

# NUREC-INSTITUTE

## NEW IMMIGRANTS AND LONG-SETTLED RESIDENTS IN DUISBURG-MARXLOH

BULGARIAN AND ROMANIAN IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR  
PERCEPTION BY THE LONG-SETTLED RESIDENTS



# DUISBURG-MARXLOH



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## Foreword

The field study conducted in 2015 by the NUREC-Institute on the migration of Bulgarian and Romanian citizens to Marxloh, a suburb of the City of Duisburg located in the German *Land* North Rhine-Westphalia, was funded by the Open Society Initiative for Europe and conducted in close co-operation with the Municipal Integration Centre of the City of Duisburg and the Duisburg Development Agency.

It aimed to help inform and provide knowledge relevant to developing future action. It focused on a) the situation of immigrants themselves, b) the perception of them by the local people who have been living in the neighbourhood for a longer period of time and c) the viewpoints of the experts dealing with the situation. Beside qualitative interviews with all three groups, research trips to the immigrants' regions of origin and comprehensive data analyses were undertaken. Due to the primarily qualitative approach of the study the results can only claim to a limited degree to be representative of the surveyed groups.

The results of the study have been widely presented and discussed not only in the Marxloh neighbourhood but also in and beyond the City of Duisburg. The complete study will be published in print and as an e-book by Springer Publishing House in spring 2017.

## The New Immigrants-Two Groups Featuring Multiple Deprivation



The new immigrants to Marxloh are Bulgarian and Romanian nationals who tend to share several common features. However, differences with regard to their countries of origin, the way they migrated and the way they live in Duisburg-Marxloh can be found.

### Common Features

- The new immigrants come from two neighbouring countries sharing common borders, partially similar histories and - in the recent past - difficult economic conditions.
- In their countries of origin, they belong to

minorities which are subjected to discrimination with regard to their social situation and in part to their ethnic origin as well. Most of the Bulgarian immigrants are members of a Turkish minority living in Bulgaria whilst most of the Romanian immigrants are part of the Roma community.

- Both immigrant groups have low educational standards, are in particularly difficult employment and/or income circumstances and are therefore especially hit by poverty in both countries.
- Their migration to Germany became possible subsequent to both their countries of origin joining the European Union and the resulting freedom of movement for EU citizens granted to them. Frequently, the immigrants have gathered experience of living as immigrants in other European countries and/or German towns prior to their arrival in Marxloh.
- Both groups' demographic share in Marxloh is more or less equal gaining strong momentum in the last three years.

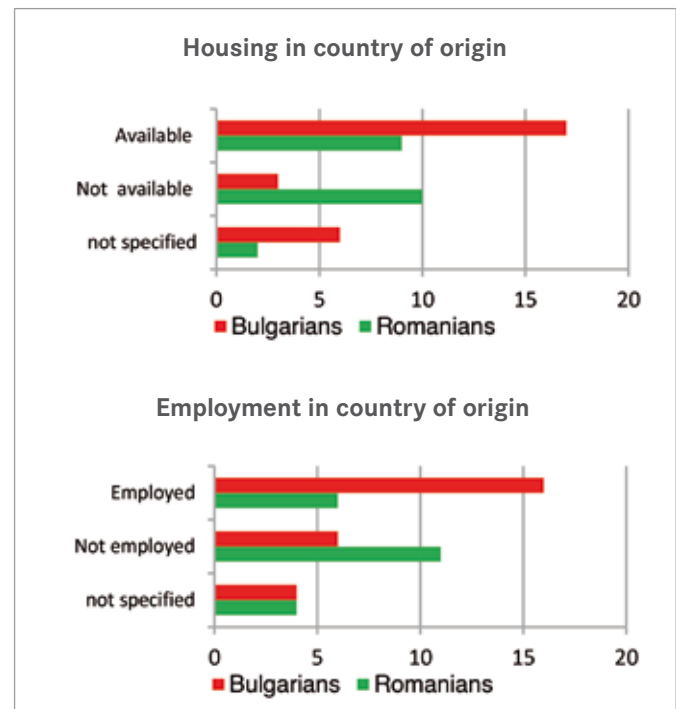
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- Both groups are subject to deprivation in Duisburg-Marxloh, too. They frequently live under precarious circumstances (difficult living quarters, lack of health insurance, unemployment) and are threatened by extreme poverty. They are also confronted with partially strong discrimination by the locals, i.e. citizens who have been living in Marxloh for quite some time.

## Differences

In contrast to the uniform view frequently forwarded by politics and the media alike, the study reveals a spectrum of dissimilarities which requires differentiation.

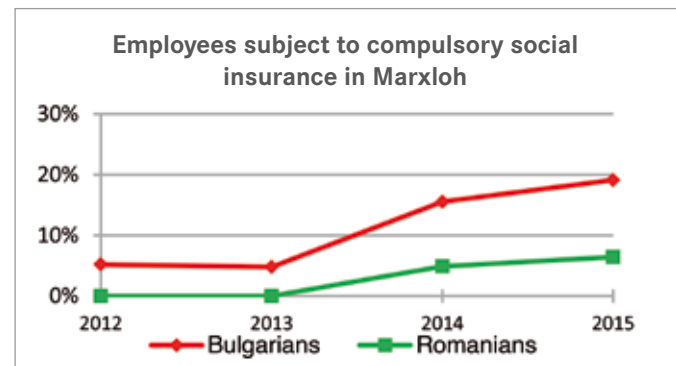
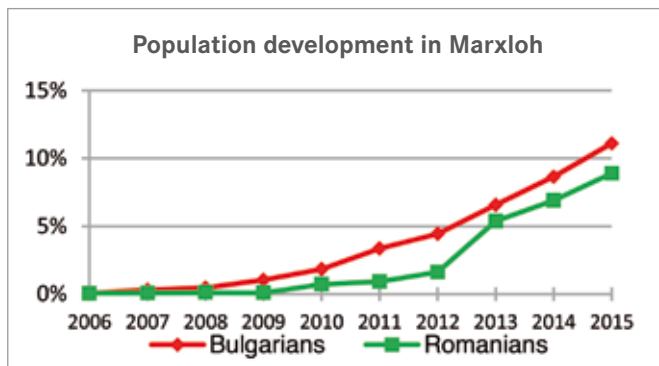
- The Bulgarian immigrants originate from metropolitan urban contexts forming highly concentrated minorities in certain neighbourhoods; for their part, the Romanian immigrants come mainly from rural towns and villages in which they intermingle more with the majority population.
- The living and working conditions of the Ro-



manian immigrants in their home country are considerably worse than is the case with the Bulgarians and they experience stronger ethnic-cultural discrimination.



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- In the case of Bulgarian immigrants the father tends to arrive first before fetching the rest of the family. The Romanian immigrants usually migrate with their entire families. This is one of the reasons why there are so many children among the Romanian population. More than half of the Romanian immigrants living in Marxloh are less than 15 years of age.
- Fluctuating population figures in Marxloh are clearly evident in both groups but more marked with the Romanian immigrants than with the Bulgarians. Many only stay in the neighbourhood for short periods before moving on to seek their fortunes elsewhere.
- The Romanian immigrants to Marxloh live under considerably more difficult circumstances than their Bulgarian counterparts. They have worse living quarters, live mainly on black-market labour, child benefits and begging, and frequently find themselves in extreme poverty. Also, they experience far worse discrimination by the long-settled Marxloh population.
- A special feature of the more advantageous situation of the Bulgarian immigrants are their Turkish language skills which provide them with easier access to important information

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and resources. This is indeed an asset in a neighbourhood with a large Turkish minority.

## Being Part of the Roma Minority

The majority of the Romanian immigrants are open about belonging to the Roma community which only marginally leads to certain differences among the Romanian group.

- Those Romanians surveyed having a Roma background tend to have a higher number of children than those without. However, they are also members of the Pentecostal Church which generally features high birth rates.
- Furthermore, the Roma - especially women - have low educational standards. A large share of them have never attended a school and are illiterate as a result.
- Educational deprivation experienced by parents does not however result in low educational aspirations for their children. Children having appropriate education is highly esteemed, also among parents with Roma backgrounds.



Overall, strong dissimilarities were identified between and among the migrant groups with political-territorial, religious and social differences interacting with ethnic-cultural dissimilarities.

## The Long-settled Local Population – An Over-stretched Community

The attitudes and behaviour of the long-settled local community should be seen against the background of the historical development and current situation in the neighbourhood.

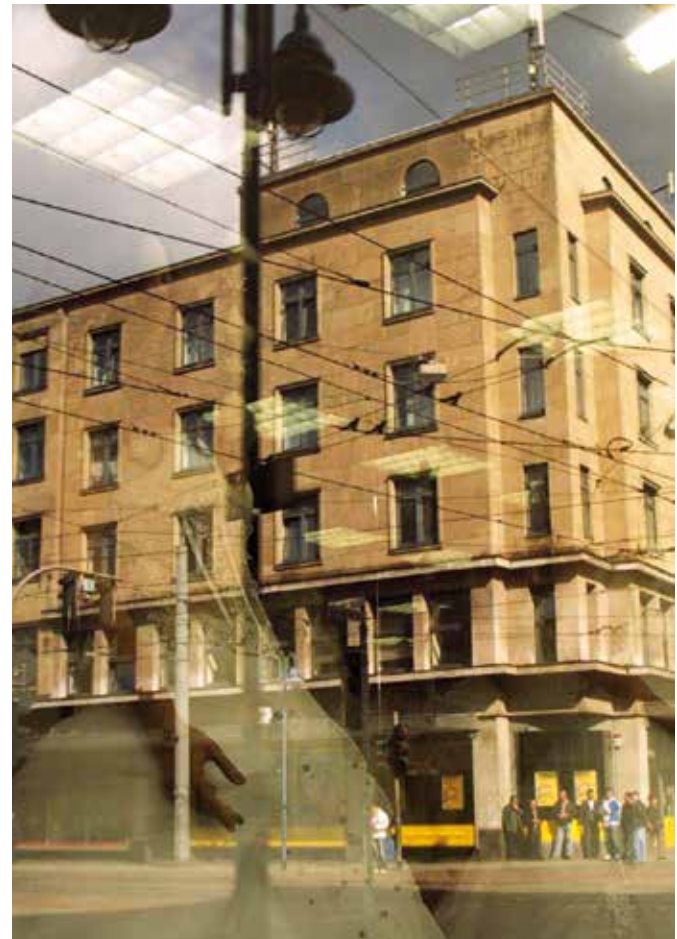
- The Duisburg-Marxloh neighbourhood used to be home to heavy industry but has been subject to continuous economic and societal decline since the 1970s, a process which could only partially be held up by urban development interventions and citizens' initiatives.
- Marxloh has been a multi-ethnic neighbourhood since the 1960s marked by the strong presence of people of Turkish descent and a large number of other ethnic groups of various origin.
- The considerable migration of Bulgarian and Romanian nationals to Marxloh since 2011 has added to the pressure on the societal and ethnic mix in the neighbourhood.
- The long-settled local community tends to identify the state and municipal institutions as being chiefly responsible for the difficult situation. The predominant feeling is that of being 'left to their own resources' by these institutions.
- The new immigrants are also seen as being partly responsible for the deterioration in the neighbourhood. Accordingly, a considerable share of the long-settled Marxloh population reports multiple pressures on co-habitation in the neighbourhood as a result of the presence and behaviour of the Bulgarian and Romanian immigrants.
- Neither the remaining German majority nor the large Turkish minority have been able to assume the role as 'recipients' of the new immigrants. The latter are frequently excluded by both groups and partly exploited and discriminated against.
- The attitude of the long-settled local community towards new immigrants is mainly marked by their fear of being disadvantaged and by disinterest, prejudice and negative assessments. A concentration of these negative views on the Roma community only happens partially.



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- The long-settled locals clearly tend to keep their distance from the new immigrants. Contacts at neighbourhood level scarcely exist and are only welcomed by the long-settled population in exceptional instances.
- Furthermore, all groups interviewed reported discrimination against the new immigrants by the long-established local community ranging from verbal attacks and exclusion to direct physical violence.

The overall picture of the long-settled local community features an already existing difficult situation in the neighbourhood which is now challenged by new immigrants; long-settled locals often feel hard pressed and the resulting overload which they feel, they pass on severely to the groups of new immigrants who are even more hard pressed than themselves.



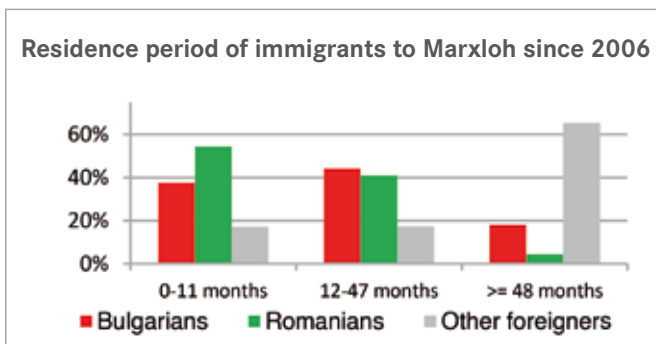
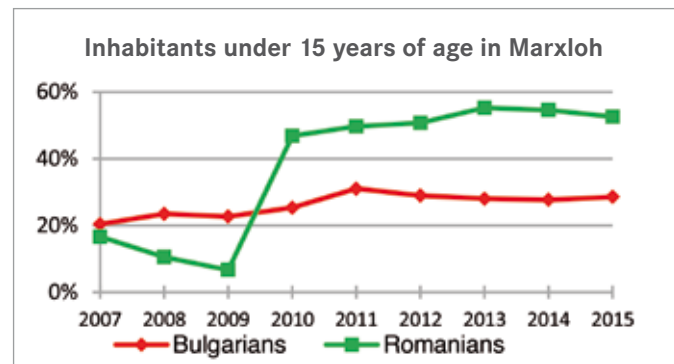
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## Variety of Challenges and Complex Action Requirements

The study reveals the size and variety of the challenges facing the City of Duisburg and the Marxloh neighbourhood. It also points to the complex action requirements which have emerged from these challenges.

### Challenges

- Since 2012 the number of Bulgarian and Romanian immigrants living in Duisburg-Marxloh has quadrupled. This means that by the end of 2015 one fifth of the Marxloh population were Romanian or Bulgarian nationals.
- The fluctuation in numbers among the Romanian community in particular makes the use of



- long-term integration measures difficult.
- The migrant groups already deprived in their countries of origin also find themselves in Duisburg-Marxloh in extremely precarious situations, for instance in vital areas like work, living quarters and health. Their circumstances are characterised by insecurity, poverty and discrimination.
- Special challenges are posed to the educational institutions by the high numbers of children and young people amongst the immigrant population.
- The variety of challenges caused by new migra-

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tion is highly volatile against the background of the difficult financial situation of the City of Duisburg and, according to statements by numerous experts, the lack of support by the national - and partly – the regional government.

## Action Required

- The extent and variety of challenges result in a complex mix of action required to stabilise the Duisburg-Marxloh neighbourhood in the frame of an integrated approach.
- A comprehensive strategic approach supported by municipal politics and administration alike, is necessary both at inter-departmental municipal and neighbourhood levels in order to coordinate the numerous existing measures. This also applies to the close co-operation of all players involved. According to several of the experts interviewed, there is considerable room for improvement despite the hitherto efforts of the institutions responsible.
- Time and again the experts cast doubt on how tailor-made and sustainable the projects conducted (and the funding programmes tapped) are.
- A cross-section requirement is enhanced communication. This does not just mean creating better communication through language training and information but also improving the conditions for interaction between the new immigrants and the long-settled local community so that the various groups understand the difficult situation of the respective other group better.
- A fundamental pre-condition for immigrants to lead self-sufficient lives is their integration in the formal labour market. This requires com-



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prehensive group-specific labour market measures.

- In the short and medium terms, problems faced by new immigrants should be tackled regarding basic requirements like acceptable living quarters and health insurance.
- In the long term, the new immigrants and their children will only find their way out of poverty if they meet the educational requirements necessary for integration in the labour market.
- For the new immigrants of working age, this means comprehensive educational measures, vocational training and further training. To ensure the immigrants' regular participation in such courses the necessity of maintenance payments to them has been pointed out repeatedly.
- Indeed, massive investment in the education of up and coming generations of immigrants is a gigantic challenge which to date has only been partly taken up.





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## Prospects – Future Developments in Marxloh and Challenges on Research

### Difficult conditions are looming for Marxloh in future.

- Migration to Marxloh from Bulgaria and Romania has continued since 2016. In the meantime, 22% of the Marxloh population have either the Bulgarian or Romanian citizenship.
- In addition, a twofold interference has evolved with regard to the migration of refugees.
  - With reasonably-priced accommodation and an immigrants' infrastructure, Marxloh was the Duisburg neighbourhood at the end of 2016 having the greatest number of recognized asylum seekers living in Duisburg.
  - The significant immigration of refugees in 2015 re-directed the attention of politics and public administration away from the immigration from Bulgaria and Romania and the connected challenges which were intensifying at the same time.
- It remains to be seen whether in view of the dimension of the challenges the recently renewed attention to these challenges can be put



to the benefit of a gradual alleviation of tensions in the neighbourhood.

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## Research Challenges

- Continued scientific research into the situation in Duisburg-Marxloh and the connected challenges entails both analytical/explanatory perspectives and generating proposals for future action.
- In the frame of a quantitative, representative survey the qualitative findings of the study presented here could be verified methodically and the content enlarged upon.
- In the frame of an evaluation study of the measures in Marxloh already conducted and planned for the future, a contribution to the enhancement of the strategic orientation and coordination of interventions could be undertaken based on the idea of an integrative approach to involving all players acting to benefit the neighbourhood.



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## Imprint

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