

Manpower Requirements and Availabilities in Europe in 1948

The following article summarises the results of a statistical enquiry made by the International Labour Office in May and July 1948 into the shortages of manpower in Europe which might be met by immigration, and the surpluses of manpower available for emigration. The decision that the Office should collect and disseminate such data, at regular intervals, was made by the Governing Body at its 104th Session¹, after the Economic Commission for Europe, through its Manpower Committee, had recommended in March 1948 that certain tasks on the subject of manpower surpluses and deficits should be undertaken by the I.L.O. The Manpower Conference, convened (Rome, January 1948) by the Italian Government on the recommendation of the Manpower Committee of the Committee of European Economic Co-operation², had also suggested that certain enquiries concerning the redistribution of manpower in Europe should be undertaken by the International Labour Organisation.

The enquiry was based on a questionnaire, which was circulated to the 22 members of the I.L.O. in Europe, to Germany (three western zones) and to the International Refugee Organisation.

For the purposes of the enquiry conducted by the International Labour Office into the requirements of manpower in Europe that could be met by migration in 1948, countries were asked to supply information concerning their requirements of foreign labour and their manpower surpluses.

Regarding requirements of foreign labour, countries were asked to give only the number of workers who could be absorbed and accommodated. Information was asked as to the categories of requirements

¹ For an account of the discussion, see *International Labour Review*, Vol. LVII, No. 4, Apr. 1948, p. 355.

² The Manpower Committee was set up by the Committee of European Economic Co-operation in August 1947 for the purpose of "assessing the availabilities and requirements of labour" among the countries participating in the Marshall Plan and to "determine ways in which co-ordinated transfers of workers between these countries can be facilitated". See "Manpower Report of the Committee of European Economic Co-operation", *International Labour Review*, Vol. LVI, Nos. 5-6, Nov.-Dec. 1947, pp. 566-575.

TABLE I. FOREIGN LABOUR REQUIREMENTS OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Country	During 3 months to 31 August 1948			During 12 months to 31 May 1949		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
	(a) Long-term requirements					
Belgium	3,000	3,000	—	12,000	12,000	—
France.....	60,000	51,000	9,000	206,000	166,000	40,000
Luxembourg	775	700	75	1,800	1,500	300
Netherlands	—	—	—	1,000	—	1,000
Sweden	—	—	—	(2,500)	(2,500)	—
Switzerland	10,250	5,325	4,925	30,000	13,750	16,250
United Kingdom...	31,300	20,000	11,300	60,000	30,000	30,000
	(b) Short-term requirements					
France.....	—	—	—	9,000	9,000	—
Netherlands	150	50	100	—	—	—
Switzerland	18,020	13,370	4,650	57,750	42,500	15,250
Total :						
Long-term	105,325	80,025	25,300	313,300	225,750	87,550
Short-term	18,170	13,420	4,750	66,750	51,500	15,250
Grand total ...	123,495	93,445	30,050	380,050	277,250	102,800
	During 4 months to 31 December 1948			During 13 months to 30 September 1949		
	(a) Long-term requirements					
Belgium	4,000	4,000	—	12,000	12,000	—
France.....	30,500	25,000	5,500	135,000	120,000	15,000
Netherlands	500	—	500	2,000	2,000	—
Sweden	700	400	300	2,900	1,700	1,200
Switzerland	5,100	2,100	3,000	17,000	8,300	8,700
United Kingdom...	10,500	1,500	9,000	22,500	6,500	16,000
	(b) Short-term requirements					
France.....	6,000	6,000	—	15,000	15,000	—
Switzerland	3,200	1,700	1,500	45,000	32,900	12,100
Total :						
Long-term	51,300	33,000	18,300	191,400	150,500	40,900
Short-term	9,200	7,700	1,500	60,000	47,900	12,100
Grand total ...	60,500	40,700	19,800	251,400	198,400	53,000

TABLE II. FOREIGN LABOUR REQUIREMENTS OF EUROPEAN INDUSTRIES

Industry	Long-term		Short-term		Total		
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Total
<i>(a) Three months ending 31 August 1948</i>							
Agriculture.....	39,900	7,825	4,800	1,200	44,700	9,025	53,725
Mining.....	22,000	—	—	—	22,000	—	22,000
Metals.....	7,150	250	1,800	200	8,950	450	9,400
Building and construction.....	6,700	—	5,000	—	11,700	—	11,700
Textiles.....	300	7,400	—	300	300	7,700	8,000
Clothing.....	200	400	100	250	300	650	950
Chemicals.....	2,500	—	—	—	2,500	—	2,500
Food and drink..	200	200	200	400	400	600	1,000
Personal and domestic service	250	8,800	1,050	2,350	1,300	11,150	12,450
Miscellaneous....	825	425	470	50	1,295	475	1,770
Total.....	80,025	25,300	13,420	4,750	93,445	30,050	123,495
<i>(b) Four months ending 31 December 1948</i>							
Agriculture.....	8,800	5,700	6,000	—	14,800	5,700	20,500
Mining.....	17,550	—	—	—	17,550	—	17,550
Metals.....	5,300	50	—	—	5,300	50	5,350
Building and construction.....	300	—	—	—	300	—	300
Textiles.....	25	5,250	—	—	25	5,250	5,275
Clothing.....	150	350	—	—	150	350	500
Food and drink..	150	50	—	—	150	50	200
Personal service..	250	6,800	900	1,500	1,150	8,300	9,450
Miscellaneous....	475	100	800	—	1,275	100	1,375
Total.....	33,000	18,300	7,700	1,500	40,700	19,800	60,500

(whether long-term or short-term and seasonal, according as the employment is available for one year or more, or for less than one year); whether male or female workers were required and the age limits within which they would be recruited; the industries for which workers were required, and the occupation and description of duties of workers in these industries.

Regarding surpluses of manpower, countries were asked to give information only on those available for emigration; for these, information was requested on the sex of the workers, the number under 45 years of age and the number of 45 years and over, and their occupations, with a description of their skill and qualifications.

TABLE III. EUROPEAN REQUIREMENTS (IN THOUSANDS) OF FOREIGN WORKERS AT VARIOUS DATES.

Country	Paris ¹	Rome ²	Geneva ³			
	1 Jan. 1947	1 Jan. 1948	1 June 1948		1 September 1948	
			3 months to 31 Aug. 1948	12 months to 31 May 1949	4 months to 31 Dec. 1948	13 months to 30 Sept. 1949
Austria	18.0	28.0	—	—	—	—
Belgium	61.5	21.0	3.0	12.0	4.0	12.0
France.....	290.0	145.0	60.0	215.0	36.5	150.0 ⁴
Luxembourg	5.4	5.4	0.8	2.0	—	—
Netherlands	9.3	9.3	0.2	1.0	0.5	2.0
Sweden	100.0	5.0	—	2.5	0.7	2.9
Switzerland	73.0	67.0	28.2	87.5	8.3	62.0
United Kingdom..	120.0	100.0	31.3	60.0	10.5	22.5
Total	677.2	380.7	123.5	380.0	60.5	257.4

¹ Report of Committee on European Economic Co-operation, Paris, July 1947.

² Report of Manpower Conference, Rome, Jan. 1948.

³ Reports of the I.L.O.

⁴ Average of minimum and maximum estimates.

Special attention was drawn to the importance of giving concise descriptions of the types of worker required in the different industries and of the qualifications and skills of the workers available in the different occupations. Such information is essential in order to ensure that the bodies responsible for selecting immigrants may know the precise type of labour available, and that those responsible for selecting emigrants may know the types of labour required.

For requirements, information was requested in the first enquiry for the ensuing three months and for the ensuing twelve months, i.e., for the periods 1 June to 31 August 1948 and 1 June 1948 to 31 May 1949. For resources, information was requested for 1 May 1948, and an estimate of the surpluses likely to be available on 1 May 1949. For the second enquiry, information was requested for the periods 1 September to 31 December 1948 and 1 September to 30 September 1949 in the case of requirements, and for 1 September 1948 and 1 September 1949 for resources.

FOREIGN LABOUR REQUIREMENTS

Fifteen of the countries replied that their requirements were either nil or negligible, or that they had no information. Of the seven which supplied information, the requirements, both long-term and short-term, and for male and female workers, are given in table I. above. The industries for which these workers are required are given in table II.

The greatest demand is for skilled workers ; unskilled workers will be accepted chiefly in agriculture and personal service. France, however, is prepared to take 10,000 unskilled workers in coal mines ; the United Kingdom is prepared to accept unskilled workers in coal mines for training if skilled workers are not available.

It is of interest to compare these figures with the estimated requirements submitted to the Paris Conference in June 1947 and the Rome Manpower Conference in January 1948. The figures are given in table III. It will be seen that the estimated demands on 1 January 1947 amounted to about 677,000 workers ; by 1 January 1948 these had fallen to 380,000 ; by June 1948 the demands for the ensuing twelve months were also estimated at 380,000, although the requirements of some countries had varied. By 1 September 1948 the demands for the following three months were estimated at 60,500 and for the following twelve months at about 250,000.

These changes since January 1947 are due chiefly to the entry of foreign workers, the granting of civilian status to many prisoners of war, the more effective use of national manpower, the scaling down of original plans in some cases, and the housing crisis which limited effective recruitment.

SURPLUSES OF LABOUR AVAILABLE FOR EMIGRATION

Most of the countries which replied (17) stated that they had little or no surplus labour or no data on the subject. Surplus workers are in fact confined almost entirely to a few areas. They are the refugees and displaced persons in Germany, Austria and Italy under the care of the International Refugee Organisation ; the large body of unemployed in Italy, and the surplus of persons (mostly females) in Germany (bizonal area). Small surpluses exist also in the Netherlands and Switzerland. The figures supplied to the Office (table IV) show that nearly 3,000,000 persons are estimated as being surplus to national requirements.

As the Italian Government points out in its reply, it is not possible to estimate the number of workers available for emigration until the immigration countries have given particulars of the kind of work available and of the conditions attached to such offers. The wish to emigrate is an important factor depending not only on the wages, etc., offered, but also on the possibility of living satisfactorily in the immigration countries, and the possibility of remitting money to relatives in the home country. The figure of 2,000,000 persons given in table IV is an estimate of the genuinely unemployed ; certain young and elderly persons should be omitted as well as persons, chiefly females, whose family position prevents emigration.

The figures for Germany (bizonal area) are also estimates of the number of persons who can be spared ; they do not relate to particular individuals. In Germany, there is at present a large excess of females who have little chance either of family life or of earning a livelihood in the country.

The figures for refugees are a census of all persons between 16 and 65 (17-55 in Austria) with certain exceptions, such as mothers of young children. Owing to the special circumstances of these people, they are, in the majority of cases, willing to take up work

TABLE IV. SURPLUSES OF MANPOWER

Country	Total	Males	Females
	(a) On 1 May 1948		
Germany (bizone).....	545,000	45,000	500,000
Italy ¹	2,000,000	n.a. ³	n.a.
Netherlands	40,000	40,000	—
Switzerland	5,550	3,800	1,750
Refugees, etc. ² :			
Germany (3 western zones)	306,000	201,000	105,000
Austria	21,000	15,000	6,000
Italy	14,000	11,000	3,000
Grand total	2,931,550	—	—
	(b) On 1 September 1948		
Germany (bizone).....	545,000	45,000	500,000
Netherlands	52,000	47,200	4,800
Switzerland	5,350	3,700	1,650
Italy ¹	2,000,000	n.a.	n.a.
Refugees (estimate) ...	330,000	(220,000)	(110,000)
Total	2,932,350	—	—

¹ Estimated number of unemployed.² On 31 Mar. 1948.³ Not available.

in another country. No information is available for the refugees who do not come under the care of the International Refugee Organisation. The Netherlands figures consist chiefly of farmers' sons who are unable to settle on the land, but the number who are willing to emigrate is not known.

The figures in table IV should not, therefore, be taken as the number of persons available for emigration, but rather as the number of persons who would be willing under certain conditions to consider taking up work in another country.

Occupations of the surplus workers. Little information is available on this question. No figures are available for Germany (non-refugees) for the reasons given above, and the Italian figures are not available by occupations, though it is stated that the great majority are unskilled; some, moreover, have never exercised an occupation. Switzerland and the Netherlands, on the other hand, indicate the

occupations of their available workers. The main source of information concerns the refugees; these have been classified by the International Refugee Organisation into some 215 occupations grouped into certain broad categories which are given in table V.

TABLE V. OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS OF REFUGEES IN GERMANY, ITALY AND AUSTRIA ON 31 MARCH 1948 ¹

Group	Total	Males	Females
Professional, managerial	43,547	28,970	14,577
Clerical and sales	20,953	11,289	9,664
Personal, domestic and protective service	26,449	6,313	20,136
Agricultural, fishery and forestry	75,964	57,351	18,613
Skilled manual occupations	98,192	76,609	21,583
Semi-skilled manual occupations	18,750	15,668	3,082
Apprentices, helpers and labourers	18,366	12,411	5,955
No previous work experience ...	38,257	18,079	20,178
Total	340,478	226,690	113,788

¹ These figures relate to all persons between 15 and 65 in the three western zones of Germany and Italy, and between 15 and 55 in Austria. Certain persons, however, such as the sick, mothers of children under 12, etc., are omitted.

These figures show that about 34 per cent. of the males and 19 per cent. of the females have been classified as skilled manual workers; agricultural workers form 25.3 per cent. of males and 16.3 per cent. of females, and the professional and managerial class 12.8 per cent., both sexes.

COMPARISON BETWEEN REQUIREMENTS AND AVAILABILITIES

Although the data are not complete, it is possible to draw some rough comparisons between the demand for foreign workers and the supply of workers available. Total requirements up to 31 December 1948 amount to 60,500, and for the year ending on 30 September 1949 to 251,000. Recorded surpluses available for emigration, although precise figures are not available, amounted to a much larger figure, the numbers in Germany alone reaching over 800,000. In addition, there is a large number in Italy. There is thus a very large excess of supply over demand. But though the number available to meet European requirements is largely in excess of the number demanded, it does not follow that all requirements can be met. The requirements are largely for skilled labour, while the majority of persons available are probably unskilled or semi-skilled, or persons without previous work experience. Even if the 40,000 persons

required in 1948 in non-agricultural occupations are all considered as skilled, it by no means follows that they could be supplied out of the 98,000 skilled non-agricultural workers reported among the refugees. It is a question of finding the most suitable workers to fill the posts vacant in each occupation. Unfortunately, although special efforts have been made, full details are not yet available as to the precise types of worker required and of the skill and qualifications of the workers available; in the further enquiries, which the Office is making into these questions at regular intervals, efforts are being made to obtain more satisfactory data than have been obtained in the first enquiries.

Finally, it should be remembered that the enquiry was limited to European countries, and that data on the supply of workers available for emigration could evidently not distinguish between those available for European countries and those available for non-European countries. Some of the large surplus of labour over demand will undoubtedly be absorbed by non-European countries.