

# **Female Migrants – the New Nomads in the Old Europe**

## **The gender specific dimensions of migration**

Undocumented Worker Transitions

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**Antonina Zhelyazkova**

International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations

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## **Methodology of the research**

This report will be focused on the undocumented immigration and the semi- or undocumented employment of female migrants. Male immigrants are well presented in all other thematic researches and the juxtaposing methods, the measurement of differences in male/female migrants are indispensable when analysing the status and social adaptation by gender.

In order to draw attention to the problem and to raise discussion on the fate of female migrants one should have in mind the preservation or disintegration of the traditional responsibility for the existence of family and raising children, as well as the specific reasons for the gender division of migrants' labour in the informal labour markets.

It is of particular importance to analyse the countries of origin which are an important factor for the females' socialization (or the lack of such). At the same time, the influence of the traditional culture and religion will inevitably have an effect on the demographic parameters, as well as on the participation in the labour market and the domination in certain sectors of employment. The factors that made the female migrants leave their countries are in direct correlation with the above-said, as well as the way they made their choice to come to the host country. It is important for the analysis to pay attention to the obstacles caused by discrimination based on origin, sex, sexual orientation in everyday life and at the workplace in the host country.

As agreed, each of the seven partner countries had to conduct 30 in-depth interviews, about half of them (11-15) with female migrants. Finally, the seven partner countries presented for the analysis 101 interviews with female migrants at the age of 19-55, who came from different countries from Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, and Latin America. The interviews were conducted by the corresponding team members, in some cases interpreters and mediators were used and some partners used collaborators from the immigrants' circles, as well as students with a specialized profile. The interviews were conducted keeping to a preliminary prepared and unified questionnaire but each partner was free to extend it or interpret it freely. They were in-depth interviews at the most and were carried out at different places – at the workplace, at home, in ethnic restaurants and shops, some respondents were invited at the interviewer's office or in cafés, in the streets, on the market, etc.

Most of the interviews were recorded on tape or on a dictaphone. These records have been subsequently copied to a computer and on paper for their processing and archiving. A

small part of the interviews, especially with newcomers and illegally arriving immigrants, as well as with trafficked women were written by hand.

During the fieldwork in Bulgaria two focus groups with women were additionally organized, as well as a focus group with women, men and children altogether was arranged in IMIR's office. The team conducted also specialized interviews with two Iraqi women – a speaker and an activist of the Iraqi forum in Bulgaria. In order to show the Bulgarian specifics as a country, which still does not accept many immigrants but actively sends migrants to the EU countries and the USA and to supplement the data of our partners in countries with Bulgarian emigration, the researchers conducted, for comparison, several interviews with Bulgarian women who work undocumented or semi-documented in Spain, Greece, Austria, Germany and UK. This made it possible to have the female migrants' point of view in some of the partner's (and not only) countries so to say from within.

Another Bulgarian specificity is the lack of experience in accepting and caring for refugees and migrants as the country is in its early stage of adaptation to the European practices and legislation. This explains the certain accent on the situation in Bulgaria.

Previous studies on this topic, data and analyses of Eurostat and other national and European institutions were used by most of the countries in order to compare data and the obtained results.

This report presents the general national state of gender equality and the women's participation on the labour market in each of the partner countries trying to boldly outline the status, role and place of female migrants in the corresponding host societies.

## **General data on gender in the UWT partner countries**

The general data of partner countries with the corresponding gender parameters and with a special focus on the gender differences in the different European societies are a necessary context description based on which a clearer state of the art view can be elaborated for the female migrants' place in the surveyed host societies.

We referred to the Global Gender Gap Report 2007 – Country Profiles<sup>1</sup>, taking out some drawings not to aggravate the text using also for this topic the Additional Data, Gender Gap Index 2007 and Gender Gap Subindexes.<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the Index is designed to measure gender-based gaps in access to resources and opportunities in individual countries

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<sup>1</sup> Global Gender Gap Report 2007, World Economic Forum

<sup>2</sup>It is possible that the data are not correct everywhere. For example, the Gender Gap Index for Bulgaria says that women received voting rights in 1945. Historically, this is not true. The first Bulgarian 1879 Constitution provided general suffrage for all Bulgarian subjects but practically this did not happen. Women voted for the first time in the 1937 municipal elections and in the 1938 Parliamentary elections.

rather than the actual levels of the available resources and opportunities in those countries. This methodology was chosen in order to make the Global Gender Gap Index independent of the level of development, or the Index ranks countries on their gender gaps, not on their development level. Rich countries have more education and health opportunities for all members of society and measures of levels thus mainly reflect this well-known fact, although it is quite independent of the gender-related issues faced by each country at their own level of income. The Gender Gap Index 'rewards' countries for smaller gaps in access to these resources, regardless of the overall level of resources. For example, the Index penalizes or rewards countries based on the size of the gap between male and female enrolment rates, but not for the overall levels of education in the country.

## The country profiles of the project partners

### Austria

Gender Gap Index 2007

Rank 27  
(out of 128  
Countries)

Score 0.706  
(0.00 = inequality,  
1.00 = equality)

#### Key Indicators

Total population (millions), 2005.....	8.23
Population growth (in %).....	0.72
GDP (US\$ billions), 2005.....	208.68
GDP (PPP) per capita.....	29,981
Mean age of marriage for women (years).....	26
Fertility rate (births per woman).....	1.40
Year women received right to vote.....	1918
Overall population sex ratio (male/female).....	0.95

#### Gender Gap Subindexes

	Rank	Score	Sample Average	Female	Male	Female-to-male ratio
<b>Economic participation and Opportunity</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>0.582</b>	<b>0.577</b>			
Labour force participation	43	0.82	0.69	64%	77%	0.82
Wage equality for similar work (survey)	116	0.52	0.64	—	—	0.52
Income (PPP US\$)	92	0.44	0.50	20,032	45,095	0.44
Legislators, senior officials and managers	49	0.39	0.26	28%	72%	0.39
Professional and technical workers	59	0.85	0.68	46%	54%	0.85
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>0.980</b>	<b>0.916</b>			
Literacy rate.....	—	—	0.85	—%	—%	—
Enrolment in primary education.....	81	0.99	0.97	—%	—%	0.99
Enrolment in secondary education.....	95	0.95	0.92	—%	—%	0.95
Enrolment in tertiary education.....	1	1.00	0.81	54%	46%	1.19
<b>Health and Survival</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.980</b>	<b>0.958</b>			
Sex ratio at birth (female/male).....	1	0.94	0.92	49%	51%	0.94
Healthy life expectancy.....	1	1.06	1.04	74	69	1.07
<b>Political Empowerment</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0.282</b>	<b>0.142</b>			
Women in parliament.....	14	0.47	0.19	32%	68%	0.47
Women in ministerial positions.....	.9	0.55	0.13	35%	65%	0.55
Number of years with a female head of state (in last 50 years)	40	0.00	0.11	0	50	0.00

#### Additional data

##### Maternity and Childbearing

Births attended by skilled health staff (as % of total).—	
Contraceptive prevalence, married women (%).....	51
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births).....	5
Length of paid maternity leave.....	16 weeks
Maternity leave benefits (% of wages paid).....	100%
Provider of maternity coverage. social security	
Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births.....	5
Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15–19)....	12.72

##### Education and Training

Percentage of female teachers, primary education.....	90
Percentage of female teachers, secondary education....	61
Percentage of female teachers, tertiary education.....	29

##### Employment and Earnings

Female adult unemployment rate (%)	5
Male adult unemployment rate (%)	5
Women in non-agricultural paid labour (as % of total labour force)	45
Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership*	5.53
<b>Basic rights and Social Institutions**</b>	
Paternal versus maternal authority	0.00
Female genital mutilation	0.00
Polygamy	0.00
Existence of legislation punishing acts of violence against women	0.17

\*survey data, responses on a 1-to-7 scale (1=worst score, 7=best score)

\*\* data on a 0-to-1 scale (1=worst score, 0=best score)

## Italy

### Gender Gap Index 2007

Rank **84**  
(out of 128  
Countries)

Score **0.650**  
(0.00 = inequality,  
1.00 = equality)

### Key Indicators

Total population (millions), 2005.....	58.61
Population growth (in %).....	0.74
GDP (US\$ billions), 2005.....	1,132.83
GDP (PPP) per capita.....	25,381
Mean age of marriage for women (years).....	28
Fertility rate (births per woman).....	1.30
Year women received right to vote.....	1945
Overall population sex ratio (male/female).....	0.96

### Gender Gap Subindexes

	Rank	Score	Sample Average	Female	Male	Female-to-male ratio
<b>Economic participation and Opportunity</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>0.543</b>	<b>0.577</b>			
Labour force participation	82	0.67	0.69	50%	74%	0.67
Wage equality for similar work (survey)	111	0.54	0.64	—	—	0.54
Income (PPP US\$)	84	0.46	0.50	18,070	38,902	0.46
Legislators, senior officials and managers	74	0.27	0.26	21%	79%	0.27
Professional and technical workers	64	0.82	0.68	45%	55%	0.82
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0.997</b>	<b>0.916</b>			
Literacy rate.....	.56	0.99	0.85	98%	99%	0.99
Enrolment in primary education.....	.63	1.00	0.97	99%	99%	1.00
Enrolment in secondary education.....	1	1.00	0.92	93%	92%	1.02
Enrolment in tertiary education.....	.1	1.00	0.81	72%	54%	1.34
<b>Health and Survival</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>0.972</b>	<b>0.958</b>			
Sex ratio at birth (female/male).....	109	0.93	0.92	48%	52%	0.93
Healthy life expectancy.....	67	1.06	1.04	75	71	1.06
<b>Political Empowerment</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>0.087</b>	<b>0.142</b>			
Women in parliament.....	.56	0.21	0.19	17%	83%	0.21
Women in ministerial positions.....	88	0.09	0.13	8%	92%	0.09
Number of years with a female head of state (in last 50 years)	42	0.00	0.11	0	50	0.00

### Additional data

#### Maternity and Childbearing

Births attended by skilled health staff (as % of total).....	—
Contraceptive prevalence, married women (%).....	.60
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births).....	5
Length of paid maternity leave.....	5 months
Maternity leave benefits (% of wages paid).....	80%
Provider of maternity coverage.....	Social security
Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births.....	5
Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15–19).....	6.96

#### Employment and Earnings

Female adult unemployment rate (%)	11
Male adult unemployment rate (%)	6
Women in non-agricultural paid labour (as % of total labour force)	41
Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership*	3.53
<b>Basic rights and Social Institutions**</b>	
Paternal versus maternal authority	0.00
Female genital mutilation	0.00
Polygamy	0.00
Existence of legislation punishing acts of violence against women	0.42

#### Education and Training

Percentage of female teachers, primary education.....	96
Percentage of female teachers, secondary education.....	66
Percentage of female teachers, tertiary education.....	34

\*survey data, responses on a 1-to-7 scale (1=worst score, 7=best score)

\*\* data on a 0-to-1 scale (1=worst score, 0=best score)

## Spain

### Gender Gap Index 2007

Rank **10**  
(out of 128  
Countries)

Score **0.744**  
(0.00 = inequality,  
1.00 = equality)

#### Key Indicators

Total population (millions), 2005.....	43.40
Population growth (in %).....	1.65
GDP (US\$ billions), 2005.....	678.02
GDP (PPP) per capita.....	24,171
Mean age of marriage for women (years).....	.26
Fertility rate (births per woman).....	1.30
Year women received right to vote.....	1931
Overall population sex ratio (male/female).....	0.96

#### Gender Gap Subindexes

	Rank	Score	Sample Average	Female	Male	Female-to- male ratio
<b>Economic participation and Opportunity</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>0.589</b>	<b>0.577</b>			
Labour force participation	75	0.71	0.69	57%	81%	0.71
Wage equality for similar work (survey)	117	0.51	0.64	—	—	0.51
Income (PPP US\$)	76	0.50	0.50	16,751	33,648	0.50
Legislators, senior officials and managers	33	0.47	0.26	32%	68%	0.47
Professional and technical workers	57	0.89	0.68	47%	53%	0.89
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>0.994</b>	<b>0.916</b>			
Literacy rate.....	64	0.98	0.85	97%	99%	0.98
Enrolment in primary education.....	71	0.99	0.97	99%	100%	0.99
Enrolment in secondary education.....	1	1.00	0.92	99%	95%	1.04
Enrolment in tertiary education.....	1	1.00	0.81	72%	59%	1.22
<b>Health and Survival</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>0.973</b>	<b>0.958</b>			
Sex ratio at birth (female/male).....	109	0.93	0.92	48%	52%	0.93
Healthy life expectancy.....	1	1.06	1.04	75	70	1.07
<b>Political Empowerment</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.421</b>	<b>0.142</b>			
Women in parliament.....	7	0.56	0.19	36%	64%	0.56
Women in ministerial positions.....	1	1.00	0.13	50%	50%	1.00
Number of years with a female head of state (in last 50 years)	42	0.00	0.11	0	50	0.00
<b>Additional data</b>						
<b>Maternity and Childbearing</b>				<b>Employment and Earnings</b>		
Births attended by skilled health staff (as % of total).....	—			Female adult unemployment rate (%)	15	
Contraceptive prevalence, married women (%).....	81			Male adult unemployment rate (%)	8	
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births).....	4			Women in non-agricultural paid labour (as % of total labour force)	41	
Length of paid maternity leave.....	16 weeks			Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership*	3.95	
Maternity leave benefits (% of wages paid).....	100%			<b>Basic rights and Social Institutions**</b>		
Provider of maternity coverage.....social security				Paternal versus maternal authority	0.00	
Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births.....	5			Female genital mutilation	0.00	
Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15–19).....	9.31			Polygamy	0.00	
<b>Education and Training</b>				Existence of legislation punishing acts of violence against women		0.25
Percentage of female teachers, primary education.....	69					
Percentage of female teachers, secondary education.....	56					
Percentage of female teachers, tertiary education.....	39					

\*survey data, responses on a 1-to-7 scale (1=worst score, 7=best score)

\*\* data on a 0-to-1 scale (1=worst score, 0=best score)

## United Kingdom

### Gender Gap Index 2007

Rank **11**  
(out of 128  
Countries)

Score **0.744**  
(0.00 = inequality,  
1.00 = equality)

#### Key Indicators

Total population (millions), 2005.....	60.23
Population growth (in %).....	0.66
GDP (US\$ billions), 2005.....	1,619.53
GDP (PPP) per capita.....	29,571
Mean age of marriage for women (years).....	26
Fertility rate (births per woman).....	1.70
Year women received right to vote.....	1928
Overall population sex ratio (male/female).....	0.98

#### Gender Gap Subindexes

	Rank	Score	Sample Average	Female	Male	Female-to-male ratio
<b>Economic participation and Opportunity</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0.695</b>	<b>0.577</b>			
Labour force participation	36	0.85	0.69	69%	82%	0.85
Wage equality for similar work (survey)	61	0.66	0.64	—	—	0.66
Income (PPP US\$)	22	0.65	0.50	24,448	37,506	0.65
Legislators, senior officials and managers	29	0.49	0.26	33%	67%	0.49
Professional and technical workers	59	0.85	0.68	46%	54%	0.85
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.000</b>	<b>0.916</b>			
Literacy rate.....	1	1.00	0.85	99%	99%	1.00
Enrolment in primary education.....	1	1.00	0.97	99%	99%	1.00
Enrolment in secondary education.....	1	1.00	0.92	97%	93%	1.03
Enrolment in tertiary education.....	1	1.00	0.81	70%	51%	1.37
<b>Health and Survival</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>0.974</b>	<b>0.958</b>			
Sex ratio at birth (female/male).....	1	0.94	0.92	49%	51%	0.94
Healthy life expectancy.....	85	1.04	1.04	72	69	1.04
<b>Political Empowerment</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0.307</b>	<b>0.142</b>			
Women in parliament.....	47	0.25	0.19	20%	80%	0.25
Women in ministerial positions.....	14	0.40	0.13	29%	71%	0.40
Number of years with a female head of state (in last 50 years)	7	0.30	0.11	12	39	0.30

#### Additional data

##### Maternity and Childbearing

Births attended by skilled health staff (as % of total).....	99
Contraceptive prevalence, married women (%).....	84
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births).....	5

Length of paid maternity leave..... 26 weeks

Maternity leave benefits (% of wages paid) ..... 90 for the first 6 weeks and flat rate after

Provider of maternity coverage..... Employer (refunded for 92% by public funds)

Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births..... 11

Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15–19)..... 25.83

##### Education and Training

Percentage of female teachers, primary education..... 82

Percentage of female teachers, secondary education..... 61

Percentage of female teachers, tertiary education ..... 40

##### Employment and Earnings

Female adult unemployment rate (%)..... 4

Male adult unemployment rate (%)..... 5

Women in non-agricultural paid labour (as % of total labour force) ..... 50

Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership\*..... 4.98

##### Basic Rights and Social Institutions\*\*

Paternal versus maternal authority.....0.00

Female genital mutilation .....0.00

Polygamy.....0.00

Existence of legislation punishing acts of violence against women.... 0.08

\*survey data, responses on a 1-to-7 scale (1=worst score, 7=best score)

\*\* data on a 0-to-1 scale (1=worst score, 0=best score)

## Denmark

### Gender Gap Index 2007

Rank **8**

Score **0.752**

(out of 128

(0.00 = inequality,

Countries)

1.00 = equality)

### Key Indicators

Total population (millions), 2005.....	5.42
Population growth (in %).....	0.27
GDP (US\$ billions), 2005.....	171.21
GDP (PPP) per capita.....	30,224
Mean age of marriage for women (years).....	31
Fertility rate (births per woman).....	1.80
Year women received right to vote.....	1915
Overall population sex ratio (male/female).....	.098

### Gender Gap Subindexes

	Rank	Score	Sample Average	Female	Male	Female-to-male ratio
<b>Economic participation and Opportunity</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0.734</b>	<b>0.577</b>			
Labour force participation	16	0.90	0.69	74%	83%	0.90
Wage equality for similar work (survey)	39	0.72	0.64	—	—	0.72
Income (PPP US\$)	6	0.73	0.50	27,048	36,882	0.73
Legislators, senior officials and managers	63	..0.33	0.26	25%	75%	0.33
Professional and technical workers	1	1.00	..0.68	52%	48%	1.08
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.000</b>	<b>0.916</b>			
Literacy rate.....	1	1.00	0.85	99%	99%	1.00
Enrolment in primary education.....	1	1.00	0.97	99%	97%	1.01
Enrolment in secondary education.....	1	1.00	0.92	93%	90%	1.03
Enrolment in tertiary education.....	1	1.00	..0.81	87%	61%	1.42
<b>Health and Survival</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>0.970</b>	<b>0.958</b>			
Sex ratio at birth (female/male).....	87	0.94	0.92	49%	51%	0.94
Healthy life expectancy.....	101	1.03	1.04	71	69	1.03
<b>Political Empowerment</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0.305</b>	<b>0.142</b>			
Women in parliament.....	5	0.58	0.19	37%	63%	0.58
Women in ministerial positions.....	11	0.50	0.13	33%	67%	0.50
Number of years with a female head of state (in last 50 years)	42	0.00	0.11	0	50	0.00

### Additional data

#### Maternity and Childbearing

Births attended by skilled health staff (as % of total).....	—
Contraceptive prevalence, married women (%).....	78
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births).....	5
maternity leave.....	18 weeks
Maternity leave benefits (% of wages paid).....	.90% up to a ceiling
Provider of maternity coverage.....	State
ratio per 100,000 live births.....	7

#### Employment and Earnings

Female adult unemployment rate (%)	5
Male adult unemployment rate (%)	5
Women in non-agricultural paid labour	Length of paid
	48

Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership*	—
Maternal mortality	—

#### Basic rights and Social Institutions\*\*

Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15–19).....	6.76
Paternal versus maternal authority	0.00
Female genital mutilation	0.00
Polygamy	0.00

#### Education and Training

Existence of legislation punishing acts of violence against women	0.25
Percentage of female teachers, primary education..	—
Percentage of female teachers, secondary education..	—
Percentage of female teachers, tertiary education.....	—

\*survey data, responses on a 1-to-7 scale (1=worst score, 7=best score)

\*\* data on a 0-to-1 scale (1=worst score, 0=best score)

## Belgium

### Gender Gap Index 2007

Rank **19** Score **0.720**  
(out of 128 (0.00 = inequality,  
1.00 = equality)

countries)

### Key Indicators

Total population (millions), 2005.....	10.48
Population growth (in %).....	0.55
GDP (US\$ billions), 2005.....	249.35
GDP (PPP) per capita.....	28,575
Mean age of marriage for women (years).....	28
Fertility rate (births per woman).....	1.70
Year women received right to vote.....	1948
Overall population sex ratio (male/female).....	0.96

### Gender Gap Subindexes

	Rank	Score	Sample Average	Female	Male	Female-to-male ratio
<b>Economic participation and Opportunity</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>0.668</b>	<b>0.577</b>			
Labour force participation	54	0.79	0.69	57%	73%	0.79
Wage equality for similar work (survey)	84	0.63	0.64	—	—	0.63
Income (PPP US\$)	32	0.63	0.50	24,123	38,338	0.63
Legislators, senior officials and managers	41	0.43	0.26	30%	70%	0.43
Professional and technical workers	54	0.92	0.68	48%	52%	0.92
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.000</b>	<b>0.916</b>			
Literacy rate.....	1	1.00	0.85	99%	99%	1.00
Enrolment in primary education.....	1	1.00	0.97	99%	99%	1.00
Enrolment in secondary education.....	1	1.00	0.92	97%	97%	1.00
Enrolment in tertiary education.....	1	1.00	0.81	69%	57%	1.21
<b>Health and Survival</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0.979</b>	<b>0.958</b>			
Sex ratio at birth (female/male).....	1	0.94	0.92	49%	51%	0.94
Healthy life expectancy.....	61	1.06	1.04	73	69	1.06
<b>Political Empowerment</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0.232</b>	<b>0.142</b>			
Women in parliament.....	11	0.53	0.19	35%	65%	0.53
Women in ministerial positions.....	28	0.27	0.13	21%	79%	0.27
Number of years with a female head of state (in last 50 years)	42	0.00	0.11	0	50	0.00

### Additional data

#### Maternity and Childbearing

Births attended by skilled health staff (as % of total)....	—
Contraceptive prevalence, married women (%).....	78
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births).....	4
Length of paid maternity leave.....	15 weeks
Maternity leave benefits (% of wages paid)..	82% for the first 30 days and 75% for the rest (up to a ceiling)
Provider of maternity coverage.....	Social security
Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births.....	10
Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15–19).....	8.05

Polygamy

#### Employment and Earnings

Female adult unemployment rate (%)	8
Male adult unemployment rate (%)	7
Women in non-agricultural paid labour (as % of total labour force)	44

Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership 4.86

#### Basic rights and Social Institutions\*\*

Paternal versus maternal authority	0.00
Female genital mutilation	0.00
	0.00

Existence of legislation punishing acts of violence against women 0.17

#### Education and Training

Percentage of female teachers, primary education.....	79
Percentage of female teachers, secondary education...	57
Percentage of female teachers, tertiary education.....	41

\*survey data, responses on a 1-to-7 scale (1=worst score, 7=best score)

\*\* data on a 0-to-1 scale (1=worst score, 0=best score)

## Bulgaria

### Gender Gap Index 2007

Rank **25**  
(out of 128

Score **0.708**  
(0.00 = inequality,

countries) 1.00 = equality)

#### Key Indicators

Total population (millions), 2005.....	7.74
Population growth (in %).....	-0.53
GDP (US\$ billions), 2005.....	16.03
GDP (PPP) per capita.....	8,036
Mean age of marriage for women (years).....	21
Fertility rate (births per woman).....	1.20
Year women received right to vote.....	1945 <sup>3</sup>
Overall population sex ratio (male/female).....	0.93

#### Gender Gap Subindexes

	Rank	Score	Sample Average	Female	Male	Female-to-male ratio
<b>Economic participation and Opportunity</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0.699</b>	<b>0.577</b>			
Labour force participation	40	0.84	0.69	52%	63%	0.84
Wage equality for similar work (survey)	86	0.63	0.64	—	—	0.63
Income (PPP US\$)	22	0.65	0.50	6,406	9,855	0.65
Legislators, senior officials and managers	29	0.49	0.26	33%	67%	0.49
Professional and technical workers	1	1.00	0.68	61%	39%	1.56
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>0.989</b>	<b>0.916</b>			
Literacy rate.....	58	0.99	0.85	98%	99%	0.99
Enrolment in primary education.....	76	0.99	0.97	95%	96%	0.99
Enrolment in secondary education.....	88	0.98	0.92	87%	90%	0.98
Enrolment in tertiary education.....	1	1.00	0.81	44%	38%	1.16
<b>Health and Survival</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0.979</b>	<b>0.958</b>			
Sex ratio at birth (female/male).....	87	0.94	0.92	49%	51%	0.94
Healthy life expectancy.....	1	1.06	1.04	67	63	1.06
<b>Political Empowerment</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0.167</b>	<b>0.142</b>			
Women in parliament.....	36	0.28	0.19	22%	78%	0.28
Women in ministerial positions.....	22	0.31	0.13	24%	76%	0.31
Number of years with a female head of state (in last 50 years)	37	0.00	0.11	0	50	0.00

#### Additional data

##### Maternity and Childbearing

Births attended by skilled health staff (as % of total).....	99
Contraceptive prevalence, married women (%).....	42
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births).....	13
Length of paid maternity leave.....	135 days
Maternity leave benefits (% of wages paid).....	90%
Provider of maternity coverage.....	Social security
Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births.....	32
Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15–19).....	43.97

Polygamy

##### Employment and Earnings

Female adult unemployment rate (%)	13
Male adult unemployment rate (%)	14
Women in non-agricultural paid labour (as % of total labour force)	52
Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership*	5.22

##### Basic rights and Social Institutions\*\*

Paternal versus maternal authority	0.00
Female genital mutilation	0.00
Existence of legislation punishing acts of violence against women	0.33

##### Education and Training

Percentage of female teachers, primary education.....	93
Percentage of female teachers, secondary education..	77
Percentage of female teachers, tertiary education.....	45

\*survey data, responses on a 1-to-7 scale (1=worst score, 7=best score)

\*\* data on a 0-to-1 scale (1=worst score, 0=best score)

<sup>3</sup> See the note on p.4. Women in Bulgaria voted for the first time in 1937 and 1938.

## Demographic and social characteristics of female migrants in the surveyed countries

The data obtained from the 101 interviews show women's most general profile by countries of origin, age, education, employment in a given sector and status.

**Table 1**

### UK

Country/ region of origin	Age	Education	Current residence status d/sd/u	Status change	Current employment status	Family status	In host country since
Bulgaria	44	Professional qualification	Documented	Y	Dental nurse	Married , 1 child	1996
Bulgaria	43	Secondary	Semi- Documented	Y	Hotel cleaner	Married, 4 children	2007
Ghana	47	Post-grad, MSc.	Undocumented	Y	Project worker	Single	2002
Philippines	37	Professional	Semi- documented	N	Care assistant	Single	2005
Philippines	52	University	Undocumented	Y	Domestic worker	Married, 1 child	1999
Russia	24	Secondary	Semi- documented	Y	Receptionist and baby-sitter	Single	2006
China	31	Minimum	Undocumented	N	Kitchen assistant	Married, 1 child	2004
Colombia	32	Professional	Documented	Y	Medical admin	Single	2003
Philippines	NA	Minimum	Undocumented	N	Domestic work	Divorced, 1 child	2004
Turkey	48	Minimum	Documented	Y	Textile worker	Married, 2 children	1989
Turkey	38	Secondary	Documented	Y	Kitchen assistant	Married, 2 children	1989
Turkey	31	Secondary	Documented	Y	Restaurant worker	Married, 2 children	1990
Turkey	38	Minimum	Documented	Y	Domestic cleaner	Divorced, 2 children	1997
Kosovo (Serbia)	28	University	Documented	Y	Banker	Single	1999
China	35	Secondary	Undocumented	Y	Child-minder	Married, 2 children	2000

**Total 15 female interviewees**

**Table 2**

**ITALY**

<b>Country/ region of origin</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Current residence status d/sd/u</b>	<b>Status change</b>	<b>Current employment status</b>	<b>Family status</b>	<b>In host country since</b>
Ukraine	45	Secondary	documented	y	Care giving, services	Separated	2002
Ukraine	46	University	documented	y	Care giving, domestic work, cleaning, shop assistant, teacher	Separated	2002
Romania	30	Secondary	documented	y	Baby sitter, catering	Married	1996
Ukraine	50	University	documented	y	Care giving, chambermaid, cultural mediator	Married	2000
Bosnia	37	Secondary	undocumented	y	Cleaning, care giving, agriculture, food industry	Married	1992
Bosnia	33	Minimum	undocumented	y	Private household work, catering	Married	1997
Burkina Faso	32	Secondary	documented	n	Private household work, tourist sector, industry, social health worker	Married	1995
Senegal	50	University	documented	y	Private household work, catering	Married	1998
Morocco	35	Minimum	Documented (semi- documented)	y	Catering	Separated	1994
Romania	33	Secondary	Documented, undocumented	y	Private household work, private healthcare (ward assistant)	Married	2002
Croatia	44	University	documented	y	Private household work, dental assistant, catering	Separated	1996

**Total – 11 female interviewees**

**Table 3****Austria**

Country/ region of origin	Age	Education	Current residence status d/sd/u	Status change	Current employment status	Family status	In host country since
Ex-Soviet Union	29	Tertiary	long-term residence permit	y	Private household, NGO, Catering	married	2006
Ex-Soviet Union	42	Secondary	undocumented	y	Private Household	separated	2003
Ukraine	50	Tertiary	Tourist	n	Private Household	married	20 days
Bulgaria	30	tertiary	EU citizen	y	Private Household, Catering	single	2002
Poland	30	secondary	EU citizen	y	Private Household, Care	single	2003
Slovakia	54	secondary	EU citizen	y	Private Household, Care	single	1996
Poland	38	secondary	EU citizen	y	catering	separated	2007
Slovakia	40	secondary	EU citizen	y	mobile care	separated	2001
Turkey	28	secondary	Long-term residence permit	y	Hair dresser	Single	2003
Serbia	36	secondary	Long-term residence permit	y	restaurant	married	2004
Slovakia	25	secondary	EU-citizen	n	hotel	Single	2003
Serbia	49	minimum (illiterate)	Long-term residence permit	y	restaurant		1985
Turkey	24	secondary	Long-term residence permit	y	hotel	married	2003
Serbia	19	minimum	undocumented	n	cleaning	married	

**Total – 14 female interviewees**

**Table 4**

**Denmark**

Country/ region of origin	Age	Education	Current residence status d/sd/u	Status change	Current employment status	Family status	In host country since
Turkey	28	Minimal	Undocumented	N	Restaurant	Divorced	2004
Thailand	23	Minimal	Documented.	N	Erotic dancer/ Prostitute	Divorced	2006
Brazil	22	Secondary	Undocumented	N	None	Married	2006
Turkey	19	Minimal	Documented.	N	Catering etc.	Married	2006
Thailand	29	Minimal	Undocumented	N	Catering etc.	Divorced	2006
Ukraine	27	University	Undocumented	Y	Erotic Dancer/ Prostitute	Single	2006
Albania	25	Minimal	Undocumented	N	Prostitute	Single	2006
Philippines	32	University	Documented	N	Au pair	Married	2003
Philippines	23	Secondary	Documented	N	Au pair	Single	2007
Philippines	30	Minimal	Documented	N	Au pair	Single	2007
Philippines	26	Minimal	Documented	N	Au pair	Single	2007
Philippines	26	Minimal	Documented	N	Au pair	Single	2007
Philippines	27	Professional	Documented	N	Au pair	Single	2007
	30	College (Some)	Documented	N	Au pair	Married	2008
Latvia	29	Secondary	Documented	Y	Baker	Single	2001
Nigeria	24	Secondary	Undocumented	N	Prostitute	Single	2007

**Total – 16 female migrants**

**Table 5**

**Belgium**

Country/ region of origin	Age	Education	Current residence status d/sd/u	Status change	Current employment status	Family status	In host country since
Brazil	30	High school	U		cleaner	Married	2001
Brazil	30	-	U		cleaner	Married	2006
Brazil	32	Secondary school	U		cleaner	Married	2001
Brazil	38	High school	U		cleaner	Lives in partnershi p	2003 2007
Brazil	40	High school	U		cleaner	Divorced, lives in partnership	2002 and 2005
Brazil	54	Secondary school	U		Cleaning houses and buildings for society	Divorced	2003
Ecuador	31	High school non finished	U		Internal cleaning, then as external servant	Sham marriage	1999
Ecuador	36	University degree	From SD to U		cleaning	Divorced and married again in Belgium	1996 2002
Ecuador	42	Primary school	U		cleaning	Married	2003
Poland	19	High school	D.		horticulture	Married	2007
Poland	34	-	D.		horticulture	Married	2007
Poland	40	Primary school	D		horticulture	Married	2007
Rwanda	51	High school	D		Education, social worker	Single parent	2000

**Total – 13 female interviewees**

**Table 6****Bulgaria**

Country/ region of origin	Age	Education	Current residence status d/sd/u	Status change	Current employment status	Family status	In host country since
Iraq	28	Higher	D	Y	Employed	Single	1985
Iraq	40	Secondary	Sd	N	Unemployed	Widow	Oct. 2007
Iraq	55	Secondary	D	Y	Employed	Widow	1979
Guinea	27	N/A	U	Y	Unemployed	Sham marriage	N/A
Palestine	40	Higher	D	Y	Employed	Married	1989
Palestine	33	Secondary	D	Y	Employed	Separated	1991
Ukraine	45	Higher	D	Y	Part-time	Widow	2001
Ukraine	34	Secondary	U	Y	Shadow economy	Living in partnership	1991
Ukraine	33	Secondary	U	Y	Shadow economy	Married	1990
Moldova	30	Secondary	U	Y	Shadow economy (trafficked)	-	N/A
Armenia	26	Secondary	Sd	Y	Shadow economy	Living in partnership	1996
Mongolia	45	Higher	U	Y	Shadow economy	Single	1995
Guatemala	35	Secondary	U	Y	Unemployed	Living in partnership	1998
Liberia	41	Secondary	U	N	Shadow economy	Widow	2005

**Total – 14 female interviewees**

**Table 7**

**Spain**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>age</b>	<b>married</b>	<b>arrived in</b>	<b>Status d/ud</b>	<b>working</b>	<b>Work qualifications</b>	<b>Status change</b>	<b>education</b>
Uruguay	39	No	2002	Yes	Yes	sq	yes	secondary
China	36	yes	2005	No	Yes	not working	no	secondary
Mali	29	widow	1993	Yes	Yes	q	yes	primary
Morocco	27	yes	2003	Yes	Yes	q	no	primary
Morocco	33	No	2001	Yes	Yes	q	yes	primary
Bulgaria	39	yes	2001	Yes	Yes	nq	yes	secondary
China	55	No	1992	Yes	Yes	q	yes	Degree
China	54	yes	1977	Yes	Yes	nq	yes	primary
Morocco	38	yes	2002	Yes	Yes	q	yes	Degree
Morocco	38	yes	2000	Yes	Yes	q	yes	Degree
Morocco	44	yes	2000	Yes	Yes	q	yes	Degree
Romania	35	yes	2005	only resid.permit	Yes	nq	no	secondary
Romania	32	No	2002	Yes	Yes	sq	yes	Degree
Gambia	50	widow	1977	Yes	Yes	q	yes	primary
Ecuador	41	yes	2001	Yes	Yes	Nq	yes	secondary
China	53	divorced	2000	Yes	No	not working	yes	secondary
Estonia	46	yes	1995	Yes	Yes	Q	yes	Degree
Argentina	38	No	1995	Yes	Yes	Q	yes	Degree

**Total: 18 female migrants**

**Statistics and gender**

The precision of data on the number of immigrants in the different countries remains a basic problem in the immigrants' demographic statistics. Although this project made an attempt to apply logical formulas and methodology for estimation and calculation of the undocumented immigrants, the results are regarded as doubtful or they do not enjoy consensus among the research teams because of the hypothetical and relative initial data from censuses, mortality rates, illegal transfer to third countries, repeated change of status and dropping out of the control systems and the social networks. This leads to problems in the collection of data for the female migrants and undocumented workers. It would be more correct to speak of tendencies in the migration flows, their gender dimensions and presence on the European labour market.

During the past years feminization of immigration and female participation on the labour markets, including semi- and undocumented employment can be clearly observed in six of the old EU partner countries. This tendency has been formed basically by two factors – old (economic tradition) and new (political situation).

1. The traditional factor is the well-developed specific labour market in the so-called by the Austrian partners “sector where the affective work is of crucial importance”, i.e. the domestic work – cleaners, housekeepers, carers for children, old people and disabled, cooks, etc. This sector is quite poorly developed in Bulgaria and the other CEE countries. The Italian researchers use another, also appropriate terminology for this sector, classifying these jobs centering on “care”, in a broad sense of the word. One can add to this developed sector the jobs in the touristic sector such as chambermaids in hotels, waitresses in restaurants and bars, cleaners in offices, etc. Another important sector is the sex industry which takes advantage of the women trafficking and participates in its organization, and 2. After 1989 there were intensive migration flows from the CEE countries, the ex-Soviet republics, as well as from ex-Yugoslavia where the 1990s were marked by military conflicts. After the fall of the iron curtain massive female flows from these countries found the free niches in this well developed market, including also the agricultural sector where ethnic minorities from these countries preferentially turned to hoping to survive in a sector for which they had skills and work experience.

In Bulgaria, being a new EU member state, poor and unattractive as it is and preferred by migrants basically as a transit and frontier country in the EU periphery, the tendency for feminization of immigration has not been observed yet though this has been argued by some of the researchers. These disputes are based on the logics that Bulgaria, Romania and some other acceding countries are part of the general European tendency rather than on any concrete statistics. For the time being, it is only IMIR’s researchers and the surveys of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee that try to prove that the gender ratio within migrant communities in Bulgaria is in favour of male migrants.<sup>4</sup> We can add here that 93.4 % of the immigrants are of working age (between the ages of 26 and 45), which is almost reversed of the sex-age structure of the local population.

Actually, Bulgaria and the other post-communist countries participate in the all-European process of feminization of migration as a source of migrating women to the other EU countries. These East-European women turn into competitors to the females from the Philippines, Thailand, Brazil and Turkey as they prevalingly enter the sectors of domestic cleaners, childcare and elderly, the services in tourism, as well as in agriculture. One should take into consideration that the Bulgarian women, as well as the other women from CEE countries and the ex-Soviet republics are extremely vulnerable and dominate in the last 15-18 years in the women trafficking to Western Europe, as well as to the Balkan countries especially to the regions where military Peace Corps are deployed.

According to the 2006 Report of the BHC female migrants represent 80 % of the Russian immigrants in Bulgaria and their predominance over the other CIS countries and CEE is visible.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Research of the Rights of Migrants in Bulgaria, Final report of the BHC, November 2006, p.20, where it is stated that males represent 62% of all immigrants in Bulgaria.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.21/

Every year around 800 000 people in the world become victims of trafficking. Human trafficking is the third biggest and most profitable business in the world. The annual incomes from this trafficking are between 8 and 12 billion Euros. Annually 10 000 women from Bulgaria alone become victims of trafficking with the aim of sexual exploitation. In connection with a scandal with a Bulgarian prostitute in Belgium, *Le Soir* quotes an anonymous Belgian policeman, who claims that 70% of 200 prostitutes at the Brussels-North railway station only are Bulgarian women.<sup>6</sup>

According to data from Spain 70% of the women employed in the sexual business are female migrants from different countries. They specify, however, that this is not always the result of women trafficking, but sometimes is the personal decision of the woman. To a great extent, this is due to the feminization of poverty, which more and more affects women all over the world. According to the European Women's Lobby, 2001, out of 1,3 billion poor people 70 % are women and their under age children. According to the American Agency for International Development 70-80% of the unemployed Russian workers are women (Refugee Reports, 2000). In the Ukraine and other East-European countries women also constitute 70% of the unemployed (Lebed, 1998)<sup>7</sup>. That is how matters stand in Moldova, considered by IOM as one of the basic sources for trafficked women to Western Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East (Baker, 2002).<sup>8</sup>

### **Family status/civil state and adaptation to the new environment**

According to their family status female migrants belong to all respective categories, i.e. married, separated, single, widows, with or without children. Further to the data obtained from the 101 interviews 43 women are married, 5 live in partnership, 28 are single, 15 are divorced and 6 are widows. Two sham marriages were declared and two females refused to speak of their marital status. The number of children varies from 1 to 3 with the exception of a Bulgarian woman immigrant in the UK who had 4 children and who, most probably, is a Roma by ethnic origin, as well as a female migrant in Spain raising 3 children. 11 of the 18 migrant women interviewed in Spain have children, who in two cases live in their countries of origin: one is a Chinese woman whose only child is 23 years old and completely independent, and the other is a Romanian woman whose two children are at school age and looked after by a relative. A female migrant in Belgium is a single parent. As we do not have data about the number of children in all seven countries we can only ascertain the tendency that the usual number of children is 1-2 and more rarely – 3.

Family status is an important part in the process of entering the host country, as well as in the subsequent process of adaptation. Thus for example, the majority of immigrants in Bulgaria (61.8 %)

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<sup>6</sup> Reprint from *Le Soir* in 24 Hours daily, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2008, p.24

<sup>7</sup> Lebed, M.A. (1998). A few observations about trafficking in women by a criminologist, Kiev, Ukraine: La Strada

<sup>8</sup> Baker, P. (2002). Toronto Star Newspapers Ltd. The Hamilton Spectator, November, 9, 2002

have chosen to migrate on their own, 38.2 % were accompanied by another family member: spouse/partner (21.6 %), child/children (13.8 %), parent(s) (6 %), close friend(s) (6 %), etc. The majority of migrants in Bulgaria are married or they live in partnership (63.4%). Quite big is the number of intermarriages with Bulgarian women/men (57.4 %), which is higher among women (61.1 %) and slightly lower among men (55%). The average immigrant family has one (42.7 %) or two (41.8 %) children, 46.8 % of whom are Bulgarian citizens.<sup>9</sup>

According to the observations of the Spanish partners the reunion/regrouping of families is a comparatively new tendency and is a result of males' migration who arrived in the country in the beginning of 2000. The newly arrived wives/daughters, cousins have residence permits only but nevertheless, they work sometimes as cleaners. They arrive basically from Pakistan, Morocco, and Latin America. Actually, it is not possible to make a general conclusion from the interviews because there are not enough data. There are only some scanty data which cannot be generalized. At first sight it seems that the classic variant is valid, i.e. women who arrive with their children to join their husbands but this cannot be certain either. One of the options is the family reunion when one of the spouses has already stayed a long time in the host country, is employed and has adapted to the undocumented status or to the transitions from one status to another. S/he already knows the local culture which hastens and facilitates the family adaptation. There are similar characteristics when real, fictitious or arranged marriages are contracted both with local partners and co-nationals who have a regular residence status. These marriages make it possible for the newly arrived female/male migrants to regularise their status by marriage, to get acquainted with the local culture, to find employment and to fit in the social surroundings more easily.

Not rarely, however, family can play the role of a binding and discriminative factor. These two examples are from Austria:

*“Family reunification is an important pathway of entrance for migrant women. It also can be on the ground of traditional patterns of marriage arrangements, like the finding and following transfer of ‘native’ women as wives to the country of destination. (A-I27) Another example refers to arranged marriages between settled migrants in Austria and women from their countries of origin as in the case of A-I29, a Turkish female migrant who was living in her husband’s house feeling very isolated and exploited: ‘I was always at home. I felt in a crisis. In the household I was exploited like a servant. I became depressed. There was nobody. I didn’t get on with my mother in law. ... I was always at home for three months and became depressed. You know nobody and you don’t go out. I accepted it.’ She managed to get out of those coercive family structures and to get access to a German language course as well as to irregular jobs to earn her living. She reached regularisation of her employment status on her*

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<sup>9</sup>Research on the Rights of Migrants in Bulgaria, Final Report of the BHC, 2006, p.21

own. Moreover, she arranged also the family reunification with her mother and her siblings. Despite these emancipative efforts the pressure of traditional male dominated patterns still is high when she is confronted with the rebuke not to walk in the streets alone – as a divorced Turkish woman.

Another case (A-I20) shows migration in terms of forced escape on the basis of massive, life-threatening gender discrimination. The refusal to forced marriage and massive physical violation by the males in her family made her leave her home country in order to save her life. She managed to escape the violent patriarchal structures in her country of origin, to cross Europe (without knowing the language), and to organise a regularised status despite the strong patriarchal structures within the ethnic minority community in Austria which she had either to circumvent or fight against.

There are similar cases of escape from extremely conservative patriarchal traditions in the Bulgarian interviews but they concern basically males. An interviewee from Lebanon explained that the reason for his escape to Bulgaria was the fact that he was forced by his family to leave his beloved as she belonged to another ethno-cultural community and to marry his cousin. As a result children with disabilities were born (BUL4). One can conclude that no matter whether we are speaking of men or women – this is an escape from the conservative traditional culture. The cases with female migrants in Austria and male migrants in Bulgaria show an attempt to find more freedom for the particular person, i.e. to escape from the patriarchal shackles in his/her countries of origin.

A previous interview relates the story of an Albanian immigrant from Kosovo who lived in Germany. He was incited to join the KLA and to become a commander of a military unit in order to escape from the woman he was forcibly married to by the parents of both families as his life with her was a nightmare.<sup>10</sup>

For many women from Turkey and other countries from the Near and Middle East emigration to West European countries (as part of immigrants' families) is the only chance to get free from family dependence and violence and to become emancipated. Fieldwork in Germany, where the Turkish Diaspora is the biggest in Europe, showed cases when women managed to get divorced due to the more liberal local legislation. They took advantage of the social system in the host country, received protection and started a life on their own which would be impossible in their country of origin.

In a similar way women from the Philippines and Thailand are turned into family slaves in Denmark. Such is the case with the young Chinese women and men in Bulgaria who, though single and sent to the host country to work there, actually send everything they earn to their families and create conditions for the arrival, accommodation and adaptation of new family members.

Two quotations from the Danish interviews illustrate the fate of the female migrants from the Middle East. *“My situation is more or less characteristic for some women from my own country. First*

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<sup>10</sup> Zhelyazkova, Antonina. Albanian Prospects. Fieldwork., IMIR, 2003, p.78-79

*we get married, then some things happen, we get divorced, we cannot go back to our country, because we lose face, and then we stay here on our own. If you don't have the social competencies, and you don't want to work hard, you can become a friend of some very nasty guys and very bad people”.*

*“If you have problems with your host family – and some do – then you must go to the police. Sometimes a new host family can be found – through friends or through the Internet. The kind of problems that some have is misuse and maltreatment – sometimes the family is strict with having your friends in the house, sometimes they criticize your cleaning. The conditions are written in the contract, but sometimes you are not allowed to go to the language lessons, even though it is written in the contract”. The situation is very typical for women from this region. Coming to Denmark as au-pair with a limited residence, hoping for staying longer and permanent via getting married.*

Leaving aside the specific vulnerability among women who got divorced with a local or naturalized migrant (in such cases they lose their regular residence status in the country) and the cases with the erotic dancers/prostitutes (dominated by women) it seems that there are no other differences. Most interviewees refer to the type of the regular/irregular status as the main factor for the occurrence of such cases with respect to gender.

According to the Spanish interviews all female interviewees who have children claim that they are very well integrated. In some cases the integration of children in the new society is a fundamental factor and if children's integration has not been achieved, the mother is apt to return with the children in the country of origin.

Experience in Bulgaria shows that children in one of the most difficult to integrate group of the Chinese turn into a sort of a link between the parents and relatives with the host society through the language knowledge, better knowledge of local culture, traditions and public rules thus cooperating for the partial inclusion of the elderly persons. Women from the Middle East can also get out of the family capsulation and create some contacts with the social environment of the host society only through the children and their inclusion in the health and educational systems of the host country.

The fate of some women from the ex-communist countries has its specifics. Unemployment and the low living standards during the period of transition to market economy in their countries of origin made them work in the “entertainment services”, (although advanced in years and with university degrees), in order to send money to support their families and their children's or grand children's education. During the hard economical and political transition in these countries, which is marked by stages of ‘wild capitalism’ and corrupt practices, social hierarchies in the countries from South-eastern and Central Europe, Russia, the Ukraine, etc, changed places and the inadapted workers were thrown on the European labour market. Such are the people with university and college education, students,

children and even agricultural workers having specialized skills, who were protected during the socialist period<sup>11</sup>. There is plenty of literature on the transition period so we have taken into consideration the countries of origin which we have in our interviews.

A previous research made by the Bulgarian team in Greece analyses interviews with middle-aged female migrants, most of whom with higher education, who adapted painfully to their jobs as home cleaners. These were engineers from closed military plants, teachers, philologists, etc, who worked as housekeepers, looked after children, nursed elderly and handicapped people working 24-hours a day and some of them did not have rest days for 2-3 months. And those, who had the bad luck to fall into more isolated agricultural regions, became often victims of sexual exploitation by all males in the family that had employed them to do the housework.<sup>12</sup>

People speak nowadays about the syndrome of ‘the new generation of children with immigrant parents’ in the CEE countries, the ex-Soviet and Yugoslav republics. Many of these children have remained in their countries of origin to be brought up by grandparents, relatives and neighbours while their parents make money sending it from the host countries. This has overturned the moral principles of these societies because the new generation was raised without direct parental care, the mother’s love and father’s respect were virtual and at the same time this generation has a strongly marked consumer’s ideal “*I am alone and this gives me the freedom to do what I want, besides, I have Euros, which my parents send me, I have nice clothes, video and CDs*”.<sup>13</sup>

Similar are the evaluations about the family role in the interviews made with female migrants in Belgium. Their countries of origin are basically in South America. In one way or another, the women’s stories are linked with the size of the family considered either as a burden or a support.

Table 5 on p.16 shows that some women live alone with their children, others raise them with partners, but the children’s fate and their future in particular, is part of the project even when the living conditions are extremely difficult.

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<sup>11</sup> The Effects of Political and Economic Transition on International Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/oso/829702/2004/00000001/00000001/art00004;jsessionid=3b1gg8104gkqp.alice?format=print>

Recent Changes in Social Conditions of Countries in Transition: Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States; [http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/\(httpAuxPages\)/B321105A86C37EC880256B67005B758F/\\$file/dp117](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpAuxPages)/B321105A86C37EC880256B67005B758F/$file/dp117)

International migration in Central and Eastern Europe – current and future trends, [http://www.un.org/esa/population/migration/turin/Symposium\\_Turin\\_files/P12\\_Kaczmarczyk&Okolski.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/migration/turin/Symposium_Turin_files/P12_Kaczmarczyk&Okolski.pdf)

Glenny, Misha. 1999, The Balkans 1804-1999, Granta Books, London

Novite Balkani, 2006, Hermes Publishing Ltd Canada, Sofia, compiled by Kurvetaris, George, Victor Rudometov, Kleomennis Kutsukis, Andrew Kurvetaris; (a collection of surveys conducted by a number of researchers during the past 10 years. The above four authors have collected them, they are translated in Bulgarian and were published in Bulgarian only).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 216

<sup>13</sup> A. Zhelyazkova’s archive, interviews with schoolchildren, 2005-2008.

Talking about the size of the family one can notice that women, especially Brazilian females, have to deal with most of the administrative problems of the household as finding a lawyer for the husband who was arrested in an immigrant's detention centre, approaching the social services or the landlord who provided disgusting living conditions, etc. Again the case in point is the traditional local culture. The same refers to the Bulgarian female migrants no matter where they are. They can cope with most of the problems because these are 'macho' societies and the women are those who cope with all everyday necessities. Such is the fate of women from the Ukraine, Moldova and the ex-communist countries.

BE 20 believed that, upon her arrival to Belgium she was going to work as a secretary or saleswoman in a store. But like the others, she was only able to do housework for families, which had no respect for her. Her husband's arrest on a building site and his detention in a centre forced her, for the first time, to start approaching the administration and to stand for her rights. Until then, regarding herself as illegal, she did not know that she had certain rights, and in particular that she was entitled to social benefits from the local authorities' Welfare Centre. It is from that moment that she decided to take some time for French lessons. She wonders now if the future of her children would not be more secure in Belgium.

In the couples BE 23 and 24, the wife took charge of the project regularization and managed to carry out the necessary formalities.

*"My grandfather is Italian. I am a European descendant. Therefore I went to Italy to obtain Italian nationality. This is a known fact among the Brazilian community. I already knew it in Brazil. Actually this is something which made us decide to leave. Two years before leaving, I started to collect the required documents in Brazil. It is a long process: I knew which documents were necessary and we arrived in Europe with all necessary papers. First I had to live for eight months in Italy. (...) My husband stayed in Belgium. I lived in Belgium, but I went back for one week every month to Italy. After an eight months procedure, I was given Italian identity. As we are married, my husband also has the right to regularization. The process is the following: in November 2007 we both registered with the commune of Anderlecht. We brought the marriage certificates to prove that we are legally married and he was given provisional documents for a two months stay (...) I have the right to remain in Belgium, to work, all. From January my boss will declare me officially. If there are problems, I go directly to the Italian consulate. (...). We know the law a little. One receives a lot of information from other Brazilians.*

Often, upon arrival, the Brazilian men do not foresee the difficulties that they will encounter. Contrary to the women, they are more naive as is seen from BE 29:

*"It is easier to come to Belgium because only a plane ticket is necessary. And then I had these two*

*cousins who were already there. They were telling me that it was easy to learn the language, to register in a school and that they were ready to help me to find work. It was very difficult for me to understand what it meant to live as a clandestine person. I knew that it was not easy, but I did not suspect that it would be so difficult. He said to me that they were well there, that he had a place to live, a job. So I trusted them”.*

In the conversation with BE 23 and 24, the husband describes what he expected when arriving in Belgium, but the wife describes the steps she had to take to fulfil this expectation. She always says “us”. But she is the only one who speaks the language well enough to deal with the administration.

BE 23, the husband:

*“Often they come in order to buy a house, a car or with the aim of setting up a business in Brazil. It is not possible any more to reach these objectives today by working normally in Brazil. Coming here in Europe, two years are enough if one has a good job. Even for a house because it is not very expensive in Brazil”*

BE 24, the wife:

*“What happens is that when they find out what is the reality here, they realize that they will not be able to reach their objective quickly. So they stay longer”.*

*Q. And all the procedures to obtain papers, is it only to have access to a better job or it is because you plan to remain here?*

BE 24:

*We like the life here and think of staying for a long period. We would like to buy a flat, to have a good car, to start a family and to live here. All is better here; services, quiet, there is no real violence. In Brazil you earn little and live little because you do not have enough to eat fruit, to buy a TV. Here after a day's work you can buy yourself TV!*

*Q. And if you had the possibility to earn a lot of money in Brazil, to have the same standard of living, would you prefer to live over there or here?*

BE 24

*“Here. There is culture, education for the children which does not exist in Brazil. In general, Belgians treat Brazilians really well, they are good with them. It is only occasionally that we have these problems as with the municipality and often with some Flemish, but we do not meet many in everyday life. With the other foreigners, we have normal relations. These are not questions of nationalities but that of people to people”.*

It is obvious that this woman has already planned everything: she wants to change the neighbourhood and leave the ghetto. She wants to live among Belgians and to integrate with the local culture.

Women from Central and South-eastern Europe, Russia, the Ukraine, Moldova and other ex-Soviet republics make unfavourable comments about the spouses and the women's role for their immigrant adaptation, which proves once again the importance of the traditional culture and family tradition for the migrant families' adaptation in the host country. Not a few women from the ex-socialist countries mentioned that their husbands adapted with difficulty in the new environment, they looked for employment a longer time, they did not accept just any employment, they could not accept the fact that their jobs were under their qualifications and education. Often they give up and they either return to their country of origin or they stay at home while their wives provide for the family. At a given moment it becomes clear that it is more functional for the family if women stay alone in the host country, to make money and sent it to their families after their husbands have returned home. Women adapt more quickly out of necessity because they used to cope with everything in the ex-communist countries to provide for their families.

A female respondent from the Ukraine who was interviewed in Bulgaria said, "*Women always manage because their most important value is to protect their families, their children in particular, against poverty. They accept any kind of job and they are more tenacious, they are not fastidious, they can bear humiliations*"/BUL20/

Female emigrants from Bulgaria said that local men in Spain, Italy, Greece, as well as male immigrants from Albania, Turkey and other more conservative minded countries wondered at the Bulgarian phenomenon (it is more precise to speak of post-communist phenomenon), i.e. women bear the hardships of emigration working hard in order to provide for their husbands and children. "*This is not possible with us, said to them Albanian migrants or local Spaniards, men are obliged to provide for their wives and children. We cannot even imagine a situation like yours – men staying at home, reading newspapers, drinking raki and looking after the children while you are exposed to any risks in a foreign country, without male protection, working for employers who do not respect you.*"<sup>14</sup>

Quite opposite is the situation with women from the Near East who arrived in Bulgaria as refugees and immigrants. Very rarely young women from these countries would start labour migration on their own. All interviewed men were unanimous that the situation of Muslim female refugees or asylum seekers, especially those who, rarely, but for one reason or another, have arrived alone with their children, not accompanied by an elderly male from the family, is very difficult. This information was obtained by the women themselves but was confirmed by men, too. They cannot communicate freely with men but as soon as they are placed in the detention centre after crossing illegally the border, they fall into the company of males, including the security guards. In such an environment, where difficulties increase with the language problems, they cannot even ask for the necessary sanitary and

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<sup>14</sup> IMIR archive – interviews with Bulgarian women working in Greece, Spain, Italy

health facilities. After leaving the detention centre, female migrants have to face still more difficulties because they have to cope with the minimum support of 30 Euro per month, per person. Their traditional culture hampers them in their contacts with more experienced refugees and immigrants who have a several year experience in the host country, as well as with the local job brokers. Institutions that manage the status of refugees have in general more favourable attitude to lonely women (and especially women with children). That is why women become victims of insistent attention from other refugees, undocumented immigrants and men from the detention centres who hope to obtain a legal status and avoid extradition through marriage (even a sham marriage).

The most difficult interviews for the Bulgarian team were namely with such women who were in a constant stress – having lost their homes, their traditional milieu, their spouses or part of the family, they had made a hard weeks-long march through the mountains, in the smugglers' hands, to cross the green border. They were in poor health and in entirely male environment, which offered them horrible alternatives; they had neither any language knowledge nor interpreters and they were in a state of a complete dead-lock and depression. That is how female refugees and asylum seekers feel like in Bulgaria when they have no contacts in this country. They come from Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran. Bulgarian institutions are not flexible enough and they are not able to take advantage of the migrant's organizations and networks which offer their services as translators and provide 'first aid' for the newly arrived. /Bul FG; BUL12; BUL7; BUL16/

All this and the additional factors described in the analysis made on the interviews turn Bulgaria into a transit country where the efforts of the prevailing part of the migrants are to find means and safe channels to get to other European countries.

## Female immigrants and education

In this category the gap between women and men's current access to education is measured through ratios of women to men in primary-, secondary- and tertiary-level education. A longer-term view of the country's ability to educate women and men in equal numbers is captured through the ratio of the female literacy rate to the male literacy rate.

As can be seen from the 2007 Gender Gap Index <sup>15</sup> for the seven UWT partner countries, the educational attainment of women on national level is similar and good. As regards the equality index in educational attainment the sample average for the women in the seven countries is the same – 0.916, which is quite close to the full equality and their participation in teaching is also commensurable with certain nuances of measurement in the secondary, primary or higher education for each country.

Against this background interesting for the social profiling of female migrants is their educational qualification and its weight in the process of socialization and integration in the host country. It is paradoxical that in most of the cases the level of educational attainment and qualifications is not a factor for the female immigrants' realization on the undocumented, and often on the documented labour market of the host countries. Here is a short table showing the educational qualifications of the male and the female interviewees.

Educational level	Male	Female
Minimum	13	24
Secondary	51	41
Post secondary	44	34

By countries the situation is the following: In Belgium all female interviewees except one work under their educational qualifications and five males out of the 17 interviewees work to their educational level. The rest are working in the construction industry and horticulture. In Austria one woman with secondary education works as a hair dresser, the remaining 13 females work under their qualifications as cleaners, au pairs, care giving, catering, etc. All male respondents work under their educational qualifications – in construction, hospitality, agriculture, etc. All 16 female migrants in Denmark are employed under their qualifications. The same refers to men who work in restaurants, retail, etc. Four of the 11 interviewed females in Italy seem to work according to their educational level. Three of the males (out of 19) work close to their educational qualifications and the rest occupy low paid/manual jobs in agriculture, construction, hotel services, industry, etc. Five of the women in the UK

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<sup>15</sup>Global Gender Gap Index Report 2007, World Economic Forum

work according to their qualifications. Thus 4 of the women with minimum education work according to their skills. One can presume that five out of 15 males are employed to their qualifications. In Bulgaria 5 females work in accordance with their education and only three of the 16 male interviewees are employed according to their educational qualifications. In Spain six women (out of 18) work close to their qualifications and 12 work under their educational level. They work as cleaners, care minders, etc. Half of the 12 male interviewees work as skilled or semi-skilled employees. The rest are either unemployed or they are low skilled workers having minimum education. According to the BHC research on migrants' rights in Bulgaria (of both sexes) the average immigrant in Bulgaria is very well-educated: most migrants (54 %) have completed secondary education; 37.1 % hold a university degree (Bachelor's or Master's), 2.1 % hold a higher academic degree, and the same percentage of migrants have only primary education. This level of educational attainment, which is higher than the level among the general population, is largely due to the fact that a significant proportion of established immigrants first came to Bulgaria as university students. Bulgarian citizens by naturalization demonstrate even higher level of educational attainment compared to immigrant groups with resident status: 33.9 % hold a university degree and 3.2 % a higher academic degree. Around half of all migrants (51.4 %) had no knowledge of Bulgarian when they first arrived in the country, 30.9% of them, on the other hand, did not speak English at all.

Nevertheless, a great part of the female migrants not only in Bulgaria but in the other six countries as well work under the education they have attained in their countries of origin and sometimes – in the host country. We understand that well educated people from Brazil and other South American countries reside in Belgium – they have either secondary or higher education (Ecuador), they all are undocumented and work as cleaners. This is typical of emigrant countries with high unemployment rates and distinct social and economical disproportions and divisions. They have chosen Belgium by chance or subsequently but their project was always aimed to make quick money there and to accumulate material comforts, which are inaccessible for them in their countries of origin. (BE 18, 19 and 20). It becomes clear from these interviews that women from Latin America choose Belgium as a place with higher culture and better educational opportunities for their children. (BE 8, 13). Our Belgian colleagues conclude that all female interviewees have secondary or high education except two. Some have abandoned their studies in order to start working or to better share their life with their partners even if the partnership was an unsuccessful try. Definitely these women have sacrificed their qualified job in the countries of origin in order to provide for their children development. Such examples are a nurse who worked as a technician in a private laboratory, an administrative employee, a chemical technician in an industry complex, etc. It becomes clear from the interviews that men also explain the reasons for migration. The difference is that women put it much more clearly saying that they have

chosen migration, first for the good of their children and second, for the good of the whole family, while men in most of the cases point to political, economical and even emotional reasons. There are almost no men in the 101 interviews who have declared that they are working under their qualifications for the benefit of their children, while the greater part of the female interviewees said precisely this.

In Bulgaria female migrants are well educated. Out of 14 interviewees 4 females have higher education, 9 have completed secondary schools and only one immigrant from Guinea refused to speak of her education. It can be assumed that she has the minimum level of schooling. In Denmark the interviewed females are 16 and 8 of them have minimum education. They came from Turkey, Thailand, the Philippines, and one woman came from Albania, 6 women have secondary and professional education and 2 have university degrees. From 11 female interviewees in Italy, only 2 have the minimum level of training – one from Morocco and one from Bosnia. The rest women were with higher education (4) – 2 from the Ukraine, one from Croatia, one from Senegal; 5 were with secondary education (2 from Romania and the other 3 from the Ukraine, Bosnia and Burkina Faso). None of these females worked in conformity with their qualifications.

Immigrants' high educational status in Bulgaria and in the other countries is due to the fact that some of them were university students who did not return to their countries, others were educated people who came from countries with high unemployment rates, refugees from the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan who worked for the state in the previous political regimes and are aiming now at regular status or asylum as political immigrants.

Another example are the immigrants who came in the host countries to receive higher schooling and after they graduated they remained in the country usually through intermarriages or they stayed with semi- or undocumented status. What is typical of some of those who have regular status is that they have chosen on their free will to deal with business, or to work in the restaurant sector as they cannot understand how highly reputable in their countries of origin professions, can be so low-paid and low esteemed in Bulgaria. A female interviewee from Iraq who graduated as a medical doctor in Bulgaria said, *“When I went back for several months to Iraq to help my people after the fall of Saddam they looked on me as an idol, as a person from the high classes, well, I am a doctor, while here (in Bulgaria) to be a doctor, an engineer, or a teacher means that you are like the rest. People do not value the qualifications, they do not associate you with any national elite...”* /BUL12/.

Well educated are the females who come from the ex-Soviet republics and other post-communist CEE countries. In all seven partner countries, women who work within their competences or close to their education and skills are an exception: there is not such an example in the Austrian sample; things look better in the UK. Out of 15 interviewees 5 females work in accordance with their qualifications – one Bulgarian woman works as a dental nurse, a post graduate immigrant from Ghana is a project

worker most likely in an NGO, a Filipino woman works as a care assistant, a Columbia woman is a medical administrator and a woman from Kosovo with university education works in a bank. In Denmark most of the 16 interviewed women have minimum level of schooling but on the other hand, a woman with higher education works as an erotic dancer; five other women with university degrees, college and secondary education work as children carers, a baker and a prostitute correspondingly. Almost all 13 female respondents in Belgium with secondary and higher education work as cleaners and gardeners and only one had the luck to work as a social worker. From the 14 interviewed women in Bulgaria only 4 females with higher and secondary education have regular work contracts and their jobs are close to their qualifications and education. 12 females of the 18 respondents in Spain, whose education is given in Table 7, work as cleaners or they attend to children, elderly and handicapped people.

The results obtained by researchers who made a Comparative analysis on educational qualifications and professional skills of migrant women in 11 countries confirm the findings of the UWT based on 101 interviews with women. 186 migrant women participated in biographical interviews taken in CY, FR, GE, GRE, IT, POL, POR, SLO, SP, SW and the UK. The majority (more than 49%) had a higher educational level; more than 20% have had technical and/or vocational training; around 20% have attended secondary education; almost 10% have primary education<sup>16</sup>.

It is not necessary to make a long conclusion to this chapter. It is obvious that the existence of irregular status and discriminative attitude towards the immigrants is an obstacle to use their real capacities, professional qualification and possibilities, which would ease the social tension among immigrants and would be instrumental for the host societies. It is in each host country's interest to make efforts for the legalization of undocumented immigrants, to mobilize all means for their quick language adaptation in order to take advantage of the real female migrants' human capital. The isolated cases of our samples with female migrants who work in accordance with their education and skills in each of the seven partner countries (210 interviews, of which 101 with females) unambiguously show the high level of their integration, their persistence in strictly observing the laws of the host country, as well as their will to pay regularly their taxes and fees.

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<sup>16</sup> Comparative analysis on language skills, educational qualifications and professional skills of migrant women in Femipol countries, Brussels, European conference, 31 March 2008

## Health care and female immigrants

As could be seen in the Tables this category in the Global Gender Gap Index attempts to provide an overview of the differences between women and men's health. To do this, two variables have been used. First, the gap between women and men's healthy life expectancy is used, calculated by the World Health Organization. This measure provides an estimate of the number of years that women and men can expect to live in good health, by taking into account the years lost to violence, disease, malnutrition or other relevant factors. The second variable included in this subindex is the sex ratio at birth. This variable aims specifically to capture the phenomenon of "missing women" prevalent in many countries with strong son preference.

The immigrants' health status and their access to the health services in general and of female migrants in particular was out of the project research interests. Only some of the national reports and interview analyses provide some data on this topic. For this reason we can refer to individual interviews conducted in some of the countries where the issues of access to health services have been touched and to show some typical tendencies.

According to the UK's analysis, regardless of the EU workers' regular immigrant status, there exist some problems for lack of access to social and medical assistance and lack of protection against human traffickers. This, naturally, involves additional impediments in these spheres for the undocumented immigrants and the workers employed in the shadow economy without labour contracts. The initial employment for some Turkish speaking female migrants in the UK was in the textile sector where they worked under very hard conditions, put to humiliation and harassment (UK 28). Two of the female interviewees spoke about continuing health problems as a result of the difficult and reiterated work activity and illegal working hours.

The health system liked most by the female migrants is that of Spain as a host country. A Bulgarian female interviewee said that the Spanish healthcare system, the dental treatment included, attends to undocumented immigrants in cases of emergency regardless of the fact that they are undocumented and without social insurance.<sup>17</sup> She related of how she visited a general practitioner in the polyclinic because of a virus illness but he noticed that she had undergone an operation of breast cancer. He demanded that she immediately organized the receipt of her patient's file from Bulgaria in order to put her down for regular medical check up by an oncologist every three months. According to the evaluations of other immigrants the health services in Spain are social and they do not marginalize

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<sup>17</sup>A.Zhelyazkova's archive from May, 2008: A 50 year old woman, with college education of laboratory assistant lived 5 years as undocumented migrant in Pamplona, Spain, taking care of elderly people and handicapped. Since the second half of 2007 she is documented, her employment being the same.

the undocumented immigrants but provide the needed assistance solely upon their residence address registration.

There are data from the Danish interviews that the employers themselves, when necessary, provide for the medical care, especially for females working in their houses, paying all the costs with their health insurance cards (we have recorded similar cases with employers in the Netherlands).

In Bulgaria the situation of immigrants' health insurance is to a great extent identical with the general social insurance system, which is in unenviable position. Around 23% have no health insurance and 66.4% pay their health insurance fees as self-employed. 70.3% of the females and 60.4% of the males have a personal physician though many of them prefer the services of a general practitioner from their own community and like many Bulgarians, they pay additionally for medical services irrespective that they have health insurance and a personal physician. Figures show that males (68.8%) more often prefer the informal access to medical care than female migrants. In contrast to Spain and other countries, the illegal immigrants in Bulgaria cannot obtain residence address registration and access to the healthcare system is out of the question. This leads to corruption practices in the health system where the undocumented migrant can receive medical care for illegal payment if he/she can afford this money. Most often, due to shortage of money, the undocumented migrants do not resort to medical assistance; they try to treat themselves alone thus neglecting serious troubles.

Much worse are things with females who are still with unclear status – refugees, women who crossed illegally the border, and those who landed in detention centres. When speaking of specific female disorders in particular, Muslim women refuse to ask for assistance from the security guards or the males working in the immigration and refugee services. A female respondent from Iraq, a physician, said, *“Things are much more complicated for women from our religion when they need the attendance of an obstetrician or gynaecologist – and not only then, but when they need a more detailed examination. First, she must confide a woman, then a physician has to be found who must be also a woman, besides a woman must be at the examination to observe the rules of propriety, as well as to translate and to make sure that the check up was adequate”* /BUL12/. Quite recently the Border Police reported a story of a woman with two small children who was arrested together with the smuggler, leading her across the Turkish Bulgarian border. First she started screaming then she fainted away and the policemen thought she simulated in order to mislead them and to avoid sanctions. In fact she was giving birth having said nothing about her situation either to the smuggler or the policemen. The border policemen managed to call for an ambulance as they understood about the refugee's state from her two small children. After the childbirth they did not take her to the detention centre as the law provides but she was sent to the Agency for Refugees because of her delicate situation and the need of care. (Focus Information Agency, 24 chasa daily, 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2008).

According to the Global Gender Gap Index, as well as to different national statistics and reports, other researches and data from the UWT interviews it is obvious that the seven UWT partner countries have quite different health insurance systems, different approaches to the health status of their citizens and immigrants, female migrants included, both documented and undocumented. Austria and Spain stand out with adequate health care for people on a national scale and the immigrants accordingly. Lagging behind according to certain indexes are Great Britain, Italy, Denmark and Belgium. As for Bulgaria, its health services system is in crisis, the reform proved a failure and the migrants can rely on it as much as all the other people, i.e. minimally.

## **Female migrants and their presence in the shadow and regular economy in the seven host countries**

### **Motivation for women's emigration**

The reasons and factors that make women emigrate to other countries are closely related with their participation or non-participation in the labour market of the host countries. According to our **Belgian** colleagues the motivation for the emigration project is one of the essential criteria for gender differentiation. They accept that this issue is at the centre of the reconstitution of the migratory experience, as well as that of the social practices which characterize it.

Four are the women's basic motivation models that make them leave their countries and sometimes, their families and children.

1. Most often they leave their country of origin with their children to join their husbands who have already settled down and adapted in a host country. With such a motivation, women do not always enter the labour market in the new country. Usually they try to ease their husbands' way of life, they help their children to adapt in the new environment and for their more successful socialization. This is typical of females from the Near and Middle East and the Maghreb;

2. In the role of either accompanying or accompanied are the female refugees or asylum seekers who leave the regions with military conflicts with the whole family or part of it. When they reunite with their full family they rarely go to work after receiving a regular status; more often they stay at home to keep the house and look after their children. This is also typical of females from the Near and Middle East and the Maghreb;

3. Women whose motivation is economical – they look for a host country with a higher standard where they could actively enter the labour market and earn as much as they can in order to send money to their families in the poor country of origin, to provide for their children's education or to grow rich

quickly (according to their views) and to arrange their lives better after they return to their countries of origin. These are mainly women from Latin America, the Balkans, CEE, Russia and other ex-Soviet republics, and

4. Women who serve in the sex industry including females, who were victims of trafficking. This category could be considered to a certain extent as part of the third group because, by all means, it is connected with economic motivation. These are females, who in their desire to improve their standard have either chosen this sector of activity or were misled by the traffickers that they would work in the tourist and services sector. In the host country, however, they understand that they were victims of a deception and were put to cruel exploitation as sex slaves.

Our **Austrian** partners stress on the first motivation model, according to which family reunification is one of the ways for female migrants to come to Austria. It can be organised on the basis of the traditional patterns of marriage arrangements. Such are the arranged marriages between settled migrants in Austria and women from their countries of origin as is the case of A-I29, a Turkish female migrant who lived in her husband's house and felt very isolated and exploited.

According to 2004 data, however, it becomes clear that feminization of immigration in Austria has turned into a reality as 56 % of the women among immigrants have arrived in the course of 10 years or less.<sup>18</sup> Obviously, except for the prevailing factor of family reunion and marriages arranged by relatives, there is an increasing flow of female migration during the past ten years mainly from the Southern, Eastern and Central Europe, which is economically grounded irrespective of the kind of work – domestic services, sex industry or agriculture.

**Spain** has also marked family reunion as one of the obvious reasons for migration but the researchers underlie that it is not the only one. Seven of the interviewed women came to Spain to join their husbands and 11 came with tourist visa which is a legal way to enter Spain and for the subsequent undocumented entry in the labour market. They arrived directly from their countries and reaching Spain was their goal. It is obvious that for countries from Latin America that speak the same language, the possibility to move without visas, the big Diaspora and contacts with compatriots who adapted long ago turn Spain into an attractive host country. Spain is one of the most attractive country for residence and work for female migrants from Bulgaria and other countries from South and Eastern Europe because of its well developed social health care system, the intensive demand of domestic workers, as well as because of the similarity in the temperament and culture typical, as a whole of the South European peoples. According to the same source, feminization of migration in Spain has reached 51%.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Policies for Labour Market Integration 1, European Conference, 31 March 2008, Brussels, (Table 1 Source: Oso and Garson (2005)), FEMIPOL project

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, Table 1

According to the same data feminisation of migration flows in **Belgium** is 54%, it has reached 55% in **Italy** and 50% in **UK**. It is only for **Denmark** that the 2004 data show male prevalence and the female migrants are 48%.<sup>20</sup> The prevailing sectors on the labour market include domestic services, hospitality, restaurants and bars, sex work and horticulture/agriculture. There are no data about Bulgaria in this research but as mentioned in the beginning, the sector of domestic services is not developed, nor is it popular to commit residential care of elderly people and children to immigrants because of the economic structure in this country and the national peculiarities of migrants' countries of origin. **Bulgaria** is still used basically as a transit country and male migration prevails there.

### **Women's age in the motivational strategies**

The **Belgian** research team pays attention to the female migrants' age observing that most of the women are not young – they have only one 19 year old student of Polish origin and the rest are over 30. Of all 13 interviewees five women are over 40 and 50. As women would leave their homes only in the last resort, the fact that they do it at the age of 40-50 speaks for some compulsion. This leads to the hypothesis that female migration is the result of an extreme economic necessity and a considered life project and is not regarded as an adventure.

In **Spain**, out of 18 respondents 7 are over 40 and 50, 9 are over 30, and only 2 are around 30. In **Austria** there is only one 19 year old Serbian woman, 4 are in the middle and the end of their 20s, and the rest are within the range of 30-50. All interviewees in Italy are between 30 and 50 and in the **UK**, except for one 24 year old Russian woman, the rest are also within the range of 30-50. Things are similar in **Bulgaria**. 3 respondents are in the middle of their 20s and the rest are between 30 and 55. As regards women's age the **Denmark's** sample is 'the youngest' with one 19 year old interviewee from Turkey and the other 15 female respondents are between the age of 22 and 32. As regards the age structure of the male interviewees it is not much different from the females. Five of the 16 male respondents in Austria are between the age of 20-30, four men are between 30 and 40 and the rest seven are between the age of 40 and 54. In Belgium four men are between the age of 20-30, nine are between 30 and 40 and four are within the range 40-63. In Denmark female interviewees are comparatively young, five of the male respondents are between 23 and 30 years old, and the rest are at the age of 30 and 44. Six of the male respondents in Italy are between the age of 20 and 30, 13 are 30 and 49 years old. Only three male interviewees in the UK are between the age of 20 and 30, the rest are from 30 to 48 years old. Only one male interviewee from China is 50 years old and one has not responded to this question. In Bulgaria four men are between the age of 20 – 30, only one interviewee is 59 years old and

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

the rest are between 30 and 45 years old. Six of the male interviewees in Spain are at the age of 20 - 30, five are between 30 and 40 and one is 59 years old.

This is the age structure of male interviewees according to the available interviews but all these men have arrived in different years in the host country. Sometimes the interviewee left the country of origin at an early age, he has moved from one country to another, or he has been living in the host country for many years. It is difficult to make an analysis of the relation between a country of origin and age with our random samples. For example, judging from some of the interviews one can presume that migrants from Africa arrive at their early age but some interviews from other countries refute this. The same is true for the Chinese. We know that Chinese migrants in Bulgaria are very young, that is also the case in Denmark, but they are older in Spain and the UK. **Once again, it will be more correct to speak of tendencies rather than of findings. Obviously, we are not speaking of an adventurous approach with the female migration but of a compulsion of life or a considered family and personal project. The basic sectors of employment are clearly outlined as well, i.e. domestic services, hospitality and restaurants, sex work and agriculture.**

### **Female migrants and their integration on the labour market**

Labour market deregulation and flexibility, which are key measures for reducing unemployment and facilitating labour market re/integration, have differential impact on different groups. This is due to ethnic and gender labour market segmentations, which entail female migrants who are disproportionately located in low paid and low qualified jobs. For this reason female migrants have to endure the insecurities and instabilities of part-time and short-term employment contracts and, in many cases, informal/undocumented types of work.

A key problem is that the employment strategies that are currently being implemented are not creating adequate conditions for long-term integration, but rather produce a growing unstable segment of the workforce, which remains on the periphery of the labour market and wider society. In other words, the short-term strategies employed to increase participation and integration are not solving the problem of social exclusion and marginalisation in a long-term perspective. The imperative for economic efficiency behind the service delivery often results in providing help for those with fewer barriers to employment and who are thus easier to help; this tends to disadvantage those in need of greater assistance.<sup>21</sup>

Another aspect of labour market segmentation relates to the creation and amplification of 'ethnic niches' in the labour market. Although they play an important role such niches may lead to ethnic and

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<sup>21</sup> Maria Kontos, Integration of Female Immigrants in Labour Market and Society. Policy Assessment and Policy Recommendations, March 2008, p.2-3

cultural capsulation, may also provide limited access to majority society, and a reliance upon them alone may limit the potential for wider social integration

The reduced support for the unemployed will directly reject those groups that are not able to qualify for benefits because they do not have a regular residence status or are undocumented and semi-documented. Similarly, because they lack the necessary criteria either due to unstable employment conditions or because of the number of the worked off hours and their lower rates of pay. Again, female migrants are mainly disadvantaged in this regard, because they dominate in such shadow and poorly regulated areas of activity.

There are many programmes and measures for labour market integration and they display a variable potential for success. The access to training and job schemes is important. This is limited for those female migrants with irregular status and limited residence permits. There are further obstacles which arise due to limited knowledge of programmes and some practical constraints posed by work and domestic demands. These programmes are inaccessible for wives of workers, they rarely leave their homes which dooms them to marginalization having no chance to get socialized. Sometimes, the only link of such women with the outside world is in the near by shop or in their contacts with the children's teacher or doctor.

The Specific Targeted Research Project of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme of the European Commission on 'Integration of Female Immigrants in Labour Market and Society' ascertains that the increasing distinction between 'desirable' and 'undesirable' migrants in European migration policies facilitates the entry of the highly skilled migrants, whilst restricting that of low-skilled labour migrants, asylum seekers, and those seeking family reunification. Rights are stratified not only in relation to entry, but also in terms of rights to settlement, social welfare, family reunification, and citizenship. The negative gendered effects of these policies are significant, resulting from gender divisions and structures in both sending and receiving countries, as well as the gendered valuation of 'skills' that structure policies. For example, whilst the demand for care is growing (or as we call it affective work), care is de-valued as a profession, which produces constraints for the female migrants who are often expected to fill in these gaps.<sup>22</sup> Just to say it clearly: those sectors that are most open for female labour and the most demanded services are most badly regulated and they, by all means, fall into the sector of the shadow economy and deprive the female migrants from multiple rights.

The distinction between highly skilled labour migrants and asylum seekers disregards the fact that there are many highly skilled people in the latter group. In most countries, asylum seekers do not have the right to work, leading to de-skilling and a waste of skills. This is seen very clearly in the Bulgarian sample where part of the interviews were made with refugees and asylum seekers who were

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p.2-3

still undocumented or had temporary residence permit, as well as with the political immigrants where the female refugees' de-classification was visible, and the almost predetermined impossibility to enter the labour market with the education and skills they had.

### **The shadow economy – a basic labour niche for female migrants**

For many female migrants employment in the informal sector is the only possible source of income. Such is often the case with females from third countries who have limited job opportunities because of their unsettled migratory status. For many years migrants' employment in the informal sector has been particularly prevalent in Southern Europe.

Typical is the case with Bulgaria where against the background of the general high national levels of the shadow economy quite naturally comes the high level of immigrants' undocumented employment. In the Bulgarian case, there is a very close connection between the poor migrant's possibilities to obtain a legal status and his/her participation in the shadow economy and for the females – in the non-regulated sex industry as well. The several cases with women from Palestine, who had the status of political immigrants, show how important is for them to keep the laws of the country and to be strict in renewing their status as well as in looking for regular jobs with formal labour contracts. It is in their interest to be meticulous.

Currently, however, there is a growth of the informal sector in other EU countries, too. The main sectors for informal work are agriculture, construction, tourism and domestic services. These sectors are low-paid, with low work status and are occupied by the more vulnerable groups like women and migrants.

Migrant women in European societies constitute a significant section of flexible labour. On the one hand, there has been a growth of temporary and insecure employment conditions, and on the other - a growth of the undocumented segments of the workforce. This creates favourable conditions for exploitation by employers, who desire cheap and docile labour, to take advantage of the deregulation of the labour markets and welfare regimes. In this sense, we can speak of a *specific demand for informality* which encourages not only irregular migrants in need of employment, but also general informal working practices among those who have regular migration status and others in need for work. We have also identified a type of informality produced by EU-led policies facilitating sub-contracting which result in cheap informal migrant labour. At the same time, there has been a general undermining of the welfare regimes, which in turn forces many to seek informal work to supplement their low incomes. This research that was presented in March 2008 in Brussels has also identified a type of *informality*

produced by EU-led policies facilitating sub-contracting which result in cheap informal migrant labour.<sup>23</sup>

There are different types of undeclared workers. This is particularly visible in the case of female migrant workers who do not constitute 'legitimate' workers because of their immigration status as 'undocumented' (i.e. with no regular status or rights at all); or 'semi-legal' (e.g. having legal entry but working beyond the provisions provided in the work permit if they have such).

The criminalisation of undeclared work is particularly negative for female migrant workers: the 'punishment' for the migrant worker is always much harsher than that given to employer as she will face deportation at the end of the day. In many cases the incorrect employers take advantage of these norms and they themselves threaten the undocumented workers that they will call the police to use sanctions if they demand extra payment for additional work, make complaints about the work conditions, employed violence, etc. Repressive policies undermine further the social position and job security of migrant workers. This concerns particularly countries with poor control on employers, as well as high levels of corruption. Female migrants work in sectors which are invisible for the society and actually they cannot be protected by human right or labour organizations. Sometimes they live with limited freedom of movement and work with reduced rest days, so that it is very difficult for them to make any contacts and enter some social networks even with their compatriots and to ask for assistance when put at risk of harassment. A recent example shows that attempts are made to put under control the sector of domestic cleaners. An announcement in *The Times* said that a local citizen of the UK and her Bulgarian domestic cleaner registered a firm two years ago thus providing employment for 30 women from Bulgaria and Poland. The payment they offer is £11 per hour. Perhaps this kind of private business initiatives will bring this sector into sight and is a certain guarantee for the employed women. (quoted from *The Times* in *24 hours* daily, 6 January 2009).

Powerful racist and gendered processes generate specific and acute forms of discrimination towards different categories of female migrants; these processes often operate as informal constraints which reproduce undocumented and exploitative work regimes. Systematic, institutional and structural discrimination, as well as ideologies, discourses, myths and negative stereotypes are all combined in associating ethnic/cultural/national and gender elements. These act as social, economic, institutional and ideological devices that reproduce and perpetuate structural inequality and discrimination. We can add to this citation the non-punishable moral and physical violence on women as they are in the vague shadow zone of economy, which makes them, to a certain extent, invisible for the human rights and social networks and their employers are also, to a great extent invisible, thus they are difficult to become subject to punishment.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.4-5

In addition to the above-said the role of trade unions is minimized but there is, of course, a subjective reason as most of the women are not accessible to the union activists. At the same time, the women themselves, working in the domestic services, the sex-industry or agriculture do not have that freedom to participate in trade union activities.

There is not sufficient information in the interviews about the access to trade unions or support by unions. In Bulgaria the interviewees' summarised answer was almost identical: "*I have never been a union member, what could a union do for me? I am illegal and I work in the shadow economy*". Some of the women did not understand the question and knew nothing about trade unions. The only exception was a female from Latin America, who was a stewardess in her country of origin. She stated that she was a union member because it was obligatory for all employees in the airlines, but in Bulgaria, she found this senseless because of the nature of her current job. In Spain the majority of the interviewed women (9) had no contacts with trade unions. Some others took advantage of the information and legal and labour guidance (5) and only few are currently enrolled (2) or were enrolled (2). In the UK the trade union membership is mentioned as an important difference between men and women. While none of the women interviewees was a trade union member or supporter, around one in five of the men described themselves as 'union-friendly'.

On the one hand women, unlike men, work mainly in sectors where there is not an organized union activity. On the other hand, these are sectors of the shadow economy and very often they deprive women of elementary human rights and freedoms, thus they do not have the opportunity to look for such a support or organized protection.

One should have in mind the attitudes of migrants who came from the ex-communist countries where workers were formally enlisted in trade unions having no other alternative. Trade union activity is neglected in the host countries and migrants from CEE find it senseless to look for any support from them.

### **Domestic work as a specific and typical employment sector for female migrants**

Demographic and labour market specificity, welfare policies, as well as the evolution of the inter-family obligations according to the age hierarchy define different levels of demand for foreign domestic workers within EU countries. South European countries acknowledge the need for foreign domestic and care workers in their immigration legislation. In Spain and Italy, foreign domestic and care workers are integrated in quota systems. Legalization of migrant domestic workers in some countries is either on the basis of a work contract or on the basis of self-employment and self-insured work. While the latter may decrease dependency on the employer, it is often merely a disguised salaried work with reduced rights and benefits for the worker. Not rarely, domestic workers in Spain claimed in

their interviews that they themselves prefer to avoid legalization because within the current state they can accumulate more quickly the money they came for in this country. The regular status brings security for them but a regular payment of taxes and fees as well. They have to observe certain rules, which decrease their income.

In **Austria** the domestic work in the form of cleaning and caring in private households is a typical sector for the country dominated by women in the informal economy. The work in the private households is perceived as servant work, domestic workers are treated as objects, not as labourers: “The employers think you are their property” (A-16). Reflecting the social status of domestic work A-I12, a Bulgarian student, said: *‘Our societal hierarchy is based on the assumption that the profession of a doctor or lawyer have the highest status, and the domestic workers have a very low status. But it’s also a construction. I mean, on the one hand it’s reality for many women ... but for me it is absurd that people leave their families and that this is legitimate and logic due to their needs. They are leaving their families to be able to care for their families. And they come and do a job with is not creating anything just to be able to support their families in another country. I do not see myself in the same situation. (...) it’s something transitional for me and I know that I have different possibilities and resources and I am working all the time to fulfil my own expectations.’* She makes difference between her labour history as a domestic worker, who sees this phase just as a transitional period in her life, and other women who rely on this kind of work for a longer period not only to make ends meet for themselves but also for their families. The point is she does not see herself as a ‘domestic worker’, does not want to get involved too much into this transitional period of her life as a female migrant working in private households and does not identify with this kind of work. The literature on migrant domestic work stresses that many women see the employment in the care economy and private households as a ‘transitional’ occupation. However, there seems to be a hierarchy among the different jobs in the care economy: at the bottom is sex work, migrant women working in the sex industry mostly dare to escape from there seeking employment at the next ‘step of the ladder’ in the care economy: cleaning/baby sitting in private households, which is seen, especially by highly qualified migrant women, as a serving and less prestigious work. The next realistic option is the employment in the formal care sector with defined working conditions and seen by the public as a worth and respected profession, taken into consideration by migrant women planning to stay in Austria and who do not want or cannot come back to their former profession (see Caixeta et.al. 2004).

The position of the employer is perceived as privileged. Hierarchies between employers and employees are not only visible when shedding light on the often abusive way in which employees are treated but hierarchies are created because such kind of migrant labour simply exists: *‘Perhaps we have*

*now this moment historically and socially that there are these different kind of groups: people who are in need for a domestic worker, and people who need a job. And the two things go together, they are complementary. I do not accuse people who hire a domestic worker. But I would want them [employers] to reflect, also to question their positions as Austrian majority.’ (A-I12)*

On the other hand ‘very correct’ employers reflecting on their privileged position turn out to be ridiculous when ‘over-appreciating’ a domestic worker’s status in Austria which she in fact does not have: *‘she does not say that I am a ‘cleaning lady/Putzfrau’... thanks thanks. I don’t care if she calls me ‘putzfrau’ or not. Household cleaning – no problem. I do not feel these words, this is not my language. But I thought about hundreds of times. If I was a man I could easily work on a construction site and earning ‘normally’ like the other people too. But my documents and my curriculum say: I am a woman. Some people come and say: is this the wrong curriculum or the wrong person? This is the problem with me. This was also the problem in XX. Now I am curious which jobs I can get here’ (A-I13).* In this quotation the allotment of domestic work to ‘women’ is emphasised, i.e. the deeply inscribed gendered division of labour. Austrian colleagues make a comparison with one male interviewee who also began to work as a domestic assistant. A-I9, a Ukrainian worker, should find a female domestic worker for a potential employer in the Ukrainian community. All his female contacts, however, were very busy with work and could not overtake more work. He emphasized this fact that it was much easier for women to find work because private households were continuously demanding domestic workers. He on the other hand, sometimes had vacancies in his working biography. At the moment he had little work to do so he offered to make the household work himself. He outlined, he didn’t mind doing that kind of work and in contrast his employer praised him saying: *‘you are working better than women.’ (A-I9)*

According to the **Spanish** interviews the female migrants’ main sectors of activity are domestic work, services in hotels and restaurants and intercultural mediation. The first activity is carried out within the shadow economy, the second combines cases of shadow and formal economy while the third is completely regulated. As regards the domestic work in Spain, there is a difference between the payment to the autochthonous and foreign women. The first earn more (roughly 9-11€ against 8€ per hour). In both cases women usually work in the shadow economy. This is one reason for the work conditions to be very similar: they work at different workplaces some hours per week (2-4 hours). In both cases the “variable time” is very important because it helps to establish a relation based on mutual trustworthiness. There are no differences between documented and undocumented women.

Domestic work in **Spain** is not regulated and it is invisible (it is not possible to understand whether a woman is paying a visit to someone or she is going to clean the flat) but at the same time this

is a pillar in the Spanish society because it allows the autochthonous women to work in more satisfactory sectors, released from domestic work, assistance for the elderly and children.

This is how female migrants in **Denmark** describe their vulnerability in this sector although the prevailing part of them has the privilege to work with regular labour contracts. An interviewee from the Philippines described the following typical situation, *if you have problems with your host family – and some do – then you must go to the police. Sometimes a new host family can be found – through friends or through the Internet. The kind of problems that some have is misuse and maltreatment – sometimes the family is strict with having your friends in the house, sometimes they criticize your cleaning. The conditions are written in the contract, but sometimes you are not allowed to go to language lessons, even though it is written in the contract.*

The situation is very typical for women from this region - coming to Denmark as au-pair with a limited residence, hoping to stay longer or permanently via getting married.

Because of the specifics of this sector and the complicated and expensive administrative procedures a great number of domestic and care workers in Southern Europe have an unstable legal status.

The participation of immigrant women in the **Italian** labour market is described as a structural phenomenon, characterized, however, by strong elements of both vertical and horizontal segregation. Compared to the occupational segregation that characterizes the employment of immigrant workers in general, in the case of women we find not only the discriminations of class and race but also of gender. The mechanics of the labour market destine immigrant women - along with the majority of Italian working women - to jobs for which they “ought to” have a “natural” disposition as women and that can be classified as jobs centering on “care”, in a broad sense of the word. The type of work, then, is not limited to domestic work or assistance for the elderly or childcare only but also in the work of a social health worker (It 14), a hospital ward assistant (It 24), a school caretaker (It 1), an instructor (It 2), a cashier in a bar (It 4), a waitress (It 22), or a cook (It 21), what is central - or, rather, becomes so precisely in relation to the worker’s gender - is the capacity to take care of persons, manage relations, look after the cleaning of places or objects: in other words, work in the sphere of *services*.

For most of the interviewed females the first work experience in **Italy** was in the sphere of domestic work and care giving. In fact, it is quite easy to find employment in this sphere, due to the strong demand from the labour market. It is fuelled by the destructuring of the welfare state for all, the aging of the autochthonous population, and the increasing feminization of the Italian labour market.

This work experience usually began during the period of irregularity, with the women finding their jobs above all with the help of relatives or acquaintances, and tended to continue even once the residence permit had been obtained, in various forms: either it continued to be the primary source of

income, especially in the case of the migration projects of single women (IT 1,2,7) or, within families, it became a form of income that was supplementary but, also, indispensable for the family budget (It 8,9,24).

It becomes clear from the interviews that this sector is characterized by long working hours, low wages, and high turn-over. Working conditions are often very hard, not only at the physical but also at the psychological level. In cases where the immigrant woman lives in the home of the family she is working for, the occupational segregation is transformed, in fact, into full-fledged material segregation, imposed directly, by prohibiting (It 1, 28) or limiting her right to leave the house, or indirectly, with a saturation and prolongation of the work day, which prevents her from having relations outside the work sphere and greatly limits her socio-affective life (It 1, 2, 4, 7, 14).

The work has different impact on women than on male and this differentiation lies rather in the fact that this sector is not subject to any state or public control, while in most of the sectors where men are employed there is some labour surveillance. Anyhow, the extension of working hours is a standard practice for both men and women. The other specificity in the sectors where women are employed is that women are bound more emotionally with their employers and are more strongly dependent on them.

This clear occupational segregation of female migrants is confirmed, moreover, by the very small number of them working outside the services sector. Only in five interviews cases of immigrant women employed in factories were found: It. 8, 13 (the wife), 14, 23 (the wife), 28.

Besides, more often than in other types of work, the relation of subordination between employer and employee is regulated by racism. Racism, as a social relation, proves to be an organic component of the personal subjugation and greater exploitation of immigrant women (see int. 1 and 9). At the same time, by making possible the "emancipation" of western women from domestic and care work, safeguards the relations of the sexual division of labour. In this way the reduction of immigrant women to mere labour power reaches its peak: not workers, but "slaves" (It 1)

Most of the interviewees decided to leave this type of work, calling both the occupational and the material segregation into question. Their new occupations, although marked by the segregation characteristic of the services sector, are outside the domestic sphere and often involve a new 'sociality' through the direct contact with other workers. We also note an important consequence as regards the women's family and affective life: leaving domestic and care work - around the clock or "by the hour" - permitted many immigrant working women to apply for reunification with their children or to marry and make a family of their own in Italy. The extreme precariousness deriving from employment in this sector, capable of pervading every dimension of existence, is replaced, then, by the possibility of achieving a stabilization that regards the migration project in its entirety, while calling into question the

process of a reduction to mere labour power. Furthermore, as the case of the Ukrainian workers demonstrates, the engagement that originates in the occupational sphere can become a full-fledged process of political self-organization in the struggle to obtain residence permits and to improve the conditions of all workers. (It 1,2,7). In this struggle for social emancipation, political activation and the “solidarity” among workers are pitted - perhaps not unconsciously - against “staying home” and the “division” that derives from it (It 7). This attitude can manifest itself not only in extreme forms (see Int. 1) but also in softer ones. For example the Italian employer's fear of theft and consequent surveillance have no actual foundation, but are exclusively due to the fact that the woman working in her home is an immigrant (see Int. 9).

The researchers working on **‘Integration of Female Immigrants in Labour Market and Society project, which is a Specific Targeted Research Project of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme of the European Commission** ascertain that Eastern European countries do not officially recognise a demand for foreign domestic workers for a number of reasons. In Slovenia home and personal services are not identified as deficit professions, and in Poland, these sectors employ mainly undeclared migrant women.<sup>24</sup> This is not quite accurate because in many of these countries such services either are not used and the family manages alone with these needs, or they use local women who are as low paid as migrant women would be but they have the privilege to know the language, the local culture and infrastructure.

There is an obvious necessity of such kind of employment in the EU countries and each government is trying to find adequate policies to meet these needs. Germany, for example, has failed to attract foreign domestic workers within the existing immigration recruitment scheme, whereas in France the domestic and care work is listed among 150 deficit occupations, but open to the citizens of new EU member states only.

The Swedish government adopted recently a policy on tax deductions for domestic services, which was aimed at creating jobs. Tax breaks are also part of UK policy in the area; however, domestic work is not part of the new ‘points system’ for migration, and hence legal routes for domestic workers from outside of the EU are very limited. The policy is in line with the general aim of filling gaps in lesser skilled sectors of the labour market with workers from within the EU, and notably the new accession countries.

Immigration laws and care policies present immigrant/foreign domestic and care workers as “helpers” and “assistants”. This is in contradiction to the widely underscored need of professionalization in this sector, where indeed considerable skills are required.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.7

BE 14 and 9 were welcomed at their arrival by an Ecuadorian “lady”. One presents her as her mother-in-law’s friend, the other as a family friend. This lady places immigrant Ecuadorian in families as living-in domestic workers. This is illegal and the social inspection knows it very well. Most probably, this placement is remunerated, in part by the family left in the country, part by the client willing to have an undeclared and undocumented domestic worker.

In an interview conducted in 2001 at the Brussels Capital Region social inspection, the head inspector explained to the interviewers the system of Polish “au pairs”, introduced as students wanting to learn French in catholic families. The Polish parish took care of the placement.

Since then, the law on the “au pair girls” has been changed but in any case women are not likely to have another choice but cleaning in private households as the only accessible employment.

This specific job, however, is more and more threatened in Belgium by competition on the market. On the one hand, there is a pressure to lower wages because of the massive presence of Polish women in this niche and, on the other hand, a new government measure to create domestic service jobs ("*emplois de proximité*") has been introduced in order to integrate long-term unemployed women into the labour market ("*titres services*"). The low cost of work, the fact that employment is declared and the tax incentives given to the users of the services resulted in the disappearance of a great number of undeclared jobs. |

In addition, the sector also includes living-in domestic employment which is still open to undocumented women, while office and industrial cleaning jobs are more often reserved for men.

In **the UK** specificities are less than the similarities with the other partner countries. The most significant difference in the experiences of the interviewees by gender relates to the jobs and the sectors where they were employed. For example, no women worked in construction, whereas nearly a quarter of the male interviewees had been working in that sector. Women dominated in the domestic and industrial cleaning sector, where more than one in three of the women interviewed worked in cleaning, whereas only one of the 15 males worked in the sector. Men preferred to be working in the hotel and catering sector, and this was mainly due to a high level of presence in the ethnic restaurant sector. Again, this demonstrates that occupational segregation is evident for migrant workers, for while approximately the same proportions (around half) obtained work in ethnic businesses, the businesses that women worked in were different than those worked in by men. Women worked in the textile sector and for ethnic minority employers in domestic households, whereas men worked for ethnic businesses in the catering sector.

With reference to the domestic work (done notably by women) there are different opinions about the relations between workers and their employers. While some interviewees spoke of good relations, these mainly were observed in those cases where either the worker was exceptionally vulnerable and

felt safer when 'hidden' in their employer's house, or where the individual worked as a domestic but in a self-employed capacity. In relation to wages, there is no clear pattern as regards gender. Of those interviewees where an hourly rate of pay was given (28 out of the 30 UK interviewees) male earnings ranged from £1 an hour to £10.50 an hour. For women, earnings ranged from £1.49 an hour to £9.37 an hour.

Work in private homes provided a similar 'protected' environment, although it may also offer the poor pay and working conditions. Paid domestic work has been a step into work for women migrant workers, in particular, whether they had arrived claiming refugee status or as economic migrants. Domestic work in private homes was often defined as work that was 'safer' for those without documents, as it was felt that the police were less likely to raid private houses. It also meant that work could be conducted unseen. But at the same time the consequences were that workers were very poorly paid and sometimes were badly treated. Interviewee 1, originally from Bulgaria, while undocumented, had first worked as a cleaner in a private household. She had started with one house and had then been recommended to other clients, eventually cleaning five or six houses a week. However, she had held back from expanding further as she was concerned that this would put her at greater risk of detection from the authorities. Another interviewee, a Filipino worker, had also always worked in private homes, as without documents this was the only type of work she could access. However, even in this case her latest employer was starting to express concern about her status. Interviewee 28 was currently working as a cleaner in private houses, with around eight clients sourced through friends or adverts in shop windows. Interviewee 30 had recently taken up work in a private household, following the increased number of police raids against Chinese owned restaurants, where she had traditionally worked. Private household employment was described as 'more secure' because 'the police can't easily come and check a private home for undocumented migrants'.

There is a great variety of domestic work in terms of work content (cleaning, housekeeping, care for old, child care), work arrangements (live in or live out, single or multiple employers, service agencies), work premises (work at other people's home/versus at home - in case of child care), underlying legislation (au pair programmes of cultural exchange, labour legislation). There is also a variety of experiences. Domestic work can be a simple step to entering the country and later shifting to other employment or study, i.e. it is either a transitional and short-lived experience (often parallel to other work or training) or a long-term working experience or durable situation. This overall lack of recognition contributes to undermining the self-esteem of workers, most of whom experience a sharp de-skilling when entering care and domestic work.

According to the stories of Bulgarian interviewees who had university degree and high skills and who worked as domestic workers or looked after children of low educated employers in Spain, Italy or Greece, the fact that they were educated but with a non-prestigious current job led to violences on the part of the employers. *“My mistress used to wake me up during the night saying, ‘Come on, the engineer, change my bed sheets and bring me a glass of water, let me see you now’... ‘After I was employed they did not give me a day of rest for four months and I had not left the house. When I went out for the first time in the street, in the unknown city, having no acquaintances, I had the feeling I had gone mad...I had no one to complaint to – neither any institution, nor friends, nor any contacts”*<sup>25</sup>

In accordance with the Specific Targeted Research Project of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme of the European Commission, live-out domestic work predominates in Northern Europe. This often implies having multiple employers and fragmented working hours. Cases of live-in arrangements, which are more widespread in Southern Europe, are associated with the risk of being trapped in this sector against one's will and being subjected to exploitation. On the other hand, live-in arrangements may provide a transitional solution to housing problems as they enable workers to cope with instability, precariousness and occasional housing problems. They also help workers to save money on rent which is important for fulfilling their role as ‘breadwinner’ and, in many cases, as a ‘transnational mother’. Anyway, putting a stress on specificities in Northern and Southern Europe after the experience gained by all the project partners is not quite correct because each country has a varied picture of cases of exploitation and application of different rules with the domestic work.

Usually, undocumented employment in private households is very stable. From the employer’s point of view it is important to have one or two females for care work and to keep relations of mutual trust between the employee who provides cares (the vendor) and the one who receives care (the customer). For females providing care insulting work is not a rare phenomenon and they are forced to leave the job. Besides, there is insecurity as regards the patient’s health condition: he/she can die or be transferred to residential care.

In this sector the trustful relation between employers and employees is very important because the domestic workers infiltrate into the private sphere of their employers. Therefore, private networks for job placement are crucial. An Austrian interviewee, a female migrant from Bulgaria (A-I12) gave an example as she was cleaning for two years a flat of a woman whom she never met because she was never present when she came to clean on weekends. A high level of trust is required to let an unknown person enter and clean your private space. Therefore, changing domestic worker is not recommended. The domestic work is perceived as ‘invisible work’. The employers usually prefer not to be present

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<sup>25</sup> A. Zhelyazkova’s archive, interviews conducted in 2002 and 2007 with Bulgarian women working in Spain, Italy and Greece.

when their employees are working. Very often the only contacts are notes with left salaries and brief telephone calls. Another feature of the invisibility of undocumented domestic workers is that the private household is a place of ‘protected work’, i.e. far from police, governmental control or prosecution, from labour inspection, etc. On the other hand just because of this invisibility there is a greater probability of being exploited and discriminated:

When childcare is part of the domestic work emotional binding becomes an important aspect among the triangle: migrant domestic worker – child – parents/employer: A female worker from CIS (A-I15) stayed in the beginning of her sojourn in Austria as a live-in in a Russian-Jewish household looking after a girl for two years 24 hours. The girl said ‘mama’ to her because she did not see often her parents. Now she is not living and working anymore in this house but still goes there casually for work and is very close with this family. *‘Every time they call now, I like to help.’...: ‘We are combining everything: what you need on the one hand, what is necessary [job, caring for her daughter] and try to derive also a benefit from this necessities. [taking the daughter to her employer].’* She and her daughter are part of this family, but: *How to draw the line between job and free time – when employers become some kind of ‘friends’?*<sup>26</sup>

To enter one’s privacy also means to adapt to the peculiarities of the private household: which polish to use, where to clean first, which method of cleaning to use. Sometimes these requests are easy to fulfil and employer and employee go together without problems. Sometimes when the employer insists on these particularities this leads to degradation of the domestic worker’s skills and the simple will to exercise power over the servant.

### **Working areas in regard to tasks, to spaces and to persons involved**

There is not a clear definition of the areas of responsibility/work. Informal caregivers have to do household tasks, medical tasks, social tasks (going for a walk, playing, cooking together with the patient), and there is no clear limitation of working hours. *If available for 24 hours, when to find time for recovery? Even sleeping time is working time because the patient can wake up every minute, you have to hold her/his hand during the night, accompany her/him to the toilet, etc.*<sup>27</sup>

Actually, their basic task is to work with their patients’ bodies and souls but often they have also to do other jobs, like preparation of meal for some relatives, too. A Bulgarian female immigrant in Spain told how she had to care for a very old disabled lady. She worked in shifts with a local woman who took the night responsibilities. Little by little, however, the old lady became attached to the Bulgarian employee from the day shift and she categorically asked for her 24-hour cares – of course,

<sup>26</sup> UWT\_TR Labour Market, first draft, prepared by Austria

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

against a higher pay. Thus, the worker had to gradually drop her other part-time commitments, which she fulfilled during her free time and brought her good enough additional money and to devote entirely to the old patient whose conditions, on the one hand bring security for her but on the other – turn her into a person available for 24 hours depriving her of any opportunities for social contacts and privacy.<sup>28</sup>

### **Lack of Privacy**

24-hour care is defined as a mental and physical burden. The carers have to wash, dress, to anoint the patients, to carry around the patient if he/she cannot walk anymore by him/herself. The whole day is structured according to the patient's needs. Caregivers do not have any time for themselves, do not have any private sphere, no room of their own. Patients' health status has a strong impact on the working and living conditions of the migrant care worker. The health status defines whether the women have the opportunity to leave the house for a short walk, or if they are trussed to the household. *'24 hours. No freedom at all. That's like it is.'* (A-I6)

Permanent availability is required although it is not absolutely necessary. Employers/patients think that the worker should be disposable whenever they want her to come. Because of the nature of the affective work caregivers have problems of dissociating themselves from the patients.

This type of physical, as well as emotional exploitation has a structural societal aspect which is linked to the crisis of the welfare state all over Europe. An Italian lawyer and gender expert explicitly addressed this point referring to the weak social position of elderly people who were in need of care. *"Improvements in the national contract of the domestic-work sector introduced since March 2007 have not affected the conditions of exploitation in force in this sector. These conditions are correlated with the crisis of welfare policies, which on the one hand make recourse to private forms of assistance necessary, and on the other adversely affect the elderly who receive assistance. Senior citizens more and more often live in conditions of marginality, with pensions that are too low and without the support of a family network. Their poverty affects, in turn, the female migrant workers, who are underpaid and are obliged to work in conditions of exploitation."*

Due to the permanent pressure of work migrant workers suffer from severe health problems. A Spanish expert, from an NGO working with migrants pointed out that aspect: *"The uninterrupted dedication required by the migrant can be the cause of psychological suffering and it is mainly common among Latin-American women who have migrated alone and who live with ill or older people. The fact of not being able to have relationships with other people and practically not having a rest strongly affects them"*.<sup>29</sup> The same was declared by female migrants from Bulgaria who suffered from the

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<sup>28</sup> A.Zhelyazkova, Interview, May 2008, IMIR's archive

<sup>29</sup>UWT\_TR Labour Market, first draft, prepared by Austria

impossibility to get detached even for a short time from the old people they cared for in order to visit their children in the country of origin. In Austria all interviewed migrant women working in this area reported the incidence of severe health problems during their irregular “care-career”.

### **Sex services as an ordinary employment niche and as a compulsion**

The UWT research, which, as a whole, is focused on immigrants’ undocumented employment irrespective of gender, did not have the task to focus, by all means, on females practicing sex-work. However, it was inevitable during the interviews for each partner not to come across one or two cases of females working in this sector and it deserves to be described as quite considerable within the European shadow economy.

The Specific Targeted Research Project of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme of the European Commission, presented on March 31 in Brussels, which is focused notably on the varieties of the female migrants employment made the following findings in respect to their participation in the sex industry: “Prostitution and entertainment are a part of highly diversified and global sex industry with strong economic and social bases underlying and producing demand and supply of those who enter the sector and generate an income from it.

Ideological debates and dichotomous considerations frame the policies on prostitution either as a quintessential form of male violence against women and sexual exploitation, or as a labour market issue - *sex-work as any other work*<sup>30</sup>

For some of the women who left for the host country with the aim to make their living through this type of work and in this particular sector, the sex work is actually accepted as any other work.

Quite different is the case with females who were forced to become prostitutes and who migrated hoping to work in sectors like tourism, hospitality, restaurants and domestic services but having arrived in the host country or a third country before reaching the final destination they find out that they have to work in places with sex consumption or, they become objects of sexual compulsion by the managers of the amusement places or the employers in whose houses they were hired to work as servants.

The research confirmed the observations of all partners that women who enter the sector of sex services arrive prevalently from all ex-communist countries in transition, Latin America and Africa. Their usual motivation is that they have escaped from the unemployment, the exclusion and discrimination in the labour market in their countries of origin. Sometimes these women enter the host country with tourist visa, they practice sex-work while their visa expires, then they return to the country of origin, leaving again to another country, with a tourist visa again thus their life turns into something

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, Migrant Women in Prostitution and Entertainment, ppt presentation, Brussels, 31 March, 2008

like a considered nomadism in different countries with a periodic return to the countries of origin. These female migrants are the 'lucky' case of women who work on their own or with temporary employers and they do not fall into 'slavery' and forced dependence.

Quite different is the situation with females who fell into the hands of traffickers and who find themselves in the host country without identity cards, documents and entirely dependent on the procurers, kept locked up, exploited and ill-treated by them.

Here is a story of a Moldavian interviewee whose host country was Bulgaria and whose case is a typical one for women trafficking. She came from a region in Western Moldova. Her parents, trying to save her from poverty, were working in Romania to save money and pay the smugglers. Their hope was that the smugglers were connected with employers who would employ their daughter as a waitress or bar-maid first in Greece and then in the UK. This is how she fell into a channel for human trafficking aimed for sexual exploitation. The interviewee and her friends from the same region were forced to prostitute for tourists in Romania. After some time they were placed in a bus for Greece and only when did they reach the border they gave them their documents informing them that they would be met in Bulgaria and then taken to Greece, and from there, after a time they would be transferred to Great Britain or Italy. As her sister had been working for two years in Italy the interviewee hoped that she would be met in Italy by a close relative. While crossing Bulgaria they managed to escape and for a time lived illegally in this country hiding from the traffickers. The interviewee managed to get in touch with her sister in Italy who started sending her money to rent a room and to buy food. Later she began to work in Bulgaria as a waitress and prostitute because, being undocumented, she could not find a job of a hairdresser or a model as she wished<sup>31</sup> (BUL22).

It is necessary to consider the entanglement of service work with sexuality. As an interviewee, waitress in bars, stresses sexuality is very central in her business, her body and her appearance are her means of production: *'Just when I am entering the bar the customers pay me compliments. I have such a mentality. I like it when men look at me and I have the impression to be desired. And I underline my strengths. You can see my G-string when I bend down. But I don't mind and the customers like it. I like to flirt. But I don't accept touches.'*(A-I10). The boundaries between personal integrity and business are very tight. Therefore she expects her work to be appreciated not only by the customers but also by her employers. She expects also respect of her person and dignity in her work. She often experienced the transgression of bounds: not only are there structural hierarchies between customers who are males, and service providers who are females, but also between employers who are males and employees who are

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<sup>31</sup> An expert from the Border Police stated that as a result of the increased migrant flow from Moldova immigrants arrive legally with Moldavian passports, tourist or transit visas and official invitations from Bulgarian citizens. Straight away however they look for smugglers to be transferred to Greece. From Greece, the Greek smugglers ferry them to Italy as a final destination/ 24 chasa daily, 31.08.2007/

females. Finding themselves in a dominant position vis-à-vis their employees, male employers often expect sexual services as a premise (of course without payment) to get or to hold the job, especially when accommodation is provided by the employer: *'Every waitress had to go to bed with the boss – otherwise she had to go right now. I know that many friends of mine made such experiences in catering – I never – but in general it takes place like this. For them (employers) women are just objects. But I am Aries by zodiac sign and don't accept such a treatment. A colleague asked if I wanted to work for him, but for 30 Euros I do not work. But it's also our own fault, the fault of women. Because women have accepted this treatment: if you are working as waitress you are indirectly obliged to have sex with your employer. If we women stick together then such a treatment would not be possible – especially now within the EU. If you want to find a job, you find one. And you don't have to accept any working conditions proposed by the boss. You can find something else.'* Young and inexperienced women are usually (sexually) exploited. *You have to be very self-confident, resolute and you have to know where the limits of your (body) integrity lie to succeed and survive in this much gendered business.* In this quotation A-I10 stresses on the necessity of solidarity among women working in that business. At the same time competition among women working in entertainment industry is very strong.

Respect for women who are working in entertainment is often lacking. Not only employers and customers treat women working in this sector with contempt and disrespect but also the authorities and the society as a whole. A-I10 said that before her first expulsion from Germany she was captured by the German Police and treated very paternalistically. As she was pregnant at that time the German authorities found out that she was working as a prostitute and they arrested her 'for her own safety'.

The analysis on the Spanish interviews also shows the sexual industry as a very important sector. Most of the women working in it are migrants (around 70%) and even considered as an illegal sphere, it allows them to earn much more than the domestic services. It is impossible to define the earnings because they depend on the level of activity.

Working in this sector can be a result of human trafficking but sometimes it is the immigrant's personal decision. These women however are deceived about the work conditions and they did not know that they would be lacking freedom (usually, if they work for a procurer he keeps their identity cards). Researches have shown that females who were employed for all day work to nurse old people cannot, after all, endure this kind of work and they decide to become prostitutes.

The researchers from Denmark try to find positive aspects in the women's participation in the entertainment industry and prostitution underlying that these activities provide opportunities for more social contacts with local people.

It seems that female migrants were more successful with their inclusion in the social networks of the local population. This might be due to the nature of the sector they are working in (domestic services) or the type of activities they perform as erotic dancers in night clubs owned by local people.

*'I think my situation is pretty gender specific. You cannot find many or any male from Ukraine doing what I do. In this manner it is gender specific, but I don't know if it is good or bad, only that it is this way. I think the whole situation is special for women from Eastern Europe, maybe also from Africa. This business works this way, you have some strong men that can manage the business, and some women that can make the money, and everybody should be good in their work to make it running properly and purposefully'.*

Within the aspect of gender you can have (subjective) experiences of discrimination because of different nationality or race:

*'I have my private clients but Asian girls and African girls get less in tip from the management than European girls, even Russian girls get more in tips although they are not having so many clients as we have'.*

A British expert referred to the issue of trafficking within the EU and stated that there are cases with people who have right to stay in the country but were trafficked. He mentioned cases with women from Lithuania and Bulgaria who were trafficked for sexual exploitation and pointed to the fact that many of the protectionist programmes in the EU countries are designed for non-EU citizens and that they should be adjusted for people who came from the new accession countries, who have by rights legal status, but they need support in order to be saved from the human traffickers and procurers.

## **Conclusions**

An important element in the changing gender specifics of the migratory flows is the tendency for the females to migrate individually. Aiming at finding employment, they migrate without accompanying males often as head of families. The potential positive role of migration for the female's emancipation and empowerment has, however, its 'dark' side, which deserves the researchers' attention. Female migrants remain more vulnerable toward the migration risks as they are exposed to a greater extent than men to violent labour and sexual exploitation, unfavourable work conditions and low pay. The empirical data from the conducted interviews show that female migrants can endure with much more efforts the illegal and difficult trip as refugees and asylum seekers.

Female migrants from the ex-communist countries, who are emancipated, educated, used to work a lot and to live in poverty, do not quite agree with such assessments. Their basic goal is to make money and send it to their families and children in order to support their education. In their opinion,

women can always manage. Having fallen into a foreign country they are ready to do any work in order to succeed, even in the entertainment industry and sex-work. Those who migrated with their husbands stated that men usually look for employment longer time, they try to find jobs according to their qualifications and if they have to perform unskilled work they often give up and go back to their countries of origin or they stay at home and women are those who provide for the family. Quite often educated and skilled women are employed for unskilled but well-paid jobs in the North and Southern European countries. They practice this mode of life for years sending money to their husbands and children in the countries of origin.<sup>32</sup> This allowed the introduction in the social sciences of the term ‘transnational mothers’ as a special social phenomenon. In the recent years there are debates in Bulgaria and other countries, which recruit women in the migration flows to the West, caused by the alarm that a second generation with ‘transnational mothers’ is being raised in these countries, often in the absence of both parents. These children are raised by relatives and friends and it is already visible that they suffer from some odd emotional and moral deficits.

There is a great variety among women, who have chosen for one reason or another, the migration as a life project. The general impression is that women are strong and steady and they are making the survival more tolerable for men and children in the new environment

Women, who come from the ex-communist countries, usually arrive alone. They are not refugees, although the reasons to leave their countries are not only economical; they immigrate also because of the social insecurity, as well as the potential or current civil and transboundary conflicts. These are basically women from the ex-Soviet Union – Russia, the Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, as well as from the Balkans.

A great number of these women enter the West European countries and Bulgaria being already trapped in the trafficking channels. According to experts Bulgaria remains a transit country as regards trafficking in women for sexual exploitation while countries like Greece, Italy, Spain, Austria, Germany and the North European countries are mentioned as a final destination. Trafficking in women is also stimulated by the presence of international military corps in the Balkans, i.e. in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Kosovo. The role of Bulgaria as a transit country however, does not exclude practices of labour/sexual exploitation of women passing in transit.

According to UN experts the role of the fair sex is constantly increasing. Their work creates from 60 to 75 % of the world production but at the same time, women receive 10% of the annual average income only. Further to a UK Home Office survey, migrants contributed £2.5 billion more in taxes than they claimed in benefits in 1999-2000. Some estimates have stated that the UK will need

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<sup>32</sup> See: Urgent Anthropology, vol. 2, Economic Migration to Greece in the Personal and National Prospects of Albanians, IMIR, 2003, p. 194, as well as all 101 interviews.

approximately 1.2 million migrants in the next few years to replace workforce entering retirement (cited in Kaye 2003:13). As Kaye emphasizes, however, while research data point to the contribution that migrant workers make to the economy and the fact that most developed countries have an ageing population that will soon lead to labour shortages and greater tax burden, governments in host countries have been reluctant to acknowledge the demand for migrant labour but have instead sought political advantage from the often ‘xenophobic reactions to the issue of migration’ by proposing even tighter immigration controls (2003: 13). Kaye makes it clear that unless restrictive immigration policies give way to more open ones that recognize the domestic demand for migrant labour and seek to manage and facilitate it, many migrants who are forced to look for work abroad ‘as a means of survival, rather than an opportunity to improve their standard of living’, will be left with no other choice but to rely on smugglers and traffickers to get access to these jobs (2003: 3)<sup>33</sup>.

Border control and migration management issues have also become central to the process of European integration and candidate countries have found themselves under increasing pressure to strictly apply the migratory legislation as they become external border of the European Union. While one of the positive outcomes of this process has been the increased focus on migration and asylum issues and the adoption of anti-trafficking and asylum legislation, a rather negative result is the adoption of a ‘forced’ approach to migration, which is excessively focused on the border control thus giving significant, not to say disproportionate power to the law enforcement authorities in a region where corruption practices are wide spread.

Due to already existing disparities in the negotiation positions between origin and host countries, the ‘law enforcement’ approach could lead to further power imbalances between these countries, since ‘receiving’ countries could put disproportionate pressure on the countries of origin and impose unilateral and asymmetrical restrictions on the movement of people, while failing to meet their own obligations in addressing protection of migrants’ human rights within their own borders. The International Labour Organization (ILO) warns of this tendency in one of its report on forced labour and concludes that the forced labour exploitation of irregular migrants in host countries calls for an urgent and radical rethinking of migration management policies (2005: 84). The lack of administrative control in countries of origin and the dominant philosophy of self-regulation in many host countries, which also informs the neo-liberal policies and practices of many multilateral and bilateral donor agencies in transition countries, could prove highly detrimental to the protection of the rights of migrant workers. There are disturbing disparities between the philosophy of non-interference in the ‘free’ market, frequently employed to justify poorly regulated labour market relations, and the less liberal policies on immigration. Unfortunately, as Barbara Limanowska concludes, so far, the dominant migration

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<sup>33</sup> Mike Kaye, Migration-trafficking nexus, The Printed Word, UK, 2003

management approaches have been largely 'repressive' and protective of state interests, such as prevention of migration and trans-border crime. There is a growing awareness, however, that while the protection of state security might often be justifiable concern, it can run counter to the protection of migrants (Limanowska 2005: 2).<sup>34</sup>

There is an expressed need for a change of direction and a broader understanding of the role of the state in regulating such areas of the economy that have proved to be consistently exploiting migrants' labour. So far many host countries have failed to meet their responsibilities and have thus become accomplices of the vicious cycle. This is most obvious in the fact that the most comprehensive international instrument addressing the rights of migrant workers, the 1990 United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, has to date been ratified only by countries of origin. None of the traditional receiving country is Party to the Convention, which suggests that even migrants who have accessed these labour markets through regular channels are potentially exposed to serious human rights violations (Kaye 2003:17, 20). What is more, according to Ann Jordan, many governments have adopted a 'two-tiered' approach to human rights within which only citizens are acknowledged as having rights, even though international human rights legislation 'does not predicate the majority of human rights upon citizenship' (Jordan 2002: 30).

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<sup>34</sup> Research on the Rights of Migrants in Bulgaria, Final Report of the BHC, 2006