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Unemployment, Well-Being, and Wage Curves in Eastern and Central Europe

Blanchflower, David G. "Unemployment, Well-Being, and Wage Curves in Eastern and Central Europe

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Abstract

The paper studies the labor markets of 23 transition countries from eastern and central Europe—Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, East Germany, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia. It uses new micro-data from a large number of surveys on over 200,000 randomly sampled individuals from these countries for the years 1990–1997. The microeconomic structure of unemployment regression equations in the nations of eastern Europe appears to be similar to the industrialised west. Estimation of east European wage curves produces a local unemployment elasticity of between –0.1 and –0.3. This is

somewhat larger in absolute terms than has been found elsewhere. On a variety of attitudinal measures, eastern Europeans said they were less contented than their western European counterparts. The strongest support for the changes that have occurred in eastern Europe is to be found among men, the young, the most educated, students, and the employed and particularly the self-employed. Support for market reforms is particularly low amongst the unemployed who were found to be particularly unhappy on two well-being measures. *J. Japan. Int. Econ.*, December 2001, **15**(4), pp. 364–402. Department of Economics, Dartmouth College, New Hampshire 03755; and NBER.



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