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# **International Migration, Return Migration, and their Effects. A Comprehensive Review on the Romanian Case<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract:** Romanian migration is today one of the biggest, complex, and dynamic migration to Western Europe. This paper is a comprehensive review of the existing literature that aims at providing a full picture of this dynamic migratory process and discusses its far-reaching consequences. It first presents and characterizes the Romanian migration through the different phases during and after state socialism. The second part of the paper is dedicated to unfolding the socio-economic effects of the Romanian migration addressing the remitting behavior and its development over the past years. The issue of return migration is also addressed stressing that return is not much developed, however it has significant impacts through the emergence of returnees’ entrepreneurship. Finally we address some of the consequences of the medical doctors’ migration which is today considered one of the main migration challenges the country is facing.

**Keywords:** Romania, international migration, remittances, return migration, physicians migration

**JEL Classification:** F22, F24, J15, P36

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## **1. Emergence and development of the Romanian migration**

Over the last years Romania has become one of the main source-countries for migration in Europe. After decades of coercive control of mobility that was exerted by the socialist state, Romanians were “crazy to travel” (Diminescu, 2003) after 1989, when international mobility greatly developed. Over the years there were major shifts in the Romanian migration regimes: tight migration control during state socialism, easier but restricted migration in the 1990s, strong irregular migration between 2002 and 2007, and unrestricted migration after 2007 when Romania became officially an EU member state.

Migration from Romania to Western Europe started more significantly during and after the Second World War, with the departure of ethnic Germans, population changes caused by the Second World War and war-related replacement policies. Over a period of more than 50 years, we can discern a few general patterns and periods of migration. During the communist regime (1945-1989) migration involved mostly ethnic minorities, mainly Jews and Germans but to a certain level Hungarians as well, who were allowed to leave the country. In addition, there was migration of ethnic Romanians, who followed legal or irregular migration strategies. They could cross irregularly the borders of Romania, or travel legally to the Western Europe. A major shift occurred after 1989, when the Romanian state no longer prohibited the movement of Romanians. At the same time, Western European states set up policies to restrict the East-West migration. Migration started to propagate at an increasing pace throughout Romania. It was initiated by the mass migration of ethnic Germans, of asylum seekers, and of the irregular migrants seeking their ways to the West. By the end of the 1990s, migration was already a widespread phenomenon in the Romanian society. After 2002, a qualitatively different period came about: travel regulations were less restrictive and Romanian citizens were able to travel to the

Western Europe without visa requirements.<sup>2</sup> In 2007 Romania joined the EU, and Romanians were no longer irregular migrants, at least in respect to the requirements concerning their entry and stay.

Based on the existing evidence in the literature, our research describes these migration periods and some of the main migration mechanisms. We focus on the post-1989 migration showing the main shifts in causes and mechanisms of migration caused by expanding structures of opportunities for the Romanian citizens. Romanian migration evolved from a stage of state coercion, to a stage of restricted access, and finally to a stage where Romanian citizens were granted freedom of movement within the EU and beyond. Such dramatic shifts produced far-reaching consequences that will be further addressed.

### **1.1 Migration during state socialism**

The control over internal and international migration of the Romanian citizens was seen by the Romanian communist leadership as an important factor of governing the country. International migration had a salient regime. It was tightly controlled, passports were stored by authorities, and contact with foreign citizens was under strict surveillance (Diminescu 2003). Very often, such contacts were criminalized by the regime for their ideological implications (Gabanyi 2000, Horváth 2008). Therefore, during communism it was mainly ethnic migration – that of Romanian Jews, Germans, and Hungarians, that was officially allowed. Ethnic migration putatively emerged in a context where the Romania's ethnic minorities gained international support from NGO's and international organizations due to the increasing autochthonous nationalism which took roots in Romania, targeted especially ethnic minorities. Ethnic migration was potentially benign for the regime. Moreover, the receiving states were important actors in enabling this migration and granting prospective ethnic migrants access and rights. Migration was negotiated internationally between Romania and the

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<sup>2</sup> With the exception of Great Britain and Ireland, where the entry restrictions were only lifted in 2007.

states of Germany and Israel respectively.<sup>3</sup> Migration to Hungary was tacitly agreed by the Romanian communists. A second important trend was of family reunions and other forms of legal migration, but there is scarce information about this type of migration. Although it was difficult, family reunions were still possible due to the obligations Romania has taken in international treaties on human rights. Furthermore, there was also irregular migration and exits of those included in international professional exchange schemes.

*Aliya*, the migration of the Jews to Israel, started after the Second World War, when the Jewish population of Romania numbered around 300,000 – 350,000 persons (Horváth 2007). Initially clandestine, migration to Israel became legal after 1948. This migration was motivated politically, as a reaction of Romanian Jews to the anti-Semitism of the interwar Romanian politics, and to the oppressive communist regime that came in power after 1948 (Diminescu and Berthomière 2003). Between 1948 and 1961 more than 140,000 persons migrated legally (Diminescu 2003). Part of them moved afterwards to the United States, while others remained in Israel. In 1961 an agreement was reached between the governments of Romania and Israel, regulating the migration of the Romanian Jews.<sup>4</sup> Most of the remaining Jews migrated in the 1960s and 1970s, so that in 1968 the Romanian Jews represented about 20% of the population of Israel. In 1990, there were still about 9,000 people of Jewish origin left in Romania, most of them senior citizens (Diminescu and Berthomière 2003).

The Romanian Hungarians' migration to Hungary developed after the 1980s, but the number was smaller (Horváth 2007) in comparison to the number of migrants to Israel. Hungarians' migration was only partially motivated politically, due to the growing political pressure and nationalist policies of the Romanian state (Andreescu 2005). At the end of the 1980s, 50,000 - 60,000 Hungarians moved to Hungary (Juhász 1999: 5). Some other 100,000 (Veres 2002) followed between 1989 and 2000, fostered initially by potentially ethnic

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<sup>3</sup> This was not the case with the migration of ethnic Hungarians, where there was no clear agreement between the Romanian and the Hungarian governments.

<sup>4</sup> The agreement was possible due to Romania's interests to obtain the Most Favored Nation clause with the United States. In the 1970s The Jackson-Vanik amendment 402/1974 conditioned Romania to liberalize of this migration (See Diminescu et. al. 2003).

conflicts<sup>5</sup> in Romania after the collapse of state socialism, and also by the significant economic disparities between Romania and Hungary.

Migration of ethnic Germans was the most important migration from Romania during the late years of state socialism. In the Romanian case, this status applied to roughly 350,000 ethnic Germans that remained in Romania after the Second World War. The legislative package for the reception and support of ethnic Germans was caused by Germany's responsibility for east European German refugees and expellees after the Second World War. Germans from Eastern and Central Europe were blamed collectively for the actions undertaken by Nazi Germany. About 14 million Germans from Eastern and Central-Eastern Europe<sup>6</sup> were expelled or had to flee, mostly towards Germany. In the process of deportation and expulsion about two million people lost their lives (Tränhardt 1996). The provisions adopted for the expelled and the refugees were maintained for these migrants until 1990. During the Cold War, *Aussiedler* (ethnic Germans) received generous state support: German citizenship, housing facilities, reimbursement of the travel expenses, language courses, and full access to the social security system. Their education degrees were recognized and they received grants and tax facilities to start new businesses. In some cases, these migrants were granted compensation for the years of political detention they had to go through or for property losses in their countries or origin (Groenendijk 1997).

After the 1950s the migration of ethnic Germans from Romania was relatively difficult until 1977, and family reunion was the main strategy used to migrate to West Germany. But in 1977 Germany persuaded both Poland and Romania, countries with large German populations, to allow their citizens to migrate to the FRG.<sup>7</sup> Henceforth the Romanian and the German governments

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<sup>5</sup> See for instance the outburst of the violent ethnic conflict in Târgu Mureş, Transylvania in March 1990.

<sup>6</sup> Thus, there were about 12 million Germans who migrated to Germany immediately after the war and another 2.6 million between 1950 and 1961, to the construction of the Berlin Wall (Dietz 1999).

<sup>7</sup> In the Czechoslovak case Germans were expelled after the war; in the Yugoslav case Germans moved to Germany immediately after the War; from Hungary they were expelled after the war. In the Soviet case the migration of ethnic Germans was possible just after 1990.

signed an agreement<sup>8</sup> allowing a yearly quota of 11,000 ethnic Germans<sup>9</sup> to migrate as family reunions (Weber et al 2003: 142). Romania received important financial benefits<sup>10</sup> as Germany offered compensation a ransom for every visa issued for Romanian Germans. For the next 12 years of state socialism, migration of ethnic Germans was regulated by this agreement. In the end, about 180,000 ethnic Germans migrated to Germany between 1977 and 1989.

During socialism, Germany received also asylum seekers from Romania. There were significantly fewer Romanian asylum seekers than ethnic Germans.<sup>11</sup> Asylum seekers from Romania were those able to arrive in Germany legally either as professionals working for Romanian institutions with partnerships in the West, such as members of art and music groups, sportsmen, or as tourists visiting their relatives abroad. In Germany, Romanians received political asylum or remained as tolerated foreigners. They were not sent back to socialist Romania (Appleyard 2001). After receiving the status of political refugees they could issue family reunifications. Although the migration of ethnic Romanians increased in the 1980s,<sup>12</sup> it was smaller than the Germans' migration.

There were also irregular migrants, but because the borders of Romania were heavily defended, migration involved death risks. Not many took the chance

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<sup>8</sup> As it is stipulated in "*Gemeinsame Erklärung*" from 7.1.1978. "We certify that we agree with all humanitarian applications for family reunions and marriages between the citizens of both countries, on the basis of the international and bilateral existing agreements." (Weber et al.. 2003: 142-143, my own translation) *Bulletin des Presse-und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung*. Bonn. Nr.3, 10 Januar 1978; Nr.100, 4 Dezember 1995; Nr.34, 2.Mai 1996.

<sup>9</sup> In reality, the quota was between 12,000 and 15,000 migrants per year.

<sup>10</sup> Thus, in 1978 the sum was about 5,000 DM for any German allowed to leave Romania. This changed in 1983 to 7,800 DM and in 1988 to 11,000 DM.

<sup>11</sup> Thus, there were about 12,000 applications for asylum of Romanian citizens between 1983 and 1989 (source: interview, *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge* – BAMF).

<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, the ethnic Germans who left Romania legally were about 120,000 persons. The number of Romanians who left Romania legally was about 100,000 persons to different destinations in Western Europe and North America. These may be family members of Romanian Germans, or Romanians who obtained legally the right to migrate. *Aussiedler* registered for the migration to Germany were about 150,000 persons (Comisia Națională pentru Statistică 1993: 143; Comisia Națională pentru Statistică 1994: 150; Comisia Națională pentru Statistică 1995: 136/137), out of which some could have been recorded as Romanians by the Romanian data. However, even in such conditions, the number of Romanians who migrated legally could be seen significant for this migration regime.

to cross the border irregularly. Steiner and Magheți (2009)<sup>13</sup> advance the figures of 16,000 irregular migrants attempting to cross the border to the former Yugoslavia between 1980 and 1989. The exit from Romania was 'illegal', but after arriving in the former Yugoslavia, ethnic Germans were allowed to migrate further and their entrance in the Western Europe was not seen as an illegal act. This made some ethnic Germans to migrate irregularly instead of getting into the conundrum of legal migration procedures.

## **1.2 Post-socialist migration: main periods and mechanisms of migration**

After 1989 there were a few distinct periods of Romanian migration (Baldwin Edwards 2005: 2)<sup>14</sup>: (a) 1990 to 1993, there was a period with intense ethnic, and asylum seekers' migration; there was relatively low Romanian migration (Sandu 2006); pioneers of Romanian migration started traveling to different European destinations; (b) between 1994 to 1996, there was little labor migration, ethnic migration of Hungarians and asylum seekers. Shortly after 1993 the Romanian migration to Germany almost ceased and new migration destinations appeared. The Romanian migration started to differentiate: ethnic migration continued, but brain drain, irregular migration, shuttle migration, and marriage migration developed. Initially headed towards Germany, migration reoriented towards France, Spain, Italy, Greece, and Israel. In the meantime, brain drain towards the United States and Canada took on; (c) between 1997 and 2001, there was growing circular, often irregular migration and growing human trafficking; moreover, from 1999 there appeared small recruitment policies (especially for Spain and Germany); (d) after 2002, Romanians obtained the right to enter the European Union without visa requirements. A new phase of the Romanian migration started. In the following years, irregular migration boosted towards Italy and Spain facilitated by the demand of unskilled labor. The number of Romanian legal residents in each of these two countries exceeded the level of Romanian

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<sup>13</sup> See also Dan Gheorghe, "Cea mai sângeroasă frontieră a Europei," *România Liberă*, 28<sup>th</sup> of December 2010.

<sup>14</sup> This information is consistent to that of the Romanian scholars.



migration to Germany; (e) in 2007 Romania became EU member. After 2007 there was officially a period of restriction on the EU labor markets for the Romanian citizens, but they enjoyed the rights and entitlements of being EU citizens; f) once with the financial crisis that commenced in 2008, Romania implemented drastic austerity measures that put pressure on state employees. The Romanian migration reoriented again towards the countries from Northern Europe.

In the first two years after the fall of the communist regime in Romania most ethnic Germans migrated *en masse* to Germany, together with an increasing number of Romanians. Germany's migration policies started to change shortly after 1990 by taking firm steps towards a restrictive policy. For a couple of years, between 1990 and 1993, Romanian migration continued to be directed towards Germany through the migration of ethnic Germans and a strong flow of asylum seekers. These two migration flows need special attention since they were fundamental for the development of the Romanian migration afterwards. While during state socialism political concerns were the main push-factors for Romanian migration, after the collapse of state socialism, economic motivation prevailed (Dietz 1999, Horváth 2007).

The migration of ethnic Germans brought to Germany a significant number of non-German as family members.<sup>15</sup> Part of those who migrated after 1989 maintained their ties to their origin communities. Ethnic organizations in Romania, such as the German Democratic Forum of Romania, German high schools, and social ties in the origin communities perpetuated over time the relations of ethnic Germans to their place of origin (Michalon 2003a). In this sense Michalon (2003b) argues that after 1990 the Germans' migration was not only a "return migration" to Germany, but also a migration having a certain degree of circularity and involvement in the country of origin through the family visits in Romania. Migration between Romania and Germany involved the

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<sup>15</sup> It is difficult to estimate the exact ratio of non-Germans arriving in Germany with the *Aussiedler* status in the Romanian case. However, information from fieldwork in Nuremberg and from other Romanian localities (Sighișoara, Sibiu) sustains the argument that in the 1980s there was a high ratio of intermarriage. In cities like Sighișoara for instance not less than 50% of the Germans had married Romanians. See also Verdery (1985), Poledna (1998).

establishment of some networks of temporary labor migration. Access to the networks of ethnic Germans mediated the access of Romanians to temporary labor in Germany (Michalon 2003b: 21). For example, in Baden Württemberg and Bavaria, some Transylvanian Saxons used networks in Romania to bring workers into the German constructions sector (Michalon 2003b); when coming back to Romania, Germans expanded their networks to ethnic Romanians.

In the first years after 1989, there was also a strong wave of Romanian citizens who requested political asylum predominantly in Germany. These asylum seekers were the second largest category of migrants from Romania between 1990 and 1994. At the beginning of the 1990s, Romanians moved to Germany either irregularly, crossing the borders between Poland, Czech Republic and Germany (Reyniers 2003: 57),<sup>16</sup> or received invitations from the Romanian Germans (Diminescu 2003:16). Once in Germany, they filled in requests for political asylum. Between 1990 and 1993 Romanian citizens formed the largest group among the applicants for political asylum. During that period, Romanian citizens applied for asylum in Western Europe (Fassmann and Münz 1994: 532-533) out of which Germany received the largest numbers: there were about 60,000 applicants in 1992 and more than 140,000 applicants in 1993<sup>17</sup>.

Table 1: Number of applications for political asylum in Germany, Romanian citizens, 1990-1999

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
11,191	27,089	57,464	146,738	21,424	10,274	3,168	1,672	917	537

About half of these applicants were Roma (Reyniers 2003) who complained about increasing discrimination in Romania. Nevertheless, in 1993 Romania was considered a safe country and further applications were denied (Weber et al. 2003). In order to enforce the law, Germany signed a bilateral

<sup>16</sup> For example, in 1991, 8,500 Romanian citizens were apprehended at the German-Polish border and another 4,500 between 1st of January and the 15th of March 1992. About 12 450 Romanian citizens tried to enter Germany in the first six months of 1992 (Reyniers 2003: 58).

<sup>17</sup> Source: Interview BAMF.

repatriation agreement with Romania in September 1992. Romania agreed to take back 60,000 Roma and about 40,000 Romanians, while Germany agreed to cover the transport costs (Kurthen 1995: 928). Nevertheless, a large number of asylum seekers “disappeared.”<sup>18</sup>

Germany represented at the beginning of the 1990s the main target-country of the Romanian migration, made of Romanian Germans and Romanian asylum seekers. In the following years after 1993 Romanian migration to Germany continued but at a much lower pace, consisting mainly of marriage migrants, some limited cases of labor migration, and a tiny brain drain.<sup>19</sup> Due to the large number of migrants who arrived in Germany between 1980 and 1993, Germany remained the main entry point for Romanians migrating to Europe throughout the 1990s: about 500,000 migrants from Romania settled in Germany and the number of tourist visas issued from Germany (180,000 visas a year) far exceeded the number granted by all other European countries all together<sup>20</sup> (Diminescu 2003). Romanians receiving these invitations were afterwards going to other European destinations (Diminescu 2003: 16).

After 1990 ethnic migration from Transylvania continued through the migration of Hungarians to Hungary. There were two main flows in this migration process: a permanent migration (Veres 2002) and a temporary, shuttle migration (Fox 2007). The result was a cleavage between those incorporated in the primary labor market in Hungary and those employed in the secondary labor market (Gödri and Tóth 2005) who started to shuttle between Hungary and Romania.

Other forms of international mobility were now emerging, such as petty trade to former Yugoslavia, Turkey, Poland, and Hungary. Petty traders were among the first in Romania to experience Europe, and to look internationally for alternative economic niches while maintaining their residence and social ties in Romania. Their practices expanded afterwards and many become pioneers of

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<sup>18</sup> From qualitative information obtained during my fieldwork in Nuremberg, I found out that many asylum seekers remained in Germany, others migrated towards other European countries and some returned to Romania.

<sup>19</sup> For instance, throughout the 1990s, migrant workers and IT green card holders from Romania grew more important (Dietz 2003, 2006).

<sup>20</sup> In comparison, there were only 40,000 visas a year from France, the second country to grant visas to Romanian citizens (Diminescu 2003: 15).

migration (Diminescu 2003). Before 1989 workers were also recruited by the agencies of the socialist state to work abroad. Some of them became pioneers of migration towards Western Europe after 1990. For instance, migration from Dobrotești (south Romania) was initiated during socialism. Villagers were recruited by a state-owned agency in Bucharest within the framework of economic agreements with several Arab countries such as Libya, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt (Șerban and Grigoraș 2000). Incidentally, part of them was made of members of the Adventist Church who had an increasing positive perception of international migration, and who used the network of Adventist believers to move abroad and establish migration routes. They were bricklayers and carpenters and soon found employment in the labor market in Spain. After a few years, their Orthodox relatives and friends started to migrate, helped by the Adventist migrants.

Ethnic and religious minorities generated the most mobile groups at the beginning of the 1990s. Hungarians were moving to Hungary, Germans moved to Germany, Roma from the former German areas of Romania tended to move to Germany (Sandu 2005: 571) and request political asylum there. Germany<sup>21</sup> was a transit country for Romanians going to Spain, Italy, or to other European destinations (Bleahu 2004, Anghel 2008, Cingolani and Piperno 2006). For many Romanians, this phase represented the first way out of Romania, a country who severely restricted the exit of its citizens towards Europe for about 50 years (Diminescu et al 2003). The migration of these pioneers led to the gradual establishing of migration routes (Anghel 2008, Cingolani and Piperno 2006, Stan 2005).

A different stage in the development of the Romanian migration was from 1993 to 1996. Migration was low but diversified: there were seasonal migrants, circular (shuttle) migrants, brain drain (mostly students), ethnic migrants, marriage migrants, disguised tourists, and so on. The Catholic Church and the neo-Protestant churches played an important role in initiating and perpetuating migration in the 1990s. Catholic confidants from Moldova started to migrate to

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<sup>21</sup> And France to a more limited extent.

Italy (Sandu 2000), while neo-Protestants were helped by religious organizations to move to Germany and Spain (Radu 2001, Șerban and Grigoraș 2000).

Migration from cities in Romania was not sufficiently covered in the literature, but studies on brain drain (Ferro 2004a, 2004b, Nedelcu 2000, Csedö 2005, 2008) argue that these migrations were realized essentially as individual projects. In a similar vein, Potot (2003) stresses the importance of the individual decision making of young city dwellers going to Nice and London in 1994-1995. She shows how migrants from the city of Târgoviște<sup>22</sup> had actually short migration projects in mind, with the aim of returning and opening small businesses in Bucharest. These migrants moved to France asking for political asylum and later earning their living from selling newspapers. Potot (2000) also points to the differences between the urban and the rural migration from Romania, claiming that migrants coming from cities were more mobile than rural migrants. They were first moving to one country, afterwards they could move again to another. Migrants she interviewed moved from France to the northern Italy; some others moved to London, or to Madrid.

Religion continued to play an important role in the migration of Romanians throughout the 1990s. Analyzing the migration from Orthodox and Catholic villages in eastern Romania, Stan (2005) shows marked differences based on membership in the two religious groups. Catholic migrants were able to get better accommodation and labor market incorporation by using their religious ties to the Catholic priests in Italy. In contrast, the Orthodox Church was not active in the migration of Romanians, so that villagers' migration expanded through kinship mostly. In the end, the institutional support granted to the Catholic migrants proved to be crucial for migrants' later success: after a few years, Catholic migrants were more successful in comparison to the Orthodox ones. In a similar vein, the role of religion in the migration of Romanians is analyzed by Cingolani (2008) who shows that membership into specific religious group and access to different structures of opportunities does not account for all differences in migration. He analyzes the migration of villagers from Marginea (Suceava

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<sup>22</sup> Located in the southern part of Romania, at about 100 km away from Bucharest.

county, northern side of Romania) to Turin. He notices the dominance of short-term projects among Romanian migrants. The radical changes in the Romanian society and the increasing uncertainties prompted people to employ short-term strategies to cope to the changing economic reality and institutional lack of predictability. In contrast, Adventist villagers in Romania were organized around relations of solidarity, based on a shared religious ethic of organizing their lives around long-term projects. Different from the Orthodox migrants, the Adventist migrants in Turin distinguished themselves through stronger optimism, solidarity and entrepreneurship. The author contends that the higher optimism and solidarity among Adventist believers made them more successful on the labor market in Italy. At the same time, analyzing the influence of religious denomination on economic performance of Romania migrants, Roman and Goschin (2011) conclude that migrants affiliated to a religion have a weaker outcome compared to those unaffiliated. There are also economic differences between religious groups, since religious minorities in Romania - such as the Neo-Protestants - have the lowest penalty in receiving country compared to other denominations.

After 1997 Romanian migration acquired a certain level of development. The decisive factor was the process of de-industrialization of the former socialist industry, cumulated to a stark impoverishment of the population (Horváth 2007). De-industrialization put pressure on population, especially on commuters who were among the first who lost their jobs in some post-socialist societies (Hann 1995, 2002). This situation created a class of potential migrants and put a strong pressure on rural households (Horváth 2008, Anghel 2008, Cingolani 2008). A typical case is the migration from Călan, a small mono-industrial town in Transylvania that developed during socialism through industrialization and internal migration (Grigoraş 2001). After 1990, its inhabitants started to migrate towards Hungary and Germany, but migration really boomed after 1997 when all industry was closed down.

This massive restructuring partially explains the developing of migration after 1997 at the national level. Unemployment and impoverishment were seeing

a dramatic increase. From a total of 9.5 million jobs in 1990, only 4.5 million remained active in 1999 (Horváth and Anghel 2009). Since then, Romanian migration continued growing and reached maturation. Through its firm increase, some clearer patterns of migration became more obvious afterwards, different from the previous period when irregular migration was only exploratory and unstructured.

After 1997 a high degree of regionalization of migration developed. People from the western side of Romania, formerly inhabited by Germans, tended to move to Germany, while Hungarians moved to Hungary. Roma people from the region of Cluj (Transylvania) and Romanian migrants from Oaş (northern Transylvania) preferred going to France, where they achieved economic incorporation by selling newspapers. Migration to Turkey and Israel emerged from the eastern side of Romania. At the end of the '90s there were about 70,000 Romanian labor migrants in the Israel's construction sector who came especially from these regions (Diminescu 2003). Their aim was not settlement but work, and the contact to the local population was minimal (Diminescu et al 2003). From southern Romania and Transylvania, people would generally migrate to Spain. From the southwestern regions (Timiș and Mehedinți counties), they moved first to Yugoslavia and later to other European destinations. From the eastern counties (the eastern region of Romanian Moldavia) there was strong migration to Italy (Sandu 2006).

The regionalization thesis is based on quantitative surveys, mostly on Romanian rural migration, although information on urban migration is also available. It implicitly applies the principle of proximity (Ravenstein 1889: 286) for the dispersion of migration. But this thesis alone actually hides the diversity of migrants' practices and of their destination routes. It does not explain how different destination routes were chosen by migrants from the same origin regions and locales, or how destination routes structured.

Quite the contrary, qualitative research (Stan 2005, Cingolani 2008, Bleahu 2004) shows the diversification of migration routes, suggesting that people from the same locales had to choose between multiple opportunities to

move abroad. This happened also because in the 1990s, despite 50 years of programmatic state control over population movement, Romanians developed many ties to Europe through Romania's ethnic and religious minorities (including small communities of Italians, Greeks, Turks, or Croatians), European small scale investments, mobility schemes for students and professionals, tourism (Nagy 2008), religious networks (of Catholics, neo-Protestant), recruitment agencies, migration brokers, and so on. These ties created diversified and expanding structures of opportunities for potential migrants, and migrants would often choose one of the possible migration destinations.

Networks of migration were the main pulling factor behind migration in all Romanian regions. This is well documented in most migration research on Italy (Anghel 2006, 2008, Cingolani and Piperno 2006, Vlase 2008, Bleahu 2007, Alexandru 2006), Spain (Șerban 2008, Șerban and Grigoraș 2000, Elrick and Ciobanu 2009), or France (Diminescu 2003). To a lesser extent is this true for Germany (Michalon 2003a; b). Kinship and friendship constituted the main migration networks to Spain, and especially to Italy (Sandu 2006). The adaptability of networks, their "lock-in" (Guilmoto and Sandron 2001) into specific locales, and the preference for some destination countries in the West account better for the regional distribution of Romanian migration than the regionalization thesis. The lock-in effect stresses that once networks become established into a place, it was rather difficult to move to a different one: thus, movement was organized from one locale to one or several locales in the West. Moreover, the analysis should consider recruitment and migration policies of the receiving states. Elrick and Ciobanu (2009) show how different networks reacted to recruitment policy of Spain in comparison to networks with shorter migration history, networks with longer migration history were less affected by such policies set up by the Spanish government.

Some authors consider Romanian migration circular with migrants shuttling between Romania and the Western Europe (Sandu et al. 2004). Similar to the thesis of incomplete migration (Okólski 1996) of Polish migrants to Western Europe and of Ukrainian migrants to Poland, Romanian migration



entailed a high level of circularity and involvement in the origin country. It was a movement back and forth, a “settling into mobility” (Diminescu 2003): Romanian migration was an alternation of stays-and-goes between the countries of origin and destination (Diminescu et al. 2003). The destination countries were seen as countries where money was made, not as countries of settlement (Stan 2005).

This situation holds true until a certain time, but this issues should nowadays be reconsidered. Until 2000-2002, there were not many legal Romanians residing in Spain and Italy. As migrants acquired more rights and social ties in the country of destination, their migration projects changed. The long residence abroad is followed by family reunions and settlement plans. This is noticeable by looking at increasing family reunions and school attendance of Romanian migrants. In 2008 there were 116,000 underage Romanians in Italy (Pittau et al. 2008) and the levels of mixed marriages between Italians and Romanians increased. Some Italian authors argue that there is a clear process of settlement of Romanian migrants in Italy (Schmidt 2006).

Castagnone and Petrillo (2007) also show how Romanian women are successful on the labor market. In comparison to Ukrainian women, their knowledge of Italian improves relatively easy, and they are better equipped to finding new labor and housing opportunities. Their migration was caused by increasing risks to their households in Romania and economic hardship. Initially seen as short-term projects, women prolonged their stay and afterwards, brought their children to Italy. In contrast, Ukrainian women left their children in Ukraine; their savings from Italy were used to improve their children’s education back in Ukraine.

Romanian migration entailed a certain degree of marginality and precariousness. One of the most sensitive issues is the women’s trafficking (Lăzăroiu 2000). He relates the trafficking of women to the deep poverty in the origin communities and to the relative deprivation of non-migrant households in the 1990s. In a different research, Alexandru (2006) analyzes the migration of unaccompanied children and underage youth. Different from trafficking, this migration gains acceptance and moral justification in migrants’ origin

communities. Traditionally, children fulfilled economic roles in their households and the coming of age was usually conceived as incorporation into the labor market. Migration changed this perception of manhood in the origin communities, and children's migration became socially desirable, as a rite de passage towards adulthood.

From 2000 to 2002 a series of institutional changes impacted on the Romanian migration. In February 2000, Romania was invited to join the European Union, and the visa regime for Romanian citizens started to normalize (Diminescu 2003). After 2002 Romanians were granted freedom of movement within the European Union. As a consequence, there was mass migration to Western Europe, especially towards Italy and Spain. Migration became easier and less costly. If before 2002 migration from poorer areas was less intense, after 2002 migration spread all over Romania. After the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007, Romania joined the EU and Romanian migrants started to acquire more economic, social and political rights given their status as European citizens. They were entitled to participate in local elections in the countries of Western Europe where they resided legally. Romanian migrants also received much attention in the Romanian politics. Romanian authorities adopted a law for the protection of Romanian migrants abroad in 2000.<sup>23</sup> Romanian institutions also started to organize labor recruitment.<sup>24</sup> In 2002, the Office for the Labor Migration mediated 20,000 labor contracts, and 53,000 in 2006 (Horváth and Anghel 2009). In 2002, Romania and Spain signed the first bilateral agreement for workforce (Sandu et al. 2004: 21).

After 2008 the deep economic crisis in Western Europe altered the patterns of the Romanian migration again. The “already” traditional destinations, such as Spain and Italy were targeted by the crisis: especially the construction sectors experienced severe reduction and, at least in Spain, people lost their jobs. However, as some research has pointed out (Stănculescu and Stoiciu 2012) men were differently targeted than women. Whereas men worked in

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<sup>23</sup> 156 /26.07.2000.

<sup>24</sup> Oficiul pentru Migrația Forței de Muncă (Office for the Labor Migration) intermediated contracts for agricultural work, restaurants, forestry work (Diminescu 2003).

sectors that experienced severe reduction, women worked in care. Living in ageing society with lack of care work, they were able to have secured jobs in comparison to men. Simultaneously, the crisis stroke Romania simultaneously and there, the labor market shrunk too. There resulted an odd context in which migrants tried to make ends meet in uncertain contexts both at home, and abroad. For instance, one survey conducted in the Madrid area showed that the return intentions among Romanian migrants was of about 71 percent, very high in comparison to previous data (Marcu 2011: 5). In Italy also there were visible differences between migrants coming before and after 2007<sup>25</sup>. Isilda Mara (2012) contrasted Romanians migrating to Italy before and after 2007. One of the author's main conclusions was that while the first group migrated with long-term migration in mind, the latter had no predefined migration plans.

Uncertainties in the southern Europe pushed Romanian citizens to find alternative ways. In a few years, Romanian migration took on towards the northern Europe: Germany, the UK, as well as the Scandinavian countries started to see more Romanians arriving. There were some significant differences, most of them not tackled here. However, in the two main destinations, the UK and Germany, the settling prospects differed. In the UK the growing number of Romanians was related to the job offers in a rich and differentiated secondary labor market. In Germany it was related with some previous patterns, and the growth of seasonal jobs for EU migrants. Besides, it is likely possible that many migrants in Spain re-routed towards other European countries (Ciobanu 2015).

Finally, another pattern worth mentioning here is the migration of poor Romanian citizens, especially the Roma. This migration became visible mainly after 2007 where public debates erupted in Italy and France on the situation of the poor Romanian citizens, often begging or performing street work. In both countries situation led to serious dilemmas as in France at least, the principle of freedom of movement within the EU led to a situation where EU citizens were

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<sup>25</sup> Accession to the EU was followed by a transition period of up to 7 years until EU national markets were freely accessible by Romanian workers.

deported to their country of origin. Research in Roma from Romania also unfolded that in 2012 already, the Roma were pretty mobile, the ration of Roma households with a migrant member was at least as that of Romanians' (Duminică and Ivasiuc 2013). Different other researches (Pantea 2013, Tesăr 2013) unfolded differences in how the Roma performed in west European countries, especially in what it concerned traditional versus non-traditional as well as the cleavages between different Roma sub-ethnic groups (Vlase and Voicu 2014).

In conclusion, the Romanian migration passed through a series of several distinct phases after the collapse of the state socialism in 1989. To summarize these phases, Horváth and Anghel (2009) provide the following typology, including the main destination countries, characteristics, and migration goals (see Table 2):

Table 2. Phases of post-socialist Romanian migration

Period	Time horizon for migration	Main goal of the emigrants	Major countries of destination	Main characteristic
1990-1993	Definitive	Relocation	Germany, Hungary, France, Belgium	Ethnic migration. Asylum seeking.
1994-1996	Temporary Circular migration	Labor	Hungary, Israel, Turkey	Labor migration emerges
1997-2001	Circular migration Prospects for long term legal residence	Labor	Hungary, Italy, Spain, Ireland	Labor migration, strongly expands mostly irregular. Regularization programs are caught by Romanian migrants in Spain and Italy
2002-2006	Prospects for long terms legal residence	Long term residence.	Italy and Spain	Continuing processes of regularization involving a large number of Romanians.
2007 – 2009 (pre-crisis context)	Possibility for long term legal residence and formal employment	Long term residence, large Romanian communities in Italy and Spain	Spain, Italy, other European destinations	Labor migration continues, but at lower levels, limited return migration

		especially		
2009 - present	Mixed – long term and temporary	Labor migration and long term residence	Decreasing communities in Spain and Italy, migration oriented towards German and the UK	Labor migration continues. New patterns: seasonal work in Germany, temporary migration to the UK; increasing return migration, double migrants from Spain and Italy moving towards the UK and Germany. Visible precarious migration in many European countries.

Source: Horváth and Anghel (2009).

Romanian migration to Canada and the United States had a different development: it significant percentage of highly skilled migrants such as IT workers, medical doctors and students. The United States and Canada selected a large number of Romanian migrants based on qualifications and level of education. Up until 2000, around 140,000 Romanians migrated to the United States alone, of which 35.9 percent had tertiary education. This was more than other immigrant groups from CEE countries, such as Hungarians with 30 percent (Brădăţan and Kulcsár 2014: 513). The ‘brain drain’ towards Western Europe consisted of students, IT specialists and medical doctors. Studies on Romanian migration estimated that in 2003 around 26 percent of migrants were persons with tertiary education (IOM 2008: 53). However, it is still unclear how many of them took on jobs in the primary and how many in the secondary sectors of the labour market. Nevertheless, in the case of medical doctors, the phenomenon of “brain waste” seems to be a second order problem, since the chances for a Romanian degree educated professional holder (as are the medical doctors) to enter a skilled job are relatively high: 70 percent as computed in the study of Mattoo et al. (2008).

Regarding the “brain drain” of physicians, Romania records one of the largest stocks of emigrated medical doctors among countries from Eastern Europe. In 2007, for example, 4,990 medical doctors, representing more than 10 percent of the medical active workforce, expressed their intention to migrate as measured by the number of certificates issued by the Romanian Ministry of Health. In 2010 more than 300 certificates per month were issued to medical doctors. These numbers are really large given the fact the high skilled migration rarely exceeded 3 percent of the domestic workforce in the EU countries (Wismar et al. 2011).

While in the ‘90s, the preferred destinations for the Romanian medical doctors were US and Canada, after Romania's admission to the EU, Romanian physicians have mainly migrated to France, Germany, UK and Belgium (Buchan et al. 2014: 77; Botezat et al. 2016). In 2010, for example, Romanians physicians was the largest national group (15,4%) of foreign medical doctors in France (Buchan et al. 2014: 78). In 2012, a third of foreign doctors registered in France were Romanians (Séchet and Vasilcu 2015). The same situation is in Belgium, which recorded in the last years the highest share of Romanian health professionals from the EU12 (Buchan et al 2014: 78).

Following the years of accession to the European Union, the outflows of health professionals slightly decreased, but now the trend is still growing. Given the fact that Romania has the fewest number of practicing doctors per head of population in the EU (Eurostat 2013), the medical brain drain should be regarded as an “issue of national concern”, as stated by Professor Vasile Astărăstoeae, the former President of the Romanian College of Physicians.

The ‘brain drain’ differed significantly from ethnic migration in terms of motivation and mechanisms of migration. Whereas ethnic migrants moved to their ‘fatherlands’<sup>26</sup> as titular co-ethnics and – in the case of Germans – as citizens of this receiving country, non-ethnic qualified migrants had to adapt to

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<sup>26</sup> Here we use this term to denote destination states seen as the countries of origin of ethnic migrants, despite the fact that their ancestors may have left these countries generations ago or may not have originated from these territories at all. Nevertheless, in such cases migrants have been considered co-ethnics.

the countries of destination, pass test procedures or obtain further qualifications. Studies on the Romanian 'brain drain' show that highly qualified migrants succeeded in obtaining qualifications and good jobs in the destination societies and tended to complain about labour conditions in Romania, having no intention of returning (Moroşanu 2013: 361, Ferro 2004b: 514).<sup>27</sup> So far, there is little substantial research on the return of 'brain drain' migrants, despite the fact that large Romanian companies are sometimes headed by return migrants who decided to return and invest in the Romanian economy. However, in respect with medical personnel, Roman and Goschin (2014) show that there is a significant difference in intentions to return between medical doctors and nurses and midwives, the last category having a higher propensity to return.

## **2. Socio-economic effects of migration**

In the past years the issue of the effects of migration in Romania attracted much attention of the academia, especially of economists and sociologists. A series of more integrated approaches were developed such as the research on financial remittances realized by economists, or the migration and development program at the Open Society Foundation in Bucharest. A series of issues emerged as most important: the effects and uses of financial remittances, population loss, brain drain, return migration, and migrant entrepreneurship. In the following, we sketch some of these approaches and key findings. In assessing some main effects on the Romanian society, one may first differentiate between short and medium-term effects on the one hand, and long-term effects on the other. Whereas short-term effects may be both beneficial for countries of origin and reception, as it can alleviate financial pressures on migrants' households and solve the issue of unemployment at the national level, the long-term or permanent mass migration may lead to increasing dependency, depopulation and loss of talent. In such cases, many authors argue that in spite of the positive effects of remittances, negative effects are greater (Delgado-Wise and

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Covarrubias 2007, Portes 2009).<sup>28</sup> In order to assess some of these effects and allegedly their development, one may first discuss the labor market incorporation of Romanian migrants.

### **2.1 Labor market integration of the Romanian migrants abroad**

The labor market incorporation of immigrants not only influence their adaptation to countries of reception, but also their remitting behavior, use of remittances and return, as well as the gain or loss of human capital. One should first consider that the Romanian migration was widely diversified. At the beginning of 2000's about 34% of Romanian migrants had higher education significantly above the country's average, which was 10% at that time (Alexe et al. 2012). At the same time, many had little or no working experience and qualification in Romania (Alexe et al. 2012) as in 2008 29% respectively 24% of migrants living in Italy and Spain were inactive before migration. However, over the years this tendency may have changed as many of the large pool of unoccupied people (i.e., unemployed) effectively migrated. Thus, analyzing the occupational distribution of Romanian migrants, Andren and Roman (2016) mentioned that a relatively high proportion (52%) of all Romanian working migrants have an occupation that requires specialized skills (which might be gained through vocation training), while only 39% have occupations that require very little or no education at all.

On the other hand, Romanians who migrated to a non-EU country (mostly US and Canada) have occupations that require a higher level of education than of other migrants; these findings lead the authors to the conclusion that these emigrants are better educated compared to those who migrated both to south and north EU countries. Similarly, Ambrosini et al. (2012) reported that Romanian migrants and returnees are strongly affected by skill-related wage incentives. Countries that premium more high skills thus attract the better educated immigrants and induce the greatest benefits to their income and productivity. One

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<sup>28</sup> For instance, one such effect is easily noticeable in the Romanian case, where the large wave of remittances in 2000s was a temporary phenomenon only, later on remittances decreasing to less than half. Furthermore, depopulation of entire regions of the country will continue on the longer run.



may also hypothesize that these migrants are also more prone to acquire more social remittances such as knowledge and skills, which can be potentially used by the countries of origin.

The history of migration and establishment of social networks in certain countries help explaining the aforementioned country selectivity. Thus, considering the income of Romanian migrants, Andren and Roman (2016) also noticed that Romanian migrants have a lower income compared to other Balkan migrants (around 1,100 euro in the case of Romanian migrants from southern European countries, and 1,400 euro in the case of northern European countries). They explained this by a longer history of migration from Bosnia and Kosovo as opposed to Romania, having a much younger migration. “While, for instance, [from] Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo migration tends to be towards higher income countries in Northern Europe (e.g., Germany, Switzerland, Austria, the Nordic countries), the largest group of Romanians choose an EU member state from Southern Europe as a destination (particularly Italy and Spain), with much smaller groups having migrated to Northern Europe” (Andren and Roman 2016).<sup>29</sup>

Overall, Romanian migrants in Europe are primarily engaged in economic such construction (26%), domestic care (21%), manufacturing (12%) and agricultural sector (7%) or service industries (Soros 2011). A surprisingly high number of Romanian migrants describe themselves as being engaged in the informal sector: Mara (2012) reported that in Italy around 25% declare not to have a regular working contract and 60% of women worked without a contract, while 16% of men had no regular working contract. In Spain, most Romanians (regardless of gender) arrived prior to 2007 without legal status but legalized their status afterwards (Rodríguez-Planas and Vegas 2012). With respect to self-employment, Clark and Drinkwater (2008) reported that self-employment was an important route for Bulgarians and Romanians to the UK during 2000-2007, and the access to paid employment was restricted in their case.

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<sup>29</sup> If such statement holds true for Romanian citizens one shall not forget that the real number of migrants from Romania included very many holding German citizenship, thus not recorded as Romanians in the aforementioned data.

## 2.2 Remittances

In the past 15 years Romania was a top receiver of remittances worldwide. The sharply increasing remittance inflow after 2004 marked Romania as an important recipient of remittances, holding the fourth position worldwide in respect to the absolute level of transfers in 2008, accounting for 3.3% in terms of GDP (Andren and Roman 2016). As a relatively young and massive migration, Romanians used to send large amounts of money back home. Current debates on remittances focus on the one hand on the levels of remittances, their uses and potential development impact. One of the key findings worldwide is that the real amount of remittances is clearly underestimated (Anghel et al. 2015): in many cases researchers consider that the official flows approximate roughly half of the real amounts. Thus, even if we cannot apply this figure for the Romanian migration, one should not fail pointing out that the data on the Romanian remittances largely underestimate the real amounts.

Table 3. Remittance flows to Romania

Year	Amount*	Year	Amount
1991	17	2004	3,100
1992	80	2005	3,900
1993	89	2006	5,530
1994	153	2007	6,172 <sup>30</sup>
1995	237	2008	6,610
1996	436	2009	4,360
1997	456	2010	3,810
1998	623	2011	2,300 <sup>31</sup>
1999	535	2012	2,200 <sup>32</sup>
2000	861	2013	2,336 <sup>33</sup>
2001	1,031	2014	2,547 <sup>34</sup>
2002	1,612	2015	3,200
2003	2,028		

<sup>30</sup> Data from 2007 to 2010 from Alexe et al. (2012).

<sup>31</sup> Approximate data based on <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTECA/Resources/Romania.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> <http://de.tradingeconomics.com/romania/remittances>

<sup>33</sup> idem

<sup>34</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Tab2\\_Personal\\_remittances\\_total\\_inflows\\_to\\_the\\_EU-28\\_millions\\_EUR\\_2.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Tab2_Personal_remittances_total_inflows_to_the_EU-28_millions_EUR_2.png)

Source: Horvath and Anghel (2009), Alexe et al. (2012) and compiled from other sources<sup>35</sup>.

Thus, given the ratio between formal and informal transfers, Andren and Roman (2016) suggest that formal remittances tend to take on. The cost of sending money through formal channels has decreased in recent years, and the financial and banking culture of persons involved in the remitting process developed, making formal transfers more attractive. Thus, Romanian migrants mainly use money transfer operators such as Western Union and Money Gram, but also banks, credit unions and postal offices in both sending and receiving countries. Under such circumstances, remittances reached a peak of US \$9.4 billion in 2008, yet halved in the following two years, owing to the economic crisis and slow recovery. The decreasing tendency of remittances was partially due to the economic crisis in the southern Europe and to the process of family reunions, as a large part of Romanian migrants brought their families with them.<sup>36</sup>

Over time however, the remitting behavior and return intentions are positively correlated. Migrants with a higher propensity to remit are more connected to Romania and consequently generate higher expectations to return (Roman et. al 2012). However, most of the financial remittances are invested in consumption and just a portion of them is stored in banks.<sup>37</sup> Among the most consumed items it can be encountered home appliances (50%), 37% have extended / modernized their houses and 16% have bought automobiles.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, several studies showed that migrant remittances had influenced the labor market (Hreban 2015). In some cases, remittances sustained local economic development. Migration was an export of 'unemployment' and improved living conditions in many areas of Romania that were affected by deindustrialization and lack of jobs. In some cases it reduced

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<sup>35</sup> <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1199807908806/4549025-1450455807487/Factbookpart1.pdf>; Hreban (2015) based on the World Bank data.

<sup>36</sup> The level of family reunification of Romanian migrants living abroad is high, with an average size of households of 2.1 family members (FSR and IASCI, 2011).

<sup>37</sup> <http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/Romania.2515.0.html?&L=1>

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.ac-grenoble.fr/comenius/berges/Documents/Romania/The%20economical%20impact%20of%20migration%20in%20Romania%20CZ.pdf>

social inequalities<sup>39</sup>. Remittances were heavily influenced by the economic crisis, (see Roman and Goschin 2012) who characterized the remitting behavior of Romanian emigrants in crisis context. Weaving between the positive and negative effects, Suditu (2013) analyzed the effects of remittances and migration by highlighting the positive ones: surplus of cash resources, thus access to quality services, including private ones. It helped developing working relationships, attitude towards work, work habits, productivity, responsibility and innovative spirit. It also included the development of interpersonal relationships in the workplace and in the local community to support training and carry out for actions involving mutual benefit – charity. Besides those, he also underlined the negative ones - the substantial decrease in the national supply of labor, both quantitatively and qualitatively; limiting opportunities for reducing income differences from other countries and thus encouraging labor migration. Not having a focus on labor deficits in the country, we will however mention that a study in 2010 unfolded that 36 percent of the companies in Romania in 2010 reported labour shortages, while he most affected sectors are textile and clothing, constructions and hospitality (see also Andren and Roman 2014, Coste 2005, Sandu 2010, Suditu 2013).<sup>40</sup> More recently, social remittances are more and more in focus of migration research. Although the topic was not much discussed in the Romanian context, Nikolova et al. (2016) show that in the case of Romanian and Bulgarian migrants worldwide, having family and friends abroad is positively associated with pro-social behavior, a result that holds across different pro-social behaviors: donating, volunteering, and helping strangers. Similarly, Vlase (2013) shows that social remittances related to gender-equality norms are “brought back” by returnees from Italy. Heretofore we first discuss regional and demographic effects of migration and conclude with return migration and effects on entrepreneurship.

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<sup>39</sup> See for instance research reports of the Migrom project, *migrom.humanities.manchester.ac.uk*, as well as Duminičă and Ivasiuc (2013).

<sup>40</sup> See also <http://ftp.iza.org/dp8690.pdf> as well as <http://www.ac-grenoble.fr/comenius/berges/Documents/Romania/The%20economical%20impact%20of%20migration%20in%20Romania%20CZ.pdf>.

### 2.3 Regional and Demographic effects of Romanian migration at origin

The migration effects occur in home country as negative demographic (and social) consequences, which are hard to ignore. Ivan (2015) and Brădăţan (2014) show that migration is one of the most important factors of population decline in Romania, having further influences on family structure. Romanian migrants are generally young people: in 2010 the average age was of 34.6 years, and 62 percent of Romanians was at the age of fertility (Alexe et al. 2012). This had implication on age structure of the population and the demographic dynamics in the country. This demographic effect comes in a context where the demographic structure of the Romanian population was already deteriorating after 1990, with a yearly decrease of 0.2 percent annually. Between 2000 and 2009 there is a relative decrease of 21.5 percent of the age group of people less than 14 years (Alexe et al. 2012.).

This demographic effect however displays much regional diversity. Alexe et al. (2012) show that losses are greater in counties experiencing high international and internal migration rates and fertility losses (Botoşani, Vaslui, Buzău, Tulcea, Vrancea, Călăraşi, Giurgiu, Teleorman, and Olt). Other counties are able to compensate migratory losses with higher fertility rates (Suceava and Iaşi). In Western and Central regions population loss is somehow balanced by internal migration. Also, in counties affected by combined losses, these losses are more in the rural areas. At the regional level, in 2012 Alexe et al. accounted for the losses or gains due to external and internal migration as in the following table. Given the further development of the Romanian migration afterwards, one needs to update these estimates.

Table 4: Romania's regions according to their net migration loss and gain

Development regions (NUTS II)	Net (internal) migration loss/gain	External migration	Counties facing great losses due to migration
(1) North East	Significant loss	High rates (based on estimates)	Vaslui and Botoşani
(2) South East	Significant loss	High rates (based on estimates)	Tulcea and Vrancea
(3) South	Significant loss	Relative low rates	Teleorman and

		(based on estimates)	Giurgiu
(4) South West	Relatively balanced	High rates (based on estimates)	Olt to some degree
(5) West	Significant gain	Relative low rates (based on estimates)	Hunedoara to some degree
(6) North West	Relatively balanced	High rates (based on estimates)	Maramureş to some degree
(7) Centre	Moderate gain	Relative low rates (based on estimates)	
(8) Bucharest - Ilfov	Significant gain		

Source: Alexe et al (2012).

A second main demographic effect was on families, care and social support. When questioned if migration has a positive or negative impact on the family, the most Romanians answered positive (45.4%), while 30% believed that migration has a negative impact on the family and 24.1% were neutral. Women respondents are more convinced than men that migration has a negative impact on the family (Sănduleasa and Matei, 2015).

Children left behind are often considered a category at risk. In Romania, the first official data that monitors the phenomenon dates back to 2006, when almost 60000 children were registered as having at least one parent working abroad. According to these data reported by the Romanian Authority for Child Protection, the largest magnitude of this phenomenon was recorded in 2008, when the number of children left behind was higher than 92,000, representing 2 percent of the child population. Since then, their numbers have slightly decreased, recording in 2012 a value of 84,000.

But according to several studies, the data provided by the Romanian government are grossly underestimated. Only very few parents inform the authorities that they intend to migrate to work abroad, leaving their children at home. A study conducted by UNICEF (Toth et al 2008), for instance, estimates that in 2008 almost 350 000 children (from a total of 4.400.000 children aged 0-

18<sup>41</sup>) lived in migrant families. The same study also reports that nearly 400 000 children had at some point one or both parents working abroad. Another research conducted by the Soros Foundation in 2007 shows that 170 000 junior high school students (almost 20 percent of students enrolled in high school) had parents working outside Romania (Toth et al 2007).

Both official data and those estimated in the studies mentioned above reflect the dimensions of this phenomenon of the Romanian children left behind, which has been described in the media as “a national tragedy” (The New York Times, 2009).

The above mentioned research conducted by the Open Society Foundation (OSF 2007) unfolded that the most affected psychologically were those whose mothers or both parents were abroad. In a different paper, Roman and Voicu (2010) presented the recent labour migration flows and trends and the temporary abandonment of minors by their labour migrant parents. In empirical studies, Cruceru (2010) and Pescaru (2015) argued also that one of the most serious problem caused by Romanians migration abroad refers to the situation of children left behind, who are vulnerable to abuse, labour exploitation, lower school performances and early school leaving. However, the situation of these children is not overly dramatic. As Bădescu et al. unfold (2007), effects are diversified and on the average they do not perform less than children with both parents at home. In line with these results, Botezat and Pfeiffer (2014) show that in Romania home alone children receive higher school grades, partly because they increase their time allocation for studying. However, the children left behind are more likely to be depressed and more often suffer from health problems especially in rural areas. Robila (2010) also finds a high level of depression and that rates for girls are higher than for boys. However, she finds that acceptance of migration was important for children’s psychological well-being.

Finally, one may also point that migration postpones marriage and childbearing (Alexe et al 2012) which can also have demographic effects. As migrants tended to settle in the reception countries, migrants tended to bring their

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<sup>41</sup> Source: The National Institute of Statistics, Romania.

families and children with enrolling them into school. Thus if the situation of the children ameliorates due to their migration, the parents left behind started to experience lack of social support. Added that they experience deficit of access to welfare support, such as medical care, we shall conclude that they remain a very vulnerable category. In a context where the migration of health professionals is a widespread phenomenon<sup>42</sup>, parents left behind represent a category at risk whose needs were not researched so far.

#### **2.4 Return migration and migrant entrepreneurship<sup>43</sup>**

At the moment there is no clear evidence of the numbers and proportion of return migration to Romania and it is hard to make a comprehensive estimate, in principle due to the difficult distinction between different forms of return and circular migration. Thus some studies have tended to overestimate the real rates of return. One of the first extensive studies on return migration to Romania has argued that Romania has a relatively high rate of return (Ambrosini et al 2012: 5). The study argues that the median rate of return was close to one for every two migrants, while in other CEE countries it was 1.12 for every two migrants. This implies that every second migrant returned within a decade of his or her first departure, a surprisingly high figure for Romanian migration. However, the data was gathered between 2000 and 2002, when the Romanian migration was not that developed. This situation later changed when Romanians migrated to Italy or Spain, as Romanians tended to settle abroad more frequently in the following years.<sup>44</sup>

The debate on return intentions actually gained salience in the context of the economic crisis. Heather Rolfe et al. (2013: 16) highlighted the role of the crisis in shaping the return intentions of Romanian migrants. The survey in Madrid in 2008 established that 71 percent of Romanian migrants wished to

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<sup>42</sup> See the annex 1 with a data analysis.

<sup>43</sup> A portion of this report is taken from Anghel and Coşciug (2016).

<sup>44</sup> Usually, long-term settlement in Israel and Turkey was neither envisioned nor possible for Romanians. In 2002, Romanian citizens obtained freedom to travel within the EU and migration reoriented towards Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece. There, Romanians encountered conditions allowing labour migrants to work and settle legally. As a consequence, the number of Romanians moving to these countries started to grow and return rates dropped accordingly.



return, also mentioned that return intention was, however, not equivalent to actual return practice (Marcu 2011): of 71 percent wishing to return, only 42 percent declared that they definitely wanted to return, and 13 percent said they were sure they would return. Fourteen percent stated that they intended to return within a year, 33 percent within two to five years, and 15 percent in over five years. Another author pointed out that the likelihood of return to Romania was linked to migrants having relatives back home (Ibid.: 5). Besides, despite Romanians' increasing desire to return home from those countries affected by the economic recession, several studies found no clear evidence of large-scale return (Bărbulescu 2009: 16, Eurofound 2016: 6). A number of factors significantly shaped migrants' decisions: many migrant women had employment in care and cleaning and were less affected by the crisis (Stănculescu et al 2011: 15, Eurofound 2012: 11, Mara 2011: 34-40). At the same time, Romania too experienced a severe economic crisis. Instead of return, many migrants decided to remigrate to other West European country less affected by the crisis (Ferri and Rainero 2010: 21-25, Eurofound 2012: 16).

The share of Romanian returnees (including those who moved temporarily) was estimated at around 20 percent of the migrant population in several regions of Romania. Stănculescu and Stoiciu thus found that between 2009 and 2010, 26 percent of the households surveyed in these regions had at least one migrant member and 4.5 percent of them at least one returnee (Stănculescu and Stoiciu 2012: 71). The same study revealed that migrants who worked in agriculture tended to return more often than those working in other domains. Return rates were higher in poor regions that had experienced higher emigration rates. Another study in 2012 (Eurofound) found that Romanians from Italy and Spain tended to return more frequently, and that more men returned than women (Ibid.). Also, migrants over the age of 45 were more inclined to return, as well as those with low qualifications. Family was mentioned by 73 percent of returnees as their main reason to return. One in five intended to remain at home permanently while over half planned to migrate again. Finally, returnees addressed the adverse economic and social conditions in Romania.

Whereas men complained about poor work opportunities, women underlined that job opportunities for them were even worse and besides they were confronted by gender inequality in the family and society (Vlase 2011). Besides, studies in Romania have shown that returnees sometimes challenged prevailing gender inequality or undemocratic political ideas (Careja and Emmenegger 2012, Vlase 2011).

Considering the lack of jobs at home, entrepreneurship appeared to represent one of the main options for returnees (Stănculescu and Stoiciu 2012, Eurofound 2012: 36). Often, financial remittances help returnees to establish new lines of business when migrant entrepreneurs come back with new ideas and levels of professionalism (Batista et al. 2014). Emblematic examples are the IT specialists who have returned to India or the highly qualified returnees to China who have taken top positions in these emerging economies (Wescott 2006; Kale and Little 2007). Studies in Romania emphasize that often returnees aim at becoming entrepreneurs. Toth and Toth (2006: 49) had stressed that migrants have much higher propensity to become entrepreneurs than non-migrants. However, there are striking differences among the group of returnees: Oțeanu makes the difference between more successful and less successful returned entrepreneurs (Oțeanu 2007) while Anghel and Coșciug (2016) observe that migrants with longer migratory experience were much more successful in comparison to migrants with shorter migratory experience.

## **2.5 The economic and social effects of physicians' migration**

While an extensive body of literature documents the economic and social effects of high-skilled emigration on the source countries, such as the impact on human capital accumulation, labor productivity, remittances and wages (Beine et al. 2001; Gibson and McKenzie 2012; Cantore and Cali 2015;), the evidence on the effects of medical migration on the home country is rather scarce.

Generally, the impact of physician emigration can be analyzed in terms of costs and benefits for the source country. The financial cost of outflows of medical personnel is represented by the loss of the investment in medical

training in the case of those who migrate after graduation (Rutten 2009). Various representatives of the Romanian public opinion share the views that migration of Romanian medical doctors translates into the impossibility of recovering the higher costs with the public investment in medical education. Nevertheless, recent research shows that, when migration of physicians does not happen immediately after graduation, a higher share of training costs is already recovered before migration (Clemens 2011).

The remaining costs may be compensated through remittances, even though, in the case of medical doctors, the amount of the money sent back is rather low (Rutten 2009). This is due to the fact that physicians tend to migrate permanently and, consequently, remit less than the temporary migrants (Rutten 2009). Apart from this, they generally come from higher income families, where the need for remittances is rather low. However, regardless of the amount of remittances, Clemens (2011) highlights the multiplier effects of the remittances through the positive fiscal effects of corresponding spending in the country of origin. Thus, even if the amount of remittances is low, through various fiscal channels, the benefits from remittances might attenuate the detrimental effects of migration costs.

The exodus of medical personnel implies also health care shortages in the source country, which, in turn, might have negative effects on various health outcomes. For example, Bhargava et al. (2011) shows that a lower number of doctors per capita is negatively associated with infant and child mortality rates, but the effect is lower in magnitude. A higher significant effect was found by Bhargava and Docquier (2008) in the case of sub-Saharan African countries, where higher medical brain drain rates predicted higher adult mortality due to AIDS disease. Chauvet et al. (2009) reach the same type of conclusion, that medical brain drain has a significant negative impact on child mortality. Bhargava et al (2011) find also evidence that reducing physician brain drain might lead to an increase in vaccination rates, but the potential gains are small compared to the stated Millennium Development Goals (United Nations 2008).

Although there is a general consensus in the literature on the adverse effects of migration of skilled workers, particularly in sectors such as health and education, recent studies have also highlighted the beneficial effects of the brain drain on sending countries. For example, Beine et al. (2011) show that migration prospects among highly skilled individuals may induce significant investments in human capital prior to potential departure, by increasing the effort during the studies. This effect is especially high in the case of low-income countries, when the expected outcomes following migration are particularly large. In Romania, we also noticed in the last decade that an increasing number of students want to study medicine. According to the data provided by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics, the share of graduates in medicine at Romanian universities has been increasing steadily following Romania's accession to the European Union. Besides, entrance exams became much more selective than before. Because of extremely tough competition nowadays medical schools in Romania received more talented and determined and industrious students. Thus, the prospects of migration, especially in the health sector, might also have an impact on the enrollment rates at the medical schools and beyond.

### **3. Conclusions**

Based on the literature we worked on we may finally sketch a short profiling of the destination countries for Romanian migrants. Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal were countries that received mostly labor migrants, people working especially on the secondary labor markets. Germany has the most complex situation. There are ethnic Germans, often living in mixed families with Romanians; brain drain made by former students in the German universities, medical doctors, engineers, or IT specialists. Besides, there are labor migrants who settled there over longer periods of time and finally seasonal workers working within fix-term contracts. In the UK, France and Belgium as well migration was more complex than in the southern Europe, being made of brain drain and labor migrants and significant 'poverty migration'. In the past years also

the northern countries (Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway) received brain drain and some labor migrants. Countries from the Central and Eastern Europe received ethnic migrants (Hungary) or temporary labor migrants who often tended to return or re-migrate towards other European destinations, especially in Western Europe. Most of these countries received in the past years precarious but often mobile migrants.

The Romanian migration resulted in about 3 million Romanian citizens abroad (Eurostat 2016)<sup>45</sup>. Among these one may account for the people born in Romania and those who acquired Romanian citizenship after 1990, such as those born in the Republic of Moldova and other neighborhood countries. In 2006 already about 10% of Romanian households had at least one member that worked abroad (Sandu 2006). The number of Romanian migrants is however, difficult to estimate roughly due to the partial overlapping between recording and measuring stocks and flows. If measuring instruments are able to provide relatively accurate data on recent *flows* (based on surveys on households for instance, see Sandu 2006), data on *stocks* is often inconsistent due to the ways of registering the mobile population (especially for those holding dual nationality or for those moving to a third or fourth country). There is also very difficult to relate census and registry data cross-nationally. Besides, as there was in the case of the Romanian last censuses, there were serious difficulties to register the population data comprehensively due also to informal flows. Thus, the last Romanian census in 2002 accounted for a total population of 21,600,000 people, with only 159,426 emigrants. The same census mentions, surprisingly, 600,000 missing people at the time (Bădescu et al. 2007). Existing data show that more than 10% of the Romanian adult population participated in one or more episodes of temporary labor migration since 1990 (Sandu 2006). The census in 2011 accounted for a total number of 20,121,641 persons<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> See for instance [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/1/1c/Main\\_countries\\_of\\_citizenship\\_and\\_birth\\_of\\_the\\_foreign\\_foreign-born\\_population%2C\\_1\\_January\\_2015\\_%28%C2%B9%29\\_%28in\\_absolute\\_numbers\\_and\\_as\\_a\\_percentage\\_of\\_the\\_total\\_foreign\\_foreign-born\\_population%29\\_YB16.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/1/1c/Main_countries_of_citizenship_and_birth_of_the_foreign_foreign-born_population%2C_1_January_2015_%28%C2%B9%29_%28in_absolute_numbers_and_as_a_percentage_of_the_total_foreign_foreign-born_population%29_YB16.png)

For the latest data.

<sup>46</sup> [http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/statistici/comunicate/RPL/RPL%20rezultate%20definitive\\_e.pdf](http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/statistici/comunicate/RPL/RPL%20rezultate%20definitive_e.pdf)

In 2012 there were at least 430,000 Romanian citizens who migrated to Germany after 1977, 288,000 migrating after 1990.<sup>47</sup> Additionally, there were 263,000 applicants for asylum between 1990 and 1995, many of whom returned to Romania or migrated somewhere else in Europe. Data from the 2014 microcensus mentioned that there are today 209,000 ethnic Germans coming from Romania and that the total number of people born in Romania is of 593,000<sup>48</sup>, of which 345,000 are Romanian citizens (Eurostat 2016). In Italy, the Romanian resident population was of 890,000 persons (ISTAT) on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2010, while Pittau et al (2008) suggest already in 2008 figures up to 1,016,000 persons with shorter or longer stay in the Peninsula. Currently there are about 1,130,000 Romanian citizens in the country, out of which 1,016,000 were born in Romania. In 2012 estimates in Spain were of about 890,000 migrants.<sup>49</sup> Today there are registered 708,000 Romanian citizens, out of which 646,000 were born in Romania. Significant numbers are also in the UK with about 180,000 in 2015, Austria with 89,000. In Hungary<sup>50</sup> there were about 180,000 in 2010 and today there are 203,000 people born in Romania, only 28,600 being Romanian citizens. In 2010 there were recorded in France 74,000 immigrants born in Romania<sup>51</sup>. Portugal recorded 17,200 Romanian citizens in 2008<sup>52</sup> whereas today there are about 31,500. Greece<sup>53</sup> recorded 25,000 in 2006 and Denmark 19,000 in 2015.

In terms of social and economic effects, the report first addresses the labor market participation of Romanian migrants. By doing that, it better address the remitting behavior. We then followed with a short analysis of migrant

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<sup>47</sup> [www.bmi.bund.de/cln\\_012/Internet/Content/...Spaetaussiedler/Statistiken, /Aussiedlerstatistik.../Aussiedlerstatistik\\_seit\\_1950.pdf](http://www.bmi.bund.de/cln_012/Internet/Content/...Spaetaussiedler/Statistiken, /Aussiedlerstatistik.../Aussiedlerstatistik_seit_1950.pdf). Data on entries and exits show however higher figures, with entries exceeding exits at least with 320,000 between 1990 and 2007 (interview, BAMF Nuremberg).

<sup>48</sup> [https://www.destatis.de /DE/Publikationen/Thematisch /Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/Migrations\\_hintergrund\\_2010220147004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de /DE/Publikationen/Thematisch /Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/Migrations_hintergrund_2010220147004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

<sup>49</sup> See <http://extranjeros.mtin.es/es/InformacionEstadistica/> for the residence in the 30.09.2010.

<sup>50</sup> See Gödri and Toth (2005).

<sup>51</sup> [http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau\\_local.asp?ref\\_id=IMG\\_1B&millesime =2011& niveau =2&nivgeo =FE&codegeo=1](http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau_local.asp?ref_id=IMG_1B&millesime =2011& niveau =2&nivgeo =FE&codegeo=1). Given the history of the Romanian migration to France last for over 60 years, there should be also added the number of those who received French citizenship at least after 1990. Thus, the overall data should be much bigger.

<sup>52</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estatística, [www.ine.pt](http://www.ine.pt).

<sup>53</sup> [www.statistics.gr](http://www.statistics.gr).

remittances and their development over the past years. One may notice that remittances were influenced by the crisis in the Southern Europe and family reunions. We further discussed the issue of return migration stressing that so far there is not much return, however pointing towards one of the positive outcomes of return: the emergence of returnees' entrepreneurship. We concluded unfolding the demographical involution of Romania with some regions particularly affected, as well as mentioning some secondary social problems generated by the contemporary Romanian migration.

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