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COMPAS Research Project:
“Changing status, changing lives? The socio-economic
impact of
EU accession on low wage migrant labour in the UK”

AU PAIRS' INTERVIEW

(March 2004)

1 BACKGROUND

1. What is your citizenship?

- 1 Czech Republic
- 2 Lithuania
- 3 Poland
- 4 Slovakia
- 5 Bulgaria
- 6 Ukraine

2. What is your age?

_____ years old

3. Gender

- 1 male
- 2 female

4. Do you currently have a wife/husband or long-term partner?

- 1 yes (CONTINUE WITH 5.)
- 2 no (SKIP TO 7)

5. Where does your wife/husband/partner currently live?

- 1 Czech Republic
- 2 Lithuania
- 3 Poland
- 4 Slovakia
- 5 Bulgaria
- 6 Ukraine
- 7 in the UK
- 8 other, specify: _____

6. Is your wife/husband/partner currently working?

- 1 yes
- 2 no

7. What is the highest level of schooling that you completed? (TICK ONE ONLY)

- 1 no schooling (SKIP TO W10.)
- 2 some primary (CONTINUE WITH W9.)
- 3 completed primary (CONTINUE WITH W9.)
- 4 intermediate (CONTINUE WITH W9.)
- 5 high school and equivalent (CONTINUE WITH W9.)
- 6 higher education qualification (below degree level) (CONTINUE WITH 9.)
- 7 first degree and equivalent (CONTINUE WITH W9.)
- 8 higher degree and equivalent (CONTINUE WITH W9.)

8. How many years of formal schooling (excluding vocational training and language courses) have you had, in total?

a. _____ years in total, including **b.** _____ years in the UK

9. Have you had any vocational training?

- 1 yes (CONTINUE WITH 10.)
- 2 no (SKIP TO W13.)

10. Briefly describe the nature of vocational training received:

11. How many years of vocational training have you had, in total?

a. _____ years in total, including b. _____ years in the UK

12. Was some of your vocational training part of your formal schooling?
(REFER TO W8)

- 1 yes, ___years of my vocational training were part of my schooling
- 2 no

13. How would you assess your proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing English?

a. Speaking		b. Reading		c. Writing	
1	Fluent	1	Fluent	1	Fluent
2	Adequate	2	Adequate	2	Adequate
3	Basic only	3	Basic only	3	Basic only
4	None	4	None	4	None

14. For how many years in your life have you worked, and where?
(WRITE "O" FOR "NEVER")

a. Worked in the UK	_____ years and _____ months
b. Worked in my home country	_____ years and _____ months
c. Worked elsewhere	_____ years and _____ months
CHECK TOTAL:	_____ years and _____ months

15. When did you first start work in the UK?
(NB For the purposes of this interview, being an au pair counts as “work”)

Date (month and year): _____

16. What was your employment status just before that date? (REFER TO DATE GIVEN IN 15.)

- 1 working in paid or unpaid employment (including family labour)
(CONTINUE WITH 17)
- 2 not working but looking for work (SKIP TO 21.)
- 3 not working and not looking for work (SKIP TO 21.)

17. Specify the type of your employment just before you last came to the UK:
(REFER TO DATE GIVEN IN 19)

- 1 wage labour (or other paid employee)
- 2 self-employed
- 3 employer
- 4 unpaid family labour
- 5 unpaid labour outside family

18. What was your occupation in that employment? (REFER TO 17)

19. Until when and where did you work in this capacity (REFER TO 18)

- a) until _____ (month and year when employment ended)
- b) _____ (country of employment)

20. What were your take-home (net) earnings/income/salary in that job? And what were your average working hours per week in that job (REFER TO !8)

- a. _____ (Local currency units) per month (WRITE “0” IF UNPAID LABOUR)
- b. _____ average hours per week in that job

21. When you first entered the UK as an au pair (REFER TO 15), how long did you intend to stay and work/be an au pair here?

_____ years

no plans

other, specify: _____

22. Before first arriving in the UK as an au pair, did you have a job offer/au pair placement in the UK?

1 yes

2 no

IMMIGRATION AND RECRUITMENT

2. How did you come to be an au pair in the UK?

Objective: to explore motivations, expectations, and process of migration.

- What stage of life were they at (student finishing college? Young family? Recently unemployed? Family changes?)
- What had they been working as before they came to the UK and how much had they been earning?
- Did they choose the UK? If so, why?
- What did they imagine it would be like?
- Why did they choose to enter an au pair?
- Did they come straight to the UK or stay in other countries?
- How traveled and found employment (links between travel agencies, recruiters, employment). Were they offered work before they came?
- How did they finance the trip (loans)

EMPLOYMENT AND LIVING CONDITIONS

3. Can you tell me about the host families and other jobs you've had while you've been in the UK?

Objective: to gather an employment history

- How many host families have they had
- why did they change?
- how did they find new families?
- Casual work (cleaning, waitressing etc) as well as au pairing
- Do they go to English classes?

4. Can you describe the work you are doing now?

- type of jobs done in the house performed
- hours, days, babysittings and money arrangements
- relations with the host family
- Do you enjoy your job(s)? What is good and bad about it/them

5. Do you have a written agreement?

Objective: to understand the impact of different levels of formality

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a written agreement?
- What would happen to your jobs if you were sick for a month?
- What would happen if you injured yourself at work?

6. Who holds your passport?

- If it is anyone other than you, who holds it and how did this happen?
- Has it ever been a problem in a previous job?
- Have you ever tried to get a passport back?
- do you feel this is a problem for you?

7. How much do you get paid?

Objective: to understand the “micro-economics” of individual’s wage.

- How much do you get paid for all your jobs?
- Are there deductions from your salary for travel, recruitment costs, loans, payment to employment agents, uniforms, accommodation etc? Was it clear from the outset that these deductions would be made? Do you know how much they are worth?
- Is your pocket money what you expected it would be?
- Are you paid overtime?
- What non-wage benefits do you get that you know of e.g. accommodation, food, bills, insurance, health-care
- Do you feel you get a fair deal?

8. Can you describe your current accommodation?

- Do you live in with your host family? If not, why not?
What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in?
- Do you feel you can use the house as your home?
- Do you have your own bedroom?
- Is it in a neighbourhood that you like (services, people, fellow nationals around?)
- How did you find your accommodation?
- Are you happy with your accommodation?

9. What do you do outside work for relaxation?

Objective: to explore non-employment networks

- Are you a member of any institutions or associations?
- Who do you relax with? Do you know many fellow nationals? Are they mainly au pairs?
- Use of local leisure facilities?
- Place of worship
- Where do you go for advice/help?
- What contact with non migrants outside work – very little / a lot
- Any contact with policy/ immigration authorities. Two authorities
- Public service
 - Health
 - Education
 - English classes

10. What do you think are the good and bad things about the au pair system?

- is it better to be a student or an au pair?
 - is it better to be working in a bar or an au pair?
 - is it easy to meet people?
 - is staying with a family a good or bad thing?
 - would you recommend au pairing to your friends?
- what advice would you give to someone from your country applying as an au pair?

11. What advice would you offer to fellow nationals in the following situations:

- **they are the victim of a serious physical assault by a stranger;**
- **they are not paid their wages;**
- **they have to move out of their accommodation;**
- **they are unemployed;**
- **they become seriously ill;**
- **they overstay their visa**

Objective: to explore the use (or not) of services, contact with the police, and level of control exercised by employers.

- would they go to a solicitor or police in any of these circumstances?
- Would they access the NHS?
- Do they know about other advice agencies such as CABx?
- Would they approach a trades union?
- Would they approach the Embassy?
- Would they approach the settled community, via individuals or community organizations?

12. Do you feel “at home” in the UK?

Objective: to discuss social capital in UK and transnational behaviour

- Do you feel welcome in the UK:
- Would you like to stay permanently in the UK?
- How often do you contact your country of origin and how do you do so?
- Do you send money home regularly? How often? And how (Western Union, remittance company, friends)
- Have you returned home for any visits recently?
- Do you get any publications or newspapers?
- Do you go to any places to meet up with fellow nationals?
- Do you have any British friends?
- Do you feel you've had to change to live in the UK?

11. What changes to your life will accession bring?

For accession nationals

- do you anticipate changing to a different kind of work?
- Has your host family made any comment to you about how they feel about your change in status?
- Do you anticipate moving accommodation?
- Do you anticipate accessing public health or other services?
- Would you consider settling in the UK?
- Would you encourage family members or friends to come to the UK?
- Do you think you will be able to earn more money in this job or by moving?
- What are the other benefits of living in the UK that you will be able to access?
- Do you think you will have more contact with British citizens.

For non-accession nationals

- Do you think it will have any impact on your employment opportunities or your wages?