

## Hungary: cross-border migration in a fragmented ethnic space

Béla Soltész

„ Discovering migration between Visegrad countries and Eastern Partners”  
- final conference and book launch -

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# Migratory trends in Hungary

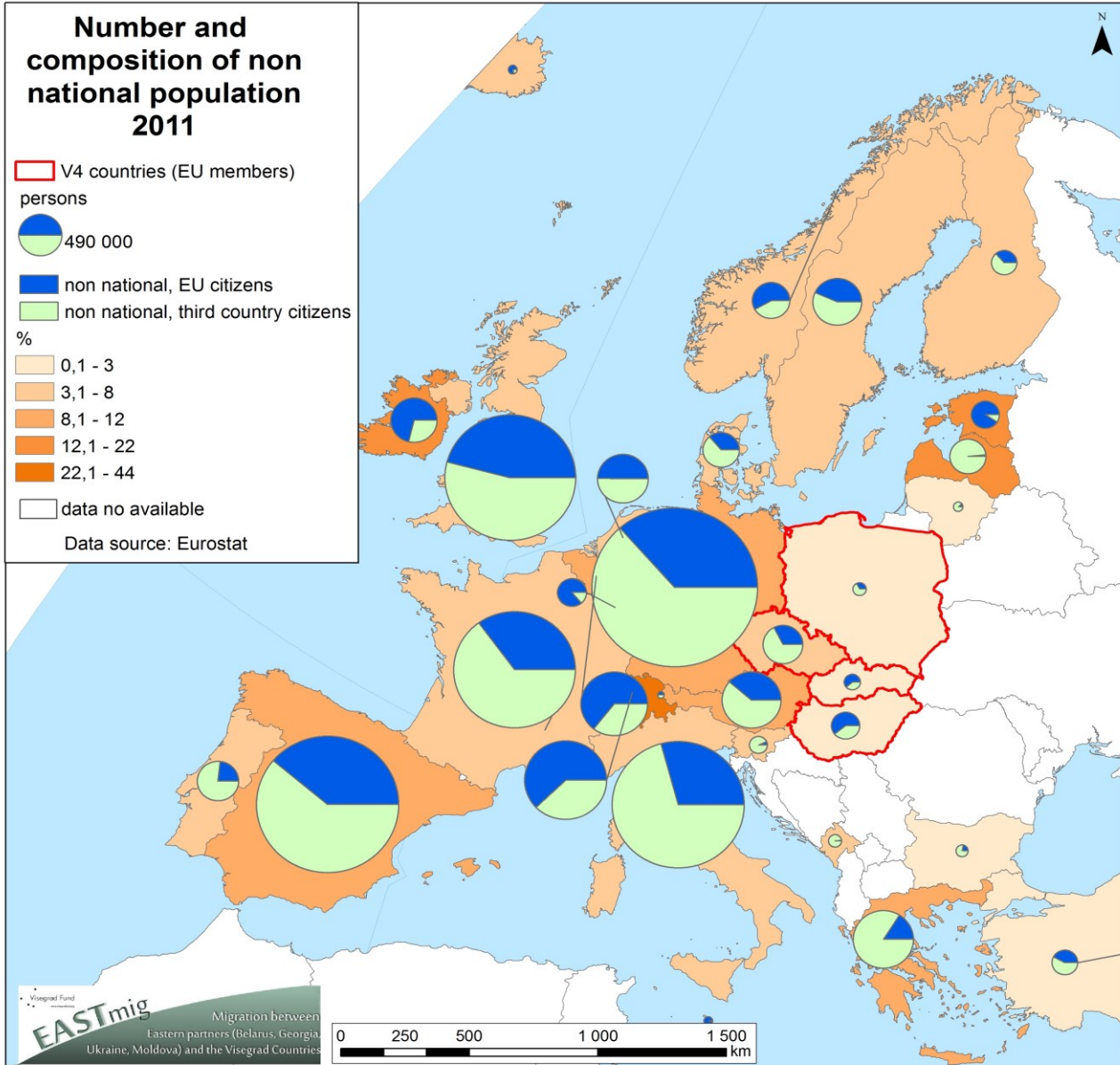
**Migratory trends have been changing in Hungary over the past three decades. The four main stages are the following:**

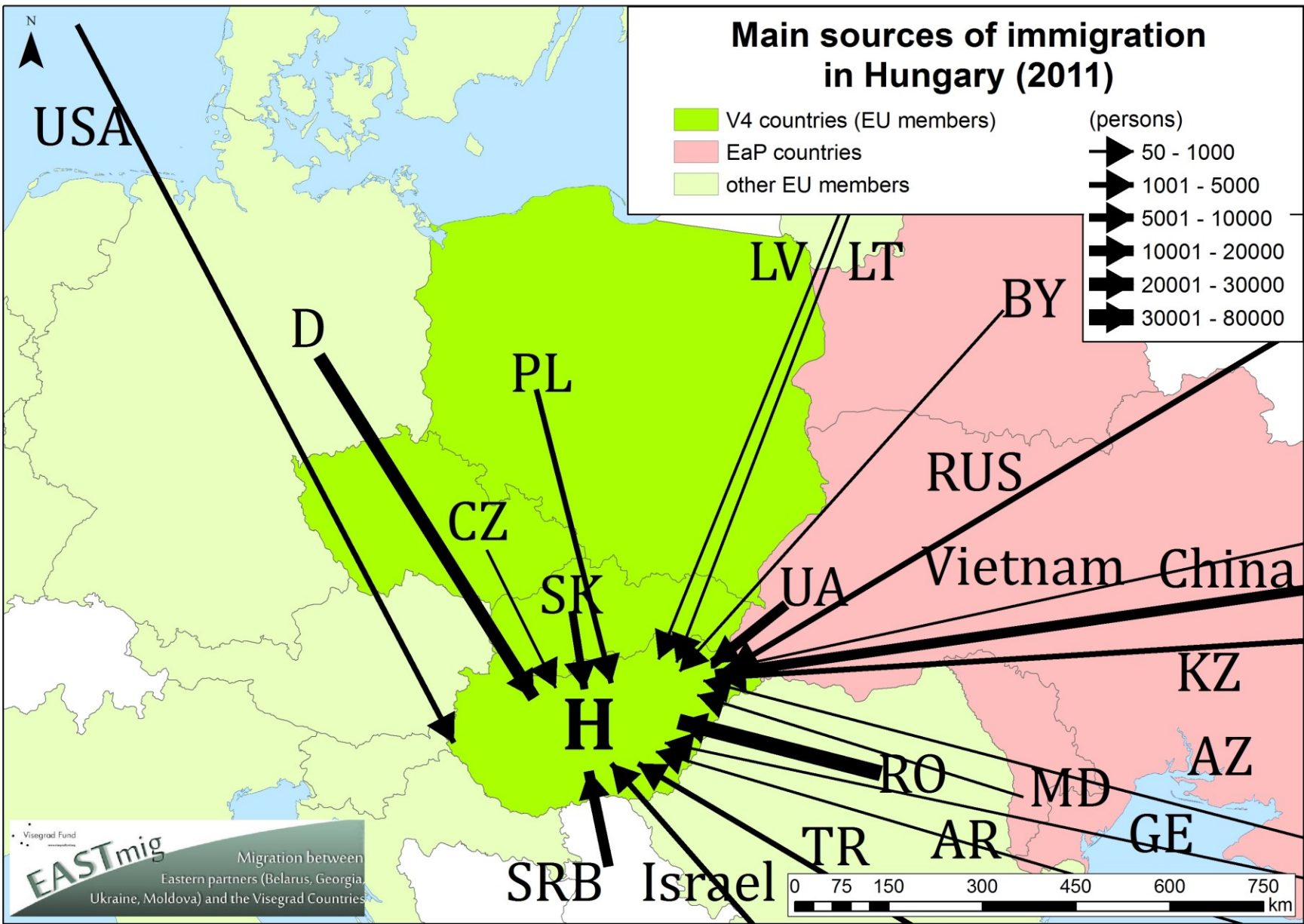
-Until the late 1980s, Hungary was the 'happiest barrack' of the Eastern Bloc with a relatively stable economy and acceptable living standards, though with limited personal and economic freedom, and limited possibility for (legal) migration.

-The transition to democracy Hungary was rather smooth compared to other South East European countries, thus the country became an attractive destination for citizens of neighbouring countries. Most of them were ethnic Hungarians, but "majority" ethnicities (Romanian, Serbian, Ukrainian) were also present and they number has been increasing. (N.b. the simplified naturalization process from 2010 has made their proportion difficult to measure.)

-As the economic situation in the region normalized, intra-regional migration decreased, and a small but economically active group of non-European immigrants (most importantly East Asians and Middle Eastern nationalities) arrived. Also, a growing number of EU/EEA citizens (most notably Germans) has been present.

- With the lift of the restrictions for Hungarian citizens to work in the EU Countries (2004 for UK, IE and SE, 2007 for ES and IT, 2011 for DE and AT) and being pushed by the unfolding of the global economic crisis (especially severe in 2008-2010 in Hungary, emigration started to rise. As of now, it is estimated that the net migration rate of Hungary is close to zero.





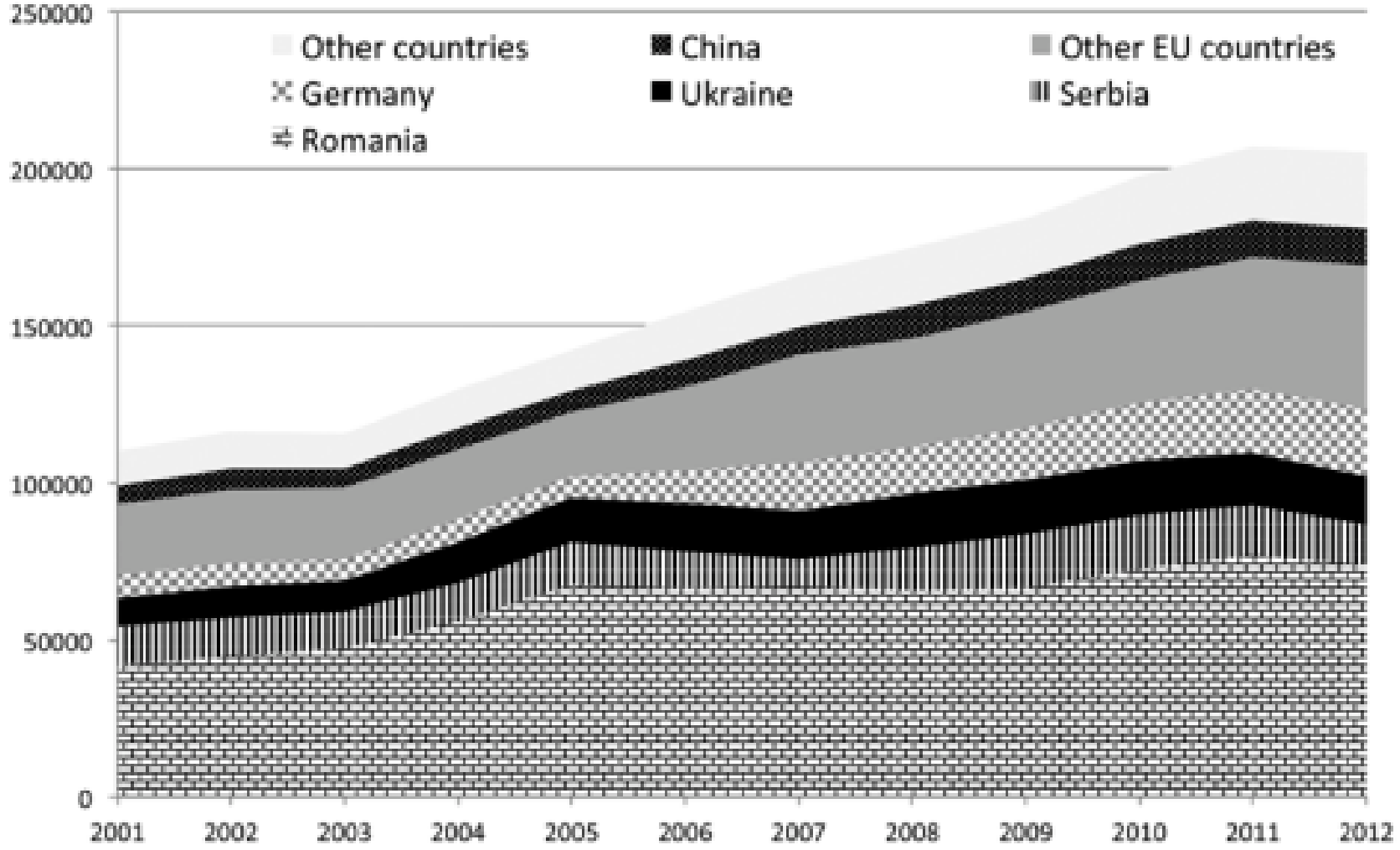


Figure 2. Foreign residents in Hungary by citizenship (2001-2012)

*Table 1. Number of foreign residents in Hungary from EaP countries*

	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>Ukraine</b>	8947	9835	9853	13096	13933	15337
<b>Moldova</b>	48	77	102	118	117	140
<b>Belarus</b>	77	88	82	109	118	136
<b>Georgia</b>	71	65	67	82	90	99
<b>Armenia</b>	73	64	59	99	96	127
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	11	21	20	25	27	32
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Ukraine</b>	15866	17289	17610	17241	16537	15362
<b>Moldova</b>	156	181	177	237	243	196
<b>Belarus</b>	139	150	155	185	189	168
<b>Georgia</b>	101	126	153	159	174	195
<b>Armenia</b>	115	114	127	128	139	149
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	52	42	44	71	71	103



# Geographic characteristics of migration from Ukraine

## Origin

Ukrainian citizens living in Hungary may be classified into three groups according to their original (Ukraine based) place of residence.

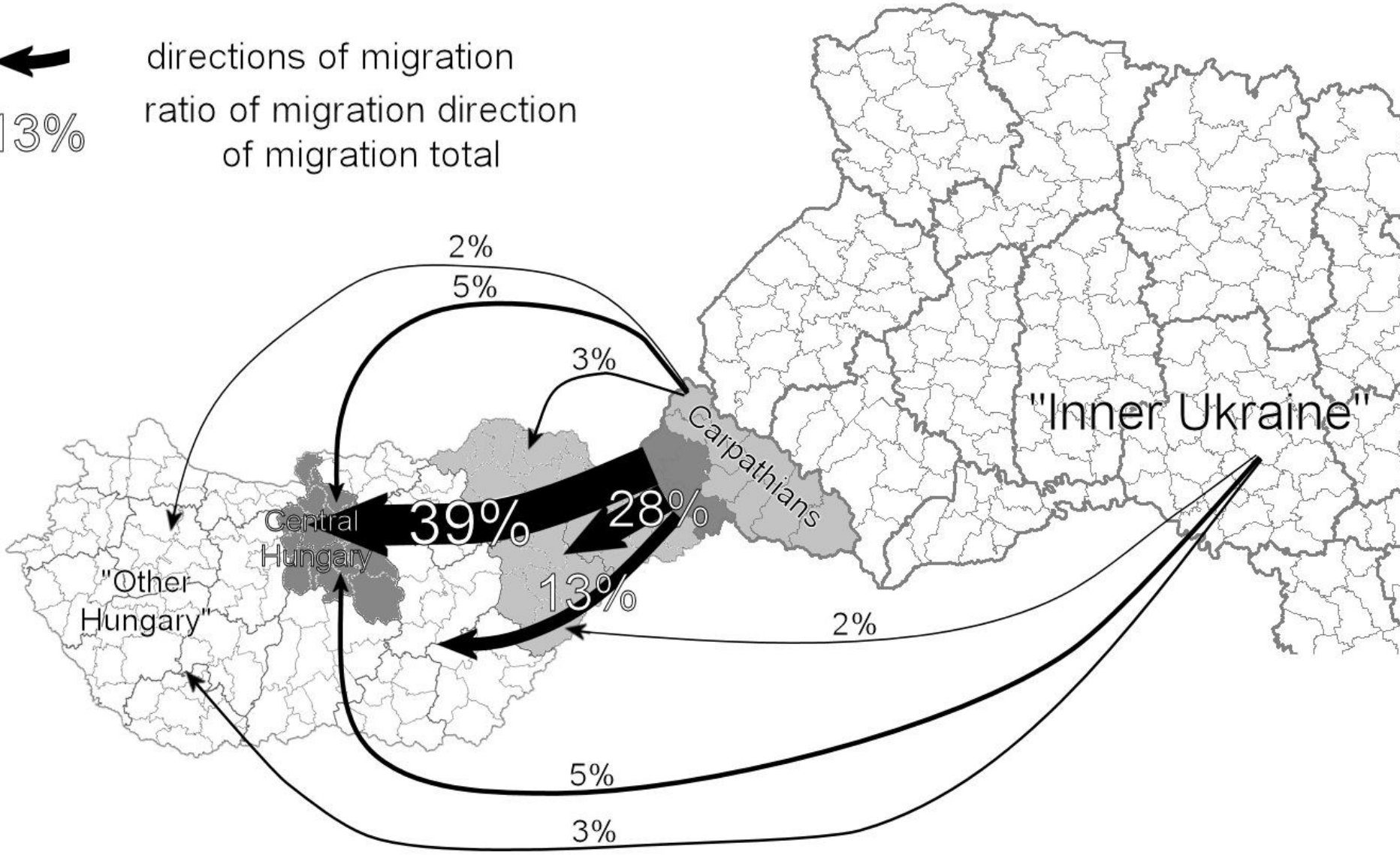
- 74% come from the border area districts of Berehovo, Mukachevo, Vynohradiv and Uzhorod. This area is the Transcarpathian Plain. Ethnic Hungarians show the highest number and proportion here in Ukraine.
- 16% comes from other parts of Transcarpathia.
- 10% comes from the inner areas of Ukraine, lying beyond the Carpathian Mountains, mainly from the metropolitan areas of Kyiv, Donetsk and Lviv.

## Destination

- Budapest, Nyíregyháza, Debrecen, Kisvárdá and Miskolc are the major destinations for settlement in Hungary; in the counties of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Pest and Hajdú-Bihar, where more than 77% of EaP migrants live.
- Those coming from Ukraine mainly prefer the agglomeration of the capital and the areas along the Ukrainian border.

← directions of migration  
ratio of migration direction of migration total

13%





# Social characteristics of migrants from Ukraine

## Age

Working age people account for the highest proportion of Ukrainian citizens living in Central Hungary and for the lowest proportion of those living in border areas, because the lack of job opportunities makes the border region less attractive for this age group.

Those aged between 19-24 and coming mainly from Transcarpathia's lowland areas account for a higher proportion in areas near the border and in Central Hungary. This group mainly pursues higher studies in Hungary. Nearly one fifth of Ukrainian citizens living in Hungary arrived to study.

## Skills and education

Among those from the inner areas of Ukraine – who mainly live in Budapest – university and college graduates account for the highest proportion, which results from the higher rate of urbanization of these groups.

In the Ukrainian group as a whole, manual jobs account for the highest proportion (25%). Intellectuals – in jobs that need higher qualifications – have the second highest proportion (23%).

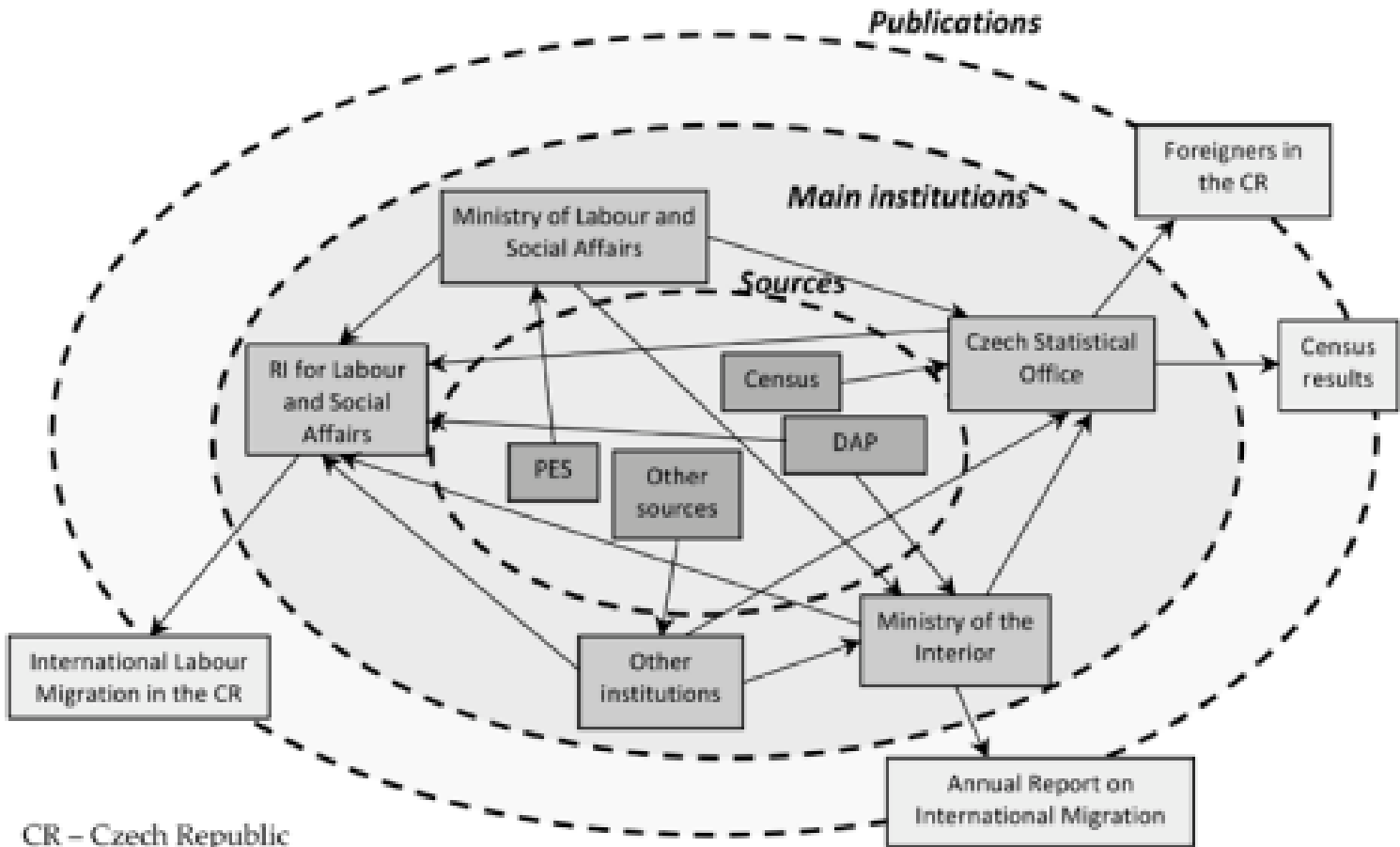
## Data sources and migration flows in the region

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# Data sources by category and country



CR – Czech Republic  
 PES – Public Employment Service  
 DAP – Directorate of the Alien Police of the Police of the Czech Republic  
 RI – Research Institute

Figure 1. Basic Scheme of Statistical Context of International Migration in the Czech Republic  
 Source: Drbohlav & Valenta, elaborated for the EASTMIG report (2014)

## Data sources by category and country

Table 1. Major data sources and available migration-related data content in Hungary

<i>Databases</i>	<b>Data source</b>	<b>Residence permit</b>	<b>Population register</b>	<b>Labour permit</b>	<b>Social security register</b>	<b>Tax register</b>	<b>Census</b>	<b>Labour Force Survey</b>
	<b>Data collector</b>	OIN	COAEPS	NES	NHIF	NTCA	HCSO	HCSO
	<b>Data type</b>	Admin	Admin	Admin	Admin	Admin	Survey (full)	Survey (sample)
<i>Does it contain data on migrants' characteristics?</i>	<b>Citizenship</b>	yes	Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
	<b>Place of birth</b>	no	Yes	no	no	no	yes	yes
	<b>Economic activity</b>	no	No	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<i>Does it contain data on these migrant groups?</i>	<b>Resident migrant</b>	yes	partially	no	no	no	no	no
	<b>Circular migrant</b>	no	No	partially	no	no	partially	no
	<b>Daily commuter</b>	no	No	yes	yes	yes	no	no
	<b>Regular migrant</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
	<b>Irregular migrant</b>	no	no	no	no	no	no	no

OIN – Office of Immigration and Nationality (BÁH)

COAEPS – Central Office for Administrative and Electronic Public Services (KEKKH)

NES – National Employment Service (NFSZ)

NHIF – National Health Insurance Fund (OEP)

NTCA – National Tax and Customs Administration (NAV)

HCSO – Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH)

Source: Hárs (2009), p. 18.

# Data sources by category and country

Country	Administrative data sources (collected by institutions of public administration)		Statistical data sources (collected by the Statistical Office)		
	Entry, stay and exit	Economic and social	Census type	Last census	LFS
<b>Belarus</b>	Department of Citizenship of the Ministry of Interior	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection	Traditional	2009	No
<b>Czech R.</b>	Ministry of the Interior, Directorate of the Alien Police	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	Registers combined with other sources	2011	Yes
<b>Georgia</b>	Ministry of Internal Affairs, Civil Registration Agency	Ministry of Education and Science, Central Bank	Traditional	2002	No
<b>Hungary</b>	Office of Immigration and Nationality, Central Office for Administrative and Electronic Public Services	National Employment Service, National Health Insurance Fund, National Tax and Customs Administration	Traditional	2011	Yes
<b>Moldova</b>	Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Information Technologies and Communications (Moldova), Migration Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Transnistria)	Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family	Traditional	2004	Yes
<b>Poland</b>	Ministry of Interior, Border Guard	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of National Education, Social Insurance Institution, Ministry of Finance	Registers combined with other sources	2011	Yes
<b>Slovakia</b>	Bureau of Border and Alien Police of the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport	Traditional	2011	Yes
<b>Ukraine</b>	State Department of Citizenship, Immigration and Registration of Individuals at the Ministry of Interior, State Border Service, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	State Employment Service	Traditional	2001	No

## 2. Data Sources on International Migration in the Eastern Partnership and the Visegrad Countries

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<sup>1</sup> Besides the input from EASTMIG project's country profile authors, the migratory data system analysis papers of three further projects are referred to here: CARIM-EAST, PROMINSTAT and SEEMIG. References are given by the name of the author(s) of the respective project outputs.

There are three types of drawbacks that hinder the completion of reliable datasets:

- 1) non-statistical
- 2) objective
- 3) operational

- the latter two defined by Drbohlav and Valenta (2014) as two separate aspects of the problems concerning gathering and processing statistical data.

## Non-statistical drawbacks

Related to historical, political, economic and cultural circumstances under which migration statistics operates, and the legislative bases thereof exists.

1. **Border issues:** the non-recognized states of Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia have their own management of borders
2. **Intra-EU mobility:** Countries within the Schengen area do not have a full coverage of entry and exit statistics
3. **Intra-CIS mobility:** free movement within the CIS, although recorded in border statistics, is not further refined according to length of stay since many intra-CIS migrants do not apply for permanent residence cards

## **Objective drawbacks** - *related to the methodology of data collection*

1. The data gathered by the respective data collector institutions (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour etc.) concerning foreign citizens is based on the numbers of issued permits and not the number of foreign citizens holding these permits – **overestimation of immigrant stock**
2. Limited interconnectivity of different registers, often actively promoted by advocates of data protection. Hungary: a citizen is registered under three different identification numbers, the identification document number, the tax identification number and the social security number – **incoherences of stock numbers from different data sources**
3. Institutional collection of data and its procedural circumstances. Administrative data collectors are not specifically interested in adding new items to their forms only for statistical purposes – **incoherences in categories**
4. Emigrant citizens should report their absence to different authorities which they rarely do. Deregistration has no incentives – **underestimation of emigrant stock**



**Operational drawbacks** - *connected with actual practices which contribute to the final incompleteness of the data*

1. No databases are able to comprise **unregistered residents and workers**. Informing the employment authority is a legal duty for employers, but there is a solid assumption that the duty is often not fulfilled, especially for EU/EEA citizens and seasonal workers from third countries.
2. Actual data entry, i.e. for the administrative forms and survey questionnaires, the **language issue** is more than problematic. Most forms are available in national languages only, causing problems for the migrant population with little or no knowledge of that language. Training for responsible staff and translation of the questionnaire can help.

## Conclusion and recommendations

**1. Non-statistical drawbacks:** consequences of the border and visa regimes - lie outside the scope of the present analysis.

**2. Objective drawbacks:**

- **Harmonization of definitions** in datasets in line with the Regulation (EC) No. 862/2007.
- **Harmonization of time periods of permit categories** (and their statistical nomenclature).
- Legal authorization for the **access of the statistical offices to administrative datasets**, either through one central database or through processes of interoperability.
- **Incentives for deregistration of emigrants** (e.g. tax exemptions).

**3. Operational drawbacks:**

- **Improvement of data entry** by trainings and provision of informative material, and by building partnership of statistical offices with main data collector institutions
- **Questionnaires** (incl. Census and LFS) **and forms should be translated to main immigrant languages** and at the Offices of Immigration mediators and translators should help the administrative process.
- New and innovative methods should be used for **boosting the migrant sample in representative surveys**.
- **Compilation of mirror statistics** for data on emigrants should be implemented on a regular and transnational basis. A network of statistical offices should be set up for this purpose.

Thank you for your attention!

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