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The Polish Migration: The Folly of Perception

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PRE-ACCESSION



BBC

April 2003: In a 2003 BBC questions and answer session on how new member states would change Europe the concern was that we would become poorer. Although be the world's largest trading block.



November 6th 2003: Among the ten new members the Commission identified no fewer than nine areas of “serious concern” where it feels that Poland has yet to live up to its treaty commitments...The Poles are chastised for failing to introduce “minimum training requirements” for several professions, including health-care workers. This, the commission says, could threaten their prospects of working in the rest of the EU.

The Economist



FIRST YEAR FOLLOWING ACCESSION

April 6th 2005: Tyneside ship workers are at loggerheads with bosses after it emerged more jobs are being handed to Eastern Europeans. The GMB union members want the yard to bring work in-house so Tyneside's no longer lose their jobs to cheap labour.



October 4th 2005: 20 Merseyside pipefitters have accused their employers of racial discrimination after claiming they were made redundant and replaced by Polish workers who were paid less.

August 23rd 2005: I'M concerned about the influx of cheap Polish labour. I've been a decorator for 22 years but have been made unemployed because of the huge amount of Eastern European workers in the construction industry. Brits looking for a realistic wage have no chance. I'm 42 and can't compete with the low wages they work for.

FIRST YEAR FOLLOWING ACCESSION



October 26th 2004: T&G vows fight against cheap labour

Pressure from the T&G has led to assurances from the Harwich Dock Company that they will not proceed with plans to bring in Polish agency labour without giving prior warning.



May 11th 2005: Flat pack homes built in a factory in Poland used cheap Polish labour costs

Hyde Housing Association, the developers of the scheme, said the Polish workers are paid less than half the UK minimum wage. The Polish-built homes are guaranteed to last for 60 years.



March 18, 2005: Grass was not greener 19 Poles were head-hunted in 2004 by a Burslem-based pottery firm in a deal which appeared to satisfy both sides of the labour market. For Wood and Sons, the Poles provided a relatively cheap supply of labour.

So in Poland poverty and unemployment, poor infrastructure and political instability (government just fallen). In the UK exploitation of Polish workers and their willingness to work for lower wages than UK workers.

BUT POLISH SKILLS NEEDED

The Press and Journal

Aberdeen Press and Journal - December 3rd 2005: North politician is calling for increased access to English lessons for foreign workers. Mary Scanlon MSP has written to Highland Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise regarding the cost and availability of English language lessons in Inverness, after she was contacted by members of the Polish community in the north. Mrs Scanlon said: "Skills shortages are hugely prevalent in many areas of the construction industry in the Highlands. It is estimated that more than 6,000 Polish workers are now living in the Highlands and Islands. It is vital we provide more access to learning English, as many of the Polish workers have training they are unable to use because they are not sufficiently fluent in English."

Polish skills needed so why are they not more readily recognised?

Often diplomas and recognised Polish qualifications not accepted.

Our skills bodies are too rigid in their recognition of skill sets, for example in construction many of the architectural design side Polish qualifications are not recognised by RIBA.