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IMMIGRATION – SOCIO-ECONOMICAL IMPLICATIONS. THE CASE OF ROMANIA*

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to initially identify, at an exploratory level, an immigration model in Romania, with a special focus on economic immigration. It is well known that Romania, although *source country*, on our continent (Spain, Italy, Belgium, France etc.), as well as on the American (Canada, U.S.A) or the Australian one, with a negative migratory balance rate, after joining the European Union, it will become in the near future a *destination country*, especially for „economic immigrants”. The natural population deficit with which Romania is currently confronted, the labour market imbalances (the low level of participation of the current population in the productive process and the high number of Romanians working abroad) and the experience of older European Union members support the idea. As such, the analysis of social and economical risks that rising immigration will bring on the Romanian society is rather interesting and the applicative uses reside in identifying risk management solutions, in the context of formulating specific policies for immigration management.

Keywords: immigration, foreign labour force, Romania, European Union

JEL Classification: J61

Introduction

Immigration's issue is quite complex and attractive for any researcher, through all components it involves, requiring an interdisciplinary analysis, from the geographical, demographic, economic aspects of the phenomenon, up to the psychological and sociological ones etc. And, in Romania, even though, at the present moment, a source country supplier of emigrants, especially for the European countries from the West of the

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continent, being as well acknowledged as far as permanent emigrations are concerned, Germany¹ with about 3 026 Romanian citizens in average per year who have definitively changed their residence during the period 1990-2007 (NIS 2003, 2008), Italy (2 382), Austria (1 274) and France (884), Italy and Spain² becoming traditional as far as temporary emigration of the labour force goes, *immigration* started to become a reality shown in full, reflecting a demographic phenomenon which is deployed in view of at least three realities:

- the obvious tendencies towards a demographic crisis;
- the disequilibrium of the labour market;
- the quality of member of the European Union and the tendencies of economic growth.

All this are reinforced by the experience of ex-communist countries as well, countries from the East of Central Europe that have composed the first “wave” of adhesion (May 2004), among which some countries have already known the change of the migration sense, from source countries in destination countries, the examples of Czech Republic (0,97 ‰), Hungary (0,87 ‰), Slovenia (0,52 ‰), Slovakia (0,30 ‰)³, and Poland already signing in 2007 a bilateral agreement with India in order to bring foreign workers (Voicu & all, 2008. p. 9). Examples of older members of the European Union are also known, such as Spain and Italy which have passed from negative values of the migration rate to positive ones, thus currently forming receiving labour pools.

Tendencies are obvious even in Romania which has known a considerable decrease of migration rate's value, from strongly negative values in 1990 (- 4,04 ‰)⁴ to balanced values nowadays, with small oscillations around the 0 value, both in the negative and positive spectrum, in 2008 the net migration rate reaching the value of - 0,13 ‰ (Figure no. 1).

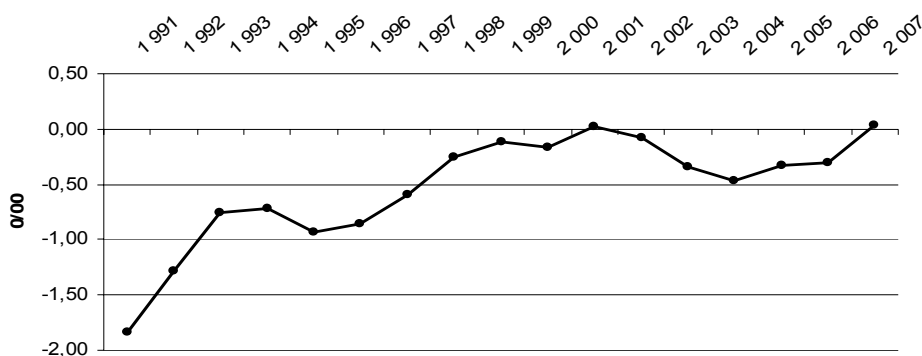


Figure no. 1: Net migration rate, Romania (1991-2007)

Source: National Institute of Statistics (Statistical Yearbook, 2003, 2008)

¹ The average refers only to Romanian ethnics, thus excepting “the exodus of German ethnics” in the years following 1990 (if in 1990 over 60 000 Romanian citizens of German ethnicity definitively left the country, in 2007 the number of this ones was only of...12). The situation of Hungarian ethnics is similar, as they have permanently emigrated from Romania, from over 11 000 to 167 during the years mentioned above, 1990, respectively 2007 (NIS, 2003, 2008).

² Outside Europe, another important labour pool for the Romanian emigrants is constituted by Anglo-Saxon North America (U.S.A with an average of 2 439 emigrants per year and Canada with 1 827).

³ According to *World Fact Book* 2009.

⁴ The Statistical Yearbook of Romania, 2008.

The general framework exposed above constitutes an excellent background in order to try a deepened scientific analysis of the immigrationist phenomenon in Romania, considering all the extremely important consequences that the new-comers have in modifying the population structure, in general, and the quantitative and qualitative modifications as far as autochthonous labour force goes, in particular, to which one can add other social, economic, cultural, effects and so on. The applicative valences of the current study can also be found when preparing a theoretical and scientific framework which along with other studies (such as those realised by the Soros Foundation from Romania: Şerban & Toth, 2007; Voicu & all, 2008; Comşa & all, 2008 etc.) legitimate, in the near future, concrete and coherent policies from the authorities when dealing with the regulation of this reality which currently surpasses the phase of tendency and puts itself across in a phenomenological and territorial reality, when referring to its manifestation.

1. Scientific Approach/Methods

The methodological aspects which endorse the realization of this exploratory study sketch at least two dimensions of the faced issues: the former – a *conceptual* one, the latter, a consequence of the first one – the *statistic* one.

In the first case, the fact that the term „immigrant” has suffered numerous mutations nowadays, must be mentioned: starting from the idea of a *permanent sitting* (or at least on a long term) in a particular space, with the change of the residence, towards the one of willing *movement/mobility* (favoured by the globalization of transports), with an incredible variety of shapes, types and subtypes.

If in the traditional sense of the concept „migration” (permanent change of residence) one may find situations such as *family reunions*, *the family formation* and *repatriations* or *return migration*, in the second sense, namely the one of mobility rather than a permanent sitting or one on a long term, there are listed, as a relatively recent tendency, *temporary labour migrants* – a cheap labour force (households, constructions, agriculture, hotel or catering services) or one highly specialized, seasonal, trans-boundary or *labour tourists* or moreover one of *petty traders* (Salt, 2001, p. 4). At this ones one can add those who study, working holidaymakers or groups who need temporary protection, refugees, those who ask for political asylum etc.

All these forms suffer a strong capacity of translation between them – a student who studies abroad can marry and take a permanent job in the country where he has finished his studies (the case of Moldavian students or of other nationality in Romania), an applicant for asylum can establish in the adoptive country (communist dissidents) and an economic immigrant can come back in the origin country in a certain circumstance (the case of Romanian workers from Spain and Italy sacked because of the economic crisis etc.).

The terminological complexity and the semantic mutations from the field of migration reflect in the *statistic gaps*, both at a quantitative and qualitative level: inappropriate methods of collecting data in comparison to the real situation, unharmonized aggregations and standardizations in Europe, although considerable progress has been made in this matter through the emergence of a series of comparative tables at a continental level in publications such as reports from the Council of Europe, reports SOPEMI of the OECD, data from EUROSTAT etc.

However, at a micro territorial level, as far as the case of Romania is concerned, the situation is even worse. Thus, the Yearbooks elaborated by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS), has recorded for the first time the rubric „immigrants” starting with 1991, in two phases: in the last decade of the years '90 they recorded a single category of immigrants who established their residence here – *the repatriated*, the rubric “immigrants” barely showing up in the yearbooks following the year 2000 and recording only foreigners who own a permanent residence in Romania.

The situation is much more complicated by *the illegal immigration*⁵ (persons who stay or work illegally in Romania, human trafficking etc.) phenomenon of great amplitude, that alter the accuracy of data. For example, Chinese immigrants, according to data recorded statistically at the National Institute, are limited to no more than several thousand persons, their number being in fact of several tens of thousands. All these because NIS only records the permanent changes of residence, this involving only the immigrants who have a permanent residence in Romania.

In this respect, data has been harmonized with the one of Ministry of Administration and Interior, MAI), through the specialized structure from its subordination – Romanian Office for Immigration (created in 2007!) through the restructuration of the Authority for Foreigners and of he National Office for the Refugees) which hold an evidence of all foreigners in Romania who stay in the country for more than 120 days.

All in all, the current study consists of interpreting the data recorded directly by NIS and by MAI and the one compiled from different studies that carried out qualitative research (such as those of Soros Foundation from Romania).

2. Considerations regarding immigration to Romania in post-communist period

In order to thoroughly understand the immigrationist phenomenon in Romania, an analytical point of view as far as its dynamics in time goes is necessary and furthermore as far as socio-economical, cultural and politic contexts specific to each level are concerned.

The collapse of the communist system meant:

- on one hand the “*liberalization*” of migration, a natural consequence of the exacerbated control of the migrational process before 1990, when emigration was resumed to “*fleeing from the country*” (the demand of politic asylum abroad) with considerable risks for the ones who were caught (severe punishment, including the capital one, the pursuit of the family remained in the country and reprisals over it), or to “population transfers” under strict inter-governmental agreement (the '80s), regarding the representatives of certain ethnical minorities (Germans, Jewish, Hungarians) or the dispatch of a small number of workers in a preferential regime (countries with which the regime from Bucharest used to develop certain political and economic relationships), under a rigorous control of

⁵ The debates focused on the terminology centered on this type of migration sketches a series of expressions very closed as a sense, considering the organism or the institution that monitors the phenomenon and that accompanies this type of mobility – „illegal” (European Union, a part of the governments such as the one of UK, a part of the mass-media) „irregular” (International Labour Organisation, International Organisation for Migration, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Global Commission for International Migration), „undocumented” (NGOs), „unauthorised” (Home Office –Immigration and Passports Department from Great Britain), IPPR, 2006, p. 6.

communist authorities (programs developed in the '70s with the German Democratic Republic, countries from Africa or the Middle-East) and on the other hand:

- the emergence of some new specific institutions reglementing migration, such as Labour Force Migration Office created in 2002.

As far as immigration in Romania is concerned, it was restrained enough as a volume, during the communist regime and it used to consist almost exclusively of accepting, under strict control, youngsters from African countries (Nigeria, Sudan, Algeria, Libya and so on) and from Arabic countries (Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq) or from other countries from the Persian Gulf (Iran) to study in Romanian public universities (being recognized in the collective memory as “the foreign students from Medicine”⁶), for whom they constituted an important source of income or of accepting a restrained number of persons within “exchange programs for workers”.

At the beginning of the '90s, with the passing to the market economy, the change of the political regime and the bailment of freedom of movement of the population through the new Constitution, the second component of migration in Romania individualises and develops, namely, the immigration which taking into account its characteristics, chronologically records at least three major phases (Figure no. 2):

- repatriations and “business” immigration (small investors)
- transit immigration
- immigration of cheap labour force.

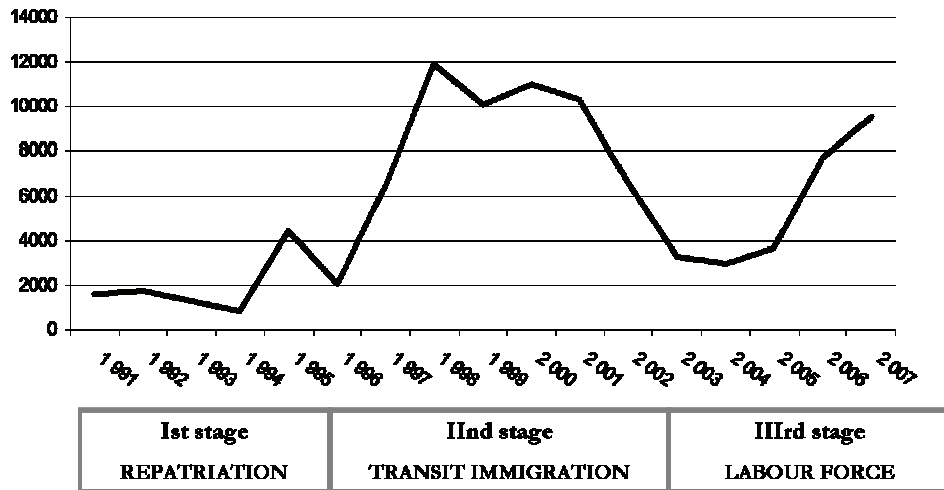


Figure no. 2: Net immigration rate, Romania (1991-2007)

Source: National Institute of Statistics (Statistical Yearbook, 2003, 2008)

⁶ In 1981, there were recorded in Romania 16 900 foreign students, representing approximatively 7-8% from the total of students (SOPEMI 1994, available at www.focus-migration.de/Romania.2515.0.html?&L=1).

Repatriations and "business immigration" (1990-1995). They represent the components that define a major phase of immigration in Romania, manifesting in the first post-communist years, starting with 1990. A part of those who have emigrated "illegally" during the communist regime, are coming back to their families, in their countries, between 1 000 and 2 000 of those who came back being of average age (26-50 years), with a considerable proportion of women in 1990 (63,7 %, in the following years the flow input of men being obvious) and what is more, being recorded annually. This characteristic is individualized by the origin countries of those who come, as there are economically developed countries such as Germany (a quarter of the immigrants flow from that period deriving from here), Austria or France. For example, from the total of those came in 1994, the most emanated from Germany (228 persons), Austria (121 persons), USA (80 persons), France (79 persons), the Republic of Moldova (62 persons), Hungary (60 persons) and Israel, 31 persons (Constantin, 2004, p. 65).

Besides these ones, at the beginning of the transition period, there was recorded a small number of immigrants coming to Romania in order to develop some businesses, mainly in the services (the en-gross and en-detail commerce), constructions and realties, on the background of a legislation, on one hand shortcoming and on the other hand encouraging and stimulating as far as investments were concerned. As for the origin countries, the "business" immigrants, this small investors who came to Romania at the beginning of '90s, were especially from China (commercial activities), Turkey (services and realties) and the Arabic countries – Syria, Lebanon and so on, in the last mentioned activity sectors (Lăzăroiu, 2003, p. 4), totalizing together about 25% (Figure no. 3).

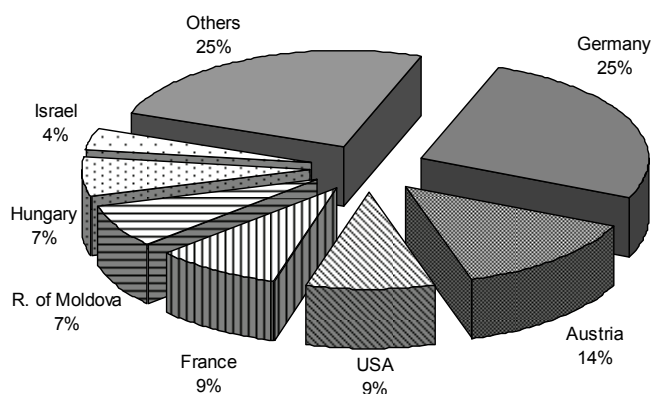


Figure no. 3: The structure of immigrants by source country, Romania (1994)

Source: National Institute of Statistics (Statistical Yearbook, 2003, 2008)

Transit immigration (1996-2002). Starting with 1996, year which marks both the change of political power at Bucharest and the coming at government of a centre-right coalition (the anterior one had been of left), in the plan of immigration a sudden growth of values towards anterior period is recorded, the number of those who came to Romania augmenting from about 2 000 to 10 000-12 000 persons per year and over, the biggest part (approximately 75%) deriving especially from the Republic of Moldova (Figure no. 4) in comparison to 7 % during the period 1991-1996.

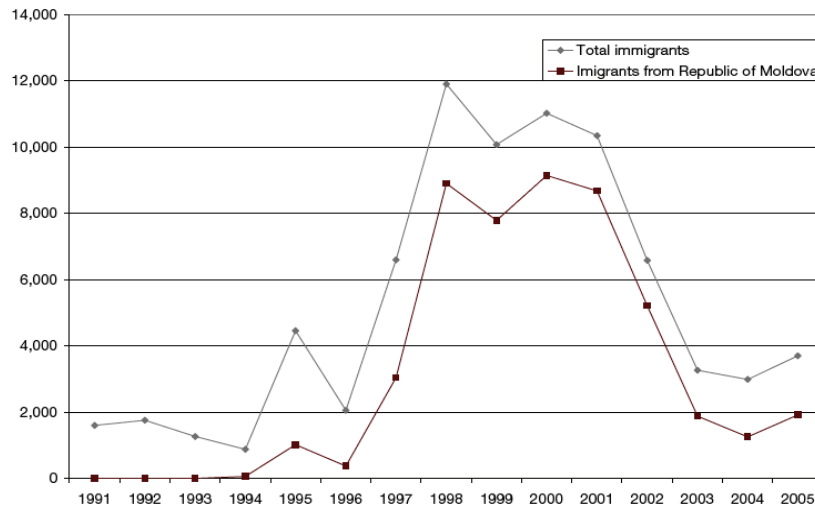


Figure no. 4: The ratio between immigrants of R. of Moldova and total (1991-2005)

Source: Hamburgisches WeltWirtschafts Institut, 2007, p. 4

As for the immigrants from the countries situated in the Central and Western Europe, the weight of this ones starts to diminish after 1996, reaching medium values (calculated in the interval 1997-2002) of 3,8 % in the case of those who came from Germany, 2 % (Austria), 2,5 % (Hungary), 1,5 % (France)⁷, while the weight of those who came from USA has decreased to 2,6 % in the interval above-mentioned and of the ones from Israel to 1,3 %.

The big weight as a total and the historical particularities confer to immigration from the Republic of Moldova a special status, namely: the nowadays territory of the Republic has entered in the component part of Romania in various historical periods, being lost after the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact (1939) and the citizens of the republic of Moldova (Romanian ethnicity weighing the most) speak the same language as Romanians, respectively Romanian language, fact for which those who migrate at West of the Prut are considered as repatriated. Moreover, the policies of (re)naturalization of the Moldavian citizens from the Republic⁸ have massively contributed to a flow of over 8 000 persons per year recorded as immigrants from the Republic of Moldova, during the period 1997-2001. However, a small part of these permanently remain in Romania, mostly being in transit towards the West of Europe. Therefore, a particular situation: Moldavian immigrants are on one hand *repatriated* (the historical background) and on the other hand they constitute themselves in *transit immigrants* (the economic background). For example, in 2002, at the end of the

⁷ For the time interval 1998-2002, the year 1997 being the last one when the weight of those who came back to Romania has recorded a big value, namely 14,3 % (according to NIS data).

⁸ According to Romanian legislation (The law regarding Romanian citizenship from March,1991), the citizens from the Republic of Moldova individualize through a special status, being allowed to ask for Romanian citizenship, even though they hold at the present moment another citizenship and they do not live on the territory of Romania, considering the fact that they are descendents of Romanian ethnics from territories that used to belong to Romania – *non-resident dual citizens* (Iordachi, 2009, p. 13), in spite of the fact that the legislation from the Republic of Moldova recognized the double citizenship of the Moldavian citizens only since 2002 (Gâsca, 2009, pp. 3-4).

analyzed period, out of the total of Moldavian citizens recorded on the territory of Romania, slightly more than a half (59%) had come for more than one year, for 31% the span of the staying being of less than a year and for 10% even less than three months, the transit tendency being obvious in comparison to the span of staying of Chinese and Syrian immigrants (97% more than a year), Greeks (93 %), Turkish (91 %) ⁹, for whom Romania used to be a destination country, developing in it different businesses in services (commerce, alimentation) and realties.

The status of EU member of Romania (1st of January 2007) and the introduction of compulsory visas for the citizens from the Republic of Moldova have had as an effect the growth of requests of Romanian citizenship from 200 000 in 2002, to 500 000 in 2006 (the pre-adhesion year), to 80 000 – 1,5 million (according to some forecasts) after the adhesion of the 1st of January 2007, out of a total of 3,8 million, figure that represents the population of the Republic of Moldova (Gâsca, 2009, p. 13).

As far as the age structure of the immigrationist flow is concerned in the „Moldavian stage” (1996-2002), one can notice the big weight of youngsters aged under 25, over 30 %, the biggest part coming to studies in Romania (only the capital city Bucharest, famous academic centre, concentrating over 40% from the total of immigrants; the second region is the one of North-East, the attraction pole being the first and the oldest academic centre of the country, the city of Iași, at the same time the main polarizing city from the region) and being unwilling to come back in the Republic of Moldova after having completed their studies. The situation is also confirmed by the Ministry of Interior (an adaptation after Zaman & Sandu, 2004, p. 16, table 12), for the same period, pupils and students representing 30 % out of the total of immigrants, with whom, with small weights another professional categories were marked out: specialists for technical assistance in different domains (7,5 %), humanitarian personnel (4,3 %), professors and trainers (0,9 %); this shy beginning of export of highly qualified personnel towards Romania, temporary or permanent, such as the mentioned authors disclose, was mostly due to foreign direct investments and to the development of the business environment, also to the breakthrough of the multinationals on the Romanian market or to the growth of the consultancy services sector .

Immigration of the cheap labour force (2002-present). After 2002, the flow of immigrants records a temporary decrease from over 10 000 comers annually during the period 1998-2001, 3 000 (in the interval 2003-2005), growing afterwards up to approximately 10 000 (2007).

Furthermore, important mutations are registered even in the flow structure, depending on the origin country. Thus, even though, those from the Republic of Moldova remain predominant as far as the number of persons coming annually in Romania is concerned, their weight in the total records a negative dynamics, from almost 80 % in 2002 to less than a half, respectively 42 % in 2007. Big growths as weight register instead the Italians (their percentage growing, namely from 1,4 % in 2002 to 8,8 % in 2007), North-Americans (USA and Canada), from 5,4 % to 7,7 % and the immigrants from the countries in the Near and the Middle East, such as Turkish (from 0,5 % to 5,5 %), Syrians (from 0,2 % to 2,4 %), Lebanese (from no settle of residence in the territory of Romania in 2002 to 1,7 %), Iranians and Iraqi (to 1,5 %, respectively 1,3 % in 2007) at which one can add Chinese with

⁹ According to NIS data

weights between 4 % and 5 % in 2007, the weight of the new-comers, with a steady residence in Romania, in 2002 being zero¹⁰.

Overall, in 2007, the year of Romania's adhesion to the European Union, the first origin countries of immigrants in Romania were the Republic of Moldova (11 800 persons), Turkey (6 300), China (4 300)¹¹, this configuration being kept in the following years, as well.

By comparison, at the same time, (the year of adhesion), even though immigration remains dominant as far as the mobility of labour force is concerned, 68 000 persons emigrating from Romania with temporary labour contracts (53 000 through Labour Force Migration Office and 15 000 through private agencies¹²), the number of foreigners entering the country, having the right to stay in Romania, stood at 54 000, meaning only 0,2% from the total population (SOPEMI, 2008, p. 274), a weight which has been kept up until nowadays.

According to the Authority for Foreigners, from the requests for long-stay visa in the territory of Romania, given in the same reference moment, 27,5 % were to work, 24,7 % for family reunions (out of which more than a half were mixed marriages, 19,5 % for studies, 10,6 % for commercial actions, at which one can add humanitarian or religious actions or other purposes. Depending on the origin country and on the goal of the staying, the situation can be shaped as follows: over 42 % from those from the Republic of Moldova had as a purpose academic and post-academic studies, more than a half of the Chinese and Italians used to deploy commercial activities, over 40% of Syrian, a third of the Lebanese and more than 20% of Turkish and Ukrainians were for family reunions (MAI, 2007, p. 30-31, 39).

As far as the sector of activity in which allochthonous labour force is engaged goes, in 2006, out of the total of those who obtained work permits in Romania or who renewed them, about 28% were busy in the production of goods, a similar weight in commerce, 20% in the sector of services and only 7% in constructions (domain from which the greatest part of Romanian workers have emigrated abroad and who has known a real „boom”, the local labour force in this domain knowing a serious deficit in this respect).

As such, in the analyzed period (2002-present), two tendencies are recorded:

- the growth of the weight of great North-American investors, which differentiate from the American citizens of Romanian origin who came back home at the beginning of the '90s, encouraged both by the pro-American line of the Romanian external policy and by the fact that Romania constituted a permanent pole of security at North of Balkans, a member of NATO, with American military bases at the Black Sea; in the same line, but with another motivational substrate, are the Italians who developed important businesses in Romania, especially in the big cities from the West of the country: Timișoara, Arad, Oradea, at which one can add the capital city, on a succession of territorial mobility that has become traditional between Romania and Italy. In most of the cases, there is all about

¹⁰ *Idem*

¹¹ The difference (quite big) between the values recorded by NIS and data that show up in other reports of diverse institutions (the Ministry of Interior, OECD etc.) is given by the methodological differences of registration.

¹² According to entrance data in Spain and Italy, over 300 000 work permits were recorded for Romanians in each country.

mixed Romanian-Italian marriages: the female population from Romania emigrated in Italy after 1990, initially as a cheap labour force in the domain of domestic services (households etc.), have formed mixed families and afterwards they came back and invested in Romania in different domains.

- the emergence of cheap labour force which no longer conveys in transit towards the West of the continent, but on the contrary, stays here, Romania thus becoming a *destination country*, a similar situation being recorded in some of the ten countries which have entered the European Union at the 1st of May 2004.

Out of the immigrants who have the right of permanent staying on the territory of Romania, the most come from China, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, Iran.

3. “Pull” and “push” factors

The main motivations that determine the immigrants to come to Romania are not at all particular, on the contrary, they subscribe in the ones known and studied already with the passing of time.

Thus, we will briefly present a part of the factors that generated the motivation of becoming an immigrant in Romania:

- *The economic factor*

Is the most encountered among the such-called “pull-factors”, manifesting mainly during the last years, especially after Romania’s adhesion to the European Union.

One can notice especially the case of the immigrants from Asian countries (Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, China etc.) and from African countries, as well (Tunis, Nigeria, Libya etc.), who do not foresee any opportunities of finding a workplace or of beginning a business in the origin countries. Furthermore, this motivation is supported by the bigger wage level from Romania (yet lower in comparison to the average of the EU, but still bigger than the one in the origin countries), in the case of transit migration, “the EU mirage” really working.

The explosion of services and of commercial activities after 1990 has enhanced the economic attractiveness of Romania, even though the labour market in the production of different goods has stagnated or decreased.

Initially, the economic immigration had an individual character, afterwards being developed informal networks meant to support the coming of other foreign workers. Most of these immigrants are also counting on the experience acquired in other countries in which they worked temporarily, such as several studies revealed (Voicu & all, 2008, p. 33).

Nevertheless, a particular situation is constituted by those who *come back to Romania after they have finished their studies*. When completing their studies in Romanian universities, they return to their native country and afterwards, given the experience and knowledge achieved here, they come back to work.

- *The social factor*

Family reunions could be considered as a second powerful motivation in the decision of emigrating to Romania. Even though, during the first years following the collapse of the

communist regime, one used to talk about the *dissidents' returning home*, nowadays, various categories are shaded: the situation of *mixed marriages* (there were remembered in this study the Romanian-Italian marriages) or the one of *the second generation*: youngsters whose parents studied or worked in Romania and who, in their turn, left their origin country.

Education (the effectuation of studies or the specialization in a certain domain) constitutes another “pull-factor” for the immigrants and in this purpose one can identify at least three situations: *the African and Arabian students who study Medicine* (due to bilateral agreements closed by the communist regime with the Third World countries at the half of the '70s through which their diplomas were recognized by the origin country), the *students and master students after the '90s*, Africans and Arabian, but also from the proximity countries (Ukraine, Bulgaria) and the *Moldavian students and master students* (bilateral agreement up until 2002 and afterwards unilateral, at the initiative of Romania which grants a big number of scholarships for youngsters from the Republic of Moldova, willing to study in Romania; at the admission exams at Romanian universities they candidate on separate places, especially for them).

- *The cultural factor*

The cultural familiarity could be identified as an attraction factor, in this situation being those who come from the Republic of Moldova or those who are representatives of the Romanian ethnicity in the neighbouring countries—Ukraine, Bulgaria. Knowing Romanian language is a great advantage besides ethnical belonging or the home nearness, when talking about trans-boundary migration.

- *The political factor*

Romania is a destination country for the *political refugees*, in 15 years following the collapse of the communist regime (1991-2006) being recorded 15 605 requests of asylum, the most coming from Iraq, Somalia, China, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Georgia (MAI, 2007, p. 51).

- *The legislative factor*

Has initially functioned as a “pull-factor”, *the facility of obtaining touristic visas* hiding many times in the statistical recordings the illegal immigration, and the fiscal facilities together with *the permissiveness generated by the law of foreign investments* in Romania in the first years after 1990 were considered as being attractiveness elements.

However, the adhesion to the EU has lead to the translation of the legislative factor towards a “push factor”, the quality of EU member bringing more strict measures of control as far as immigration outside European Community goes.

As for the *rejection elements* in the idea of emigrating to Romania, the study of Soros Foundation (Voicu & all, 2008, pp. 38-41) identified, among others:

- *the legalization of the status*. The granting of the right to stay in Romania, no matter the reason (work, study, asylum) supposes difficult procedures, a documentation in Romanian (a barrier for the immigrant), a bureaucratic complexity, the clerk's attitude, corruption etc.

- *the interaction with the labour market*. Most of the times this interaction involves abuses from the employers who speculate the linguistic deficiencies of the immigrant and

who are tempted to elude a great deal of the rights provided in the labour laws (traps regarding the contract terms, the extra work, the remuneration etc.)

- *discrimination*. It is a general situation which accompanies an immigrant in the adoptive society. Even though it is well regulated through legislation, it is however manifested probably because of a tacit acceptance of local labour protection.

4. The immigration to Romania and local labour force market

In the latest years, the debates regarding the policy in the domain of (im)migration (Salt, 2001, p. 2) focus around three aspects:

- *the substitution (im)migration* in order to face the decline and the demographic aging;
- *the (im)migration in the spirit of global market*, seen as an engine of the economic growth, case in which the human allochthonous resource, through its specialization, is perceived as a national resource for which countries are competing;
- *(im)migration as a solution of solving specialization crisis on the labour market* (temporary or not) and that leads to the stagnation or the decrease of the economic growth.

After 1990, all three contexts are also applied to Romania which together with other European countries (Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine etc.) faced a drastic reduction of population both because of natural aspects (demographic decline because of the natural deficit of population) and also because of emigration (Figure no. 5).

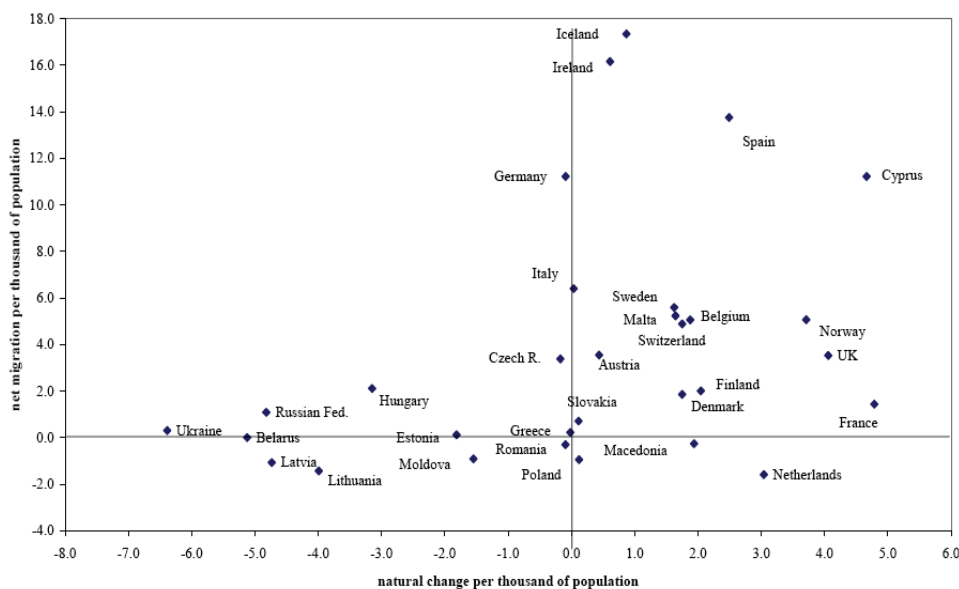


Figure no. 5: The effect of international migration correlated with natural dynamics of population (2006)

Source: Eurostat (Coleman, 2008)

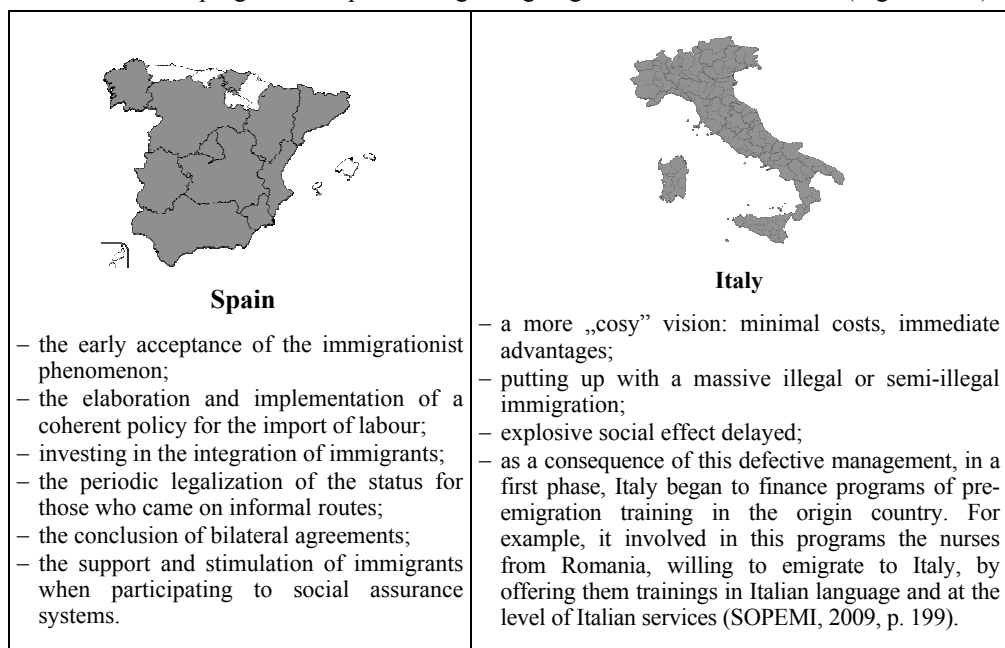
Ever since 1990 up until present, Romania has lost more than 2 million inhabitants (about 10% of the total population), out of whom 29 % were because of the decreasing values of the natural spore, 20 % due to the known and recorded emigration, 51% to unrecorded emigration, though estimated (Ghețău, 2008, p. 5). A third of the active labour force works abroad and the condition of competitor on the EU market, that is a sustainable development of the national economy, must firstly lead to solving the disequilibria existent on the labour force market.

A possible solution and relatively rapid (in comparison to the pro-natal policies whose effects are noticed after many years), but which involve a series of risks is *immigration*.

Immigration is a quite complex phenomenon, through all the dimensions that the coming of a foreigner in an adoptive society involve (cultural, social, demographic, economic, political, psychological etc.) and as such a good management of the problem is difficult even in countries with a rich experience in this matter.

Generally, *migration*, in spite of programs and regulation policies is, however, a *phenomenon which manifests independently*: it takes place in optimal economic conditions, despite the fact that a coherent policy of immigrants' attraction is settled or not and usually the restrictive measures stimulate the illegal migration. A problematic management will only generate major disequilibria in that society and they manifest mostly the moment in which the destination country postpones the recognition or the acceptance of the fact that the immigrationist phenomenon exists on its territory.

The case of Italy and to a certain extent, the one of Spain, illustrate thoroughly this aspect- the “boom” of Romanian immigrants and of another citizens from the last years generating a late inertia of the programs and policies regarding migration in those countries (Figure no. 6).



**Figure no. 6: The management of Romanian migration.
Comparative analysis Spain-Italy**

It is also well known the experience of other older members of the EU (Portugal, Ireland, Greece) which from source countries for the states situated on the North-Central half of the Union have become destination countries, nowadays, a shy tendency being sketched even for the ex-communist countries (Slovenia, Hungary).

Romania is situated on the „Balkan route” of the illegal migration and its status of EU member and at the same time of „access gate” on this gangway will transform it, in the near future, from a *mainly transit country in a destination one* for the economic immigrants in the East of the continent, Near and Middle East and in the South of Asia.

In the spirit of these European experiences, one of the studies of Soros Foundation from Romania (Şerban & Toth, 2007, pp. 32-34), illustrates the fact that from a sample of 600 firms from three domains strongly affected by a genuine crisis of labour force—constructions, textile industry and hotel services, the employers still manifest a reduced interest as far as the intention of attracting immigrants is concerned – immigrants who should work in the mentioned domains, in a proportion of 7% in the case of allochthonous labour force and 13% in the case of Romanians who work abroad and are “repatriated”¹³, declaring that they have never considered this aspect in 2008, those undecided representing 9%, respectively 11%.

The authors of the study explain this reduced weights in terms of the labour deficit with which employers from the above-mentioned economic branches confront, through at least two reasons: legal migration is quite expensive for the employer and Romania’s status of “EU entrance gate” supposes a particular control of immigration, in the spirit of European policies; not even a “reflex of thinking” is omitted considering the fact that during many years Romania was a source country that has faced with the emigration of the labour force.

What also proves to be interesting is the potential pool of adoption of the economic immigrants that the study reveals, two situation being emphasized: the Romanian employers would need highly qualified specialists from the EU’s countries such as Germany, Italy, Spain or Asian countries (Japan) and cheaper labour force from proximity, possibly in a trans-boundary regime (Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine), but also from distant countries such as Turkey, India, China, Pakistan, Thailand or Mexico.

Another study of the above-mentioned foundation (Voicu & all, 2008, pp. 17-19) which synthesises the position of employers and of trade unions as far as the importation of labour force from abroad is concerned (through a sample that contained four employers associations and five trade unions), identifies at least three dimensions of solving this deficit of labour force on the Romanian market: *the importation of foreign labour from the outside* (even though the study realised a year before revealed a quite reduced intention of employers from constructions, textile and hotel industry to consider this idea, at least in 2008), *the return migration* (the scepticism being quite big, as well) and *the retraining, particularly in agriculture* where more than a third of active labour force is settled (a quite big value in comparison to the average of the EU). The last one was preferred by both the employers and trade unions in spite of several constraints: the administration’s reduced

¹³ To this end the authorities have carried out veritable media campaigns in the destination countries, but without success; but the 2008 financial crisis generated, to a certain degree, “return migration”.

capacity of applying for projects financed through European funds as far as human resource is concerned and the large interval of implementation.

Analyzing the natural and migrating deficit of Romania in comparison to the necessity of economic development in the EU some visible distortions individualise on the labour force local market:

- the need of replacing the emigrated labour force: with workers from the “black market” or with immigrants, especially outside the European Union, who are attracted by bigger wages comparatively with those received in the origin country but also by the “EU mirage”, Romania also being an entrance gate on the EU’s territory.

- inconsistency between some major infrastructure projects with entrepreneurs from Spain, Portugal which seemed to be impressive during the years 2006-2007 (the years of “boom” for the domain of constructions in Romania), counting on the cheap local labour force. However, because of the severe shortage of the workforce, Romanian manufacturers used to work (destiny’s irony?), among others even in Spain (Silași and Simina, 2007, pp. 189-190); this fact induces the same tendency of orientation towards foreign workers outside the community. Nevertheless, starting with 2008, constructions’ stagnation produced “naturally”, through the manifestation of the financial crisis that affected almost the entire Northern Hemisphere.

- on the long term, certain projections show that in 2022 the weight of immigrants in the local labour force will grow only with 1,8% in comparison to 2002 (9,8% in 2052), the most reduced growth comparatively with other EU members (Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Slovak Republic with weights of 2-3%, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Hungary with 6-7%), the average in EU-27 being of 7% (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2005, p. 27, Table 4).

Conclusions

The analysis of migration in Romania, a phenomenon that has manifested mostly after the collapse of the communist system (also the first year in which statistic recordings of those immigrated in Romania show up, with a total change of residence being in 1991), has lead to the following conclusions:

- *immigration in Romania respects the patterns of the one with each older members of the European Union have initially confronted at the adhesion moment;*

Even though the period in which the phenomenon of immigration has been recorded is short, the emigrational model seems to be the same: the predominance of the *economic immigration* (the other forms: post-academic studies, family reunions, solicitants of political asylum) subscribing to it. As long as the „EU mirage” will be deployed, Romania, taking a look at the experience of other countries, but also due to the effectuated analysis, *shall transform from a source country into a destination one for the labour force migration* (in a legal, semi-legal or illegal regime).

Among the particularities regarding immigration in Romania there are inscribed: the status of immigrants from the Republic of Moldova and the case of Romanian citizenship together with the return migration.

- *the emigrational phenomenon is rather an independent manifestation;*

The territorial mobility of population, as a long term process, acts rather as a thermodynamic system, individualizing an equilibrium between the two conditions, forces: one of attraction, one of rejection, generically called “push” and “pull factors”, no matter if there are some prohibitive measures that stimulate rather the illegal immigration.

- *at least three realities which manifest nowadays indicate the fact that Romania will be faced in the near future with a demographic crisis, with strong distortions on the labour force market;*

These are:

- the natural deficit of population that followed the „normalization” of birth rate (a consequence of the strict legislation regarding the ban of abortion from the communist period) and the disequilibrium which will appear between the generation of the '70s (retired) and the generations after 1991, much more reduced (the active population) in a quite near future.

- the economic emigration in the post-communist period has lead to disequilibria on the local market of labour force, approximately 1,5 million inhabitants emigrating (a third of the active population), certain sectors confronting with serious deficits in this sense (for example, constructions). This situation at which it is also added

- the quality of European Union member and the tendencies of economic growth, will lead sooner or later *to earnestly consider the solutions of importing labour force.*

- *the translation of immigration from the transit immigration to the permanent one;*

There is noticed the growth of long-term staying in detriment of those on short term, in the last years.

- *immigration in Romania still has an individual character;*

The migration networks are in an incipient phase of development, being based on the first immigrants who bring their friends, families. Much more developed are the webs whose activity object is constituted by human trafficking.

- *Romania must elaborate clear policies regarding immigration.*

The gaps generated by the lack of programs and policies in the domain of immigration generate certain problems in the interaction with the labour market from Romania, at which one can add the cultural context, to a certain extent the tolerant attitude generally shown to foreigners by the Romanian society as a whole, making up for it.

What is more, assuming the role of Eastern frontier of the European Union will generate a restrictive framework as far as the attitude goes when dealing with the granting of visas of staying and generally a stricter control of illegal migration, in parallel with the development of a complex management system of this phenomenon (institutions, programs and policies).

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