

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

Grant Agreement JUST/2014/RCIT/AG/CITI/7269



PERSPECTIVES ON FREE MOVEMENT:

Drivers and barriers to free movement in receiving countries

Cross country report





Disclaimer: This report has been produced with the financial support of the Citizenship Programme of the European Union. The contents are the sole responsibility of the project partners and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

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Chapter 1- Drivers of young European citizens

This chapter will examine the drivers for movement within the European Union by young EU nationals. It will first explore the situation of EU nationals who have already moved to another country and the factors that played a part in their decision to move. Secondly, it will investigate the motivations of nationals of receiving countries who are planning or considering to move. Thirdly, it will look at country-specific aspects which have drawn EU movers to a particular country and review these and the previous findings in the fourth and final section.

The analysis here is based on the national reports of the receiving countries (RCs) and mixed countries (MCs): Belgium (BE), France (FR), Germany (DE), Netherlands (NL), United Kingdom (UK), Austria (AT), Spain (ES), Italy (IT) and Cyprus (CY).

1. Drivers that led EU citizens to move

Focusing on the interviews conducted with young EU citizens in receiving and mixed countries, this section will analyse and compare the different drivers which led these individuals to move to another country. In total, 258 movers were interviewed in the following RCs and MCs: BE (32), DE (41), FR (35), NL (37), UK (38); AT (14), CY (24), ES (25), IT (12).

1.1 Work and employment - push and pull factor

In the majority of cases, a combination of push and pull factors contributed to a young person's decision to move to one of the receiving or mixed countries examined in this project. By far the most important drivers are work and employment-related issues. This concerns both push factors in the home country (unemployment and lack of career opportunities, low wages, poor working conditions etc.) and pull factors in the destination country (the prospect of employment, job opportunities, higher wages etc.). In all the receiving countries, "work" was the most frequently cited as well as the primary reason for moving by the EU movers interviewed.

In Belgium and France, nearly 50% of EU movers interviewed moved because of work. While unemployment frequently acted as a push factor to leave the home country, family members and partners were a pull factor to move to Belgium or France. In France, 17 of 35 interviewees (48%) moved either because of unemployment and lack of job opportunities in the home country and/or due to a job offer in France or the hope of finding employment. In Belgium, 53% (17 of 32) of incoming movers reported that employment was their main motivation. Better job opportunities and higher wages on the one hand, and economic difficulties and lack of career prospects in the home country on the other hand were also a key driver of EU citizens moving to Germany and the UK. In Germany, these drivers were cited by incoming movers of all nationalities but it was mostly persons from Italy, Spain, Poland and Austria who stated that their motives for moving to Germany were primarily related to employment. Over 70% of EU movers interviewed in the UK (28 of 38) said that their main reason for migrating was to get a better job and live a better life. In the Netherlands, movers described their motivation for coming to the Netherlands for work-related reasons differently depending on their country of origin. Movers from Eastern Europe (particularly Poland) interviewed in the Netherlands mainly mentioned unemployment in their home country and low wages as reasons for moving (push factors). Movers from Southern Europe (particularly Greece) on the other hand tended to speak of pull factors such the prospect of finding employment in the Netherlands, career development opportunities and better working hours.

Work was also one of the key drivers in mixed countries. In Austria, 43% of incoming movers came because of work. Similar to the Netherlands, one can distinguish between two different groups of employment-driven movers. The first group consists of movers who had a job offer in Austria, such as a German interviewee who stated that she would never have moved without an employment contract. The second group moved because of a lack of employment opportunities in their home country (in general or appropriate to their qualification). They tend to have little or no knowledge of the German language and moved without a concrete job offer and thus frequently end up working in low skilled jobs. These movers do not tend to come from crisis-affected countries in Southern Europe but from Eastern European states, in particular Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. This type of movement can also be observed in Cyprus and is described as “force of circumstance mobile workers” in the Cypriot national report. “Force of circumstance mobile workers” refers to low-skilled movers from Eastern Europe and Greece who are driven by poor economic conditions in their home countries and higher wages in Cyprus. These individuals feel they have no choice but to move and look for work in Cyprus in order to secure their livelihood and survival.

In Spain, economic reasons including finding a job and higher salaries were cited as key drivers mainly by movers from Bulgaria, Romania, Italy and Portugal. A mover from Italy who was interviewed in Spain said, “The Italian economic crisis is deeper than the Spanish one and there were more opportunities in Spain” (IT23, Italian, female, 25-29), indicating that economic drivers are always relative to the mover’s country of origin.

1.2 A better life, more opportunities and higher living standards

The hope for a better life, higher living standards and more opportunities is in most cases closely linked to economic factors such as employment and income.

In Spain, interviewees from Bulgaria, Romania, Italy and Portugal all shared the same primary reason for moving to Spain, namely the economic situation and a better life than in their home countries. IT7, male, 30-35, said, “*I came to Spain for economic and work-related reasons [and] because taxes are lower and the quality of life is better.*” However, when talking about “a better life” it was not always clear whether interviewees were referring to their personal work and financial situation or to the economy of their home country in general, or both. This was, for instance, the case in Italy, where 11 of 12 incoming movers said they were primarily motivated by the prospect of better life opportunities in Italy, but did not further specify what they meant by that. Meanwhile, in some receiving countries “a better life” was mentioned as a separate driver and in relation to things such as the environment, infrastructure and children. For instance, an interviewee in Germany (C (No.5), male, 35 years, RO) complained about the poor infrastructure in his home country of Romania such as derelict and broken buildings and a general lack of commitment to protecting the environment. A number of interviewees in the Netherlands and the UK stated that they moved to the Netherlands/the UK in order for themselves and their children to have a better future and more opportunities. A Bulgarian female interviewed in the UK said, “*The situation in my home country is not very good that is why I have chosen to come to England for the future of my children*” (UK18). Similarly, two Spanish females in the UK (UK12, female, 24 years and 33-year-old female) said that they had decided to look for better opportunities and a better life abroad due to the “*bad situation in Spain*”, which even drove one of the two into bankruptcy. 3 interviewees in the Netherlands said that the future of their children was at the forefront of their mind when they made the decision to move and is also one of the reasons why they intend to stay in the Netherlands, “*We’ll do everything that is good for them*” (NL19).

1.3 Family, friends and partners

Family members, partners and spouses were a frequent pull factor for EU movers. The wish to join one’s partner in the destination country was the primary reason for migration for 20% of EU movers to the Netherlands (8 of 37) and a contributing factor for many others. The interviewees either moved to the Netherlands to join their Dutch partner or followed their non-Dutch partner who was living in

the Netherlands. In the case of the Netherlands, it was mainly women who joined their male partner. Family members and partners were mentioned as a driver by over half of all EU movers to Belgium, while in France 30% of incoming EU citizens moved because their partner was French or living in France. Family members, partners and friends residing in the destination country were also an incentive for EU citizens to resettle to the UK and Germany, albeit not as often as in the other three receiving countries. In Austria, relationships were the main driver for 4 of 14 movers and were also cited by movers to Spain. In Italy, merely one interviewee moved in order to reunite with their family. In Cyprus, several interviewees said that they had family members or a partner who was living in Cyprus and were therefore inclined to move there. This was particularly the case with movers from Greece.

1.4 Making new experiences, trying something new and self-development

The desire to leave one's home country and travel, go on an adventure and explore new cultures, start a new life chapter and experience something different were all factors which contributed to many young Europeans' decision to move to another country.

With the exception of movers to the UK, Austria and Italy (who did not explicitly mention it), one or several of these drivers were cited by interviewees in all receiving and mixed countries. M (No.26), male, 29 years, ES, who moved to Germany, aptly described the sentiments shared by many of his fellow EU movers, *"And the question [when making the decision to move] is sometimes, why not? Well, a new language, a new culture. I mean it's a good experience as well. Difficult? Yes, of course (...) But it's also very useful. Working abroad, getting to know people..."*. The majority of movers to Germany believed that the challenges of moving abroad and the experiences gathered in the process would improve their job and life prospects if they ever were to return to their home countries.

In Spain, it was only movers from Italy and Portugal who cited the wish to travel and explore new countries as a driver, such as IT28, female, 30-35, who said, *"I did languages as my major so the desire to go abroad was due to my inquisitiveness and training"*. In Cyprus, it was mainly successful or highly skilled Western Europeans who were motivated by the above-mentioned drivers. These "hyper-movers" stand in stark contrast to the previously described "force of circumstance mobile workers" in the sense that they consider moving a choice and a way to further their self-development.

1.5 Education

While education was a contributing yet secondary factor for EU movers to Germany and UK, it was mentioned as an important factor by movers to France (34%), Belgium (12%) and Austria (28%).

In France, 12 of 35 interviewees said their move was partly due to a lack of educational opportunities in their home country on the one hand and the good French education system and low tuition fees on the other hand. In Belgium, 4 interviewees had initially moved to the country to study and ended up staying after completing their studies. However, since the interviews were conducted in the university town Leuven, this group might be slightly overrepresented in the Belgian report. University studies were cited as a key driver by German movers to Austria. German universities tend to have strict application requirements and admit students based on their grades. German students who fail to be accepted by a university in their home country therefore sometimes choose to study in Austria instead, where university admission criteria are less restrictive and the same language is spoken.

1.6 Language

Prior knowledge of the destination country's language and/or the opportunity to learn was a driver for EU citizens to move to Germany, France and the UK. Learning the German language was mainly mentioned in relation to gathering new experiences and getting to know the German culture. Of the 15 people who moved to France partly because of the language, several had studied French in school in their home countries and some had a good enough grasp of the language to be able to find work in

France or be accepted into a French university. 6 interviewees said that they simply liked the French language. The situation in the UK is slightly different. As English is considered a universal language and a good command of it crucial skill in the job market, it was an important driver for many young Europeans to move to the UK. However, 24 of 38 interviewees spoke no or very little English when they came to the UK and said that one of the reasons why they moved to the UK was to improve their English. *“English is not hard to learn... English is spoken all around the world. If I go anywhere in the world and speak English at least someone will understand”* (UK 13, male, Netherlands).

1.7 Corruption and social injustice as push factors

Corruption, social injustice and political reasons were mentioned as factors driving people away from their home countries almost exclusively by nationals from Bulgaria and Romania, who had moved to Germany and the Netherlands. S (No.40), male, 28 years, RO explained that corruption in his home country of Romania hindered his professional development and was one of the key reasons that 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. (...) 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. (...) you will have lots of trouble”*. Similarly, M (No.32), male, 38 years, GR, who moved from Greece to Germany, said that it was social injustice that led to his decision to reject a job offer in Greece and relocate to Germany, *“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”*. Eastern European movers to the Netherlands reported a general distrust towards government and public authorities in their home countries. They expressed a similar attitude of suspicion towards public institutions in the Netherlands, preferring to seek help and advice from friends and acquaintances rather than of official bodies and organisations.

2. Drivers that make EU citizens want to move

In addition to the interviews with movers from sending countries, interviews were conducted with nationals of receiving countries about their intentions and plans to move to other EU countries. Overall, 20 prospective movers from RC were interviewed: BE (3), DE (5), FR (4), NL (4), UK (4). The following section will analyse the drivers behind RC nationals’ wishes or plans to move to another EU country.

2.1 Job and career opportunities abroad

Work opportunities are a major driver for nationals of all receiving countries who are planning or considering to move abroad. The prospective movers hope that working abroad will improve their skills and lead to new career opportunities either in their home countries or abroad. For several interviewees from Belgium and Germany, this involves learning a new language. A 25-year-old Belgian man wants to move to France in order to improve his French, which he sees as a form of self-realisation as well as a way of improving his job skills since he works in sales and thinks it is important to be able to speak to his clients in their native tongue. He is looking for a position as a receptionist in France, which will not only allow him to learn the French language on-the-job but will also help him progress in his career, lead to higher pay and get him closer to his dream of running his own international company one day.

2 interviewees from Germany (J, male, 24 years, DE and T, male, 32 years, DE) believe that stepping out of their comfort zone, gaining work experience abroad and learning a new language will make them better qualified and improve their confidence. 3 of 4 French interviewees mentioned work as a key driver for wanting to move to another country. They complained about a lack of work opportunities in their specific work sector in France and believe that there will be more opportunities in other EU countries. FR4, female, 25, is looking for work in the NGO sector. Since positions in this field are scarce and popular in France, she is searching for opportunities in Brussels and other EU countries. FR3, female, 28, who works in art, is planning to move to Amsterdam, where she hopes to have better and more opportunities. She prefers the art style in Amsterdam over that in France and believes that people are generally more open for art. FR2, female, 35 wants to quit her job as a secretary and relocate to Scotland to work in personal development. Growing unemployment in France, as well as the rigid hierarchical structures often found in French businesses and organisations, are reasons for her to move.

In the Netherlands on the other hand, no economic push factors were mentioned by any of the 4 Dutch interviewees. Instead, job opportunities outside of the Netherlands are a pull factor for the interviewees themselves and their partners. In the UK, work opportunities were also mentioned as drivers for moving abroad, for instance by UK 22, female 35, BR who is going to move to Belgium on a 6-month work contract.

2.2 Family and partners

Family and relationships were identified as another frequent driver for many but not all prospective movers from receiving countries. One Belgian interviewee (25-year-old) explained that while family and friends did not play a part in his decision to move to France specifically (where he does not have any relations), he doesn't want to move too far away from them and has therefore chosen a country relatively close to home. Another Belgian interviewee, who is moving to France with her family, reported that she already has family who have moved to France and has made friends with locals while on holiday in France. She hopes that this network will make the moving and settling in process for her family much easier and faster.

2 of the 4 French interviewees are planning to move abroad along with their partner who has been offered a job in Sweden (FR1, female, 27) or a place at university in the Netherlands (FR3, female, 28). However, both couples had already been planning to move abroad together before these opportunities came up. 3 of the 4 Dutch who are planning to move or have moved in the past mentioned their partner as one of their drivers for movement. Both NL36 and NL1 are planning to move because of their partner's work abroad, whereas NL42 has previously moved to Portugal due to her partner's career and family circumstances. Family and relationships are also a driver for some of the German interviewees. In the UK on the other hand, friends and family were not found to be a determining factor, except in the case of one interviewee (UK21, male, 33, BR), who is planning to move to France with his French wife.

2.3 New experiences and quality of life as pull factors

The wish to travel and experience different cultures and mentalities as well as enjoy a better quality of life were contributing factors in the decision to move abroad for many of the prospective movers.

One Belgian interviewee wants to move to a larger and more vibrant city (Berlin) with a friend, while another interviewee has chosen to permanently resettle to France for reasons including financial aspects, geography, the way of life and mentality in the destination country. 2 Germans expressed similar motivations, namely a different way of life, culture and a warmer climate. Several German interviewees stated that they want to move abroad to make new experiences, but at the same time, 3 of 5 said that they are not willing to fundamentally compromise on the high living standard that they are used to in Germany. In France, all 4 prospective movers expressed a strong general wish to leave

France and experience a different and more open-minded mentality and tolerant culture. For 3 of the 4, the prospect of travelling and exploring new cultures is a strong incentive to move. FR1, female, 27 and FR4, female 25 want to move to places which are more multicultural (or where multiculturalism works better), FR2, female, 35 wants to experience a different and more open-minded mentality. Between them, the 4 interviewees further mentioned pull factors such as the weather, nature and less pollution. Interestingly, none of the French interviewees is contemplating moving outside of Europe. They all expressed a desire to stay within the EU, either because of a perceived common cultural basis, similar political systems and history or proximity to friends and family in France. The expectation of a better quality of life including a different climate, being able to spend more time outdoors and being close to a beach was identified as the most important driver for UK citizens who are planning to move abroad.

2.4 Racism, discrimination and politics as push factors

The final category of reasons mentioned by nationals of receiving countries who are planning to move concerns negative social and political experiences and developments in their home countries. A Dutch interviewee confessed that his primary reason for wanting to leave the Netherlands is to do with his partner experiencing discrimination and racism at work and the general negative attitude towards immigrants in the Netherlands. While none of the French said that they or someone in their close social circle had personally experienced xenophobia, 3 of 4 French interviewees complained about the rise in racist discourse and sentiments in France and the fact that France is withdrawing into itself. FR4, female, 25 feels that this is a trend in many European countries but believes that other countries are more successful at maintaining harmony between immigrants and natives.

3. Country-specific factors which made Europeans choose a particular destination country

Sections 1. and 2. examined the general, overall motivations of past and future EU movers as well as the push factors in their home countries which incentivised them to move abroad. The following section will focus on country-specific pull factors which made Europeans of sending countries as well as of receiving countries choose a certain destination country. It is important to bear in mind that the majority of movers are/were driven by employment opportunities (or lack thereof), family and partnerships. As is pointed out in the Dutch national report, the choice for a certain country can thus often be attributed to pure circumstance or even arbitrariness. While pull factors which are unique to a specific destination country may in many cases only have played a secondary role in a young person's decision to move, they are still worth exploring.

3.1 Receiving countries

The EU citizens who moved to Germany explained that they had partly chosen the country for its high living standards, financial security, economic stability, quality of life, language, social security and education system. C (No.5), male, 35 years, RO appreciates that Germans are very respectful towards each other, while M (No.32), male, 38 years, GR was drawn to the social justice and mentality of Germany. Civil liberties and a better future for their children were important factors for several of the Romanian movers. Most people who moved to France mentioned as country-specific reasons the quality of life, education system, France's good international reputation, culture and social security. Interviewees from Belgium and Germany who are planning to move to France mentioned the French language, the geography and climate, culture, mentality and way of life as drivers. One Belgian interviewee is drawn to France because of cheaper housing and lower taxes and the laid-back lifestyle.

Europeans who have moved to the Netherlands were attracted to the country because of professional opportunities in specific work sectors such as medicine, social work and human rights, and the prospect of their children having a better future. Southern European movers, especially the Greek, mentioned better working conditions in the Netherlands. 2 movers wanted to learn a new language in the Netherlands, however, they were interested in learning German or English rather than Dutch. Other aspects mentioned by only 1 or 2 movers include the climate, comparatively low tuition fees and architecture. Factors which have drawn Europeans to the UK include the prospect of living a better life, a better future for the movers' children, language, study opportunities and the liberal nature of UK society. The open-minded mentality and tolerant society are also the main reason why a prospective mover from France (FR2, female, 35) wants to relocate to Scotland.

3.1.1 Capital cities of receiving countries

Among both categories of interviewees (people who have already moved and people who are planning on moving), there were a number of individuals who were/are drawn not so much to a country in general but specifically to its capital city. For instance, UK15, transgender, 33 years, PL said that she highly appreciates the liberal and non-judgemental mindset of society in the UK, however, she was specifically drawn to London where she is able to express herself freely, *"the legislation is what attracted me to London because I'm a different person. I belong to some kind of minority, so my prospects for a career are limited, so I feel that I would have better chances of life here than in my previous country... London is cosmopolitan and I like it"*. While no country-specific pull factors were mentioned for Belgium as a whole, one French interviewee (FR4, female, 25) is planning to move to Brussels specifically to work in the NGO sector. A Belgian interviewee intends to move to Berlin due to the open and friendly nature of the people there. Five EU movers to France had moved to Paris because of the city's beautiful architecture, art and multiculturalism. A prospective mover from France (FR3, female, 28) is drawn to Amsterdam because of the city's culture and art style.

3.2 Mixed countries and others

A German interviewee who is planning to move to Italy has chosen the country because of the Italian way of life, nature, weather and culture. As far Austria is concerned, as pointed out in Section 1, the Austrian university system is a major pull factor for German movers. For EU movers to Spain, the hope for a better quality of life was by far the main pull factor. One mover also mentioned lower taxes. The main country-specific pull factors that can be identified in Cyprus concerns cultural and linguistic similarities as well as the geographic proximity between Greece and Cyprus. CY8A is one of several Greek who have moved to Cyprus because of these reasons and said, *"In Cyprus it felt wonderful because I did not feel that I was a migrant"*. FR4, female, 25 would like to move to Portugal because of the Portuguese culture and mentality and the nice weather, while NL43 has already moved from the Netherlands to Portugal and back because of her partner's career, family reasons and the desire to experience a different lifestyle.

4. Conclusions

This chapter has examined the factors which contributed to young EU citizens' decision to move and how these may vary depending on the nationality of the mover and the destination country. Overall, many young Europeans do not seem to base their decision for or against a certain destination country on factors which are necessarily unique to that country and there are often no objective reasons as to why one country is a more favourable place to move to than another.

Work was identified as being by far the most important driver, which acts in most cases simultaneously as a push and a pull factor. It does, however, appear that push factors (unemployment, corruption, social injustice) played more of a part for movers from Eastern Europe, particularly from Bulgaria and Romania. Work-driven movement is frequently combined with the desire to join family, friends and partners in the destination country. While for EU movers who have already moved to a receiving or mixed country, family and partnerships were often a pull factor in the sense that they *followed* them, prospective movers from sending countries tend to plan to move together *with* their family or partners.

Making new experiences and improving one's quality of life are drivers for both EU citizens who have already moved and those who are planning on doing so. It can be said that prospective movers tend to phrase their motivations for moving in more positive terms than EU citizens who have already moved and there seem to be fewer push factors which drive the movement. The exceptions to this are prospective movers from France, who all stated their eagerness to leave their home country. Despite their mostly positive outlook on their upcoming move, prospective EU movers seem to be aware of the potential downsides that moving abroad might have and take them into consideration. J, male, 24 years, DE said, *"It [the decision to move] depends on 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... (...) it won't be worse elsewhere. But as I said, it's something everybody has to decide on his/her own"*.

While languages were mentioned as drivers by nationals of receiving, mixed and sending countries, the only languages that EU movers seemed to be interested in learning are English, French and German. These languages all have in common that they are spoken in more than one European country and in the case of English and French even outside of Europe. It is possible that they are therefore considered more useful and worth learning.

Chapter 2- Barriers of young European citizens

This chapter gathers together the similarities/differences on the barriers perceived by the incoming/outgoing movers of the receiving countries (RCs): Germany – DE, Belgium – BE, Netherlands – NL, United Kingdom – UK and France – FR; and the incoming movers in the “mixed” countries (MCs): Cyprus – CY, Spain – ES, Austria – AT and Italy – IT. Firstly, it will focus on the perceived barriers of the young EU nationals, those wishing to move to another EU country. Secondly, it will take a closer look at the actual barriers of the young EU nationals who have already moved. Thirdly, it will observe some country specific barriers, and finally will sum up the most distinct features of the findings.

1. Perceived barriers: those wishing to move (RCs)

This sections comprises of the interviews obtained from 20 movers with the following number of interviews: BE – 3, FR – 4, NL – 4, UK – 4, and DE – 5.

1.1 Cost of living

The movers with a wish to move out of the receiving countries represent a cluster with a variety of barriers, with no dominating aspect to be clearly identified. Among the interviewees, a possible high cost of living in the destination country is being brought out frequently as one of the main obstacle. This barrier was mentioned, for example, quite frequently by the interviewees from the UK and France. As a one example: a female interviewee in France looked for job opportunities in Scandinavian countries, but she expressed a great hesitation about moving, because of the cost of living.

1.2 Bureaucracy

Likewise, the fear of possible bureaucratic troubles or orientating in the complex system of administrative rules is identified as one the hurdles for the movement, especially among the interviewees from Belgium and Netherlands. One of the interviewees from Belgium expressed the concern about dealing with the taxes, but assumed that there are services in the destination country that will help her. To this group of bureaucratic hurdles also belong difficulties with the official documents - that are necessary for different applications - and their translation. For example, an interviewee from Netherlands complained that *“everything in the Netherlands is in Dutch, so it’s very hard to get things done that you need in English.”* Another interviewee was concerned about registration procedures abroad because these are the essential aspects of everyday life, e.g. opening a bank account and accessing the housing market.

Administrative delays also prove to be frustrating: *“It is a never-ending struggle to get things done... The German official agencies should be more helpful to people who moved here to work.”* Interestingly, the inadequate role of the embassy in helping their citizens with the administrative troubles was also highlighted, illustrated by the following quotes: *“The Dutch embassy in Portugal is not aware of what you have to do to get things done in Portugal. They cannot help you if you have difficulties in Portugal”* or *“What use has the Dutch embassy if they will not help you when you have difficulties with the German municipality?”*.

1.3 Personal barriers

Lack of friends, social networks, and the resulting homesickness is seen also as a barrier to exercising the right of free movement. These factors, for example, were brought forward by a half of the interviewees from

France. A one female respondent explained that although she mainly looks for jobs abroad, she is also looking work in France because of the potential loss of social networks: *"I am always torn between the idea of staying in France and leaving."*

1.4 Language

Not knowing the local language is another major commonly perceived barrier among the people who wish to move, most notably mentioned by the people from Germany and Belgium. A female interviewee from Germany explains for example that *"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..."*.

1.5 Employment

Another issue relates to the perceived difficulties in finding employment. Employment issue was one of the main concerns among the respondents from Germany. For example, a 32-year old interviewee from Germany 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. Similarly, another respondent from Germany admitted that he is not willing to take on a job which he is completely overqualified for.

1.6 Child care and schooling

Possible problems with finding the child care and (right) schooling of children were mentioned in several interviews.

2. Actual barriers: EU citizens (RCs and MCs) who have already moved

This section is based on the 258 interviews with the movers both among both Rcs and MCs. The number of interviews divided by the countries is as follows: IT - 12, AT - 114, CY - 24, ES - 25, BE - 32, FR - 35, NL - 37, UK - 38, and DE - 41.

2.1 Language

The most common feature of the receiving and mixed countries in relation to the barriers experienced by the incoming EU citizens is the language barrier. Difficulty to learn a new local language or getting around in the new and different linguistic environment is one of the major barrier in almost every country under study.

For example, the case of language was identified as one of the main problems encountered by the interviewees when moving to Germany. Nine respondents from Germany pointed out that the German language poses a major, if not the main, problem in the moving and integration process, that eventually can lead to loneliness and isolation. One of the respondents from Romania explains that *"if you do not properly speak the language, you will have the impression you aren't part of the society"*. A person from Portugal comments that *"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."*

The language is also the main concern among the people who have moved to the Netherlands. Several interviewees indicate very clearly *"the main barrier [for moving] is always the language"* or *"I can imagine if someone comes here and does not speak Dutch or English it must be very difficult. The language is a big issue"*. Interestingly, many public offices follow the instructions whereby employees, although able to communicate

easily in English, are instructed to only speak in Dutch to their clients, due to the reason that the use of other languages may take away the priority and urgency of learning Dutch. Some respondents however agree with this kind of policy, e.g. by remarking that *“language is key to integration. It is important to work hard on learning your new language. It is too easy to say that only people who have a knack for languages can succeed in that, you have to be willing to work hard for it and to dare to use Dutch”*.

As somewhat paradoxically in the UK, where language is seen as one of the main drivers, it also appears to be one of the main barriers. A Polish national explains in the interview that *“it was very hard for me because this time I didn’t speak English and it’s not easy... I had to go to the school for 3 years I had to really learn hard.”* A Dutch interviewee comments that *“...it took many time to adjust to life in this country, it was very hard for me, I was bullied as well because I could not speak English and I had an accent so it took me time.”*

The language issue is problematic in France as well. One respondent from Spain even got a feeling that she was considered “stupid” by the officials by not knowing the French. The sentiment that the French do not want to speak to you in any other language but French, has been felt by many interviewees. Similarly, amore or less subtle resentment is felt by these respondents who cannot speak French. A Polish national stated that *“sometimes in France if we do not speak French very well, or if we have an accent, or if we make little mistakes, we feel it very, very strongly.”* Likewise, most of the interviewed young European movers to Spain considered the language the most pressing issue. A Bulgarian national describes for example that *“I learn it by practice, in the everyday life. One of the greatest obstacles at the beginning is the language, that would be the greatest one, and then the academic training you have; if you have a contract before arriving that makes getting used to things a lot easier.”*

Movers to Austria experience the same phenomenon as the movers to Netherlands, where the authorities, who are responsible for EU mobility and settlement, speak only German. A Polish national reported that *“I have never felt discriminated against, but at the registration office, when I said, that I do not speak German, the lady looked at me weird.”* However, in many countries in this study, for example in Italy, (knowing of the) language is seen as the best tool for integration. For example, an interviewee from Romania felt excluded while speaking in English, but after learning Italian, she became more included into social life and was also accepted by her neighbours.

2.2 Employment

Besides language, another most common barrier faced by the movers is the trouble finding a suitable employment. In Germany, around one third of the interviewees 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. A male interviewee from Bulgaria explains 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 interviewed for this study indicate that they had no difficulty finding a job or received help from family and friends.

In Belgium, finding work is also difficult for a quarter of the movers from the Mediterranean countries, although it does not seem to be a problem for movers from the newer EU member states. People moving to Netherlands do not generally experience difficulties in finding a job, but there are exceptions, such as work-related discrimination – this was explained by one of the respondents *“it isn’t easy to find a proper job, you will always be the second category as a non-native. People still think it is better to select someone from their own education system.”* However, those reporting troubles in finding a job in Netherlands frequently also report communication difficulties with the public authorities, suggesting cumulative barriers.

In the UK, most of the interviewees report that they faced challenges finding a job. Some of them accepted the first job they came across irrespective of their qualifications and personal goals, mainly in order to "survive". More than half of the participants were in low paid jobs or part time jobs. Other respondents reported that initially they faced challenges finding a job, but this improved over time and some of them got the kind of jobs they wanted.

Almost a half of the movers to France had similar problems finding work. By and large it came down to the realisation that in many cases French workforce is preferred over the foreign labour. In addition, some interviewees referred that their work qualifications had to closely match the local criteria to get a specific job. In Cyprus, matters seem to be worse, as the widespread practice of work-related discrimination and even exploitation was mentioned in the interviews. Such treatment has befallen on mainly the movers from Eastern Europe, and mostly the private job searching companies can be blamed for this kind of situation. Thus, a problem might not be even finding a job, but what kind of situation one might eventually land on.

Nationality-based discrimination in the labour market was also reported in Italy. As for Spain, many people from Bulgaria and Romania had difficulties with work connected with their countries' former restrictions in accessing the labour market of certain EU countries. However, movers also from old EU member states complained about the job insecurity in Spanish labour market. For example, one Italian interviewee explains that *"it was hard in the beginning because I had a lot of short-term contracts"* while the other described that *"I have had unsteady jobs with traineeships, low-paying jobs, I had to ask my parents for help."* In Austria, barriers in finding employment have plagued mostly the ones who do not yet have a job while moving to Austria.

2.3 Bureaucracy

There are various bureaucratic issues related to the process of moving: e.g. residence registration procedures or recognition of diplomas/qualifications. This confirms the fears or perceived barriers of those people who are planning or wishing to move (see previous subchapter), who already before the moving rightly identify these as the issues that may come up during their process of movement.

Many interviewees moved to Germany complain about the (strict) bureaucracy, issues with the recognition of foreign diplomas and degrees, arranging health insurance, language and overall communication. These aspects concerned for example interviewees from Romania, Poland, Spain as well as Italy. In Belgium, the second most frequently mentioned barrier besides the language was the registration process. This is related to the lack of accessible information in a range of areas relevant to free movers, particularly in non-native languages, and difficulties with cooperation with authorities. The case-studies from the Netherlands describe that among all barriers, the legal and bureaucratic matters are clearly the most extensive. They range from getting registered, complaints about the helpfulness of government agencies to the lack of cohesion between public authorities. Also the need for approaching several different agencies for overlapping purposes was identified. As one respondent puts it *"You have to contact many different services that all need different things from you"*. In addition, different levels of administration do not seem to pass correct data among different authorities, which creates more confusion. There were also complaints about the inadequate information in governmental websites etc., exemplified by the following quote: *"The information available is bad and you constantly have the feeling that governments do not want you to know everything. That is very frustrating."*

Interestingly and contrary to many other countries, the UK case-studies describe that the common experience of movers interviewed in the course of the research was that they did not face problems with authorities. Entry in the country was easy just by showing their documents. Interviewees stated that the movement was easy as there were no problems at the borders and no registration requirements. In France, 28 people out of 34 interviews mentioned having trouble with the administration. The main criticisms are that administrative procedures in France are complicated, bureaucratic and lacking clear information. An interviewee from Romania summed it up by saying, *"You do not know where to start."* Also, such

procedures takes up lot of time, there are difficulties arranging health insurance, with public employees not knowing about EU matters, documents not recognised by the French authorities etc.

For Cyprus, the administrative and bureaucratic barriers - such as the transfer of social insurance and the issues of recognition of qualifications - are listed as the main barriers to free movement. Movers to Austria also report about the lengthy and difficult bureaucratic process of movement and settlement. A UK citizen and an Italian citizen in Austria were stressed about the requirements for the residence permit. A German citizen, who has lived in Austria, was also inadequately informed about the settlement requirements and received contradictory information on the requirement of employment for settlement. She explained a rumour that *"...if I stay longer in Austria than for 3 months, I need to go to the foreign police and register there? I was at the registration office two times and now, I would need to go there for the third time, because I have stayed for three months in Austria. But at the registration office, nobody informed me about this. I haven't found information online and nobody said this to me. I was informed about this by an acquaintance, but I do not know whether this is voluntary or obligatory. I do not know if I have to do this, but on the other hand, I can imagine that it is sanctioned if I do not do it. So, here I would need information."*

2.4 Discrimination

Although the issues of experiencing some sort of discrimination do not constitute a major aspect among the all listed barriers, it was nevertheless the feature that was brought out in almost every country. In many cases, it included discrimination based on ethnicity, but also gender based discrimination, discrimination while finding a job; or feeling general negative attitudes of otherness or some other form of discomfort.

In Germany, respondents of almost all nationalities, almost a half of the sample, were affected by the discrimination, which seems to indicate that discrimination is not directed towards certain nationalities, but towards foreigners in general. However, discrimination is experienced and dealt differently by different people and the situation might not even be considered as such by some. For example, Belgian case-studies refer to the cases of the on-the-job discrimination due to the movers' origin. In Netherlands, discrimination is a topic that was addressed explicitly in the interviews, although most of the interviewees did not report high levels of discrimination - they reported inconveniences and general migrant issues such as missing family and friends and not feeling at home, but not explicit discrimination. The cases that were mentioned were mostly about the work-related discrimination. As it was explained by one of the respondents: *"Some companies treat all the people the same, but other companies don't. You can see it easily that we are a little bit pushed back. They treat us harder than normally"*.

There were also few cases of ethnicity based and gender based discrimination among the UK cases. Strikingly, in France, 22 interviewees out of 34 mentioned that they suffered from discrimination and racism. Many interviewees explained how they were discriminated against when looking for a job. However, many interviewees who mentioned that they were discriminated against felt the need to add that they knew that it was nothing in comparison to people who are not from the European Union. In Cyprus, too, the respondents report a high degree of discrimination, mostly work related, which in some cases borders even with the exploitation. The movers to Spain from Eastern Europe have experienced more discrimination than the movers from elsewhere. The movers to Italy claimed to be discriminated against based on their nationality and also brought out the role of media which portrays the migrants in a negative light.

In Austria, some interviewees reported on discrimination in interactions with the authorities, also with landlords, but these are very exceptional cases, mostly based on the country of origin. In Austrian cases of discrimination, individual perception may play a major role: the same situation can be perceived as extremely bothering and discriminative by one person, while the other one not even recognizes it as problematic. What was observed was that EU citizens from Northern and Western countries are more sensitive to discrimination than those from the Southern and the Eastern EU countries.

2.5 Personal-related barriers

Another sizeable cluster of barriers can be termed as a "cultural shock", which entails feelings of homesickness, feelings of leaving family behind, difficulties making local friends, difficulties being accepted into a host society, and other various cultural differences. Also, although brought out in only a few countries, so called natural phenomena related issues such as weather were mentioned as a barrier when moving to another country.

In Germany, third of interviews reported having experienced difficulties moving and settling in, and having 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. Some respondents in Belgium stated that it was difficult to make local friends. In the UK, a challenge consistently mentioned by the majority of respondents was that it was not easy to make friends apart from those in their national community. In the Netherlands, similarly, the main issue is the lack of a social network of friends and family. First of all, the interviewees explain that they find it emotionally difficult to leave their family and friends behind. This feeling is not something that subsides quickly, as for some of the young people it is a constant reason to consider moving back to their home country. Having to leave friends and family behind and at the same time having difficulties in building up a new network in the Netherlands makes these interviewees feel less at home than they would want to. In several cases, the language barriers come up again in this context. Thus, those people who have trouble with the language also face barriers in their social environments. This can be combined with experiences of cultural clashes or differences in manners and customs. Adaptability to local weather also proved to be difficult for some.

In France, many interviewees explained how for them it is difficult to make friends in France - at the beginning, it seems to be much easier to make friends within the foreign community. One interviewee mentioned that he had a "cultural shock" when he arrived in France because French people are not friendly and are very formal. Several interviewees describe that for them it was hard to make friends with French people because they are rather "cold". Several interviewees expressed that they always feel like a foreigner in France. However, they also stated that these difficulties are not the reasons for them to leave France. In Austria, significant barriers due to cultural differences or certain habits were not described. The vast majority of the interviewees do not at all recognize cultural or other differences between different EU Member States.

2.6 Child care/schooling and health insurance

In comparison with all countries under study, less emphasis was placed on the child care, schooling and health insurance issues. These were mentioned in a more detailed manner by the Dutch interviews. For example, the interviewees describe that one of the obstacles were the mistakes made by the movers is taking out health insurance. Several interviewees point out that they only found out by coincidence or after attaining a job that they were even obliged to take out health insurance for themselves. While other obligations such as a delayed registration at the municipality are impractical and frustrating, lacking health insurance is not only a great risk with regard to being uninsured, but also carries with it a fine that can even lead to severe financial problems. Interviewees with children also report some difficulties in relation to enrolling their children in school or pre-school. Again, it is not so much of the access to children care or education itself that forms the problem, but finding the right information about how to go about it. The UK report, too, identifies troubles in enrolling a child to a school. One of the interviewee explains how she had to spend three months at home before she was able to get a school placement for her child. Case-studies in Belgium mention troubles with health insurance very briefly.

2.7 Housing

Troubles of finding housing or a place to stay were brought out in several interviews in several countries such as Germany, Netherlands, UK, Belgium and Italy. In the Netherlands, for example, housing related issues were mentioned frequently by the Greek interviewees, but also by some others. It is not clear whether this is due to any specific procedures in gaining access to social housing or whether it is rather a matter of finding a suitable and quality home. Interviewees do refer to unclear procedures and a general feeling that landlords prefer to rent out their properties to native Dutch people, due to a lack of trust in migrants and foreigners. The UK report described that Member States can exclude EU jobseekers from the receipt of means-tested social assistance during the first three months of residence, and that movers must pass the Habitual Residency Test. This was reported to cause hardship to those who are not able to afford private accommodation. Most interviewees describe that they found it difficult to get accommodation and due to the high cost of living in the UK, and most of them find accommodation very expensive. After their move to the UK, they were initially hosted by their friends or family before they could get a place of their own.

2.8 Cost of living

Furthermore, a high cost of living is another commonly perceived barrier, which was mainly described in Belgium, France, and Italy cases. In Italy, the high cost of living was mentioned in connection with the fact that the movers did not get to an immediate job when coming to the country. In France, six interviewees pointed out in general that Paris is a very expensive city. For some interviewees, the cost of living was so high that they considered moving back home.

3. Country specific barriers

There are some country specific barriers to be identified among the list of countries under study, however, their number is rather small. One of the common denominators that connects many countries is the feeling and actual experience with the discrimination and unfriendly feelings of the host society towards movers, especially from Eastern Europe. This was reported in Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Italy and Cyprus (as far as labour exploitation), in lesser instances sporadically also elsewhere.

In Cyprus, on the one hand, almost all workers from Greece said that the fact that Greek was the official language was a strong incentive for moving to Cyprus. On the other hand, all Western-Europeans interviewed stated that Cyprus was attractive to them because of the wide use of English. Specific advantages emanating from the common language relate also to the Austrian movers to Germany. This obviously helps significantly to make the transition more smooth.

Remarkable is the emergence of the topic of racism in France, reported by many interviewees.

The UK case is interesting in regard as it lists the possible negative effect of the Brexit on the outgoing British movers - Brexit creates a lot of uncertainty and as a result, the movers do not know what the future of free movement will be for the British people. For example, a respondent from UK fears a situation where Article 50 will be triggered and there are no sensible plans in place for the UK to move forward and this to him will be very disastrous. The same concern goes for the movers who arrive to UK.

Specific feature compared to other countries and shared by Netherlands and Austria was the issue related to the language barrier, in which the officials of the respected countries, despite knowing English, are instructed to communicate with the movers in the local language, in order to stress the priority of their languages.

Although most of the country cases did not include the answers to the question what would make the movers move back home or to another country, the German is exceptional in this regard. The interviewees

in Germany list the work and family as a reason for return for both the incoming and outgoing movers. However, it is sufficient to reason that these could also be the main reasons for many other countries.

4. Conclusions

All in all, the main barriers that are mutual among the receiving and “mixed” countries contain three main components:

1. difficulties in managing within the new linguistic environment,
2. difficulties in securing the desired employment position, and
3. all types of bureaucratic troubles.

These barriers have been listed by all countries to the very top of their lists. There is a list of other conditions that makes a life of a mover, or a possible future mover, more complicated. For example, the standing out of the ethnic-based and sometimes also gender-based discrimination, which constituted a common line running through most of the experiences as reported in the country case-studies. It mainly surfaced in relation to the movers’ labour market experiences and while looking for a job. A sizeable and a common part of the barriers shared by almost all movers were also the personal barriers: difficulties in adjusting to the host culture, inability to make new friends and to create social networks, feelings of homesickness, and to a certain degree, even the effects of the weather.