



Edited by Mojca Vah Jevšnik & Kristina Toplak

## FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON LABOUR MOBILITY IN THE EU



Inštitut za slovensko izseljenstvo in migracije ZRC SAZU  
Slovenian Migration Institute at ZRC SAZU

Kataložna zapisa o publikaciji (CIP) pripravili v Narodni in  
univerzitetni knjižnici v Ljubljani

Tiskana knjiga / Printed book

COBISS.SI-ID 174160643

ISBN 978-961-05-0801-4

E-knjiga / E-book

COBISS.SI-ID 174384131

ISBN 978-961-05-0802-1 (PDF)



Založba ZRC

# **FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON LABOUR MOBILITY IN THE EU**

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Ljubljana 2023



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# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

*Mojca Vah Jevšnik and Kristina Toplak*

This book follows up on the 2018 edited volume *Labour Mobility in the EU*,<sup>1</sup> which offered explorations of several existing and emerging challenges concerning labour mobility in the European Union (EU) through the prism of different professions and mobile professionals. Conceptually, the book follows its predecessor by providing a collection of essays covering various topics, perspectives, and geographical contexts that address the dynamics of labour mobility in the EU. However, in terms of the content, the second volume exceeds the first volume by including the reflections, perspectives, and critical analyses of renowned foreign researchers and scholars who provide timely and thought-provoking snapshots of some of the core issues lingering in the overlap between the EU-labour market dynamics and cross-border labour mobility patterns. The book's seven chapters are written by ten authors from four different EU countries. Despite their different academic backgrounds, they are all part of a tight-knit and dedicated network of scholars and researchers of migration, mobility, and (transnational) social protection in the EU. The book, however, is not intended only for the academic crowd. On the contrary, it strives towards reaching a broad range of audiences and hopes to prove insightful, inspiring, and valuable for their understanding of labour mobility within the EU.

The first chapter by Frederic De Wispelaere uses a statistical approach to explore **transnational social protection in the EU**. First, it provides an insightful overview of the legal framework concerning transnational social protection, i.e., the coordination of social security systems currently implemented by the Basic Regulation 883/2004 and the Implementing Regulation 987/2009 (commonly referred to as the Coordination Regulations), which play a crucial part in preserving and guaranteeing the social protection of millions of persons moving within the EU. The chapter then quantifies Member States' expenditure on transnational social protection by applying the Coordination Regulations and compares it with total social spending. The statistical data focuses on the main

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1 Toplak, K., Vah Jevšnik, M., eds. (2018). *Labour Mobility in the EU*. Založba ZRC SAZU: <https://isim.zrc-sazu.si/en/publikacije/delovna-mobilnost-v-eu-1>.

branches of social security, i.e., pensions, healthcare, and family benefits, and is used to demonstrate the scope and importance of the Coordination Regulations in safeguarding transnational social protection in the EU.

Rossanna Cillo and Fabio Perocco bring attention to the **intersections of migration and mobility regimes in the EU** by outlining migration and mobility pathways of third-country nationals – from their immigration to the EU to their labour mobilities within the EU. More specifically, the chapter examines the forms and experiences of mobility (not only in geographical terms) of North African workers in Italy and eventually other EU Member States through the mechanism of posting of workers and cross-border temporary provision of services. The sector under scrutiny is construction, which has become one of the main sectors of employment of migrant and posted workers in the EU.

The following chapter by Mojca Vah Jevšnik and Sanja Cukut Krilić explores the tremendously unenviable policy challenge of tackling **severe shortages of healthcare workers in light of the unfavourable demographic trends in the EU and the continuous globalisation of healthcare labour markets**. It identifies several mutually reinforcing variables that have a significant (negative) impact on the delivery of public healthcare in the EU and have converged to create a perfect storm: a debilitating situation caused by a combination of unfavourable circumstances. The authors emphasise the need for a stern policy response to ensure sufficient staffing levels and limit geographical imbalances in the supply and demand of healthcare workers.

In chapter four, Majda Hrženjak and Maja Breznik highlight the pressing issue of **care migration in care homes for older people in the European semi-periphery between Slovenia and former Yugoslav countries**. Building on the historical analysis, statistical information, and data collected with problem-centred interviews, the authors discuss the care deficit in Slovenia that stems from the state's underinvestment in care for older people and from the low purchasing power of households to compensate for insufficient public services, and the recruitment of migrant care workers from the former Yugoslav republics to fill in the vacancies. They argue that in pursuing cost containment, care work, as an increasingly rare commodity, is systematically extracted from poorer countries by richer ones.

The chapter by Kristina Toplak illuminates the struggles of **cross-border workers in the Slovenian neighbouring regions and workers posted to work abroad from Slovenia during the COVID-19 movement restrictions**. The author presents the results of the study on the impact of government policies and measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These policies and measures included movement restrictions that greatly impacted commuters and workers

posted to provide service abroad. In addition to exploring mobile workers' economic and social risks, she critically evaluates national governments' ad hoc and uncoordinated measures as restrictive and harmful to mobile workers, asserting that such measures created new inequalities and contributed to the deterioration of their socioeconomic status.

Nikoleta Slavíková and Lucia Mýtina Kureková examine the **diverse realities of Roma labour migration from Slovakia**. The authors outline the migration trends and characteristics of labour migration of Roma from Slovakia and discuss several obstacles they face when entering the labour market. They note that despite poor working and living conditions, most Roma do not decide to emigrate. Those who do, however, emphasise two rationales behind their decision: higher salaries and less discrimination due to their ethnic origin. The characteristics of Roma migration in Slovakia build on the insights shared by social workers with extensive experience and knowledge of the Roma communities.

The final chapter by Sanja Cukut Krilić and Mojca Vah Jevšnik discusses the **health-related vulnerabilities of temporary migrant workers in the sectors of agriculture and construction**. The authors explore, in particular, the occupational safety and health-related (OSH) vulnerabilities and utilise a layered approach to analyse the factors that may significantly impact the development of OSH-related vulnerabilities of temporary migrant workers. These include the conditions of recruitment and migration status, socioeconomic conditions in the countries of origin and destination, and the sociodemographic characteristics of migrant workers themselves. The chapter also accentuates the importance of including mental health in the analysis and discussion of health-related vulnerabilities of migrant workers.

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## **Design**

*INadvertising, d.o.o.*

## **Issued by**

*ZRC SAZU, Slovenian Migration Institute*

## **Represented by**

*Marina Lukšič-Hacin*

## **Published by**

*Založba ZRC*

## **Represented by**

*Oto Luthar*

## **Editor-in-Chief**

*Aleš Pogačnik*

## **Print**

*CICERO, Begunje, d.o.o.*

## **Print run**

*300 copies*

## **First edition, first print run / First e-edition**

*Ljubljana 2023*

## **Cover illustration by**

*Izar Lunaček*

*The Open Access version has been made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 International License, except for the material where there is indicated otherwise in the credit line: <https://doi.org/10.3986/9789610508021>*



*This publication is the result of the research program P5-0070, funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS).*



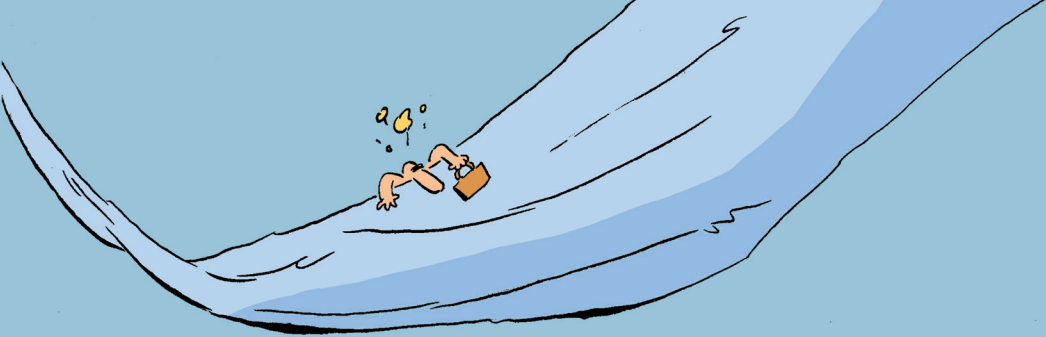
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19 € ISBN 978-961-05-0801-4



9 789610 508014

<https://zalozba.zrc-sazu.si>

