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# Chapter 8

## Southern Europeans in France: Invisible Migrants?

Tatiana Eremenko, Nora El Qadim, and Elsa Steichen

### 8.1 Introduction

France has a long immigration history and has been an important destination for migrants from Southern Europe throughout the twentieth century. Faced with labour shortages as early as the nineteenth century, France actively recruited workers from neighbouring countries until the start of the 1970s. Italians were among the first foreign nationals to be recruited, along with Belgians and Polish. They represented the largest immigrant community in France in the 1950s. The number of Spanish migrants, present in the south of France from the start of the twentieth century, grew in the mid-1940s, following the civil war. Portuguese migration took off later, at the end of the 1950s and rapidly became the largest migrant community by the mid-1970s. However, by the time of the 1974 economic crisis migration flows from Southern Europe had declined and they have remained low in the last decades.

The current economic crisis does not appear to have changed this evolution and France has not emerged as an important destination for Southern European migrants as have Germany and the UK. Although France fared relatively well at the start of the current economic crisis, it has experienced low economic growth and high unemployment rates in recent years, thus explaining its overall low attractiveness for Southern Europeans and EU migrants looking for work. Although their numbers have increased and represent a growing proportion of recent flows to France (Brutel 2014), they remain low compared to numbers in Germany and the UK.

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Despite this statistical reality, EU mobility and more generally the role of the EU in economic and social policy have been at the forefront of debates in France since the early 2000s. Although these debates are a continuation of historical debates regarding immigration in France, they have taken a new intensity in the context of the current economic crisis. These debates have targeted two populations – the Roma and posted workers – with both groups being portrayed as threats to the French welfare state. The number of posted workers has increased threefold between 2007 and 2013, reaching 212,641 workers posted in France during the last available year, and Southern Europeans constitute a growing proportion of this number. Although posted workers are, according to official EU definitions, not migrants and do not fall within the legal framework relative to intra-European mobility as such, their characteristics and experiences are similar to other groups of temporary migrant workers. This led us to consider their case as an example of crisis induced work mobility in the EU when considering the French case.

Section 8.2 of this chapter provides a brief overview of the socio-economic situation in France, before analysing the evolutions in the volume and characteristics of recent migrants and posted workers since the start of the 2000s. Section 8.3 analyses debates concerning intra-European mobility through the lens of two recent debates on the Roma and posted workers. In both cases, the issue of the national model of social protection is central. Although Southern European nationals have not been central to any of the debates – the image of posted workers focused on Eastern Europe – they are directly affected by their results and policy changes. Moreover, we argue that the focus of political debates on other populations in France has contributed to the relative invisibility of Southern European immigrants in this country.

## **8.2 A Quantitative Assessment of Crisis-Induced Migration to France**

### ***8.2.1 Socio-economic Situation in France***

The current economic crisis did not impact France as hard as other European countries. In 2009, the GDP decreased by 3%, but recovered in the following years, increasing by 2% in 2010 and 2011 (Larrieu et al. 2014). However in the most recent years, the socio-economic situation has stagnated with a growth rate under 1% from 2012 to 2014 (Debauche et al. 2015).

The evolution of the employment situation reflects that of the GDP. In 2009 the number of jobs decreased and the unemployment rate went from 7.1% the previous year to 8.7% (Table 8.1). The creation of government aided jobs and the increase in independent activity limited the contraction of the labour market. In 2012 and 2013 job losses resumed and the unemployment rate started increasing again, reaching 9.8% in 2013. This evolution has led to 843,000 additional unemployed persons

**Table 8.1** Evolution of unemployment (ILO definition) by sex, age, occupation and level of education

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of unemployed (thousands)	2,299	2,320	2,320	2,121	1,970	2,457	2,504	2,474	2,672	2,813
Male	1,123	1,133	1,142	1,062	987	1,281	1,287	1,255	1,405	1,486
Female	1,177	1,187	1,178	1,059	984	1,176	1,217	1,219	1,267	1,327
Unemployment rate (%)	8.5	8.5	8.4	7.7	7.1	8.7	8.9	8.8	9.4	9.8
<b>By sex</b>										
Male	7.8	7.8	7.9	7.3	6.7	8.7	8.7	8.5	9.4	10.0
Female	9.3	9.3	9.1	8.1	7.4	8.8	9.1	9.1	9.3	9.7
<b>By age</b>										
15–24 years	19.8	20.3	21.3	18.8	18.3	22.9	22.5	21.8	23.6	23.9
25–49 years	7.8	7.8	7.6	7.0	6.3	7.8	8.0	8.0	8.7	9.1
50 years or more	5.2	5.0	5.1	4.6	4.3	5.2	5.5	5.5	5.9	6.5
<b>By educational level</b>										
Tertiary	6.4	6.2	5.9	5.5	4.5	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.6	na
Secondary	8.2	8.1	8.1	7.2	6.9	8.8	8.8	8.8	9.8	na
Less than secondary	12.3	12.9	13.1	12.2	11.7	14.2	15.3	15.1	16.0	na
<b>By occupation</b>										
Executives	4.1	4.2	3.7	3.0	2.8	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.9
Intermediate occupations	5.2	4.8	4.6	4.4	3.8	5.0	4.6	4.8	5.1	5.2
Employees	8.6	9.0	8.8	7.8	7.0	8.3	8.9	9.2	9.7	10.0
Workers	10.5	10.8	11	10.1	9.8	12.6	12.8	12.3	13.8	14.6
Skilled workers	7.4	7.7	7.6	7.2	7.0	8.9	9.4	9.2	10.5	11.2
Unskilled workers	15.8	15.9	16.8	15.2	14.7	19.1	18.6	17.7	19.5	20.6

Source: INSEE (2014). INSEE T304

Persons aged 15 or older residing in metropolitan France in ordinary households

over the period 2008–2013. The unemployment rate in France was slightly lower than the EU average in 2012 (10.6%), but higher than that of other destinations such as Germany (5.6%) or the United Kingdom (8.0%) (INSEE 2014).

Prior to the crisis, women had a more disadvantaged situation on the labour market than men (higher unemployment rates, lower salaries, more frequent part-time jobs). However as activity sectors most hit by the economic crisis employed more male workers (construction, temporary work placements...), men's employment has deteriorated to a greater extent. For example in 2008 men's unemployment rate was 0.7 points lower than that of women, but the situation has reversed by 2013.

Young adults (15–24 years old) have been the age group most affected by the crisis. Their unemployment rate was significantly higher than average prior to the crisis (18.3% in 2008) and has continued rising since then. In 2013, almost one in

four active young people were unemployed (23.9%). However this high level of unemployment partly reflects the specific situation of this age group as many individuals are still pursuing their studies and are not counted in the active population. Thus the proportion of unemployed among all 15–24 years old is significantly lower (8.9%).

The increase in the unemployment rate has been highest for groups with low levels of human capital. It increased by 4.3 points between 2008 and 2012 for individuals with a less than secondary degree, whereas the rise was only by 1.1 points for those with a tertiary degree. Executive staff and intermediate occupations experienced low unemployment rates throughout the crisis (less than 4% and less than 5.2% in the period 2008–2013), whereas the unemployment rates of workers, and particularly unskilled workers, have risen.

## ***8.2.2 EU Migration to France: A Positive, But Limited Impact of the Economic Crisis***

### **8.2.2.1 Stocks and Flows of EU Migrants in France**

After two decades of relatively low levels of migration flows, arrivals in France resumed at the end of the 1990s. At the start of the century, 200,000 migrants on average entered France every year (INED 1994–2008). As a result, the total immigrant population increased from 4.3 million in 1999 to 5.1 million in 2006 (Table 8.2). It has continued to increase in the last years, albeit at a lower rate. Since the end of the 1990s, growth in the immigrant population has mainly been fuelled by migration from outside Europe, primarily Africa and Asia. Conversely, the number of EU27 immigrants experienced only a small increase between 1999 and 2011 and their share in the total immigrant population declined from 41.5% to 32.6%. However, since the beginning of the crisis, migration flows of EU27 nationals are on the rise: the annual number of entries went from an average of 65,000 in 2006–2008, to around 91,000 in 2012 (Eurostat 2014).

These changes are mainly due to an increase in the number of Southern European migrants since the beginning of the crisis (Brutel 2014). In the previous decades the number of Italian, Spanish and Portuguese immigrants residing in France had been declining due to a low number of entries, an increase in the number of returns to the country of origin and the ageing of the population.<sup>1</sup> This can equally be observed for the first two groups in the period 1999–2011, whereas the number of Portuguese remained stable and then increased. However, since the start of the crisis, entries of Southern European migrants have increased and Portuguese migrants represented the largest proportion of migrants entering France in 2012 (8%), surpassing

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<sup>1</sup>Greek immigrants in France are not identified as a separate category in statistical sources due to low numbers. In the remaining sections they are grouped with “other EU27” nationals and the category of Southern European migrants only refers to migrants from Italy, Spain and Portugal.

**Table 8.2** Immigrant population by country of origin, 1999–2011

	Total			% col			Annual increase (%)	
	1999	2006	2011	1999	2006	2011	1999–2006	2006–2011
EU27	1,786,087	1,790,510	1,826,766	41.5	34.9	32.6	0.0	0.4
Spain	316,544	269,647	245,013	7.3	5.2	4.4	–2.3	–1.9
Italy	380,798	329,998	297,740	8.8	6.4	5.3	–2.0	–2.0
Portugal	570,243	569,600	592,281	13.2	11.1	10.6	0.0	0.8
Greece	10,157	9,496	9,683	0.2	0.2	0.2	–1.0	0.4
Belgium	93,395	103,263	111,264	2.2	2.0	2.0	1.4	1.5
Germany	125,227	128,91	123,313	2.9	2.5	2.2	0.4	–0.9
United Kingdom	74,683	134,052	153,955	1.7	2.6	2.7	8.7	2.8
Poland	98,566	90,426	92,769	2.3	1.8	1.7	–1.2	0.5
Romania	23,301	42,219	74,661	0.5	0.8	1.3	8.9	12.1
Other EU27	47,097	54,206	59,606	1.1	1.1	1.1	2.0	1.9
Third countries	2,522,440	3,345,784	3,778,402	58.5	65.1	67.4	4.1	2.5
Total	4,308,527	5,136,294	5,605,167	100	100	100	2.5	1.8

Source: INSEE – Population census

Algerians and Moroccans (7% each) (Brutel 2014). Spanish and Italian migrants accounted for 5% and 4% of entries.

The numbers of immigrants from Belgium and Germany have stayed relatively stable in the last decade, whereas there was an important increase of UK nationals (their number doubled between 1999 and 2011). Migration from Eastern and Central EU countries to France has remained limited compared to other destination countries, such as the UK, in part due to the introduction of transitional periods for nationals of the new Member States in 2004 and 2007 and the ensuing restrictions in their access to the labour market. The number of immigrants from EU8 countries, mainly Poland, remained stable during the last decade. Migration from EU2 countries, mainly Romania, started prior to their EU accession and has grown since their entry. The number of Romanians tripled between 1999 and 2011.

In the remainder of this section we compare the characteristics of recent migrants in the period prior to and after the start of the current economic crisis.<sup>2</sup> As mentioned earlier, we observe an increase of the three groups of Southern Europeans since the crisis: in the period 2006–2011, the number of recent migrants from Southern

<sup>2</sup>France does not have a statistical source allowing direct monitoring of flows. In line with the national statistical institute (INSEE) that uses the population census to estimate flows and characteristics of migrants, we use the population census to describe this population (Brutel 2014). We define recent migrants as immigrants residing in France for less than 5 years. Since 2004 the population census is an “*annual information collection covering all municipal territories in succession over a five-year period*”. Data for a given year (for example 2011) comprise information gathered over a 5-year period (2009–2013). We use the population census individual database [INDREG] for the years 2006 and 2011.

**Table 8.3** Number and distribution of recent migrants by country of origin, 2006–2011

	Number		% col		Annual increase (%)
	2006	2011	2006	2011	2006–2011
EU27	193,748	207,302	30.2	34.0	1.4
Spain	11,948	16,387	1.9	2.7	6.5
Italy	14,07	19,665	2.2	3.2	6.9
Portugal	27,203	42,228	4.2	6.9	9.2
Belgium	17,583	19,405	2.7	3.2	2.0
Germany	21,177	17,515	3.3	2.9	−3.7
United Kingdom	52,283	34,974	8.2	5.7	−7.7
Poland	9,605	10,247	1.5	1.7	1.3
Romania	11,287	19,746	1.8	3.2	11.8
Other EU27	28,594	27,135	4.5	4.4	−1.0
Third countries	447,22	403,198	69.8	66.0	−2.1
Total	640,968	610,500	100	100	−1.0

Source: INSEE – Population census individual database [INDREG]. Authors' estimations  
Immigrants residing in France for less than 5 years

Europe living in France increased from around 53,000 to 78,000, with a particularly strong increase for Portugal (+15,000) (Table 8.3). Although the number of recent migrants from the UK remains in second place, it has reduced compared to the period before the crisis. The number of Polish nationals remained stable, but we observe an increase in the number of recent migrants from Romania, albeit they still remain much lower than that from Portugal and the UK.

When analysing the characteristics of recent migrants from Southern Europe to France with regards to previous migration waves, it is important to keep in mind the historical development of each community and how much time separates the two waves of migration (see introduction). Flows of Italian guest workers had declined by the end of the 1960s and several decades had elapsed before recent migrants started arriving from Italy to France. The situation of Portugal is quite different to the extent that migration flows of workers had been declining prior to the country's EU accession, but that they had never fully stopped and thus current flows can be considered a continuation of these past waves. Spanish migrants are in an intermediate situation as their flows developed and declined later than that of Italians, but there is nevertheless more discontinuity between the two waves compared to the Portuguese case. The extent to which characteristics of recent migrants mirror those of past flows – low-skilled work migration, with a dominance of male migrants – or present new characteristics associated with EU migration – students, highly-skilled workers – largely depend on the history of each community.

### 8.2.2.2 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Recent Migrants in France

EU migrants in France remain concentrated in the 25–44 age group in both periods, with the exception of UK nationals, but some differences can be observed since the crisis pointing to changes in the age composition of migration flows (Table 8.4). Around one in five Portuguese migrants are under the age of 15, thus pointing to an important family component. The corresponding proportion was lower for Italy and Spain in 2006 (11 % and 13 %), but increased by 2011 (16 % and 20 %) suggesting that recent migrations more often comprise entire families and not only single adults. The proportion of 15–24 years old declines for Spain and Portugal, but also Poland and Romania. As this age group primarily consists of students, this may indicate that student mobility has diminished during the crisis due to a rarity of resources (institutional but also individual and family). In the case of EU10 nationals it also results from a diversification of profiles and the increase in economic migration since the end of the transitional period. Nationals from the UK and Belgium are on average older, with migrations often taking place for professional reasons at a later stage of the career or after retirement. Migrants in this age group remain relatively few among Southern Europeans, but their proportion has increased among the Portuguese (13 % in 2011 versus 9 % in 2006).

After being a minority among the immigrant population throughout most of the twentieth century, women finally represented 51 % in 2008 (Beauchemin et al. 2013). Among recent migrants their proportion was higher: 53–54 % (Table 8.5). Portuguese migration has been male dominated since the beginning and the

**Table 8.4** Age of recent migrants by country of origin, 2006–2011

	2006						2011					
	–15	15–24	25–44	45–64	65+	Total	–15	15–24	25–44	45–64	65+	Total
EU27	15.4	17.4	41.8	20.3	5.1	100	16.5	17.4	43.8	18.0	4.3	100
Spain	13.0	23.8	52.8	8.2	2.2	100	20.0	19.8	49.2	9.7	1.3	100
Italy	11.3	18.1	53.6	12.8	4.2	100	15.9	16.9	52.7	12.0	2.5	100
Portugal	22.1	21.6	45.9	8.6	1.9	100	20.8	18.6	46.7	12.7	1.2	100
Belgium	18.4	13.6	42.5	20.4	5.2	100	18.9	13.8	37.7	23.1	6.5	100
Germany	13.5	21.6	46.4	15.2	3.3	100	14.3	21.5	45.1	16.0	3.1	100
United Kingdom	15.3	6.6	27.3	39.9	10.8	100	13.9	9.3	26.5	37.5	12.8	100
Poland	10.6	24.0	57.3	7.6	0.5	100	11.6	18.4	58.8	10.4	0.8	100
Romania	11.0	26.2	54.9	6.8	1.0	100	14.7	21.9	53.5	9.0	0.9	100
Other EU27	15.1	23.5	39.7	17.7	4.0	100	14.5	21.3	42.3	17.2	4.6	100
Third countries	16.3	26.5	48.6	7.2	1.2	100	14.6	26.9	50.1	7.2	1.1	100
Total	16.0	23.8	46.6	11.2	2.4	100	15.3	23.7	48.0	10.8	2.2	100

Source: INSEE – Population census individual database [INDREG]. Authors' estimations  
Immigrants residing in France for less than 5 years



**Table 8.5** Proportion of female migrants among recent migrants by country of origin, 2006–2011

	2006	2011
EU27	51.3	50.5
Spain	54.6	51.1
Italy	49.1	48.9
Portugal	44.9	45.9
Belgium	49.4	49.4
Germany	52.4	53.4
United Kingdom	48.9	49.7
Poland	60.3	55.7
Romania	56.4	51.8
Other EU27	56.6	55.8
Third countries	53.9	55.9
Total	53.1	54.1

Source: INSEE - Population census individual database [INDREG]. Authors' estimations

Immigrants residing in France for less than 5 years

proportion of women remains low among recent migrants (45–46%). On the contrary, the majority of Spanish migrants were female in 2006 (55%), but since the start of the crisis their proportion had decreased (51%) pointing to a larger emigration of male migrants. The recent migration flow from Italy has been balanced and does not appear to be affected by the crisis. Poland and Romania had the highest proportions of female migrants in 2006 (57–60%), but they diminished by 2011 (52%), possibly due to the decrease in student migration and the growing proportion of work migrants from these countries.

Southern Europeans represent two extremes in terms of educational levels among recent migrants in France, but we can observe a certain homogenization since the start of the crisis. A large majority of migrants from Portugal (77%) had a less than secondary degree and only 8% had a tertiary degree in 2006 (Table 8.6). Conversely, the majority of migrants from Spain and Italy held a tertiary degree: 63% of Spaniards and 51% of Italians in 2006. Although these differences persist in the post-crisis period, we see some changes. The proportion of Portuguese migrants with a secondary education has progressed (19% versus 15%), pointing to a new class of workers potentially hit by the crisis and thus deciding to emigrate. On the contrary, Spanish migrants with a less than secondary educational level are more represented in the recent period, thus suggesting the emigration of low skilled migrants compared to recent years. Italian migrants became increasingly holders of a tertiary education (56% versus 51%).

**Table 8.6** Educational level of recent migrants by country of origin, 2006–2011

	2006				2011			
	Less than secondary	Secondary	Tertiary	Total	Less than secondary	Secondary	Tertiary	Total
EU27	28.8	29.0	42.1	100	31.0	28.8	40.2	100
Spain	12.8	24.7	62.5	100	16.8	24.2	59.0	100
Italy	17.6	31.8	50.6	100	15.3	28.6	56.1	100
Portugal	76.8	14.9	8.2	100	71.2	19.3	9.5	100
Belgium	18.9	32.7	48.4	100	20.4	36.5	43.1	100
Germany	13.4	37.5	49.1	100	12.0	37.9	50.1	100
United Kingdom	30.9	26.4	42.7	100	26.1	26.4	47.6	100
Poland	21.3	39.8	38.8	100	23.2	36.2	40.6	100
Romania	30.5	32.4	37.1	100	35.3	32.7	32.1	100
Other EU27	14.6	33.0	52.4	100	17.6	31.6	50.8	100
Third countries	41.9	26.1	32.0	100	37.1	26.8	36.1	100
Total	38.0	27.0	35.1	100	35.1	27.5	37.5	100

Source: INSEE - Population census individual database [INDREG]. Authors' estimations  
Immigrants residing in France for less than 5 years aged 15 years or older

### 8.2.2.3 Labour Market Situation of Recent Migrants in France<sup>3</sup>

When we compare the situation of recent migrants before and after the crisis, we observe an increase of their activity rates – 64 % in 2006 to 74 % in 2011 – which may have resulted from a decrease of student migration and increase of workers (Table 8.7). By comparison, the activity rates of third country nationals did not change in the same period. The activity rates are generally lower for female migrants (56 % in 2006 versus 72 % of male among recent EU27 migrants), but women have also experienced a higher increase by 2011 (+10 versus +9 points).

EU27 migrants, particularly nationals of EU15 states, benefited from a more favourable situation in the labour market prior to the crisis (INSEE 2012). Although EU27 migrants remain less concerned by unemployment than third country nationals, they have also experienced an increase of this indicator in the last years (unemployment rate increased by 2 points). Spanish and Italian migrants show the largest increase of the unemployment rate (+34 % and +30 %), but it remains above average for Portuguese (+13 %). Conversely, it has decreased for Eastern Europeans, namely Polish (–13 %) and Romanians (–15 %), who faced a much worse situation in 2006.

<sup>3</sup>The sample sizes of recent Southern European migrants in the French Labour Force Survey are small (for instance, there are 1500 South European immigrants in the 2012 LFS survey, whatever their age and period of arrival). Thus, we use the population census to describe the labour market situation of recent migrants. However, the information provided in the population census does not allow estimating comparable indicators pertaining to this field to other data sources (for example unemployment rates according to ILO definition).

**Table 8.7** Distribution by labour market status of recent migrants by country of origin, 2006–2011

	2006			2011			Unemployment rate			
	Employment	Unemployment	Inactive	Total	Employment	Unemployment	Inactive	Total	2006	2011
EU27	54.2	10.0	35.8	100	60.6	12.9	26.5	100	15.6	17.5
Spain	72.4	10.4	17.1	100	71.6	14.6	13.8	100	12.6	16.9
Italy	67.7	10.7	21.6	100	69.8	15.0	15.2	100	13.7	17.7
Portugal	74.1	12.0	13.9	100	75.1	14.1	10.8	100	13.9	15.8
Belgium	61.5	9.5	29.1	100	58.1	11.7	30.2	100	13.3	16.7
Germany	71.2	6.5	22.4	100	72.4	6.2	21.3	100	8.3	7.9
United Kingdom	33.2	5.9	60.9	100	39.8	5.9	54.3	100	15.1	12.9
Poland	54.4	18.9	26.7	100	64.2	18.6	17.2	100	25.8	22.4
Romania	43.7	26.7	29.6	100	51.8	24.5	23.7	100	38.0	32.1
Other EU27	52.4	10.2	37.4	100	55.9	12.9	31.1	100	16.2	18.8
Third countries	38.2	25.7	36.1	100	35.9	27.8	36.2	100	40.3	43.6
Total	43.7	20.3	36.0	100	45.4	22.1	32.5	100	31.7	32.7

Source: INSEE – Population census individual database [INDREG]. Authors' estimations  
 Immigrants residing in France for less than 5 years aged 15 years or older and not studying at time of observation  
 The unemployment rate is the proportion of unemployed among the active population

**Table 8.8** Occupation level of recent migrants by country of origin, 2006–2011

	2006				2011			
	Low	Mid	High	Total	Low	Mid	High	Total
EU27	28.3	44.7	27.0	100	33.3	42.6	24.1	100
Spain	15.0	48.6	36.5	100	19.3	47.7	33.0	100
Italy	20.3	41.5	38.2	100	17.8	39.7	42.5	100
Portugal	64.8	31.1	4.1	100	62.6	33.5	3.8	100
Belgium	18.2	53.1	28.7	100	20.9	54.0	25.1	100
Germany	14.6	49.3	36.2	100	13.0	49.5	37.5	100
United Kingdom	16.9	50.0	33.1	100	19.2	47.5	33.3	100
Poland	42.6	41.8	15.5	100	42.7	42.7	14.6	100
Romania	37.5	45.0	17.5	100	40.5	39.2	20.3	100
Other EU27	16.2	47.4	36.4	100	22.3	44.7	33.0	100
Third countries	41.3	44.1	14.6	100	36.5	44.0	19.4	100
Total	35.8	44.4	19.9	100	34.9	43.3	21.8	100

Source: INSEE – Population census individual database [INDREG]. Authors' estimations

Immigrants residing in France for less than 5 years aged 15 years or older and employed at time of observation

Low-level occupations refer to unskilled employees and labourers, including agricultural workers. Mid level occupations refer to intermediate professions, skilled employees, labourers and tradesman. High-level occupations refer to directors of companies of 10 or more employees and executives

The differences in terms of educational levels of Southern European migrants determine their occupation in the labour market. In recent decades Spanish and Italian migrants, similarly to North Western European migrants (Belgium, Germany, UK), are more likely to hold mid and high-level occupations (INSEE 2012); this is equally observed among recent migrants before and after the crisis (Table 8.8). Conversely, Portuguese have been concentrated in low-skilled occupations and this is still the case among recent arrivals (more than two thirds are in this category). Migrants from Central and Eastern Europe are in an intermediate situation.

However these profiles have changed for some groups in the period under study. Previously we observed a decrease in the educational level of Spanish migrants, and this is paralleled by an increase in the proportion of migrants in low-skilled occupations (+4 points). Conversely, among Italians who had already held the highest proportion of high-skilled occupations before the crisis, their proportion has further progressed and reached 43 % in 2011. Although the census does not distinguish the holders of tertiary degrees, other sources point to the presence of a large number of Italian PhD holders in academic positions in France. Italians were the largest national group working in the National Centre for Scientific Research (332 in 2013, 19 % of foreign researchers) (CNRS 2013). They also accounted for the largest number of recruitments of university professors in the last decade (371 between 2004 and 2013, 17 % of recruitments of foreigners).

We also observe an increase in the occupational level of migrants from Romania, which may result from the fact that since the end of the transitional period, they are

able to access a wider array of occupations. There has been a particularly high increase in the number of doctors born in Romania and practicing in France (176 in 2007, 840 in 2014) (CNOM 2014). This is also the only national group where female migrants have higher level of occupation than male migrants (32 % are high-skilled versus 13 % of male). For example, Romanian doctors in France are predominantly female (71 %).

### ***8.2.3 Posted Workers in France: More Southern European Working Under This Status Since the Beginning of the Economic Crisis***

The definitions and data sources used in the previous section allow identifying and describing a certain profile of EU migrants, i.e. those having changed their country of residence and currently residing in France. However this approach gives only a partial evaluation of the extent of crisis-induced immigration from Southern Europe to France for several reasons. Firstly, the population census is likely to underestimate the most recent migrants who may think of themselves as being temporarily in France and thus not concerned by the data collection, lack individual housing and not be identified by the census takers, be reluctant to participate given language problems, etc. Secondly, the population census does not cover specific profiles of migrants coming for a shorter duration in France, such as seasonal or temporary workers. Although the volume and characteristics of these migrants are by definition less known, different sources point to their increase since the beginning of the crisis.

Spaniards and Portuguese constituted the majority of workers recruited by the French Office for International Migration (OMI) to carry out seasonal activities in the 1960s and 1970s. After the entry of Spain and Portugal into the EU (1986) and the end of the transitional period (1992), Spanish and Portuguese workers obtained a direct access to the labour market and no longer had to go through the OMI recruitment process, thus disappearing from statistics on this type of workers. However, many of them continued working in seasonal jobs and commuting to France during certain periods of the year (Michalon and Potot 2008). Anecdotal evidence shows that their numbers have also risen since the start of the crisis, particularly in Southern regions of France (Picouët 2008; Millien 2014). The long-standing presence of workers from these countries in this sector may have facilitated their recruitment.

Another category of workers coming temporarily to France consists of posted workers, i.e. workers employed by companies based in other EU countries carrying out temporary services for companies or private employers in France (Math and Spire 2004). These workers in principle are not migrants, as they do not change their place of residence (UN definition). During the period of posting, workers hold a contract with their company based abroad and remain affiliated to the social security regime in the country where their company is established. Their stay in France is

temporary, as most missions have a fixed duration, lasting from a few days to several months, which cannot exceed the maximal legal duration.<sup>4</sup> Moreover these situations do not fall under the EU jurisdiction related to the freedom of movement to the extent that postings are regulated by the Directive 96/71/EC of 16 December 1996 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services.

Despite this, characteristics and experiences of posted workers are similar to other groups of temporary migrant workers (Clark 2012). The process leading these workers to work abroad is also linked to limited economic opportunities in their home countries and their willingness to improve their living conditions. Although their missions have a limited duration and they are expected to return after each mission to their origin country, they can end up spending a relatively long time abroad, either when carrying out a mission lasting several months or by accumulating several shorter missions without returning. They occupy similar jobs to other migrants, such as low-skilled jobs in the construction sector or agriculture. Therefore, in many cases, it is only their legal status that differentiates them from other migrants, possibly putting them in a more vulnerable position despite their EU nationality (Math and Spire 2004). These considerations have led us to consider their case as an example of crisis induced work mobility in the EU, particularly given the fact that their presence in France has gained attention in the recent years and has triggered many debates (Sect. 8.3).

### 8.2.3.1 Volume of Posted Workers in France

The number of posted workers has grown continuously throughout the 2000s, going from around 16,000 in 2004 to around 213,000 in 2013 (Table 8.9).<sup>5</sup> Even though part of this evolution is due to a better monitoring of these situations and the statistical coverage, which itself is a result of the growing attention this issue has raised in the recent years, it also indicates that an increasing number of EU nationals come to work in France under this regime. It is important to note that the term “posted workers” covers various types of postings – provision of services, temporary placement, intra-company transfers, self-employed – with different worker profiles in terms of nationalities, skill levels, working conditions, etc. The existing statistics do not

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<sup>4</sup>The maximum legal duration for a posting is 24 months after which the worker no longer has the right to continue to be affiliated to the social security regime in the country of origin and must be registered in France.

<sup>5</sup>Companies posting workers in France have to make a declaration beforehand to the local work protection administration (number of workers, duration of posting, activity...). This information is compiled by the national work protection administration to produce annual statistics. These statistics do not estimate the number of workers coming to France a given year (*flows*) as the declaration covers a “*service*” (it may include several workers, workers may come to France several times during a given year, the duration of the presence in France of these workers varies). For a more detailed description of these statistics see Direction Générale du Travail (2014).

**Table 8.9** Number of posted workers by nationality, 2004–2013

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
EU15	9,871	14,666	16,625	28,977	54,529	65,906	58,205	72,117	78,569	98,758
Portugal	175	830	1,960	4,623	8,852	8,730	13,804	16,453	20,130	34,480
Spain	312	808	915	1,751	1,471	2,479	2,898	9,009	7,060	14,148
Germany	3,283	4,013	3,754	6,624	9,038	9,116	9,305	11,395	12,898	13,874
France	0	0	0	3,711	20,743	28,557	19,468	18,508	16,934	12,668
Italy	188	618	855	3,531	3,297	3,335	3,795	6,642	8,401	10,282
United Kingdom	952	2,910	4,413	4,718	4,025	5,273	2,794	3,880	5,242	5,185
Belgium	4,275	4,370	3,618	2,095	4,213	4,955	4,032	4,193	4,415	4,759
Other	686	1,117	1,110	1,924	2,890	3,461	2,109	2,037	3,489	3,362
EU10	4,497	9,724	17,051	34,463	34,081	33,127	43,956	59,158	69,173	93,043
Poland	3,260	7,310	12,471	25,322	23,453	19,912	23,086	27,728	31,741	38,067
Romania	275	468	608	2,599	4,164	4,918	9,598	13,159	17,522	26,971
Bulgaria	0	16	77	409	912	1,228	2,931	5,744	8,219	12,532
Slovakia	337	1,053	2,100	3,618	3,418	3,134	3,810	5,081	5,154	5,823
Hungary	204	220	663	1,110	779	2,557	2,596	3,699	3,161	3,773
Lithuania	7	32	54	29	107	288	339	1,455	1,732	2,861
Czech Republic	257	375	617	1,176	858	662	844	1,525	907	1,512
Other	157	250	461	200	390	428	752	767	737	1,504
Third countries	1,606	2,076	4,248	4,658	6,651	6,711	9,012	13,136	21,721	20,840
Total	15,974	26,466	37,924	68,098	95,261	105,744	111,173	144,411	169,463	212,641

Source: Direction Générale du Travail (2014)

allow us to identify these different groups, although it is possible to make some assumptions as we describe below.

There has been an important change in the geographical composition of posted workers in France in the last decade. Historically posted workers were mostly high-skilled workers from neighbouring countries: in 2004 almost half of posted workers came from just two countries, Belgium and Germany. Starting from the mid-2000s we see an increase in the number of EU10 nationals. In 2013 Polish workers represented the largest national group with around 38,000 workers, thus 18 % of the total. The number of Romanian workers has also been rapidly increasing since 2009, reaching 27,000 workers in 2013 (13 % of the total). However since the beginning of the crisis, and particularly in the most recent years, the most important increases are seen in the numbers of Southern European workers. Between 2012 and 2013 the number of Portuguese progressed by 71 %. Portugal now has the second highest number of posted workers in France (34,000 workers in 2013, 16 % of the total) and although they remain the second largest group (after Poland), they were expected to surpass them in 2014. The number of Spanish workers doubled in 2013 and they became the fourth most numerous national group (after Poland, Portugal, Romania).

### 8.2.3.2 Socio-economic Characteristics of Posted Workers in France

The large majority of posted workers are concentrated in low-skilled occupations (86 % are labourers in 2013) (DGT 2014). Intermediate and high level professions accounted for 5 % and 2 % respectively, with the remaining proportion undetermined. Most posted workers are employed in construction (42 % in 2013), but there is also an important proportion of workers employed by temporary placement agencies covering different sectors (23 %), as well as workers in the industrial sector (16 %).

The regions of activity of posted workers in France have also evolved over the years. Up until the mid-2000s they were primarily concentrated in border regions in the East and North of France. With time however there has been a penetration over the entire territory, including the Ile de France region. The increase since the crisis has been stronger regions in the South, in regions bordering Spain and Portugal. In Aquitaine the number of posted workers has tripled since 2008 (whereas it has doubled in France), with most of the postings being declared by Spanish and Portuguese companies in the construction sector (DIRECCTE Aquitaine 2014).

## 8.3 Policies and Debates in Focus

Immigration has been a recurrent issue of French national debates in the 2000s and 2010s. These debates have mainly focused on flows from third countries in the South or from Eastern European countries, and only indirectly touched upon the case of Southern European countries. This section analyses the factors explaining



this situation, focusing first on the history of immigration policy in France, then on the implementation of EU directives related to the freedom of movement and provision of services. The analysis of debates related to EU mobility and EU policy, precisely that on the Roma and on posted workers, underlines two characteristics of the recent debates on intra-European immigration in France: first of all, these debates started before 2008 and the economic crisis; second, these debates focused on Eastern Europeans, which in turn contributed to the invisibilizing of Southern Europeans in France.

### **8.3.1 History of Immigration Policy in France**

The history of immigration policy in France can help explain why policies and debates today are not so much focused on immigrants from Southern Europe. The state has played a central role in managing immigration policy flows in France since the nineteenth century (Weil 1991; Noiriel 1996; Viet 1998; Guiraudon 2000). Immigration policy in France in the twentieth century is thus the result of the emergence and variations of three competing logics, each defended by a variety of administrations: a *policing logic*, with the objective of ensuring the safety of the territory through the control of borders and foreigners; a *labour logic*, with the objective of providing a sufficient labour force in times of need and in specific sectors, but limiting the presence of foreigners in times of economic crisis; and finally a *logic of population*, concerned with the role of immigration in the French population and its fertility, and at times tainted with racial undertones (Spire 2005). These three logics are often intertwined and difficult to disentangle in the resulting immigration policy.

These logics were all at play in the gradual favouring of European immigration over immigration from the former French colonies (mainly in West and North Africa). Immigration to France, initially mainly from Belgium, Italy and Poland, comprised more and more workers from the French colonies between the wars, as well as Spaniards. After the Second World War, the numbers of immigrants from the (former) colonies in Africa grew, in parallel with the number of Spaniards and Portuguese. While the slowing down of the economy at the end of the 1960s led to limitations in the entry of foreign workers, and eventually to the announcement of the end of labour migration in 1974, the preference for European migrants was reinforced with the progressive construction of a European market and the promotion of the free movement of workers and their families (Sect. 8.3.2). EU law effectively created a two-tier system of immigration by distinguishing EU nationals from “third-country nationals”.

With the rise of colonial and postcolonial immigration (Sayad 1999), European immigration came to be considered as unproblematic, compared to that of other immigrants. Gérard Noiriel (1996) showed how successive waves of immigrants to

France since the nineteenth century have all progressively been integrated within the French nation, by looking at their socio-economic status, their religious (or rather non-religious) beliefs and practices, as well as rates of inter-marriage. He also explained that debates on non-European immigrants developed along similar lines as earlier debates on Polish or Italian immigration, for example. This is why he expected the integration of non-European immigrants to follow the same path.

However, this narrative has been questioned by accounts that underline the specific treatment of postcolonial immigration, as well as the later development of racist, xenophobic and more recently anti-Muslim discourses in France (Blanchard 2005; Boubeker 2005; Boubeker and Hajjat 2009). The public debate has very much followed a “logic of population” and been framed in terms of “integration”, defined on the basis of the French model of citizenship (Brubaker 1998). In this framework, extra-European immigration is considered more “problematic” than European immigration, including when the arrival of different migrants actually coincided in time (as is the case with the Portuguese for example). The differential treatment of European and non-European immigrants is thus institutional and systemic, as has been shown by the literature on postcolonial immigration and on discriminations (see for example De Rudder et al. 2006), and as induced by the process of European integration. It is also part of the everyday economic and social life of immigrants, as shown in the higher employment rates of European immigrants compared to non-Europeans in France (Simon and Steichen 2014). They also tend to occupy different jobs: in the construction sector, for example, Portuguese workers are given supervising positions, while immigrants from Africa and North Africa are usually assigned subaltern tasks (Jounin 2009). This is symptomatic of the privileged position of European immigrants in France compared to other immigrants, and of the progressive invisibilizing of these immigrants (Cordeiro 1999).

We argue that political debates on intra-European immigration, while singling out Eastern Europeans, have reinforced this dynamic and made Southern European immigration even less visible. Most policies and debates in the last decades continue to target extra-European immigrants. However, economic concerns and competition in the labour market were also part of these debates, as is visible in campaigns of the extreme-right Front National against immigration. In the 2000s and 2010s, both before and after the crisis, these concerns also affected the debate on intra-European migration. European migrants came to the fore on various occasions and mostly in relation to debates on the EU’s enlargement and to the question of social protection and rights for workers.

### ***8.3.2 Controlling the Access to the Labour Market in a Context of Free Movement***

One of the ways in which intra-European immigration was favoured in France was through European integration. As early as 1957, the Treaty of Rome introduced the idea of a free movement of people, more specifically of workers, between European

countries. However, the construction and implementation of free movement was progressive: the national legal norms transposing this right were only elaborated at the end of the 1960s (right of establishment of workers and their families, coordination of social security regimes...) and discriminations towards workers from Member States persisted until the 1990s (Rodier 2001; Math 2004). Despite this, limitations on social security or pension benefits, as well as most limitations on access to some occupations (for civil service for example) were progressively removed.

As a result, the labour markets of member States became almost completely open to nationals of other Member States. However political moves were made to protect national labour markets, particularly at the time of every EU enlargement. Higher salary and social protection levels in “older” Member States were often seen as overly attractive to workers of “new” Member States, whose citizens would then constitute unfair competition for national workers. This led to the adoption of so-called “transitional periods” for new Member States, during which migrants coming from these countries benefited from free movement, but could not directly take up salaried work and had to ask for a provisional authorisation to do so. In 1986, France introduced the maximum transitional period for Spanish and Portuguese workers limiting their access to the French labour market for 7 years. During the recent enlargements towards Central and Eastern Europe, France introduced a transitional period of 5 years, later reduced to four, for EU8 members states (May 2004–June 2008),<sup>6</sup> 7 years, the maximum authorized duration, for Romania and Bulgaria (January 2007–December 2013) and 2 years for Croatia (July 2013–June 2015).

This meant that the European Union was not a two-tier system distinguishing between EU nationals and non-EU nationals (or third country nationals), but rather a variable geometry system of borders for protecting national labour markets. In fact the system is three-tier: “ethnic migrants” from outside the EU are considered the most visible and raise concerns about integration and multiculturalism, while “free movers” or “Eurostars”, as nationals of pre-2004 Member States, enjoy freedom of movement and establishment since a long time. “East-West migrants” from the Member States having accessed the EU in the 2000s, fall in between these two categories: while they enjoy the freedom of circulation, and are given the freedom to work in all EU Member States after the end of the transitional period, they are still considered as “immigrants” rather than “free movers” (Favell 2009). In spite of the transitional period of new Member States coming to an end, the political debate on intra-EU immigration and the labour market has remained very much focused on nationals from these States, even though Romania came in third position as an immigration-sending country to France in the recent period, after Portugal and the UK, and Poland in eighth position, way behind Spain, Italy or Germany (see Sect. 8.2.2).

This focus has been particularly visible in two recent debates. First, the debate on the non-French Roma population culminated in 2010, when the French President,

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<sup>6</sup> Among the 2004 accession countries, Malta and Cyprus were not covered by the temporary restrictions.

Nicolas Sarkozy, announced the dismantling of camps and squats, and the deportation of their foreign inhabitants to their origin countries within the EU. Although this policy was influenced by a long history of institutional racism towards the Roma in France, it also raised an array of arguments relating to free movement and the differences in social protection systems in the EU. Second, the debate on the Directive on services, also known as the “Bolkestein directive”, addressed the issue of posted workers prior to the 2008 economic crisis and re-emerged in recent years. In both instances, in spite of their focus on Eastern Europeans, political debates contributed to shaping political discourses as well as policies towards intra-European immigration and as such have had an impact on policies regarding Southern European immigration.

### ***8.3.3 Anti-Roma Feeling and the Issue of Social Protection in the French Debate on Intra-European Migration***

In 2010 the debate over Roma presence in France and the circulation of Roma EU-citizens within the European Union made the headlines in France and abroad. Indeed, after a gendarme killed a young French Roma and the following attack of a police station by dozens of armed French Roma, Nicolas Sarkozy, then President of the country, announced the dismantling of 300 illegal camps and squats within 3 months.<sup>7</sup> He also declared that those found to be living in France “illegally” would be sent back home. His speech particularly targeted Romanian and Bulgarian Roma, who had already been victims of France’s quantitative objectives for deportations in the previous years. However, this announcement, by singling out a population along ethnic lines and by publicizing the deportation of EU citizens, attracted harsh criticisms. EU Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding took a stand against these deportations, and the European Commission warned France that it had two weeks to implement the 2004 EU directive on freedom of movement or it would face an infringement procedure. Although the Commission did not pursue an infringement procedure, Viviane Reding deplored the fact that some policies appeared to target and single out Roma populations, thus violating EU anti-discrimination directives as well as the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Although anti-Roma feeling is not new, national and local policies have exacerbated it in the recent years (Fassin et al. 2014). The existence of a form of “welfare tourism” has been one of the central arguments to justify these policies, particularly the deportation of Roma citizens back to Romania and Bulgaria (Nacu 2012).

Despite the fact that the EU Directive on free movement stipulates that recourse to social assistance cannot be a valid ground for expelling an EU national, French law allows the expulsion of EU nationals who have the “primary objective of benefiting from the social assistance system” (Dimitrova 2013). Thus, following a

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<sup>7</sup>Nicolas Sarkozy, Speech in Grenoble, 30 July 2010.

period of opening access to social protection (see Sect. 8.2.2), restrictive conditions were reintroduced for some social benefits prior to the first EU enlargement towards Central and Eastern Europe: the *Revenu Minimal d'Insertion* (RMI) (or RSA, *Revenu de Solidarité Active* since 2008), as well as the allocation for single parents (API) and for the handicapped (AAH), which all include requirements of a minimum period of residence before they can be claimed. Although many of these changes and debates mostly concern extra-European immigrants, their timing suggests that they also targeted intra-EU immigration. The selective implementation of certain provisions also shows that specific groups of migrants were targeted. For example, the conditions to claim family benefits were modified in 2012 to include a provision stating that persons having been the object of an official prefectural decision (deportation, non-renewal of residence permit for nationals with a transitional regime, beneficiaries of a financial aid in the case of return to country of origin) could not benefit from them (Demagny and Math 2014). Prior to this change, expulsions of EU nationals with insufficient resources had been disproportionately exercised against Romanian nationals (European Parliament 2009), who were therefore the most likely to be concerned by this condition. However, these changes are, in principle, for all EU migrants in France, and the restrictions on access to social revenues affect all of them.

### **8.3.4 From the “Polish plumber” to Posted Workers: The French Debate on the “Bolkestein Directive”**

As was described earlier in this chapter, an increasing number of EU nationals, particularly Southern Europeans, are coming to work in France as posted workers. These workers did not attract much attention at first (the first EU directive regulating their movement dates back to 1996) as their status was considered a quite technical issue, and mostly of interest for trade unions, labour inspections and lawyers. However, posted workers surprisingly became the centre of a heated debate in France in 2004 and 2005 after the European Commission issued a proposal for a Directive on services in the internal market, also known as the “Bolkestein Directive” (after Commissioner Frits Bolkestein). After the proposal was amended, the issue of posted workers once again “disappeared”, although some cases of postings made the headlines on a periodical basis. However with the rise of posted workers in the context of the current economic crisis, this issue came once again at the forefront of debates regarding social and economic EU policies.

Within the more general framework of the Directive 96/71/EC on the posting of workers the Bolkestein Directive aimed at reducing national regulations on the provision of services. First, it provided a framework to facilitate the permanent establishment of foreign services providers in another Member State (this point was not particularly central in the debates). Second, through the “country of origin principle”, the proposal aimed at facilitating the free movement of workers on a tempo-

rary basis (Grossman and Woll 2011). This point proved particularly difficult to articulate with the protections offered by the existing 1996 directive. In particular, by “abolishing many administrative regulations and obligations for posting workers abroad, as well as transferring the competence for controls to the country of origin, the draft Services Directive was to create a de facto situation in which controls on labour law would have been even more difficult than they already were”. The “country of origin” principle also implied “that a services provider who crosses the border to offer a service in another EU country has to abide solely by the rules of its Member State of origin, i.e., where it is formally established” (Crespy 2010: 1255).

The “country of origin” principle raised debates and mobilisations in various Member States (culminating in a march of almost 100,000 people in Brussels in March 2005 to protest against the directive), but nowhere as intense as in France. The French outrage over the Bolkestein directive and the country of origin rule cannot be understood without a closer look at the timing of the debate. Indeed, the Bolkestein directive provided opponents to European enlargement and integration with ammunition to bolster their position. In 2004, the Eastern enlargement round and its consequences – a more unequal European economic area – dominated discussions on Europe. Enlargement, as well as discussions for the potential accession of Turkey, made many weary of the competition of workers from new Member States. Moreover, in 2005, the European Constitutional Treaty, which was ultimately rejected by referendum in France was central to French political debates. In this context, the Bolkestein proposal was turned into the symbol of the tensions between the EU as an economic, market-oriented project on the one hand, and the idea of a “social Europe” on the other.

The figure of the “Polish plumber” came to embody the fears related to the directive on services and the enlargement. After Philippe de Villiers, the head of the right-wing party *Mouvement pour la France*, used this image in a speech against the directive in March 2005, it became very popular, including in other European countries – although the Germans were more concerned about butchers (Nicolaidis and Schmidt 2007; Grossman and Woll 2011). The idea behind this figure was that workers from new Member States, with less stringent labour regulations, would come to work in older Member States and constitute a form of “social dumping” and thus unfair competition (Crespy 2010). However, the use of this image shows that fears about the directive on services were not only about the content of the directive, but also about the ongoing enlargement process. In the end, European governments revised the draft directive, suppressing the country of origin principle, but replacing it with a very similar article. It forbids protectionist barriers on the provision of services, unless they are non-discriminatory, justified by public interest and proportionate.

Thus, despite the initial opposition to the directive, it was nevertheless adopted, although in a slightly watered-down version, and the issue of posted workers has regularly reappeared in the French public debate ever since. Before the 2014 European elections, for example, extreme-right and extreme-left parties brought the issue of the misuse of posting to the forefront of debates (Balbastre 2014; Gatinois 2014). During a strike of truck drivers in March 2015 the French media covered the

misuse of posted workers by transportation companies based in Central and Eastern European countries. A recent trial regarding the misuse of Romanian and Bulgarian posted workers for the construction of a nuclear reactor between 2008 and 2011 also attracted national coverage. All these events have sustained a European and national political attention on this issue.<sup>8</sup> The Court of Auditors, the institution controlling State finances in France, has singled out fraud in the use of posted workers, and estimated the amount of foregone contributions to 380 million Euro (Cour des Comptes 2014). After the adoption of an EU directive facilitating the control of posted workers in 2014,<sup>9</sup> these possibilities were rapidly transposed into French legal norms<sup>10</sup> to fight against unfair competition (CNLTI 2015). These laws increase the legal and regulatory provisions in the fight against the misuse of the system (administrative sanctions in case of non declaration of posting, blacklisting of firms convicted, extension of the right of action of trade unions and professional organizations, solidarity of developers and project managers). There is also an important reorganization of the control mechanisms for identifying and pursuing frauds concerned with this system (greater coordination between different ministries in charge and development of joint controls by multiple institutions such as police, labour inspectors, customs; special monitoring service dealing with complex frauds).

### 8.3.5 *Invisible Southern European Migrants?*

Despite their growing numbers in France, Southern Europeans have been relatively absent from recent debates on EU mobility in France, which have on the contrary mainly focused on Central and Eastern European immigration from the most recent Member States. This situation has had contrary effects on the situation of Southern Europeans.

On the one hand, the changes in the legislation regarding access to the labour market, access to social benefits, the regulation of posted workers, now affect all European immigrants, including Southern Europeans, for better or for worse. The on-going debates on the access to the social security system, though not primarily

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<sup>8</sup> Government reports mention the dangers of posted workers. See for example Le Guen (2005) for the use of posted workers in the agricultural sector. The Commission of European Affairs of the National Assembly (Grommerch 2011) and of the Senate (Bocquet 2013) also turned their attention to this issue and were both concerned with improving the regulation and control of posted work.

<sup>9</sup> Directive 2014/67/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the enforcement of Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System ('the IMI Regulation').

<sup>10</sup> Loi n° 2014-790 du 10 juillet 2014 visant à lutter contre la concurrence sociale déloyale (also called "Loi Savary"). The recent Loi n° 2015-990 du 6 août 2015 pour la croissance, l'activité et l'égalité des chances économiques (also called "Loi Macron") also includes provisions on this topic.



directed at Southern European migrants also concern them. The complexity of the administrative procedures and conditions to access certain social benefits (Demagny and Math 2014) and the increased risks of unemployment in the context of the current economic crisis, result in some of them having difficulties in fulfilling residence requirements in France (Le Progrès 2014). The posted worker regime under which many of them work also raises questions as to their working conditions and social rights. Given the complexity of the status, it may be difficult for these workers and their families to access certain social rights, such as unemployment or family benefits, whether in France or in their country of origin.

On the other hand, the focus of debates on Central and Eastern European immigration have contributed to the invisibilizing of Southern European immigrants. Indeed one could argue that the visibility of Eastern and Central European migrants contributed in a way to the relative political invisibility of Southern European ones. However, it is difficult to establish a causal link here. Eastern and Central Europeans also generated more debates because they were nationals of the newest Member States. Thus these debates are as much related to the enlargement process and the growing Eurosceptic sentiment in France as they are to debates on immigration. By retracing the differential treatment of Southern European and extra-European immigrants in the media and in political debates, we can see how the debates on Central and Eastern European immigration fit in the longer-term dynamics of political debates on immigration in France.

Indeed, as was described above, debates on immigration in France focus mainly on extra-European immigration, and have made intra-European immigration comparatively less visible. The rise of debates on Central and Eastern European immigration thus came at a moment when the process of making immigrants from older Member States less visible in France was already under way. Thus, in line with Adrian Favell's typology of immigrants (described above in Sect. 8.3.1), their position has been intermediate: for a while, this was mainly the consequence of restrictions on their freedom to work in other Member States, during the transitional period. However, once legal restrictions were lifted, the political debate on intra-European immigration continued to focus on Central and Eastern immigrants, in spite of the relatively high numbers of Southern European immigrants in France. Although the debates and the ensuing restrictions affect all EU immigrants to France, the framing of the two debates discussed in this chapter, on posted workers and on welfare tourism, also paradoxically contributed to the on-going process that made Southern European immigrants less visible in France and thus more accepted than other groups of migrants.

## 8.4 Conclusion

Southern European migration and the entailing issues raised by these flows have not emerged in France, contrary to other destination countries analysed in this book such as Germany and the UK. Did this situation result from their absence or their general acceptance in French society? Our chapter shows that given its economic



situation, France indeed did not attract as many Southern European migrants as neighbouring countries. In spite of this, we do observe changes in the volumes and composition of flows since the start of the economic crisis: a larger number of entries of Southern Europeans, new profiles of migrants, such as families with children. Moreover, the economic crisis and the more limited opportunities for companies in Southern Europe, especially in Spain and Portugal, combined with the search for cost reduction by companies in France, have supported the growth of the posted worker system. Although this system is not new and concerned primarily Eastern European workers up until the crisis, the recent increase in numbers of posted workers is partly due to the increased participation of Southern Europeans in this system.

Yet, in spite of the growing numbers of Southern European workers in France since the beginning of the economic crisis, the political debate has mainly focused in France on (1) extra-European immigration; (2) specific categories of intra-European immigrants, namely the Roma, as well as posted workers from the newest Eastern European Member States. Debates in this respect have mainly concentrated on issues of unfair competition on the labour market and “welfare tourism”. While the legal and political consequences of these debates affect Southern European workers in France, the focus on Eastern Europeans has also contributed to make Southern Europeans less visible and their presence even less controversial to the eyes of many in France.

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