



**ON-THE-MOVE - "The reality of free movement for young European citizens
migrating in times of crisis"**

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National Report

Germany



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Executive summary

ON THE MOVE examines free movement in the European Union from the perspective of young Europeans (aged 25-35) who have either moved to another member state, plan on doing so in the future or returned back to their home country. The purpose of the project is to identify key drivers of moving to another EU country, barriers that young people face when exercising their right to move freely in the Union as well as practices which facilitate free movement, with the aim of contributing to an improvement of mobility for young EU citizens in other EU countries.

This national report explores the situation in Germany and the experiences of EU citizens who have moved to Germany and young Germans who plan or wish to move to another European country.

The first part of this report consists of desk research on the current situation and challenges for young European movers in Germany, including labour market participation and migration patterns, as well as national legislation implementing Directive 2004/38/EC in Germany, related policies and relevant case law. The second and main part of this report is based on a series of qualitative interviews with 41 EU citizens who have moved to Germany, 5 Germans who intend to move abroad and 7 representatives of relevant national authorities and NGOs in the field of migration.

The search for suitable interview partners was initially very difficult due to data protection laws in Germany, which hindered companies and institutions from sharing any information on potential interviewees with us. The majority of participants (particularly the EU citizens) were recruited through a flyer posted in various Facebook groups and pages (e.g. “Italians in Germany”) as well as through recommendations from persons who had already been interviewed (snowball-system). All interviewees were questioned on their experiences of free movement, expectations, the main drivers for and barriers to free movement and integration in Germany as well as suggestions for improvement.

Directive 2004/38/EC was transposed into German national law in 2004 and revised in June 2007 to ensure full compliance. In 2014 there were 3.672.394 EU citizens living in Germany with the main sending countries being Poland, Romania and Italy. Since the extension of the unrestricted freedom of movement to citizens from Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia, many people in Germany have voiced concerns about “poverty immigration” and benefit tourism by movers from Eastern European states. According to the findings of this report, however, this fear is largely unfounded. Furthermore, the education level of EU movers includes a higher number of academics compared to the overall German population.

The qualitative interviews with EU citizens who have moved to Germany as well as with the representatives of relevant national authorities and NGOs in the field of migration revealed that the majority of EU movers come to Germany due to the strong labor market, favorable economic and living conditions. Poor economic and social conditions, lack of opportunities and corruption were frequently cited as a push-factor for EU movers.

By far the most frequently mentioned obstacle encountered by EU movers in Germany was the language barrier. The majority of subsequently mentioned barriers (i.e. making friends, finding a job etc.) could be attributed to a lack of German language skills. Furthermore, many of the EU interviewees had difficulty getting their qualifications recognized and accredited, often because of unclear and conflicting information received from public authorities.

Several participants mentioned that support from the workplace as well as from family and friends was a crucial factor to facilitate their moving process. On the other hand, almost none of the EU interviewees stated that being an EU citizen was an advantage which actively promoted their right to free movement

(apart from the fact that made the move administratively easier). With regards to suggestions and recommendations to improve free movement in Europe and in Germany in particular, amongst the most frequently made suggestion was the establishment of contact points specifically dedicated to EU citizens, since almost all existing organisations and institutions focus mainly (if not exclusively) on third country nationals and refugees. Furthermore, clear and specific information about the destination country should be provided in the sending countries. Finally, many interviewees argued that EU citizens should be legally entitled to attend state-sponsored integration, since the German language is the biggest obstacle to integration in Germany and because there is a high demand by EU movers to attend these courses.

PART A – Situation of young people and migration patterns

1. Current situation and challenges for young people

The following chapter will give an overview of the existing data and information on the situation and challenges of young EU citizens in Germany. The research in this chapter will focus on general statistics regarding young Europeans in Germany and the obstacles they face while trying to participate in German society.

In 2014, the total number of non-German EU citizens living in Germany was 3.672.394, comprising 1.992.997 men and 1.679.397 women. The average age was 40,6 years. The age group of 25 to 35-year-olds included 773.496 EU citizens, among them 422.554 men and 350.942 women. Compared to the almost equal gender distribution in the German population, the numbers show that there is a gender imbalance amongst EU citizens living in Germany, as there are slightly more men than women. This gender imbalance also applies to our reference group of EU citizens between 25 and 35 years of age (male: 422.554, female: 350.942). In this age group, Polish movers make up the largest group of EU citizens (170.258), followed by Romanians (114.040) and Italians (97.171).¹

1.1 Labour market participation

Labour market participation is one of the most important factors for the integration of EU movers. The Federal Employment Agency (*BA - Bundesagentur für Arbeit*) is responsible for observing and evaluating the German labour market for foreigners. According to the Agency's latest report from February 2016², in 2013 146.113 of the 513.166 unemployed foreigners in Germany were EU citizens. The share of unemployed EU citizens amongst all registered foreigners in Germany was 28,5%, with nationalities from non-EU member states in Europe making up the bulk at 45,2%. The largest proportion of unemployed EU citizens in Germany came from Italy (32.861), Poland (30.576) and Greece (17.943). No specific numbers concerning our reference group of 25 to 35-year-olds were available. In 2013 the unemployment rate among all EU citizens in Germany was 4,3% and therefore lower than that of the total population in Germany (6,9%).³

Another recent report by the Federal Employment Agency from 2016 (*Auswirkungen der Migration auf den deutschen Arbeitsmarkt*) focuses on the effects of free movement on the German labour market. The statistics present the numbers of employment, unemployment and social benefit recipients in comparison to the previous year. A specific look is taken at the new EU member states (EU8, EU2, Croatia) and the crisis-affected GIPS states (Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain). It is evident that immigration from Eastern Europe and the GIPS states has increased the amount of available employees (total workforce available) on the German labour market (December 2015). However, the number of unemployed (February 2016) and social benefit recipients (November 2015) has since also risen. Employment rates amongst movers from the new EU member states (EU-8, EU-2, Croatia) increased by 177.231 (21,2%) compared to

¹ Statistisches Bundesamt (2015): Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Ausländische Bevölkerung. Ergebnisse des Ausländerzentralregisters 2014. Fachserie 1 Reihe 2, Wiesbaden. URL: https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung2010200147004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile (05.04.2016).

² Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2016a): Analytikreport der Statistik. Analyse des Arbeitsmarktes für Ausländer, Februar 2016, Nürnberg. URL: <http://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statistikdaten/Detail/201602/analyse/analyse-d-arbeitsmarkt-auslaender/analyse-d-arbeitsmarkt-auslaender-d-0-201602-pdf.pdf> (05.04.2016).

³ Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2014a): Arbeitsmarkt in Zahlen. Arbeitslosigkeit im Zeitverlauf, August 2014, Nürnberg. URL: https://www.google.de/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0ahUKewjPhuWfg_fLAhWJkiwKHZxPDFYQFggnMAE&url=https%3A%2F%2Fstatistik.arbeitsagentur.de%2FStatistischer-Content%2Fstatistik-nach-Themen%2FZeitreihen%2FGenerische-Publikationen%2FArbeitslosigkeit-Deutschland-Zeitreihe.xls&usq=AFQjCNFYrdfbPZAhHHFEocJY2tuELNMmg&bvm=bv.118443451.d.bGg&cad=rja (05.04.2016).

December 2014. The number of unemployed citizens rose by 16.840 (16,8%), with the largest growth of unemployment stemming from Bulgarian (42%) and Romanian nationals (38%). The number of benefit recipients increased by 25%. The increase amongst movers from GIPS states is generally lower. Employment and social benefits increased by 5,3% and 5,4%, while unemployment rates stayed nearly constant (0,4%). Spain stands out with the largest increase in benefit recipients (17,3%). In contrast to these developments, the general rate of unemployment in Germany decreased by -3,5%. No distinctions between age groups were made in that report.⁴

Although the unemployment rate in Germany is generally low, there are significant differences between and within the individual federal states. While the unemployment rate in the former West German States (*alte Bundesländer*) is often below 5%, the rate of unemployment in the states of the former East Germany (*neue Bundesländer*) lies over 10%.⁵ The same holds true for unemployed persons with an immigration background. According to the Federal Employment Agency's labour market report of 2014 the rate of unemployment amongst people with an immigration background in the *Alte Bundesländer* (42%) is clearly higher than in the *Neuen Bundesländer* (18%).⁶ Regarding young EU citizens' prospects of finding a job, regional determinants and factors might also have an influence on employment chances.

Regarding demographic developments in Germany, due to population ageing, labour migration is gaining in importance as a strategy to prevent labour shortages. A recent survey by the Federal Office of Migration and Refugees (*BAMF - Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*) commissioned by the German National Contact Point for the European Migration Network (*EMN - Europäisches Migrationsnetzwerk*) summarises the most important studies and facts on this topic.⁷ According to the study, there are no signs of a nationwide shortage of skilled labour in Germany, although there are shortages in healthcare and nursing professions. Nonetheless, as the study points out, the mobility of migrants plays a crucial part in supplying the labour market in Germany with skilled workers. The study expects that migration from EU member states will decline, as many states are confronted with similar demographic challenges as Germany.⁸ Thus, labour migration from third states is likely to gain in significance.

1.2 Qualification levels of EU movers

Rising immigration to Germany, especially from Eastern Europe, has led to a debate on “*poverty immigration*” in the course of free movement. Some media and political actors have warned against ignoring the negative aspects of free movement. Federal Minister for Social Affairs, Andrea Nahles (SPD), wants to limit welfare claims by EU citizens by law: „We have to protect the local authorities from having to take unlimited care of destitute EU foreigners” (“*Wir müssen die Kommunen davor*

⁴ Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2016c): Hintergrundinformation. Auswirkungen der Migration auf den deutschen Arbeitsmarkt, Nürnberg. URL: <http://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statischer-Content/Statistische-Analysen/Statistische-Sonderberichte/Generische-Publikationen/Auswirkungen-der-Migration-auf-den-Arbeitsmarkt.pdf> (05.04.2016).

⁵ Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2016b): Arbeitsmarkt im Überblick - Berichtsmonat März 2016 – Deutschland, Nürnberg. URL: <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Navigation/Statistik/Statistik-nach-Regionen/Politische-Gebietsstruktur-Nav.html> (31.03.16).

⁶ Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2014b): Der Arbeitsmarkt in Deutschland – Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund auf dem deutschen Arbeitsmarkt. Arbeitsmarktberichterstattung, Juni 2014, Nürnberg. URL: <http://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statischer-Content/Arbeitsmarktberichte/Personengruppen/generische-Publikationen/Broschuere-Migranten-2014-07.pdf> (05.04.2016).

⁷ Vollmer, M. (2015): Bestimmung von Fachkräfteengpässen und Fachkräftebedarfen in Deutschland. Fokusstudie der deutschen nationalen Kontaktstelle für das Europäische Migrationsnetzwerk (EMN), BAMF Working Paper 64, Nürnberg. URL: http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/EMN/Studien/wp64-emn-bestimmung-fachkraefteengpaesse-und-bedarfe.pdf?__blob=publicationFile (05.04.2016).

⁸ Ibid., 44

bewahren, unbegrenzt für mittellose EU-Ausländer sorgen zu müssen)⁹. This refers to the right of EU citizens to receive social benefits and the risk of benefit fraud. It is often argued that EU citizens should not be entitled to benefits if they have never made any contribution to the labour market of the host country.¹⁰ A recent decision by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) is often cited in the context of this debate¹¹. The case law from 25 February 2016 states that Germany is allowed to deny social benefits to EU movers during the first 3 months after their arrival.¹² We will investigate the topic of social benefits in more detail in the *Policies and legislation* chapter of this paper.

When examining EU movers' participation in the German labour market, it is worth to consider education levels. A 2013 study by the Council of Experts of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (*SVR - Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration*) discusses the consequences and challenges of free movement for Germany. The Council analysed the education level of EU citizens based on a specific evaluation of the sample census from 2011 made by the Federal Statistical Office (*Statistisches Bundesamt*)¹³. The analysis focuses on EU movers between the ages of 24 to 45, as this age group is the most relevant for the German labour market.¹⁴

The education level of this group of Europeans shows an overall higher number of academics compared to the overall German population.¹⁵ In the case of free movement, it is more relevant to analyse the group of EU citizens who moved to Germany after their country of origin joined the EU, as this reflects the effects of free movement more clearly. The comparison of these two groups shows that people who came to Germany after their country of origin joined the EU tend to be more highly qualified.¹⁶ This result does not hold true for people coming from EU-2 states, but since these states were only monitored from 2007 to 2011, that data should not be overrated. In terms of gender, the quota of academics coming from EU-14 states is equally balanced, although there is a higher rate of female academics arriving from EU-10 and EU-2 states.¹⁷ Regarding only those academics who graduated in their country of origin, the statistics show that the rate of highly qualified people migrating to Germany has significantly increased since 2004.¹⁸ On the other hand, the number of EU movers without any qualifications has also risen.¹⁹

Contrary to the fear that free movement of people would mainly attract poor and uneducated movers to Germany, it can be concluded that Germany has so far rather benefitted from internal movement within the EU, as it has primarily gained young and well-educated people, whose high education level qualifies them for the skilled labour market in Germany.

⁹ Spiegel (2015): Nahles will Sozialhilfe für EU-Ausländer einschränken, 29.12.2015, URL: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/sozialhilfe-fuer-eu-auslaender-nahles-will-anspruch-einschraenken-a-1069915.html> (01.04.2016).

¹⁰ Preuß, R. (2016): Warum nicht alle EU-Bürger in Deutschland Sozialhilfe bekommen sollten. Süddeutsche Zeitung, 08.01.2016, URL: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/einwanderung-am-existenzminimum-1.2808086> (01.04.2016).

¹¹ Die Welt (2016): Sozialhilfe für EU-Ausländer erst nach drei Monaten, 25.02.2016, URL: <http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article152625966/Sozialhilfe-fuer-EU-Auslaender-erst-nach-drei-Monaten.html> (01.04.16).

Zeit Online (2016): Drei Monate keine Sozialhilfe für EU-Ausländer, 25.02.16, URL: <http://www.zeit.de/politik/2016-02/arbeitslosengeld-2-sozialleistungen-kinder-eu-auslaender-urteil-europaeischer-gerichtshof> (01.04.2016).

¹² Landessozialgericht Nordrhein-Westfalen, 25.02.2016, Case-law C-299/14. URL: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A62014CN0299> (05.04.2016).

¹³ Statistisches Bundesamt (2012b): Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund. Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2011. Fachserie 1 Reihe 2.2, Wiesbaden. URL: https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/Migrationshintergrund2010220117004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile (05.04.2016).

¹⁴ SVR – Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration (2013): Erfolgsfall Europa? Folgen und Herausforderungen der EU-Freizügigkeit für Deutschland. Jahresgutachten 2013 mit Migrationsbarometer. URL: https://www.stiftung-mercator.de/media/downloads/3_Publikationen/Sachverstaendigenrat_deutscher_Stiftungen_Jahresgutachten_2013.pdf p.61

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

The SVR study also compared the labour market participation and rate of unemployment between the German population and EU citizens. While there is almost no difference between members of EU-14 states and the German population, EU10 and EU2 nationals show a lower participation in the labour market and a higher rate of unemployment even though their labour market participation is still higher than that of movers from third countries.²⁰

The majority of EU nationals are employed in work environments that require at least a medium qualification level. Only a minority work in jobs with low qualification requirements (EU14: 14,8%; EU10: 18,5%). EU movers rarely work in occupations that require a high qualification standard (EU14: 39,7%; EU10: 30,7%; EU2: 34,6%), as opposed to the majority of the German population (45,5%). These differences are more distinct amongst people from EU10 and EU2 states. Compared to movers from third country states, EU citizens generally work in more higher skilled jobs.²¹

Considering the high academic level of many young EU movers, one could say that they are partially overqualified for their employment positions. Although EU movers occupy professions with higher qualification standards than people from third countries, the statistics suggest that there are major obstacles to finding access to the labour market.

1.3 Obstacles to mobility

The following section will examine the obstacles to mobility that EU citizens in Germany are frequently faced with. Although the possibility of free movement is highly appreciated by EU citizens, the majority of them have never lived in another EU member state.²² A publication by the Centre of European studies and the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation²³ examined the potential of the European labour market. The study investigated why the mobility between EU member states is not higher in the context of the unbalanced labour market situation within the EU. While Germany has a relatively low unemployment rate of 4,6%, crisis-affected member states like Greece (24,9%) and Spain (22,1%) experience much higher rates of unemployment.²¹ Labour market migration appears to be a successful strategy for economically strong countries to prevent shortages of labour and job applicants alike.

The Eurobarometer survey of 2010 examined the experiences and motives of EU citizens according to their mobility. EU nationals were questioned about expected or encountered difficulties when working in another EU country. A lack of language skills was mentioned as the main problem when going abroad (52%), followed by the expected or actually encountered difficulty of finding employment (24%).²⁴ This result is not surprising given that the EU has 24 official languages. The results of the Eurobarometer survey of 2010 focus on the general labour market mobility within the EU and thus give no specific information about the situation in Germany. As no recent and specific studies on Germany were available at the time of writing this paper, we will discuss to what extent the obstacles mentioned might be relevant for Germany.

It appears highly likely that language issues are also one of the main problems in Germany, not least because EU movers have no legal right to participate in state-sponsored language courses. Europeans can

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Eurobarometer (2010b): Special Eurobarometer 337. Wave 72.5. Geographical and labour market mobility. Fieldwork November – Dezember 2009, Brüssel. URL: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_337_en.pdf (05.04.2016).

²³ Geis, W (2013). Der Europäische Arbeitsmarkt – Erfolg durch Flexibilität und Mobilität (Teil 2). Grenzenlose Jobsuche: Potentiale des Europäischen Binnenarbeitsmarktes. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V./Centre for European Studies, Berlin. URL: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_11365-1442-1-30.pdf?131126175150 (05.04.2016).

²⁴ Eurobarometer (2010b): Special Eurobarometer 337. Wave 72.5. Geographical and labour market mobility. Fieldwork November – Dezember 2009, Brüssel. URL: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_337_en.pdf (05.04.2016).

attend these courses on request but only if there are still places available and if they pay for the course fees themselves.

Besides language issues, differences in education and training systems between individual member states may also explain the expected problems in finding employment. Among EU member states, the authentication and accreditation of qualifications is regulated in the EU Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications.²⁵ In Germany the federal recognition act (*Bundesgesetz für Anerkennung*) regulates the procedures for the evaluation of foreign professional and vocational qualifications.²⁶ According to the official statistics of the federal recognition law in 2014, most applications were made by German (2.283), Romanian (1.446) and Polish citizens (1.359). Around 3,6% of all applications were rejected.²⁷

Although there are legal regulations on the recognition of qualifications, different degrees from different EU member states may still be an obstacle for job applicants, since it is more difficult for employers to assess and verify foreign qualifications.

A qualitative Eurobarometer study commissioned by the Directorate General for Justice of the European Commission analysed the experience of young EU citizens exercising their right to move and live in another EU member state.²⁸ The analysis focused on the experiences these young people made and on the obstacles they had to face. The in-depth interviews were conducted in 2010. As far as difficulties in Germany were concerned, one of the main findings was lengthy administrative procedures, with the majority of survey respondents complaining about long waiting periods and extensive bureaucratic processes. Another problem was unclear administrative requirements. New movers had problems finding information as they did not know which authority was responsible for their request. Some of these issues could be attributed to a lack of language skills. Respondents said they had problems understanding the administrative processes because they could not understand German. Some new movers realised they were previously not aware of their rights as an EU citizen.²⁹ To help resolve these issues, people were asked to give possible solutions. Movers suggested that Germany and the EU should offer a user-friendly guide on the rights of EU citizens. Another request was the adoption of standard civil status certificates such as marriage and birth certificates or other official documents, which would help to simplify and fasten administrative procedures. In this context, it is important to mention that at the time of writing this report (March 2016), there was no English version of the German Act on Free Movement available (*Freizügigkeitsgesetz/EU, FreizüG/EU*).³⁰

Another qualitative study by the European Commission in 2011 investigated the obstacles that EU citizens face on the internal market.³¹ When asked about working or studying abroad, the respondents of the study described Germany as a “desirable” country due to its strong economy. However, one

²⁵ Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the council of 7. September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications. URL: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32005L0036> (05.04.2016).

²⁶ Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz – BQFG. URL: <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bqfg/BJNR251510011.html#BJNR251510011BJNG000100000> (05.04.2016).

²⁷ BIBB (2014): Auswertung der amtlichen Statistik zum Anerkennungsgesetz des Bundes für 2014. Projekt Monitoring des Anerkennungsgesetz des Bundes, Bonn. URL: https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/media/2015_12_11_StaBA-Zahlen_2014.pdf (05.04.2016).

²⁸ Eurobarometer (2010a): Qualitative Study. European citizenship - Cross-border mobility. Aggregate Report, August 2010, Brüssel. URL: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/quali/5823_citizenship_en.pdf (05.04.2016).

²⁹ Eurobarometer (2010a): Qualitative Study. European citizenship - Cross-border mobility. Aggregate Report, August 2010, Brüssel. URL: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/quali/5823_citizenship_en.pdf p. 26-27

³⁰ After our request to the Federal Ministry of Interior on availability of an English version of the German Act on Free Movement it is since May 2016 also available in English.

³¹ Eurobarometer (2011): Qualitative Study. Obstacles Citizens face in the Internal Market. Aggregate Report, September 2011, Brüssel. URL: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/quali/ql_obstacles_en.pdf (05.04.2016).

respondent characterised Germany as restricted in terms of its labour market.³² Furthermore, differences in work culture were also mentioned, with Germany being described as more structured and regulated compared to countries in Southern Europe. As discussed in the previously mentioned studies, EU citizens generally experience difficulties with language barriers, problems in finding employment and the recognition of professional qualifications when working in other EU member states.

2. Migration patterns and trends for young people across Europe

Using statistics on free movement since 2010, the following sections aims to establish the latest trends in EU internal movement by young people. For a substantial amount of time, immigration to Germany was dominated by internal movement within the EU. According to the statistics of the Central Foreigners Register (*Ausländerzentralregister*), the number of EU citizens living in Germany in 2014 was 651.547³³ and accounted for 56,9% of the total immigration to Germany. Although the absolute number of Union citizens moving to Germany has continued to rise, the share of EU internal movement compared to total immigration is declining (2013: 60,1%³⁴) a result of the disproportionate increase in asylum-related immigration.

Net migration between Germany and other EU member states is overall positive and has been continuously rising since 2010. In the course of the adoption of the unrestricted free movement for EU2 states, immigration from these states has increased above average. Similar patterns can be stated for EU8 states, which have had access to free movement since May 2011. While migration from Poland and Romania still dominates the migration flow to Germany, immigration from crisis-affected countries in Southern Europe has been on the rise since 2010. This trend, however, seems to be declining now.³⁵

The numbers and trends of our reference group, young EU movers between 25 and 35, are similar to the general trends (see table below). EU internal movement by young EU citizens has been continuously rising since 2010. In 2014, this number amounted to 190.895, which constituted 29,3% of the total EU immigration to Germany. The largest group of young EU citizens moving to Germany in 2014 came from Romania (49.846), Poland (43.002) and Bulgaria (17.677). Thus, immigration from EU2 states increased the most. Migration from crisis-affected GIPS states has also increased since 2010 but is now on the decline again (with the exception of Italy).³⁶

³² Ibid., 87

³³ Statistisches Bundesamt (2015): Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Ausländische Bevölkerung. Ergebnisse des Ausländerzentralregisters 2014. Fachserie 1 Reihe 2, Wiesbaden. URL: https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung2010200147004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile (05.04.2016).

³⁴ Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Ausländische Bevölkerung. Ergebnisse des Ausländerzentralregisters 2013. Fachserie 1 Reihe 2, Wiesbaden. URL: https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung2010200137004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile (05.04.2016).

³⁵ Statistisches Bundesamt (2011-2015): Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Ausländische Bevölkerung. Ergebnisse des Ausländerzentralregisters 2014. Fachserie 1 Reihe 2, Wiesbaden.

³⁶ Ibid.

EU movers (25-35) of selected nationalities from 2010 to 2014³⁷

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total	145 019	187 794	227 361	285 724	342 312
EU states	94 897	102 698	160 539	168 055	190 895
Bulgaria	7 316	9 914	12 448	14 060	17 677
Croatia	1 779	2 560	2 398	5 283	10 929
Greece	2 162	4 111	6 985	7 402	6 482
Italy	4 667	5 338	7 215	10 937	13 267
Poland	18 457	29 522	34 128	42 462	43 002
Portugal	1 191	1 543	2 352	3 103	2 669
Romania	14 151	20 317	26 351	35 954	49 846
Spain	2 195	3 331	5 868	8 156	3 143

3. The ways young people are reacting to these challenges and to the economic crisis

The following section will outline the profile of young EU citizens and how they react to general obstacles they face when moving. Although the statistics used here show no distinction between age groups, it can be expected that the target group of young EU citizens is generally of working age. By extending our reference age group (25-35) to EU citizens between 20 and 45, the share of all these people in 2014 was 66,7 % (2013: 68,4%). The average age was 31,8 years (2013: 32,2).³⁸

As previously mentioned, EU citizens have no legal right to attend state-sponsored integration courses. The business statistics on integration courses³⁹ show the numbers and features of participants from the first semester of 2016. The statistics show that integration courses are attractive for EU citizens. The total number of all new course participants in the first half of 2016 issued by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees was 154.589, 34.909 (22,6%) were EU citizens. In comparison the share of new EU participants in 2015 was fairly high with 41,8% (75.017). The decrease of EU participants might be related to the high number of participants from Syria and therefore the limited places available for EU citizens, as Syrian refugees have a legal entitlement to attend integration courses. In the first half of 2016 Syrians make up the largest nationality group of new participants with a share of 42,6% (65.842) while in 2015 the proportion was fairly low with 19,2% (34.514). In the first half of 2016 Romanians (4,9%. In 2015: 8,6%), Poles (4,3%. In 2015: 8,8%) and Bulgars (4,0%. In 2015: 6,6%) make up the largest group of European participants in integration courses.⁴⁰

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Statistisches Bundesamt (2014, 2015): Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Ausländische Bevölkerung. Ergebnisse des Ausländerzentralregisters 2014. Fachserie 1 Reihe 2, Wiesbaden.

³⁹ BAMF (2016): Bericht zur Integrationskursgeschäftsstatistik für das erste Halbjahr 2016, Nürnberg, p. 6. URL: http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Statistik/Integration/2016-halbjahr1-integrationskursgeschaeftsstatistik-gesamt_bund.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

⁴⁰ Ibid.

4. Studies and reports

4.1 Media reports

Free movement for young people remains a rarely discussed topic in the German media. The topic of EU migration is mainly picked up in the context of the debate about “poverty immigration” from Eastern European states. One of the most discussed points in this regard are social benefits in Germany. Several overviews gave information about the circumstances in which EU citizens are allowed to live in Germany, when they have a right to social benefits and when this right is abused.⁴¹ The discussion emerged as a result of the fear of social and political actors that the increasing flow of migration from other EU states would strain Germany’s social system. Special attention was given to the CSU slogan “Those who cheat will be expelled” (“*Wer betrügt, der fliegt*”), referring to their strong stance against movers who abuse Germany’s social services.⁴²

A recent claim by Andrea Nahles (SPD), Federal Minister for Social Affairs, to limit welfare claims by EU citizens by law, has led to a new discussion on this topic. She stated that “it is not acceptable that people move within the EU in order to receive full welfare in another country – when their country of origin has its own capable social system” (“*Es kann nicht sein, dass jemand innerhalb der EU nur umziehen muss, um volle Sozialleistungen eines anderen Landes zu erwerben – obwohl es ein leistungsfähiges Sozialsystem auch in seinem Herkunftsland gibt*”).⁴³ Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) supported the demand expressed by the SPD. She argued that it is reasonable to question EU foreigners’ right to welfare, if they have not been in employment in Germany yet. “That is not the intention of free movement” (“*Das ist nicht die Intention des Freizügigkeitsgesetzes*”) she said after a conversation with the Romanian Premier Dacian Ciolo.⁴⁴

The oppositional parties declined the plan to limit social welfare for EU movers, since they saw no need for action. Fraction Chairwoman of the Greens in the European Parliament, Rebecca Harms, pointed out the advantages of free movement, referring to the many well-educated EU citizens working in Germany, whose impact on the welfare system is predominantly positive⁴⁵. Vice-Chairwoman of the Left party, Sabine Zimmermann, argued along a similar line. According to her, it is wrong to assume that people only migrate in order to receive social welfare, since most of them are in employment. She said that she was ashamed by the claim made by the SPD: “The poorest of the poor are played off against each other” („*Hier werden die Ärmsten der Armen gegeneinander ausgespielt*“)⁴⁶. In addition, that claim would stand in contrast to the European idea: „If we want free movement in Europe, and Germany *does* want that, then a certain share of social security has to be given” („*Wenn wir Freizügigkeit in Europa wollen, und das will Deutschland ja, dann muss man auch eine gewisse soziale Absicherung gewährleisten*“).⁴⁷ In the context of these discussions, a recent decision by the European Court of Justice was often cited.⁴⁸

⁴¹ Bubrowski, H./Budras, C. (2014): Welche Sozialleistungen bekommen EU-Bürger? Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 06.01.2014, URL: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ein-ueberblick-welche-sozialleistungen-bekommen-eu-buerger-12739826.html#elections> (06.04.2016).

⁴² Spiegel (2014): CSU-Kampagne "Wer betrügt, fliegt": Seehofer verteidigt Stimmungsmache gegen Zuwanderer, 01.01.2014, URL: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/seehofer-verteidigt-kurs-der-csu-im-streit-um-armutsmigration-a-941433.html> (06.04.2016).

⁴³ Die Welt (2016): Sozialhilfe für Ausländer „mit Hochdruck“ beschränken, 14.02.2016, URL: <http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article152219655/Sozialhilfe-fuer-Auslaender-mit-Hochdruck-beschaerlen.html> (06.04.2016).

⁴⁴ Zeit Online (2016): Merkel will Sozialleistungen für EU-Ausländer beschränken, 07.01.2016, URL: <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2016-01/hartziv-sozialhilfe-eu-auslaender-anspruch-angela-merkel-andrea-nahles-unterstuetzung> (06.04.2016).

⁴⁵ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (2016): Opposition lehnt Einschränkung der Sozialhilfe ab, 02.01.2016, URL: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/opposition-gegen-spd-vorstoss-zu-sozialleistungen-fuer-eu-auslaender-13993911.html> (06.04.2016).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Die Welt (2016): Sozialhilfe für EU-Ausländer erst nach drei Monaten, 25.02.2016, URL: <http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article152625966/Sozialhilfe-fuer-EU-Auslaender-erst-nach-drei-Monaten.html> (01.04.16).

As mentioned earlier, the case-law from 25 February 2016 allows Germany to deny social benefits to EU foreigners during the first three months after their arrival.⁴⁹

The issue was taken up and judged differently by the German media. Some media warned that the increasing number of EU movers would be forgotten in the face of the increasing numbers of refugees in Germany. Regardless of the positive aspects of free movement for workers, negative developments should not be ignored. These negative aspects were substantiated by the increasing share of EU citizens requiring social benefits. Thus, it was argued that social benefits should not be guaranteed without any contribution requirements or labour market inputs made by EU movers. Other media found that these concerns had been exaggerated and pointed out that the statistics showed no signs of a growing share of unemployment amongst EU citizens.⁵⁰ As there was no substantial evidence of the abuse of free movement, politicians were criticised for creating and promoting a false stereotype of Eastern European criminals who only come to Germany to rip off the social welfare system. It was furthermore pointed out that Germany also takes advantage of “poor” movers, as they are used as cheap workforces.⁵¹

As a result of the financial crisis, youth unemployment has become one of the main problems within Europe. Although the European economy is recovering, a growing gap between adults and young people can be noticed, with increasing numbers of young people affected by poverty and social exclusion.⁵² In the case of Germany, it is criticised that young people are at risk of poverty even if they have full-time jobs, due to temporary contracts and low wages.⁵³ Compared to the high share of youth unemployment in crisis-affected EU countries, Germany is still called the “safest labour market for European youth”.⁵⁴ This makes Germany an attractive destination for many young Europeans. However, the integration of EU foreigners in the labour market is seen as an important challenge for German companies, with language barriers being one of the major obstacles.⁵⁵

4.2 Academic literature

There is a broad range of literature on young migrants in general living in Germany. In contrast young Europeans moving to Germany as a research topic is rarely discussed in the academic literature. In the following we will outline two of them.

Previous research has shown that there are strong regional and local differences between labour markets as well as large disparities in the distribution and concentration of foreign nationals across Germany. These factors can all have a significant impact on migrants’ integration and their chances of success on the labour market. Against this background, Haas and Delamar (2010)⁵⁶ investigate for example the degree to which labour market entry and integration differ for young Germans and non-Germans. Haas

Zeit Online (2016): Drei Monate keine Sozialhilfe für EU-Ausländer, 25.02.16, URL: <http://www.zeit.de/politik/2016-02/arbeitslosengeld-2-sozialleistungen-kinder-eu-auslaender-urteil-europaeischer-gerichtshof> (01.04.2016).

⁴⁹ Landessozialgericht Nordrhein-Westfalen, 25.02.2016, Case-law C-299/14. URL: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A62014CN0299> (05.04.2016).

⁵⁰ Gathmann, F. (2014): Pläne gegen Sozialmissbrauch: Die aufgeblasene Armutseinwanderung. Spiegel, 26.03.2014, URL: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/armutseinwanderung-koalition-will-migration-bekaempfen-a-960886.html> (06.04.2016).

⁵¹ Caspari, L. (2014): Die Bundesregierung diskriminiert. Zeit Online, 27.08.2014, URL: <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2014-08/migration-armutsmigration-bulgarien-rumaenien> (06.04.2016).

⁵² Spiegel (2015): Soziale Kluft: 26 Millionen jungen EU-Bürgern droht Armut, 27.10.2015, URL: <http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/soziales/armut-in-eu-26-millionen-jugendliche-bedroht-a-1059717.html> (21.04.2016).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (2012): Deutschland ist der sicherste Arbeitsmarkt für europäische Jugendliche, 10.08.2012, URL: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/beruf-chance/jugendarbeitslosigkeit-deutschland-ist-der-sicherste-arbeitsmarkt-fuer-europaeische-jugendliche-11850873.html> (21.04.2016).

⁵⁵ Astheimer, S. (2012): Wunschziel für Jungakademiker. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 06.07.2012, URL: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/beruf-chance/wunschziel-fuer-jungakademiker-denk-ich-an-deutschland-11811452.html> (21.04.2016).

⁵⁶ Haas, A./Delamar, A. (2010): Labour Market Integration of Young Migrants in Germany: A Regional Perspective. In: David Cairns (Hrsg.): Youth on the Move. European Youth and Geographical Mobility, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 71-82.

and Delamar found that there is almost no difference between Germans and movers from EU-15 states and the former Yugoslavia in terms of their chances of finding an apprenticeship as well as employment after completion of the apprenticeship. Young movers from Turkey and other states on the other hand not only tend to have more difficulty finding an apprenticeship than their German counterparts but are also more likely to be unemployed after finishing an apprenticeship.

Cairns and Menz (2007)⁵⁷ examine the mobility intentions of young Europeans who are in the transition from education to work and argue that despite efforts by the European Union to encourage transnational mobility the majority of young Europeans are not on the move. Using Northern Ireland and East Germany as case studies, the authors illustrate that while many young people are willing to migrate when faced with unemployment or poor working conditions, the majority are only looking to move within their home country. In the case of Northern Ireland, young people are most likely to move to other parts of the UK or the Republic of Ireland, whereas young East Germans tend to move to West Germany. According to Cairns and Menz, these findings indicate that the EU's policy measures to remove barriers to free movement have not been successful in fostering transnational European mobility for young people as they fail to address the practical support needs of young people.

5. Interim findings

Looking at the statistics there are slightly more men than women among European movers in Germany. In 2014 the number of all EU citizens in Germany was 3.672.394 with an average age of 40,6 years. The main sending countries within our target group in 2014 were Poland, Romania and Italy. The unrestricted freedom of movement for EU citizens from Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia has triggered a debate on "poverty immigration" from East Europe states and on the rights to social benefits for EU citizens. However, our statistics (see p.7) show that the education level of EU movers includes a higher number academics compared to the overall German population.

⁵⁷ Cairns, D./Menz, S. (2007): Youth on the move? Exploring Youth Migrations in Eastern Germany and Northern Ireland. In: Thomas Geisen/Christine Riegel (Hrsg.): Jugend, Partizipation und Migration. Orientierungen im Kontext von Integration und Ausgrenzung, Wiesbaden : VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 325-339.

PART B – Policies and legislation

1. Legislation implementing the Directive

1.1 Background information

Directive 2004/38/EC, which had to be implemented by EU member states by 30 April 2006, was incorporated into German national law by the Act of General Freedom of Movement for EU Citizens (*Gesetz über die allgemeine Freizügigkeit von Unionsbürgern (Freizügigkeitsgesetz/EU - FreizüG/EU)*). Forming Article 2 of the Immigration Act (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*; formerly known as Aliens Act *Ausländergesetz*) the FreizüG/EU Act was adopted on 30 July 2004 and entered into force on 8 August of that year. The FreizüG/EU Act of 2004 did not adequately meet the statutory provisions of Directive 2004/38/EC, and was therefore updated on 14 June 2007 through the adoption of the Law on the Implementation of the Directives of the European Union Regulating Residence and Asylum Law Affairs (*Gesetz zur Umsetzung aufenthalts- und asylrechtlicher Richtlinien der Europäischen Union, Richtlinienumsetzungsgesetz*).⁵⁸

The FreizüG/EU Act regulates the right to entrance and residence of EU movers and their family members in Germany. It is an independent and conclusive regulation for this group of movers. The Resident Act (*Aufenthaltsgesetz, AufenthG*) does not apply here (for exceptions please see the following chapter *Other legislation*).

The reform and implementation of the Immigration Act was accompanied by a heated public debate which first emerged in 2000 following ex-chancellor Gerhard Schröder's Green Card Initiative for the acquisition of foreign computer professionals.⁵⁹ While the Social Democratic Party in Germany (*SPD*) was interested in encouraging immigration of highly-qualified academics, the Free Democratic Party (*FDP*) preferred a regulation of immigration based on the actual needs of the labour market. The plans of the Union parties Christian Democratic Union (*CDU*) and Christian Social Union (*CSU*), on the other hand, were characterised from the outset by national security concerns and a desire to tightly restrict immigration.⁶⁰ It took around four years for the new Immigration Act to come into force by way of an immigration compromise (*Zuwanderungskompromiss*). The major concern in this debate was the regulation and restriction of immigration to Germany, which was reflected in the legal title of the „Legislation to regulate und restrict immigration as well as to regulate the residence and the integration of EU citizens and foreigners” (*Gesetz zur Steuerung und Begrenzung der Zuwanderung und zur Regelung des Aufenthalts und der Integration von Unionsbürgern und Ausländern*).

With the revised Immigration Act the promotion of integration became a legal duty of the federal government for the first time.⁶¹

1.2 Analysis of the legal transportation

EU Directive 2004/38/EC was adopted as a single act into German law (the FreizüG/EU Act) and revised in 2007 to ensure full compliance with the Directive. The last update of the FreizüG/EU Act was made

⁵⁸ Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration, *Unionsbürgerrichtlinie/ Freizügigkeitsrichtlinie*. URL: <http://www.asyl.net/index.php?id=195>.

⁵⁹ Schröder will um ausländische Fachkräfte werben. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 22/04/2001. URL: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/zuwanderung-schroeder-will-um-auslaendische-fachkraefte-werben-11271321.html#elections> (15/03/2016)

⁶⁰ Eine schwere Geburt: das deutsche Zuwanderungsgesetz. Goethe Institut. URL:

<http://www.goethe.de/lhr/prj/daz/mag/mip/de4237086.htm>

⁶¹ Zuwanderung und Aufenthalt. Mediendienst Integration. URL: <http://mediendienst-integration.de/migration/zuwanderungsrecht.html>

on 22 December 2015 regarding social assistance for EU citizens.⁶² The FreizügG/EU Act only contains regulations regarding the right to residence for EU citizens. Social rights and regulations are defined in the respective benefits laws.

Since there was no English version available of the FreizügG/EU Act at the time of writing this report,⁶³ the key issues of the Act which affect the freedom of movement are pointed out as follows:

Family reunification

As a result of the European Court on Justice (ECJ) judgment from 25 June 2008 (Rs. C-127/08 – Metock et al.) family members of third country nationals do not have to prove their language skills for the reunification with their family members in Europe. For example, a Brazilian national does not have to prove their language skills for the reunification with their Portuguese spouse who is living in Germany.⁶⁴ Another impact of the judgment concerns living arrangements. The right to freedom of movement for family members does not depend on a shared home. This terminological divergence between the FreizügG/EU and Free Movement Directive was eliminated by the Guidelines Implementation Law (*Richtlinienumsetzungsgesetz*).

Family members of third country nationals

According to the Guidelines Implementation Law, EU citizens and their family members may be requested to provide proof of their right to residence in Germany by the Foreigners' Registration Office three months after their arrival in the country. In the case of third-country family members, the Foreigners' Registration Office should also check these individuals' entries in the Central Register of Foreigners (*Ausländerzentralregister*, AZR).⁶⁵

Right to freedom of movement for unemployed persons – sufficient resources

The general Administrative Regulation on the Freedom of Movement Act (*Allgemeine Verwaltungsvorschrift zum Freizügigkeitsgesetz/EU*) states that it is generally assumed that a EU citizen has sufficient resources at their disposal if no claims for social assistance benefits (SGB II or SGB XII) are made. Should a subsequent claim for such benefits be made, it will fall under the meaning of §5 par. 3 for the review of the requirements for the continued right to freedom of movement.⁶⁶

Family members

Under the Guidelines Implementation Law the age of family members of unemployed EU citizens was extended from 18 to 21 years.⁶⁷

1.3 Practical implementation

Regarding the practical implementation of the legislation there are a number of key issues affecting the free movement of EU citizens as briefly outlined in the following:

⁶² For legislation amendments please see Bundesgesetzblatt Gesetz zur Änderung des Zwölften Buches Sozialgesetzbuch und weiterer Vorschriften, No. 55 from 30/12/2015, p. 2557. URL:

[http://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/text.xav?SID=&tf=xaver.component.Text_0&toctf=&qmf=&hlf=xaver.component.Hitlist_0&bk=bgbl&start=%2F%2F*\[%40node_id%3D%271116003%27\]&skin=pdf](http://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/text.xav?SID=&tf=xaver.component.Text_0&toctf=&qmf=&hlf=xaver.component.Hitlist_0&bk=bgbl&start=%2F%2F*[%40node_id%3D%271116003%27]&skin=pdf)

⁶³ An official English translation of the FreizügG/EU Act has since been published: http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_freiz_gg_eu/index.html

⁶⁴ EUGH: Keine Deutschkurse vor der Einreise für Ehegatten von Unionsbürgern. Migrationsrecht.net: <http://www.migrationsrecht.net/nachrichten-auslaenderrecht-europa-und-eu/1157-eugh-metock-familiennachzug-ehegattennachzug-sprachprg.html>

⁶⁵ Allgemeine Verwaltungsvorschrift zum Freizügigkeitsgesetz/EU (February 2016) 5.2.1 & 5.2.1.2.3

⁶⁶ Allgemeine Verwaltungsvorschrift zum Freizügigkeitsgesetz/EU

⁶⁷ Allgemeine Verwaltungsvorschrift zum Freizügigkeitsgesetz/EU (2009) 4.1.4, p. 12

New Member States and restrictions on freedom of movement

Germany was amongst those member states which made use of the right to restrict the freedom of movement for EU-citizens from new accession states, such as Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia. Since January 2014 (Croatia since July 2015) workers from these countries have been granted unrestricted freedom of movement.

Freedom of movement certificate (Freizügigkeitsbescheinigung)

Until 23 January 2013 it was common for German authorities to issue freedom of movement certificates, which were different from residence permits as regulated by the Residence Act (*Aufenthaltsgesetz - AufenthG*). Since EU citizens already owned the right to freedom of movement in other EU member states, the certificate was of purely declaratory nature and was used for identification purposes.⁶⁸

Language courses

The freedom of movement for EU citizens is closely linked to employment in another member state. Integration courses intend to facilitate easier access to the labour market by helping foreigners learn the German language. However, EU nationals do not have a legal entitlement to attend those courses, which could be seen as a serious obstacle to integration. If they do not yet speak adequate German or have particular integration needs, EU citizens may apply for a course if there are still places available but they will have to cover the course fees by themselves.⁶⁹

Implementation and evaluation reports (Directive 2004/38/EC)

Hilpold, Peter (2015): *Die Unionsbürgerschaft – Entwicklung und Probleme*. In: *Europarecht 2015*, Heft 2, Nomos Verlag, Baden-Baden (p. 133-148).

The concept of European Union citizenship is said to be a key driver for the further development of European Union law; this was recognised early on by advocate-generals as well as the European Court of Justice. However, it also raises questions regarding the limitations of EU citizenship. Hilpold explores the development and problems of European Union citizenship focusing in particular on the risk of EU citizenship leading to benefit tourism and judgements by the CJEU relevant to this subject matter.

Huber, Peter M. (2013): *Unionsbürgerschaft*. In: *Europarecht 2013*, Heft 6, Nomos Verlag, Baden-Baden (637-654).

In the past 15 years, European Union citizenship has continually evolved on the basis of the principles of freedom of movement and prohibition of discrimination. However, complete equality between Union citizens from a different member state and nationals of a state has not been achieved and is unlikely to be achieved in the near future. Huber examines the areas in which equality of Union citizens may come into conflict with national law and concludes that only through a differentiated and gradual inclusion of Union citizens can a clash with national legislation regarding the treatment of nationals, EU citizens and foreigners from third states be avoided.

⁶⁸ Information on the discontinuation of the freedom of movement certificate (*Freizügigkeitsbescheinigung*). URL: <http://www.aufenthaltsrecht.org/union.htm> (02/25/2016)

⁶⁹ Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. URL:

<http://www.bamf.de/EN/Willkommen/DeutschLernen/Integrationskurse/TeilnahmeKosten/EUBuerger/eubuerger-node.html>

Kießlig, Andrea (2015): *Das Recht auf Freizügigkeit und seine Schranken nach zehn Jahren Aufenthalt im Aufnahmemitgliedstaat*. In: *Europarecht 2015*, Heft 5, Nomos Verlag, Baden-Baden (641-662).

The freedom of movement gives EU citizens the right to move freely and reside in any member state. In theory, this right is not tied to any economic activity. However, exercising the right to free movement in practice often involves economic activity, not least because it is based on the requirement to have sufficient financial resources to support oneself as well as health insurance for the duration of the stay. These questions have been thoroughly researched in the past few years. As a result, the debate on the impact of past criminal offences on the right to freedom of movement has somewhat been pushed into the background. Although the issue was to some extent clarified by Regulation EU 2004/38, some questions still remain. In her article Kiessling discusses how severe criminal offences need to be in order for a Union citizen to be expelled from a member state and the determination criteria used in these cases.

Meier-Braun, K.H./Weber, R. (Hrsg.) (2013): *Deutschland Einwanderungsland, Begriffe-Fakten-Kontroversen*. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart (esp. p. 99-125).

This compendium investigates various historical and current aspects of migration and integration in Germany and clarifies concepts and terminology which are frequently misunderstood. The various authors contributing to this book aim to deliver a clear and concise overview of issues such as society and religion, political participation, legislation and economy and how these in turn affect or are affected by migration. The chapter on legislation and economy includes a collection of short sub-chapters on topics including the labour market situation in Germany, labour market integration and employment of migrants, free movement, family reunion, naturalisation, asylum and refugee law as well as recommendations for further reading.

Schroeder, W./Obwexer W. (Hrsg) (2015): *20 Jahre Unionsbürgerschaft: Konzept, Inhalt und Weiterentwicklung des grundlegenden Status der Unionsbürger. Sonderheft Europarecht*, Nomos Verlag. 1 November 2013 marked the 20th anniversary of the establishment of European Union citizenship under the Maastricht Treaty. In the course of the past 20 years Union citizens have gained access to a broad range of rights across all EU member states which were previously exclusively reserved for nationals of the respective states. In celebration of the anniversary, the 13th “Österreichische Europarechtstag” was dedicated to the topic of “20 years of Union Citizenship – concepts, contents and developments in the status of Union citizens”. This supplement to the journal “Europarecht” features the ten papers presented at the conference, first discussing the key concepts and contents underpinning Union Citizenship before analysing the social, political and constitutional dimensions of Union Citizenship.

2. Other relevant legislation / case law

2.1 Related legislation

General Administrative Regulation on the Freedom of Movement Law (Allgemeine Verwaltungsvorschrift zum Freizügigkeitsgesetz/EU)

General Administrative Regulations are designed to ensure uniform application of the law across the country. They are directed at the relevant public authorities and cannot as such be directly appealed to by the citizens concerned. However, since public authorities are obliged to apply General Administrative Regulations, they may in some cases still be of legal relevance to citizens.

Resident Act (Aufenthaltsgesetz, AufenthG)

§ 11 of Freedom of Movement Law (*Freizügigkeitsgesetz/EU*) regulates the applicable provisions of the AufenthG, which are inter alia:⁷⁰

- §3 (2) AufenthG – Exemption from the passport requirement
- §44 (4) AufenthG – Participation in integration courses depending on availability
- § 46 (2) AufenthG – Exit prohibition
- § 69 AufenthG – Charges for specific administrative acts
- § 85 AufenthG – Calculation of periods of residence

Social law (Sozialgesetzbuch, SGB)

The SGB is divided into twelve books, each of which relates to a single, separate law. Relevant books in regard to the freedom of movement are:

- SGB II: regulates the basic benefits for job seekers (*Grundsicherung für Arbeitssuchende*); e.g. § 7 SGB II describes persons who are entitled to benefits
- SGB III: employment promotion (*Arbeitsförderung*); e.g. § 284 SGB III work permits for EU nationals of new Member States (*Arbeitsgenehmigung-EU für Staatsangehörige der neuen EU-Mitgliedstaaten*); § 59 SGB III eligible persons for vocational training grants (*förderungsfähiger Personenkreis*)
- SGB XII: Social assistance (*Sozialhilfe*) is a basic security benefit for seniors and for persons with reduced earning capacity (*Grundsicherung im Alter und bei Erwerbsminderung*); e.g. § 23 social assistance for foreigners (*Sozialhilfe für Ausländerinnen und Ausländer*), § 27 and § 41 beneficiaries

Federal Registration Act (Bundesmeldegesetz, BMG)

§ 17 Registration and deregistration: Each person renting an apartment in Germany is obliged to register within two weeks at the registration office (this also applies to German citizens).

General Act on equal treatment (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG)

The AGG is the implementation of the European non-discrimination and equal treatment directives. The main focus lies on the protection of employees against discrimination.

2.2 Case law: basic security benefits for EU citizens

A major concern in Germany has always been the right to social security benefits for European citizens. This topic has been greatly debated, resulting in legislative amendments and court judgments.

On 11 November 2014 the Grand Chamber in Leipzig, Germany, ruled against Elisabeta Dano in the case of *Dano vs. Jobcenter Leipzig*. Ms Dano, a Romanian citizen staying with her son in Germany, was refused social assistance for job seeking⁷¹. She was not seeking employment, nor had she ever been employed in Germany or Romania. In order to ensure that the court's decision was in line with EU Law,

⁷⁰ Allgemeine Verwaltungsvorschrift zum Freizügigkeitsgesetz/EU (February 2016) 11.1.1

⁷¹ Judgement on the merits delivered by the Grand Chamber in Leipzig *Ellisabeta Dano, Florin Dano v Jobcenter Leipzig*, In Case C-333/13, URL: <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=159442&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=234065> (11.11.2014)

the CJEU was asked for a preliminary ruling. According to the CJEU (Case law C-333/13) the EU Citizenship Directive does not oblige host member states to grant social assistance in the first three months of residence. For residence periods between three months until five years, the directive sets the condition for economically inactive EU citizens to have sufficient resources of their own, thus giving host member states the right to refuse social assistance to Union citizens.⁷²

On 15 September the European Court of Justice ruled on the issue of social benefits for EU citizens. The case of *Alimanovic* concerned a Swedish citizen and her four children. Ms. Alimanovic and her eldest daughter were temporarily employed between June 2010 and May 2011, after which they both received benefits in accordance with SGB II (also known as Hartz- IV or ALG II), until the Jobcenter Berlin Neukölln discontinued their allowance. The Social Court in Berlin (*Sozialgericht Berlin*) considered this refusal of benefits to be unlawful, and the case was subsequently taken to the Federal Social Security Court (*Bundessozialgericht, BSG*). It was undisputed that at the time of the refusal the claimants could not rely on their right to residence as employees but on their right to freedom of movement as job-seekers. The *Bundessozialgericht* subsequently put the question forward to the ECJ, to clarify if automatically excluding job-seekers from benefits in accordance with SGB II was in line with the principle of equal treatment enshrined in (EC) Nr. 883/2004, primary law as well as the free movement directive.⁷³

The ECJ decided that a EU Member State may exclude European citizens from entitlement to certain 'special non-contributory cash benefits' if their purpose of residence is based on searching for a job. Therefore "*Foreigners who go to Germany to obtain social assistance or whose right of residence arises solely out of a search for employment are excluded from entitlement to German benefits by way of basic provision (Grundsicherung)*"⁷⁴ even if those benefits are granted to citizens of the host member state who are in the same situation.⁷⁵

Following on from this, on 3 December 2015 the *Bundessozialgericht* ruled in three judgments (B 4 AS 59/13 R, B 4 AS 44/15 R, Az.: B 4 AS 43/15 R) on the issue of security benefits for EU citizens. It decided that it was in line with European law to exclude EU citizens from basic benefits for job-seekers (*Grundsicherung für Arbeitssuchende, SGB II*) if their residence permit was based on the purpose of seeking employment⁷⁶. At the same time, however, the *Bundessozialgericht* stated that the complaint could not be dismissed in its entirety and that benefits in accordance with *Sozialhilfe* SGB XII should be provided. In short, the *Bundessozialgericht* held that EU citizens in Germany do *not* have the right to employment benefits (*Arbeitslosengeld II- Hartz IV, SGB II*) but *do* have the right to social assistance after six months (*Sozialhilfe, SGB XII*).

In the case C-299/14, "*Vestische Arbeit Jobcenter Kreis Recklinghausen v Jovanna Garcia-Nieto and Others*," the Court of Justice confirmed that nationals of other member states may be refused certain social benefits in the first three months of residence.⁷⁷ This case was in line with the previous judgements on the *Alimanovic* Case C-67/14 (a Member state may exclude Union citizens who go to that State to find work or to seek non-contributory social security benefits) and the *Dano* Case C-333/13

⁷²Vonk, „EU movement: No protection for the stranded poor,” *European Law Blog*, 25.11.2014, URL: <http://europeanlawblog.eu/?p=2606>

⁷³ Der Umbau der europäischen Sozialbürgerschaft: Anmerkungen zum Urteil des EuGH in der Rechtssache *Alimanovic*, *Verfassungsblog* on matters constitutional, 16/09/2015. URL: <http://verfassungsblog.de/der-umbau-der-europaeischen-sozialbuergerschaft-anmerkungen-zum-urteil-des-eugh-in-der-rechtssache-alimanovic/>

⁷⁴ Court of Justice of the European Union, Press Release No 101/5, Luxembourg, 15/09/2015. URL: <http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2015-09/cp150101en.pdf>

⁷⁵ European Court on Justice, C-67/14 – *Alimanovic*, 15/09/2015

⁷⁶ *Bundessozialgericht* Urteil 03/12/2015, B 4 AS 44/15 R

⁷⁷ Court of Justice of the European Union, Press Release No 18/16, Luxembourg, 25/02/2016. URL: <http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2016-02/cp160018en.pdf>

(economically inactive citizens who go to another State solely in order to obtain social assistance may be excluded from certain social benefits).

The judgements again triggered a debate about the restrictions of social benefits for EU citizens. As mentioned above, some politicians, such as Andrea Nahles (Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs), criticised the verdict and the right to social assistance for EU citizens. To keep costs low for local authorities, the right to social assistance should be restricted by law.⁷⁸

3. Competent Authorities

Federal Ministry of the Interior (Bundesministerium des Innern, BMI)

The Ministry of the Interior defines and coordinates domestic politics in Germany. As a constitutional and communal ministry it is not only responsible for the modernisation of the state and administration but also for key issues regarding state and federal orders, e.g. voting rights. It is furthermore in charge of internal security, social cohesion, Migration and Integration (e.g. European integration politics, for example the responsibility for the Freedom of Movement Act) and oversees a variety of agencies, such as the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (*Bundesamt für Flüchtlinge und Migration, BAMF*).

On behalf of the BMI, the BAMF, as a higher federal authority (*Bundesoberbehörde*), is responsible for the asylum application process, refugee protection, international tasks, promoting integration as well as voluntary returns.

Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit und Soziales, BA)

As the largest provider of labour market services in Germany, the BA offers a variety of services for citizens as well as companies and institutions in the labour – and training market. A nationwide network of 700 job centres and branch offices is in place to provide these services. Their key tasks include job and training placements, career counselling, employer counselling, promoting job training and advanced vocational training as well as providing benefits replacing employment income such as unemployment benefits and insolvency payments. Furthermore, the BA conducts labour market and employment research, monitors the labour market and provides labour statistics.

4. Policies/programmes addressed to young people

In 2013, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie, BMWi) published a guide for German employers on the recruitment and employment of young European citizens⁷⁹. The guide highlights the benefits of employing young European citizens and integrating them into the German labour market, gives practical advice regarding the recruitment process (advertising job vacancies, conducting interviews etc.) as well as information on relevant legal regulations, and draws attention to support measures for EU workers in Germany. In terms of federal support programmes, the guide highlights in particular the project “MobiPro-EU”, which we will hereafter outline in more detail.

⁷⁸ Nahles will Sozialhilfeanspruch von EU-Bürgern einschränken, Zeit online 29/12/2015, URL: <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-12/eu-auslaender-sozialhilfe-andrea-nahles> (26/02/2016)

⁷⁹ Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie (2013): *Fachkräfte finden, europäische Jugendliche ausbilden*. Kompetenzzentrum Fachkräftesicherung, Berlin 09/2013. URL: <https://www.bmwi.de/BMWi/Redaktion/PDF/H/handlungsempfehlung-europaeische-jugendliche.property=pdf.bereich=bmwi2012.sprache=de.rwb=true.pdf>

“Promotion of vocational mobility of young people from Europe interested in vocational training (MobiPro-EU)”, Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs

In the course of the financial crisis, unemployment amongst young people in the EU rose dramatically. Germany is one of the few countries with a comparatively low and stable youth unemployment rate. Since 2013 the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs in cooperation with the International and Specialized Services (ZAV) has been running the support programme “MobiPro-EU: Promotion of vocational mobility of young people from Europe interested in vocational training”⁸⁰. The programme is aimed at young EU citizens aged 18 to 27 and gives them the opportunity to complete a supported, in-company vocational training/apprenticeship in Germany. This should not only help reduce youth unemployment in Europe but also attract skilled workers to Germany. Supported by federal funds, MobiPro-EU is a pilot project and is thus also designed to help generate measures to reduce barriers to free movement and integration of EU citizens wishing to work in Germany, such as language barriers and difficulties in the job search and hiring process⁸¹. Based on observations and evaluations, MobiPro-EU has been adapted and updated multiple times since its inception. While the project initially operated on the basis of funding individual apprentices and workers (2013-2014), funding has become project-based since 2015. Germany subsidises or reimburses up to 90 per cent of apprenticeship-related expenses, including accommodation, language courses and travel costs from and to the participants’ home countries. To be able to participate in the programme, applicants have to find a company in Germany which is willing to take them on as an apprentice⁸².

Following a budget analysis, the federal government decided on 23 March 2016 to cease funding MobiPro-EU. While ongoing projects will continue to receive funding until their completion, no new projects and participants will be recruited beyond 2016⁸³.

5. *Interim findings*

Directive 2004/38/EC was fully adopted in June 2007 as the initial adoption in 2004 did not adequately meet the statutory provisions. A major debate was and still is the right to social benefits for EU citizens, which is reflected in many judicial decisions, in politics and the media in the context of Free Movement. The main concern here refers to EU citizens from East Europe and “poverty immigration” from those countries. This debate has come to the fore again in 2015 in the course of the now unrestricted freedom to movement for EU citizens from Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia.

⁸⁰ Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales (2016): The job of my life – Current information on the Special Programme MobiPro-EU, Berlin. URL: <http://ausbildungsinteressierte.thejobofmylife.de/en/interested-trainees.html> (16.12.2016)

⁸¹ Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales (2016) Promotion guidelines for “Promotion of vocational mobility of young people from Europe interested in vocational training (MobiPro-EU)” through project promotion, Dated: July 24 2014, Berlin. URL: http://projekttraegerundunternehmen.thejobofmylife.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Downloads/PDFs/Amendment_Funding_Criteria_MobiPro_EU_120515.pdf (16.12.2016)

⁸² Goethe Institut (2014): Vocational training in Germany: the MobiPro-EU Programme. URL: <https://www.goethe.de/en/kul/ges/20436725.html> (16.12.2016)

⁸³ Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales (2016): The job of my life – Current information on the Special Programme MobiPro-EU, Berlin. URL: <http://ausbildungsinteressierte.thejobofmylife.de/en/interested-trainees.html> (16.12.2016)

PART C – Experiences of young people on free movement

1. Sample and method

Our qualitative research on free movement within the European Union was conducted between April and August 2016. 41 qualitative interviews were conducted with EU citizens from different member states (Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Spain, Austria and Portugal) as well as 5 qualitative interviews with young Germans, who had already stayed abroad for a certain amount of time and could imagine moving to another country. All participants were between 25 and 35 years of age when migrating.

The aim of the interviews was to throw more light on some of the key drivers and barriers that young European movers face when moving to Germany as well as to find out more about movers' access to information and their personal experiences of free movement. Finally, the interviewees' personal suggestions on how to improve free movement for certain groups and facilitate migration were outlined. Rather than simply 'adding on' further facts and definitions, the in-depth interviews enabled us to develop a better understanding of the ways in which young European movers move in times of crisis.

In the initial steps we had some difficulty reaching relevant interview partners, especially the group of EU citizens living in Germany. We contacted several institutions, organisations, counselling centres as well as companies, however, due to data protection regulations in Germany they were not allowed to share information on potential interviewees with us. In light of these difficulties, we created a flyer to encourage EU citizens who fit in the target group to contact us. We handed out these flyers to companies and language schools. However, as it turned out, the best way to reach relevant interview partners was through social media (Facebook). We either uploaded the flyers on a page (e.g. *Italians in Germany*) or contacted group members directly. Thus, the number of 41 interviews was realised primarily through Facebook pages but also through contacts by the already interviewed Europeans (snowball-system).

2. EU citizens in Germany

2.1 Previous experience and information about free movement

When asked whether or not they felt well-informed and considered themselves as having enough information on free movement, the EU citizens we interviewed stated that they had enough information on the issue. They were well aware of their right to move freely within the EU, including the possibility to work and reside in any member state without restriction.

However, most of them were only familiar with the basic concept of free movement and would have appreciated more detailed and in-depth information on certain issues.

This lack of access to specific and detailed information was criticised by several participants from Spain, Romania and Poland. Particularly, B (No.4), female, 28 years, ES said: *“And I do also have another friend from Cuba. He doesn't speak well German. He has problems to properly understand everything. So, it would be very helpful if employers spoke different languages or information was provided in different languages that you have the possibility to read information in your mother tongue or at least in English.”*

As already indicated, the majority of our participants stressed that they had enough information, but they, like those few who did not feel well-informed at all, regretted that there was a general lack of information on certain specific issues and the administrative procedures they entailed. In particular, some were concerned about being unaware of important information pertaining to their rights and duties in detail,

such as M (No.13), female, 33 years, IT. Moreover, the legal situation of their stay was far from clear for G (No.30), female, 29 years, IT and M (No.17), female, 30 years, PL. The latter also mentioned that there was always something new that she had to figure out, for instance, how to deal with the tax declaration.

Additional information

The majority of participants stated that they would like to have more specific and detailed information about their rights and duties as EU citizens or legislative issues within Europe in general. This included, for instance, information on how to open a business (Gewerbe) (S (No.40), male, 28 years, RO) opportunities for further education and the recognition of foreign qualifications and certificates in Germany (M (No.38), female, 31 years, RO). M (No.38), female, 31 years, RO is highly interested in becoming a masseuse and would thus appreciate more information on vocational training in Germany. S (No.40), male, 28 years, RO, who is currently working in a bakery, criticised that European citizens are being made to fit into any career, regardless of their academic qualifications. On the other hand, B (No.27), female, 32 years, AT wanted to know if she would still be able to claim unemployment benefits in her home country of Austria if she ever were to return there. Although she is hoping to build herself a future in Germany, she would appreciate having some financial security in Austria if things in Germany did not work out. Apart from that, she would appreciate having more information on health insurance in Germany as well as on how to get registered (same as M (No.42), female, 35 years, RO). Only a handful of interviewees claimed that they did not need additional information right now, such as G (No.25), male, 34 years, AT and K (No.29), male, 31 years, BG, who said that he would do internet research or ask German neighbours or friends if need be. His brother-in-law D (No.28), male, 35 years, BG said he did not need further information on free movement since the main rules are the same in Germany as in Bulgaria.

Sources of information

The most commonly mentioned sources of information amongst the participants were the internet, newspapers, TV and radio (media). University studies were only cited as a source of gathering information about free movement by C (No.16), female, 28 years, IT, who had dealt with European issues and foreign languages in various European countries, as well as M (No.33), female, 34 years, PL, who had studied Political Science and worked in the field of European policy in Poland for some years.

A large number of interviewees used the help and support of friends, family members, boy- or girlfriends and movers of the same nationality to find out more about free movement and their host country. This highlights the importance of networks in the host country in terms of information procurement. Having studied in Nuremberg (Erasmus) before and thus made a group of friends there, B (No.19), female, 28 years, ES mentioned “*the big Spanish family*” of movers currently residing in Nuremberg who help each other out a lot. Whilst L (No.12), male, 28 years, IT referred to his boss as source of information and support, M (No.6), female, 28 years, PL and A (No.44), female, 27 years, PL received much help from their fiancé or boyfriend, respectively.

Prior Experience

The 41 participants were asked to describe and assess their experience of free movement and living abroad in general (past and present) and highlight the main issues which shaped their experience.

More than half of the participants (22 of 41) have prior experience of moving and living abroad. 11 participants have lived in Germany before, 12 participants have lived in other EU countries (6 of which have also lived in Germany) and 5 participants have lived in non-EU countries in the Americas and Asia

(2 of which have also lived in a different EU country and/or Germany). In total, 10 participants have taken part in the Erasmus Programme at least once in the course of their university studies. Of the 11 participants who have previously lived in Germany, 5 did so as Erasmus students.

Future Plans to move

Of the 41 participants who spoke about their plans to move again in the future, 11 stated that they would like to stay in Germany and expressed no intention to move back to their home country or another state. The overwhelming majority of respondents (29) said that they would like to stay in Germany for the time being but could imagine moving in the future. There was no clear trend evident with regards to where these 29 respondents would move, with around 1/3 of respondents wanting to return to their home country, another EU- or non-EU state, or both, respectively (If they are to move again, 9 respondents would like to return to their home country, 10 would move to another EU or non-EU state, 10 either). It is interesting to note that despite the fact that most respondents do not rule out leaving Germany at some point, none of them have made any concrete decisions or plans for moving back to their home country or elsewhere.

2.2 Drivers

Key reasons

This section will outline the main drivers and key reasons for moving to Germany as pointed out by the interviewees. In line with common perceptions, the most frequently mentioned drivers were better job opportunities and higher wages. These key drivers were cited by interviewees of all nationalities but mostly by the Italian, Spanish, Polish and Austrian participants, who stated that their motives for moving to Germany were mainly work and job related. M (No.17), female, 30 years, PL said that she wouldn't have moved to Germany if she had found a job back in Poland and stressed her need to find work: *"I cannot afford living without working. My father died a long time ago and my mother only receives a small pension!"* Unfavourable conditions in the participants' countries of origin clearly encouraged many to search for a job abroad. Factors that encouraged participants to move included corruption and no prospects due to negative political and economic conditions in their home countries, as well as the good social security and education system in Germany and Germany being perceived as taking care of its citizens and the environment.

What was striking is that almost all of the Spanish, Greek, Bulgarian and especially Romanian respondents cited the abovementioned factors as the main reasons for their move to Germany. Whilst corruption was mainly mentioned by Romanians and Bulgarians, several participants of other nationalities stated political and economic circumstances, fewer opportunities in their countries of origin, and the education and social security system as key drivers. S (No.40), male, 28 years, RO made it clear that the corruption back in his country of origin really hindered his development and made him want to move: *"My main reason was that I really wanted to try something outside of Romania because in Romania the corruption is really high. So even if... I don't know. My whole life I was thinking about starting something, doing something for myself but in Romania it's impossible as you do not have enough money plus you know it's a corrupt country. So, it's really difficult even if you open something you will have lots of trouble."* C (No.5), male, 35 years, RO also mentioned that Romanians, unlike Germans, do not care much for their environment and houses and buildings are often derelict or broken. The way Germans deal with things would be more to his taste. Other than that, he raised the issue of showing respect towards fellow citizens, something which he highly appreciates about Germany. Along a similar line, M (No.32), male, 38 years, GR said he preferred the social justice and German mentality as a whole.

This was also a reason why he rejected a job offer back in Greece: *“The proposition was very interesting I must say but I wouldn't go back to Greece even with double the money because it was the everyday life, social injustice that drove me away more than the income or anything else.”*

The interviews further revealed that some Europeans moved because of their partners or spouses as well as the high living standards and welfare system in Germany. A number of respondents moved to Germany to gather experiences and learn or improve their language skills. These arguments were mentioned by interviewees of several nationalities. M (No.26), male, 29 years, ES, when asked what his main motives for moving were, replied: *“And the question is sometimes why not? Well, a new language, a new culture. I mean it's a good experience as well. Difficult? Yes of course. I do also think so. But it's also very useful. Working abroad, getting to know to people...”*

He mainly focused on the positive aspects affecting him personally, getting to know a new culture and people. Interestingly, only a few respondents said that they came to Germany because they would have more liberties or their children would have better lives. Most of them migrated due to their families or simply because they liked Germany. It was mainly respondents from Romania who mentioned the possibility of enjoying more liberties when living and working in Germany. Compared to the situation in Romania, several respondents said that they had more money available in Germany as well as a stable job, and that this in turn would prevent them from having to rely on their parents' income. This arguably played an important role for I (No.9), male, 26 years, RO, who said: *“I am independent here. You aren't independent back in Romania. You are always dependent on... Money. You are not able to survive with that worse salary... And there's lots of work and stress. Everybody is watching you how you... No, it's a lot of stress back there!”* M (No.33), female, 34 years, PL took her children into consideration when deciding to move to Germany, since they would benefit from growing up with two languages. On the other hand, G (No.3), male, 26 years, GR moved to Germany to join his family who had already lived there for the past 30 years, and G (No.25), male, 34 years, AT, said he appreciated living in Munich as he is now closer to his family in Austria.

According to L (No.23), female, 28 years, EE, migrating to a different country had been a dream of hers since childhood and also K (No.37, female, 28 years, PL, who first worked in Germany for a company, decided to come back afterwards as she really liked Dresden and wanted to build her future there. Two interviewees, namely A (No.14), male, 27 years, IT and S (No.35), male, 25 years, PL stated that they just needed some change in their lives. For the latter *“money wasn't important here”*, while the former considered making new experiences as something that everybody should try at least once in their lives. The education system in Germany was praised by two Romanians, namely M (No.36), female, 26 years, RO and M (No.24), female, 25 years, RO. One of them noted that university in Germany was quite affordable and very encouraging, whereas the other one mainly appreciated the LMU in Munich as a top university.

It is difficult to determine general trends in the comments that were made by respondents of the same nationality. At first glance, the Romanians frequently mentioned having moved due to the political and economic system, while the Estonian respondents stated many different reasons such as the German language, and half of the Polish interviewees cited their husband or boyfriend, respectively, as the main reason for moving to Germany.

Expectations

Another aim of the interviews was to find out more about the expectations EU movers had before coming to Germany and whether or not they have been met.

The main expectation cited by respondents of almost all nine nationalities was to find a job and have financial security in Germany. A considerable number of interviewees found it much more difficult and time-consuming than expected to find work, learn the German language and become integrated in German society.

M (No.33), female, 34 years, PL did not expect German kindergartens to be so inflexible: *“We asked her four times if she could learn some German with Rita. But she said 'No, it's just a kindergarten'. For me that is very weird. The kindergarten was also very expensive as it was a private one. There were no other possibilities to find something in January. And that was the same situation with a preparation course in German. So, none of the people were flexible at all. Not even a bit... That was like a blockade.”*

However, many respondents said that they did not have any particular or no expectations at all when migrating to Germany. This indicates that they were very open-minded towards Germany and its society or that they at least did not have any fixed ideas. In spite of this, some movers argued that they were dissatisfied with their migration experience or that their expectations have not or only been partially met.

M (No.38), female, 31 years, RO, when asked what her expectations were when moving to Germany, said: *“I knew that I would come and first clean here. I didn't know yet how long I would stay but the only thing I needed at that time was a break from Romania... For one year at least... And I also had the expectation to maybe have a better life here in Germany. I knew that it would be difficult to learn the language and also the rules (...) a new start was important for me... Starting from the very beginning on again.”* Other responses which were brought up included building a better future in Germany, a better quality of life, independence and experiencing something different and new, even some sort of adventure.

As far as the extent to which our participants' expectations have been met is concerned, it transpired that in the vast majority of cases the participants are happy and satisfied with their experience. Although the Spanish and Polish regretted that their expectations have only been partially met, most of the Italians, Bulgarians and Romanians have been quite content with everything in their new country of residence. In the case of Romanians and Bulgarians, this could be due to them not having any particular expectations in the first place. M (No.38), male, 38 years, GR said the following in terms of how his expectations have been met in Germany: *“I think I have met my expectations about 90% here so far. So, with a little bit of patience and just insist on your decision and be clear in your mind what your targets are I think if you try it out you can actually get the results that you expect within the period of these two or three years that I am here definitely... I mean you only need to be determined and focused for what you are about to do. And it's actually not only for migrating it's almost for everything in life.”* He explained that one would only need more time in order to have all one's expectations met. Other than that, M (No.24), female, 25 years, RO added: *“For me the benefits you get here are... I didn't even know that the company fully pays for your health insurance and that you are protected by law so they will not be able to let you go from the job unless you do something actually illegal or they are restructuring the company. (...) So it's really amazing how much they really care about you.”* Her expectations of Germany have thus largely been exceeded.

Life quality and job prospects

Along with that, the interviewees were questioned about their expectations regarding their quality of life and job prospects. The responses were quite clear and very similar, since most participants had the expectation that job prospects would improve, not least because many of them did not have a job in their country of origin, were paid less or because of the strong economy in Germany. For instance, F (No.43), female, 27 years, PT mentioned that she wouldn't have earned as much back in Portugal as she earns now

and that going on holiday was a luxury for her. Likewise, M (No.24), female, 25 years, RO wanted to improve her job prospects by coming to Germany as there are more opportunities, internships and working students' positions. Furthermore, work seemed to be much more flexible in Germany.

On the other hand, some participants did not expect to improve their job prospects or failed to do so due to their lack of German language skills.

Although living and working abroad is likely to improve one's career prospects, S (No.15), female, 34 years, IT, asked herself what kind of job she could find back in her hometown in Italy: *"So, I feel like a small step forward and so it helps for the CV and of course if I move somewhere else in Germany or also in Italy I could say 'Hey, that's what I've done, that's my experience.' I can sell myself better but at the same time in Italy if I go to Udine there's no other company that can offer such a job. So it's like 'OK what should I do?' "* M (No.6), female, 28 years, PL on the other hand would rather have found a job in Poland due to her lack of German language skills.

Lastly, it has to be noted that the interviewees also considered the job prospects that they will or would have if they were to return to their country of origin. Having gathered work experience abroad, learnt another language and faced problems and challenges in another country, most participants believed that they would certainly have improved their job prospects in their home countries.

As far as quality of life is concerned, most participants said that they expected it to improve. This was due to several factors, including the comprehensive social security system a more jobs that people are better paid for. As a result, most interviewees had more money, welfare and were able to lead a more independent life.

Several participants said that making new experiences, encountering a new language, people and country opened their minds. M (No.24), female, 25 years, RO said that her new financial independence has been a massive improvement to the quality of her life: *"I didn't want to live on my parent's salary. I just wanted to say 'OK I am going to have a career and I will be able to sustain myself and pay for all my expanses'. This is what I wanted to be... Financial independent (...) And I am really proud on that. I don't rely on their money anymore. I mean usually for Germans I see that it's a very common thing to be financially independent at this age but..."*

It should also be pointed out that some interviewees did not properly answer the question on quality of life or job prospects.

2.3 Barriers

General

In this section, the participants were asked if the process of moving to Germany was easy or difficult and why. More than half of the participants stated that the process of moving had been quite easy, however, a small number, most notably all interviewees from Spain, described the experience in solely negative terms. According to M (No.29), male, 29 years, ES, the move was difficult and looking back she would handle things quite differently: *"I started from scratch. That's even more difficult (...). But then, slowly but surely you understand the people better and the language as well. And you can move more freely. There are different types of people, there are different circumstances. It's like that but it was difficult without knowing the language and without any work. It is complicated. For instance, in hindsight it would probably have been better to look for a job before leaving Spain."*

Other respondents described the moving experience in both negative and positive terms. Unsurprisingly, the movers from Austria had few if any problems moving to Germany, as their culture and language are

very similar. This showed that both language and culture play a huge role in the integration process. B (No.27), female, 32 years, AT pointed out the advantages of being an EU citizen and not having to deal with as much paperwork as third-country nationals: *“I would say coming to Germany is very easy since I am from Austria and thus an EU citizen. Everything worked quite well.”*

However, many respondents complained about the bureaucracy in Germany, the recognition of foreign diplomas and degrees and language and communication issues. These aspects concerned Romanians, Polish, Spanish as well as Italians alike: *“If I understand the language it won’t be so difficult”* noticed M (No.33), female, 33 years, IT. The respondents unanimously agreed that language was the biggest problem when moving to Germany. Furthermore, finding a job and apartment in Germany were also highlighted as key problems by the respondents.

The interviewees’ responses did not provide a comprehensive insight into how they dealt with the problems they encountered. However, it appears that in many cases, learning German and interactions with society and other movers helped our interviewees become more settled. According to C (No.16), female, 28 years, IT *“you (also) have to adapt yourself (to society) because you don’t have any choice”*. Support from their employers, families, friends and colleagues were also mentioned as factors which helped overcome barriers.

Based on the participants’ descriptions of their experience of moving to Germany, we have identified the three most commonly raised issues/themes as follows.

Country-specific differences and culture shock

36 respondents commented on country-specific differences that they encountered in Germany, such as cultural, societal and geographical differences, including the German weather, food, lifestyle, cost of living, etiquette, etc. 16 respondents reported feeling good about and enjoying living in Germany, and had made predominantly positive experiences or perceived country-specific differences as pleasant or an improvement to their home countries. The most frequently commended aspects were the cleanliness and tidiness of public spaces in Germany, the orderliness and organisation of public services, and the politeness and mindset of society. Several respondents stated that they find the experience of living abroad challenging yet exciting. On the other hand, 13 respondents⁸⁴ experienced difficulties moving and settling in, and struggled to get used to country-specific differences. In addition to homesickness, it was criticised that life in Germany is more hectic and expensive compared to the respondents’ home countries, and that German people tend to be very reserved. Finally, 7 respondents reported having experienced little or no country-specific differences.

Homesickness

Out of the 21 respondents who commented on missing home and homesickness, only 5 reported that they do not mind being separated from their family and friends and have not experienced any homesickness. The vast majority of respondents (16) stated that they miss their home country and found it hard to leave their families and friends behind. 4 of these 16 respondents noted that the favourable job market and good career prospects in Germany make up for any feelings of homesickness.

German language as a barrier

As can be seen in more detail in the later sections of this report, the language barrier was identified as one of the main problems encountered by Europeans when moving to Germany. When describing their

⁸⁴ 2 respondents said that after an initial period, they now feel good about the experience of moving.

experience of moving to Germany, 9 respondents pointed out that the German language posed a major, if not the main, problem in the moving and integration process. G (No.3), male, 26 years, GR stated that a lack of German language skills can lead to loneliness and isolation, while both and S (No.21), male, 33 years, RO and G (No.8), male, 28 years, RO claimed that "[i]f you do not properly speak the language, you will have the impression you aren't part of the society".

F (No.43), female, 27 years, PT also found that learning German was a crucial step in the integration process and gave her more independence: *"So it's really a big big difference when you are able to speak [the language]. Then you understand the people and you understand the culture and then I think that you are integrated. I think the language is the most important thing."* and *"I noticed when I started speaking German then everything was really really easier. Now I can do things by myself. I can go to the post office or I can go here and there. I always needed the help from someone before. Now I am independent and that is really a good feeling (...)"*. C (No.5), male, 35 years, RO criticised that official information is rarely available in English, which further exacerbates the language barrier: *"Official information. Not everything... German. You have to learn German. But you have so many immigrants here. I don't understand why (...) you don't put it in English. The official forms. It's weird. It's weird. Why not?"*

Different aspects which affected the migration

As already discussed, language barriers were identified as the biggest hurdle Europeans faced when moving to Germany, with around half of our interviewees describing the German language as difficult, problematic or tough. Whilst some attended language or integration courses, others tried to pick the language up as best as they could or studied German in their own time.

Language barriers frequently resulted in other difficulties for the movers, such as making friends, fitting in and finding work. L (No.12), male, 28 years, IT explained that many people were reluctant to help him or be considerate of the fact that he did not speak German very well: *"The language is not the only problem, it is also the people. Some people are even not trying to use simple words even if they see or hear that you are struggling with the language, and they don't speak slowly. So it goes far beyond the language"*.

However, once their language skills improved, things became easier. F (No.43), female, 27 years, PT: *"And I noticed when I started speaking German then everything was really easier (...). I think the language is a big player wherever you go because just when you are able to speak the language you can understand the people where you are and you can be heard. Then you can explain your feelings or explain yourself and your positions (...). I think the language is the most important thing."*

The interviews showed that the vast majority of participants had no difficulty registering in Germany. The interviewees who claimed to have found the registration process very easy did not request any support or help. Those who did require assistance (around one tenth of respondents), received help mainly from voluntary organisation and were satisfied with the support these offered. With regards to accessing information, language barriers again turned out to be a problem. C (No.5), male, 35 years, RO cited language barriers as the main reason for his lack of information and S (No. 21) male, 33, RO said *"You have so many immigrants here. Why do you not put the official forms in English? It's weird (...). You just have 300.000 immigrants here. How can they survive? You'll keep them? You give them food, a place to stay... Nobody puts anything in English. Why? It's an international language. I don't think it's a problem"*. M (No.42), female, 35 years, RO complained about a lack of information on vocational training whereas G (No.30), female, 29 years, IT experienced a lack of information on legal issues and thus did not feel sufficiently aware of her rights.

Around 30% of participants had no problems with health insurance in Germany, while 1/6 considered the the health insurance system to be difficult and unclear. Some also mentioned using their European health card most of the time or receiving help from their employers when dealing with health issues.

As far as employment is concerned, 30% of participants reported having problems finding a job despite having applied for numerous openings. They found it even more difficult to find a job which aligned with their professional background. This was most probably due to the lack of language skills as well as long recognition processes for papers and qualifications.

According to S (No.40), male, 28 years, RO, the work experience he had made back in Romania counted for very little in Germany: *“So, why doesn't it count? Because... I don't know. Maybe a start up needs me because... Alright papers don't count. But you know I know stuff that can help to bring revenue to that company. It makes no sense!”* Y (No.34), male, 33 years, BG complained that companies would rather not fill a position than fill it with a foreigner: *“I already studied in Bulgaria. I know that my knowledge is not so deep like the one of an engineer here in Germany but... It doesn't matter if I am recognised here or not. They don't want to try at all to hire someone with less experience and knowledge to train him/her a bit, to integrate him/her a bit and to win a man. They prefer to have a free place. They don't want to try; they don't want to make an experiment with the people. That's my experience.”* In contrast to these negative experiences, 10 of the movers we interviewed said that they had no difficulty finding a job or received help from family and friends.

Other issues that came up in the interviews were the housing market, making friends, the weather, cultural differences as well as the costs of living. Several movers, particularly from Eastern Europe, experienced discrimination when looking for a flat. S (No.15), female, 34 years, IT having made some bad experiences when calling her landlord in the past, had a German friend make phone calls on her behalf instead. M (No.24), female, 25 years, RO reported that after 6 months of flat hunting, she and her boyfriend had still not found a place to live: *“But then his parents knew someone who knew someone and basically this is how we got our apartment because otherwise I don't know how much longer it would have taken”*. 9 respondents were living with family or friends or had done so when first arriving in Germany, whilst 9 received support from their companies, colleagues or friends which made moving a lot easier for them. 2 out of 4 Greeks as well as 7 out of 10 Romanians used to live or were still living with acquaintances, family or friends.

A considerable number of interviewees struggled to make German friends, which they put down to the German mentality and language barriers. Y (No.1), male, 32 years, GR, said he would like to spend time with German people since he wants to improve his language skills; however, he found it very difficult to meet Germans that he could make friends with, since there do not seem to be many parks or activities through which people can get to know each other. Overall, most interviewees made friends with people from their home country or other countries, rather than Germans. 7 respondents explained that they had had no difficulty making friends in Germany, such as B (No.19), female, 28 years, ES and M (No.7), female, 28 years, ES. The former still had friends in Nuremberg from when she was an Erasmus student, while the latter found friends through Facebook.

The majority of participants complained about the weather in Germany and said that they had not managed to get used to it. Interestingly, it was mostly Bulgarians who criticised the weather.

Different habits and cultural differences did not seem to pose too much of a problem for most interviewees at first sight, although many pointed out that a lot of things were different in Germany. M (No.17), female, 30 years, PL explained: *“As a guest, I would never say to somebody ‘Please, change*

everything. As I am from Poland I am used to different things'. I am here and I live here and I want to integrate myself". Several respondents praised the German mentality and the fact that people tend to be very open-minded and tolerant. A (No.44), female, 27 years, PL appreciated the culture of cycling in Germany as well as consumer and environmental awareness. 8 movers stated that they had not experienced any cultural differences or that they were only minor and had no impact on them.

Given the higher salaries in Germany, most participants considered the costs of living to be reasonable. 7 respondents argued that life in Germany was generally more expensive but their higher salary would make up for it. Others on the other hand found Germany cheaper than their countries of origin. Especially A (No.14), male, 27 years, IT appreciated the higher salary he has been making in Germany: *"I mean in comparison to the pharmacy one it's on another step. I mean it's almost the double! It's seriously a big step"*. Nonetheless, it is evident that a number of things were considered expensive by almost all participants, such as food, clothes, transport, services, furniture or technology, although of course these observations are always relative to and dependent on each person's country of origin.

Discrimination experiences

18 of the movers we interviewed reported having been discriminated against to a greater or lesser extent, 15 argued they had not made any negative experiences with discrimination.

On entering the Job Centre, L (No.23), female, 28 years, EE was immediately told: *"You won't receive Hartz4, you know that, right?!"* After explaining that she has a degree in English and German language studies, the Job Centre employee retorted: *"Everybody knows English and German here. We don't need you here. Go back to your country!"* M (No.36), female, 26 years, RO explained how she often felt uncomfortable around her class mates: *"And I sometimes wished that there would have been more foreigners around. I thought that Germans... like when I was the only foreign person with the group of Germans they kind of spoke among themselves and kind of ignored me which was... That was not what I expected. I thought they would be friendlier but sometimes they thought I f didn't get their references or stuff like that when they were talking to me even though we watched the same kind of American pop culture and I could have had a conversation with them."* D (No.28), male, 35 years, BG said he was often made to feel stupid or inferior when dealing with Germans. When M (No.13), female, 33 years, IT asked an elderly lady for help and didn't understand her, she replied *"Immigrant, go back to your country"*.

Respondents of almost all nationalities were affected by discrimination, which seems to indicate that discrimination is not directed towards certain nationalities only but towards foreigners in general. Finally, it also has to be said that discrimination is experienced and dealt with differently by different people and might not even be considered as such by some.

Factors which might make movers move back or to another country

Among the factors that would potentially make them move back to their countries of origin or elsewhere, the respondents frequently cited job and work issues as the primary reasons.

These could include better job conditions at home, being unable to find work in Germany. M (No.6), female, 28 years, PL said *"If I cannot find any work as psychologist I will return to Poland (...). I was also a bit scared that it wouldn't be that easy working as psychologist here in Germany"*, which showed that her job was the deciding factor for her. Some respondents stated family reasons as motives such as having to look after or care for relatives due to old age or illness. Family issues were most frequently

mentioned by participants from Romania, Portugal and Italy. Overall, nine interviewees of different nationalities said that they could not think of any reason to move away from Germany.

2.4 Practices that promote or hinder the right to move freely

Finally, the participants were questioned about practices which facilitated or hindered free movement. Among the factors that were experienced as positive and were mentioned by most participants were support and help from the workplace, family and friends, partners, landlords as well as people of the same nationality. In total, 18 respondents said that help from other people considerably simplified the migration process.

Almost nobody mentioned being an EU citizen or enjoying the help of any programme, funding or voluntary organisation as a factor which promotes migration.

It is also worth noting that certain aspects were barely touched upon in the interviews, since participants did not have the opportunity to choose between several response options, and thus only issues which they themselves raised could be considered and analysed for the purpose of this project.

2.5 Suggestions

When asked to give their opinion as to how free movement could be improved and barriers removed, the interviewees offered some insightful suggestions. Since the major barriers were language barriers and lack of information, the respondents mostly made suggestions relating to these issues. The most commonly mentioned suggestions were setting up a public organisation or institution that would serve as a contact point for movers especially in the beginning, making information more readily available and language proficiency. Of the 41 respondents, 37 gave various recommendations which are summarised below.

An organisation/institution

12 out of 37 respondents highlighted the need for the creation or establishment of a specific public organisation or institution (other than the City Council) that will offer support for newly arrived movers. Such an organisation would serve as a contact point for movers and source of information from the beginning of their stay. It should have skilled and specially trained personnel, who could offer help and support in several languages. Organisations of this kind should exist in all European countries, so that their services would be available in both home and destination countries, so that people can seek help before and after migrating and familiarise themselves with the requirements of the destination country.

Such an organisation or institution can help facilitate the integration process of movers, and would provide up-to-date information about country-specific laws, rules and customs. The organisation could also provide online consulting and advice services or telephone numbers for foreigners in different languages. The said organisation or institution could also serve as consultation offices where EU movers can receive personal advice on country-specific guidelines, as questions tend to be individual and differ from case to case. Handbooks with the most important facts on each country would also be appreciated. These sentiments are aptly articulated by Y (No.1), male, 32 years, GR; *“It should be more organised but from the state and the European nations should have an organisation or something that would help people who need help and ask its country what kind of (...) Everyone goes to another country for a reason and there should be an organisation, maybe there is one I don’t know, but should be an organisation which should organise the people and the governments every governments every European nations and with simple words, tell to its nation what they need what they can do, and when someone*

want to travel to another country for some reason, for a personal reason, for work, for something, he should register there to that organisation and goes more simple.”

Information

11 respondents expressed their views and suggestions on improving access to information. Firstly, information could be provided or obtained in the home countries for would-be movers before they migrate or move to another country. Stressing the importance of acquiring information prior to moving M (No.6), female, 28 years, PL said *“Being human we are afraid of persons, of something we do not know. If we know something better, we won’t be that afraid.”* V (No.39), female, 33 years, GR shared this view and said that it would have helped if the Greek job centre had provided information about other EU countries, how to get papers translated or what to do first, and support during the first steps in Germany before actually moving to Germany.

Information about the right to free movement also needs to be more readily available. F (No.11), male, 35 years, IT argued that *“More information about free movement should be given, and country-specific information would be useful as well”* and F (No.43), Female, 24 years, PT, criticised that there is little awareness of the right to free movement. In Germany, information from public institutions and service providers about requirements for bureaucratic processes, labour laws, health insurance etc. should be provided in a language that movers understand as well as in English. This includes online information on the websites of service providers and banks.

Y (No. 34), male, 33, BG noted that there is a need for more information on the recognition of academic certificates and diplomas obtained in other countries before coming to Germany, as the educational systems differ and academic achievements are important for finding a job.

Language

Language is another major barrier that young Europeans face when they come to Germany, especially in the early days. The response of M (No.13), female, 33 years, IT is a reflection of the viewpoint of most respondents, *“The first help... if I had gotten the first help in my mother tongue or in another language that I can understand it would have been a really big help for me just to make the change a little bit softer”*. In this regard, officials and other public sector workers should speak different (European) national languages and not only German, and documents/forms to be filled in should also be available in different languages. SM (No.21), male, 33 years, RO expressed the frustration of most movers about information being only available in German, *“Another thing that annoys me: No company or state authority has a website that is also English except AOK. AOK has its website in all the languages in the EU including Romania, Estonian, and Lithuanian... Come on, those are one Million people. But except them... They are the only ones I found. Besides then... Oh yeah and Deutsche Bank has a... But banking... Sparkasse doesn't have in English. Are you kidding me?”*

As far as language courses are concerned, G (No.3), Male, 26 years, GR thinks that it would be better if they were more intensive, and private language courses should be more affordable. M (No.7), female, 28 years, ES does not understand why movers from third countries do not have to pay for their language/integration course whereas she had to pay for it.

Other Views

In addition to the suggestions outlined above, the respondents made further recommendations, for instance, related to education. D (No.10), male, 28 years, IT, for instance, proposed that study abroad programmes like ERASMUS be made obligatory because they would help widen the scope and

perspective of students and promote closer relationships between EU countries and movers: *“Because Europe should not only be reduced on the euro and on the economy, it should be also about culture, a common culture, and all the people should understand this” (“Damit Europa nicht nur auf den Euro reduziert wird und nicht nur auf Ökonomie reduziert wird, dass es auch um Kultur geht, um eine gemeinsam geprägte Kultur geht und das sollen die Leute verstehen“).*

Similarly, education or university systems should be more uniform and it should be easier to get foreign qualifications recognised. S (No.31), male, 36 years, EE is still struggling to get his Estonian qualifications recognised in Bavaria, but he knows of a man from Spain who got the very same qualification recognised in no time in Baden-Württemberg. If the educational system were standardised, it would also be possible to change universities after each semester within Germany and Europe, which according to G (No. 25), male, 34 years, AT, is already possible in Spain.

Another important point raised is organising events and activities that would bring people from different countries together, such as cultural festivals and also events where foreigners have the possibility to meet locals, which would promote integration. As M (No.17), female, 30 years, PL put it, *“It will be better if there are more events where foreigners have the possibility to meet locals and can talk to them. That could be of help getting integrated.”* She continued *“I don’t know how to describe it when people are not really in contact with foreigners. We are always the bad. But that’s kind of natural as it is the same in Poland. I cannot say that it just happens in Germany like that. It almost happens in every country that once people are not in contact with foreigners it is problematic. They sometimes don’t know that the simplest things could be the most difficult”* to stress the need to to be in contact with locals.

In addition, it would be helpful to have mentoring/tutoring programmes for movers, as suggested by M (No.26), Male, 29, ES and D (No.28), male, 32 years, BG. These programmes could provide support in a variety of areas such as finding a flat, answering questions, finding a job, and filing tax returns etc., and ultimately make the integration process easier and faster, not least because they would offer movers an opportunity to interact with a German person.

Moreover, work-related requirements should be standardised across the EU (I (No.22.), Female, 32 years, IT equal requirements), as they currently differ significantly between member states. L (No.23), female, 28 years, EE suggested that ID cards be standardised, too, as this would simplify bureaucratic processes.

3. Germans who wish/plan to move

3.1 Previous experience and information about free movement

All of the German interviewees had some, and in the case of K, female, 24 years, DE extensive, experience of living in other EU states and have all participated in study exchange programmes (Erasmus or similar). Two participants (K, female, 24 years, DE and T, male, 32 years, DE) have also done European Voluntary Service.

Furthermore, they all stated they had a good general idea of the freedom of movement.

However, further questions revealed that T, male, 32 years, DE and P, male, 30 years, DE, who already had a destination country in mind, only had a very basic idea of free movement, and had not done any research into country-specific regulations yet. P, male, 30 years, DE was not familiar with the Freedom of Movement Act itself but knew about the Schengen Agreement and his right to move freely within the EU. M, female, 27 years, DE, who studied study Law in Germany for many years and also focused on European legislation, had above-average knowledge of free movement. The other participants on the other hand did not have detailed knowledge of the freedom of movement.

All of the German interviewees cited the internet and personal experiences of travelling and staying abroad as their main sources of information. 2 interviewees claimed that they do not currently require more information about free movement and would do more in-depth research to inform themselves in more depth if and when they decided move abroad. 2 other interviewees on the other hand said they would appreciate more information on the labour market situation in other EU states (P, male, 30 years, DE) or their rights and duties as a German living in another EU state as well as about acquiring citizenship (T, male, 32 years, DE).

3.2 Drivers

The five Germans we interviewed stated that their main drivers and reasons for wanting to move abroad were the opportunity to improve their language skills, make new experiences, job opportunities and family or partnerships. Both P, male, 30 years, DE and T, male, 32 years, DE said that they find the French or Italian way of life and especially the nature, weather and culture very appealing and therefore wanted to move there.

3 out of 5 interviewees stated that they are not willing to fundamentally compromise on the high standard of living that they are used to in Germany. While M, female, 27 years, DE pointed out that one might have to spend more money in order to maintain the same standard of living in another city or country, J, male, 24 years, DE admitted that there are pros and cons about every country, and that the decision of moving ultimately comes down to personal choice and preference, *„It depends on the factors which are important for you. If you want to earn money it will probably be better to stay in Germany in comparison to other EU countries. If you take the cuisine abroad or the landscape and stuff like that into account... I mean regarding life quality I would think that it won't be worse elsewhere. Also if one is in a worse financial position. But as I said it's something everybody has to decide on his/her own.”*

On the other hand, K, female, 24 years, DE said that any downsides to living in another country would have to be compensated for by other factors in order for her to be willing to move.

Both J, male, 24 years, DE and T, male, 32 years, DE argued that they would be better qualified after living abroad as they would have stepped out of their comfort zone, learnt another language and confidently dealt with difficult challenges.

3.3 Barriers

None of the German interviewees expect to encounter any major difficulties in the moving process, partly because the freedom of movement has reduced many of the barriers that might have been there in the past. In light of the fact that they all have experience of living in other European countries, it could be argued that they are familiar with potential obstacles and confident about their ability overcome them and consequently have a more optimistic outlook.

The major concern that the participants brought up was the difficulty of finding work abroad. Finding a job abroad, especially in countries like Italy, is believed to be very difficult due to the current economic situation and the high rate of unemployment amongst young people. T, male, 32 years, DE argued that while it might be easy to find a low-paying job, finding work which pays enough to make ends meet is a real challenge. P, male, 30 years, DE agreed and admitted that he is not willing to take on a job which he is completely overqualified for.

Language skills were also mentioned as an important factor, which could either be positive (having the opportunity to learn a new language) or negative (being unable to communicate). M, female, 27 years,

DE explained: “I always hope that the people, the colleagues or the friends you have there also help you somehow or talk in English with you first...”.

The vast majority of the German interviewees (4 out of 5) had never experienced any kind of discrimination during their travels or prior stays abroad. M, female, 27 years, DE was warmly welcomed by the local people and P, male, 30 years, DE said that his good command of the French knowledge meant that he was not being discriminated against based on language.

Regarding obstacles which would make them want to return to Germany or move to another country, the participants named family and job issues as the most important reasons.

3.4 Practices that promote or hinder the right to move freely

Regarding practices that promote free movement, J, male, 24 years, DE argued that it is very important to be well-informed and have a clear idea of what life in the destination country will be like, as this creates a sense of stability. Support from an employer, such as a welcome box including information about the country and city (something which his university did), would therefore be very helpful in this respect. T, male, 32 years, DE mentioned having a job offer before moving as a factor which would significantly increase the likelihood of him moving to another EU country and at the same time make the move much easier and guarantee a source of income in the destination country. K, female, 24 years, DE cited language courses, high standards of living and interesting jobs as factors which facilitate migration. Both she and P, male, 30 years, DE said that having friends and acquaintances in the destination country or friends who are also planning to move there would make them more likely to move.

While J, male, 24 years, DE stated that a lack of information could be a practice that hinders the right to free movement, T, male, 32 years, DE said that having a partner who does not want to leave would be a hindering factor. The German interviewees were divided on the question of whether or not free movement has made them feel more European, with 3 people saying that it has and 2 that it has not made them feel more European. P, male, 30 years, DE explained that he feels that he as a European citizen has almost no say in EU politics and would thus appreciate more transparency and media coverage on issues debated in Brussels.

It should be noted that it became clear during the evaluation of the interviews that several interviewees had only vaguely addressed the practices which hinder or promote the right to move freely. Also, some participants had given the exact same responses as in the *Drivers* and *Barriers* sections, which could indicate that they did not understand the difference between these sections.

3.5 Suggestions

J, male, 24 years, DE argued that it is already very easy to move thanks to the freedom of movement and the amount of information on the topic freely available on the internet. According to him, everybody who considers moving is personally responsible for acquiring the necessary information and preparing themselves for the move.

Considering that finding a job was one of the main concerns for most of the German participants, it is perhaps unsurprising that 3 of 5 interviewees said that they would appreciate more support in the search for a job. A website which lists job vacancies (especially high-skilled jobs) was proposed by J, male, 24 years, DE and T, male, 32 years, DE, while M, female, 27 years, DE suggested that there should be an agency which advises movers on how to find work before they leave their home country.

4. Views of representatives of authorities

In this chapter we will describe and analyse the information gathered in the interviews with representatives from relevant national authorities and NGOs in the field of migration. We questioned 7 representatives from different authorities in 5 interviews, 4 of which were carried out face-to-face. Our aim was to select representatives from a wide spectrum of institutions and organisations involved in the area of free movement in order to include a variety of perspectives in our analysis. The main obstacle in the process of finding suitable interview partners was the situation in Germany surrounding the refugee crisis.

With most institutions, programmes and projects in Germany focusing on the high number of refugees in the country, many institutions are overtaxed and thus had little to no capacity to be interviewed for our project. As a matter of fact, some even questioned the relevance of the project *On the move*. Nonetheless, we eventually managed to compose a sample of 7 representatives from different NGOs and questioned them about the following issues: the knowledge about information on free movement, drivers and reasons that lead young people to move to Germany, the main challenges that Europeans encounter in Germany as well as ideas and suggestions to improve free movement in Germany.

4.1 Information about free movement

According to 5 of our 7 interviewees, Europeans tend to be well-informed about the main features of the freedom of movement but lack relevant knowledge when it comes to specific information such as labour law-related issues or the recognition of qualifications. One interviewee argued that the problem is not EU movers' knowledge of their *rights* (or lack thereof) but lack of awareness of their *possibilities*. According to this interviewee, unawareness of one's possibilities can sometimes become a barrier to enjoying one's rights to their full extent. For instance, many EU citizens are unaware of the possibility to register with the *Arbeitsagentur*, even if they do not wish to apply for benefits, and consequently miss out on the employment services on offer, which can put them at a disadvantage.

As far as obtaining information is concerned, for most other movers, family members, friends, communities and the internet serve as the main source of information.

4.2 Drivers

All interviewees were of the opinion that better job opportunities and finding an apprenticeship are one of the main reasons why young people move to Germany. In this context the search for a "better life" and the possibility of starting a family was also mentioned as a potential driver for young people to move. Furthermore, as one interviewee pointed out, many young people believe that gaining work experience abroad could improve their job prospects in their home and other countries. Another interviewee argued that the vast majority of young people move to Germany to do an apprenticeship and because they will most likely earn a higher salary than in their home country. The strong demand for employment was also stressed by one interviewee who said that she had never heard of an EU mover asking for money (social benefits) but rather asking about how they can make money (e.g. how to become self-employed) in Germany. Perhaps contrary to these statements was the argument made by one interviewee who claimed that the strong welfare state and social security system in Germany is a major pull-factor for young Europeans.

With regards to factors that make young people return to their home countries again, personal reasons were mentioned as one of the main drivers, such as family issues (parents get sick), loneliness and homesickness. On the other hand, some people will return to their home countries as a result of the obstacles they encounter in Germany like language barriers or difficulties in finding work. One

interviewee said that movers are likely to return to their home country *“If the hopes and expectations they had when coming to Germany are not met”* (*“Wenn die Hoffnungen mit denen sie nach Deutschland gekommen sind sich nicht bewahrhaftet haben”*). Economic crises in the movers’ home countries as a driver to move to Germany was only mentioned by one interviewee.

4.3 Barriers

Language barriers were considered by all interviewees to be the major challenge concerning all areas of life. As a consequence, almost all other challenges are likely to be connected to or exacerbated by a lack of German language skills. Thus, insufficient language skills can become a barrier to exercising one’s rights. Many documents and forms are only available in German, which may prevent those with little knowledge of the German language from claiming social benefits, even if they are eligible for them. Furthermore, a lack of German language skills can also be an obstacle to finding work and accommodation. The fact that Europeans are not entitled to attend integration courses is a further obstacle to the improvement of EU movers’ language skills. Many EU movers end up having to pay a lot of money for language courses.

According to the interviewees, the second major challenge for EU citizens in Germany is the recognition of qualifications, especially of vocational qualifications that are only school-based (as opposed to dual-based, which includes company-based training). Since the German labour market is based on a dual system, the ranking and rating of foreign certificates can sometimes be difficult. In this context one interviewee stated that there is a gap between the theory and practice of recruiting foreign skilled workers. Due to the high demand for skilled labour in Germany, skilled workers from other EU states come to Germany with the expectation of easily finding a job. In reality, however, they are often confronted with a variety of challenges and obstacles and do not receive sufficient and adequate advice. (*“Da beißt es sich schon irgendwie, wenn man sagt man sucht Fachkräfte und dann kommen die Fachkräfte und dann sag ich jetzt mal ist die Beratung nicht unbedingt zufrieden stellend für die Leute die sagen „okay jetzt bin ich Deutschland, die suchen ja Fachkräfte, ich bin Fachkraft (...) also die Realität sag ich jetzt mal schaut ein bisschen anders aus als was unsere Bundesregierung in der Theorie sich vorstellt“*). The difficulty of getting one’s foreign qualifications recognised can also result in Europeans being underemployed or employed in jobs that they are overqualified for, although this may also be caused by a lack of German language skills.

Another barrier mentioned by the interviewees was that advice centres, programmes and initiatives in Germany focus on immigrants in general and at the moment almost exclusively on refugees. Support offers are rarely specifically targeted at Europeans and it can be very difficult to find the right authority or person who can provide EU-relevant information and advice, not least because many advice offices deal with one issue only (e.g. support in finding accommodation). Furthermore, there tend to be too many support offers that are too general, which can lead to confusion and information overload for EU citizens.

Regarding the question of whether or not EU movers’ nationality has an impact on the kind of challenges they face, 2 interviewees argued that differences in challenges are more due to differences in education levels and vary depending on the field of occupation. For instance, someone with a technical qualification would have more opportunities and better chances of finding employment than someone with a social science diploma. Another potential obstacle in the job hunting process in Germany is the requirement to have *Arbeitszeugnisse* from previous employers. Most Europeans, however, only hold *references* which are not as detailed or extensive as an *Arbeitszeugnis*.

4.4 Practices that promote or hinder the right to move freely

Almost none of the representatives could provide specific information on practices that address to Europeans in particular to promote the right to move freely. Only one could give an example about a program that addresses to Europeans in specific. The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprives (FEAD) (Europäischer Hilfsfond für die am stärksten benachteiligten Personen in Deutschland, EHAP) aims to support the social cohesion and social integration of persons at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Especially deprived newly arrived EU citizens and their children as well as homeless people can receive support from the fund. The main purpose is to ensure better access to early education and social care offers for newly arrived children.⁸⁵

Another Best Practice that was mentioned by an interviewee was the initiative „Give something back to Berlin.”⁸⁶ It does not address to Europeans in particular, but here one could see how integration could be realized by making social engagement and neighborhood work accessible to the migrant population. People from different countries are helping and assisting each other and working as volunteers in different projects.

Furthermore some practices and initiatives that address to migrants in general were mentioned. Although they do not address to Europeans in particular, they can take advantage of the services too. For example 2 of the interviewees said that all the migration advice centres (Migrationsberatungsstellen)⁸⁷ which are available in almost every larger city, are a good initiative and practice to serve as a first contact point. The advice centres offer a broad range of services in giving support and advice on questions regarding for example where to learn the German language, how to recognize foreign qualifications, where to find work, about health insurance, marriage, family raising children or where to find accommodation.

No one of the seven interviewees has mentioned any practices that hinder the right to free movement.

4.5 Suggestions

The interviewees' ideas and suggestions to improve the reality of free movement were mainly related to the barriers and challenges they had previously mentioned.

To help overcome language barriers Europeans should be legally entitled to attend integration courses. At the same time, integration courses should not only focus on teaching the German language but on integration in general, for example, by initiating *neighbourhood projects* where movers could interact with locals and use the German language right away. In addition, integration courses should include an *orientation course* where movers are informed of their rights, learn about administrative processes, how they can find a job or receive information about self-employment.

Since many young Europeans move to Germany to do an apprenticeship, more support in the search for apprenticeships should be provided, for example, through a dedicated contact point for Europeans. There should also be more assistance during the apprenticeship itself, for example, through extra-occupational training and homework tutoring parallel to the vocational school (*berufsbezogene Nachhilfe und Förderung parallel zur Berufsschule*). The need for a dedicated contact point for Europeans was not only mentioned in relation to apprenticeships but was suggested as a general necessity since the current

⁸⁵ Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales (2017): Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) in Germany. URL: <http://www.bmas.de/EN/Our-Topics/Social-Europe-and-international-Affairs/Europe/Programs-and-Fonds/fead.html>

⁸⁶ „Give something back to Berlin. Making worlds meet working together for a better city“. URL: <http://givesomethingbacktoberlin.com/about>

⁸⁷ For more information see: Bundesministerium für Migration und Flüchtlinge, Advice for adults. URL: <http://www.bamf.de/EN/Willkommen/InformationBeratung/ErwachseneBeratung/erwachseneberatung-node.html>

support offers are mainly aimed at refugees or immigrants in general. Thus, contact points could and should provide structured, clear and compact information on all areas and issues regarding free movement.

Finally, it was pointed out by 3 interviewees that the process of moving would be much smoother if relevant information was already available in EU citizen' home countries. This would allow them, for instance, to obtain recognition of their qualifications in their home country or at least ensure they bring all the necessary documents to Germany with them.

5. *Interim findings*

According to the qualitative interviews we conducted, the main incentive for young EU citizens to move to Germany were better job opportunities and higher wages. Unfavourable economic, political and social conditions, corruption and lack of opportunities and career prospects in the EU citizens' countries of origin were frequently cited as a reason for participants to search for a job abroad. Many interviewees said that Germany's social security and education system, the strong economy and labour market as well as the high living standards made the country an attractive destination. Some EU citizens also moved to Germany because of their partners or spouses.

The overwhelming majority of our interviewees cited the German language as the major barrier to integration and life in Germany. Nearly all other barriers which were subsequently mentioned could in some way be attributed or traced back to the language barrier, for instance, making friends, bureaucracy and finding employment. Furthermore, several participants had difficulty getting their qualifications recognised and accredited in Germany, mainly because of vague, differing and occasionally contradicting information they received from the relevant institutions and authorities.

With regards to practices that promoted or hindered the right to freedom of movement, the EU citizens interviewed stated that support from their workplace and social network (family, friends, partners) was a crucial factor and very much needed and appreciated by them. Worth mentioning is also the fact that hardly any of our participants mentioned being an EU citizen was an advantage that promoted their right to free movement nor did they mention any support from organisations or programmes as a factor which they felt promoted their right to exercising free movement.

The most frequently made suggestion to improve free movement and integration was the establishment of an organisation or institution specifically dedicated to EU citizens. This was seen as necessary due to the fact that almost all of the existing contact and information points for foreigners focus mainly (if not exclusively) on third country nationals and refugees.

Furthermore, clear and specific information about the destination country was requested by many interviewees, this should be provided or available already in the sending countries.

Last but not least, many participants voiced the view that EU citizens should be legally entitled to attend integration courses, above all because the German language is the biggest obstacle to integration in Germany. Also, the timetables for these integration courses should be more worker-friendly and flexible and not only be offered on a full-time basis.

PART D – Analysis and recommendations

In this chapter, we will review and analyse the findings from the previous chapters and recommend measures to improve free movement in Germany. We will focus on the main trends, drivers and barriers and attempt to identify the reasons behind them by comparing and contrasting the findings from each chapter. Based on this analysis, we shall make recommendation to improve free movement in practice.

It should be pointed out that the results from the different chapters cannot be compared one-to-one, as the desk research was primarily based on data about EU citizens in general; data relating specifically to our target group of 25-35-year olds was scarcely or not at all available.

The order of the chapters may present another difficulty when comparing the results. In hindsight, it would have been more effective to conduct the qualitative interviews first and then carry out targeted research into the problems and factors that were mentioned in the interviews, since some of them were not covered in the initial desk research. This includes, for instance, statistics about language barriers, experiences of discrimination or data on social benefits. Another problem is the currency and relevance of the data used. In some cases, the data used in the desk research was updated after completion of the qualitative research, meaning that some of the data from the desk research (especially labour market participation) is no longer up to date. In addition to the limited availability of data relating the group of 25-35-year olds, it was sometimes very difficult to find country-specific data and numbers as many statistics are compiled according to country groups (e.g. EU2, EU14), rather than individual member states. Thus, for our interviews with EU citizens, it would have been better to choose participants by country-groups instead of nationality, to allow for a better comparison with the quantitative data and relevant statistics from our desk research.

To mitigate these limitations, we will be using data from the desk research (some of it updated) as well as well as from areas in which we decided to conduct further and additional research.

1. Synthesis of results and conclusions

1.1 Employment & Qualification level of EU citizens

While the population share of economically active EU citizens is slightly higher than that of German citizens with no migration background, the unemployment rate among Union citizens is higher than among Germans but considerably lower than that of third-state nationals.⁸⁸

The unemployment rate among all EU citizens in Germany (4.3%) as presented in our desk research was also reflected in the findings of our qualitative research with only 4 out of 41 interviewed Europeans being unemployed. According to the statistics, EU citizens who move to Germany tend to be better educated and more highly qualified than persons from third countries. Furthermore, there is a higher proportion of academics amongst these EU citizens than there is amongst the German population with no migration background.

As far as labour market integration is concerned, while there is little difference between movers from EU14 states and German citizens with no migration background, movers from EU10 and EU2 states are less well integrated than the majority of the population.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ SVR – Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration (2013): Erfolgsfall Europa? Folgen und Herausforderungen der EU-Freizügigkeit für Deutschland. Jahresgutachten 2013 mit Migrationsbarometer. URL: https://www.stiftung-mercator.de/media/downloads/3_Publikationen/Sachverstaendigenrat_deutscher_Stiftungen_Jahresgutachten_2013. P. 62

Especially movers from France and Great Britain tend to have a very high level of education, with 62,4 % of French and 53,9 % of British movers having a higher education degree.⁹⁰ Unfortunately, no statistics were available on our target group of 25-35-year olds, however, based on the findings from our qualitative research it is evident that the education level is high in this age group, too. 31 of 41 respondents had a university degree, the majority in a technical science or economics/business subject. Only one respondent had merely a lower secondary school degree (*Hauptschulabschluss*) and only 2 respondents were working in jobs with low qualification requirements (waiter, warehouse worker). This fact is also reflected in the findings from our desk research, which showed that only a minority of EU movers work in jobs with low qualification requirements (EU14: 14,8%; EU10:18,5%).

Compared to third-country nationals, movers from the new EU Accession states show a better labour market integration despite the fact that their stay in Germany tends to be shorter.⁹¹ It would have been useful at this stage to question the interviewees about the duration of their stay and their first job in Germany in order to identify how long it takes EU movers to find work in Germany. According to the statistics, there are no significant differences in the amount of time it takes EU movers and German citizens to find employment. However, a closer investigation into the amount of time it takes different people to find work and the reasons behind it (e.g. lack of language skills or qualifications) would allow for the establishment of targeted support measures, such as language courses for EU citizens or further education and training opportunities.

The fear of so-called poverty immigration from Eastern Europe, which has been a hotly-debated issue both in the media and in the legal practice, turned out not to be substantiated based on the findings from our qualitative research. Merely 3 out of 21 respondents of Eastern European origin (Rumania, Bulgaria, Poland and Estonia) were unemployed. At the same time, however, this means that with only 4 of 41 respondents being unemployed, 3 of them came from an Eastern European state. Nonetheless, the 7 representatives of NGOs that we interviewed confirmed the findings from our interviews, namely that better job opportunities are a main driver for Europeans to move to Germany, not the prospect of claiming social benefits.

In conclusion, it can be said that EU citizens who migrate to Germany tend to be young, well-qualified and motivated workers, whose labour market integration does not differ much from that of the German population. This and the fact that EU citizens make up 56,9% (see *Migration Trends*) of the foreign-national population in Germany illustrates their significance for the German labour market. In order to use EU movers' potential to the fullest, barriers to free movement need to be removed. These different barriers will be explored in more depth in the following section.

⁸⁹ SVR – Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration (2013): Erfolgsfall Europa? Folgen und Herausforderungen der EU-Freizügigkeit für Deutschland. Jahresgutachten 2013 mit Migrationsbarometer. URL: https://www.stiftung-mercator.de/media/downloads/3_Publikationen/Sachverstaendigenrat_deutscher_Stiftungen_Jahresgutachten_2013 . P. 99

⁹⁰ Statistisches Bundesamt (2015): Bildungsstand der Bevölkerung. Wiesbaden. URL: https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Bildungsstand/BildungsstandBevoelkerung5210002157004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile P. 106

⁹¹ SVR – Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration (2013): Erfolgsfall Europa? Folgen und Herausforderungen der EU-Freizügigkeit für Deutschland. Jahresgutachten 2013 mit Migrationsbarometer. URL: https://www.stiftung-mercator.de/media/downloads/3_Publikationen/Sachverstaendigenrat_deutscher_Stiftungen_Jahresgutachten_2013 . P. 99

1.2 Barriers

Although they are generally well-qualified and highly motivated, there are certain barriers which impede EU movers' integration into the German labour market.

Firstly, there is the language barrier; the linguistic heterogeneity in Europe and a lack of knowledge of the most commonly used languages in Europe has long been known to be an obstacle to the geographical mobility of citizens within the Union.⁹²

According to a 2015 Eurobarometer study, only 39% of Germans believed that language was a critical factor when it comes to hiring employees in Germany⁹³. However, as we discovered in our interviews with Europeans, language barriers are a crucial factor in all areas of life. This issue will be investigated in more detail in the following section.

Language barriers

In our interviews with young European movers as well as with NGO representatives, language barriers were mentioned as one of the major challenges affecting all areas of life. Almost all other problems were mentioned in relation to language barriers, such as finding a job, experiencing discrimination, administrative processes (e.g. filling in official forms), daily life activities (e.g. doctor's appointments) or making friends. 23 respondents stated that they struggled to find a job in Germany due to language barriers.

All of the NGO representatives that we interviewed pointed out that a lack of German language skills could negatively affect movers' rights as EU citizens. This issue was also raised in the Eurobarometer survey, according to which a lack of language skills is one of the main problems when going abroad (52%) (see 1.3 *Obstacles to mobility*, p.8)

The importance of language in every aspect of life cannot be overemphasised. In the *Recommendations* section we will examine in more detail how language barriers can be overcome. Besides language barriers, differences in education and training systems between member states may also be a challenge, especially when it comes to the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Recognition of foreign qualifications

The recognition of foreign degrees and qualifications for EU citizens is governed on a European level by primary law (Free Movement of Workers and Right of Establishment 53ff. tfeu) and secondary law (Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications 2005/36/EC). On 1 April 2012 the Federal Recognition Act, which is short for the „Law to improve the assessment and recognition of professional and vocational education and training qualifications acquired abroad“ (*Gesetz zur Verbesserung der Feststellung und Anerkennung im Ausland erworbener Berufsqualifikationen*)⁹⁴, entered into force in Germany and has since been regulating the recognition of foreign qualifications. However, the Recognition Act only applies to professions which are governed by the Federal Government. Professions such as teachers, nursery, school teachers, youth social workers, engineers and architects are regulated by State legislation.⁹⁵

⁹² SVR – Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration (2013): Erfolgsfall Europa? Folgen und Herausforderungen der EU-Freizügigkeit für Deutschland. Jahresgutachten 2013 mit Migrationsbarometer. URL: https://www.stiftung-mercator.de/media/downloads/3_Publikationen/Sachverstaendigenrat_deutscher_Stiftungen_Jahresgutachten_2013.pdf p. 135

⁹³ EU- Commission (October 2015): Special Eurobarometer 437 “Discrimination in the EU in 2015”, Results for Germany. URL: <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/surveyKy/2077> p. 1

⁹⁴ Recognition in Germany: Federal Recognition Act. URL: https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/federal_recognition_act.php

⁹⁵ Recognition in Germany: Länder Regulations. URL: https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/laender_regulations.php

This caused some confusion and problems for a number of our interviewees, for instance S (No.31), male, 36 years, EE who has a Master's Degree in Engineering. While he struggled to get his degree recognised in Bavaria, an acquaintance of his had no difficulty getting the very same degree recognised in another State. Although only 3,6% of applications for recognition were rejected in 2014, in our qualitative research we found the recognition process to be a major barrier to free movement and the integration of EU citizens in Germany.

It appears that there is a high demand for more information on state-governed professions such as teachers and engineers. Meanwhile, most States have adopted their own legislation for recognising foreign qualifications; however, there are no evaluations available yet.

Discrimination

According to Eurobarometer, 86% of Germans are in favour of the free movement of people in Europe, which is similar to the EU-average approval rating.⁹⁶

Although this high approval rating cannot be directly compared to the results of our qualitative research, it stands somewhat in contrast to the opinions and experiences of our interviewees. Out of the 41 persons interviewed, 19 had suffered discrimination in Germany, although 6 likened the experience more to a feeling of being unwanted rather than outright discrimination. Most experiences of discrimination were linked to a lack of German language skills.

1.3 Drivers

Immigration to Germany from other EU states has been continually rising since 2010. While in 2010, only 248.649 persons from other EU states moved to Germany, in 2016 the number of new arrivals had risen to 658.485⁹⁷. A Eurobarometer survey from 2015 showed that the economic situation in Germany is perceived to be "good" by 84% of respondents, which could explain the steadily rising level of EU-immigration in Germany.

This impression was confirmed by our interviewees, who stated that "better job opportunities" was one of the main reasons why they came to Germany. Good job prospects were also mentioned by all representatives of NGOs as a main driver for young Europeans move to Germany. In this context, the prospect of a better quality of life and starting a family was also mentioned as a driver by the representatives of NGOs. Compared to the previous year, immigration from the so-called GIPS-States (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain) rose by 4.9% in 2016. It can be assumed that this can at least be partly attributed to the effects of the financial crisis.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ EU- Commission (May 2016): Standard EUROBAROMETER 85 "Public opinion in the European Union", URL: <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2130> p. 31 (English)

⁹⁷ Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit (August 2016): Auswirkungen der Migration auf den deutschen Arbeitsmarkt. Nürnberg. URL: <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statischer-Content/Statistische-Analysen/Statistische-Sonderberichte/Generische-Publikationen/Auswirkungen-der-Migration-auf-den-Arbeitsmarkt.pdf> p. 10

⁹⁸ Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit (August 2016): Auswirkungen der Migration auf den deutschen Arbeitsmarkt. Nürnberg. URL: <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statischer-Content/Statistische-Analysen/Statistische-Sonderberichte/Generische-Publikationen/Auswirkungen-der-Migration-auf-den-Arbeitsmarkt.pdf> p. 7

2. Recommendations

2.1 Language courses

In all three chapters of our report, language barriers were identified as a major problem in all aspects of life (personal and professional). In many cases, a lack of language skills may result in further difficulties for EU citizens, for instance, it can impede access to social benefits to they are entitled, as it's very time-consuming and complex to fill in the necessary forms.

Reducing language barriers would not only be in the interest of EU citizens but would also help the German labour market, if businesses and institutions are made aware of the potential of EU citizens for the German economy. A first step towards reducing language barriers would be to make integration courses more accessible to EU citizens. They already make frequent use of these courses: in 2013 the share of EU participants in integration courses was 43%.⁹⁹ Thus, there certainly seems to be capacity to accommodate EU citizens in these courses. What is however problematic are the course timetables. The courses are usually only offered on a full-time (all-day) basis and therefore clash with many EU movers' work schedules. A far bigger problem is that even if they get a place on an integration course, EU citizens have to pay around 300 EUR in course fees each month. By explicitly extending the target group of integration courses to include EU citizens, these fees would be scrapped. If one has a legal right to attend these courses, they are either free or require only a small fee to be paid.

However, this would not solve the problem that already exists for third-country nationals, namely that integration courses only teach German up to language level B1, which is sufficient for basic daily interactions but not for most professional environments. Therefore, integration courses are only the first of many steps; they are necessary but not sufficient.

In light of the problems and difficulties that can result from a lack of German language skills, it is crucial that the burden of language teaching is not on Germany alone. Government-funded language courses should also be offered in the sending countries to help facilitate the moving and settling in process of EU citizens wishing to emigrate to a different member state. To improve job prospects and qualifications, it would also be useful to provide career-specific language courses following integration courses. A language programme of this kind (ESF BAMF) has been on offer in Germany since 2009, however, it is primarily aimed at job-seekers.

Another measure to reduce language barriers and simplify and clarify administrative procedures would be to introduce English as an official language in all European states, as it is the most widely spoken second language in Europe at 38% (German 11%)¹⁰⁰.

2.2 Contact points for EU citizens

We had some difficulty finding representatives of relevant NGOs to interview for our research, as there are very few NGOs that offer targeted support for EU citizens, are familiar with free movement and directly interact with Europeans.

The lack of dedicated support offers for EU citizens was also criticised by the EU interviewees and NGO representatives we interviewed. To improve free movement, dedicated contact points for EU citizens should be created, at least in larger cities. These contact points should act as the main point of contact

⁹⁹ MIGAZIN (2014): Jahresstatistik 2013. Mehrheit besucht Integrationskurs freiwillig. URL: <http://www.migazin.de/2014/05/08/mehrheit-besucht-integrationskurs-freiwillig/>

¹⁰⁰ EU-Commission (June 2012): Special Eurobarometer 386 „Europeans and their Languages“. URL: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_386_en.pdf p. 5

and offer advice in all or many areas related to free movement. The staff would need to be educated and trained in EU citizens' rights so as to be able to cater for EU movers' needs.

In light of the large share of EU citizens in the total foreign population in Germany, steadily rising levels of immigration as well as EU movers' potential for the German labour market, setting up contact points and expanding the offer of language courses are important measures that would benefit both EU movers and Germany as a whole (due to population aging and labour shortages).

2.3 Further recommendations

To ease the transition and prepare EU citizens for life in another member state, information and advice on the host country should be offered in the sending countries. This could, for instance, be done by building or using already existing networks between Germany and the sending countries.

Meanwhile, companies in Germany should be made aware of EU movers' potential for the German labour market, so that they can create incentives for them to join their business. By recruiting EU citizens, investing in their education and offering language courses, companies could gain valuable employees and at the same time help maximise those individuals' potential and contribution to both their company and the German economy in general.

However, not only companies based in Germany but institutions, businesses and organisations in the sending countries should provide language courses and training opportunities to prepare their citizens for the German labour market. Again, this could be done using networks between companies in Germany and the sending countries.

This report has shown that young EU citizens have the potential to be a great asset to Germany's labour market if certain barriers to free movement and integration in Germany are removed. Unfortunately, in our desk research we were only able to procure quantitative data on the labour market integration and qualifications of EU citizens and general migration trends, which was in most cases not specific to our target group of 25-35-year olds. Quantitative data on the barriers EU citizens face when coming to Germany, or their reasons for moving, is scarcely or not at all available. However, through our qualitative interviews with young European movers we have been able to shed some light on these so far under-researched issues and make a contribution to the knowledge in this research area.

Annex

Sample Table - Young Europeans		Organisation: european forum for migration studies					Country: Germany				
Young Europeans in Germany											
Interviewee No.	Gender Male: M Female: F N.A.: Prefer not to say	Age or Age group (A: 25-29, B: 30-35)	Nationality	Family Situation Married (M) Co-habiting (hab) Partnership (P) Engaged (E) Single (S)	Level of Education	Employment Status Employed? - Profession - Job Title/Function	Country of residence - place of residence	Country of birth	Interview Conducted face to face Yes/no (how)	Date of interview	
1	M	32 (B)	GR	S	Fachhochschule	No	Germany	GR	Yes	22.04.	
2	M	28 (A)	IT	M	Hauptschule	Warehouse Worker	Germany	IT	Yes	28.04.	
3	M	26 (A)	GR	P	Abitur	Waiter	Germany	GR	Yes	02.05.	
4	M	28 (A)	ES	S	Master: Engineering Sc.	Project Coordinator (Construction Manager)	Germany	ES	Yes	11.05.	excluded from the analysis, since he came with a program
5	M	35 (B)	RO	P	Studies: Economics	Deliverer	Germany	RO	Yes	11.05.	
6	F	28 (A)	PL	E	Master: Psychology	Doctor's Receptionist	Germany	PL	Yes	13.05.	
7	F	28 (A)	ES	S	Bachelor: Education	Assembly Line Worker	Germany	ES	Yes	15.05.	
8	M	28 (A)	RO	S	Bachelor: Music	Financial Consultant	Germany	RO	Yes	13.05.	
9	M	26 (A)	RO	S	Bachelor: Economics	IT Commissioner	Germany	RO	Yes	16.05.	
10	M	28 (A)	IT	S	Bachelor of Arts	Student/Language Teacher at VHS	Germany	IT	Yes	17.05.	excluded from the analysis, since he came as a student to Germany
11	M	35 (B)	IT	M	PhD	Consultant/Manager	Germany	IT	Yes	18.05.	
12	M	28 (A)	IT		Bachelor	International Customer Service	Germany	IT	Yes	18.05.	
13	F	33 (B)	IT		Master of Arts	Customer Service	Germany	IT	Yes	18.05.	
14	M	27 (A)	IT		Degree	Italian Sales Department	Germany	IT	Yes	18.05.	
15	F	(B)	IT	M	Master of Arts	Sales Agent	Germany	ARGENTINA	Yes	18.05.	
16	F	28 (A)	IT		Bachelor's Degree	Purchaser	Germany	IT	Yes	18.05.	
17	F	30 (B)	PL	S	Master of Science	Engineer	Germany	PL	Yes	20.05.	excluded from the analysis, since she came with a program
18	M	28 (A)	RO	S	University Degree	IT	Germany	RO	Yes	19.05.	

19	F	28 (A)	ES	P	Degree	Language Teacher (University)/Cleaning Woman	Germany	ES	Yes	19.05.	
				S							
20	M	29 (A)	BG		Abitur	Electrician	Germany	BG	Yes	19.05.	
21	M	33 (B)	RO	M	Electrical Engineering	IT Support Engineer	Germany	RO	Yes	19.05.	
22	F	32 (B)	IT	M	Master's Degree	Project Manager	Germany	IT	Yes	23.05.	
23	F	28 (A)	EE	E	Master's Degree	Research Assistant	Germany	EE	Skype	26.05.	
24	F	25 (A)	RO	hab	Bachelor: Economics and Finance	Company: Carfax	Germany	RO	Yes	24.05.	
				S							
25	M	34 (B)	AT		Master: Engineering Sc.	Project Manager (Sale)	Germany	AT	Yes	24.05.	
				S							
26	M	29 (A)	ES		Master: Structural Engineering	Construction Draftsman	Germany	ES	Yes	24.05.	
27	F	32 (B)	AT	P	Master: Architecture	Architecture Consultant	Germany	AT	Skype	02.06.	
28	M	35 (B)	BG	M	Master: Engineering Sc.		Germany	BG	Yes	03.06.	
				S							
29	M	31 (B)	BG		Master: Economics		Germany	BG	Yes	03.06.	
30	F	29 (A)	IT	P	Bachelor: Psychology	Student	Italy (still fully registered in Italy)	IT	Yes	06.06.	
				S							
31	M	36 (B)	EE		Master: Engineering Sc.	Safety Engineer	Germany	EE	Yes	06.06.	
				S							
32	M	38 (B)	GR		Master: Cultural Tourism Management	Online Sales Manager	Germany	GR	Skype	06.06.	
33	F	34 (B)	PL	M	Master: Political Science	No	Germany	PL	Yes	07.06.	
34	M	33 (B)	BG	M	Master: Engineering Sc.	Product Manager	Germany	BG	Skype	15.06.	
				S							
35	M	25 (A)	PL				Germany	PL	Skype	15.06.	
36	F	26 (A)	RO	P	Bachelor: English and Slavic Studies	Student (M.A. English Studies)	Germany	RO	Skype	18.06.	
37	F	28 (B)	PL	P	Training: Paramedic (Rettungsassistentenausbildung)	Nurse (Pflegerkraft in Pflegeheim)	Germany	PL	Skype	19.06.	
				S							
38	F	31 (B)	RO		Master: Special Education (Sonderpädagogik)	Integration Assistant (Betreuung eines autistischen Kindes)	Germany	RO	Skype	19.06.	
				S							
39	F	33 (B)	GR		Training: Hairdresser, now: IT area	No	Germany	GR	Skype	28.06.	
				S							
40	M	28 (A)	RO				Germany	RO	Yes	01.07.	
41	F		RO	P	Bachelor: English and German Studies, European Studies		Germany	RO	Yes	01.07.	excluded from the analysis since she came to Germany in 20005
42	F	35 (B)	RO	P	Training (?)	No	Germany	RO	Yes	01.07.	
43	F	27 (A)	PT				Germany	PT	Skype	22.07.	
44	F	27 (A)	PL	P	Master: Sociology	No	Germany	PL	Skype	11.07.	

Young people from Germany who plan or wish to move

Interviewee No.	Gender Male: M Female: F N.A.: Prefer not to say	Age or Age group (A: 25-29, B: 30-35)	Nationality	Family Situation Married (M) Co-habiting (hab) Partnership (P) Engaged (E) Single (S)	Level of Education	Employment Status Employed? - Profession - Job Title/Function	Country of destination	Country of birth	Interview Conducted face to face Yes/no (how)	Date of interview
1.	M	32	DE	S	M.A. Biology	Scientific Officer for alternatives to the use of animals in research and testing	Italy		yes	
2.	M	30	DE	S	M.A. Sociology	Coordinator for fellowships	France	Germany	yes	30.07.2016
3.	M	25	DE	S	B.A. History	Student	Portugal (i.a.)		yes	
4.	F	25	DE	S	B.A. Ethnology and Polish studies	Student			yes	
5.	F	27	DE	P/hab	Law (first state examination)	Junior Lawyer (Rechtsreferendarin)			no (skype)	