

56,000 ROMANIAN AND BULGARIAN WORKERS LIKELY TO GO TO BRITAIN NEXT YEAR

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Around 56,000 Romanian and Bulgarian workers are likely to migrate to Britain next year, according to new research from the Institute for Public Policy Research (ippr) published today (Tuesday).

The report will be launched at the Romanian Cultural Institute in London where Immigration Minister Tony McNulty will speak.

ippr estimates that around 41,000 Romanians and 15,000 Bulgarians will come to work in Britain in the first year after their countries join the European Union. This estimate is based on what happened after the last EU enlargement in 2004. Although Romania and Bulgaria are poorer than the countries that joined last time, most migrating Romanians and Bulgarians will want to go to Italy, Spain and Greece because they are closer and have higher numbers already resident.

ippr argues that the Government should allow labour market access to Romanian and Bulgarian nationals to work in Britain when accession is expected in 2007 because:

- * new inflows are likely to be relatively small
- * the impacts on the UK labour market are likely to be positive
- * free access will have to be introduced eventually and a separate scheme would increase

bureaucracy

- * those Romanians and Bulgarians already here would be able to regularise their status.

Allowing labour market access to workers after the 2004 enlargement has proved beneficial for the UK. Although the 117,000 new workers who came to Britain during the first year exceeded official estimates, their impact has been positive:

- * they made an estimated economic contribution of around ?240 million to the British economy in the first year

- * less than 1 per cent even applied for income-related benefits
- * eight out of ten found work
- * as many as 53,000 regularised their work status and started to contribute to the public purse
- * most are working in jobs that are hard to fill, especially in factories, cleaning and caring
- * almost nine out of ten visitors from the new EU members stayed in the UK for less than three

months

- * there is no evidence that the new workers have caused any rise in unemployment or depressed the wages of workers already in Britain.

Migration to the EU is likely to improve the Romanian and Bulgarian economies, reducing the incentive to find work abroad in the future. At this point, the UK will need to look further a field to fill its low-skilled labour demand.

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Danny Sriskandarajah, ippr associate director, said:

"Romanian and Bulgarian accession should be seen as an opportunity not a threat. Workers from these countries will join an increasingly important Eastern European workforce currently doing hard-to-fill jobs in key sectors and regions.

"If the last EU enlargement is anything to go by, many people will get very worked up about migration from Romania and Bulgaria when they join the EU. But just as last time, we are likely to see turnstiles not floodgates as young and hard-working people come to the UK to work, save, learn English and go home."

EU Enlargement: Bulgaria and Romania Migration - Implications for the UK is available from www.ippr.org/publicationsandreports

Notes to editors:

EU accession is expected on 1 January 2007 but could be postponed for one year if Bulgaria and Romania do not meet the joining criteria.

Bulgarians and Romanians are currently required to hold a visa to travel to the UK and can stay with a visa for work (via a number of employment and business schemes), or as a student, spouse, partner or family member.

ippr's estimate of 56,000 Romanian and Bulgarian new entrants is based on an analysis of flows after the last EU enlargement in 2004 and assumes a similar arrangement to the Worker Registration Scheme being in place when Romania and Bulgaria join. If these Romanians and Bulgarians are spread through the UK in the same way as previous accession workers, their regional distribution would be as follows:

- * Total across UK = 56,000 new workers, joining 12,000 already here
- * London = 9,600 new workers, joining 2,100 already here
- * East of England = 9,300 new workers, joining 2,000 already here
- * Midlands = 6,200 new workers, joining 1,400 already here
- * Central = 6,100 new workers, joining 1,300 already here
- * South West = 4,800 new workers, joining 1,000 already here
- * North East = 4,600 new workers, joining 1,000 already here
- * South East = 4,600 new workers, joining 1,000 already here
- * North West = 4,100 new workers, joining 900 already here
- * Scotland = 3,800 new workers, joining 800 already here
- * Northern Ireland = 2,000 new workers, joining 400 already here
- * Wales = 1,300 new workers, joining 300 already here

New workers who have come from Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovakia and Slovenia are making important economic contributions across the UK:

- * In Northern Ireland, west Wales and East Yorkshire work mainly in manufacturing.
 - * In Kent, the Welsh border, the Grampians, the East of England and the South West they are most likely to be working in agriculture.
 - * London and the South East have higher shares of accession workers employed in banking and finance, distribution, hotels and restaurants and public services.
 - * A higher than average proportion of those working in transport and communication are employed in the West Midlands.
 - * Construction is favoured by accession workers in Scotland.
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As EU members, Bulgarians and Romanians will not be allowed to claim asylum in any other EU country, including the UK.

The 2001 Census showed there are currently 7,500 Romanian-born people living in the UK and another 5,350 Bulgarians. There are 86,700 Romanians and 9,600 Bulgarians already in Italy. There are 59,300 Romanians and 27,100 Bulgarians already in Spain. There are 26,600 Romanians and 38,900 Bulgarians already in Greece.

The report will be launched at The Romanian Cultural Institute, 1 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PH on Tuesday 25th April at 18:00 - 19:30. Speakers include:

- * Tony McNulty MP, Minister of State for Immigration and Citizenship
- * Evgenia Marinova Koldanova, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bulgaria
- * Leonard Orban, Secretary of State for European Integration, Government of Romania
- * Stefan Wagstyl, Central and Eastern European Editor for the Financial Times
- * Chair: Mr Reijo Kemppinen, Head of European Commission Representation in UK

Here is the full text of the report - [eu_enlargement_factfile.pdf](#) (445.42 Kb)