

The Evolution of German Immigration Policy

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1. German Migration Policy 1950-1990

West Germany

- In the mid-fifties, laws were issued allowing the recruitment of (temporary) workers from Southern Europe and Turkey to fill vacancies in mainly manufacturing.
- Until recruitment was stopped in 1973, 2.6 million migrant workers had entered West Germany.
- Later on mostly migration of family members of recent immigrants took place.
- There was also an inflow of asylum seekers due to the constitutional based right of political asylum.

1. German Migration Policy 1950-1990

East Germany

- Worker recruitment treaties were signed with partnering socialist countries (e.g. Vietnam, Mozambique) to cover the labor market demand due to high outmigration rates of citizens to West Germany (2.7 million Germans emigrated until 1961).
- Immigrants had to work under strict and hard working conditions.
- The GDR also admitted a few thousand asylum seekers mainly from Chile, Spain and Greece.

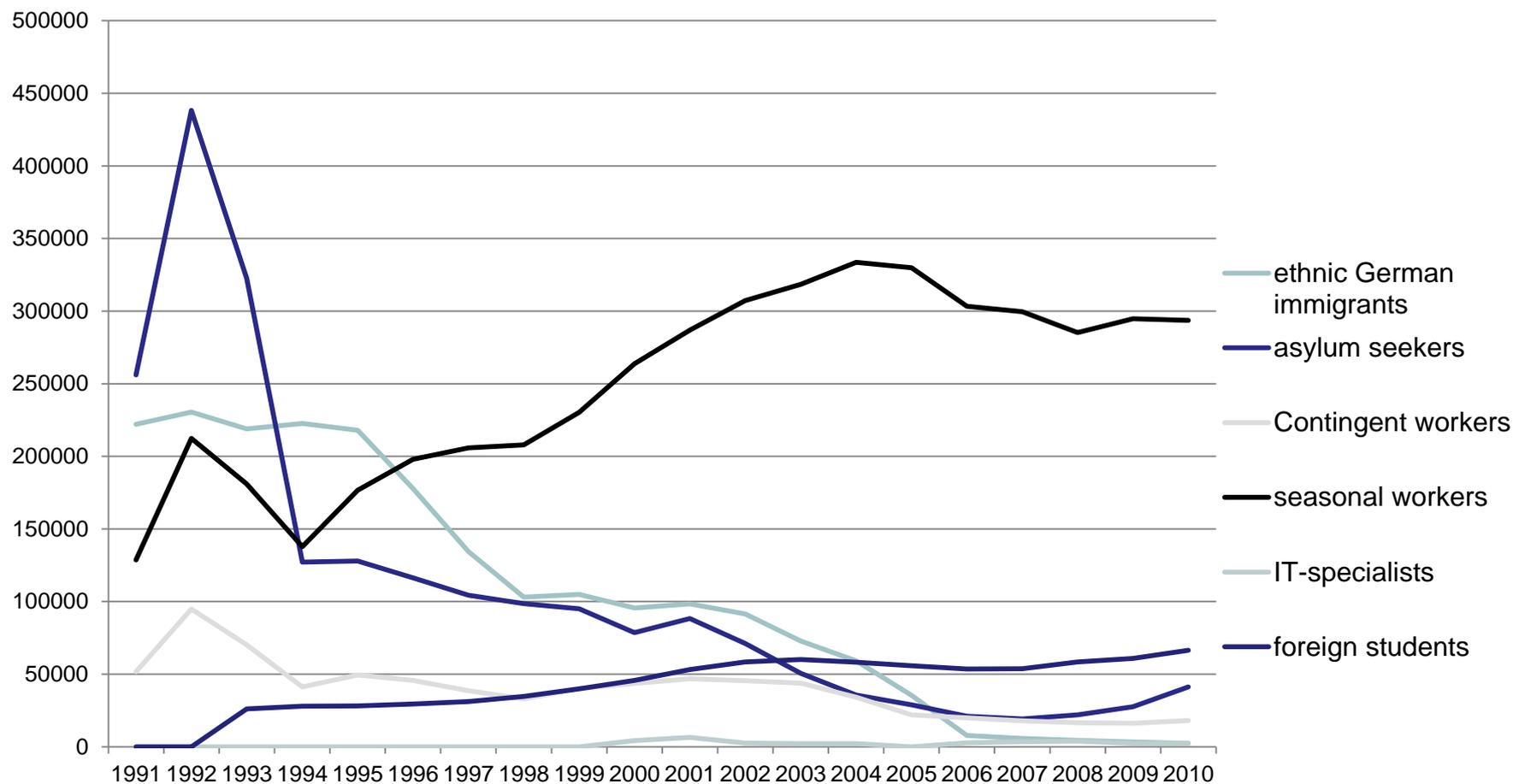
1. German Migration Policy 1990 - 2000

- In the early 1990s the numbers of asylum seekers and inflow of ethnic German immigrants increased rapidly
- After heated discussions, the German government decided to confine the basic right of political asylum quite sharply by changing the German constitution.
- As a consequence, the number of asylum seekers decreased in the following years.
- The paradigm was: „Germany is no immigration country“.

1. German Migration Policy after 2000

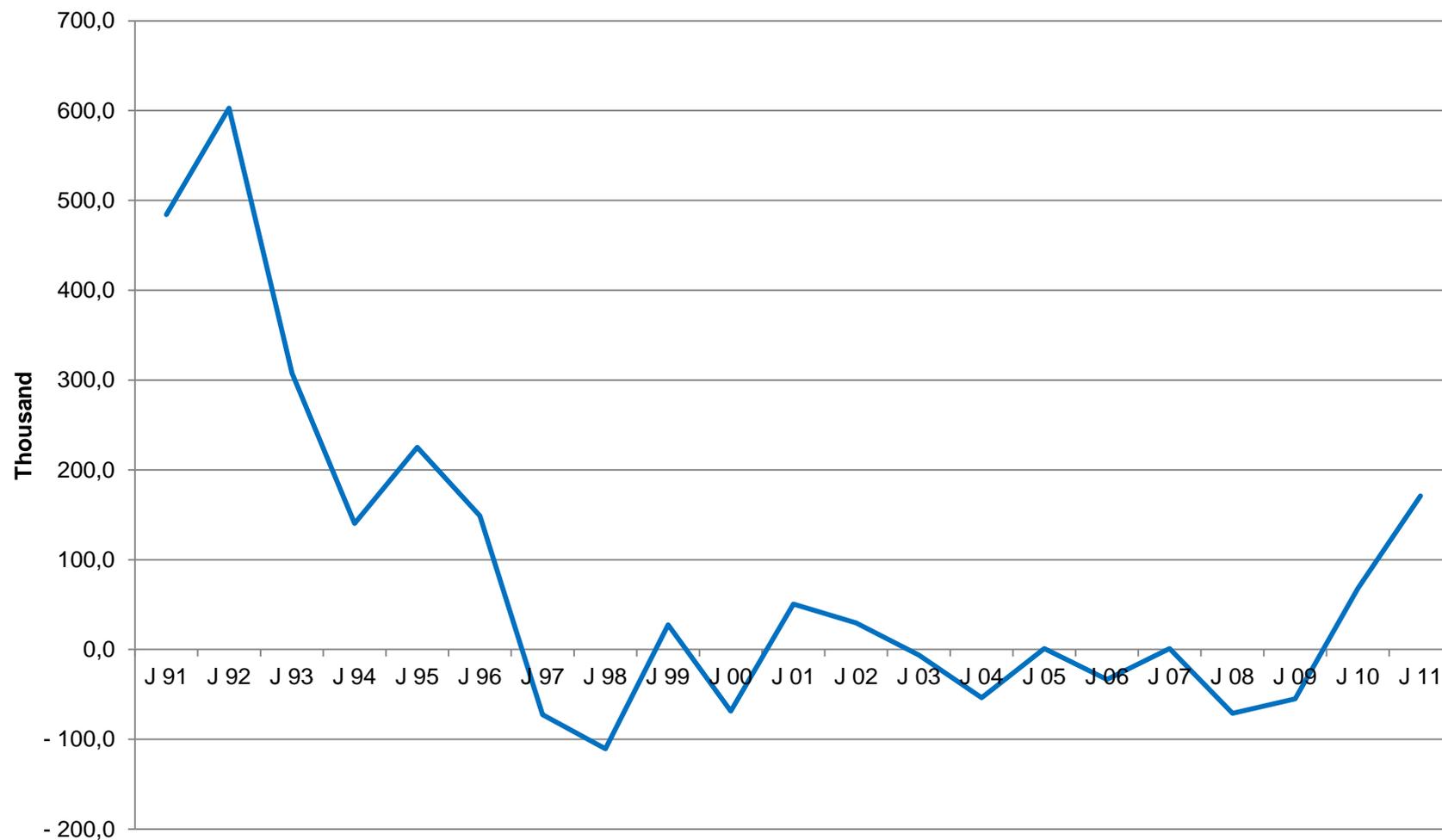
- Slowly a paradigm shift occurred. One recognized the need for immigrants within society and subsequently started to create rather pro-migrant immigration policies.
- In 2000, by enacting a new law on citizenship, holding more than one nationality was eased.
- As a first means of enhancing high skilled immigration, Green Cards for the recruitment of IT-specialists were issued from 2000-2004.
- In 2005, a new immigration law emphasised the need for successful integration of migrants and the promotion of high skilled migration.
- Since 2000 an increased inflow of seasonal workers mainly from Eastern Europe has been observed.
- Yet, immigration policies need to be reformed, for example in the field of easing access to the labor markets.

Selected Migration Inflows 1991-2010



Source: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

Net Migration Flows to Germany 1990-2011



Source: Federal Statistical Office

2. Germany and Poland - Major Migration Movements

1. Beginning in the 1950s, about 1.5 million **ethnic German migrants** emigrated from Poland to mostly West Germany 1950
2. **Political refugees:** as a result of the ‘Solidarnosc’ movements, Poles immigrated as asylum seekers or de facto political refugees
3. **Contingent workers** with temporary employment permit – to be paid according to German wages; started 1990 as a partial repeal of the “Anwerbestop” 1973 (system terminated for Poland only in 2011)

2. Germany and Poland - Major Migration Movements

4. Since 1990 increased inflow of **seasonal workers** (mostly working in agriculture and forestry). About 250 000 workers enter the country every year and therefore constitute the largest group of origin. In 2005, they made up 80% of all seasonal workers, this number decreased to 60% in 2010 effected by better working conditions in Poland and other EU-Countries.
5. About 12% of Polish immigrants in 2010 worked in the **Care sector**.
6. Some **irregular migration**; work although being tourist, seasonal workers stay without permission, cross-border commuters .

2. Germany and Poland - Policies 2004 - 2011

- Immigration changes: before 1990s immigrants prepared to stay longer, nowadays the majority of Polish immigrants stays short-term (circular migration on the rise)
- Germany maintained a maximum duration of the transition period for Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries until May 2011 – in contrast to countries such as Ireland or the UK
- German trade unions and government feared massive inflows of mostly cheap labor from Eastern neighboring countries.
- Discussion about minimum wage – in particular for temporary agency work (established in 2011).

3. Recent Developments

- Germany is only slowly adapting to its actual role of an immigration country, but still has difficulties in recognizing the benefits of migration.
- German public still sees migration and (failed) integration as a major societal problem, with potential negative side effects on (low skilled) workers.
- Germany is trying (again reluctantly) to adopt a more systematic labor market orientation vis-a-vis third country migration.
- **Main drivers:** demographic ageing and skills shortages

3.1. Recent Policy Changes for Non-EU migrants

Introduction of ‚Blue Card EU‘

- Should ease the labor market access for highly skilled non-EU nationals.
- Migrants with a tertiary education degree and a future annual salary > 44.000 € are eligible.
- If working in a highly demanded profession (e.g. scientists, engineers) the earning threshold is lower (at 33.000 €).
- Relatives parallelly receive a work permit.
- International university graduates with a German degree may receive a permanent residence permit after working for two years.
- Criticism: Blue Card restricted to highly skilled migrants.

Recognition of foreign education certificates simplified

- As of April 1st, 2012, a procedure to compare foreign education certificates with German ones is in place (mandatory for regulated jobs, such as medical professions, teachers).

3.2. Recent Policy Changes for EU-25 Migrants

Free worker mobility for migrants from the EU-10 countries

- Effective as of May 2011
- Any EU-25 national has the right to:
 - look for a job in another EU country and to work under the same conditions as nationals of that country
 - receive the same assistance from the national employment offices as nationals of their host country
 - stay in the host country for a period long enough to look for work, apply for a job and be recruited without having to apply for a work permit
- However, language skills may be required before recruiting.

3.3. Recent Developments – Facts and Figures

- In 2011, about 6.93 million foreigners lived in Germany, which corresponds to a 2.6% (+177,300 people) increase compared to 2010. It has been the largest increase for 15 years, mostly based on higher EU citizen mobility (88%).
- Share of Eastern European immigrants has been highest, followed by migrants from Southern Europe.
- Germany seems to become more attractive relative to the economic and employment prospects in countries of origin.
- 3 reasons:

I

As of May 1, 2011, there are no more legal conditions restricting worker mobility from the 2004-EU countries.

II

Southern Europeans arrive due to the ongoing economic crises

III

Increased migration from the 2007-EU-member countries Romania and Bulgaria

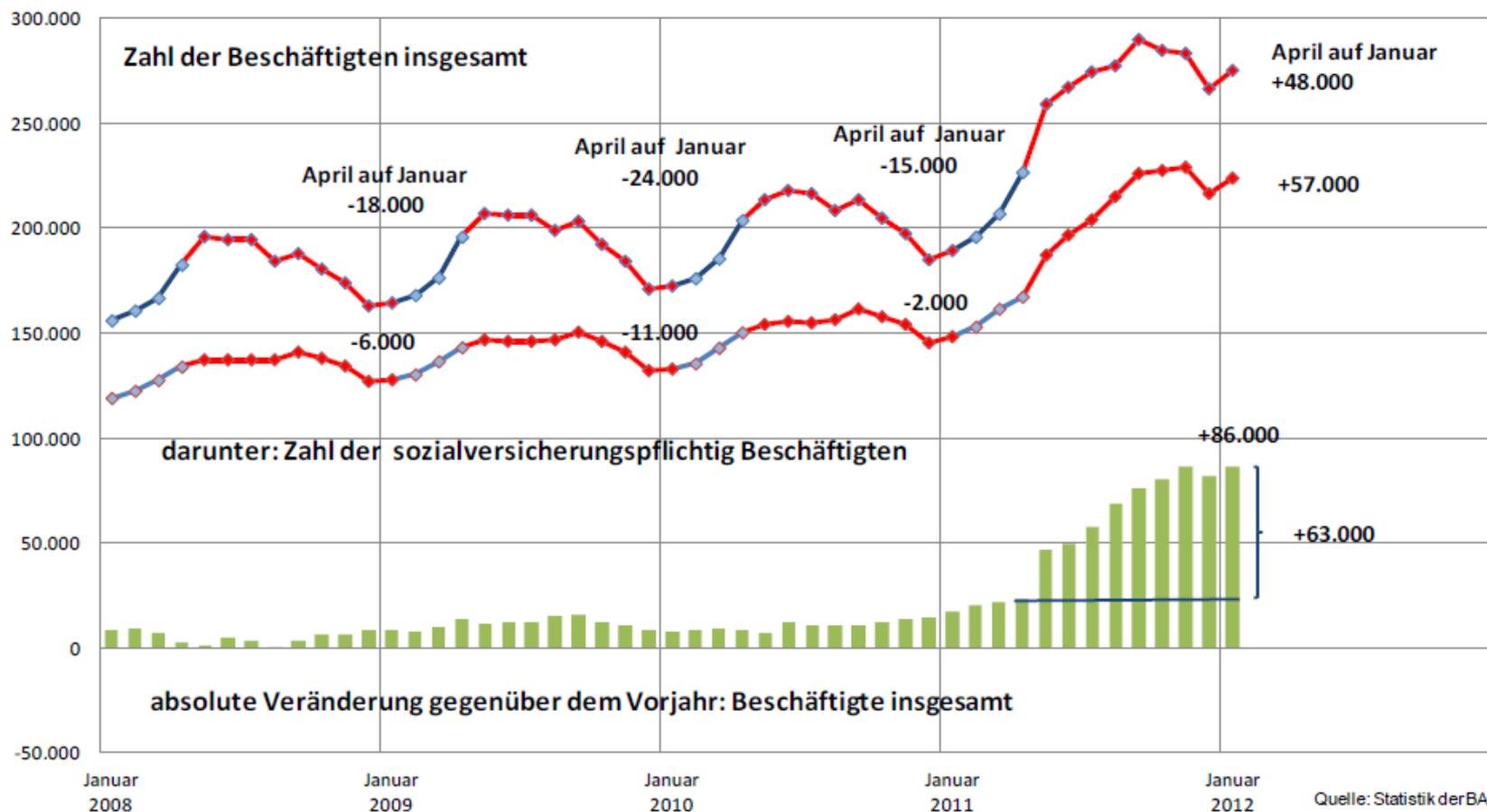
3.3. Recent Developments – Facts and Figures

Employment of migrants from EU-8

- Number of employees constantly rising
- In April 2011, 227,000 workers were employed in a job subject to social insurance. The number rose to 275,000 in January 2012.
- 63,000 are recorded as having migrated due to free worker mobility.
 - Major fields of work:
 - 13,000 hiring out of employees and temporary employment
 - 9,500 building sector
 - 8,600 manufacturing
- Poland has been the most important country of origin of migrants coming to Germany in recent years, but still migration from Poland is smaller than expected or feared before May 2011.
- 0,8% of all employed persons originated from the EU-8 countries in 2011.

3.3. Recent Developments – Facts and Figures

Employees from EU-8 member states Place of work: Germany



Source: Federal Employment Agency, 2012

5. Conclusion

- Germany comes late in appreciating the benefits of an active migration policy
- In the current economic situation and with a view to demographically induced labor shortages Germany might become a major immigration country
- Polish migrants will likely play a prominent role in this context

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