

DIMENSIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF IMMIGRATION IN ROMANIA

ALINA FLEȘER *

ABSTRACT: *Nowadays, under the strong impact of demographic, technological, social, economic, political, cultural, educative and religious factors, deepening economic, social and political disparities among groups of countries and regions, it generates and puts in the foreground a series of new features of migration processes as compared to previous periods, at the same time, causing transformations of migratory processes, such as the typology, volume, structure, intensity of flows, the costs and benefits. In this context, the present paper aims to highlight the main characteristics of the immigration flow from Romania.*

KEY WORDS: *labor market; labor migration; emigration; immigration; mobility.*

JEL CLASSIFICATIONS: *E24; J08; J61.*

1. THE HYPOTHESIS

During the present period, characterized by multiple economic and social convulsions, the movement of citizens and labor (the migration) registers increased flows and, often, changes of direction and intensity. Thus, labor migration is a multidimensional, multi-motivational and complex process which generates challenges, costs and benefits that must be managed properly on a social, community and individual level.

For the European area, including Romania, the movement of people and labor is of particular importance. The enlargement of the European Union in successive waves, the demographic ageing, in particular of the Western countries, together with the aging of the population from central and Eastern European countries, current and future EU members, the various motivations, especially the economic ones are potential strong incentives for the increased movement of people and labor, including for the change at the level of a country of the relationship between immigration and

* Lecturer, Ph.D., University of Petroșani, Romania, alina_flesher@yahoo.com

emigration (for long-term, there is a tendency to change the migration status of a country/region etc. from an emigration area into an immigration region).

In this context, it is necessary to emphasize that the mobility/circulation of people and especially of the workforce may influence differently - obviously depending on concrete conditions - the quality of the human capital of the country/region of origin and of destination, respectively. In fact, we are witnessing a process of internal and international reallocation of human capital of high competence, even in favor of those countries, regions etc. which offer the most advantageous conditions (economic, technological, educational and formative, etc.).

At the same time, we must keep in mind that, although important migration flows are recorded in a relatively small number of states, no country in the world does remain outside the domestic and international migration flows, be it either a country of emigration, or a country of transit or immigration, or holding all three attributes at the same time.

At the same time, because of the effects of the impact of training in terms of human capital, migration becomes an indicator of sustainable development. The internationalization and globalization of markets triggers new migratory behaviors, an increased fluidity of territorial movements; temporary migration phenomena for education and/or work tend to become more and more important. Population movements between countries and particularly the temporary ones confer an unprecedented dynamic to the changes, money transfers and competence, to the convergence of human development, provided that the benefits of these processes, in their turn, should be 'globalized' for all the parties involved. On the one hand, there is a behavioral and intercultural transfer, an approximation of the ideals of work and life, an increase in mobility and adaptability, flexibility in making autonomous decisions, in promoting new types of actions, adopting new attitudes and behaviors. On the other hand, migration flows require changes in economic and social policies promoted by both the immigration areas, and by the emigration ones.

Considering the above, and taking into account the fact that, in general, Romania is a country where, in the recent years, emigration has been very striking, I considered it appropriate to evaluate the size of the immigration phenomenon.

2. GENERAL TRENDS OF MIGRATION IN ROMANIA

Romania can be classified within the concept of the "new migration" developed by Koser and Lutz in 1998. "New migration" is defined as having origins in 1989 after the Cold War had ended and the Communist regimes in Europe had been dissolved. The "new migration" is characterized by several changes that had occurred in Europe: an increase in the number of immigrants - a number that exceeded all the migration waves in Europe from World War II; a change in terms of the types of immigrants (qualified people - compared to the workers who came in Europe as foreign workers - the "guest worker policies" included mainly low-skilled laborers; clandestine immigrants; applicants for asylum and refugees from conflict regions in the world); another feature of the "new migration" is the short term or circular migration or the transit (this can be seen especially in the Central and Eastern European countries,

countries which are found on the immigrants' route to Western Europe); another representative characteristic of the "new migration" is turning the countries of emigration into immigration countries or into destinations for immigrants; the difference between the two features is often blurred. Romania can also be classified into the "new migration" because after 1989 it became both a country of emigration and a country of immigration as well. After the opening of the borders in 1990, short-term migration or circular migration became one of the sources of income for the Romanians. It is estimated that about three million people are employed in this circular/short-term migration or the transnational movement between Romania and a Western country where they can find a job. [1]

In recent years, although Romania has kept to a large extent, its character of country of transit, it started to become more and more a country of destination.

Thus, at the end of 2009, in Romania there were 59.062 foreigners from foreign countries with legal residence, representing 4% more than at the end of 2008 and 76,2% more than in 2005. Out of the total of 59.062 registered foreigners with legal residence in late 2009, 49.406 people had a right for temporary stay (84%) and 9.656 (16%) had a permanent right of residence, in accordance with the aims laid down by the legislation in force. [2]

The early 2011, similar to the reference period of the last decade, reveals the same reality in terms of the dynamics of migration flows from and to Romania. Thus, Romania maintains its characteristic of country of emigration and becomes, in addition to the characteristic of country of transit, a country of destination more attractive to immigrants. According to Eurostat forecast, during the period 2008-2060, Romania will have recorded a net immigration rate of at least 18.4 per one thousand inhabitants (1.84%).

The information provided by the Romanian emigration phenomenon is extremely important for understanding immigration in Romania, whether we are talking about the manifestation of immigration at a certain time or about immigration as a trend, and for the way in which the Romanian authorities will address the management of immigration and the integration of foreigners.

The consequences, as a result of migration of Romanians, may take the form of social costs that put pressure on the state budget, causing labor shortages in certain sectors within the local labor market, which can get more serious in times of economic growth. In this context, immigration and bringing in workers from foreign countries has been a quick and handy turnaround for Romania for solving national labor market pressures.

As regards the main purposes for which foreigners have established temporary residence in Romania these are related to the family union (family reunification, family members of Romanian citizens, the EU or the European Economic area), the education (students), the employment. Another category of migrants that should be taken into account is that of asylum seekers and those who have obtained some form of protection on Romanian territory.

This trend is directly influenced by Romania's economic situation and by the implementation of European rules which stipulate that the State in which the asylum

seeker enters or seeks protection for the first time is responsible for dealing with the application.

At the same time, we must have in mind that the migration of Romanians for employment, whether it is called emigration or labor mobility within the community after 2007 when Romania had become a Member State of the European Union, is already a mass phenomenon affecting all aspects of the Romanian life and society, and immigration, respectively.

In the year 2010, the number of Romanian migrants leaving for work abroad was estimated at about 3 million people; Spain and Italy were targeted by most Romanians who left across the border. The Romanian migration is defined by moving abroad for work, while most migrants are included in the category of active population, women and men alike.

There is a close correlation between the characteristics of Romanian migration, i.e. the Romanian migrant profile who works across borders and the immigration for the purpose of employment in Romania, namely the foreign worker's profile whom we may find within the national labor market sectors.

At present, even if Romanians never cease to migrate for work, the number of departures decreases. Changes refer to the typology of the Romanian migrant and migration. The ones who migrate are skilled specialists from the following fields of activity: health, education, technical, IT, migration being designed rather as a long-term project, having a character that tends toward being permanent. These issues are reflected in the percentage increase of concentrations of Romanian migrants in destination countries such as United Kingdom, France, Nordic countries and non-EU destinations: Canada, USA.

We believe that these developments of Romanian migration have the ability to produce interesting effects with regard to the trends of immigration flows for employment purposes towards Romania.

In the future, Romania could fill in the lack of Romanian specialists in the sectors mentioned above using a policy of attracting and encouraging the establishment, in our country of highly skilled immigrants from foreign countries.

Analyzing the current national context, Romania has to face the following challenges in the field of migration:

- Romania's accession to the EU and, consequently, obtaining the right to free movement and residence of Romanian citizens, has caused a migration of local skilled or unskilled labor towards the markets of other Member States, a fact that has led to the emergence of deficits in some areas of activity;

- opening, more than ever, the labor market in 2008 for workers with low and medium training, and prolonging the world economic crisis which began in early 2009 forces many of the foreigners admitted on Romanian territory for employment to lose their jobs and try to leave the national territory to other labor markets;

- using the Romanian territory as a transit area for illegal migration to EU countries by the citizens of Eastern Europe and the Middle East; this phenomenon is emphasized by the abolition of internal borders, from the time of application of the provisions of the Schengen acquis;

- the pressure put by the migrants from countries in Southeast Asia over the borders of South, East and North-East in their attempt to enter the territory of Romania illegally with the intent to reach other countries in Western Europe;
- in the context of a Europe that grows old, Romania is experiencing this phenomenon as well as the majority of EU Member States, immigration being a part of a package of measures that can improve this situation.

3. PECULIARITIES OF THE IMMIGRATION FLOW IN ROMANIA

Immigration is a relatively new phenomenon for the Romanian society which has experienced greater development especially in the last decade, in particular during periods of economic growth (immigration for work), in the context of acquiring the status of a Member State of the European Union (family reunification and a Romanian citizen family member) and as a result of national policies in the field of education and of encouraging Romanian ethnic migrants to attend schools in Romania (immigration for the purpose of learning).

I could notice that the immigration phenomenon in Romania has two distinct phases:

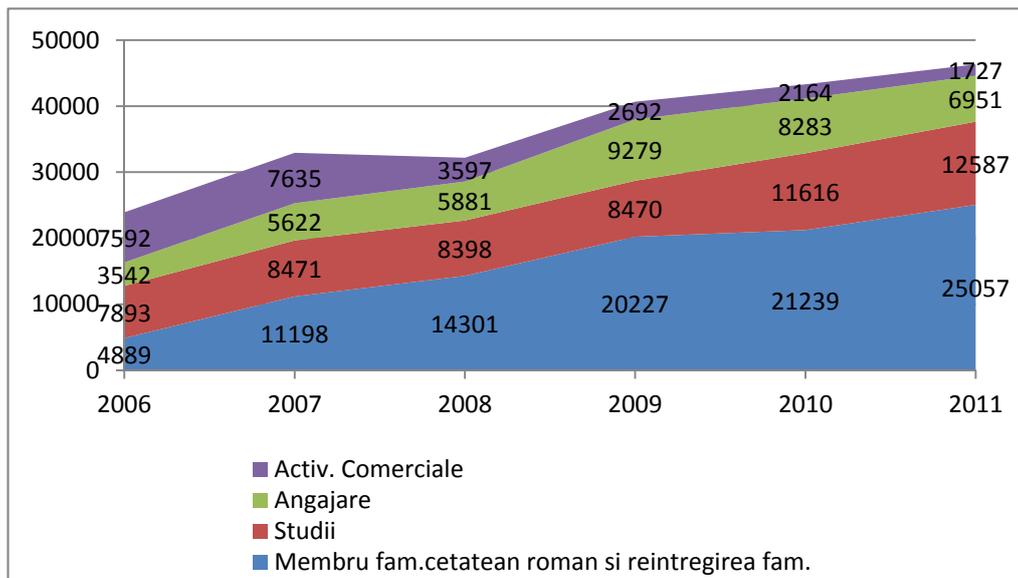
- Until 2004 the number of immigrants was relatively low, the majority of immigrants coming from Syria, Jordan, Iran, Egypt, China and Turkey. Most of the aliens, mostly men, came to Romania in order to carry out commercial activities, taking advantage of a permissive legislation and favorable foreign investments and the setting up of businesses. There were also immigrants who took courses of Romanian universities continuing a tradition manifested somewhat since the time of the Communist regime;
- In coming years, the growth in the number of immigrants, of the countries of origin and a diversification of the purpose for which immigrants are choosing Romania as a country of destination. In addition to immigrants who came to Romania to carry out various economic activities, there are specific targeted immigration flows: for work, for family reunification and for education. Thus, a relevant example of this evolution is the case of the Chinese immigrants and a similar case is that of immigrants from Turkey.

Along with the Chinese and Turkish immigrants, the immigrants from the Republic of Moldavia are one of the three main communities of foreigners in Romania. Unlike the evolution of immigration from China and Turkey, Moldavian migrants have been attracted to Romania, especially for the purpose of studies and work, and less for entrepreneurial activities. As for the Moldavian immigrants who came to Romania to find work, they were employed in the fields of activity which had registered shortage of manpower: constructions, manufacturing, trade, financial and banking services, and agriculture. Moreover, the immigrants from Moldavia have the particularity that they share the same language and culture with the Romanians, which represent the primary factors for good integration.

The year 2007 represents a turning point in terms of immigration in Romania due to the fact that it acquired the status of Member of the European Union. At that time, Romania joined the intra-Community mobility circle and the immigration policy

focuses on the immigration phenomenon of citizens from third countries, i.e. from the extra-community. At the same time, starting with this year, there comes a period with an interesting dynamics of the immigration phenomenon against the background of Romania's economic development. Thus, in direct correlation with the economic situation of Romania there was a massive increase of immigrations for the purpose of work and of the number of work permits issued to migrant workers in Romania during the economic boom (2007-2008) and a significant decline in this respect during the economic contraction and throughout the period of economic and financial crisis in 2009-2011.

However, as seen in the chart below, the phenomenon of immigration experienced a series of changes regarding the composition of migration flows caused by the alignment of the Romanian legislation to Community laws; these consequences could have been noticed since the pre-accession period. On the one hand, the increasing trends of migration of citizens from third countries who come to Romania for the purpose of family reunification or because they are family relatives of Romanian citizens, for education and, as mentioned above, in order to work and, on the other hand, the dramatic fall of the immigrants who come to our country to start a business, for commercial purposes, respectively are highly relevant in this regard.



Source: data processing Romanian Office for Immigration, the Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection

Figure 1. Evolution of the number of immigrants according to the purpose of immigration in Romania

Immigrants who have arrived in Romania through family reunification are on the one hand the life partners of foreign nationals who are already in Romania, mainly of the newcomers in the first wave of immigration for business, education or work

purposes. Most immigrants for family reunification are women from countries in the Middle East, Turkey, China or the citizens of the Republic of Moldavia. A very small percentage of the immigrants based in Romania due to a family reunification is represented by the category of relatives in the first degree, the elderly or the minor children of aliens. Records show that at national level there is a policy that encourages the coming of foreigners for education purposes, particularly of ethnic Romanians who have special places in Romanian universities. The data show that around 80% of the immigrants who study in Romania are from the Republic of Moldavia. [3]

Many of the Basarabian youngsters chose to study in Romania, and to apply for scholarships offered by the Romanian Government in order to obtain a diploma of education from an accredited educational institution in Romania. This represents for many Moldavian migrants a hope to obtain a better job and a more promising future - whatever the choice - whether to remain in Romania or to migrate to other EU countries which acknowledge their studies.

The immigrant work force reflects the profile of Romanian migrants who leave to work abroad, the growth and the decline in the number of migrant workers is directly proportional to the economic trends reflected by the demand on the labor market. Migrant workers are found in such sectors of economy as follows: constructions, transportation infrastructure and shipyards, trade and public catering services, domestic sector and child care, and other services, including hotels, restaurants, manufacturing and agriculture. They have a medium education but consistent professional experience and skill in their profession.

From the point of view of the countries of origin, most foreigners with temporary residence are from Moldavia, Turkey and China, the three countries covering almost 60% of all of the countries of origin.

The analysis of the structure by sex and age groups of legal immigrants in Romania, both for those with temporary residence and for those with permanent residence highlights that the overall balance tilts in favor of men who hold a rate of about 60% of the total of immigrants. However, as we expected, the ration of the category including people of 35-65 years of age, grows more and reaches 70% men and 30% women.

Analyzing the distribution of immigrants by age groups we may find that the immigrant population is a young population, and more active on the labor market, potentially productive and therefore it should receive all necessary conditions for successful integration. Moreover, the age structure of migrants in Romania is a prerequisite and a potential solution to the demographic problem of Romania, an aging society, with a high emigration and a low birth rate.

With regard to territorial distribution of third-country nationals with legal residence in Romania, it is apparent that they are concentrated in a ratio of 41% in the country's capital-Bucharest - or, to be more precise, in Bucharest-Ilfov region, and about 33% have chosen in relatively equal percentages (around 6%) the major conurbations in the counties of Iasi, Cluj-Napoca, Constanța, Timis, Prahova, Bihor [4].

Among the explanations concerning the degree of attraction of urban centers upon foreigners we may find the following: urban areas are the poles of economic

growth and development which requires manpower, and therefore it needs immigrant work force either skilled or unskilled; some universities are very important and therefore attract immigrants who come for education; others are located bordering areas, namely on trade and transportation routes.

At the same time, urban congestion provides greater opportunities for the integration of foreigners due to the fact that they can quickly find a job, they can open a business or their business may have greater success, they may have more opportunities to access education and training, and to create more easily their own social networks or communities. The aliens' integration is easier in large urban centers because residents are more cosmopolitans than in small towns or in rural areas where the conservative vision persists.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The determinants of migration, as well as the economic and social impact represent the subject of an increasingly rich academic literature on sustainable development, which focuses on public policy debates and beyond. Within this framework, we can find particularly the demographic factor (size and population growth, age structure, sex and socio-professional categories) that strongly influences the internal and external migration.

With regard to the phenomenon of immigration in Romania, from the analysis undertaken one can outline the following **conclusions**: immigration is a relatively new phenomenon for the Romanian society which has experienced greater development especially during the last decade, in particular during periods of economic growth; the dynamics of the intra-EU mobility from the recent years reveals an upward trend in the number of EU citizens who have legal residence on Romanian territory, a number which has increased twice and a half during the reference period, and the average rate of growth from year to year is more than 35%; records show that at national level there is a policy that encourages the coming of foreigners for the purpose of education, particularly of ethnic Romanians who have special places within Romanian universities; migrant workers, although they have a medium education, they have an appropriate professional experience and qualification for their job.

However we must not neglect the aspect according to which there are a number of analysis and qualitative research studies that confirm the presence of immigrants in the hidden economy sector and the existence in Romania of illegal immigrants.

REFERENCES:

- [1]. Hamberger, A. (2011) *Migration and Immigrant Integration Policies. The Case of Romania Since 1990*, Universitatea din Bucureşti
- [2]. *** *Strategia Naţională privind Imigraţia 2011-2014*
- [3]. *** *Program 2007-2013, Fondul European de Intergrare a Resortisanţilor Țărilor Terţe, Oficiul Român pentru Imigrări*
- [4]. *** *Oficiul Român pentru Imigrări*, <http://ori.mai.gov.ro/detalii/pagina/ro/Statistici-si-publicatii/147>