

Labour migration in Norway in times of crisis – the perfect guest workers?

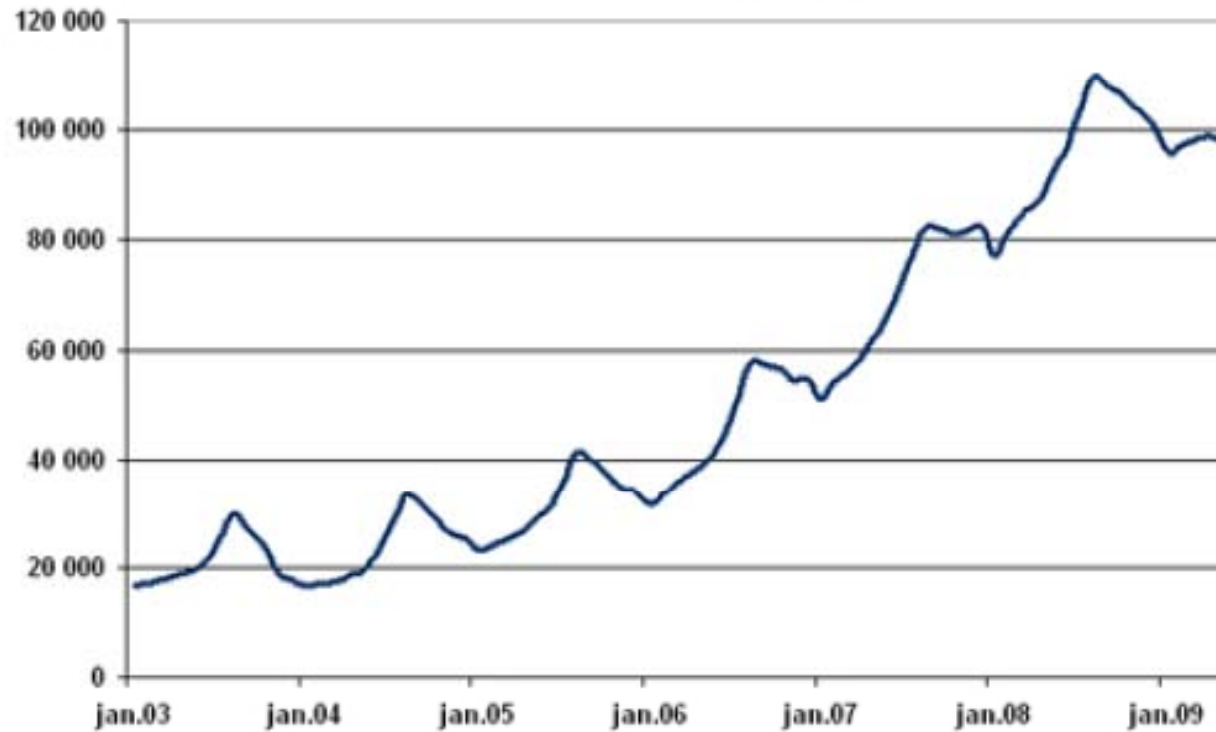
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Prominent questions

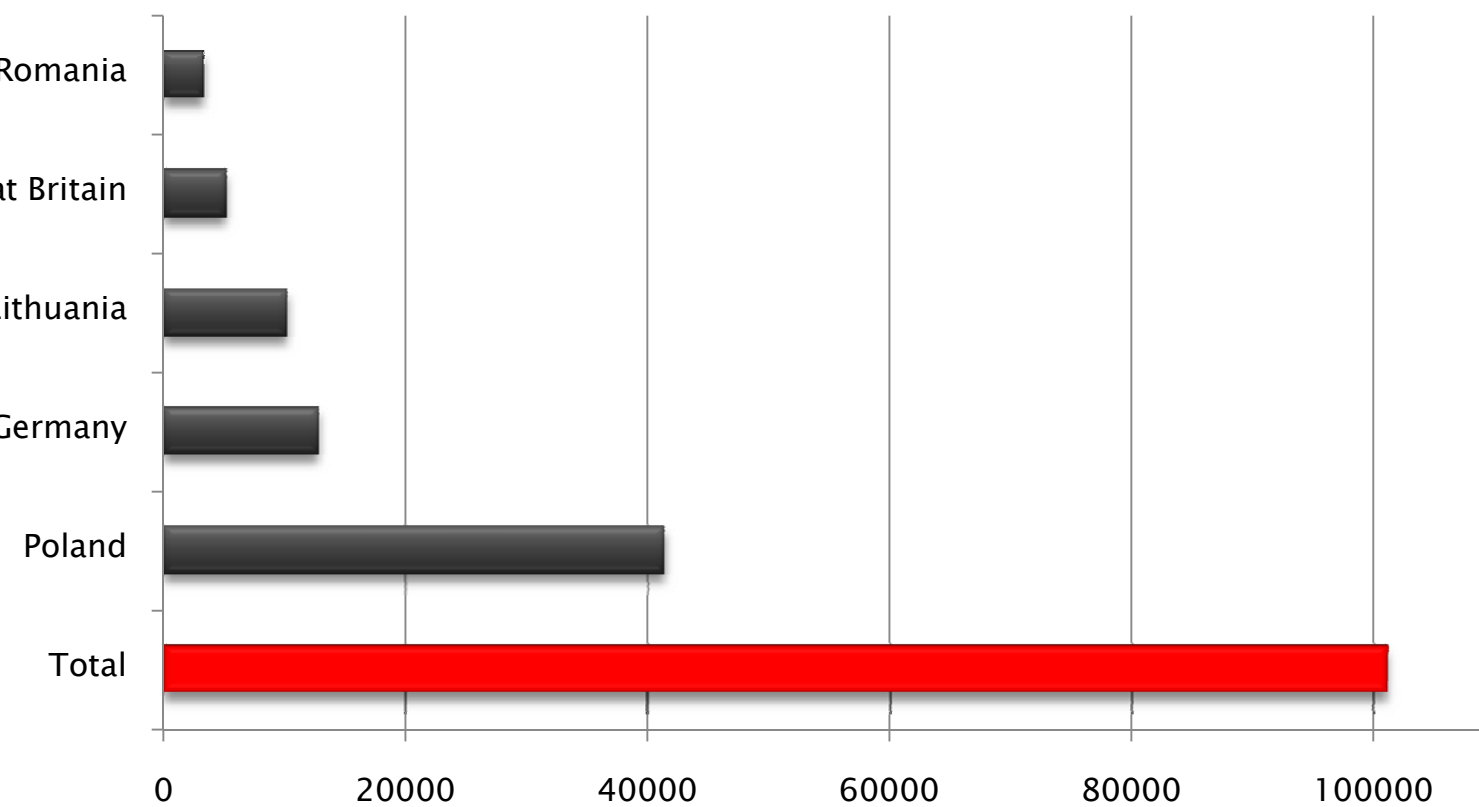
- ▶ How do labour migrants from the new EU countries respond to the economic recession in the Norwegian labour market?
- ▶ Which factors may contribute to an increased marginalisation of labour migrants?
- ▶ Is there a need for a recalibration of existing programmes and policies in Norway?

Valid work permits 2003–2009



Source: UDI

Valid work permits (August 2009)



Source: UDI

Registered unemployment among labour migrants (July 2009)

3156 polish labour migrants registered as unemployed. Increased by 460 % compared with July 2008.

700 labour migrants from the Baltic countries registered as unemployed. Increased by 500 % compared with July 2008.

Consequences of the economic recession

Labour migrants are particularly exposed to negative consequences of recessions due to factors such as short length of service, industry sensitivity to economic cycles, as well as lack of language skills, network and access to a public safety net.

Labour migrants have earlier been “invisible” in the Norwegian welfare system. Now, the system faces new challenges due to the recession. “Welfare tourism” is seen as a new threat.

Coping mechanisms

Different coping mechanisms depending on labour migrant category (Friberg and Tyldum 2007):

- The integrated labour migrant

- The legal labour migrant

- The illegal labour migrant

- The “casual worker”

Variations in:

- Staying or leaving

- Mobility

- Legal or illegal market

- Use of welfare services

Increased marginalisation?

From May 1st 2009, labour migrants can enter into Norway and stay/work for three months or six months as a person in search of work without a residence permit

→ Both probable positive and negative consequences of the abolishment of the transitional rules

A weak position in the labour market creates increased activity on the illegal market and increases chances of unregulated work conditions

Lack of right to introductory program and free language training increases chances of social dumping and marginalisation, especially in times of recession

A need for a recalibration of existing programmes and policies?

Offering free language training is an important precondition for integration and empowerment of labour migrants

Securing regulated work conditions

Integration in local communities

Building a safety net

Encounters with welfare workers; under consumption of welfare services is a larger problem than welfare tourism

A crisis or not a crisis?

"The crisis has been called-off"

Also the reality for labour migrants?