



Research Note 1/2010  
**Detailed analysis of the  
relative position of migrants**





Social Situation Observatory – Income distribution and living conditions  
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## Introduction

The research note analyses the occurrence of risk-of-poverty and deprivation among the migrant population and the characteristics of those concerned. It explores the factors underlying the higher risk of poverty generally experienced by migrants across the EU, including labour market participation and household composition. The analysis is based primarily on the EU-SILC and defines migrants in terms of their country of birth distinguishing between those born in another EU country and those born outside the EU.

Our focus is on the situation of migrants in their recipient country, thus we do not address the issues related to the sender country, including the issue of remittances. We explore the social exclusion of the migrants themselves and do not address the impact of the presence of these migrants on the domestic labour market. We focus only on migrants present in the country of residence, and not on potentially other family members elsewhere.

## Migrant population and their definition in the EU-SILC survey

### Migrant population in EU countries

Migrant groups are relatively heterogeneous across the EU. Most challenges are posed by illegal migrants, those third country nationals who do not fulfil the conditions of entry, stay or residence in the Member State where they live. Most countries have only rough estimates of the number of such migrants and, accordingly, they tend to be underrepresented in household surveys. Unofficial estimates range between 100 thousand and one million in Germany, 40-100 thousand in Austria and 310-570 thousand (0.5-1% of the population) in the UK<sup>1</sup>.

In *France*, most migrants come from outside the EU, mainly from Maghreb countries, and to a smaller extent from sub-Saharan countries (from former French African colonies)<sup>2</sup>. In *Germany*, 8.2% of residents are not citizens, and a large majority of these have arrived on the grounds of family reunification (typically from Turkey) or as ethnic German repatriates, 'Spätaussiedler', (from the Russian Federation). The largest migrant group is of Turkish origin, reaching 1.7 millions. A relatively large Moroccan and Turkish population lives in *Belgium* and *the Netherlands* as well. *Austria's* largest non-EU migrant group comes from Serbia, while in the Czech Republic Ukrainians dominate (103 thousands), and in *Hungary* those with Romanian citizenship (67 thousands), although mostly of Hungarian ethnic background. Accordingly, the definition of migrants by country of birth may not capture ethnic differences *per se*. Some of those born outside (and so regarded as migrants according to our definition), however, may have been living in the country for many years, e.g. the majority of the large Russian ethnic groups in *Estonia* and *Latvia* (26% and 31%, respectively)<sup>3</sup>. Partly because of this, some of the foreign born population may not be regarded as "migrant" by national governments. "Regardless of the non-citizen's status

<sup>1</sup> *ibid*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, country study on France by Karen Sohler. According to census data, 1.1 million migrants from Maghreb countries live in Metropolitan France.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*.



and country of birth of non-citizens, people who permanently resided in Latvia before 1990 are not defined as immigrants.”<sup>4</sup>

In *Slovenia*, the majority of migrant workers are workers from countries of the ex-Yugoslavia<sup>5</sup>. After 2004 the numbers of migrant workers from the new EU Member States increased, especially from Slovakia, while numbers of migrant workers from EU15 Member States and other countries are very small. In most cases work and employment of workers from EU countries is temporary.

The number of migrants from the Member States which entered the EU in 2004 also increased, in this case markedly after entry in the UK and Ireland, which together with Sweden were the only countries not to impose temporary restrictions on the ability of people from these countries to enter and take up employment. In this case, migrants were predominantly from Poland and the Baltic States as well as Slovakia.

### Measurement of migrants in the EU-SILC survey

The measurement of migrants is somewhat limited on the basis of the EU-SILC survey for various reasons. Conceptually, the current EU-SILC question only explores the stock of migrants, with no information on how long they have been in the country. In addition, there is no information on ethnic status of respondents. In addition, the categorization of the migrant groups into “EU” and “non-EU” is rather broad: and the groups distinguished too large and heterogeneous, though sample sizes would need to be much larger for any more detailed breakdown. The number of observations per country, therefore, especially for those born in another EU Member State, is very small in most countries.

The definition of migrants adopted is based on country of birth (grouped into EU or non-EU countries) and has, in addition, a household dimension, in the sense that migrants are defined as those who live in households where all adult members were born outside the country of residence. This enables us to attribute migrant status to children in the household, as there is no information on their country of birth in the dataset. Note that this definition of migrants includes those who have acquired citizenship in the meantime.

This definition based on country of birth is preferable to the alternative, citizenship-based definition. Problems in comparing migration data based on nationality (citizenship) stem from the different rules and requirements which govern the acquisition of citizenship in different countries. (The issues of measurement, together with an analysis of the groups based on the two alternative definitions, are discussed in more detail by Leikes and Zolyomi (2008)).

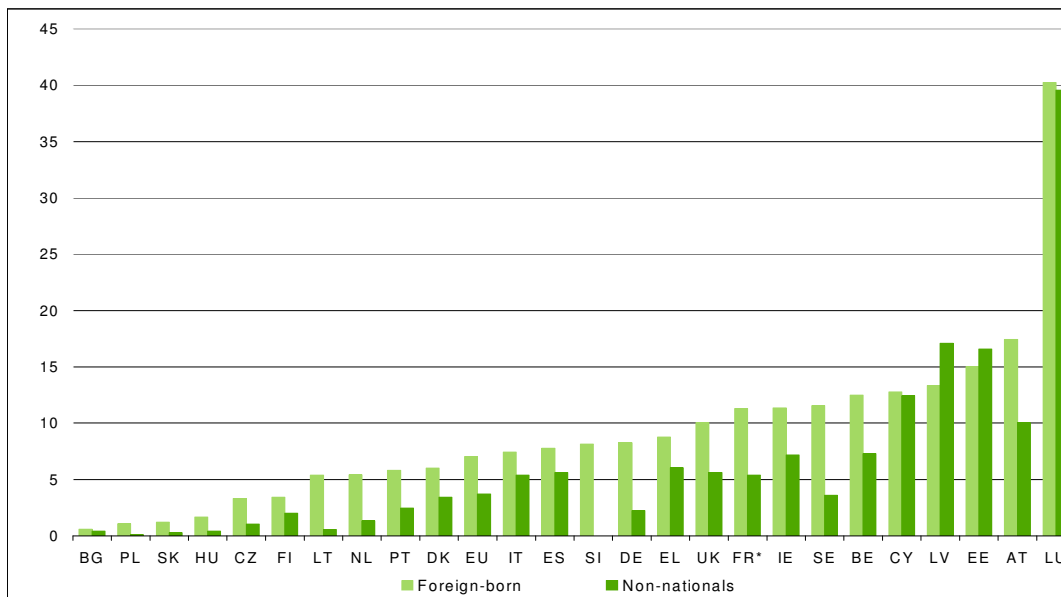
<sup>4</sup> See “Employment and working conditions of migrant workers — Latvia”:  
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/studies/tn0701038s/lv0701039q.htm> (Access date: 9 July 2010)

<sup>5</sup> They are mostly poorly educated and hold hard, low paid jobs in construction, metal manufacturing and similar sectors. See “Employment and working conditions of migrant workers — Slovenia”:  
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/studies/tn0701038s/si0701039q.htm> (Access date: 9 July 2010)



### Share of foreign-born and non-nationals, %, 2008

The share of migrants among the total population in EU countries ranges from around 0.5% in Bulgaria to around 40% in Luxembourg. In these two countries, together with Cyprus, it makes almost no difference whether we measure the share of migrants using the country of birth definition (foreign-born) or the citizenship-based definition (non-nationals). In the overall majority of countries, however, this is not the case which highlights the importance of the definition used to measure the migrant population.



The share of the foreign-born population accounts for 7% of the total population in the EU. Their share is relatively low, below 5%, in Finland and in some of the new member states, and with the exception of Luxembourg, the share of foreign-born never surpasses more than 18% (Austria).

Regarding the size of the foreign-born population, our estimates based on EU-SILC data suggest that it is the largest in Germany (6.7 million), followed by the United Kingdom (5.6 million), Italy (4.4 million) and Spain (3.5 million). Foreign-born migrants living in these countries make up 68% of the total foreign-born population in the EU. On the other hand, the number of foreign-born is relatively low, below 300 thousand, in the Baltic States, Finland, Hungary, Slovenia and Cyprus and is less than third of that in Slovakia and Bulgaria.

In Estonia and Latvia many former USSR citizens (mostly of Russian ethnicity) have a "non-citizen" status (created legally in the early 1990s), which explains why the number of non-nationals surpasses that of those foreign born.

### Definition of migrants (our lead indicator)

- based on country of birth, rather than citizenship
- children: it is generated based on adult household members' status (original EU-SILC variable: only for household members aged 16 or over)
- measures stock, not flow
- does not measure how long they have been in the country, thus no proxy for the extent of assimilation or integration
- migrants, but illegal or temporary migrants in particular are likely to be underrepresented compared to their actual share within the population



The EU-SILC 2008 used in this analysis covers 25 countries (EU27 except Malta and Romania which was omitted because of the sample size problems). Total sample size is 513.000, and the number of observations varies between 59 (Lithuania) and 4699 (Luxembourg) for EU migrants, and between 62 (Bulgaria) and 2433 (Germany) for non-EU migrants. We omitted Romania altogether due to the small number of observations). For Bulgaria, EU migrants are not distinguished for the same reason while for Slovakia, non-EU migrants were omitted. As there is no micro data available for France for 2008, the data used are from the 2007 survey. Migrants are not distinguished by country of birth in Germany, Estonia, Latvia and Slovenia, where all migrants are grouped together (under the category of "non-EU" migrants). (There is also no breakdown of foreign citizenship for these countries).<sup>6</sup>

Alternative data sources on these countries confirm that there is *no significant EU migrant population* in Estonia, Latvia and Slovenia, though there is a substantial population in Germany. For Germany, it is known that most EU migrants come from Poland as seasonal guest workers, and these are very likely to be underrepresented in surveys in general, but there are significant migrant groups from other EU countries as well.

**Migrant status information in the German EU-SILC: data quality issues**

Hauser (2008) examines data quality of the German EU-SILC, and highlights the problem of under-representation of particular population groups, especially of those with migrant backgrounds.

**Table: Differences between the Microcensus, EU-SILC and SOEP in showing the nationality of those aged 16 and above (%), 2005**

Nationality	Microcensus	EU-SILC	SOEP
German	91.3	90.5	92.8
Turkey	2.1	0.8	2.6
Old EU South (Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italy)	1.5	0.9	1.4
Old EU West/North + CH	1.0*	3.4	1.1
New EU	0.6	1.4	0.3
Other Europe	1.8	1.6	1.1
Others	1.6	1.5	0.7
All foreigners	8.7	9.5	7.2

Sources: SOEP 2005, Microcensus 2005 (SUF), EU-SILC 2005 (data access for guest researchers in the Federal Statistical Office Research Data Centre), calculations by W. Strengmann-Kuhn, cited by Hauser (2008)

\* the Microcensus includes the Baltic states and Malta, Slovenia and Cyprus

Hauser attributes this result to two main factors: the survey method and the sampling method.

- Germany is the only country which conducts the EU-SILC survey not by using interviews, but *entirely by post*. The problem according to Hauser, is that there is a higher drop-out rate when using postal survey and if the forms are not precisely filled out, it is more difficult to follow it up. Moreover, despite follow-up phone calls, many households, particularly in the bottom income groups, do not have land phones which makes phone follow-ups impossible. Secondly, the method of using the postal survey with a highly complex questionnaire might not reach those households whose command of German is insufficient. This is particularly relevant for households with migrant backgrounds.
- Currently households participating in the SILC are taken from a "permanent random sample of households willing to take part" (DSP) of those having participated in the Microcensus. Since only

<sup>6</sup> Alternative data sources on these countries confirm that there is *no significant EU migrant population* in Estonia, Latvia and Slovenia, though there is a significant population in Germany. For Germany, it is known that most EU migrants come from Poland as seasonal guest workers, and these are very likely to be underrepresented in surveys in general, but there are significant migrant groups from other EU countries as well.



10% of participants in the Microcensus (comprising 1% of the population) agreed to participate in a further survey, there is a great risk of distorted selection. According to Frick and Krell (2010), it is mostly households in the middle income range that show a high willingness to participate while households with a non-German head of household tend to drop out of the sample relatively soon or to not agree to participate in any further surveys.

Source: Hauser (2008)<sup>7</sup>, Frick and Krell (2010)<sup>8</sup>

Our calculations are often affected by the problem of small numbers of observations. This means that data disaggregated by education, work intensity, employment status, household size and households type etc. are reliable only for a limited number of countries. Data with reliability problems are indicated in the relevant tables and figures and are inherent part of the interpretation of the results.

## Risk of social exclusion: overlap between alternative measures

One of the headline targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy is the reduction of poverty by aiming to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty or exclusion. The indicator used is a combination of three indicators: people living in households with very low work intensity, at risk of poverty after social transfers and severe material deprivation. We explored the extent to which foreign-born EU population is at risk of exclusion according to these indicators. According to our estimates, based on EU-SILC data, we find that altogether 10.5 million non-EU migrants and 2.2 million EU migrants are at risk of exclusion (being at risk of poverty, severely deprived or living in households with very low work intensity), in contrast to 106.8 million “local” inhabitants (see Figure 1). This suggests that one out of ten people at risk of exclusion have a migrant background in the EU.

The largest group within those at risk of exclusion is those at risk of poverty. Our calculations suggest that there are 5.9 million non-EU migrants, 1.4 million EU migrants at risk of poverty, compared to the 59.7 million individuals at risk of poverty who were born in the country of residence.

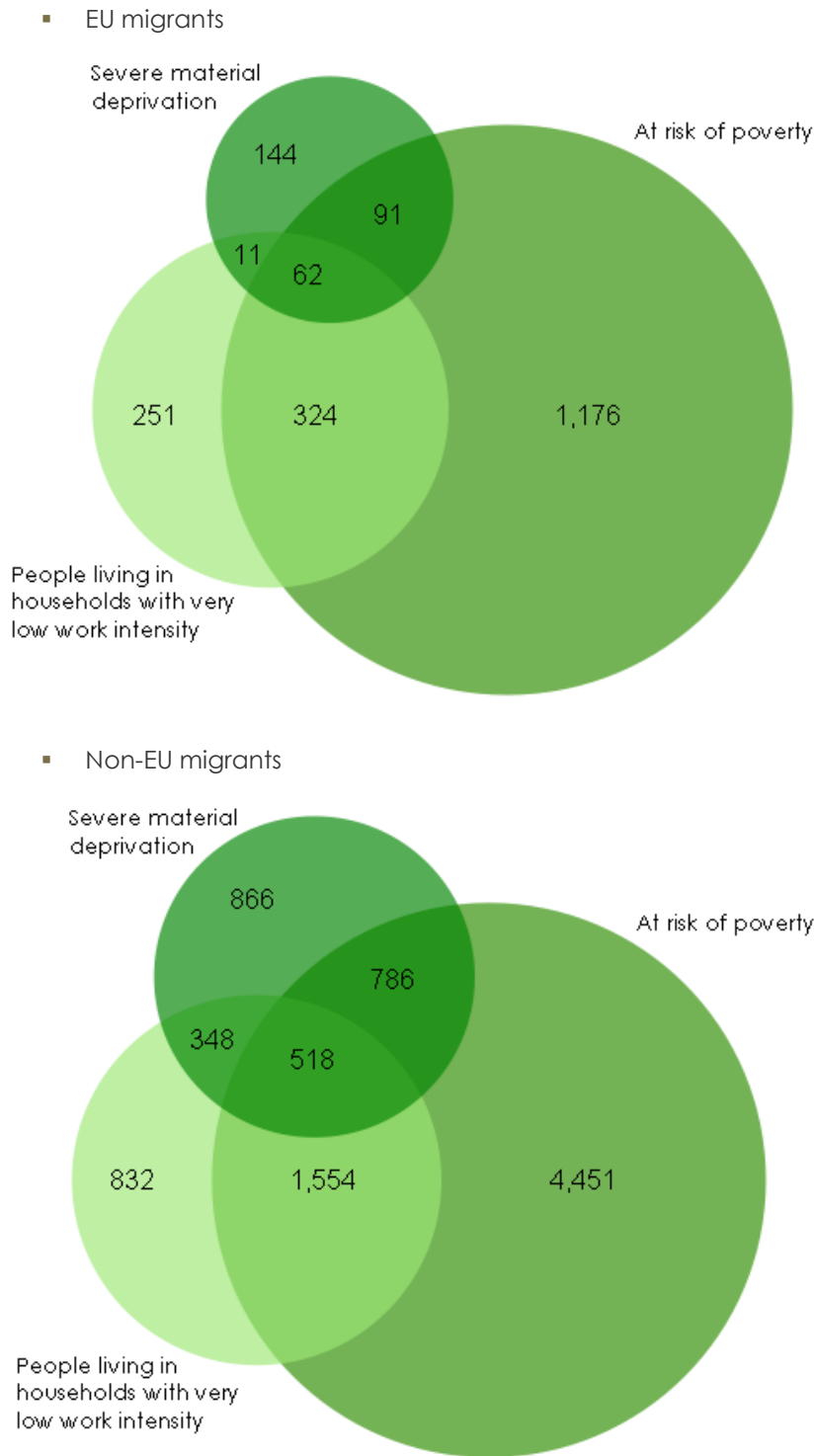
Migrants are more likely to be socially excluded than the local population. The share of migrants at risk of exclusion or poverty is relatively high. On average, 26% of non-EU migrants and 19% of EU migrants are at risk of poverty, compared to 17% of the “local” population.

<sup>7</sup> Hauser, R. (2008) Problems of the German Contribution to EU-SILC – A research perspective, comparing EU-SILC, Microcensus and SOEP, SOEP Papers 86, DIW Berlin

<sup>8</sup> Frick, J.R. and Krell, K. (2010) Measuring Income in Household Panel Surveys for Germany: A Comparison of EU-SILC and SOEP, SOEP Papers 265, DIW Berlin

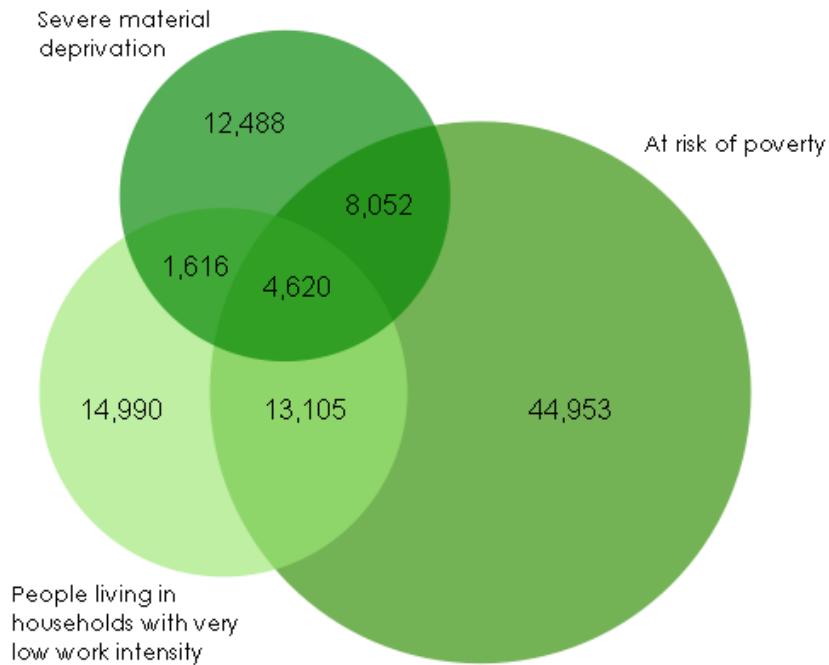


**Figure 1: Overlaps between at risk of poverty, material deprivation and low work intensity, by country of birth, in the EU (thousands of individuals), 2007 income year**





Local population



Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008

Notes: The calculations refer to 26 countries (EU27 except Malta)

Data for France refers to previous year {EU-SILC 2007 (2006 income year)}

EU: born in any EU country except country of residence

Non-EU: born in any other country

Local: born in the same country as country of residence

At-risk-of-poverty = those with an equivalised disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60 % of the national median.

Low work intensity = people living in households where those aged 20-59 worked less than 20% of their work potential over the past year.

Severe material deprivation = people living in households severely constrained by a lack of resources, defined as being deprived of at least 4 of 9 items: not being able to afford i) to pay rent or utility bills, ii) to keep home adequately warm, iii) to face unexpected expenses, iv) to eat meat, fish or a protein equivalent every second day, v) a week's holiday away from home, vi) car, vii) washing machine, viii) colour TV, ix) telephone.

Cumulative disadvantage with respect to all three indicators affects only 1-2% of both migrant groups, just as in the case of the local population (62 thousand EU migrants, 518 thousand non-EU migrants and 4.6 million "locals").

There is a relatively large overlap between at risk of poverty and low work intensity in all three groups (but especially for non-EU migrants). There is a smaller overlap between at risk of poverty and material deprivation as well as between material deprivation and low work intensity.



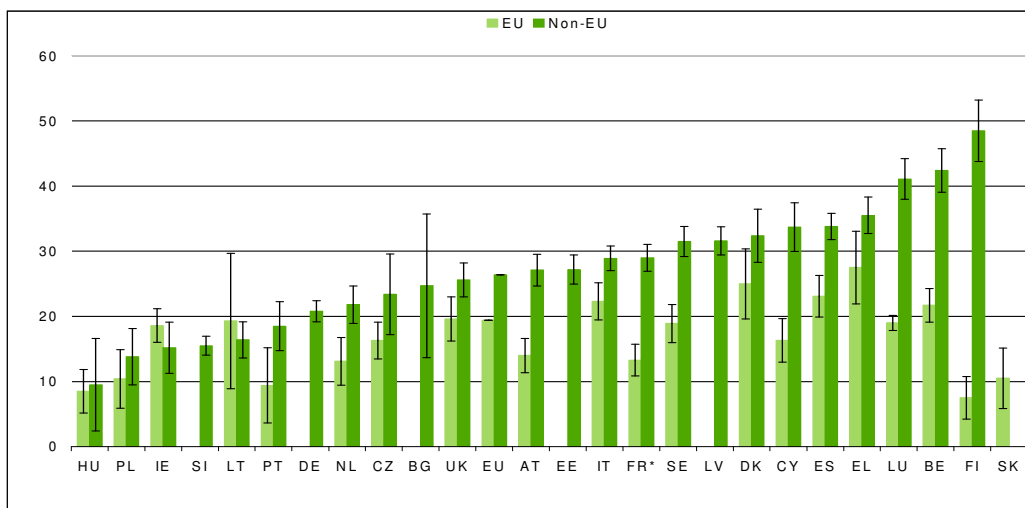
## At-risk-of-poverty

### Situation in 2007

The migrant population, particularly those born outside the EU tend to have a higher risk of poverty than other sections of the community, in some countries, a much higher risk. The at-risk-of-poverty rate is as high as 40% or more in Belgium, Luxembourg and Finland and also reaches 30% in Denmark, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Latvia and Sweden (Figure 2). Overall the at-risk-of-poverty rate of non-EU migrants exceeds 30% in 9 out of 25 countries, while it is between 20% and 30% in another 9.

The estimated rates as such, however, need to be treated with caution, as the estimates are relatively uncertain because of the small number of observations. Calculating a conventional 95% confidence interval for each country (meaning that there is a 95% probability of the true figure being within the calculated range) indicates that there is an average range of about 7-8 percentage points around the at-risk-of-poverty rate within which the true figure is likely to lie (Figure 2). There is great variation across countries. For example, for Germany, the range is 19-22%, while for non-EU migrants in Bulgaria it is 14-36%<sup>9</sup>.

**Figure 2: At-risk-of-poverty rate by migrant groups (%), 2007 (income year)**



Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008

\*Data for France refers to previous year {EU-SILC 2007 (2006 income year)}

Notes: Estimates based on less than 20 observations have been omitted

EU: born in any EU country except country of residence

Non-EU: born in any other country

Local: born in the same country as country of residence

Data for the 'non-EU' population in Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Latvia (LV) and Slovenia (SI) includes EU migrants as well.

These confidence intervals highlight not only the "uncertainty" of the point estimates of at-risk-of-poverty rates, but also that the estimated rates may not be statistically very different between countries. The risk of poverty, for example, is estimated to be lower for both migrant groups in Hungary (8.5% and 9.5% for EU and non-EU migrants, respectively) than in Poland (10.4% and 13.8%). But once the confidence intervals are taken into account,

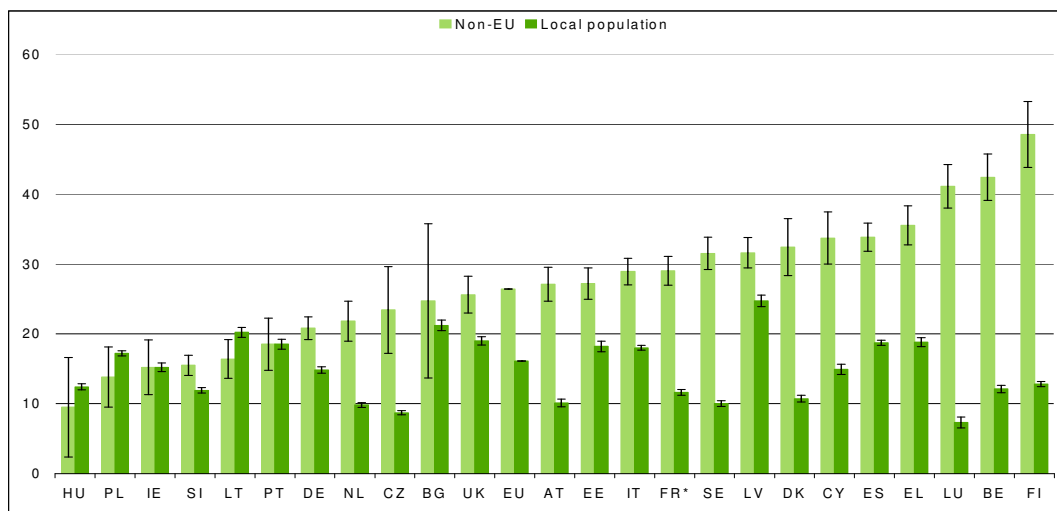
<sup>9</sup> This is due to the small number of observations. In Bulgaria, there are altogether 62 non-EU migrants, of which 17 are at risk of poverty.



the two figures are not statistically different and it is not possible to say that one is higher or lower than the other. On the other hand, it is clear that the proportion of non-EU migrants at risk of poverty in Belgium, Luxembourg and Finland is the highest in the EU.

The disadvantage of non-EU migrants also tends to be large in *relative* terms. Compared to the local population, there is at least a threefold difference between the at-risk-of-poverty rates in Belgium, Luxembourg, Finland and Sweden (Figure 3). In a number of other countries, including the Czech Republic, France, Cyprus, the Netherlands and Austria, non-EU migrants face between 2 and 3 times higher risk of poverty than the local population. Of these countries, Austria has the largest non-EU migrant population, with a share of 12%, highlighting the social importance of this problem. At the other extreme is the Czech Republic with its very small non-EU migrant population (below 1%). Compared to EU-migrants, there is at least a twofold difference in the at-risk-of-poverty of non-EU migrants in Belgium, France, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Portugal and Finland. In Finland, the at-risk-of-poverty rate of non-EU migrants is 6.5 times higher than rate for EU-migrants. Note, however, that the share of non-EU migrants is only 2% in Finland. All these forms of relative disadvantage, but particularly the drawback of non-EU migrants compared to the local population, signal major social cleavages.

**Figure 3: At-risk-of-poverty rate of non-EU migrants compared to the local population (%), 2007 (income year)**



Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008

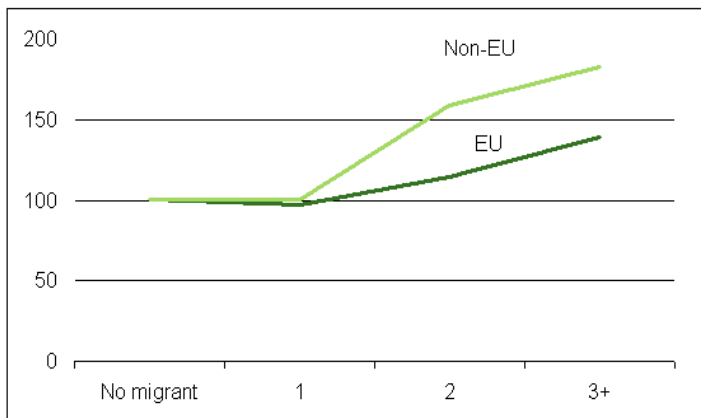
Notes: see Figure 1

In contrast to the norm, migrants seem to have a more favourable situation than the local population in a few countries, which are not typical destination countries. In Lithuania, Hungary, Poland and Portugal, the at-risk-of-poverty rates of both EU and non-EU migrants are lower than that of the local population. All of these countries have relatively small migrant groups, much below the EU average.

The risk of poverty increases with the number of migrants within the household, as shown by Figure 4. The increase is more pronounced in the case of non-EU migrants, where those households with three or more migrant members tend to have a poverty rate twice as high as those where there is none or only one migrant. The relative poverty rates are 33% for the former groups, compared to 17% for the latter. It should be noted that households with only one migrant member have no higher risk of poverty than the average.



**Figure 4: At-risk-of-poverty rate by number of migrants in the household compared to households with no migrant members, EU average, % difference, 2007 (income year)**



Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008

Notes: see Figure 1

EU average: refers to 25 countries (EU27 except Malta and Romania)

Overall, the highest risk of poverty is for those living in households with 3 or more non-EU migrants (with a poverty rate of 33%), followed by households with 3 or more mixed (both EU and non-EU) migrants (27%) and households with 2 non-EU migrants (26%).

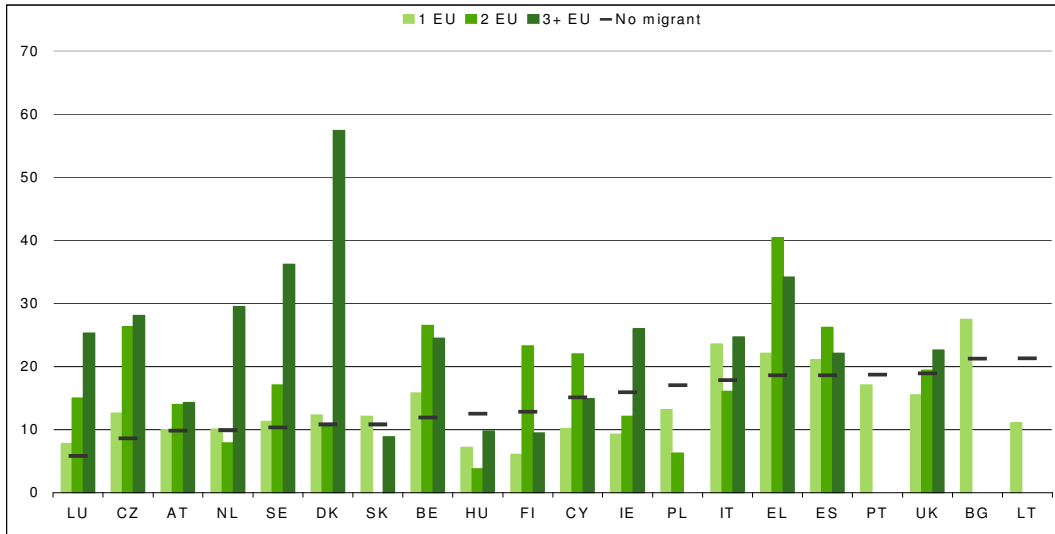
The disadvantage of households with a relatively large number of EU migrants is particularly high in Luxembourg, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark, where the at-risk-of-poverty rate for such households is at least three times more than that of households with no migrant members (Figure 5).

The relative disadvantage of households with non-EU migrants is much greater (Figure 5). In Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Luxembourg, Finland, Sweden and Austria, households with three or more non-EU migrants have a risk of poverty of at least three times more than that for those with no migrants. In Luxembourg, the relative difference is 9 times, while in Finland it is 5 times. It should be noted, however, that there is no significant additional poverty risk for non-EU born population in the Baltic States (where most migrants are Russian born), and Poland, Hungary and Portugal (where the numbers concerned are small).

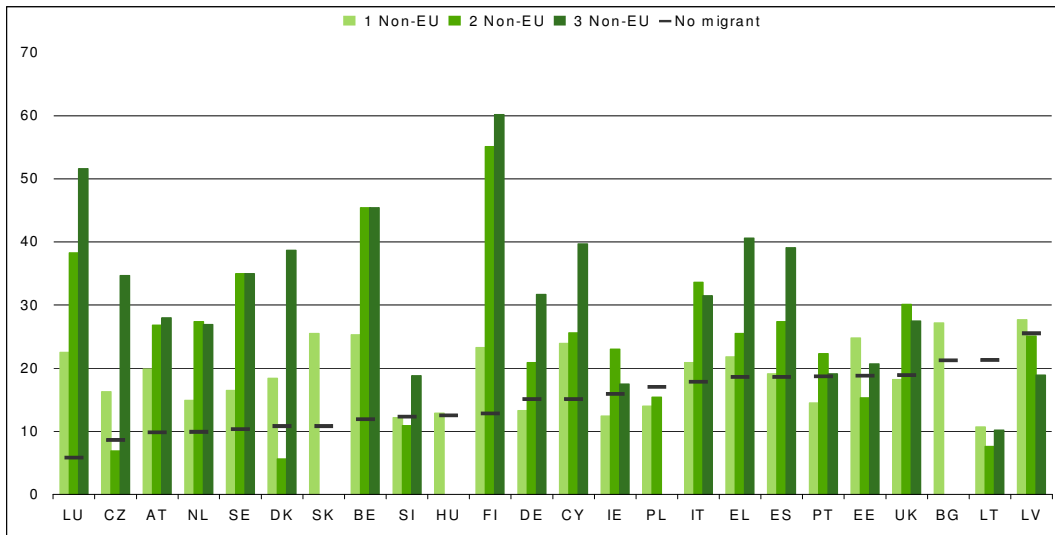


**Figure 5: At-risk-of-poverty rate by number of migrants in the household (%), 2007 (income year)**

- Number of EU migrants in the household



- Number of non-EU migrants in the household



Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008

Notes: see Figure 1

No observations on EU migrants in Germany, Estonia, Latvia and Slovenia



## Trends in the at-risk-of-poverty rate

Though data are consistent in principle, there is only a relatively short time series: 2004-2007, which is inevitably affected by the small sample size of the EU-SILC. There are problems with the reliability of the data because of the small number of observations. The margin of error is therefore wide, especially for 2005 in some countries<sup>10</sup>. Overall, there is little evidence of changes over time. We highlight those countries where there is a statistically significant change over this period.

There was probably a decline in the risk of poverty in Ireland among both EU and non-EU migrants (from 26% to 19% in case of EU migrants and from 33% to 15% in case of non-EU migrants) and in Finland among EU-migrants (from 16% to 8%).

There as a probable increase in the risk of poverty in Cyprus and Finland among non-EU migrants (from 25% to 34% in the former and from 30% to 49% in the latter), though for the latter, the figures fluctuate a lot and the “increase” only holds if the 2004 values are correct.

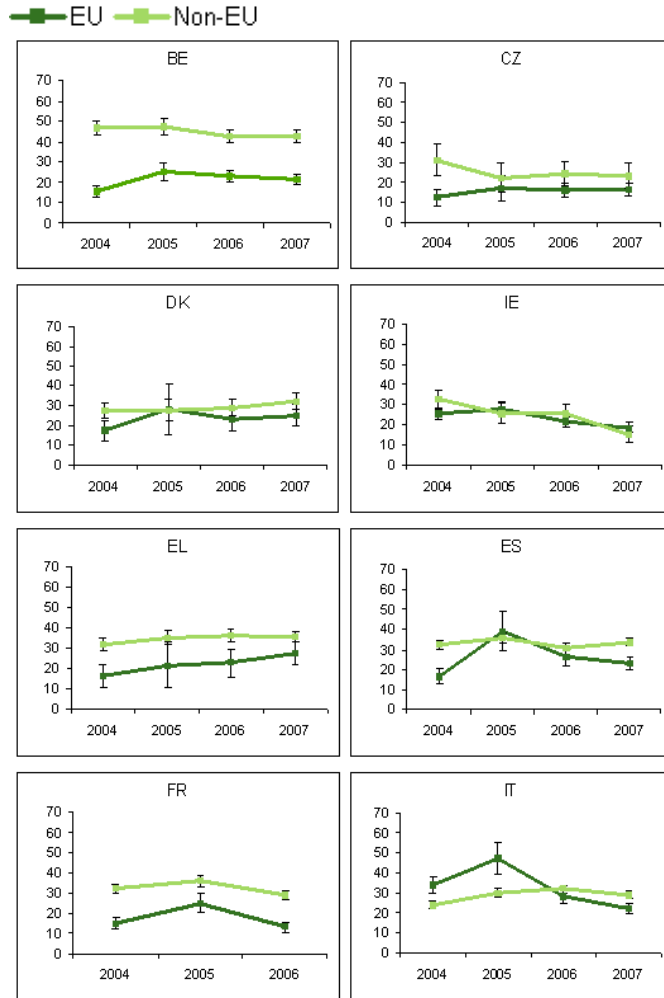
In the case of Germany, Estonia, and Latvia, countries where EU and non-EU migrants are grouped together, there is evidence of an increase over period. In Germany, the at-risk-of-poverty rate of migrants has increased from 16% to 21%. This, however, crucially depends on the reliability of the figure at the start of the period, 2004, as the rate has not changed since then. In Estonia, there is an increase from 20% to 27%, and in Latvia from 19% to 32%. Note, however, that there are large blips in both countries in 2005, when the at-risk-of-poverty rate appears to have peaked at 30% and 35%, respectively.

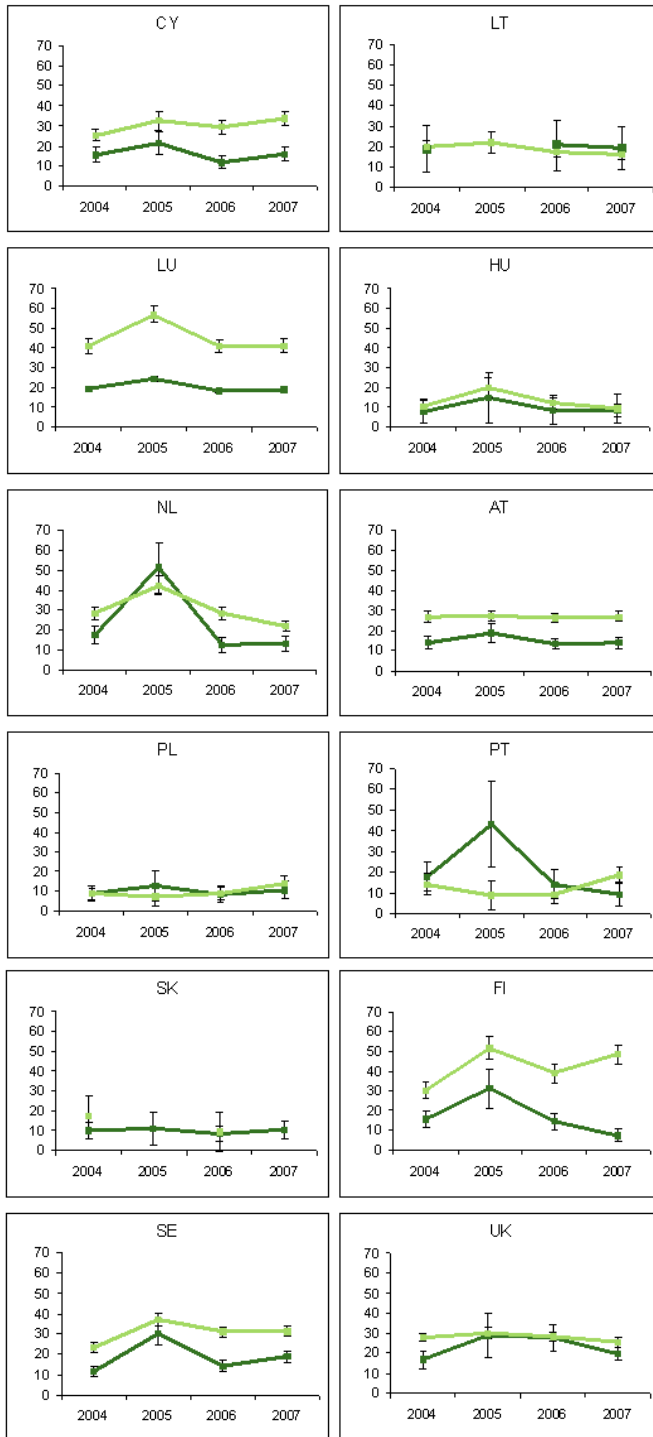
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<sup>10</sup> It is a measurement issue which specifically affects migrant groups in these countries. We did *not* find a similar “blip” for the local population in these countries. We did not find any explanation in the data documentation on why this particular issue occurs in the 2005 income year (EU-SILC 2006) and in this group of countries.



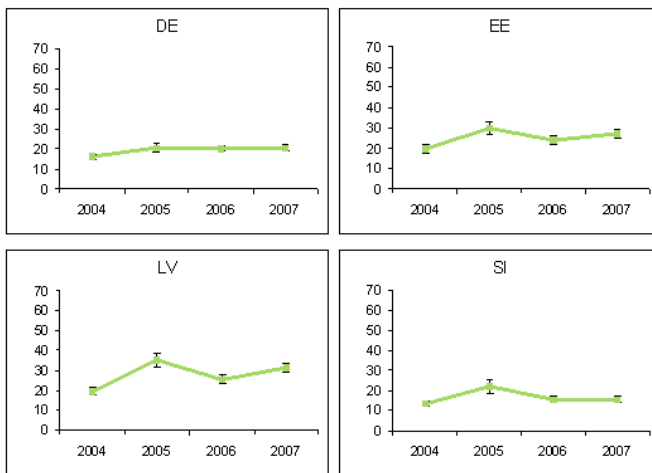
Figure 6: Trends in at-risk-of-poverty rates among migrant groups, 2004-2008







■ EU and Non-EU migrants together



Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008, 2007, 2006 and 2005  
 Notes: See Figure 1

## Poverty by age group

### Child poverty – the risk of poverty among households with children

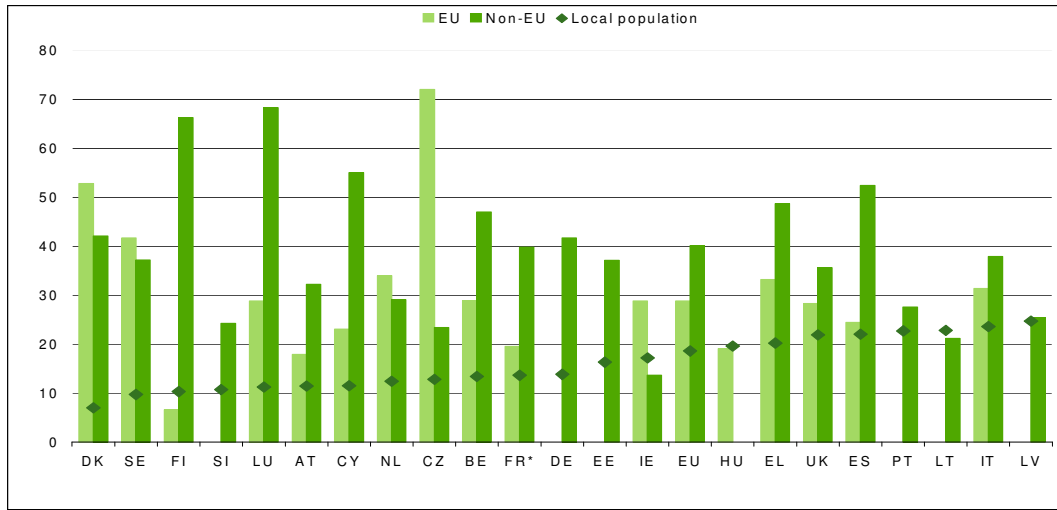
Children with migrant background are exposed to a particularly high risk of poverty. As children usually do not have incomes of their own, they are assumed to share the income of their parents and others in the household. In the majority of countries children with migrant background, have a risk-of-poverty rate of over 30%. In, Spain, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Finland, at least half of the children born outside the EU live in households with incomes below the poverty threshold. In Spain, this is partly attributable to the relatively large share of children in the migrant population (23-24%) as compared to “local” children (who account for 17-18% of the population born in the country). In general, however, the higher poverty risk of migrant children is not attributable to their larger number. The calculations suggest that the share of children within both the non-EU and EU migrant groups is smaller on average than within the local population (18.1% and 12.4%, versus 19.6%, respectively).

The at-risk-of-poverty rates of children with a migrant background are not only high in absolute terms, but also relative to “local” children. In most countries, the risk of poverty is much higher among non-EU migrant children than among local children. In Denmark, Finland and Luxembourg, non-EU migrant children have a risk of poverty risk six times higher than local children.

What types of household are exposed to a high risk of poverty in the different groups? Are there specific features of the migrant communities in this respect? Taking the EU as a whole, it is among EU migrants and the local population, that children with lone parents tend to be most at risk of poverty (47% and 39%, respectively). Lone-parent households face a similar risk of poverty among non-EU migrants (48%), however, the specific feature of this migrant group is the high poverty rate of “large” households with three or more children (52%).

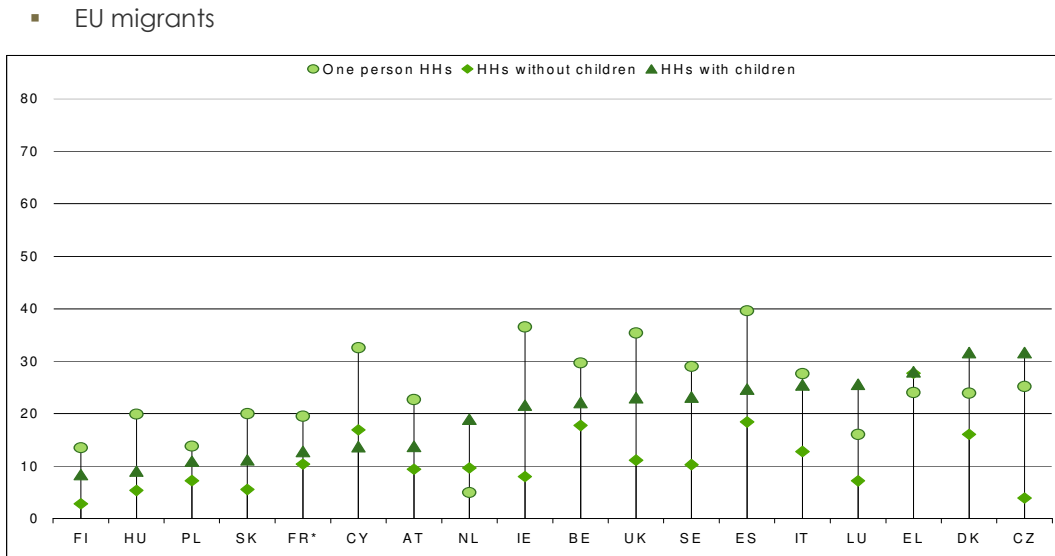


**Figure 7: At-risk-of-poverty of children (aged 0-17) by country of birth of parents (%), 2007 (income year)**



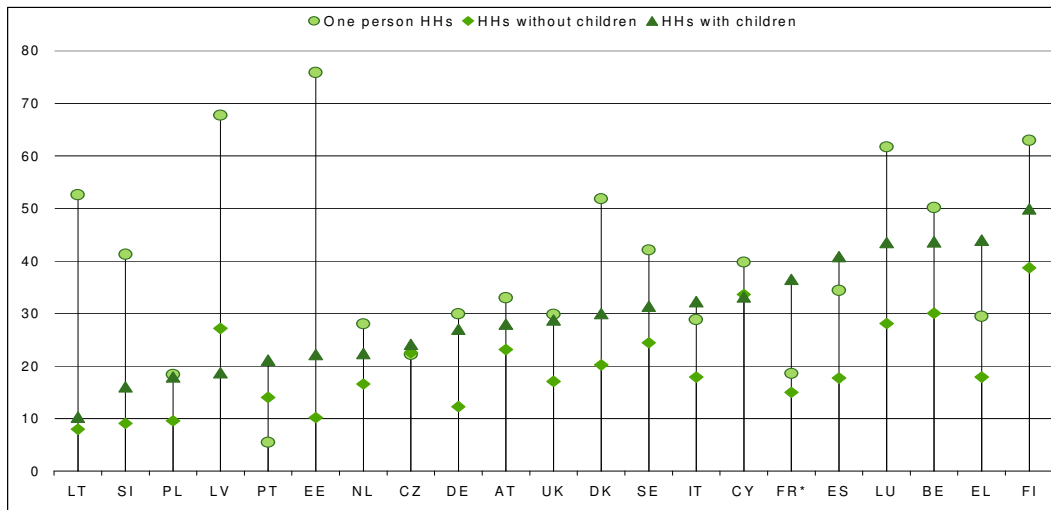
Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008  
 Notes: see Figure 1

**Figure 8: At-risk-of-poverty by household type and by country of birth (%), 2007 (income year)**

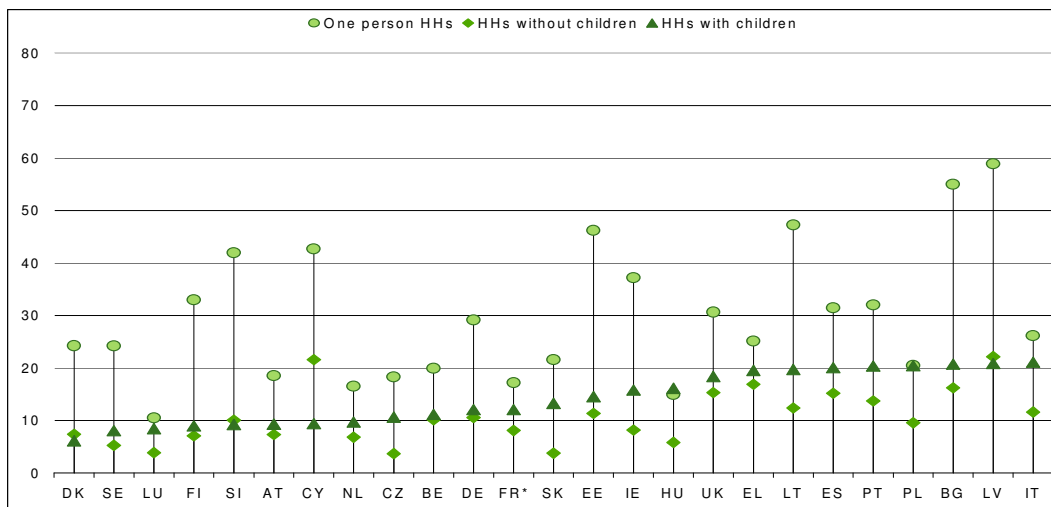




■ Non-EU migrants



■ Local population



Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008

Notes: see Figure 1

Households without children exclude one person households

Living alone seems to have a financial “penalty” attached to it. One person households tend to have a higher risk of poverty than other households<sup>11</sup>. The risk is particularly high among non-EU migrants. In Estonia, Latvia, Finland, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Denmark and Belgium, more than half of those in a one person household live on income below the poverty threshold. In the three Baltic States it is due to the high number of the elderly population and the particularly high risk of poverty among them (see Figure 9).

Households with dependent children also have a higher risk of poverty than those without children,, particularly so in the case of non-EU migrants. More than 30% of non-EU migrants live in households with dependent children are at risk of poverty in 10 out of 21 countries.

<sup>11</sup> We grouped household types together to these three categories due to the small number of observations. Some specific household types (household with three or more children) might have a higher risk of poverty than single person households, but we cannot test this with the data available.



The at-risk-of-poverty rate is particularly high, over 40%, in Finland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Greece and Spain. The situation of EU migrant households with children is more favourable.

We also explored the demographic composition of migrant groups to see whether there were any striking differences across countries. In Ireland and Belgium, over 70% of non-EU migrants live in households with children, while in Germany, Estonia Lithuania and Latvia, this figure is only between 32 and 40%. In Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Italy, Austria, Finland, Sweden and the UK, the share of non-EU migrant children is over 30% exceeding that of the local children. On the other hand, in a number of countries, the Baltic States, Germany and Slovenia especially, there is a relatively large share of elderly among the migrant population.

Non-EU migrants are more likely than average to live in larger, atypical households (with more than two adults) across the EU. In Belgium, Denmark, Spain and Austria, the share of non-EU migrants living in large households reaches 30%.

### **Elderly migrants**

Elderly migrants (aged 65 and over) have a relatively high risk of poverty in Spain, the UK, France, the Czech Republic, Belgium, Luxembourg, Sweden and Denmark. However, there are a few countries, where the reverse is the case, including Cyprus, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia and Hungary. In Portugal and Cyprus, non-EU elderly migrants appear to have a much lower risk of poverty than local elderly. Similarly, in a number of countries, including the Netherlands, Poland, Austria and Italy, EU migrants also have a lower poverty risk than the local population. This, however, does not hold for non-EU elderly migrants in these countries.

There is considerable variation in the relative situation of the two migrant groups compared to each other. There are a few countries (Cyprus, Spain, Lithuania and France) where the at-risk-of-poverty rate of EU migrants exceeds that of the non-EU elderly. In a number of others, however, including the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium and Sweden, non-EU migrants have a higher poverty risk. In the Netherlands, the poverty risk of non-EU elderly is 7 times higher than that of the elder EU migrants.

The situation of elderly migrants compared to people of working age has a few specific features. The typical life cycle tendency, of the elderly having a higher risk than those of working age, does not seem to hold among the migrant population in the majority of countries. Elderly migrants tend not to have higher, but lower risk of poverty in most countries. Exceptions are the Baltic States and Spain.

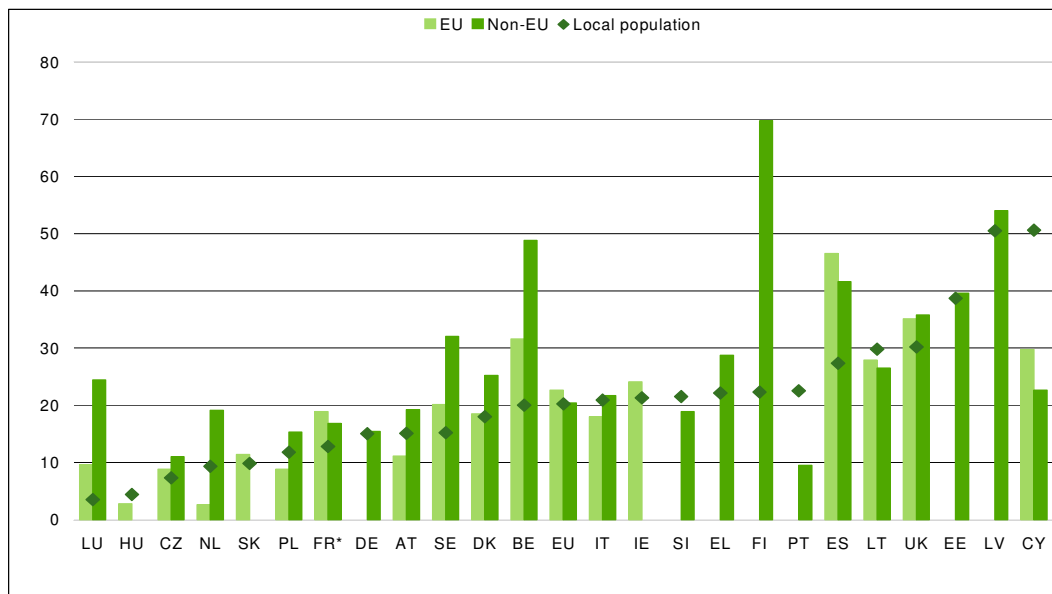
Elderly migrants born in another EU country tend to have higher risk of poverty than those of working age in Ireland, Cyprus, Slovakia, Sweden and the UK. Note that some countries may have a large proportion of pension-aged population in the migrant community. For example, in Poland the share of those aged 65 and over among EU migrants is 69.5% and among non-EU migrants 72.4%. The large share of elderly also implies a large share of single-person households in the country.

Older people living alone are typically more at risk of poverty than those living in a couple household. Due to the small number of observations, only EU average figures are presented here, which indicate no significant difference between the migrant and the local population in this regard. Typically both migrant and local elderly tend to live in a



couple household. The only countries where more than half of elderly EU migrants live alone are Lithuania, Poland and Portugal.

**Figure 9: At-risk-of-poverty rate of the elderly (aged 65+) by migrant status (%), 2007 (income year)**



Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008  
 Notes: see Figure 1

## Work intensity and education: poverty of the working age migrant population

### Work intensity

The risk of poverty is strongly correlated with the work intensity of the household, and it is more so among migrant households. Individuals living in low work intensity migrant households (0-0.49) face poverty risks of 41-48% (EU and non-EU migrants, respectively), while the at-risk-poverty rate among those in local households with similarly low work intensity is lower, 34%. The higher poverty rate of migrants can be explained by their limited eligibility to social benefits (including unemployment benefits, e.g. due to the lack of the required contribution history).

There is a similar, albeit somewhat smaller, difference in case of households with high work intensity (0.81-1.0): migrant individuals face an at-risk-of-poverty rate of 6-8%, in contrast to the 5% rate of the local population. In this case, the job characteristics of migrants may provide an explanation: they are more likely to do jobs which are lower paid. As shown by earlier evidence<sup>12</sup>, despite the higher levels of education of migrant than the locally-born population, migrants are less likely to work as managers and are more likely to do low-skilled manual jobs.

<sup>12</sup> The calculations were based on the Labour Force Survey. Source: Lelkes, O. and E. Zólyomi (2008, p. 11). Social inclusion of migrants and their 2nd generation descendants. Research Note of the Social Inclusion and Income Distribution network of the European Observatory on the Social Situation and Demography. 3/2008. Brussels, European Commission.

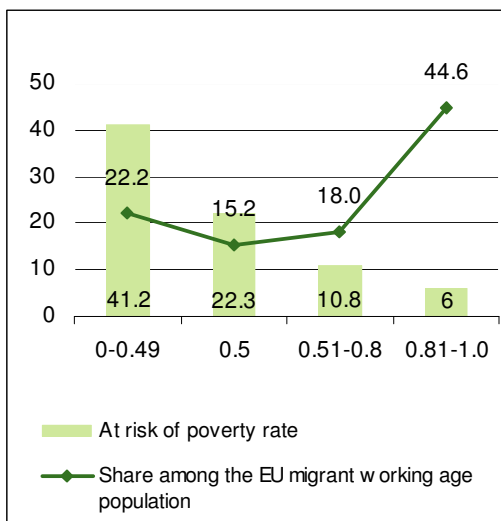


Non-EU migrants are more likely to become poor: the relative disadvantage of non-EU migrants prevail across all categories of work intensity. The at-risk-of poverty rate of non-EU migrants exceeds the rate of EU migrants by 20-30%, and the rate of the local population by 40-80%, reaching 80% in the middle categories of work intensity (0.50 and 0.51-0.80).

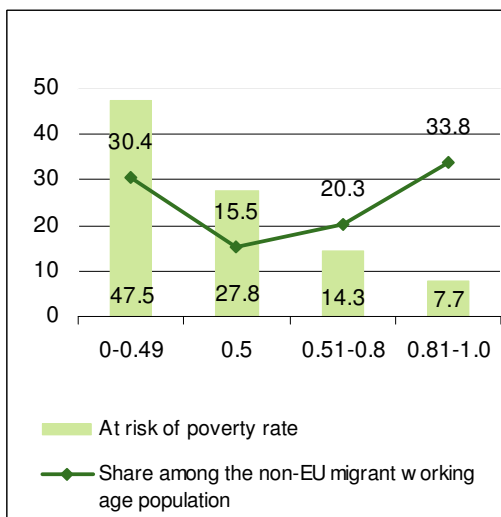
The risk of poverty is the highest in absolute terms among non-EU migrants with low work intensity (0-0.49), reaching 47.5%. In addition, nearly one in three non-EU migrants live in households with low work intensity. This figure is also high in comparative terms (30.4% versus 22.2% of EU migrants and 26.1% of the local population).

**Figure 10: At-risk-of-poverty rate by work intensity, EU average, 2008**

- EU migrants

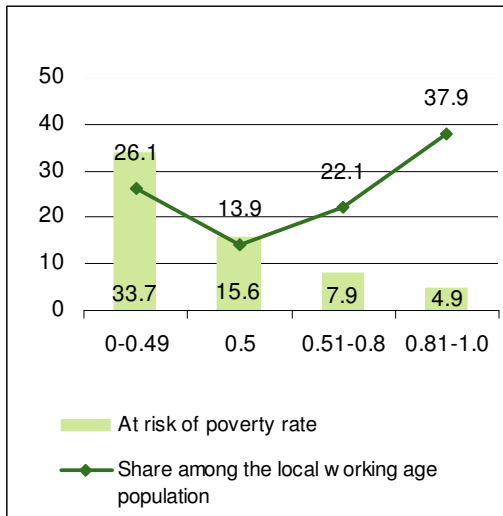


- Non-EU migrants





Local population

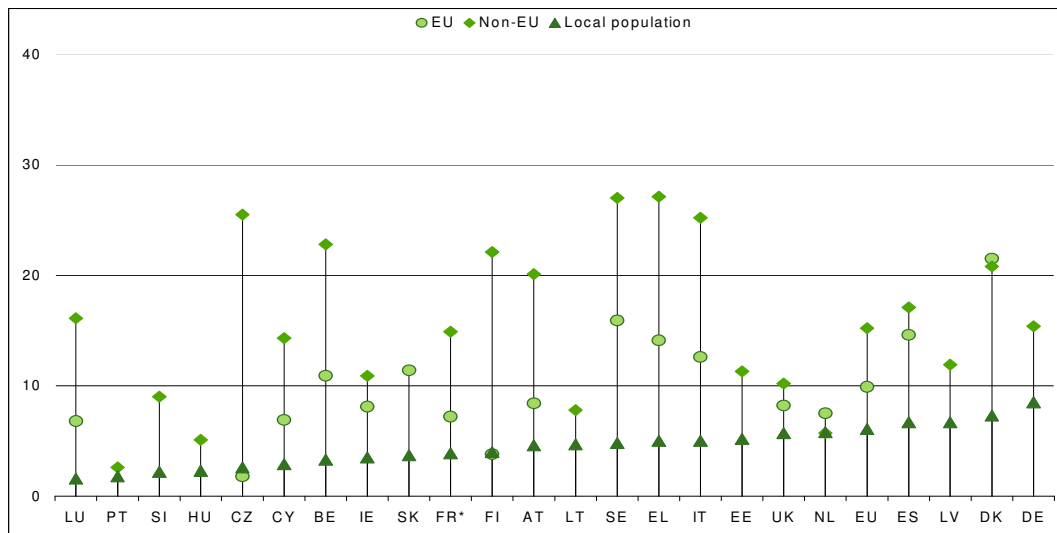


Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008  
 Notes: see Figure 1

### Educational attainment

With respect to education, there are two simplistic hypotheses in relation to migration, that which assumes a brain-drain and that which postulates that migrants are educationally disadvantaged. Although we cannot examine migration flows as such, we can observe the educational attainment of migrant groups. What is the educational attainment of these as compared with people born in the country?

**Figure 11: At-risk-of-poverty rate of those with tertiary education by migrant status (%), 2007 (income year)**



Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008  
 Notes: see Figure 1  
 Migrants aged 25-64

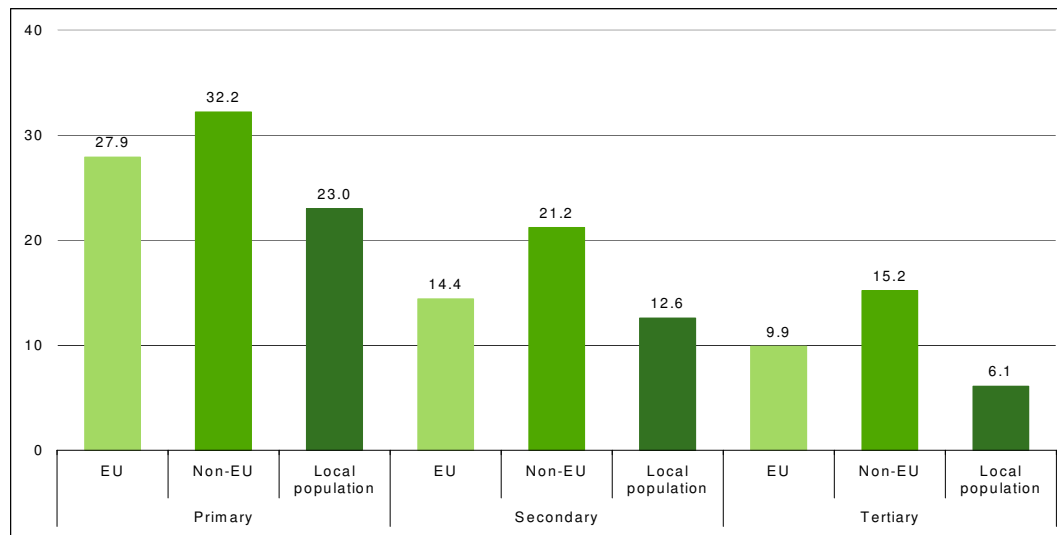


The simplistic idea that migrants have lower education is contradicted by the data, as in a number of countries the share of migrants with tertiary education is larger than that of the local population (Figure 11). This holds for both EU and non-EU migrants in Denmark, Ireland, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Hungary, Portugal, Finland and Sweden. In addition, it holds for EU migrants in Greece, Spain and Austria, and for non-EU migrants in the Czech Republic. Overall, there are only a minority of countries (Belgium, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Poland) where the local population has a larger share of university graduates than the foreign-born population. In addition, in Lithuania and Poland, it is partly due to the age structure: these countries have a larger of elderly foreign-born population, who tend to have a lower educational attainment level than younger cohorts.

Ireland and Finland seem to attract a particularly large share of highly educated foreign-born population, perhaps because of being knowledge-based economies, with high investment in R&D, and a strong presence of multinational companies in the IT sector, all of which require highly educated workers.

The strong presence of highly educated migrants in other countries might be explicable in terms of the fact that it is often the highly educated who are the most likely to migrate, given their likely superior language skills, better access to information and higher mobility. They might have a better chance of integration and a longer stay in the country. (Part of this phenomenon, however, may simply be a statistical artefact, as lower educated migrants may be underrepresented in the survey, especially if they do not have a permanent address, if they work illegally or on a seasonal basis.)

**Figure 12: At-risk-of-poverty rate by educational attainment and by migrant status, EU average (%), 2007 (income year)**



Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008

Notes: see Figure 1

EU: refers to 24 countries (EU27 except Bulgaria, Malta and Romania)

Migrants aged 25-64

If the analysis is extended to other levels of education:

- Countries where both EU and non-EU migrants tend to be better educated (have post secondary or tertiary education) than the local population include the Czech



Republic, Ireland, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Hungary, Finland and the UK (see Figure 12).

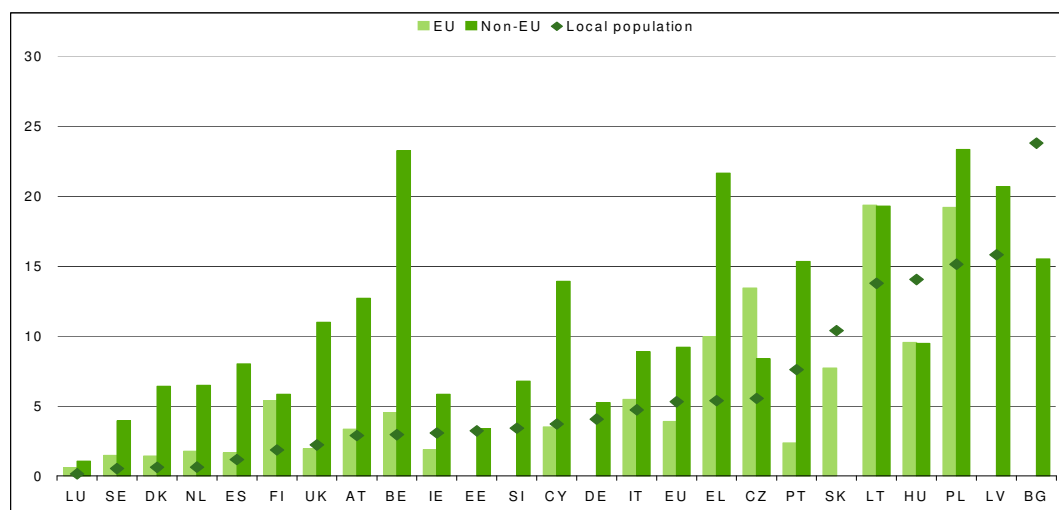
- Countries where *EU migrants* tend to be *better educated*: are Denmark, Greece and Austria.
- Countries where *non-EU migrants* tend to be *better educated* are Germany, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.
- In contrast, countries where the migrant population has an *educational disadvantage* compared with the local population, indicated by the larger share with *primary education* are Belgium, Luxembourg, Sweden (both EU and non-EU) and Germany, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and Slovenia (non-EU).

## Material deprivation of migrants

Material deprivation among migrants tends to be the lowest in Luxembourg, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands (Figure 13). In contrast, countries with the highest material deprivation rates of migrants include a number of ex-Communist countries (Hungary, Czech Republic, and Poland in the case of EU migrants and Hungary, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Luxembourg, and Poland in the case of non-EU migrants), but also Greece, Portugal, Austria and Belgium (in the case of non-EU migrants).

Material deprivation tends to be the most widespread among non-EU migrants, both compared to EU migrants and people born in the country. The material deprivation rate of non-EU migrants (the enforced lack of 3 items out of 9) reaches 30% or more in 11 out of 24 countries. In comparison, there are only four countries (Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania) where the share of those deprived reaches 30% among EU migrants. Countries where the population born in the country have a relatively high material deprivation rate include Poland, Latvia, Hungary and Bulgaria. Note that in Hungary and Poland all three population groups face material deprivation rates of 30% or over.

**Figure 13: Severe material deprivation rate by country of birth (defined as “enforced lack” of 4 items out of 9), 2008**



Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008  
 Notes: see Figure 1



There is weak relationship between average material deprivation across countries and the risk of poverty, reflecting the fact that the latter measures relative rather than absolute poverty. While material deprivation rates are defined at an EU level, poverty thresholds vary depending on the average level of national incomes, so some low-income countries may have low poverty rates, while a large share of the population may be materially deprived according to the universal EU standard. This is the case in Hungary, Poland, Lithuania and Portugal. In a number of other countries, however, including Cyprus, Greece, Belgium, non-EU migrants are affected by both high risk of poverty and high material deprivation.

#### **Definition of the severe material deprivation rate**

Material deprivation rate, adopted by the Social Protection Committee (EC), defined as the "enforced" lack of at least four of the following nine items:

- ability to face unexpected expenses;
- ability to pay for one week annual holiday away from home;
- existence of arrears (mortgage or rent payments, utility bills, or hire purchase instalments or other loan payments);
- capacity to have a meal with meat, chicken or fish every second day;
- capacity to keep home adequately warm
- possession of a washing machine
- possession of a colour TV
- possession of a telephone (including a mobile phone)
- possession of a personal car

#### **Conclusions**

The definition of migrants adopted is based on country of birth (grouped into EU or non-EU countries) and has, in addition, a household dimension, in the sense that migrants are defined as those who live in households where all adult members were born outside the country of residence. This definition is considered to be preferable to the alternative, citizenship-based definition.

Migrants from outside the European Union are occasionally exposed to a multiple times higher risk of poverty than the "indigenous" population. EU and non-EU migrants constitute two rather distinct groups in most countries in terms of their exposure to poverty. The results include various tests of reliability, including the estimation of confidence intervals for the poverty estimates, and the use of alternative definitions of migrants.

The measurement of trends is hampered by the relatively short time series and the reliability of the dataset (i.e. the low number of observations). There was probably a decline in the risk of poverty in Ireland among both EU and non-EU migrants and in Finland among EU-migrants. In contrast, there was a probable increase in the risk of poverty in Cyprus among non-EU migrants. In the case of Germany, Estonia, and Latvia, countries where EU and non-EU migrants are grouped together, there is evidence of an increase over period.

With respect to labour force participation and its relationship with poverty, we found that while migrants are more likely than those born locally to have tertiary-level education, this does not translate into higher employment. In addition, migrants, especially non-EU migrants face a higher risk of poverty than the local population with similar levels of work intensity, suggesting lower earnings and/or entitlement to social benefits.



Migrants are more likely to be socially excluded than the local population. Altogether, however, cumulative disadvantage (being at risk of poverty, suffering from severe material deprivation and living in households with very low work intensity) affects only about 1-2% of the migrant population, a number of 62 thousand EU migrants, and 518 thousand non-EU migrants. We found a larger overlap between very low work intensity and poverty among migrants than among the local population: migrants are thus more likely to be at risk of poverty if they live in low work intensity households. Or in absolute terms, the majority of migrants with low work intensity lives on poverty levels of income.

Future research based on the new wave of the EU-SILC dataset could explore the issue of integration as such, since the dataset is then expected to include information on the year of arrival in the country.



## Additional tables

Table 1: Number of observations

Migrant status (country of birth)				At-risk-of-poverty				
	EU	Non-EU	Local	Total	Not at-risk-of-poverty	At-risk-of-poverty	Total	
BE	945	869	13,091	14,905	BE	12,808	2,214	15,022
BG	9	62	11,979	12,050	BG	9,136	2,985	12,121
CZ	679	184	26,070	26,933	CZ	24,858	2,075	26,933
DK	250	512	13,992	14,754	DK	13,766	988	14,754
DE	0	2,433	26,332	28,765	DE	25,250	3,613	28,863
EE	0	1,575	11,416	12,991	EE	10,388	2,603	12,991
IE	877	321	11,353	12,551	IE	10,396	2,155	12,551
EL	253	1,134	15,372	16,759	EL	13,202	3,622	16,824
ES	657	2,164	32,979	35,800	ES	27,995	7,905	35,900
IT	851	2,160	49,374	52,385	IT	43,326	9,107	52,433
CY	476	617	8,932	10,025	CY	8,203	1,822	10,025
LV	0	1,788	11,111	12,899	LV	8,989	4,065	13,054
LT	59	700	11,372	12,131	LT	9,735	2,396	12,131
LU	4,699	942	4,496	10,137	LU	7,919	2,228	10,147
HU	266	69	22,026	22,361	HU	19,508	2,855	22,363
NL	334	785	24,223	25,342	NL	24,242	1,206	25,448
AT	648	1,316	11,664	13,628	AT	12,036	1,595	13,631
PL	181	249	37,947	38,377	PL	32,384	7,529	39,913
PT	102	418	11,146	11,666	PT	9,393	2,339	11,732
RO	7	6	19,032	19,045	RO	14,593	4,411	19,004
SI	0	2,316	26,515	28,831	SI	25,914	3,044	28,958
SK	174	13	16,228	16,415	SK	14,667	1,876	16,543
FI	259	435	25,770	26,464	FI	23,606	2,875	26,481
SE	708	1,511	16,398	18,617	SE	16,851	1,865	18,716
UK	529	1,098	18,232	19,859	UK	16,076	3,977	20,053
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,963</b>	<b>23,677</b>	<b>477,050</b>	<b>513,690</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>435,241</b>	<b>81,350</b>	<b>516,591</b>

Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008



**Table 2: Migrant population by country of birth, 2007**

	EU		Non-EU	
	Estimated total number	As a % of the total population	Estimated total number	As a % of the total population
BE	660,286	6.3	641,684	6.2
BG			39,540	0.5
CZ	249,438	2.4	90,216	0.9
DK	108,023	2.0	216,259	4.0
DE	:	:	6,693,426	8.3
EE	:	:	199,231	15.0
IE	377,714	8.5	126,480	2.9
EL	186,951	1.7	760,081	7.1
ES	874,431	1.9	2,616,772	5.8
IT	1,208,427	2.0	3,215,667	5.4
CY	43,754	5.6	56,345	7.2
LV	:	:	293,064	13.3
LT	16,240	0.5	164,371	4.9
LU	157,153	33.8	29,991	6.4
HU	127,543	1.3	37,150	0.4
NL	248,988	1.5	629,533	3.9
AT	443,837	5.4	992,380	12.0
PL	163,301	0.5	213,857	0.6
PT	111,519	1.1	498,538	4.7
SI	:	:	158,103	8.1
SK	60,020	1.1		
FI	61,595	1.2	117,326	2.2
SE	370,171	4.1	680,702	7.5
UK	1,715,111	3.0	3,954,668	7.0

Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008

Notes:

Observations below 20 have been omitted

: Not available



**Table 3: At-risk-of-poverty rates among different migrant groups, 2007 (income year)**

	EU	Non-EU	Local	Total population
BE	21.7	42.4	12.1	14.8
BG		24.7	21.2	21.3
CZ	16.3	23.4	8.7	9.1
DK	25.0	32.4	10.7	11.9
DE	:	20.8	14.8	15.3
EE	:	27.2	18.2	19.5
IE	18.6	15.2	15.2	15.5
EL	27.5	35.5	18.8	20.1
ES	23.1	33.8	18.7	19.7
FR*	13.3	29.0	11.6	13.0
IT	22.3	28.9	18.0	18.7
CY	16.3	33.7	14.9	16.3
LV	:	31.6	24.7	25.7
LT	19.3	16.4	20.2	20
LU	19.0	41.1	7.3	13.4
HU	8.5	9.5	12.5	12.4
NL	13.1	21.8	9.8	10.6
AT	14.0	27.1	10.1	12.4
PL	10.4	13.8	17.2	16.9
PT	9.4	18.5	18.5	18.4
SI	:	15.5	11.9	12.3
SK	10.5		10.9	10.9
FI	7.5	48.5	12.8	13.6
SE	18.9	31.5	10.0	12.2
UK	19.6	25.6	19.0	19.3

Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008

Notes:

Observations below 20 have been omitted

\*Data for France refers to previous year {EU-SILC 2007 (2006 income year)}

: Not available



**Table 4: At-risk-of-poverty rate by number of migrants in the household, 2007 (income year)**

	No migrant	1 EU	2 EU	3+ EU	1 Non-EU	2 Non-EU	3 Non-EU	1 EU and 1 Non-EU	Both EU and Non- EU
BE	11.9	15.8	26.5	24.5	25.3	45.4	45.4	16.4	6.4
BG	21.2	27.5	:	:	27.2			:	:
CZ	8.6	12.6	26.3	28.1	16.3	6.9	34.7		
DK	10.8	12.3	10.9	57.4	18.4	5.6	38.7	22.3	
DE	15.1	:	:	:	13.3	20.9	31.7	:	:
EE	18.8	:	:	:	24.8	15.3	20.7	:	:
IE	15.9	9.3	12.1	26.0	12.4	23.0	17.5	7.8	
EL	18.6	22.1	40.4	34.2	21.8	25.5	40.6		:
ES	18.6	21.1	26.2	22.1	19.1	27.4	39.1	30.6	
IT	17.8	23.6	16.1	24.7	20.9	33.6	31.5	2.9	
CY	15.1	10.2	22.0	14.9	23.9	25.6	39.7	5.4	0.0
LV	25.5	:	:	:	27.7	25.1	18.9	:	:
LT	21.3	11.1		:	10.7	7.6	10.2		0.0
LU	5.8	7.8	15.0	25.3	22.5	38.3	51.6	27.1	33.9
HU	12.5	7.2	3.8	9.8	12.9	0.0	0.0	11.4	:
NL	9.9	10.1	7.9	29.5	14.9	27.4	26.9	31.4	
AT	9.8	10.0	14.0	14.3	19.9	26.8	28.0	16.9	
PL	17.0	13.2	6.3		14.0	15.4			
PT	18.7	17.1	0.0		14.5	22.3	19.1		
SI	12.3	:	:	:	12.2	10.9	18.8	:	:
SK	10.8	12.1	0.0	8.9	25.5		:	:	:
FI	12.8	6.1	23.3	9.5	23.3	55.1	60.2		
SE	10.3	11.3	17.1	36.2	16.5	35.0	35.0	20.1	
UK	18.9	15.5	19.4	22.6	18.2	30.1	27.5	0.0	54.5

Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008

Notes:

Observations below 20 have been omitted

Italics: Low number of observation (20-49)

: Not available



**Table 5: Material deprivation rate by country of birth (defined as “enforced lack” of 3 or 4 items out of 9) 2008**

	EU		Non-EU		Local	
	3 out of 9	4 out of 9	3 out of 9	4 out of 9	3 out of 9	4 out of 9
BE	10.0	4.5	38.8	23.2	7.5	3.0
BG			38.8	15.5	45.4	23.8
CZ	29.1	13.4	17.1	8.4	14.7	5.5
DK	2.7	1.4	15.3	6.4	2.9	0.6
DE	:	:	12.3	5.2	11.2	4.1
EE	:	:	16.4	3.4	9.5	3.2
IE	12.0	1.9	15.5	5.8	9.2	3.1
EL	29.9	10.0	41.1	21.6	14.7	5.4
ES	9.6	1.7	24.0	8.0	5.0	1.2
IT	17.3	5.5	25.5	8.9	11.1	4.7
CY	13.7	3.5	30.6	13.9	18.4	3.7
LV	:	:	41.7	20.7	31.1	15.8
LT	41.3	19.4	37.5	19.3	25.2	13.8
LU	3.6	0.6	9.2	1.1	1.3	0.2
HU	29.9	9.5	31.5	9.5	33.3	14.0
NL	10.6	1.8	14.2	6.5	3.4	0.6
AT	11.6	3.3	32.1	12.7	9.1	2.9
PL	34.9	19.2	42.5	23.3	29.6	15.1
PT	15.6	2.4	31.2	15.3	21.1	7.6
SI	:	:	18.8	6.8	11.7	3.4
SK	23.6	7.7			26.9	10.4
FI	11.9	5.4	17.4	5.8	6.1	1.9
SE	5.3	1.5	9.9	3.9	2.4	0.5
UK	10.9	2.0	21.1	11.0	7.6	2.2

Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC 2008

Notes:

Observations below 20 have been omitted

*Italics: Low number of observation (20-49)*

: Not available