

Balkan International Migration in the 1990s

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Summary

The purpose of the study is to provide a general overview of the most notable international migration dynamics in the Balkan region during the 1990s. We take into account the Balkan countries that experienced the “real socialism”. There the migration trends during the last decade were among the most evident features as regards the demographic dynamics in the region. The migration flows in the Balkan region during the 1990s differed from those observed during the previous decades in terms of the direction, type and size. Both new origin and destination countries of the Balkan international migration have emerged, such as Albania, Bulgaria and Romania, on the one hand, and Greece, Italy and some Northern European countries, on the other hand. Apart from the forced migrations in the former Yugoslavia which have been undoubtedly the most significant element affecting the migration dynamics of the Balkans in the last decade, an important aspect of international migrations from this region in the 1990s seems to be the development of migration flows for labour purposes. To this regard Greece and Italy became two relevant countries of attraction, as emerged for the latter also according to the survey results presented in our study focusing on some immigrant communities in Rome.

Keywords: Balkan region, international migrations, refugees

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Les migrations internationales balkaniques des années 1990

Résumé

Cette étude dresse le cadre général des tendances les plus importantes des migrations internationales dans les Balkans pendant les années 1990. Seuls les pays balkaniques ayant vécu le « socialisme réel » ont été considérés. Dans ces pays, les migrations internationales ont représenté la partie la plus significative de la dynamique démographique pendant la dernière décennie. Les migrations internationales récentes se sont distinguées de celles précédant 1990 en ce qui concerne leur trajectoire, typologie et dimension. De nouveaux pays d'origine et de destinations sont apparus : d'un côté, l'Albanie, la Bulgarie, la Roumanie, d'autre côté, la Grèce et l'Italie et des pays d'Europe du Nord. Les migrations forcées dans l'ex Yougoslavie ont eu une importance de tout premier plan avec des conséquences considérables pour la dynamique migratoire dans les Balkans. Mais le développement des flux migratoires pour motifs du travail a représenté un aspect également important des migrations internationales dans cette région. A ce titre, la Grèce et l'Italie sont devenus deux pays d'attraction majeurs. Pour l'Italie également, à considérer l'enquête menée sur les immigrés d'origine balkanique à Rome.

Mots-clés: les Balkans, les migrations internationales, les réfugiées

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Introduction

The recent history of international migration in Europe is characterised by a process of gradual consolidation and extension of a migration system focused on the EU countries (Bonifazi and Strozza, 2002). In the mid-1970s, when the major immigration countries introduced stop policies, the differentiation factors were still largely prevalent. The European migration scenario was, in fact, highly fragmented. While all the attraction factors have already involved for some time a group of basically similar, easily distinguished elements, the functioning and the characteristics of the migration process differed sharply from one country to another. Almost all of Eastern Europe was excluded from the continental-migration dynamics isolated behind the Iron Curtain.

During the 1990s, the European migration process underwent a sharp acceleration, due to the rapid collapse of all the Communist regimes, subsequent to the fall of the Berlin wall, as well as to the growing economic and political integration of the European Union. Two political factors had therefore a decisive influence on the most recent developments in the continental-migration dynamics, thus confirming the exceptional relevance of these elements to the factors determining international mobility. In particular, the fall of the Berlin wall led to the rapid reinsertion of the Eastern Europe countries in the international migration dynamics, and the roles played by these countries in continental migration seem to be changing profoundly. Migration in these countries also developed in wholly unexpected ways, with the creation of new forms of mobility, the emerging of flows between countries of the same geographical area and the start-up of immigration streams from more advanced Western countries and from the Third World (Bonifazi, 2003).

In this context, the position of the Balkan area within the European migrations is especially interesting during the last decade. Besides the actual migration dynamics, these trends directly affect the role of this region in the continental context. Furthermore, since the 1990s the Balkans¹ have undoubtedly become the main factor of instability on the European scenario. A permanent solution of the conflicts and the start-up of a process of genuine pacification are not even imaginable without a direct involvement of the European Union. Migrations are an important factor in the relationships between the Balkan countries and the rest of the continent. This is not only because these migrations represent the visible and tangible evidence of the dramatic problems affecting the under crisis areas, thus compelling to seek solutions for both the

¹ We take into account the migration dynamics in the following former socialist countries of the Balkan peninsula: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FR Yugoslavia, TFYR Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia.

protection of displaced people and the control of illegal immigration requiring the co-operation of the countries involved, but also because they can provide a valid contribution to restoring the situation to fully normal conditions. In this paper, we tried to outline the main characteristics of migration in this region by the negative impact derived from the process of economic and political transition. Attention has been focused on the general trends of migration, both considering the direction of the flows and seeking to identify the areas most involved in the migration process. In particular, the flows between the Balkans and Italy have been examined; these are of special interest. Moreover, when considering that Italy is currently the main border between the European Union and the geographical area being surveyed.

From the Balkans towards the Rest of Europe: An Overview of the Past Ten Years

The 1990s undoubtedly represent a turning point for international migrations in the Balkan region. The international migrations affecting the peninsula since World War II up to the 1990s had mainly occurred on an “ethnic” basis². Labour migrations, on the other hand, had mostly involved the former Yugoslavia. The former Yugoslavia was, in fact, the only country with a socialist regime not only in the Balkan Peninsula but also in East-Central Europe that tolerated and even promoted this type of emigration. During the 1990s, on the other hand, the migrations from the Balkans have revealed different characteristics compared to the previous decades in terms of type, size and direction of the flows and have involved the populations of the region to such a massive extent that in some cases a radical geographical redistribution has occurred.

In most cases, the migrations of the last decade are identified with forced migrations and with population moves induced by the conflicts in Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia as well as by the war in Kosovo (Conti, 2002). Many of these moves took place in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, however contemporaneously many Western European countries have had to face a significant increase in asylum demands and host numerous displaced persons arriving from the conflict areas.

However, the migration history of the Balkans in the past decade has also involved other countries of the peninsula and did not come to an end with the tragedy of the displaced people from the former Yugoslavia. For Albania, the 1990s represent a period of heavy emigration towards Western Europe. The case of Albania is especially relevant for the size of emigration recorded over the past decade, driven above all by the serious economic and political crisis the country was undergoing. The exodus of Albanian citizens in the early 1990s targeted nearby European Mediterranean countries, in particular Italy and Greece, while Germany, Turkey, France and Belgium were secondary countries of destination (Misja, 1996). For Romania and

² For an overview on international migrations in the Balkans in the post-World War II period, see Fassmann and Münz (1995). For Romania and Bulgaria, useful references are Dövényi and Vukovich (1994) and Bobeva (1994). For

Bulgaria in the past decade, emigration was also different with respect to the earlier periods, above all with regard to the reasons for moves and the destinations of flows. The ethnic component had lost its major role and population moves were mainly due to economic reasons³.

In the past decade, the migration flows coming from the Balkan peninsula were not only directed towards the traditional receiving countries, but also towards geographical areas which up to recently had been sending countries, such as the European countries in the Mediterranean basin. Usually, the flows from the Balkan countries, which already had a past migration history - such as the former Yugoslavia -, have moved towards the Central European countries, where they could count on the support of family and friendship networks already established in these host countries. On the other hand, a part of migrants chose their country of destination on the basis of other factors, such as the ease of entry and geographical proximity. The range of the European countries which received migrants from the Balkan area has in any case expanded above all to host war-displaced people. In fact, in this case, many countries of North-Central Europe, which up to then had recorded a low number of people arriving from the Balkans, played a key role.

The trends of inflows into the Western European countries clearly reflect the developments of the political events in the Balkan region. In most of the European countries surveyed, the greatest flows were observed around the mid-1990s and were driven by the crisis in the region. In fact, according to Eurostat data (2002), citizens of the former Yugoslavia have dominated the scene in most of these countries.

In Germany, the migration flows from the Balkan peninsula reached a peak in 1992. On a total of 429.000 immigrants from the Balkans, the former Yugoslavs amounted to 281.000, which is more than half. The inflows into other European countries were lower. In 1994, Sweden hosted 43.000 people, and in Switzerland the greatest flow was recorded in 1992 and involved 41,000 persons. Comparing the inflows in Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany recorded in the mid-1990s, we can note the difference in the amount with respect to 1990. The greatest increase occurred in Sweden, where the flows in 1994 were well over ten times those in 1990.

The increase in migration flows from the Balkan area triggered a significant growth of the foreign population in the various European countries. Between 1993 and 1995, the stock of foreign population of Balkan origin rose considerably in many of the countries surveyed⁴; these figures clearly reflect the wars in Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia which in the first half of the decade drove many persons to seek refuge in Western European countries. In Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden the number of people arriving from the Balkan peninsula increased up

the former Yugoslavia see also Malačić (1994), Schierup (1995), Heršak and Mesić (1990).

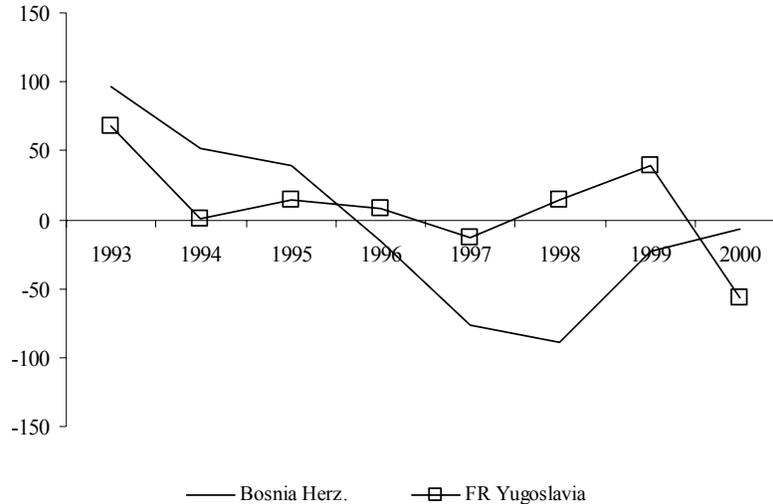
³ More detailed studies regarding the most recent international migrations in the Balkans are Gjonca (2000), Ciutacu (1996), Gheorghiu (2000), Bobeva (1996).

⁴ On 1st January 1996, Denmark showed a considerable rise in the stock of foreigners from the Balkan region. Nevertheless, this event is due to the recording of a large number of citizens from the former Yugoslavia who have officially resided in the country for over three years with the temporary status of war-displaced persons.

to the mid-1990s, after which the trend stopped and the amount declined in subsequent years as a consequence of both the repatriation policy and the increase in the acquisitions of citizenship. Up to the middle and at the end of the decade, the increase of foreigners from the Balkan area also involved Belgium and Norway. People from the Balkans in any case also became progressively more numerous in other European countries.

The continuation of conflicts and the constant inflow of displaced people into the European countries have unfortunately countered the hypothesis according to which the Balkan crisis was to have mainly short-term effects. It thus became increasingly important for the European countries to face the continuous growth of the foreign population coming from the Balkans. In the second half of the 1990s, the inflows decreased after some Western countries adopted more rigid migration policies. In Germany, in particular, since 1993 the restrictions on entry and the policy of repatriation have led to a falling positive net migration for Bosnia Herzegovina and a relatively stable low value for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia⁵. Bosnia started to record a negative net migration around 1996, although since 1998 the difference between the inflows and outflows had once again subsided (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1 – Net migration: Germany with Bosnia Herzegovina and FR Yugoslavia. Absolute values in thousands.



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (different years).

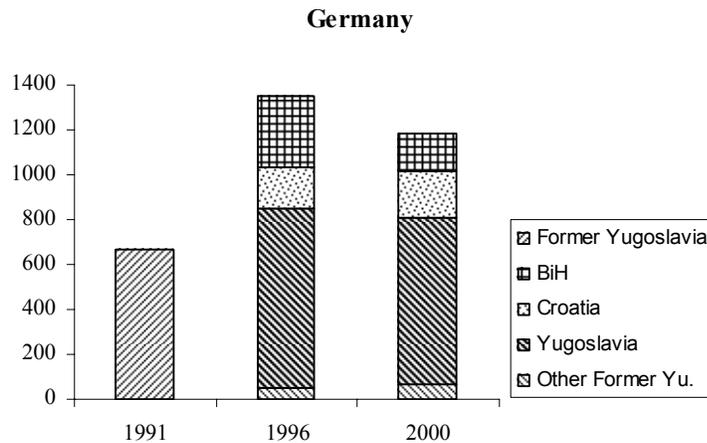
Over the same period in some receiving countries, acquisitions of citizenship have contributed to the reduction of the foreign population from the Balkans. The number of acquisitions of

⁵ Except for the growth recorded in 1999 for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a consequence of the Kosovo crisis.

citizenship in Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland rose in the second half of the decade for the citizens of the former Yugoslavia. Above all in Sweden, according to the Eurostat source (2002), the amount of acquisitions reached a peak in 1993 (11.000), 1998 (20.200) and in 1999 (15.600).

Figures 2 and 3 compare the number of citizens of the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s in three European countries that still record the highest number of population coming from the Balkans. With regard to Germany (**Figure 2**) in the early 1990s and after the conflicts, there was a significant rise in the number of people arriving from the former Yugoslavia, while at the end of the decade the value fell also as a consequence of the repatriation policy promoted by the German government. In Switzerland and Sweden as well, the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia have induced a considerable growth of the Balkan migrants (**Figure 3**). While in Sweden this amount fell at the end of the 1990s as a consequence of the increase of acquisitions of citizenship, in Switzerland the number of citizens of the former Yugoslavia was still high, with the peak levels being recorded at the end of the decade.

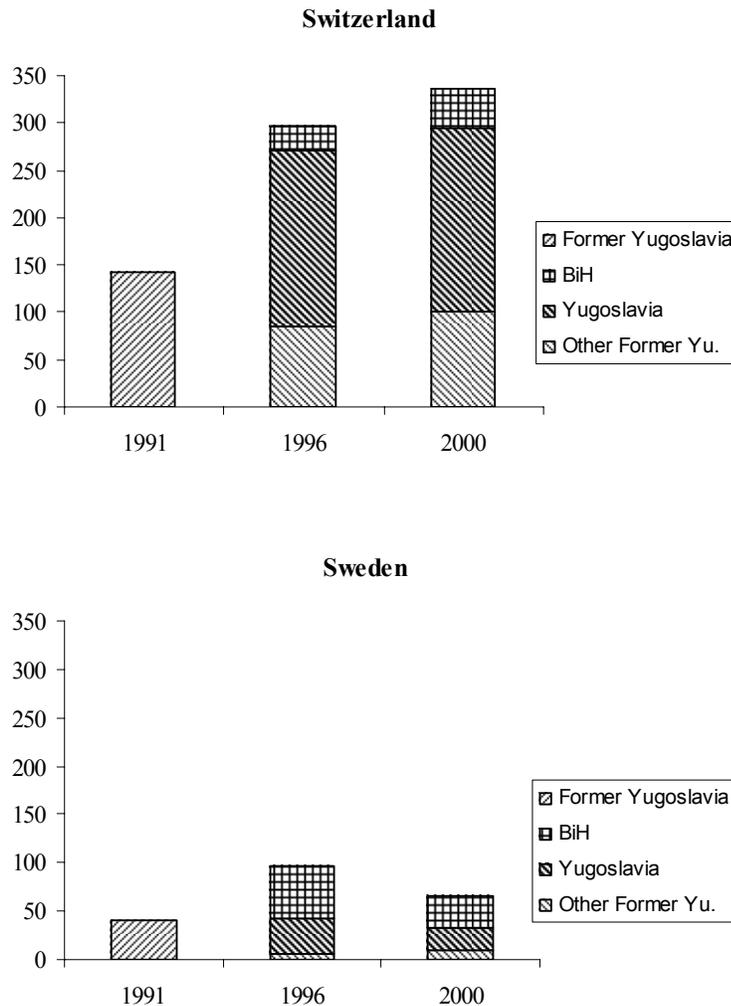
Figure 2 – Former Yugoslav citizens in Germany. Absolute values in thousands, 1st January.



Notes: In 1991 the whole Former Yugoslavia is considered. For the next years data refer separately to the new states of the former Yugoslav federation.

Source: Eurostat (2002).

Figure 3 – Former Yugoslav citizens in Switzerland and Sweden. Absolute values in thousands, 1st January.



Notes: In 1991 the whole Former Yugoslavia is considered. For the next years data refer separately to the new states of the former Yugoslav federation.

Source: Eurostat (2002).

The 1999 Kosovo crisis contributed to a new increase in the flows from the Balkans⁶, although the amount was not as great as at the beginning of the decade. This fact somehow evidences that the prevailing attitude among the European countries was to assist the victims of war in their own countries or in any case within the Balkan area, and to reduce to a minimum the involvement of the Western European countries (Conti, 2002). The percentage of immigrants coming from the Balkan area on the total flows rose in 1999 to 14% in Belgium, 22% in Germany, 25% in Norway and 15% in Switzerland. Among the receiving countries, the flows in Greece and Italy are different since most of the immigrants from the Balkans are no longer the former Yugoslavs, but the Albanians.

The situation at the end of the 1990s stresses the growth of the foreign population from the Balkan peninsula in all the European countries considered with respect to the beginning of the decade. Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland are the countries highlighting the largest foreign-population stock of Balkan origin throughout the period. According to Eurostat data, in early 2000 Germany recorded approximately 1.300.000 persons with citizenship of a country in the Balkan region; in Switzerland this amount totalled 342.000⁷, in Italy 282.000⁸ and in Sweden approximately 71,000. Relying on the last census data, in Austria and in Greece the top four nationalities of Balkan origin totalled 319.000 and 508.000 persons respectively. Among the other European countries surveyed at the end of the decade, Denmark and Norway also recorded a considerable population arriving from the Balkans, approximately 35.000 and 25.000 respectively. In Switzerland and Germany, the Balkan population represents a considerable proportion of the total foreign population and in early 2000 the percentage of the foreign population coming from the Balkans was 24% and 18% respectively. In Denmark, Norway and Sweden, at the end of the 1990s the Balkan population represented approximately 14% of the foreign population, while in the other European countries surveyed the proportion of foreign citizens from the Balkans at the end of the decade was smaller.

With a view to observing the distribution of the main nationalities of the Balkan countries in some European countries, in early 2000 the citizens of the new States of the former Yugoslavia were still more numerous than those of other Balkan countries, thereby representing a large percentage of the total foreign population (**Table 1**). Moreover, it should be stressed that the new receiving countries, that have absorbed a proportion of the migration flows coming from the Balkan peninsula, also include some Central European countries, such as the Czech Republic, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Hungary (OECD, 2001).

The migration dynamics in the Balkan region during the 1990s was quite complex and with medium-long term effects both for the receiving and sending countries. Forced migrations, displaced people and migration flows driven by a difficult economic situation in the countries of origin are considered to be the main types of migration recorded in this geographical area during the last decade. Likewise, we should recall that, as in most of the countries of East-Central Europe, new types of migrations have occurred in the Balkans over the last decade, especially transit migrations, and with regard to illegal migration, trafficking and smuggling⁹. These are undoubtedly a new and serious obstacle to the process of stabilisation in the region and a further problem to be taken into due account in the process of extension of the European Union.

⁶ See the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Figure 1.

⁷ The large number of persons arriving from the Balkans and living in Germany and Switzerland is also undoubtedly the result of a consolidated tradition that has linked these two countries for years with South-Eastern Europe and in particular with the former Yugoslavia.

⁸ The figure refers to permits to stay.

⁹ In this regard, see Frejka (1996), Okólski (1998), Iom (2000, 2001).

Table 1 – Foreigners from the Balkans (top four nationalities) in some European countries, absolute values in thousands and percentages ^(a), 2000, 1 January.

Austria (2001)		Denmark (1999)		Germany	
FR Yugoslavia	133.0	Former Yug.	34.5	FR Yugoslavia	737.2
Bosnia Herz.	108.0	Romania	1.0	Croatia	214.0
Croatia	60.7			Bosnia Herz.	167.7
Romania	17.5			Romania	87.5
<i>Tot. foreigners</i>	<i>710.9</i>	<i>Tot. foreigners</i>	<i>256.3</i>	<i>Tot. foreigners</i>	<i>7343.6</i>
%	44.9	%	13.9	%	16.4
Greece (2001)		Italy		Norway	
Albania	438.0	Albania	127.1	Bosnia Herz.	12.2
Bulgaria	35.1	FR Yugoslavia	56.7	FR	10.2
Romania	22.0	Romania	41.6	Yugoslavia	
FR Yugoslavia	3.8	Macedonia	21.1	Croatia	1.2
<i>Tot. foreigners</i>	<i>762.2</i>	<i>Tot. foreigners</i>	<i>1270.6</i>	<i>Tot. foreigners</i>	<i>178.7</i>
%	65.5	%	19.4	%	13.2
Netherlands		Sweden		Switzerland	
FR Yugoslavia	7.2	Bosnia Herz.	34.2	FR Yugoslavia	193.7
Bosnia Herz.	6.1	FR Yugoslavia	22.7	Macedonia	54.0
Croatia	1.6	Croatia	7.2	Croatia	43.8
Romania	1.4	Romania	3.0	Bosnia Herz.	42.7
<i>Tot. foreigners</i>	<i>651.5</i>	<i>Tot. foreigners</i>	<i>487.2</i>	<i>Tot. foreigners</i>	<i>1406.6</i>
%	2.5	%	13.8	%	23.8

Notes: (a) Percentage of foreigners from the Balkan region (only selected countries) on total foreign population.
Source: Eurostat (2002); for Austria and Greece census data from National Statistical Offices available online at www.statistik.at (Austria) and www.statistics.gr (Greece).

From the Balkans to Italy: The Official Data

Migration from the Balkans was one of the new aspects of migration moves affecting Italy in the 1990s and involved three main countries of origin: Albania, Romania and the former Yugoslavia. Moreover, in the latter case, Italy had to manage population flows with different characteristics with respect to the immigration that had previously affected this country. It did not involve the arrival of classical migrant workers “seeking their fortune” in a foreign country. Masses of people came to Italy, in many cases women and children, fleeing war and needing assistance, care and specific protection. Due to the lack of adequate preparation, in Italy and in many other European countries, from the legal point of view the reception of these flows required a series of urgent measures to handle the succeeding waves of refugee flows (Conti, 2002). The choices selected by Italy, regarding the type of reception provided to the persons fleeing from the territories of the former Yugoslavia, must necessarily be taken for the analysis and interpretation of data.

Therefore, examining the data on asylum applications, Italy seems to occupy a marginal position in hosting the population fleeing from the former Yugoslavia (Conti, 2002). Actually, most of the population arriving from the Balkan countries and legally hosted by Italy obtained the issue

of a permit to stay for humanitarian or special purposes, while few people undertook the ordinary procedure for asylum application.

Furthermore examining the total stay permits, we can clearly note the effects of the conflicts on migration flows coming from the geographical areas in crisis. At the end of 1992, there were only 31 Bosnian citizens in Italy. On the same date a year later, there were over 2,000 Bosnians, and almost 6,000 at the end of 1994. There is a similar situation for Croatia: on 31 December 1992, there were 445 Croatians with stay permit, almost 6,000 at the end of 1993 and over 12,000 at the end of 1994.

Between 1992 and 1993, Bosnia and Croatia recorded a definitely “anomalous” rate of increase which cannot be included in the normal trends regarding the growth of foreign population in the Italian territory. In the case of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the “anomalous” increase occurred over the period 1993-1994. During the more recent years, there have been high growth rates, probably due, above all, to the outbreak of the crisis in Kosovo. After a period showing a decrease in the stay permits issued to citizens of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, there was another increase in 1998-1999, which nevertheless failed to reach the rates attained in 1993-1994. The conflicts of the first half of the 1990s, in fact, involved increasingly extensive areas and amounts of population, thus inducing serious management problems. In any case, we should recall that two significant increases in immigrant flows (in 1996 and 1999) occurred after two laws for regularisation, which legalised the position in Italy of the illegal component of immigration coming from the Balkans. In any case, as we shall observe, the Albanians and Romanians mostly took advantage of regularisation, while the citizens of the territories belonging to the “old” Yugoslavia, also as a result of the particular treatment involved in the law, have utilised it to a lesser extent.

Albanian immigration in Italy recorded a peak between 1996 and 1997 when this population more than doubled; also between 1998 and 2000, the rate of increase in legal immigrants coming from Albania reached very high levels¹⁰. The arrival of the Albanians in Italy, to some extent, recalls that of the citizens of the former Yugoslavia. It is true that Albania did not experience ethnic differences resulting in open conflict, but the political and economic crisis between 1990 and 1991 led to a sudden and large exodus, with ships full of “desperate” displaced people landing in the Italian ports.

Legal Romanian immigration is less important, but growing rapidly, above all after the regularisation in 1999. This involves a more “traditional” type of immigration, i.e. not related to the outbreak of conflicts or the occurrence of sudden economic and social crises, instead the search for an improvement in their economic and employment status.

Adding the overall permits to stay issued to citizens from the countries of the former Yugoslavia

¹⁰ In this regard, we can recall the previous remarks on the effects of the amnesty measures.

to those held by people from Albania and Romania, more than 20% of permits we recorded valid on 1 January 2000. This confirms the important role played by the Balkan immigration to Italy. However, these initial data clearly show the wide variety in the period of arrival, in the demographic characteristics and in the reasons for emigration.

The analysis of permits by reason of issue highlights not only the changes that have occurred on the legislative level regarding the regulation of entries to Italy, but also the transformation of the Balkan citizens from refugees seeking temporary shelter to people permanently living in Italy.

There have been few permits to stay issued for political asylum or few asylum applications, with a slightly higher than average percentage of permits issued for “other purposes” (this item includes those issued for humanitarian purposes) as in the case of the communities from the former Yugoslavia. On the other hand, the percentage of permits issued to citizens of the former Yugoslavia for labour purposes has been much higher than average, above all in 1994 and in 1995 (**Table 2**). If we further break down the data, we can note that until 1st January 1997 among labour permits most were issued for “extraordinary work”¹¹. In other words, these are permits issued in order to provide reception to those who were fleeing the war and who were willing to work in Italy (Giovannelli, 2002). In more recent years, permits for “extraordinary work” have been decreasing, as was to be expected in accordance with the changes in the law. At the same time, there has been a greater relative importance of stay permits held by citizens of the former Yugoslavia for family reasons. Beyond the changes in the legislation, we can also note the stable settlement in Italy of the foreign population who immigrated due to the war. With regard to Albania and Romania, labour permits are prevailing. It is interesting to note that Albania has recorded a relative increase in permits to stay for family reasons.

Immigration from the Balkans has significantly contributed to the change in the number of foreigners in Italy over the recent years. In particular, it has significantly, though still partially, led to a rebalance of the gender distribution and to the growing presence of children among the immigrants. The ISTAT data clearly highlight the changes in immigration coming from Albania. While in 1992 the percentage of minors with permit to stay totalled 11%, it exceeded 23% in 2002¹² (Istat, 2003). Albania is the country for which the highest number of visas for family reasons was issued in 2001¹³. In any case, it should be recalled that migrations of children do not always occur for reunion with their parents; as migration flows coming from the Balkans increase, the arrival of unaccompanied minors is being recorded in Italy. There is further evidence of stabilisation in the increase of older people. Currently the Albanians aged over 60 exceed 4%, while in 1992 this percentage was less than 1%.

¹¹ “Extraordinary work” is the main reason in the case of immigrants coming from Bosnia Herzegovina.

¹² It should be recalled that the calculation of the number of minors through permits to stay has involved considerable difficulties and limitations which have only been recently and partially overcome.

¹³ Romania is the third country in the number of entry visas for family reasons.

Table 2 – Permits to stay issued to immigrants coming to Italy from Albania, Romania and from the states of the Former Yugoslavia, by reasons of the issue, 1991- 2000, 1st January ^(a).

Reason for the issue	1994			1997			2000		
	Albania	Ex Yugoslavia	Romania	Albania	Ex Yugoslavia	Romania	Albania	Ex Yugoslavia	Romania
Absolute values									
Work	18,1	53,0	4,3	51,7	59,0	17,6	86,7	58,7	41,5
Of which: <i>Special work</i>	..	32,5	..	..	33,1	..	0,1	7,4	..
Family	2,8	3,6	3,8	11,3	7,2	6,1	37,6	21,3	14,4
Asylum	0,6	0,1	0,2	0,6	0,1	0,3	0,6	0,4	0,2
Asylum application	0,4	..	0,2	..	..	..	0,1	1,4	0,1
Other reasons	0,7	4,6	1,9	1,3	5,0	1,1	4,5	6,9	2,6
Other(b)	1,1	3,4	1,7	1,6	3,5	1,8	3,5	4,0	2,4
Total	23,7	64,6	12,0	66,6	74,8	26,9	133,0	92,8	61,2
Percentages									
Work	76.1	81.9	35.6	77.6	78.9	65.3	65.1	63.3	67.8
Of which: <i>Special work</i>	0.0	61.4	0.0	0.0	56.2	0.0	0.1	12.6	0.1
Family	11.9	5.5	31.3	17.0	9.7	22.5	28.2	23.0	23.6
Asylum	2.7	0.1	2.0	0.9	0.1	1.1	0.5	0.4	0.4
Asylum application	1.7	0.0	1.8	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	1.5	0.2
Other reasons	3.1	7.1	15.6	2.0	6.7	4.2	3.4	7.5	4.3
Other(b)	4.5	5.3	13.7	2.4	4.6	6.8	2.6	4.3	3.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Notes: (a) The total referred to the Former Yugoslavia includes also the permits issued to the citizens of Slovenia.

(b) The amount includes a not defined number of persons coming from other States of the Former Yugoslavia. (..) Less than 100.

Source: Istat (different years).

It is therefore clear that the flows of migrants from the Balkans towards Italy are no longer due to the emergency related to war or to very serious economic and social crisis, but rather to “ordinary” immigration. With regard to the populations of the former Yugoslavia affected by the conflicts, emigration has also been consistent after the end of the wars. In many cases, the people who found temporary humanitarian asylum in Italy have decided to stay, thus becoming permanent immigrants.

With regard to Albania, the sudden flows of the early 1990s have been followed by a continuous and consistent flow. From 1992 to 2002, the number of legal immigrants in the country rose from 25,000 to 160,000. In the case of Romania, with its more recent flows, regularisation has led to a very rapid growth of this community, and further developments could result from the last regularisation measure.

However, what seems to be of particular interest is not just the increase of Balkan immigrants in Italy, but rather the changes occurring in their profile over the recent years. Their presence in Italy has, in fact, become increasingly stable. There are more working and non-working women, children and also retired persons instead of just young male workers. The behaviour and social needs expressed by this population have thus changed considerably with respect to ten years ago.

The Immigrants from the Balkans to Italy: Some Survey Results

Similarly to legislation, studies on immigration coming from the Balkans were initially focused on the emergency situations and on initial reception. As time passes, with new trends also emerging in official data, it has become evident that the immigration of people coming from the Balkans has become a stable component of the Italian migration panorama, no longer linked to contingent factors. The focus has thus shifted from the emergency situation to the integration-related problems.

This is why some clarification is required with regard to certain aspects that do not emerge or are only partially revealed by official sources, with the use of information from sample surveys focusing on the issue of the integration of foreign immigrants.

This paragraph focuses on the Romanian and Albanian communities in Rome. The Romanians and Albanians are among the most important communities from the numerical point of view in this city which has absorbed a very high percentage of foreign immigration in Italy. The Romanians also represent a new factor in the complex puzzle of immigration in Rome.

In order to provide a brief outline of the integration of the two communities in Rome, we shall refer to information from the two sample surveys¹⁴. With regard to the Romanians, the data derive from a research study on the integration of immigrants, conducted on people coming from four countries (Philippines, Morocco, Peru and Romania). The survey was conducted in Rome in September 2001, with a structured questionnaire being distributed to over 1,200 foreign immigrants (approximately 300 per community). A sample survey on the Albanian immigrants in Rome was conducted in autumn 2002 applying the methodology similar to the one used for the Romanians. A total of 282 immigrants from Albania were interviewed.

Evidently, due to the methodology used, people who are totally marginalised and involved in illegal activities (as protagonists or victims) were excluded from the sample. In particular, as highlighted by recent research studies, many Albanian women coming to Rome were involved in prostitution or were victims of trafficking. Obviously, this segment of immigration requires

¹⁴ The sample has been selected referring to the method proposed by Blangiardo (1996).

special methodological tools in order to conduct an adequate study: it has therefore been excluded from the sample.

As shown in **Table 3**, the Romanians in Rome are characterised by a considerable illegal component, i.e. lack of the permit to stay or both men and women. There is a smaller number of persons who hold a permit to stay and who are also registered in the municipal register (permanent legal immigrants). There is a low percentage of persons in an “intermediate” phase and hold a permit to stay though not yet resident (“semi-permanent” legal immigrants). This is obviously due to the fact that they are immigrants who have usually been in Italy for a short time. For over half the interviewees, the duration of the stay does not exceed two years.

Table 3 – Immigrants from Romania and Albania interviewed in Rome by legal status and duration of stay per gender (%).

	Romanians		Albanians	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<i>Legal Status</i>				
Legal stable	22.8	24.3	44.0	59.8
Legal not stable	5.9	10.5	10.9	19.0
Illegal	71.3	65.2	45.1	21.2
Total (a.v.)	196	113	172	108
<i>Duration of stay</i>				
Less than 1 year	6.8	16.9	16.0	11.0
1 years	27.4	26.1	10.6	12.8
2 years	26.9	24.7	12.8	9.9
3 years	11.8	10.6	13.0	10.5
4 years	14.0	9.0	9.4	1.6
5 years	5.5	8.1	5.0	6.9
More than 5 years	7.6	4.7	33.3	47.6
Total (a.v.)	201	118	175	109

Source: survey data.

In the Albanian community, which has been longer established in Rome, we observe a larger percentage of people who have achieved some stability in the city. In this respect, 44% of the males and 60% of the females state they were registered in the municipal registry (legal and permanent) and have thus established their residence in Italy. Generally, those who hold the permit to stay then register in the population registries. The percentage of those who hold a permit to stay but are not resident in Italy (legal and “semi-permanent”) is, in fact, very small. The percentage of illegal immigrants is 45% for the males and 21% for the women.

It is interesting to note that among the Albanians interviewed, most of those with a permit to stay were authorised for labour purposes, although there is a considerable number who have permits for family reasons and study purposes. In particular, official data reveal a large number of Albanian university students residing in Rome.

The decision to opt for Italy seems to be immediately clear for almost all the Romanian migrants (especially for the women). Italy is, in fact, the first country targeted for migration, which is

chosen almost exclusively for labour purposes. Family reunions can be expected to become relevant only as the years pass.

With regard to the first receiving country for Albanian emigration an interesting phenomenon occurs. For the males, there was a much higher proportion who stated that Italy was not their first destination (over 33%). Through an in-depth analysis, it emerged that in almost all the cases people who had lived in another country before arriving in Italy had stopped in Greece. This result seems to deserve specific study. It should first of all be pointed out that this trend seems to be “new”. It has, in fact, involved a number of men who have been in Italy for a year or less; for 40% of these immigrants, Italy was not the first receiving country. Among those stating that they had been in Italy for over 6 years, the percentage of those who had lived in other countries before arriving is 25% (12 cases out of 46). Further analysis shows another interesting factor. While in some cases the stay in Greece was very short, thus seeming to be a “transit” phase rather than actual immigration, in many cases the stay was longer, also 5-6 years, thus becoming immigration as such¹⁵. The move from Greece to Italy could therefore take place after people considered their migration experience in the first country to have failed and decided to try their luck in another country rather than returning to the country of origin. The case of the women, on the other hand, is quite different, where all of them move directly towards Italy.

For the Albanians, with regard to the reasons of stay stated by the interviewees purposes other than labour are of considerable relevance. For the women, in particular, the importance of immigrating to Italy for study purposes is greater than for work. Again, in accordance with official data, a greater percentage stated that their move was for family reasons. Examining further the situation of the men, we can note that although work is the most widespread reason, study plays a very significant role.

With regard to migration plans of the Romanians, we can note that over 50% of the women and 44% of the men did not have clear and definite ideas about their future in Italy when they arrived. There is nevertheless a considerable number of these women who stated that at the time of departure they had decided to move permanently to Italy. After comparing the past to the present one, we came to the conclusion that the number of those who consider their migration temporary decreases, while the number of those who declare that they want to stay in Italy permanently and those who do not have clear and definite ideas about their migration future increases (**Table 4**)¹⁶. Compared to the Romanians, the Albanians show a more general intention to stay in Italy permanently: 26% of the men and 41% of the women declaring in the interview that they wanted to stay in Italy permanently. It is interesting to note that especially for the women, the objective of staying permanently was already included in the original migration plan when they came to Italy. Generally, with regard to their migration plans also (and probably in

¹⁵ The migrants who lived in another country before coming to Italy stayed an average of 3 and a half years in their first country of destination.

¹⁶ This is obviously not a longitudinal survey, but one based on the stock, with interviews conducted only with those who are in Italy and not those who may have already moved home after a period of stay in Italy.

relation with the longer average duration of their stay in Italy), the Albanians reveal a more decisive attitude (the percentage of the undecided is quite small) compared to the Romanians.

Table 4 - Immigrants from Romania and Albania interviewed in Rome by migratory projects and by gender (%).

	Romanians		Albanians	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<i>Migratory projects at the moment of arriving in Italy:</i>				
Temporary stay in Italy	44.5	38.5	40.2	26.7
Definitive immigration in Italy	11.2	10.9	13.1	20.4
Not decided	44.3	50.6	46.7	52.9
Total (a.v)	197	118	174	108
<i>Migratory projects at the moment:</i>				
Temporary stay in Italy	31.1	28.4	43.7	23.7
Definitive immigration in Italy	19.4	16.9	25.6	40.9
Not decided	49.6	54.7	30.7	35.5
Total (a.v.)	196	118	174	108

Source: survey data.

Conclusions

For the entire Balkan region, the 1990s represented the end of a historical phase that started up at the end of World War II. The ethnic conflicts accompanying the break-up of socialist Yugoslavia have tragically marked this process of change, which should be included in the dynamics of all East-Central Europe that led to the radical transformation of political, economic and social system. Inevitably, these major institutional changes, with their economic and social revolutions, wars and conflicts have also led to a significant acceleration in the migration dynamics of the region. The main aspects of this development have been analysed in the previous paragraphs and seem to be characterised by various trends, depending not only on the forced migrations caused by wars. While the latter has undoubtedly been the most significant element affecting the migration dynamics of the Balkans in the last decade, it would be mistaken not to take the other aspects of migration into account.

Our initial conclusions must start with the issue of forced migration. The wars in the former Yugoslavia have entailed, as an indirect consequence, a profound overhaul of the rules and the increasingly stricter asylum policies in the European Union countries. The use of forms of protection other than the direct reception of refugees coming from the conflict areas and the development of a more wide-ranging set of measures to guarantee the stability of the region seem to be the most important innovations in this field. At the present time, the situation seems to be characterised by the substantial stabilisation, though many of the conflicts that have torn the Balkans and left victims are still far from having reached a stable and definitive solution. This is the case in Bosnia, where two quite separate communities live; this is the case in

Kosovo, where the protection of the Serbian minority is still ensured by the supervision of the international military contingent. It is then necessary to find a satisfactory solution for the displaced people in the current Federation of Serbia and Montenegro. At the end of 2002, there were still 700,000 of them, if to the refugees we also add the internally displaced persons and the individuals under the protection of the UNHCR.

An important aspect of international migrations from the Balkan region in the 1990s seems to be the development of migration flows for labour purposes. In previous decades, this type of flow only involved Yugoslavia, but in more recent years it has directly concerned countries such as Albania and Romania. Considering the most recent data available for Greece and Italy, we can actually realise the extent of these dynamics and the relative acceleration at the beginning of the present decade. According to the data of the last Greek census, in 2001 there were 438.000 Albanians resident in Greece, together with 35.000 Bulgarians and 22.000 Romanians, while there were very few people coming from the former Yugoslavia. The total Balkan component represented 65,6% of total immigration and the Albanians alone accounted for 4% of the total population in Greece. In early 2003 in Italy, there were 375,000 Balkan immigrants residing in the country, equivalent to 25% of the total. Also in this case, the Albanians accounted for the largest community, which seemed to be on the way towards increasing stabilisation (Bonifazi and Sabatino, 2003). The Romanian component also seemed to be growing. This trend was confirmed by the data on the regularisation now under way, since out of the over 700.000 applications 143.000 were submitted by Romanians. The number of applications submitted by other Balkan nationalities totalled 54.000 for the Albanians, 9.100 for the Bulgarians, 6.700 for the Yugoslavs and lower numbers for the citizens of the other countries of the former Yugoslavia.

The final aspect to be considered in these conclusions involves the migration relationships that have increased over recent years between the Balkan area and the countries of Western Europe. On the whole, the areas of destination seem to be substantially limited to three well-defined groups of countries. On the one hand, there is a confirmation of the traditional outlets for emigration from socialist Yugoslavia. In fact, Germany, Austria and Switzerland are still the countries with the highest number of immigrants from the Balkan peninsula, and where the flows were the greatest in the 1990s. Another important geographical area of attraction, formed by Greece and Italy, has also emerged. These two EU countries located in the East-Central Mediterranean area have absorbed most of the Albanian emigration, while Italy is hosting increasing numbers of Romanian immigrants. Finally, the countries of Northern Europe, especially Scandinavia, represent the major areas of destination for the forced migrations recorded in the last decade. On the other hand, the levels of absorption in the European countries further from the Balkan area are lower. It will be interesting to assess whether this situation continues in the coming years.

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