

Restrictions in Access to Social Protection of New EU migrants to Belgium

JeanMichel Lafleur

Associate Director

Centre for Ethnic and Migration Studies, Université de Liège



Migration to Belgium & the crisis

- Recurring tensions around the presence of migrants in Europe
- Current crisis: reemergence of the “welfare shopper”
- Belgian approach:
“keep migrants who come to take advantage of social security out”

(Secretary of State for Migration, 2013)

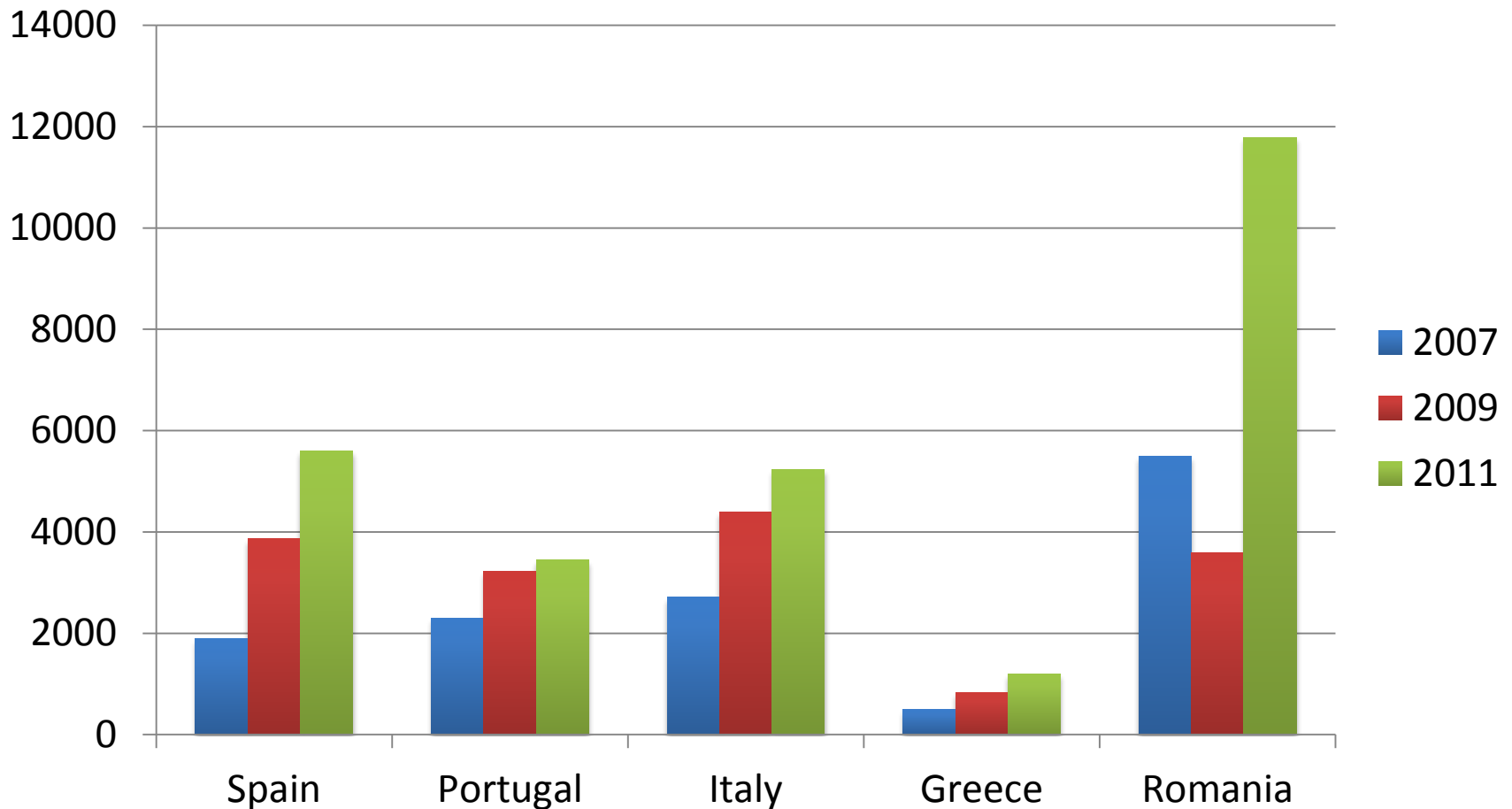
Welfare as migration policy

- Belgium: active policy of removal of residence permits since 2010
- Strict interpretation of directive 2004/38 since 2011(3rd step):
- BE removes residence permit to EU citizens who represent an “unreasonable burden on the social system” of the host country.

Welfare as migration policy

- Categories of citizens particularly targeted:
 - Citizens who make use of “safety nets”
 - Workers hired under state-sponsored work contract

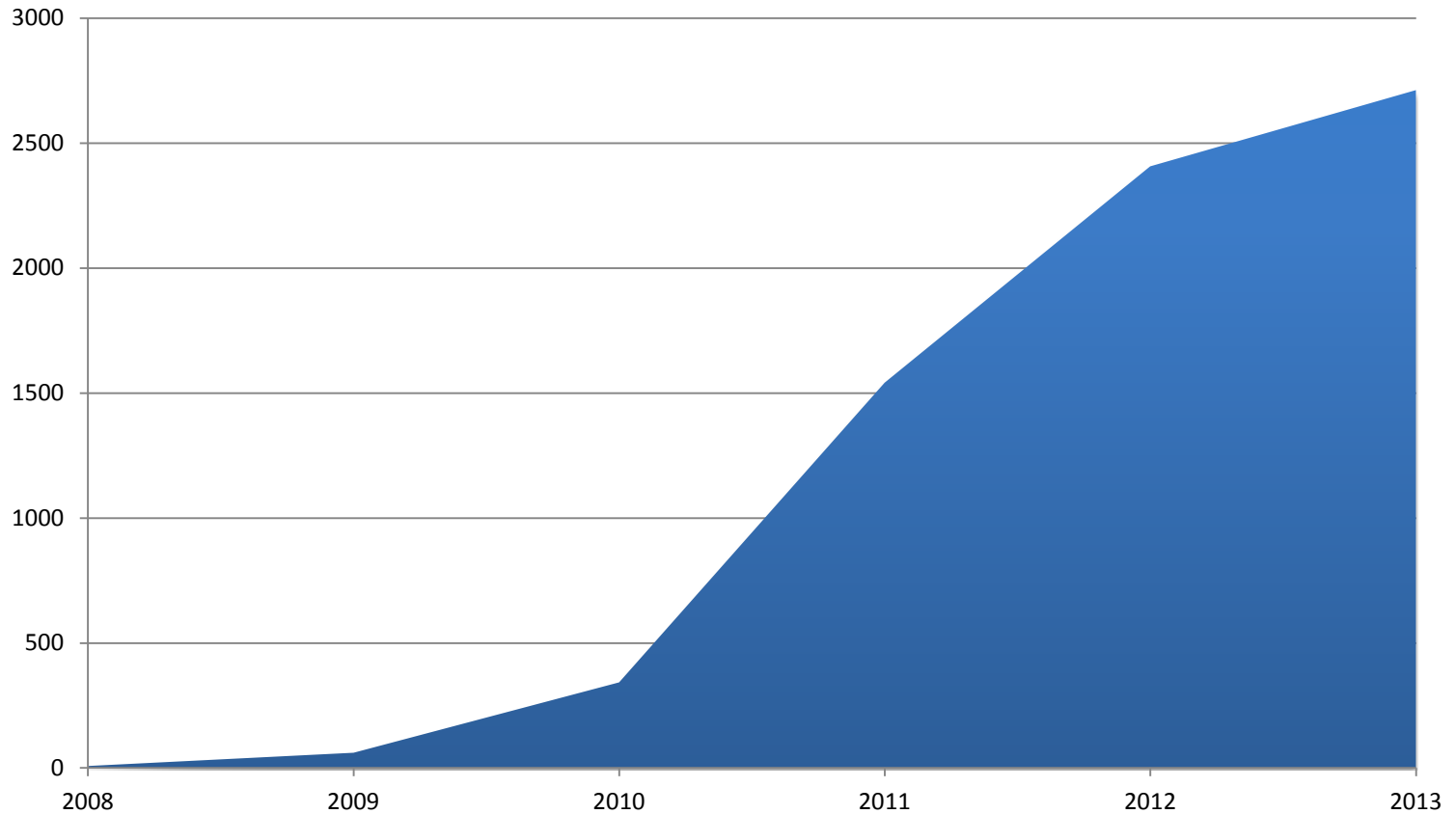
Evolution of migration flows



Source: National registry

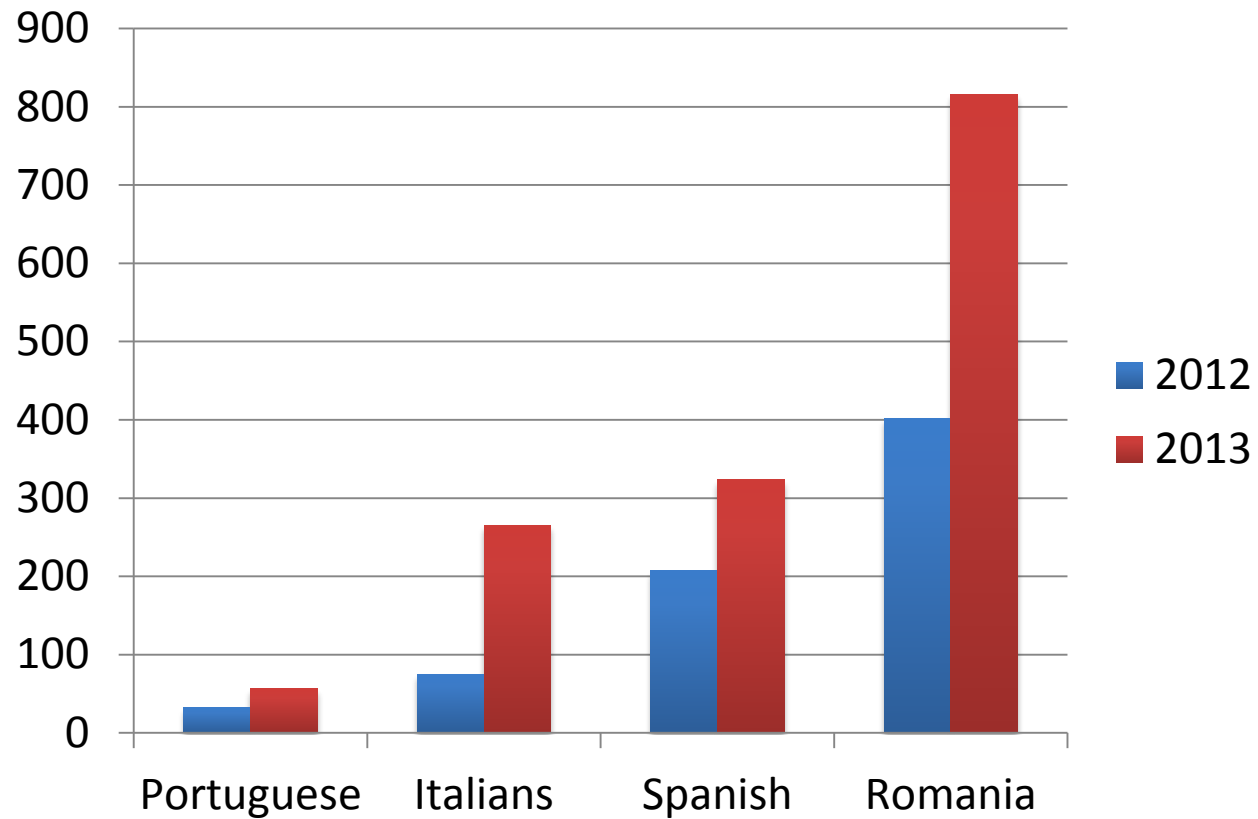
Welfare as migration policy

N removal of residence permit based based on “financial burden” argument



Welfare as migration policy

N of removals between 2012 & 2013



Welfare as migration policy

- Policy that confirms the trend to use welfare for migration control reinforced by
 - Constrains of European law
 - Context of perceived “invasion”
 - Budget crisis
 - ➔ welfare provisions became measures to select desirable EU migrants and keep others out

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1. Repeat that welfare shopping does not exist but discrimination on the job market does
2. Connect debates on freedom of circulation of EU citizens to citizens on welfare state reforms that also concern non-migrants
3. Challenge the idea that freedom of circulation is reserved to those who are not at risk of using social protection

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