

Short-term Labour Migration from the Czech Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany

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Temporary labour migration from the Czech Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany is a product of the political, economic and social changes taking place after the collapse of the communist regime in the CR. Due to the tremendous difference between the wages in both countries, a certain portion of the labour force of the CR started the out-flow, primarily to the neighbouring FRG lands. Substantial economic profitability gives temporary labour migration a remarkable competitive edge as far as income sources are concerned. It also makes it interesting for an ever growing number of persons. As a behaviour pattern, seasonal labour migration spreads quickly. Within the transformation of the Czech economy, it is much more profitable and much less risky than creating a professional career at home, small private businesses included. The labour force out-flow to the FRG primary involves the skilled labour force which not always works on corresponding qualification level. Thus, well-paid professional degradation occurs. The same degradation, however, occurs in the course of transformation of the economy at home, the only difference being, that it is often accompanied by wage degradation. Since interest in seasonal work is higher than in official institutions, whose jurisdiction is to coordinate the jobs; their operations effect the prohibition syndrome. This leads to the formation of the unofficial but functioning labour market, working in spite of all legisla-

tive barriers according to the principle of supply and demand. The effort to control the compliance with the labour and wage regulations identical with those valid for the domestic labour force also for foreigners employed in the FRG actually leads to a paradoxical situation, whereby such an effort encourages the infringement of these regulations and conditions. All conditions set forth in work contracts may be infringed upon in practice it often happens. Seasonal workers usually do not protest against a breach of contract by their employers. First, their knowledge of particular corrective procedures and of the German language are limited. Second, even in the case that the conditions of the work contracts are not observed seasonal jobs are financially very lucrative for them. The free, unregulated migration of the labour force could bring more balance into seasonal migration than the legislative instrument „Agreement on procedures during job mediation in the FRG for Czech applicants for the job to last maximum three months during one year“ signed between the Federal Institute for Labour in Nürnberg and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic. Seasonal labour migration does not threaten to change into permanent migration. The economic profitability of the seasonal work lies in its temporary character. The wage can only be transformed into profit upon the workers return home. When the exchange rate DM/Kč changes substantially, the economic profitability of the seasonal work will diminish, and leading in turn to a decreased interest in seasonal work in the FRG. The same would be the effect of the increase of the CR wages in real terms. At the same time, the pressure on the out-flow of the labour force westwards not only brings about migration movements (inflow) of the labour force from the East but also promotes migration movements within the ČR territory, thus far limited by the real barriers of work mobility.

Milada Horáková

