

Terminal Check



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Moving at labour market

National Report – United Kingdom



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1. Introduction

The Mol@m project aims at fostering mobility for learning and employment in the European Union by providing career guidance professionals with expanded knowledge on EU labour markets. The idea for the project was developed because of the realisation that mobility of employment across Europe is not always encouraged or even suggested by careers guidance advisers as their focus is more upon national labour markets. Information about other European labour markets is either not provided or it is very limited often because advisers lack awareness and/or practical knowledge.

The Mol@m Project aims to equip careers advisors in vocational education (VET) and youth centres, as well as guidance professionals in labour offices with a wider knowledge of other EU labour markets, so that they can help and encourage particularly lower skilled job seekers to look for employment in these markets. This will be done by providing an interactive tool which will facilitate access to practical information on local rules and practices related to the job markets and the local job culture of selected EU countries. The target groups will be involved in several feedback activities, in order to ensure that the tool is adapted to meet existing needs at a European level.

The Mol@m project aims to:

- ▶ Contribute to the encouragement of European mobility;
- ▶ Expand employment opportunities for low skilled citizens;
- ▶ Improve the quality of vocational training for guidance professionals;
- ▶ Widen career advice and guidance beyond national boundaries.

In order to achieve these goals, the six partners of this LLP project will develop an online interactive tool containing a wide range of practical information, including cases on immigration. This tool will be complementary to existing EU guidance organizations/bodies/tools such as EURES, Euroguidance, EXODUS and EISODUS etc. and will raise awareness of EU mobility as an option for employment.

The Mol@m project is based on a detailed research and implementation plan organised to meet the following objectives:

- To characterise the labour markets of each of the 6 European countries and to identify the training needs of the professionals who provide careers advice
- To identify the main challenges that migrants have to overcome when they decide to work in another EU country;
- To research practical information in order to fill the knowledge gaps of guidance professionals and knowledge needs of job seekers (especially those with low qualifications) about mobility to other EU countries for career purposes;
- To develop an interactive tool, including e-Learning content, addressed to the direct target group to expand their knowledge about other EU labour markets;
- To test and improve the tool;
- To disseminate project results to target group members and to the general public.

2. Project Research Methods

All project partners adhered to common and detailed methodologies for data collection and analysis in order to ensure a consistent quality for the research across the partners' countries and to build up a comprehensive picture of migration issues in Europe from different perspectives. The data was collected through a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches:

a) Desk Research: The desk research aimed at identifying the following core issues in the context of migration and employability of migrants in the partners' countries; what is the current standard of knowledge on migration in the different countries? And what are the existing support services in the different countries as well as on a European level?

b) Quantitative Expert Survey: This questionnaire was designed to capture the view of those assisting 'labour emigration aspirants' (those considering moving to another EU country for work) in the home countries and to learn about the training needs of these professionals.

c) Qualitative Expert Survey: Complementary to the expert questionnaires, in depth interviews were conducted with a group of experts supporting migrants in the countries of destination. The purpose of this research was to explore in greater detail experts' views on the main challenges facing migrants in relation to the destination countries and on their opinions regarding necessary support before migration. These interviews with experts also supplemented the interviews with migrants, as they deepened understanding of the situation of labour migrants.

d) Qualitative Migrant Survey: This instrument was designed to capture the individual experiences of labour migrants in order to understand the challenges they faced and needed to overcome in order to integrate into new work, cultural and social contexts.

As the project is concerned with EU labour migration, the EU member states were in the focus of attention. Desk research was conducted in the partners' countries and both the experts and the migrants were asked about only relevant target countries (i.e. EU member states).

3. UK Background

3.1. Labour Migration

3.1.1. A brief history of migration

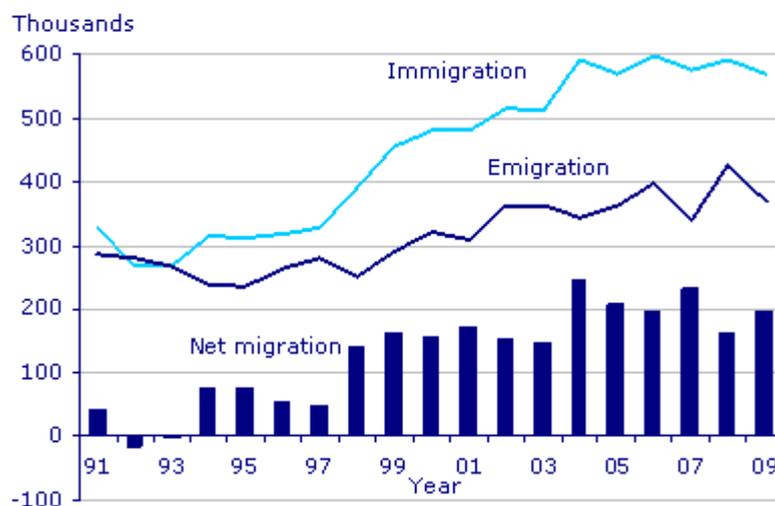
UK immigration policy runs in a direction established nearly 50 years ago by the first legislation directed against citizens of Commonwealth countries - the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962. Prior to the date of its enactment, the migration of workers from Commonwealth countries had been unrestricted by law. According to researchers, migration from the Caribbean to the UK in the absence of formal immigration controls had developed in response to labour market demand. The immigration debates which produced the 1962 Act, and its successor the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, were largely rooted in a political response to a public sentiment that new arrivals “should return to their own countries”, that the UK could not cope with the pressure of these people and that they were taking away jobs from those born on British soil, rather than an assessment of the economic case. The new Act required migrants to have a job before they arrived, to possess special skills or to meet the "labour needs" of the national economy.¹

Immediately after election in 1997, the New Labour Government introduced immigration policies which they claimed promised a modern approach to immigration. New Labour emphasised the benefits immigration had given the country (increased labour force when needed etc) and they focused upon the expansion in the demand for legitimate travel, including economic and business migration. However, they stated that growth in asylum claims was a matter of concern. Immigration began to be a concern in the press and with the public during Tony Blair’s premiership and as a response to these anxieties the Government introduced a point system for non-EU immigrants (based on skill, family, job to go to etc) that is still in existence today. However, the present Coalition Government which succeeded New Labour believes that the permitted number of migrant workers remains too high and promises radically to reduce numbers of immigrants entering the country.

¹ <http://www.signsofthetimes.org.uk/flynn%5Btextonly%5D.html> (February 2011)

3.1.2. Status quo

As can be seen on the graph below there has been a steady flow of emigration from the UK from the late 90s with peaks in 2006 and 2008. Recently there has been a considerable drop in the number of UK emigrants. - from just more than 30,000 in the year to March 2010, compared with 130,000 in the previous 12 months - and "there is no obvious reason why this trend should change substantially in 2011".²



Graph 1 Long-term International Migration to/from the UK 1991-2009

Source: Long-term International Migration, International Passenger Survey, ONS (The Office for National Statistics), November 2010 : <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ci/nugget.asp?id=260>

The level of net migration into the UK rose by 36% in 2010, Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures show. An estimated 572,000 people entered the UK on a long-term basis in the year to June 2010 while 346,000 emigrated.

According to the ONS figures, net migration figures - which include asylum seekers and people whose decide to stay longer than originally intended - have been rising steadily since December

² The IPPR (The Institute for Public Policy Research) Migration Review 2010/11

2008. While the number of people settling in the UK on a long-term basis has fallen slightly, this has offset by a sharp fall in the number leaving.

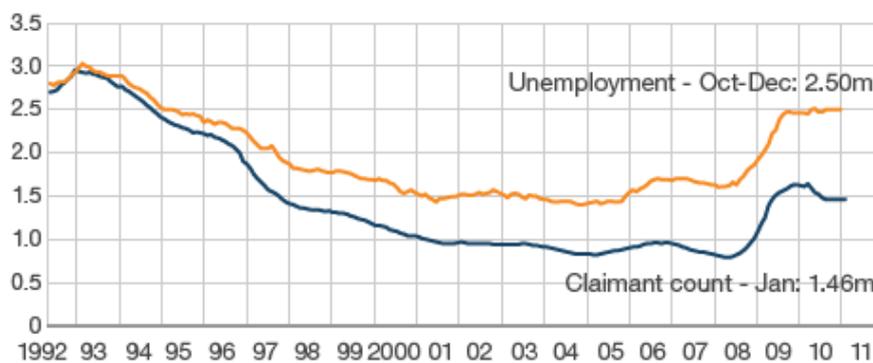
Separate figures, published for the first time by the ONS, suggest 2009's economic slowdown had a dramatic impact on the number of people coming to England and Wales to work for less than 12 months. An estimated 97,000 overseas residents visited the UK for short-term work-related purposes in the year to mid-2009, down from 162,000 the previous year - a reduction of 40%.

3.1.3. Labour Market context

The total number of unemployed people in the UK increased by 44,000 over the last quarter to reach 2.49 million, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Unemployment in the UK 1992–2011

Number, millions



Source: ONS

Redundancies have increased, the number of people classed as economically inactive rose to 9.3m and the number working part-time because they could not get full-time work reached a new high of 1.16m. Overall the UK unemployment rate currently stands at 7.9 %.

The UK depends heavily on EU and non-EU migrant workers for much of its workforce. The following are some facts taken from a 'Migrant Worker fact sheet' compiled by 'Unison'.³

³ <http://www.unison.org.uk>

Migrants make a significant net contribution to UK public finances, paying 37% more in tax than they receive in spending on benefits and services they use. European migrants who arrived in the UK since the EU enlargement in 2004 are 60% less likely than people born in the UK to receive state benefits or live in social housing.

UK public services depend on migrant workers; migrant workers account for 18% of care workers, 23% of nurses, 19% of childminders and related occupations, and 14% of social workers. During the expansion of nursing recruitment from 1997 to 2004 around 40% of new nurses were from outside the European Union. Around 1 in 3 medical staff – 2 in 3 for some grades – were trained outside Europe. The UK relies on the skills they bring to address our shortage of doctors.

3.2. Political responses to migration

David Cameron, the leader of the current UK coalition government, gave a speech on February 5th 2011 (at the Munich Security Conference) stating : "Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism (a reference to the previous Labour government's policies), we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run counter to our values."

This speech was made as criticism of the previous Labour government under which statistics show nearly 3 million more people came to live in the UK than left it during the Labour government's 13 years in power⁴. This influx was due to a surge in asylum from troubled failing states combined with cheaper cost of global travel, as well as the arrival of east European job-seekers, after 2004⁵. Towards the end of Tony Blair's time as Labour prime minister (he stepped down in 2007), concern about immigration was rising in UK opinion polls. There were complaints about the pressure of 'over-population' in some areas on schools and doctors' surgeries so ministers responded by devising a points system focusing on attracting skilled workers and seeking to exclude the non-EU

⁴ <http://www.immigrationmatters.co.uk> (February 2011)

⁵ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/blog/2011/feb/22/immigration-policy> (February 2011)

poor. The government also instituted the UK Borders Agency in order to count people in and out of the country. This practice had been stopped under previous governments because of cost).

The recent economic crisis and the government cuts in the public sector have led to a general unease in the public and the press in the UK about mass unemployment. There has also been a feeling in the (mainly right-wing) press that further immigration cannot be supported in this climate. The current government has responded to this by pledging to reduce 100s of 1000s to 10s of 1000s of annual migrants.

A research report “Fear and Hope” published on 28th February 2011 on behalf of the “Searchlight Educational Trust” shows that huge numbers of Britons would support an anti-immigration English nationalist party if it was not associated with violence and fascist imagery. The report states that there is “a clear correlation between economic pessimism and negative views to immigration”.

There is less written and talked about emigration in the political arena. When it is discussed it is usually to bemoan the loss of the UK skilled work force to other countries. As this example from the Telegraph newspaper shows; “Britain is experiencing the worst "brain drain" of any country as highly qualified professionals settle abroad... No other nation is losing so many qualified people... Britain has now lost more than one in 10 of its most skilled citizens, while overall only Mexico has had more people emigrate.”⁶

3.3. Legal framework

All nationals of the EU and EEA countries have rights to live, study and work in the United Kingdom under European Union law. They do not need a visa to enter the UK; the only documentation they need for entry to the UK is a passport or a valid national identity card. There are slightly different regulations concerning the rights of different categories of EEA migrants to work in the UK (see below).

⁶ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1579345/Biggest-brain-drain-from-UK-in-50-years> (February 2008)

A national of the EEA or Switzerland has a right of residence in the UK. They can stay as long as they wish if they have enough money to support themselves and their family for the whole period of their stay without needing any help from public funds. They do not need a residence permit or work permit. They can apply for a registration certificate proving their right to residence although this is not a legal requirement. Bulgarian and Romanian nationals must have completed a year of continual employment before they can apply for the registration certificate.

In terms of employment rights, there are three categories of EU nationals and slightly different rules concerning working apply to these three categories. The three categories are based on groups of countries:

Category 1. Nationals of Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden have full access to the UK labour market on an equal basis with UK nationals. They do not require any additional documentation and are not subject to any restrictions. They may also work in a self employed capacity.

Category 2. Nationals of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and the Slovak Republic have full access to the UK labour market. However if they take up employment they must register with the Workers Registration Scheme (see below). Rights to certain benefits are dependent on how long they have been registered with the scheme. They can work in a self employed capacity and in this case do not need to register with the Workers Registration Scheme.

Category 3. Nationals of Bulgaria and Romania are entitled to enter the UK to look for work. They generally need to apply for an accession worker card before they take up an offer of employment and their employer may need to apply for a work permit for them (they can work in a self employed capacity without these requirements).⁷

3.4. Support systems currently available

EU citizens from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Greece, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, plus EU citizens from Cyprus and Malta have

⁷ Taken from the Careers Europe “EISODUS” database, February 2011

the right to enter the UK to work or to look for work. They are entitled to the same rights and benefits regarding rates of pay and health and welfare benefits as nationals of that country.

Bulgarians and Romanians need to obtain authorisation of their employment if they wish to work in the United Kingdom. For most jobs the employer will need to apply for a work permit. Information about this is found here: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/bulgariaromania/applying/.

As an EU national the UK employment service can be accessed on an equal basis with UK nationals. There are also information sites regarding the national minimum wage in the UK (www.berr.gov.uk/employment/pay/national-minimum-wage/index.html) and your rights as a worker (www.tuc.org.uk/international/index.cfm?mins=288).

EURES is a key tool for both UK nationals and EU/EEA citizens looking to work in a different country in Europe: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/home.jsp?langId=en>.

3.5. Challenges of low skilled labour migrants

This section summarises the findings of a range of UK organisations who have worked to identify the challenges faced by migrant workers.

Employer exploitation: Research has shown that migrant workers are not always made aware of their employment rights in relation to their terms and conditions of employment - hours and overtime directives, minimum and overtimes pay rates etc. They are not put into contact with trade union or other worker representatives.

Following on from above, there is evidence that migrant workers often work in unsafe and/or unhealthy working conditions which do not comply with the standards of the UK **Health and Safety** Executive legislation.

Language difficulties exacerbate these problems. Not only are migrant workers often in ignorance of their rights, they are unable to put forward a coherent argument in the language of their employer. Few UK ‘rights’ documents are translated into EU languages. Large employers often contract out the search for migrant labourers to ‘gang masters’ who commit to supplying them with so many workers for a set period of time. Various exposes have shown what a murky and corrupt area this can be with gang masters pocketing the lump sum payment and doling out as much (or as little) of it to the workers as they see fit. These gang masters have also provided housing and food for the workers – in squalid conditions for which they charge exorbitant rates.

There is evidence that a far higher proportion of migrant workers than indigenous employees work to short term contracts, making it more risky for them to complain about injustice or malpractice.

Racism and prejudice: There is clear evidence that, as recession bites in the UK, and unemployment grows, there is increased resentment against migrant workers who are perceived as taking jobs from indigenous workers. Individual migrants can suffer twice from the fall out from a economic order that it not of their making- firstly in being uprooted from their families and friends by the imperative to find work and then by the frosty reception from the ‘host’ community. This view has recently been endorsed by the UK Immigration Minister Damian Green who said: “while it is important that low-skilled jobs are filled, there are hundreds of thousands of British people who could be doing them instead of a migrant’.

Examples of national good practice guides include the TUC’s guide on ‘[Safety & Migrant Workers](#)’ and the Citizen’s Advice Bureau’s (CAB) guide on ‘[Supporting migrant workers in rural areas](#)’. The TUC document focuses on the health and safety risks likely to be faced by migrant workers in workplaces and identifies the issues of the linguistic abilities of migrant workers, the challenges faced in the trade union recruitment of migrant workers, and the basic health and safety risks migrant workers are liable to be exposed to as particularly relevant concerns for trade unions. A further example of a national good practice guide is the UK CAB’s ‘Supporting Migrant Workers in Rural Areas’. This document focuses upon the potential difficulties faced by migrant workers in rural areas, and lists the problems of the availability of suitable advice and the language difficulties faced by migrant workers as amongst the greatest potential problems.

4. Findings from the field research – questionnaires and interviews

4.1. The view of experts

The composition of the UK group of experts consulted during our field research is described in detail in the full project report. In this UK report, we summarise the main findings of this consultation exercise. We wanted to explore the experts' view on the main challenges of migrants, to find out which services they already use, where they identify gaps in these services and what suggestions they have regarding the Interactive tool to be developed in Mol@m.

1. Their clients

The clients of the experts were relatively young. Clients aged over 40 were exceptions. There was a balance of genders and most were nationals of Eastern European countries, especially of the 'new' European countries. (Although it should be noted that a large group consisted of migrants from outside Europe (e.g. from African and Asian countries or from Russia) i.e., people not targeted by this project.

In the experience of our experts, most migrants came to the host country on the recommendation of friends rather than professionals and sought advice, work and accommodation through the help of their compatriots rather than through official channels. This was possibly due to a lack of information about official channels. The main reasons for migration were to improve job prospects (either to avoid unemployment or to work under better conditions) and to increase income. But there were also social motives (family reunification, bi-national relationships, friends).

The UK was most frequently mentioned as a desired destination, followed by France and Spain and Germany.

We asked our experts for their views of what knowledge was essential for migrants. The following is a summary of their responses:

- ▶ language (as key to integration: a lack of language creates vulnerability and hinders exercising one's rights)
- ▶ social law, migration law, EU law and bureaucracy (insurances, social system, taxes; duties and rights; own migration status, documents needed; transfer of insurance claims from one country to the other)
- ▶ everyday life (price of food and accommodation, health system, safety, transport...)
- ▶ legal issues (e.g. contracts)
- ▶ cultural and normative rules
- ▶ general labour market information (average salaries, pay scales, job fields, labour law)
- ▶ finding jobs (access to information centres, platforms on jobs and potential employers) and alternatives (grant offers, internships, how to start your own business, qualifications)
- ▶ recognition and certification of educational achievements
- ▶ support centres
- ▶ ICT skills
- ▶ information about returning home

Our experts agreed that migrants have only a vague idea of the information they will need.

They also felt that migrants needed to be made aware of challenges that they might face:

- ▶ Dangers of illegal work
- ▶ Skills (language barriers, recognition of degrees)
- ▶ Contracting issues
- ▶ Bureaucracy (insufficient information and support due to lack of knowledge of authorities, indifferent treatment, unjustified refusal of support, claims to social insurance)
- ▶ Cultural, geographical and climate differences (the influence of weather is underestimated)
- ▶ Criminal experiences, alcoholism
- ▶ Prejudices against foreigners and xenophobia

We also asked the experts to assess what information and skills they needed in order to provide effective support and help to job applicants and potential migrants

These are the areas they prioritised:

Knowledge and information of:

Employment opportunities

- ▶ Geographical areas as well as sectors where employability is high

- ▶ List of trustworthy/doubtful employers who provide work to foreigners

Legal aspects

- ▶ Migrants' rights and obligations
- ▶ Employment contracts including the termination of employment, working conditions pay and hours etc.
- ▶ Laws concerning migration
- ▶ Up to date information on employment law- minimum wage etc.
- ▶ Where migrants can go for help on these matters

Advisers agreed that it would be useful to have a list of contacts of specialists on the legal systems of foreign countries who could provide up to date information on request.

Cost of living

- ▶ Average wages, minimum wages, costs of accommodation, food and other necessary items

Social security and health care

- ▶ Conditions, functioning, payments
- ▶ How to verify that employers pay all compulsory fees
- ▶ What documents and processes are required for claims

Cultural aspects

Language was mentioned most frequently. Comprehensive information required about available classes. Knowledge of local culture and traditions and acceptable behaviour and etiquette are also necessary for the migrant for the promotion of social harmony.

Skills required:

Professional development for practitioners

- ▶ Language courses for advisers
- ▶ Some experts would value training in counselling techniques

Networking collaborative practice

- ▶ Sharing of information with colleagues and also with successful migrants in order to have access to up-to-date information. They would welcome study visits to other countries to gain first hand experience of life there and to share good practice.
- ▶ Development of a newsletter

We also asked them to make suggestions for the development of the Mol@m project. The following is a summary of the main points suggested:

- ▶ Don't create yet another network. Don't produce parallel structures but rather embed existing services, enhance awareness and create synergies
- ▶ A transparent review of options of European mobility at one place would be helpful (work, traineeships, volunteering)
- ▶ Concrete contact points in the countries of destination; List of local organisations and their services
- ▶ Involve internet platforms that young people use of e.g. facebook etc.
- ▶ The website should be in national languages
- ▶ (further) educate people in their home countries and make a special list of education and training opportunities available there
- ▶ Up-to-date information on changes (e.g. when a country changes its status) and on current labour market conditions via newsletters
- ▶ Support exchanges/partnerships between countries and organisations in different countries
- ▶ Online contact points on certain topics (especially for low qualified)
- ▶ Guideline/Checklist: what to do if you enter a new country
- ▶ Links from the EU to other services on the website does not work well
- ▶ Matchmaking for voluntary actions
- ▶ Storytelling (either digital by videos or life in schools); success stories
- ▶ Enhance connections between job seekers and employment advisers, counsellors, etc.
- ▶ Dissemination in schools to inform young people about opportunities abroad
- ▶ Information campaign to encourage people to travel to gain a job
- ▶ Directory of employers across Europe willing to take on graduates from other countries

4.2. The view of migrants

As for the group of experts, details of the UK migrants consulted during our field research are provided in detail in the full project report.

The migrants confirmed the experts' view that public services played a marginal role and that support had come from informal sources. This is a significant lack that the mol@m project hopes to address.

Here we summarise the support they would have welcomed:

- ▶ There should be support available in the country of origin
- ▶ Information and support should be given on
 - ▶ employment, health, administration administrative documents
 - ▶ kindergarten/childcare system, local support
 - ▶ starting a new business
 - ▶ country-specific details
- ▶ Legal advice (contracts, flat rent or car rent, labour rights). One person strongly suggested that migrants should have legal costs insurance
- ▶ General information-related concerns are the wish for more clarity and support from public offices, a public info-desk
- ▶ Support from/contacts with local foreigners
- ▶ Recommendation on good services
- ▶ Less bureaucracy, simplify documents and facilitate filling in forms
- ▶ Checklist on what has to be done step by step when entering a country

5. Global Report

This National Report focuses primarily upon issues relevant to the UK. There are similar national reports which have been produced by the project partners for each country involved in the project. These national reports are available in the home language of the relevant country. An English language version of the comprehensive Global Report WP2 Mol@m is available on the project website at www.spi.pt/molam. This report also attempts to provide an overview and to draw conclusions about required action based upon the research of all the project partners.

6. UK support agencies

UK national support

UK Border Agency gives information about entering, living and working in the UK. The focus is on legal obligations and essential requirements in terms of documents and forms which it is necessary to complete.

See <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk>

The EXODUS database can be accessed through libraries and careers organisations. EXODUS is a comprehensive database of international careers information. It provides information about opportunities around the world, including information about gap years, studying, working, volunteering and living in countries worldwide. It also provides direct access to websites of relevant and useful organisations.

EISODUS is a migrant communities' information resource that can be accessed in public libraries in the UK. It contains information for refugees, asylum seekers and EU migrants, as well as for people who work with people newly arrived in the UK. Information for migrants is available in English plus 23 world languages, eleven of which are EU languages.

The Euroguidance centre UK (also known as Careers Europe) is the port of call for many EURES and other careers advisors working with both outgoing and incoming migrants. The Euroguidance team answer questions on anything to with migration via a telephone helpline and email enquiries. The team also answer enquiries from the 'Ploteus' portal: www.ec.europa.eu/ploteus. The Careers Europe website: www.careerseurope.co.uk.

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