

# Four accounts on 'brain drain' in the Balkans

## 1. The 'brain drain' in Bosnia

by Ann Henry

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I went to Bosnia in 1999 to teach at The University of Sarajevo on a Soros Foundation Fellowship. Bosnia's academic community had been depleted by the war and the 'first wave' of the 'brain drain'. Our objective was to train young Bosnians to be English teachers, and to prevent our students from using their education to emigrate. By the end of one year there, I found myself encouraging them to leave.

In 1999-2000, there were few prospects for my bright, young Bosnian students. The wages for English teachers were abysmal, even by Bosnian standards. The only work available was as translators for international aid organisations, organisations whose presence in Bosnia was diminishing.

Their only choices seemed to be to scramble for work in these organisations, to make money on the thriving black market or to emigrate.

David Rieff wrote:

...the Bosnian authorities have proved largely incapable of restarting the economy. Unemployment is more than 50 per cent, and although there is a vibrant café life, a growing bureaucracy and an ever-increasing Black Market, there is no economy in any serious sense of the term, nor any realistic prospect that one will develop anytime soon. (Rieff, 2000)

According to one writer,

No one knows exactly how many Bosnians are leaving their country every year, or deciding not to return home from where they sought refuge during the 1991 to 1995 war that saw the break-up of Yugoslavia. But estimates run to the hundreds of thousands and officials fear the 'brain drain' is robbing Bosnia of its future, just as it emerges from a horrific past. (Ford, 2000.)

Pre-war Sarajevo has been described as a city where '...people had lived fairly well, worked relatively little and not asked themselves very deep questions.'

Amra Milhović, a student in Zenica, comments:

During the war, the middle class urbanites were in some ways less able to cope than the rural people. We had no idea how to deal with disaster and destruction. Our lives had been orderly, peaceful, and prosperous. After the war, the unemployment and underemployment was more difficult for those who believed they had a future, compared to those who always had it rough.'

There are a number of resettlement programmes in place for Bosnians, who are slowly trickling back to their former homes. But these programmes primarily affect people in villages, those who found adjustment to other cultures difficult. To many post-war Bosnians, Bosnia feels less and less like:

A place of opportunity, which the end of the sniping and shelling had permitted them to hope it might become.' (Rieff, 2000)

The post-war wave of immigration is largely among the secular urban middle class, those with the skills and connections that allow them to assimilate into new cultures precisely when their leadership is most needed.

Another factor fuelling immigration is the continuing presence of discrimination and lingering tensions, particularly in areas where there is a mixture of ethnic groups. Đorđe Slavnić, of Bosnian Serbian origin, was a Professor of Comparative Literature at University of Sarajevo until he was forced out, along with other Serbian professors, in a barely disguised effort at what he described as 'academic ethnic cleansing,' despite his service as a commander in the Bosnian army during the war:

I was told to go to the Republika Srpska although, given my role in the war, and my Moslem wife, I would very likely be killed. Sarajevo is my home. I worry about my son, as a mixed person. What kind of life is there for him here?'

Returnees and those who stay, especially those of mixed or minority origin, often find life in Bosnia intolerable owing to continued discrimination in housing and employment.

'Nothing has changed here politically,' he told me emphatically. 'The same people who were in power when the war started are still in power and you saw where their genius got Bosnia. You don't have a state here. Or rather you have three ethnic groups in a Dayton state, but no society. Sarajevo looks all right, but inside it is destroyed.' (Rieff, 2000)

International and Bosnian organisations have tried to entice Bosnian immigrants to return. The UNESCO Strategy for South East Europe is designed to help young Bosnian professionals share the knowledge and skills they learned abroad. The two main objectives of this programme are to establish strong professional ties:

Between the young professional graduates between the ages of 25 to 40 who make up a large proportion of the Diaspora from South Eastern Europe...and their colleagues who have remained, and to build on these contacts in order to strengthen links between institutions in this region and their contacts abroad. (UNESCO, 2001).

Yet international aid is drying up, and continued governmental instability, economic chaos and ethnic tension limit the opportunities for young professionals and provide high incentives to immigrate. Programmes such as UNESCO's are sticking plasters trying to stem the haemorrhage of professionals from Bosnia.

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## 2. The Balkan 'brain drain' and its consequences

by Gregory Weeks

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Europe has seen more than its fair share of wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The last of these major conflicts, the break-up of the Yugoslavian state in 1991, once again caused a tremendous movement of scientists, intellectuals and ordinary citizens. With each war, from the First World War onwards, Europe has lost many of its most intelligent people to immigration. This was especially true after the National Socialists seized power in Germany in 1933.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the great scientific and intellectual achievements in the United States in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were the result of the 'brain power' that arrived from Europe. One only needs to think of names like Albert Einstein to realise the impact of the mass exodus of scientists prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. Of course, one must also consider that there was still great potential in Nazi-occupied Europe and there were many scientists, including the famous rocket scientist, Wernher von Braun, who co-operated with the Nazis. Despite the "brain drain" of the late 1930s and early 1940s, science and research continued in Germany and the occupied countries and there were many talented scientists, intellectuals and researchers who carried out experiments for the National Socialist regime. The greater difficulty resulting from the "brain drain" lay in the inability of Germany to train future researchers, a deficit under which Germany and Austria suffered in the immediate post-World War II period.

- 1 See the work of Johannes Feichtinger and Mitchell Ash on this subject: Johannes Feichtinger (2001): "Die Karrierechancen von österreichischen Sozial-, Politik- und Rechtswissenschaftlern in der Englischen Emigration", in: *German-speaking Exiles in Great Britain: The Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies* vol. 3, pp. 131-147; Johannes Feichtinger (2001): *Wissenschaft zwischen den Kulturen. Österreichische Hochschullehrer in der Emigration 1933-1945*, Campus; and Mitchell Ash et al. (1996): *Forced Migration and Scientific Change: Emigré German-Speaking Scientists and Scholars after 1933* (Oxford University Press, 1996).

This inability to train younger scholars is particularly relevant in the Balkans today, where few experts remain to train the next generation of scientists, economists, researchers and scholars.

As a professor in Vienna, I have seen first-hand how numerous young Croats and Bosnians, whose families had fled during the Yugoslavian conflict, have been forced to remain abroad and I see that these students have two choices – either they can return home to an uncertain future, or they can remain abroad in Austria where the prospects of finding a job and starting a career are much better than in their home countries.

Interestingly, the perception of young Croats that Austria does present chances for young scholars is not shared by young Austrian university students, who feel that their chances are much better on the other side of the Atlantic in the United States or Canada than they are at under-funded Austrian research institutions. The complaint of a “brain drain” in Germany and Austria has been loud for at least the last ten years, with not only young Austrians and Germans but also other Europeans including French, Spanish, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegians and Italians heading for research fellowships and jobs in the United States and Canada. The Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Germany has published a number of reports on this topic and appears to recognise the danger that a “brain drain” can pose for the economy and industry.<sup>2</sup> The pull of the research culture in North America depends in great part on the willingness of private donors, universities and other non-public institutions, including foundations, to fund research and provide the infrastructure, such as computers, laboratory equipment, libraries and experienced experts, which is necessary for carrying it out.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, virtually all infrastructure was either destroyed or damaged by the war and now needs to be rebuilt. In addition, there are very few experts who can be called upon to provide the wisdom necessary to carry out the great programmes that need to be implemented, since the majority left these countries in the wake of the war in the 1990s in fear of their lives and careers, as well as the seeming hopelessness of the situation.

The question, more than ten years later, remains one of how many will actually return, especially in the case of scholars, researchers and scientists who have flourishing careers either in other European countries or across the Atlantic.

Austria, which took a large number of Bosnian and Croatian refugees, has profited immensely from their labour, especially in lower-paying professional jobs such as electricians and cabinet makers; however, academics have not yet achieved the position they deserve in Austrian research institutions. The failure fully to integrate a new generation of Balkan researchers into Austrian society will have consequences not only for Austria but also for the rebuilding of the Balkans, since Austria could easily

2 See, for example, the collection of essays edited by Eberhard Drumm and entitled: *Deutscher 'brain drain', europäische Universitätssysteme und Hochschulreform*, in which Albrecht Ritschl, from the Humboldt University in Berlin, examines current attempts to reform German universities and points out that these reforms, although well meant, have not had the desired effect (pp. 203-206).

have profited more from this 'brain power' while, at the same time, training research leaders able to return to their homelands and influence future research agendas and facilitate commerce in favour of Austria. This 'missed' opportunity does not apply to everyone in Austria. Dr. Erhard Busek, the former Austrian Vice-Chancellor and the current Director of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe, has long been a crusader both within his own Austrian People's Party and within the European Union for the integration of the Balkans into a unified Europe. Busek has built up a lobby in support of the Balkans and his work lends hope to the idea that, after Slovenia, eventually Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina will be accepted as future members of the EU.<sup>3</sup> It will be a long, hard road and it will take all the 'brain power' available to create a community of scholars who can change the world image of the Balkans as a European backwater, divided by strife and unable either to lead or produce skilled scientists and researchers. But, most of all, it will take people from countries who know the structures and the local mentality to turn back the "brain drain" and re-integrate the Balkans into the international community.

### 3. Kosovo and the 'brain drain': the implications

by Hazel Slinn

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Only two years ago, Kosovo was being held up by the UK government as a shining example of how refugees and those who had been given temporary asylum could return after a conflict and rebuild their country ([www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)). Indeed, many thousands did return, bringing with them experience and ideas from the countries which had housed them during the years of covert and overt conflict.

Many of those who returned were immediately snapped up by the swarms of international organisations arriving to work both with UNMIK (the United Nations Mission in Kosovo) and the local population on the difficult task of establishing a 'civil society'. English teachers and maths teachers drained out of schools into better-paid jobs as language assistants, IT support, finance assistants, even drivers. The international organisations distorted the local economy horrendously. According to UN statistics

3 See the German language interview with Erhard Busek in *zeit\_schritt* No. 18 (December 2003), which is a special issue on the Balkans.

(UNFPA Profile, March 2003) average monthly per capita income in 2000 was Euro 661. In comparison, a teacher earns Euro 150 and a police officer Euro 230. It is worth noting that unemployment is estimated to be in the region of 60% while 50% of Kosovars exists in what the UN terms 'extreme poverty' (UNFPA Profile, March 2003).

Now, the international organisations, including the UN, are downsizing as funding (and possibly interest) focuses on more recent problem areas: Afghanistan; Liberia; Ivory Coast; and, of course, Iraq. All these are places on people's lips in the cafes of downtown Prishtina. And where does this leave local employees, with their new project management, administration and IT skills? The short answer seems to be: frustrated. Without a doubt, some have moved into jobs previously held by international staff and continue the work they have been trained to do. This is good for them, their families and the province in general, as long as the funding lasts. Regrettably few of the organisations are financially self-sustaining.

The theory was, back in the early days of the interim administration, that 'capacity' would be built up, institutions would be developed and investment would be sought for newly-privatised or created industries. Teachers would return to their posts, invigorated by their contact with the outside world and ready to inspire and educate the next generation. To some extent, part of this theory is foundering due to lack of investment and industrial development. Michael Steiner, the UN Security Council's Special Representative for most of 2003, set up the Kosovo Trust Agency to privatise the industries of Kosovo, following the model used in eastern Germany in the early 1990s. However, the thorny, and omnipresent problem, of 'final status' overshadows the process and investors are holding back, or making lower than hoped for bids to take on the task of modernising companies in what was always the poorest part of the former Yugoslav Federation.

In a society where 50% of the population is still under 25, education has to be a priority at all levels. Jamie Shea, Director of Public Information of NATO, visited Kosovo in 2003, having not been here since 2001, and cited the young people of Kosovo as one of the strengths on which the province could build. However, students and young faculty members at the University of Prishtina are not optimistic about the opportunities offered by the education system:

A young Kosovan graduate's degree is losing currency on the international, regional and even on the Kosovan market.' (*Focus Kosovo*, April 2003)

The University is mired in local politics and there seems to be a parallel system of education developing in Serbian communities, mirroring that which existed in the Albanian communities during the Milošević years.

When a representative of the British Council was interviewed on local radio about distance learning degree courses available through London University, the office was besieged with thousands of phone calls from interested young people. A good number of candidates were able to reach the required standard of English and find the funding (approximately £1,000 annually) to join the programme. The American University of Kosovo, which opened in Autumn 2003, likewise found no shortage of applicants for

its US-accredited associate degrees, which cost in the region of \$5,000 per year. In spite of 50% of the population living in poverty, there appears to be no shortage of funds when it comes to paying for a valued education. This ability to pay is partly supported by the Albanian diaspora. Many families have one or two members living abroad, sending money home on a regular basis. In the Milošević years, the diaspora supported an entire parallel political and social system. Now, there is no official pressure to fund the national cause but family ties are strong and sons, brothers, cousins are not going to see their families suffering.

Meanwhile, the University of Prishtina seems to be stagnating. Few departments offer masters programmes, so faculties are not being replenished with younger staff. Students scramble desperately for scholarship opportunities outside Kosovo – Germany, the UK, the USA, Italy, France and Malaysia are amongst those countries attracting students with the chance to obtain internationally-recognised qualifications. Will these students return, some of them for the second time? This time they will not be returning from refugee camps and asylum hostels, but with solid qualifications, confidence and the experience of research or work placements. Will they be greeted as the future, or told to wait until it is their turn to speak by the older generation which holds power? Amanda Wilson, a consultant currently in Kosovo, has pointed out that:

Some local leaders have not yet internalised the reasons for change. [...] Nationalist posturing and political red herrings distract the public from the real and present danger: what happens if Kosovo fails to change. (*Focus Kosovo*, April 2003)

A 'brain drain' is about quality people departing and taking their skills and abilities elsewhere. Kosovo is in severe danger of exactly this happening. If the older generation stubbornly blocks the ambitions of the young majority, they will be left in control only of the rump and other countries will benefit.

Young people do not want to leave. They returned full of optimism about the new country they would build. But they do want a safe future for themselves and their families. Last autumn there were grenade attacks on the courts and police stations following a number of unpopular arrests. One evening a young colleague, her husband and two-year old son found themselves wandering the street when they were unexpectedly evacuated in the face of the danger. Both adults speak excellent English and have acquired other skills working in international organisations. 'We've never thought about leaving before,' they said, 'But if this is the future we'll have to decide what to do before he starts school.' They do not want their son growing up in an atmosphere of intolerance and danger. Both are constantly present.

The official languages in Kosovo are Albanian, Serbian and English. Recently, we took books for teachers, printed in all three languages, into a school. This was a 'thank you' for allowing a group of consultants to observe classes. However, the visitors were shocked when the Albanian-speaking teachers made it no secret that they would rip out the Serbian section of the book before reading the Albanian version. This is the model of tolerance being demonstrated by educators under the noses of the UN. One has to wonder what will happen as even more international organisations withdraw. After commenting angrily to a local colleague about this incident, I apolo-

gised for my outburst when I realised that at least I had the option of getting out if I wanted to. 'I'm not stuck here as you folk are,' I said apologetically, thinking about the problems people face trying to get visas or rustle up enough money to think about moving away and starting again. 'And what makes you think we're stuck?' she answered enigmatically, 'We make our plans and wait to see what happens. We won't stay if there's no future.'

#### 4. The Balkan 'brain drain': a comparative analysis

by Yoanna Dumanova

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A look into the nature and the complexities of the 'brain drain' phenomenon in general is necessary to grasp the implications of the problem that has raised serious concerns in the Balkans in the last decade of the 20th century. A 'brain drain' can be defined as the process in which the most talented, educated and professional people leave their home countries to reside permanently in other, usually more economically developed, ones. An early study conducted by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research in 1970 presents the main propellant of the process to be:

The lack within developing nations of effective demand for professionals despite the presence of almost unlimited need. (Dowty, 1988)

The same author goes on to say that the development level of the education system surpasses that of economic development, which creates an imbalance between the supply of well-educated people and the demand for them in these countries, leading to the lack of occupation of the latter and, naturally, to their emigration. The consequences of this phenomenon give rise to discussion and researchers approach them from differing perspectives. Some believe that the emigration of educated young people from less-developed countries does not constitute a serious problem since, if potential emigrants were to stay in their countries, the restricted employment opportunities at home would prevent them from applying the knowledge they have obtained and the skills they have developed which, if exported, could contribute to overall human development. Alan Dowty, a journalist for the New York Times, argues in favour of this position by claiming that:

Prohibiting emigration will bring little benefit to nations that can't offer suitable jobs to those kept at home. Their talents still will be lost. Likewise there is no 'drain' if they leave, since they contribute little or nothing to development by remaining. (Dowty, 1988)



Moreover, other researchers on the topic indicate that the emigration of unutilised labour relieves the pressure on the home country's government to support those individuals and, somewhat, their families. Kees Groenendijk and Elspeth Guild in their paper on *The Western Balkans and the European Union: Liberalising the Movement of People* offer such an idea as an argument for the pro-liberalisation of migration policies in the EU:

Thus measures which permit a relaxation of border and immigration restrictions for young people from the region would take pressure off the national labour markets in the region and may provide a much needed source of foreign currency in the form of remittances. (Groenendijk and Guild, 2003)

Those maintaining such a position in a discussion of the effects of the emigration of young professionals from less-developed nations reject their opponents' claim that the home countries' loss of educated people slows down economic development, referring to a large number of examples in the history of migration.

Others, however, paint a much gloomier picture of the impact of the 'brain drain' phenomenon on the development of the affected nations. They point out that these countries lose their most talented, brightest young people who, naturally, are most likely to contribute to these nations' economic progress. Peter Vas-Zoltan, a Hungarian economist, formulates this idea by saying that: 'The human capital' created by professional training, 'Becomes part of the nation's wealth in the broadest sense of the term,' and, consequently, an unrestricted 'brain drain' is unacceptable because:

It condones the continuous enrichment, without cost, of the prosperous, developed countries, at the expense of the less developed ones.' (Dowty, 1988)

Another author, Dr. Sam Vaknin, compares the 'brain drain' with colonialism by noting the similarity between the exports of brain power in the form of raw materials from the colonies (that is, less-developed countries), and the latter's import of final manufactured goods whose most important component is, namely, the brain power that came originally from the poorer nations (Vaknin, 1999). The scholar finds a significant difference, which further aggravates the plight of the less-developed states: the colonies somewhat benefit from their exports, but the countries affected by emigration not only do not get a price for the resource they are giving away but also incur the additional losses of having invested substantial resources, which do not abound in these states, into the education and medical care of the young professionals who are deserting their homelands. Vaknin comments on this unfair deal by saying that:

This is an absurd situation, a subsidy granted reluctantly by the poor to the rich. This is also one of the largest capital transfers (really capital flight) in history. (Vaknin, 1999)

Vaknin goes on to emphasise the economic advantages of these talented young people being 'adopted' by more generous labour-rewarding states due to their advanced technological skills:

Brains are an ideal natural resource: they can be cultivated, directed, controlled, manipulated, regulated. They are renewable and replicable. Brains tend to grow exponentially through inter-

action and they have an unparalleled economic value added. The profit margin in knowledge and information related industries far exceeds anything common to more traditional, second wave, industries (not to mention first wave agriculture and agribusiness). (Vaknin, 1999)

The effects of the 'brain drain' phenomenon are largely disputed, but it can be agreed that depriving a country of its talented workforce has a somewhat destabilising influence, as well as an unfavourable impact on its future development. The emigration of young skilled people from the Balkans in recent years brings back the debate among scholars regarding the gravity of the consequences of this movement. Each country in the region has its own specifics, and the roots and course of emigration are a little different, but most of the main factors driving young people away from the Balkans can be unified and discussed into two groups – as 'push' and 'pull' factors. The pull factors relate to the host countries' better-developed economies and the resulting demand for both skilled and unskilled labour, the significantly higher pay offered for the same kind of job performed than in the domestic country, the better living conditions and the removal of barriers to migration. The 'push' factors are more complicated and centre on the lack of political stability and trust in the ruling government, and the distressed economic situation, with all its ensuing damaging effects on local populations, such as a very high unemployment rate, an uneven distribution of income, poverty, inflation and low disposable income. The implications of the deteriorating standard of living of the average Balkan person has deeply affected the individual frame of mind, leading to a lack of belief in a better future, fading hopes, melancholia and an increased desire for a better, more secure and more luxurious life, regardless of the place of residence.

The economic picture in Bulgaria, one of the Balkan states where there are high concerns for the emigration of talented young people, can shed light on the engines of the process. The culprit most often cited for pushing young people away is the lack of employment opportunities. Jan Rutkowski in a World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, analyses the labour market and the factors explaining high unemployment in Bulgaria. He points out that the unemployment rate in 2001 reached a peak of 19.1% before falling to 18% in 2002. Rutkowski describes unemployment as one of long duration, affecting mainly young and old people of working age. Only 20% of those aged between 15 and 24 are employed, compared to almost one-half in the rest of the countries in transition which, the author concludes, will lead to unutilised potential and a negative effect on standards of living. According to national statistics, the duration of one unemployment cycle is, on average, around two years. This introduces the problem of long-term unemployment, which is known to lead to the social isolation of those affected, as well as to poverty. The employment opportunities for university graduates appear to be scarce given that every third unemployed person happens to be young. Hardly to the surprise of anyone, young people with economic and engineering degrees are found washing dishes, picking strawberries or waiting in English pubs, but having warm feelings about their achievement in life (*The Economist*, Feb 6 2003).

Another factor in the motivation framework of young people is disillusionment with the government and the market-oriented reforms that have been taking place

since the beginning of the 1990s. The collapse of communism marked a new stage in the consciousness of the Bulgarian citizen – that of hope to live in a democratic and economically-developed country. The transition period, however, turned out to be extremely difficult and the reforms brought more poverty, lower living standards, deteriorating economic performance, higher unemployment, stagnation and inflation. Yet, detailed economic research on the country indicates that the nation's suffering is not close to an end since 'democracy and the market economy in Bulgaria are stuck in their adolescence.' (USAID, 2003)

The lack of a strict enforcement of laws, the weak judicial system, pervasive corruption and the rising crime rate has achieved nothing but to give a further and even stronger push to the emigration tidal wave. The report furthermore focuses on some of the most troublesome issues in the country:

Within this international context, several alarming political trends have characterized Bulgaria for the past two years: a growing gap between popular expectations and the political elite's agenda, plunging trust in the public institutions, and general disengagement from public life. (USAID, 2003)

The most striking fact in the report appears to be the appraisal of Bulgaria's level of income as the lowest among all the countries in transition in the region. The minimum monthly salary of \$50, exactly the same amount to which the average pensioner is entitled, has forced a large number of people to undergo severe hardships and deprivation. This has not only led to pervasive disappointment but has killed the hope that some positive changes in the life of the average citizen will soon become tangible (Vassilev, 2003). According to Professor Andrei Marga, Romania's former education minister who has investigated the problem of emigration in the Balkans:

Undoubtedly, young people leave [south] eastern [European] countries and, of course, Romania, not only because they do not have [high] salaries, but also because they do not see any perspective for development in future, for themselves or for the social environment, for the world around them. (Tomiuc, 2001)

The National Statistics Institute in Bulgaria gives a figure of 50 000 people who have left the country since 1995 (*The Economist*, Feb 6 2003). Some might not find the statistic impressive but emigrants constituting 0.6 per cent of the population combined with a negative population growth rate is quite a worrisome conclusion. Annually, 65 000-80 000 babies are being born, compared to 130 000 deaths per year (*Weekly Commentary*, August 1999). The ageing population (13.4% of the total), emigration and the negative difference between births and deaths signify the danger which Bulgaria is facing. Some local newspaper journalists have exaggerated this to the extent of the country losing all its people by 2070 (Bulgarian Business Advisor, 2001).

Statistical data indicates the existence of emigration from Bulgaria although this does not by itself justify the 'brain drain' phenomenon. A deeper investigation into the educational background and skills of emigrants can, however, assist the reader in making a conclusion of such a kind. The *Weekly Commentary* of the Bulgarian Press states that 65% of the people who emigrated in the 1990-1999 period had completed

their secondary education while 31% had a higher education degree. In analysing these figures, one has to take into consideration that a huge migration of the Turkish population followed just after the fall of communism and the opening of the borders, which implies that the actual correlations may differ in reflecting that exceptional high outflow of minorities. Thomas Straubhaar, in a discussion paper which is part of the Hamburgisches Welt-Wirtschafts-Archiv's research programme on the *Internationalisation of Labour Markets*, argues that there is a 'brain drain' from east Europe and, in support, offers the data presented in Table 1. The skill ratio, which the author defines as the fraction between skilled people and the total number of emigrants, appears to be highest in the case of Bulgarian emigrants and lowest among emigrants from former Yugoslavia, due to the high number of war refugees seeking asylum in western states. Furthermore, the author comments that immigrants in Germany from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria have a much higher skill ratio than the average for the German population, which augments his conclusion of the existence of a 'brain drain' from central and eastern Europe.

**Table 1 – Cumulative immigration flows into Germany from eastern Europe according to level of skill, 1992-94 (000 people)**

Sending country	Total immigrants according to level of skill		
	Highly skilled (1)	Total (2)	Skill ratio (flows) (3) = (1):(2)
Poland	9.02	48.41	0.19
ex-Czechoslovakia	1.76	10.60	0.17
Hungary	3.78	10.87	0.35
Romania	6.11	63.47	0.10
Bulgaria	3.74	9.65	0.39
ex-Yugoslavia	18.58	236.16	0.08
Albania	1.11	14.72	0.08
ex-USSR	37.79	370.63	0.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>81.89</b>	<b>764.51</b>	<b>0.11</b>

The relatively poor economic situation in Balkan countries has deprived research institutes from being able to establish modern facilities and provide equipment appropriate for research and development. This has limited the opportunities for conducting research studies which have in turn, become a common factor in motivating scholars and researchers to leave:

According to results obtained in 1996, 6 005 scientists were separated from their jobs during the period 1989 to 1996, of which 600 emigrated. (Beleva and Kotzeva, 2001).

In Serbia, the situation appears to be even worse: according to Dragan Domazet, the Serbian Minister for Science:

40 to 50 per cent of the best scientists and up to 70 per cent of new graduates have left Serbia, mostly for the USA (Science Network for the Balkans, Feb 2002).

A rising number of young people have started trusting foreign educational institutions more than state ones. Some maintain that this significant change has occurred due to the deteriorating level of education in state universities and high schools. The lack of funds to provide the required library materials and to develop a modern educational base, as well as the abysmally low pay of educators, are among the main obstacles to these institutions being able to offer a high quality education. Patricia Georgieva emphasises that the emigration of teachers has led to the creation of the necessity that those who remain in higher education should handle a greater number of students and be forced to forgo previously existing opportunities for research:

Thus, Bulgarian teaching staff members, who already have very high teaching loads, are forced to neglect research and to teach and advise very large numbers of students. Naturally, this situation reflects badly on the level of teaching and the maintenance of academic standards. (Georgieva, 2002, p. 20)

Yet, probably the most accurate reason why students in the region choose to receive their education from foreign institutions is the belief that the latter open up a greater chance of coping with unemployment and finding better-paid jobs, either in the countries from which these foreign universities come or in the branches of multinational companies located in the Balkans. Thus, many become potential long-term emigrants at an early age, by pursuing their academic degrees abroad. The state does not provide them with the necessary conditions for a normal life, so it is wrong to talk about a violation on their side of the social contract with the state.

According to a survey conducted in Sofia among young people 15% of the interviewed had clear intentions to emigrate, a figure that is expected to be much higher in the rest of the country because of the gloomier prospects for employment. (*The Economist*, Feb 6 2003) The same newspaper, in an article entitled, "Please, don't (all) go", informs of a very popular trend for organisations to advertise in different media of the opportunities they offer for legal emigration to more economically-developed countries, issuing green cards or other forms of 'passports' to the west:

Many newspapers in Bulgaria advertise 'guaranteed visa' services, often fraudulent, on which some applicants are prepared to spend up to six months' wages. (*The Economist*, Feb 6 2003)

The Bulgarian government has the obligation to try to curb migration outflows, not by denying the right of citizens to travel abroad and imposing direct restrictions but by eradicating the desire of people permanently to leave the country. Several initiatives might be undertaken, focusing on job creation, attracting foreign companies to start doing business in or with Bulgaria and influencing the frame of mind of young people wanting to leave by emphasising the abundant opportunities that exist in the developing economies of the region.

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