Migration in Bulgaria

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Introduction:

Bulgaria, officially the Republic of Bulgaria, is a Balkan country situated in Southeast Europe. It is member of the European Union since 2007; furthermore, it is part of NATO (2004), and of the Council of Europe (1992). Bulgaria is also a founding state of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and has taken a seat on the UN Security Council three times. Its market economy is part of the European Single Market; nonetheless, Bulgaria has not adopted Euro and its official currency is the Bulgarian Lev (BGN).

This research focuses on the analysis of data related to the migration phenomenon in Bulgaria. In the first part, we have analysed some useful information in order to have an overview of the country, mainly from the point of view of population and economic level, as well as the welfare of the population. In the second part, we focused on migration stocks and flows data, these are analysed from different points of view: total number of migrants, migrants by age, gender, origin and reason for migration, migrants as percentage of total population. Finally, the last part is dedicated to deepening the data that allow us to understand the level of migrants' integration in Bulgarian society. Therefore, we are analysing data on migrants' educational level, on their level of employment; after all, a brief part is dedicated to the distribution of wealth and the risk of poverty among migrants.

The entire research (tables, charts and comments) is based on data from Eurostat, the World

Bank website, the United Nations database, and the Republic of Bulgaria National statistical Institute.

1. Background information

Total population	7,050,034
Population growth	- 0.72 %
GNP per capita	21,220[1]
Human Development Index Ranking	0.813
Unemployment rate of total population last year	2.6%
Youth unemployment last year	12.7%
Total population projection for 2050	5,564,146

Table 1: Bulgaria's background information

Sources: Eurostat, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/publications/statistical-reports

United Nation Development Programme, http://hdr.undp.org/en

World Bank, https://data.worldbank.org/country/bulgaria

According to Eurostat, Bulgaria's population in 2018 was estimated to be 7,050,034; nonetheless, the country is experiencing a declining phase. Since 1986 the yearly population growth rate is negative, witnessing a decrease in the total population. Between 2017 and 2018 the county's population has grown at a rate of -0.72 percent; according to the United Nations' estimates, population will continue to decline also in the coming years, so that in 2050 the total population is expected to be 5,564,146. In 2018 Bulgaria ranked number 105 in the list of countries by population and number 16 taking into account 28EU countries.

In 2018 Bulgaria's Gross Domestic Product counted for 55,182.2 million Euros, it has grown by 3.1% compared to the previous year, representing the 0.7 percent of 28EU total GDP (based on million purchasing power standards) at current prices. Since 2011 final consumption is the main factor for GDP growth, whereas the trade balance has a negative impact. With regard to the Gross National Product: in the first quarter of 2018 it counted for 13,581 million Euros (at market prices), in the same period the GNP per capita PPP was 21,220 (current international $). Though Bulgaria GNP per capita fluctuated substantially in recent years, through 1990 - 2018 period it increased by about 120.0 percent.

[1] *PPP, current international $. The data refers to 2017.*

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Bulgaria's Human Development Index value for 2017 is 0.813, positioning the country in the very high human development category: number 51 out of 189 countries and territories. Between 1990 and 2018, Bulgaria's HDI value increased from 0.694 to 0.813, an increase of 17.1 percent; indeed, in the same period the three-basic dimension of human development (long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living), all increased.

Unemployment rate of total population in January 2018 was 3.2 percent, female unemployment was 2.6 percent whereas male unemployment was 3.8 percent. All values decreased compared to the previous year (15 percent). Nonetheless, values are higher if unemployment percentage of active population is taken into account: in 2018 it counted for 5.3 percent. However, values referred to this category are also decreasing. As regard total youth unemployment (for which an age below 25 years is taken into account), it has been calculated to be 12.7 percent.

2. Migration stock and flows in the last 10 years

2.1. Total number of international migrants residing in the country:

In the last eight years, the number of international migrants residing in Bulgaria has increased almost tenfold.

[Pop_5.7_Migration_DR] retrieved in http://www.nsi.bg/en/content/6697/international-migration-age-and-sex

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number	3518	4722	14103	18570	26615	25223	21241	25597	29559

2.2. International migrant stock as a percentage of the total population.

These figures are obtained by dividing the number of international migrants by the mid-year population of that year of reference, expressed on 1000 people. The outcome indicates the number of international migrants per 1000 people.

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Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Int. migr. stock per 1000 people in Bulgaria	0.0467	0.0643	0.1930	0.2556	0.3684	0.3514	0.2980	0.3617	0.4207

2.3. Immigration stock by sex group, age, country of birth and reason for migration.

[Pop_5.7_Migration_DR] retrieved in http://www.nsi.bg/en/content/6697/international-migration-age-and-sex
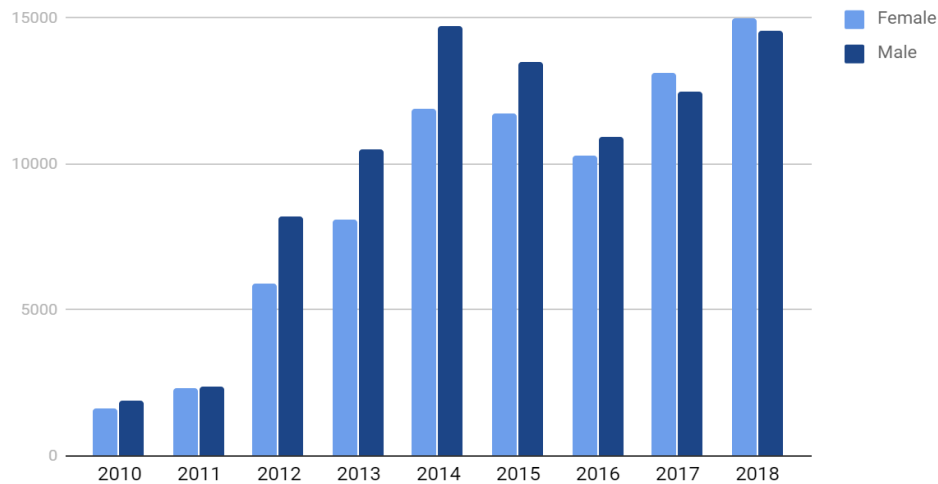
combined with

[Pop_5.8_Migration_DR] retrieved in http://www.nsi.bg/en/content/13040/international-migration-age-and-citizenship-migrants

	Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
sex	female	1608	2320	5921	8074	11903	11730	10300	13126	14973
	male	1910	2402	8182	10496	14712	13493	10941	12471	14586
age	0-19	621	1017	1964	2488	4885	4337	3554	5256	5605
	20-34	731	1419	3960	6365	7250	6674	5241	6824	7757
	35-64	1831	1959	6949	7977	11648	11701	10025	10929	12923
	65+	335	327	1230	1740	2832	2511	2421	2588	3274

Considering the following graph, it is noticeable that from 2010 to 2016 immigrant population comprised more men than women. From 2017 the trend reversed, and in 2018 there have been about 400 more women than men composing the immigration stock in Bulgaria.

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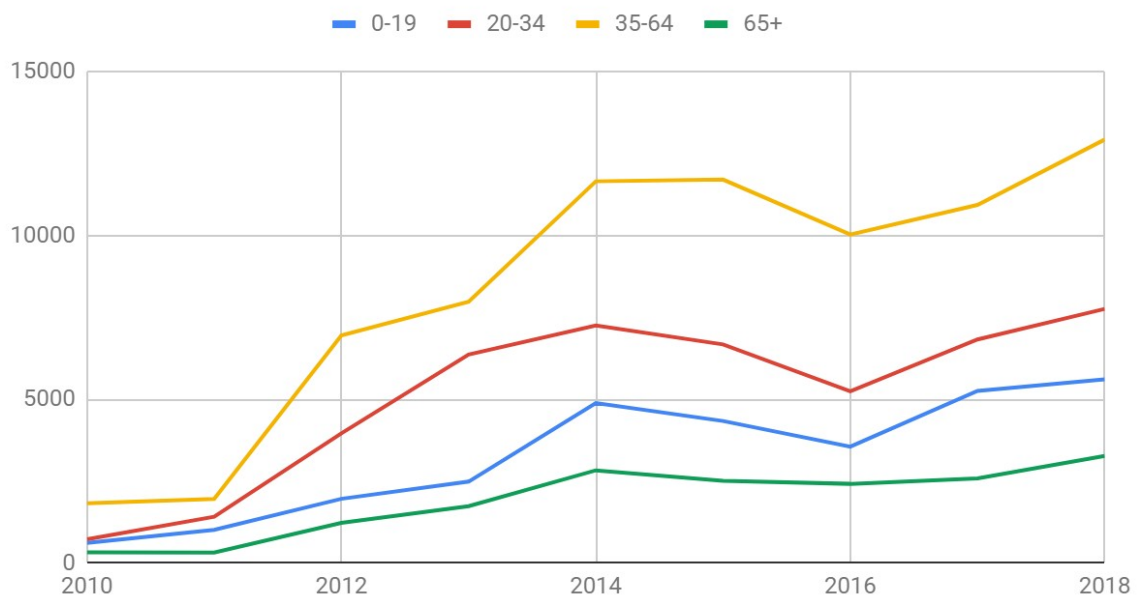Erasmus+ Programme
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Immigration stock by sex group

Looking at the figures concerning the composition of immigrants by age, we notice that the predominant component is composed by people aged 35 to 64 years. Older people are the less represented in the share of immigrant population. Minors, i.e. people aged under 18 years, represent now about one fifth of the total population of immigrants in Bulgaria.
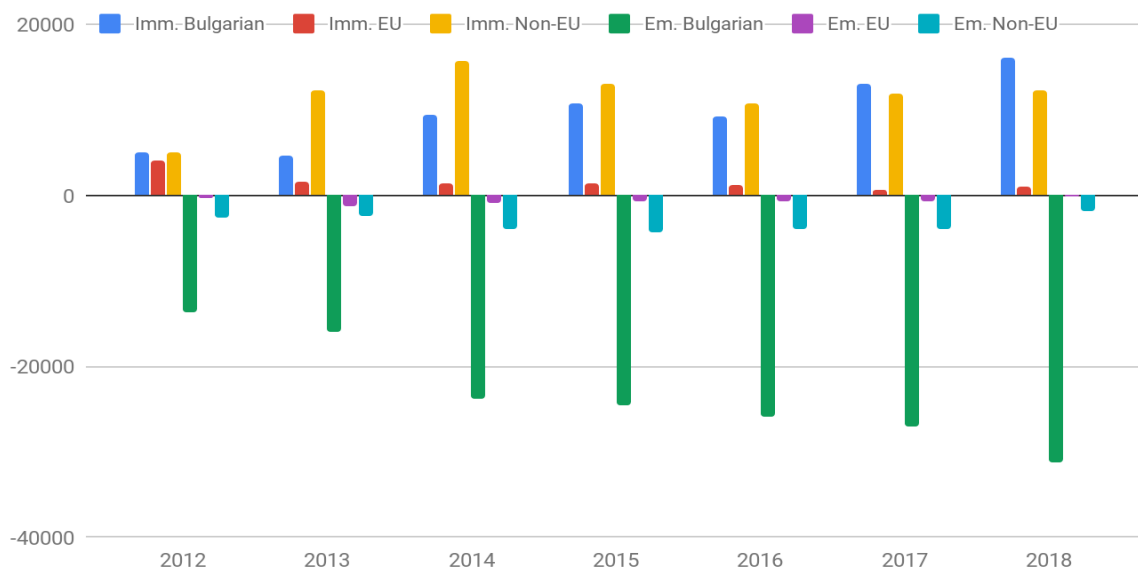
Immigration stock by age

2.4. Immigration by citizenship

If we also consider Bulgarians who come back in Bulgaria after being emigrated for 12 or

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more months as immigrant, we can look at the overall composition of immigration in Bulgaria by citizenship. There are three groups that are considered: Bulgarian, European Union citizens,, non-EU citizens. Over the period 2012-2018, we can distinguish two phases: from 2012 to 2016, immigration from non EU country was higher than immigration of Bulgarians. In the last two years the trend reversed. Anyway, EU migration in Bulgaria has always been negligible, except in 2012.

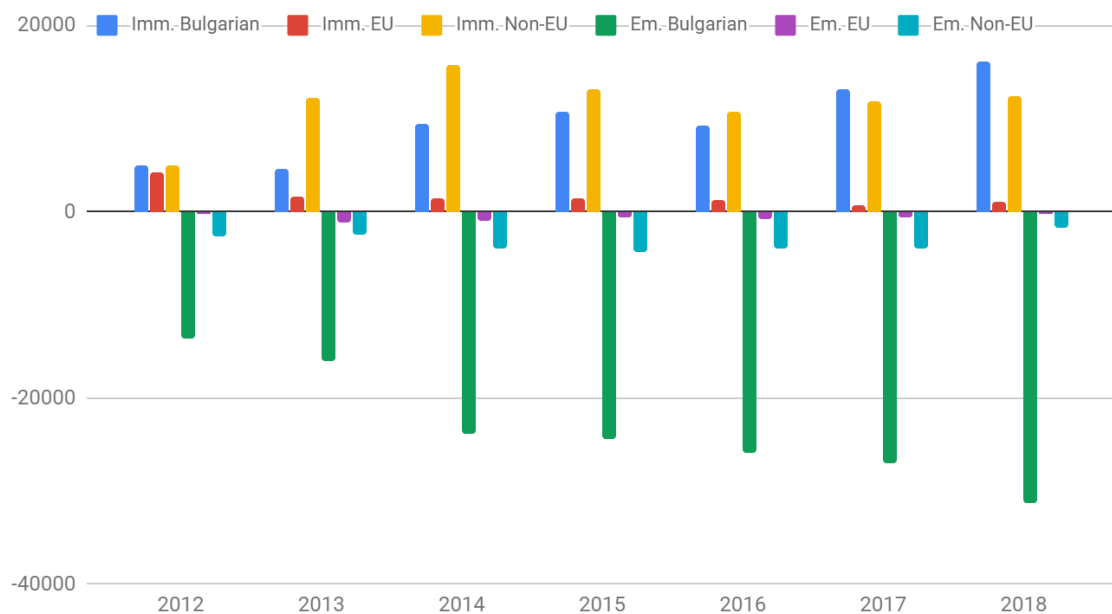**Immigration/Emigration by citizenship, 2012-2018**

2.5. Outflows and Inflows

Considering the graphs, we can observe that Bulgaria migration is characterized by more outflows than inflows. Thus, it can be considered a sending country, instead of a destination one. Bulgarian share of migrants leaving the country is the highest among the different nationalities, while regarding migrants entering in Bulgaria we have two different trends: from 2012 to 2016, number of non European migrants was higher than Bulgarian immigrants. In 2017 the trend reversed, and currently there are more Bulgarian people entering the Bulgaria than non EU immigrants.

Immigration/Emigration by citizenship, 2012-2018

[t_migr_emi] retrieved in https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tps00177&plugin=1

2.6 Immigration stock by reason for migration

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Family	2591	2906	3240	3615
Education	911	874	1067	1267
Remunerated activities	304	2261	276	1822
Other reasons	4989	3554	3359	4254

These data, retrieved from the National Statistical institute of Bulgaria, illustrate the different types of residence permits released between 2014 and 2017. Family permits, i.e. permits issued for family reunification, are the larger part of all the certificates, together with the permits for other reasons (here several specific reasons are included).

3. Migrants integration indicators

Bulgaria has the most restrictive naturalisation policies and despite EU law when migrants
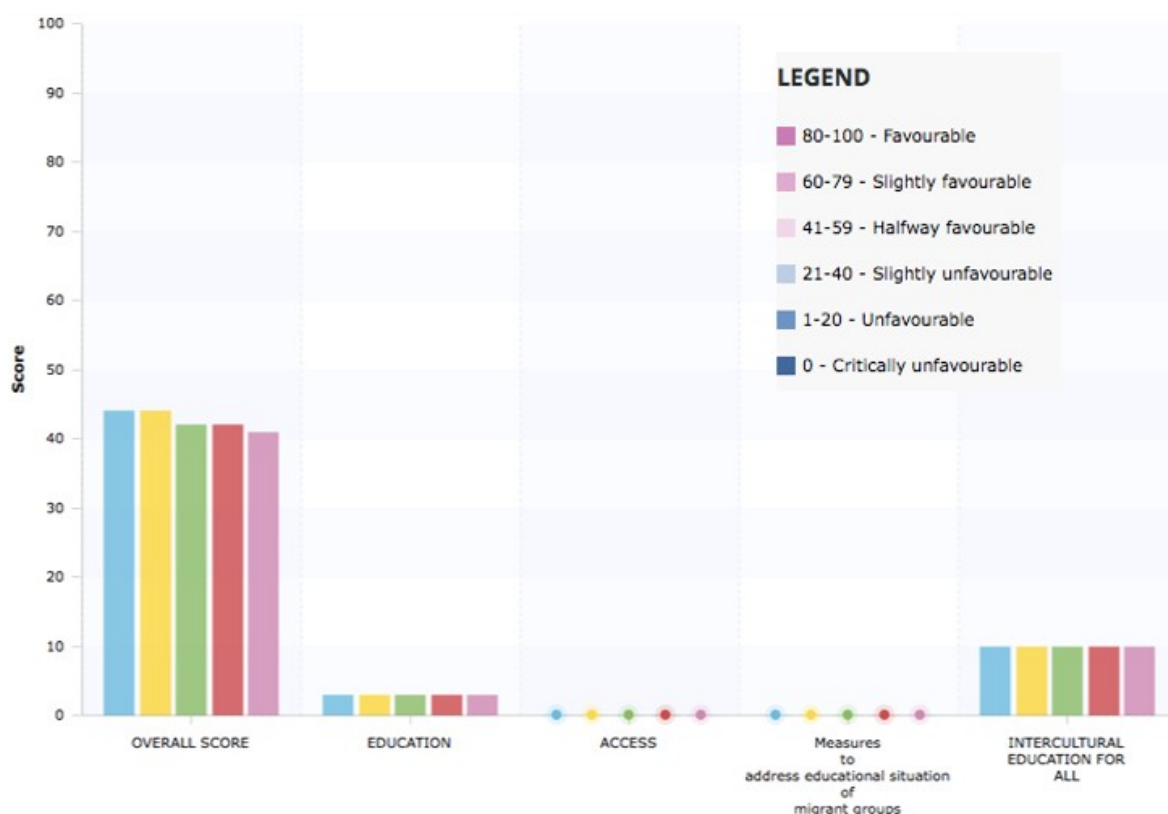
have to renew their document they face wide administrative discretion even if they meet all the institutional criterias. This is a problem for integration processes especially for non-EU residents without ethnic bulgarian roots.

3.1. Migrants by educational levels

There is a low reliability of observations in the field of migrants' integration. School system in Bulgaria isn't prepared to welcome and give opportunities to migrants. The number of foreign-born pupils remains very small (0.2% of <15 years old in 2014 - Eurostat) as a new and small country of immigration and they face many problems:

- Immigrant pupils have extremely limited access to the school system and cannot benefit from any measures of support for their specific needs
- The school system creates barriers to access for certain categories of immigrant pupils and largely ignores the specific needs and opportunities that they bring to the classroom
- Lack of a nationwide framework for responding to the needs of newcomer pupils with accompanying measures and funding to increase these schools' capacities

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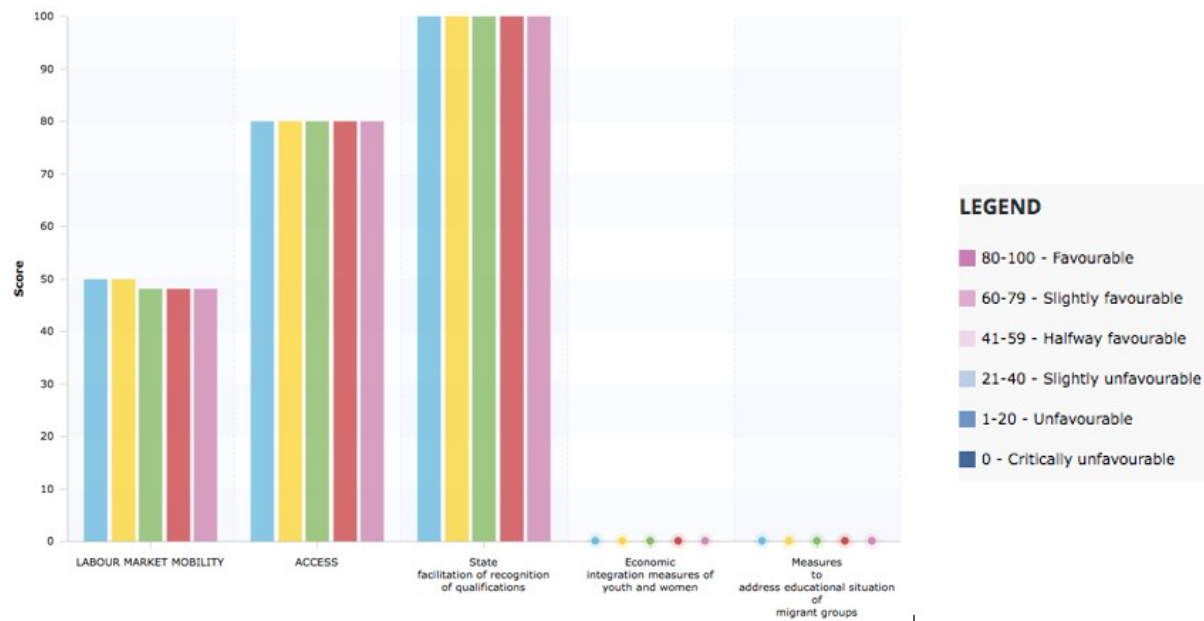Erasmus+ Programme
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As we can see from that graphic reporting MIPEX data from 2010 to 2014 the education level and the intercultural education indicator are very low. There are no data about access levels and measures to address educational situation of migrant groups.

3.2. Labour force participation in the last 10 years

Immigrants in Bulgaria do not figure in the general statistical data on employment rates.

even if Bulgaria is not yet a country of net immigration, the number of newcomers has risen in recent years especially due to labour migration of highly skilled workers: engineers and technical staff. With the exception of russians and other immigrants from the post-soviet countries, who are well integrated, the majority of migrant wage workers are mostly engaged in ethnically dominated enterprises. Most migrant workers are employed in private businesses within their community (Staykova and Trifonova, 2010) rather than working for Bulgarian companies. Trade and restaurant sectors employ the majority of wage workers, especially Chinese and Arab immigrants.Construction and light industry offer jobs for some groups of labour migrants – Turkish, Chinese and Vietnamese. Call centres represent a recent form of employment for French- and English-speaking immigrants, most commonly African immigrants. The number of work permits for self-employed immigrants is practically nonexistent. There are a number of immigrant businessmen or investors who operate as Bulgarian employers, having obtained a long-term residence permit with the biggest share coming from Turkey, followed by Russia and other countries in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, the United States, Macedonia, and China.

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http://www.mipex.eu/bulgaria

As we can see from that graphic reporting MIPEX data from the year 2010 to 2014 labour market mobility indicator are almost stable towards the years at a "halfway favourable" level. Access and state facilitation of recognition of qualifications indicators are stable towards the years at a "favourable" level.

3.3. Employment in the last 10 years by sex group, age, country of birth and reason for migration

Labour status distribution of the population by sex, age, migration status and educational attainment levelfound in: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfso_14lel&lang=en

GEO/WSTATUS	Population	Employed persons	Unemployed persons	Inactive persons
Belgium	100,0	61,9	5,6	32,5
Bulgaria	100.0	60,8	7,9	31,2
Austria	100,0	71,1	4,3	24,6
Romania	100,0	61,2	4,6	34,2
Slovenia	100,0	64,5	6,8	28,8
Switzerland	100,0	78,8	4,1	17,1

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According to the Eurostat, general data on employment in Bulgaria show a 60.8% of employed people versus a 7.9% of unemployed people, while the 31.2% of the population is inactive. The employment rate is therefore not too high nor low compared to the other countries, thus being about average in the European Union.

Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%)

found in: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa_ergan&lang=en

GEO/TIME	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
European Union - 28 countries	64,4	64,1	64,2	64,1	64,1	64,8	65,6	66,6	67,7	68,6
Belgium	61,6	62,0	61,9	61,8	61,8	61,9	61,8	62,3	63,1	64,5
Bulgaria	62,6	59,8	58,4	58,8	59,5	61,0	62,9	63,4	66,9	67,7
Italy	57,4	56,8	56,8	56,6	55,5	55,7	56,3	57,2	58,0	58,5
Austria	70,3	70,8	71,1	71,4	71,4	71,1	71,1	71,5	72,2	73,0
Romania	58,6	60,2	59,3	60,2	60,1	61,0	61,4	61,6	63,9	64,8
Slovenia	67,5	66,2	64,4	64,1	63,3	63,9	65,2	65,8	69,3	71,1
Switzerland	79,0	77,3	78,3	78,5	78,4	78,8	79,2	79,6	79,8	80,1
Montenegro	:	:	45,8	47,0	47,1	50,4	51,4	52,0	53,1	54,7

The general employment rate in Bulgaria has increased from 62.6% in 2009 to 67.7% in 2018. The employment rate of men has increased from 66.9% in 2009 to 71.5% in 2018 while the employment rate of women has increased from 58.3% in 2009 to 63.9 % in 2018. It can be concluded that the employment rate in Bulgaria has increased steadily in the last 10 years both for men and women, although it remains higher for women.

It proved quite difficult to collect information about the employment of migrants because of the lack of statistics for the country. Moreover, the data, when existing, are often unreliable.

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Activity rate by sex, age, migration status, citizenship and educational attainment level found in: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfso_14lactr&lang=en

GEO/MGSTATUS	Total	Native-born with native background	Native-born with mixed background and foreign background (second generation of immigrants)	Foreign-born (first generation of immigrants)
Belgium	67,5	69,4	59,1	65,1
Bulgaria	68,8	68,8	73,8	63,4
Italy	63,6	63,1	48,3	70,0
Austria	75,4	76,6	70,6	73,1
Romania	65,8	65,9	70,1	:
Slovenia	71,2	71,2	74,3	68,4
Switzerland	82,9	84,6	80,5	81,5

The average activity rate in Bulgaria is 68.8%, which also corresponds to the activity rate of the native-born with native parents. It is interesting that the higher activity rate is the one of the native-born with mixed background and foreign background, that is the second generation of immigrants, with 73.8%. On the other hand, the foreign-born, that is the first generation of immigrants, has the lower activity rate: 63.4%. We can conclude that there are significant differences between the activity rate of native-born and foreign-born, with the latters being in disadvantage compared to the natives.
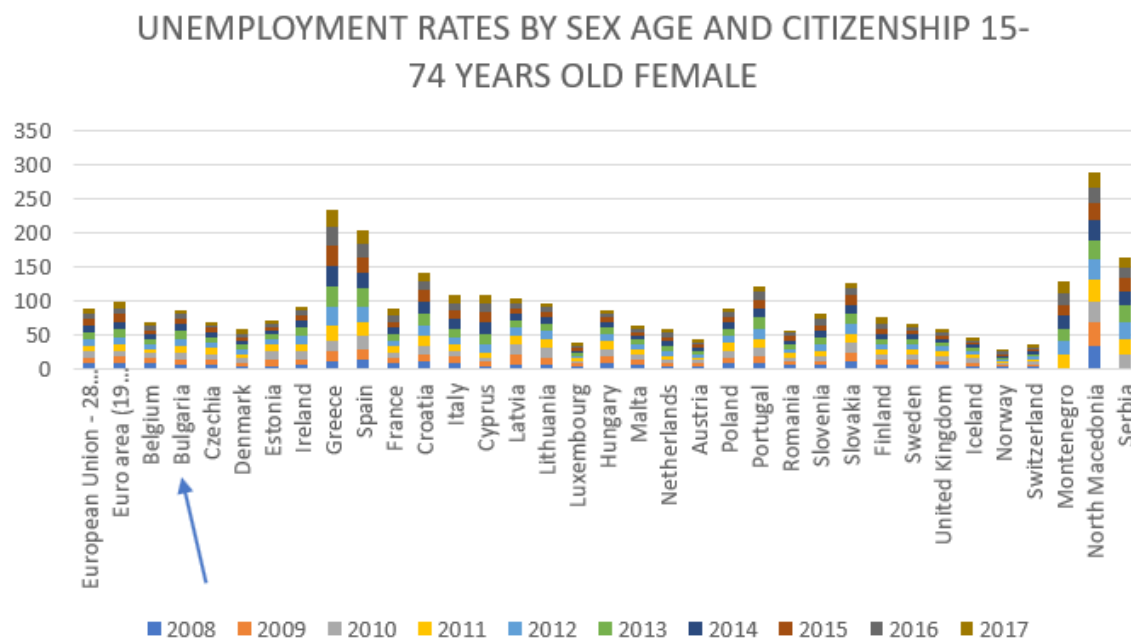
3.4 Unemployment in the last 10 years by sex group, age, country of birth and reason for migration

The following graphs show the unemployment rates of total population in BG. The total population unemployment rate is little higher than the European average. Moreover, there is a gender different unemployment of -1,1% for the female following the European trend.
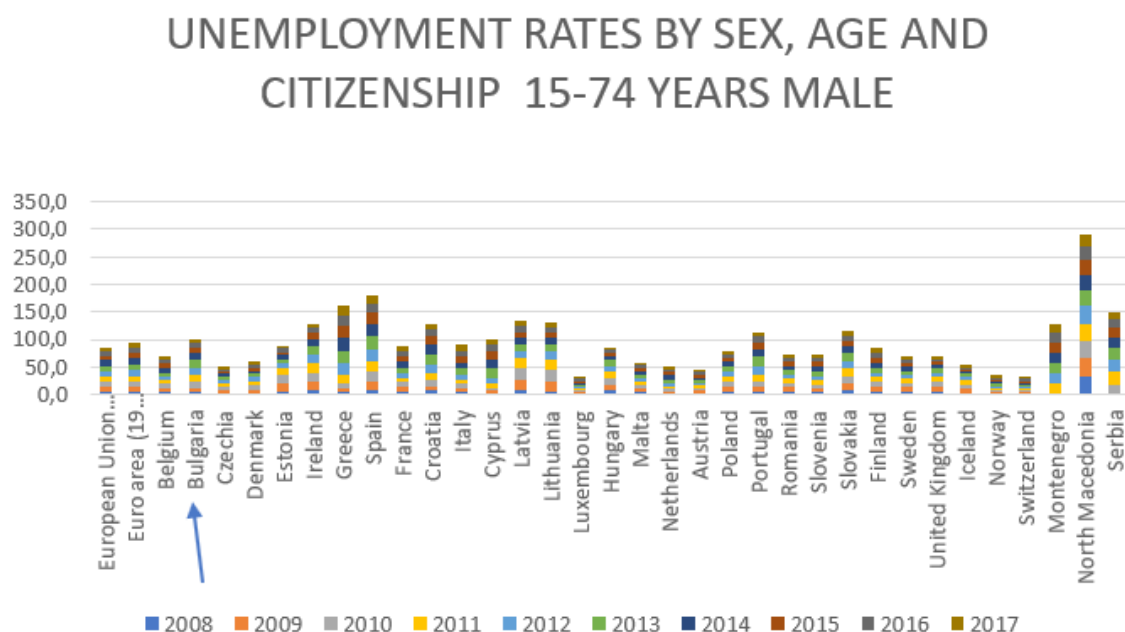
The major problem is the high unemployment of citizens less than 24 years that is around

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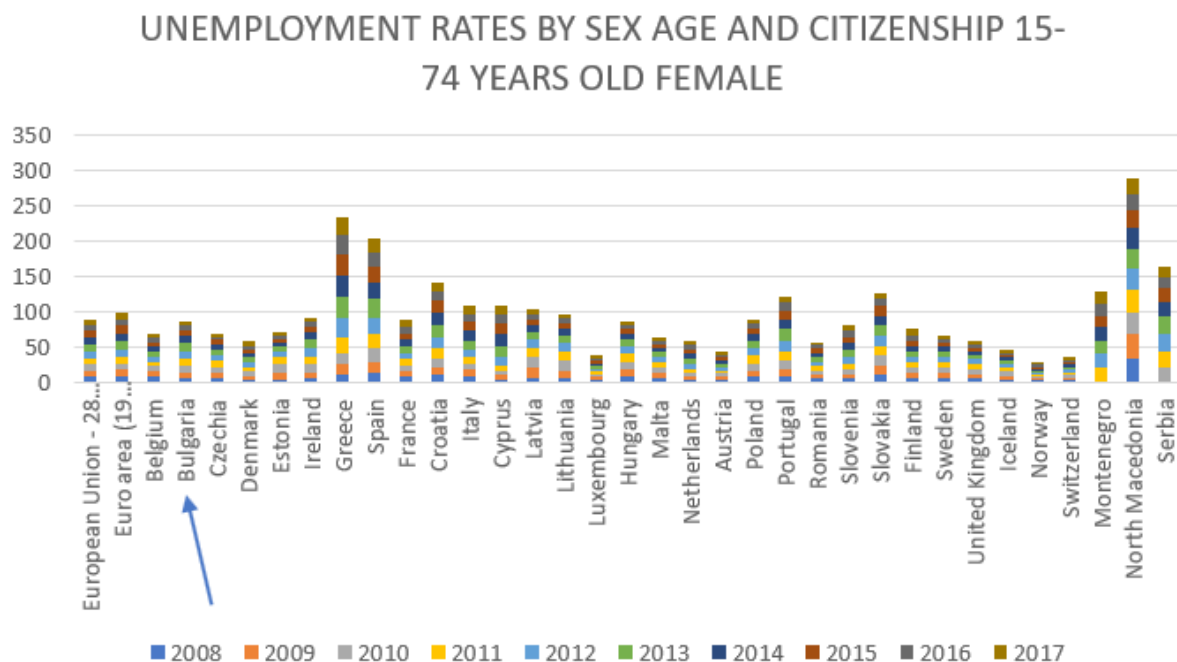of the European Union

13% with a gender difference about 3%, the highest gender gap in Bulgarian unemployment. These because BG girls start working very late and have more difficulties to find a job. Therefore, unemployment of population 25 years and over doesn't show this gender difference.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY SEX AGE AND CITIZENSHIP 15-74 YEARS OLD FEMALE

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=ilc_di15

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY SEX, AGE AND CITIZENSHIP 15-74 YEARS MALE

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=ilc_di15

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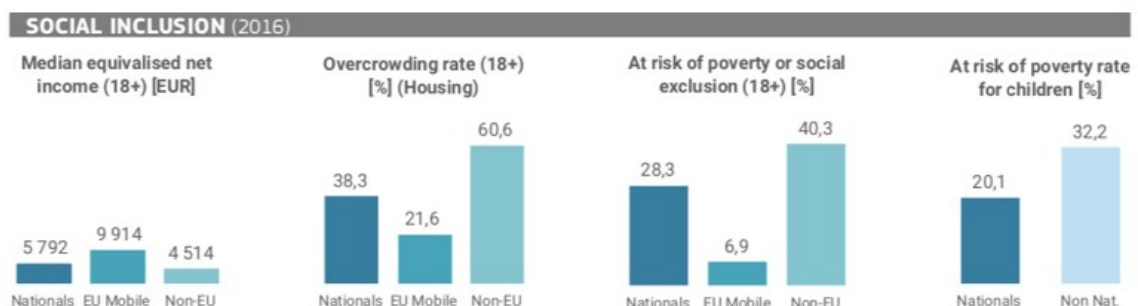## UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY SEX AGE AND CITIZENSHIP 15-74 YEARS OLD FEMALE

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=ilc_di15

3.5 Social inclusion: income distribution and monetary poverty, risk of poverty

Immigrant integration is still not a priority for the BG government. Therefore, little has changed since the first MIPEX evaluation of Bulgaria in 2010. The minor changes that have occurred since 2010 are mainly in areas regulated by EU law – family reunification, long-term residence and anti-discrimination. BG has attracted a very small number of non-EU citizens (0.5% of total migrants), this situation in common in states like HU and LT that don't have a strong social inclusion program for migrants.
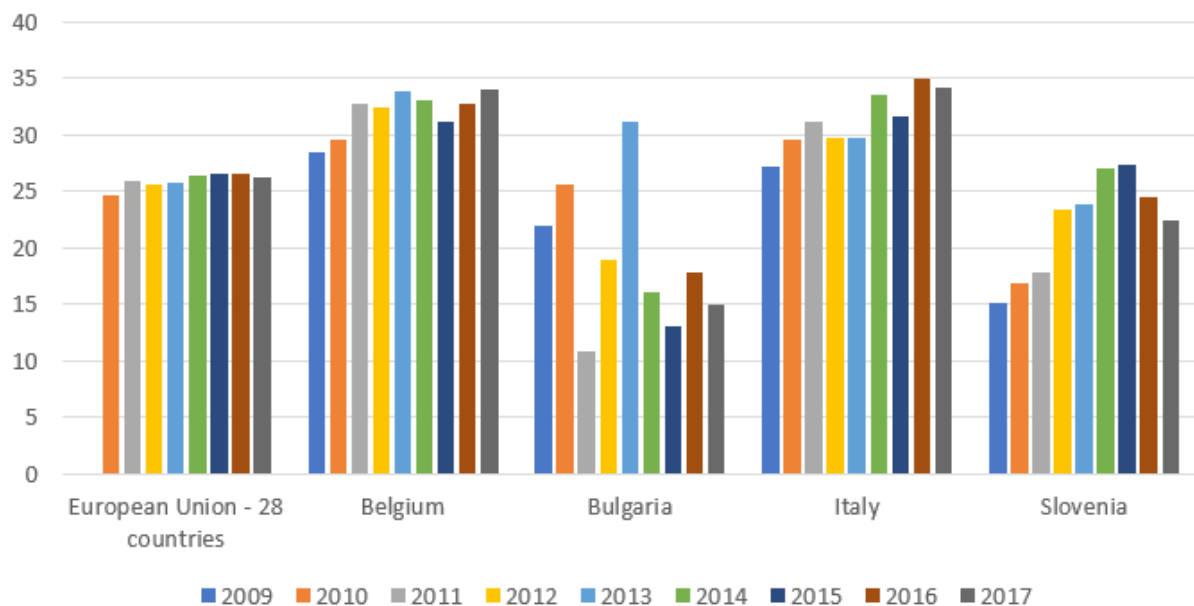
Therefore, the government does not invest efforts in developing integration policies responding to the needs of the newcomers and continues to target mainly long-term residents, which have already integrated in the country. [Mipex 2015] Source: Atlas of migration 2018

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At-risk-of-poverty rate by broad group of country of birth (population aged 18 and over) [ilc_li32]

The following graphs show the risk of poverty for foreign country people in BG during the period 2009-2017. This index shows an average of 20% of risk of poverty with a peak in 2013 of 36% due to a period of economic crisis and the arrivals of a high number of migrants.

Source: Eurostat - foreign country 18 years old over (total)

3.6. Income distribution

The income of migrants has increased from 3.049 in 2009 to 4.689 in 2017, while the income of natives has increased from 2.844 in 2009 to 3.645 in 2017. Although the income has generally increased, it remains higher for migrants rather than for natives and it is generally quite lower than the average in the European Union.

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Income of migrants:https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=ilc_di15

GEO/TIME	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
European Union - 27 countries (2007-2013)	13.222	13.095	13.358	14.373	14.317	14.568	15.175	15.532	14.864
Belgium	14.798	15.405	14.905	15.008	16.625	15.607	16.427	17.203	17.591
Bulgaria	3.049	3.296	3.368	3.672	3.521	4.090	4.362	3.804	4.689
Italy	12.106	11.449	11.861	12.136	11.625	11.506	11.594	11.063	11.835
Austria	15.539	16.267	16.329	17.038	17.488	16.828	17.057	16.361	18.296
Slovenia	8.695	8.007	8.679	8.142	8.281	7.624	8.680	8.256	9.024
Switzerland	26.584	28.402	31.822	36.578	38.949	36.526	37.210	41.536	:

Income of natives:https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=ilc_di15

GEO/TIME	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
European Union - 27 countries (2007-2013)	15.186	15.405	15.474	15.983	15.960	16.317	16.664	17.049	17.059
Belgium	19.940	20.008	20.468	20.773	22.113	22.370	22.387	22.739	23.334
Bulgaria	2.844	3.070	2.956	2.894	2.972	3.403	3.367	3.216	3.645
Italy	16.298	16.867	16.699	16.841	16.604	16.619	16.750	17.380	17.567
Austria	21.595	22.370	22.778	23.427	23.632	24.993	25.099	25.690	26.877
Romania	2.266	2.114	2.193	2.143	2.117	2.260	2.410	2.533	2.845
Slovenia	12.006	11.859	12.185	12.259	11.978	12.078	12.475	12.465	12.891
Switzerland	31.504	32.591	35.983	41.604	42.844	40.433	41.590	46.994	:

Sitography:

- Atlas for migration, https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/atlas-migration-2018
- Eurostat, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat?
- National Statistic Institute of Bulgaria, http://www.nsi.bg/en
- United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home.html
- World Bank, https://data.worldbank.org