Migration as development factor for Slovenia and its regions

Institute for economic research, Ljubljana, August 2013

Key words: migration, international, interregional, OECD, EU, Slovenia, regions, development

SUMMARY

This book is based on the research project “Migration as development factor of Slovenia and its regions”, which was carried out by the Institute for Economic Research within the target research programme “Slovenian Competitiveness 2006-2013”. More precisely it is based on one of two final studies within this research project, which was leaded by Milena Bevc and financed by Slovene research agency and Institute of macroeconomic analysis and development.

This book is comprised of a complex analysis of internal and external (international) migration for Slovenia and its twelve statistical regions over the past two decades (with an emphasis on the period after Slovenian EU accession in May 2004), analysis of the influence of migration flows on the size of population and its structure (by age, gender and education), and proposals for policy (migration, regional, etc.) and further research. This analysis is put into a broader theoretical and empirical framework. The theoretical framework includes a definition of the key terms in the field of international migration; the broader empirical framework includes an analysis of trends in international migration and in migration policy in the OECD and EU countries. The common and connecting element between this broader framework and empirical analysis for Slovenia and its regions is the chapter on methodological explanations and definitions of population and migration by the Slovene statistical office. At all levels observed (OECD/EU, Slovenia, Slovene statistical regions) analysis of international migration includes analysis of the stock of migrants at a particular moment (year) and of migration flows (size and characteristics). For Slovenia, in addition to statistically registered international migration flows, some unregistered migration flows (especially outflows – emigration) are also analysed. For Slovene statistical regions, in addition to international migration, interregional migration is analysed as well.

In OECD and EU countries international migration flows in the previous decade increased up until the start of the economic crisis in 2008 and had, in the majority of countries, a positive influence on population growth; and in many countries also a positive influence on the growth of the labour force with tertiary education. The influence of the former was, in most countries, higher than that of the latter.

Statistically registered international migration flows in Slovenia increased rapidly after its EU accession, up until the start of the economic crisis, and positive net migration increased as well (in the period 1995-2012 it was only negative for the years 1998 and 2010). Both trends are entirely the result of migration of foreigners, who represented the majority of migrants. Slovenia has seen negative net migration of Slovene citizens for the last 13 years; its size has been increasing rapidly during the past few years. After the sharp decline in total statistically registered international migration flows (of citizens and of foreigners) at the end of last
decade, these flows started to increase again in the current decade, especially the emigration of Slovene citizens. These flows until the mid-1990s had a positive influence on population growth (in the period 2000-2010 their contribution to a 4% increase in the total Slovene population amounted to 92%), and on its age structure as well (contributing to a lower average age). The gender structure of the population has also changed, with the share of men increasing. The influence on educational structure of population in the period 2008-2011, for which data was available, was positive. These influences on the number and structure of the Slovene population were exclusively the consequence of migration of foreigners. Namely, the international migration of Slovene citizens during the last and current decades has had a negative influence on the size of the population (since 1999), on the number of inhabitants with tertiary education (in the period since 2003, for which data was available) and on the overall age structure (since the mid-1990s). The stock of immigrants in Slovenia is lower than the EU-27 average; 4.4% of the Slovene population held citizenship from other countries (foreigners) and 11% were born abroad. No data is available on the total stock of Slovene emigrants; the stock of temporary emigrants (citizens who are abroad for more than one year and still have permanent residence in Slovenia) amounts to some 29,000. As regards statistically unregistered international migration flows the following was observed: (1) potential emigration of the Slovene population, aged 15 years and more, is (in year 2010) lower than the EU-27 average (9% of the population intend to leave the country over the next 10 years); (2) the annual emigration of Slovene scientists in the period after Slovenia’s EU accession increased compared to 10-year pre-accession period; (3) real and potential emigration among 2,763 surveyed former Erasmus students (generations 2005-2010) in late-2011 and early-2012 was high, and higher than for previous generations (1999-2004).

The size of migration flows, characteristics of migrants, and the influence of both on population change is analysed for all twelve Slovene statistical regions as well. We observe both the joint- and isolated influence of interregional and international migration on population changes for the period 1991-2010, and for various shorter periods, their influence on gender, age and the educational structure of population. From the data on migration flows of Slovene citizens it was possible to observe a longer period than for total migration (including foreigners). For the latter (total migration flows) the most valuable information was obtained for the period from 2008 onward, for which migration of foreigners (along with migration of Slovene citizens) has been recorded for both interregional and international migration. Migration flows had a much larger influence on population changes in most regions for the period 2008-2010 than did so-called natural population growth: the influence of interregional migration was, in most regions, negative (on account of the migration of Slovene citizens), and the influence of international migration was, in all regions except the Pomurska region, positive (entirely on account of migration of foreigners). The joint effect of both types of migration was, in the majority of regions, positive – on account of international migration of foreigners. As a result of migration flows, the number of population with tertiary education decreased during the same period in the majority of Slovene statistical regions, mainly on account of migration of Slovene citizens.

The book presents the most complete analysis of migration for Slovene statistical regions to date. This analysis is based mainly on unpublished data from the Slovene statistical office, prepared specially for the research project on which this book is based. At the same time the book represents an upgrade of two authors’ previous migration studies: “Migration in Slovenia in the context of EU accession” (2000) and “Brain drain and migration policy” (2004). It is one of three books on migration that the Institute of Economic Research published in 2012-2013.