Abstract

Germany which for decades has been known as a country of large scale immigration of labour force is increasingly turning into a country of outmigration. Since the early 1990s, it finds itself in an economic crisis, and unemployment has turned into a mass phenomenon, seizing almost all skill and educational levels. Unemployment rates of more than 10%, worsening working conditions, and little hope for improvement induce an increasing number of Germans and previously immigrated foreigners to look for better chances beyond Germany's borders. Concomitantly, the number of immigrants declines. The reactions to this new phenomenon are mixed, although its consequences are hardly investigated and not clear to a broader public. Lack of data and information about behavioural parameters make an analysis of its costs and benefits difficult. Although as measured by the share of the total labour force, outmigration still does not appear alarming and might appear as a relief to the labour market and the public treasury, its composition and perspectives increasingly seem to threaten Germany's economy. As high potentials who are increasingly scarce, display an over proportional propensity to migrate and impose high opportunity costs on economy and society. International experience moreover, suggests that due to networking, the trickle of outmigration may rapidly develop into a self-sustaining stream. This outflow is not counterbalanced by an adequate inflow of qualified labour force, and key sectors might face a lack of competent labour force which might already have become a handicap for the new fresh impetus that the German economy needs.

Keywords

migration, Germany, labour market, cost benefit analysis, economic crisis.