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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”

**IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW  
WORKERS**  
(March 2004)

CHANGING STATUS, CHANGING LIVES?  
THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EU  
ACCESSION ON MIGRANT LABOUR IN THE UK

# 1 BACKGROUND

1. What is your nationality?

- 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?

Date (month and year): \_\_\_\_\_

16. How much were your take-home (net) earnings in that (first) job?

£ \_\_\_\_\_ per month

17. Before your first job in the UK, when did you enter the UK?

Date (month and year): \_\_\_\_\_

18. How many times, in total, have you entered the UK to work (excluding holiday breaks)?

\_\_\_\_\_ times

19. When did you last enter the UK to work (excluding holiday breaks)?

Date (month and year): \_\_\_\_\_

20. What was your employment status just before that date? (REFER TO DATE GIVEN IN W19.)

- 1 working in paid or unpaid employment (including family labour)  
(CONTINUE WITH 21)
- 2 not working but looking for work (SKIP TO 25.)
- 3 not working and not looking for work (SKIP TO 25.)

21. 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

22. What was your occupation in that employment? (REFER TO 21)

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23. Until when and where did you work in this capacity (REFER TO 22)

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

24. What were your take-home (net) earnings/income/salary in that job?  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Local currency units) per month (WRITE "0" IF  
UNPAID LABOUR)

25. When you last came to the UK how long did you intend to stay and work here?

\_\_\_\_\_ years

- 1 no plans
- 2 other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

26 Before last arriving in the UK, did you have a job offer in the UK?

- 1 yes
- 2 no

# IMMIGRATION AND RECRUITMENT

## 2. How did you come to be working 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?
- Did they choose a particular type of permit? If so, why?
- 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 jobs you've had while you've been in the UK?**

*Objective: to gather an employment history*

- changes of occupation, sector and employer
- why did they change?
- how did they find new employment?
- did they switch immigration status?

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

- How many jobs (pros and cons of this)
- type of work performed
- hours, days, shifts, variations wages
- supervision style (incl. nationality)
- do they work direct for an employer, or for an employment agency/labour provider? What are the pros and cons of working for an agency/labour provider?
- Do you enjoy your job(s)? What is good and bad about it/them

## **5. Do you have a written contract?**

*Objective: to understand the impact of different levels of formality*

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a written contract?
- 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.*

- Are you paid a piece rate? What is it?
- 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?
- Are you paid overtime? How many hours do you have to work before you get paid overtime? What rates of overtime are you paid?
- 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. Are you working with other people of your nationality?**

*Objective: to understand the impact of country of origin on relations with other workers*

- Are you doing the same kind of work as others of your nationality?
- what are (or would be) advantages and problems of working with fellow nationals?
- Are you supervised by a fellow national?
- Do you work with British citizens? Of what ethnic background? What are your impressions?
- Do you work with migrants from other countries? What are your impressions?

**9. Can you describe your current accommodation?**

- how is it rented and paid for?
- How many people in how many bedrooms, kitchen and toilets
- Does it have heating and hot water?
- How far is it from your current place of employment and how do you travel to work?
- Do you share with fellow nationals?
- Is it in a neighbourhood that you like (services, people)
- How did you find your accommodation?
- Are you happy with your accommodation?

## **10. 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 go on any employer provided cultural activities or (shopping) trips?
- 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

**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 type of employment or employer?
- Has your employer(s) 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?