

## **SUSTAINABLE APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONAL HIRING**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study aims to analyze and correlate the theoretical frameworks and practical implementations involved in the international hiring process with a focus on sustainable development. The challenges presented by such a human resources strategy are extensive, encompassing various actions, approaches, and adaptations required to comply with individual rights and the prevailing laws of each relevant country. Identifying suitable candidates is a significant challenge necessitating sustained engagement with professional institutions and ensuring the prompt integration of new employees. The geographical origin of employees can either facilitate or hinder the operational workflow. Moreover, sustainable development considerations are integral to this process, requiring that recruitment practices promote economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. Relocating to a different country often represents the fulfillment of significant personal aspirations, underscoring the importance of effective and sensitive human resources management in these transitions. It is of utmost importance to provide insights into creating a more equitable and sustainable approach to international hiring.*

**KEY WORDS:** *human resource management, sustainable development, cultural integration, economic growth.*

**JEL CLASSIFICATIONS:** *M12, Q01, O47.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Globalization has significantly impacted the human resources sector, leading to increased international mobility among various professionals. By integrating perspectives from psychology, environment, and economics, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities associated with international recruitment and propose sustainable solutions.

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One notable example is the migration of Romanian medical doctors to France. Doctors of Romanian origin in France represent about 7% of the total number of active doctors registered with the French Order of Doctors and about 30% of all foreign-national doctors established in France (according to MEDREF association). Sustainable approaches to this international hiring process are examined here, emphasizing the importance of equitable and effective human resource management strategies that align with sustainable development goals (Tilvăr, 2017; Roșca & Vlăsceanu, 2015). The migration of medical professionals from Romania to France has been driven by various factors, including better working conditions, higher salaries, and opportunities for professional development. However, this movement has also raised concerns about the sustainability of such practices, both in terms of the source country (Romania) and the destination country (France). The disparities in healthcare workforce distribution, the legal and regulatory challenges, and the need for effective integration of foreign medical professionals are critical issues that need to be addressed (Ciornei & Mihai, 2017; Kingma, 2006).

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The correlation between sustainable development and human resource management is increasingly recognized as vital for achieving long-term organizational and societal goals. Sustainable human resource management practices integrate economic, social, and environmental dimensions, thus contributing to the broader objectives of sustainable development. According to Ehnert (2009), sustainable human resource management involves creating and maintaining a workforce that not only meets current organizational needs but also anticipates future challenges and opportunities, ensuring resilience and adaptability. Jackson, Ones, and Dilchert (2014) emphasize that sustainable human resource management practices, such as green training and development, foster environmental stewardship among employees, which aligns with global sustainability targets. Additionally, Kramar (2014) highlights that incorporating sustainability into human resource management can enhance employee well-being, engagement, and retention by promoting a healthier work-life balance and ethical workplace practices. These perspectives underscore the importance of aligning human resource management strategies with sustainable development goals to foster a more sustainable and responsible organizational culture.

Sustainable development in human resources involves adopting practices that promote long-term economic, social, and environmental well-being. According to the Brundtland Commission, sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987). In the context of international hiring, this means adopting recruitment practices that are socially inclusive, economically viable, and environmentally responsible (Jackson & Seo, 2010; Sparrow et al., 2004).

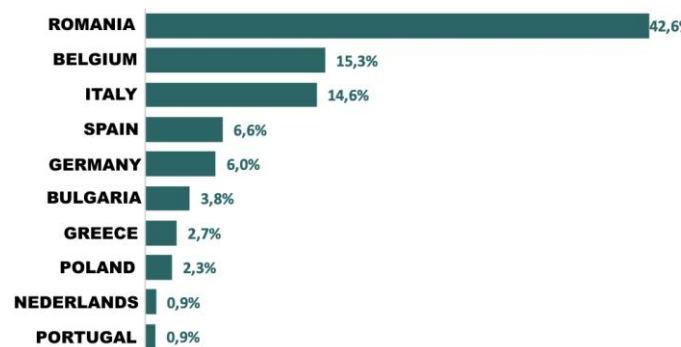
Legal frameworks play a crucial role in shaping international hiring practices. In France, laws such as the Labour Code and the Public Health Code regulate the recruitment of foreign medical professionals (Legifrance, 2021). Similarly, Romanian legislation governs the emigration of its healthcare workers, ensuring compliance with

international agreements and protecting workers' rights (Romanian Ministry of Health, 2020) (Clemens & Pettersson, 2006; Kingma & Dussault, 2008).

Psychological theories such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory can be applied to understand the motivations and challenges faced by international hires. These theories help in designing strategies that address both the basic and higher-level needs of foreign medical professionals, ensuring their satisfaction and retention in the host country (Tung, 2008; Cooke et al., 2005).

In 2023, around 5,100 regularly practicing doctors who obtained their degrees in Romania were working in France, according to the National Council of the Order of Doctors (CNOM). This represents an increase of 166.7% since 2010.

A newer trend observes French doctors that have obtained their medical degrees in Romania, reflecting the country's growing reputation for medical education within the European Union (Figure 1).



Source: CNOM <https://www.conseil-national.medecin.fr/>

**Figure 1. Top 10 countries of origin for the diplomas of active doctors with foreign diplomas obtained within the EU (excluding France) as of January 1, 2023**

### 3. CHALLENGES IN INTERNATIONAL HIRING

One of the primary challenges in international hiring is identifying candidates with the right qualifications, experience, and personal attributes. This requires collaboration with professional institutions in the source country, such as medical schools and professional associations, to ensure a steady supply of qualified candidates (Dhanaraj & Beamish, 2003; Farndale et al., 2010). The process is complicated by varying standards and practices between the two countries. Recruitment agencies play a critical role in facilitating the international hiring process. They provide valuable services such as candidate sourcing, background checks, and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Additionally, they offer support for relocation and integration, helping foreign medical professionals adapt to their new environment and succeed in their roles (Clemens & Pettersson, 2006; Kingma & Dussault, 2008).

Legal compliance is a critical aspect of international hiring. Both France and Romania have specific regulations governing the employment of foreign medical professionals. In France, foreign doctors must obtain recognition of their qualifications

from the National Council of the Order of Doctors and pass a language proficiency test (Legifrance, 2021). In Romania, healthcare workers must comply with emigration laws and international agreements that protect their rights (Romanian Ministry of Health, 2020; Ciornei & Mihai, 2017; Glinos & Buchan, 2013).

Cultural differences and language barriers pose significant challenges to the integration of Romanian doctors into the French healthcare system. These professionals must adapt to a new healthcare system, work culture, and societal norms. Additionally, proficiency in the French language is essential for effective communication with patients and colleagues. Addressing these barriers is crucial for ensuring the successful integration and performance of international hires (Tîlvăr, 2017; Stănculescu & Pădurean, 2017). Psychological adjustment is another critical challenge. Moving to a new country involves significant changes in lifestyle, social environment, and work culture, which can impact the mental health and well-being of medical professionals. Providing adequate psychological support and creating a welcoming environment are essential for helping them adjust and thrive in their new roles (Ahonen et al., 2009; Czaika & Vothknecht, 2012).

Maslow's theory explains that individuals have hierarchical needs, starting from basic physiological needs to higher-order needs such as self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). For Romanian doctors relocating to France, their initial focus may be on securing employment and stable living conditions. As they integrate into their new environment, they might seek to fulfill social needs through relationships, achieve esteem through professional recognition, and ultimately reach self-actualization by realizing their career potential. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory highlights job satisfaction influences, categorizing them into motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators include recognition and meaningful work, while hygiene factors cover salary and work conditions (Herzberg, 1966). French healthcare institutions should not only offer competitive salaries and good working conditions but also create an environment that promotes professional growth, recognition, and meaningful work. This dual approach can enhance job satisfaction, leading to better retention rates among international hires.

#### **4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

Recruitment of foreign medical professionals can significantly impact the economic growth of the destination country by filling critical vacancies, improving healthcare services, and reducing the costs associated with medical errors and inefficiencies. Additionally, it can provide economic opportunities for the source country by alleviating unemployment and fostering remittances (Dhanaraj & Beamish, 2003; Farndale et al., 2010). In France, the recruitment of Romanian doctors helps address shortages in the healthcare workforce, ensuring that hospitals and clinics can operate effectively. This improves the overall quality of healthcare services and reduces the burden on existing medical staff. The economic benefits include increased productivity, reduced healthcare costs, and enhanced patient outcomes (Brewster & Hegewisch, 2017; Sparrow et al., 2004). In Romania, the migration of medical professionals has both positive and negative effects. On the positive side, it alleviates

unemployment and generates remittances that support local economies. However, it also creates shortages in the Romanian healthcare system, particularly in rural areas. Sustainable recruitment practices should aim to balance these impacts, ensuring that both countries benefit from the process (Pavolini & Ranci, 2008; Vlăsceanu, 2016).

Social inclusion is essential for the successful integration of international medical professionals. This involves creating a welcoming environment that respects cultural diversity and promotes equal opportunities. Programs that support cultural integration, such as language training and mentorship, are crucial for fostering social inclusion (Dickmann et al., 2008). Providing language and cultural training for foreign medical professionals is essential for their successful integration. Language proficiency enables effective communication with patients and colleagues, while cultural training helps them understand and adapt to the social norms and practices of the host country. These programs should be an integral part of the onboarding process for international hires (Scullion & Collings, 2011; Jackson et al., 2014). Professional integration programs that help foreign medical professionals adapt to the new healthcare system and work culture include orientation sessions, mentorship, and continuous professional development opportunities. By providing the necessary support and resources, these programs ensure that international hires can perform effectively and advance their careers in the host country (Festing & Eidems, 2011; Dickmann et al., 2008).

## **5. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND RECRUITMENT PRACTICES**

Environmental sustainability in the recruitment process can be achieved by adopting digital tools and reducing the need for physical travel. Virtual interviews, online training programs, and digital documentation reduce the carbon footprint associated with international hiring. These practices align with broader efforts to minimize environmental impact and promote sustainability (Ehnert, 2009; Jackson et al., 2014). Effective recruitment practices involve a combination of targeted outreach, thorough candidate assessment, and robust support mechanisms. Collaborative partnerships between French healthcare institutions and Romanian medical schools, most often mediated by recruitment agencies, are essential for ensuring a steady supply of qualified candidates. These partnerships involve regular communication and coordination to identify top candidates and provide them with the necessary support for relocation and integration (Dhanaraj & Beamish, 2003; Farndale et al., 2010). By building strong professional networks, healthcare institutions can enhance the effectiveness of their recruitment efforts.

## **6. EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES**

Romanian doctors in France face several challenges, including adapting to a new healthcare system and overcoming language barriers. These professionals must navigate a complex regulatory environment and meet rigorous standards for qualification recognition. Despite these challenges, many Romanian doctors have successfully integrated into the French healthcare system and made significant contributions (OECD, 2020). Adapting to the French healthcare system involves

understanding and complying with the country's medical standards and practices. This includes obtaining the necessary licensure, familiarizing oneself with the healthcare infrastructure, and adapting to the work culture. Comprehensive orientation programs and ongoing professional development opportunities are crucial for helping international hires succeed in their new roles (Tîlvăr, 2017; Stănculescu & Pădurean, 2017). Language proficiency is a critical factor in the successful integration of foreign medical professionals. Romanian doctors must achieve a high level of proficiency in French to communicate effectively with patients and colleagues. Language training programs both before and after relocation are essential for helping them overcome this barrier and perform effectively in their roles (Ahonen et al., 2009; Czaika & Vothknecht, 2012).

## **7. INTEGRATION AND RETENTION STRATEGIES**

To create a more sustainable and equitable approach to international hiring, several best practices should be adopted. Ensuring the successful integration and retention of Romanian doctors involves addressing both professional and personal needs. This includes offering language training, cultural orientation, and support for family members. Additionally, creating a supportive work environment that values diversity and fosters professional growth is crucial for retaining these professionals (WHO, 2016). Comprehensive integration programs that address both professional and personal needs are essential for the successful integration of international medical professionals. These programs include language training, cultural orientation, and professional mentorship. By providing the necessary support and resources, healthcare institutions help foreign doctors adapt to their new environment and thrive in their roles. Supporting the families of Romanian medical professionals is crucial for their successful integration and retention. This includes providing assistance with housing, education, and social integration. By addressing the needs of the entire family, healthcare institutions create a more welcoming and supportive environment for Romanian doctors. Assistance with family integration, such as schools for their children and jobs for the spouses, is crucial for the Romanian doctors to become permanent residents. Romanian doctors prefer to have a supportive work environment that involves fostering a culture of inclusion, providing opportunities for career advancement, and ensuring a healthy work-life balance. By creating a positive and supportive work environment, healthcare institutions can enhance job satisfaction and retention rates (Pavolini & Ranci, 2008; Vlăsceanu, 2016).

## **8. CONCLUSION**

The international hiring of Romanian medical professionals in France presents both challenges and opportunities for sustainable development. By adopting recruitment practices that promote economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection, healthcare institutions can create a more equitable and effective hiring process. Collaborative partnerships, comprehensive integration programs, and ongoing support are essential for the success of these initiatives. Future

research should focus on innovative solutions for sustainable healthcare workforce management in both source and destination countries. This includes developing policies that support career progression and retention of healthcare professionals in Romania while enhancing integration and support systems for migrant professionals in destination countries.

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