs under the same conditions as Hungarian students. However, the terms and conditions of obtaining various permits and the advantages provided by the concerned permits, especially getting their visas posed relatively great challenges for them.

One interview subject, whose opinion partially differed from Hungarian speaking employees of Hungarian nationality, spoke only in Ukrainian. The main difference was that while the subjects of Hungarian nationality claimed that they faced negative discrimination in jobs, the Ukrainian speaker did not experience such discrimination and stated that qualifications and the quality of work were decisive instead of nationality.

One of the most significant motivations of taking up jobs in Hungary was family ties, as a considerable number of Ukrainian employees had Hungarian spouses or close relatives. They found it much easier to find jobs in Hungary, access to employment was more structured and once they were employed, work culture and working conditions were better, laws were more respected and corruption was lower.

A low rate of job fluctuation is typical of all the interview subjects; they had worked in their first jobs without exception since the beginning of their employment.

Those who worked in Hungary had regarded Ukrainian citizens' employment opportunities increasingly worsening in previous years, especially the year before, but they hoped that determined employees with good qualifications could find jobs for themselves.

Ukrainian employees of Hungarian nationality wanted to expect that they should not be judged in the process of employment authorization in Hungary under the same conditions as other foreigners. This fact might incite them to obtain their Hungarian citizenship, although it was not equally important for each of them. Especially young people thought that citizenship was merely one of the preconditions of greater freedom.

Ukrainian employees thought that they were more devoted and motivated to work than their Hungarian counterparts, as losing their jobs would entail higher disadvantages for them. In Hungary they had to concentrate on their work better as in many cases they lived without families and there was nothing else to engage their attention. It also "argues in favour of Ukrainian employees" that they took up the concerned jobs for lower wages in many instances.

One of the interviewed subjects claimed that the problem-solving skills of Ukrainian employees were better than that of Hungarians. A potential explanation for this might be that they arrived from adverse working conditions to work in better ones and they had been used to solving problematic issues on their own without expecting external financial or any other kind of support.

In terms of establishing Ukrainian companies in Hungary, Ukrainian citizens found difficulties in their insufficient knowledge of the process of establishment and operation. They claimed that getting the concerned information was

difficult as they could not find a place or an institution which they can turn to in the hope of smooth administration (setting up a company or other issues).

4. Conclusion

The responses given by employees reveal that access to employment in Hungary poses several administrative and official problems for both Hungarian and Ukrainian citizens. Moreover, Ukrainian employees feel a kind of negative discrimination regarding their wages and the conditions of employment as compared to Hungarian employees and they seek remedy from Hungarian official bodies for this problem.

Dual citizenship from the viewpoint of Ukrainian employees

Our findings indicate that in many cases employees decided to settle down, which was a costly process, because they might get into better positions and easier access to job opportunities under equal conditions with their Hungarian counterparts. To mention some of these advantages: equal wages or freedom to move on the labour market.

The same can be stated in relation to students: excellent students very often choose among higher educational institutions depending on the rate of tuition fee, as being Ukrainian citizens they were not entitled to take state-subsidized diploma courses. There are several examples to illustrate the phenomenon that students merely worked to get officially recorded salary which was one of the pre-conditions of settling down and once the person received the "established" status, the job was not needed any longer. In all these cases it can be observed that the given student was almost immediately taken over to state-subsidized training; although, depending on institutions, one of the primary conditions included at least a good average of students' grades. The solution of this problem might be the use of scholarships for Hungarians from Ukraine, but a reaction for this might be: "what happens if somebody would not like to return to his/her home country after graduation", as his/her career opportunities were more promising in Hungary?

Ukrainian employees of Hungarian nationality generally voiced the opinion that their judgement by the mother country should have been more favourable as that of non-Hungarian foreign citizens. Our research findings suggested that offering the possibility of free movement in Hungary and also employment opportunities for Ukrainian citizens of Hungarian nationality would not pose economic risks for Hungary. The potentials of granting dual citizenship had to be taken into account for Ukrainian citizens of Hungarian nationality, which perhaps would give them more restricted rights than for native Hungarian citizens, but it would provide free movement and employment for Ukrainian citizens of Hungarian nationality.

The introduction of dual citizenship could expedite employment conditions and would clearly simplify the administration of legal employment.

Simplification of office routine

Most respondents claim that complicated office routine was the primary obstacle in access to employment in Hungary. They agreed that the most important objective was to shorten the deadline of office routine and to cut visa costs. However, the minimum inspection period of employee demand had been modified (shortened) and the deadline for individual work permit applications had also been shortened recently.

Extension of the scope of Hungarian certificates

Most Hungarian-speaking employees arrived from Ukraine; therefore access to legal employment would become easier by the extension of the scope of Hungarian certificates and the introduction of simplified office routine. As a result, the number of illegal Ukrainian employees might decrease, which would improve the safety of Ukrainian citizens who worked illegally at that time and that of their employers; as well as it would guarantee legality for the Hungarian state.

Administration in employment offices and investigation on the system of supervision

Statistical findings reveal that mostly the Employment Centres of Mid-Hungary were involved in the issue of permits. The respondents found it a good idea that notification of labour demand took place in employment offices and besides the Regional System of Employment Offices, work permits were issued in each county in a practical, customer friendly way.

We suggested that the work of Employment Centres and Labour Inspectorates should have been further enhanced as it was disputable whether employees sent notifications of the failure or the termination of employment before the date stipulated by the work permit despite their legal obligations. It also cannot be excluded that Ukrainian citizens who possessed work permits and residence permits entitling them to take up occupational activities, might actually work in other countries of the Schengen zone, so the de facto number of Ukrainian employees were not equal with figures in official records.

Office routine for Ukrainian employees

Besides the problems of bureaucratic office routine, a part of Ukrainian employees, mostly those of Hungarian nationality, found it prejudicial that both Ukrainian and Hungarian office staff failed to show readiness to help and empathy for them. As soon as they found out that the potential employees were of Ukrainian citizenship, clerks immediately became distant with them. However as office routine was a stressful, strained situation for Ukrainian employees, it was very difficult for applicants to make objective judgements. The improvement of communication skills for customer service staff was likely to expedite the process to become more effective, fruitful and comfortable for customers.

Employment for university students

Several Ukrainian university students worked during their academic years which – as stated in their responses - they could not get acknowledged as working in Hungary. Later it would be detrimental for them as compared to Ukrainian workers who possessed work permits. Therefore, it should have been considered that student work or perhaps the education period might be counted as work for foreign students in order to help qualified people with their access to employment.

Informedness of Ukrainian employees and the structure of access to employment

Inadequate informedness about employment possessed a general problem for Ukrainian employees in Hungary. Information was sometimes very difficult for them to gain and they often got it from other Ukrainian citizens already working in Hungary. Employment abroad was mediated by illegal agents in Ukraine who refuse to take guarantee of the success of their activities. Therefore, legal workers of official employment agencies should have got opportunities to assist Ukrainian citizens in their access to employment in Hungary.

Closure

After our research Hungarian Citizenship Act was amended with states: „A non-Hungarian citizen whose ascendant was a citizen of Hungary, or who demonstrates the plausibility of his or her descendent from Hungary, and provides the knowledge of the Hungarian language, following the amendment of the Citizenship Act, can get access to Hungarian citizenship through preferential but not automatic naturalization (*Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, 2011*).” With this Act the possibilities, of Hungarian people living in Ukraine and other foreign countries, to be a Hungarian citizen have been increased significantly. Hopefully our effort was a contribution to the improvement of the possibilities of many Ukrainian workers in Hungary. However the status of other working Ukrainian citizens in Hungary was not affected by the Hungarian Citizenship Act.

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