
THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ROMANIAN EMIGRANTS TO THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE RECEIVING COUNTRIES

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Abstract: The international migration phenomenon has become, over the last century, global both in its size and consequences. Among the perspectives from which it is being analyzed, we believe that the study of the effects it has on the sending and receiving communities is essential in order to understand the way it influences societies and the relations among states. Romanian immigrants bring their share of contribution to the communities they choose to work and live in, despite the unfair image created by some journalists. Therefore, starting from the data collected by specialized European institutions, and based on the information provided by studies performed in some of the destination countries, we aim to prove the way in which immigrants from Romania contribute to the social and economic development of the receiving communities.

Key-words: *immigration, society, employment, integration, economy.*

The beginning of the new millennium has brought along the globalization and internationalization of population displacements, due to changes in the state of equilibrium that existed until that moment on a global scale. The deteriorating economic situation of under-developed states has generated an exodus from these areas. On the other hand, the new rules in international law have facilitated the movement of people, capital and services. Increased birth rates in poor regions of the planet and its decline in the more economically developed ones causes a new kind of social pressure that is reflected on the situation of international migration.

Space mobility is not a new characteristic of the individuals. The news is being represented by the current context that influences the occurrence of distinct mobility patterns. In the age of globalization and extended means of communication, migratory movements of individuals are no longer definitive, but, in exchange, we witness a new type of migration, much more flexible: temporary, circulatory, depending on the season¹.

The growing importance of migration in the economic and social landscape of the European Union has grown along with the eastern expansion, the freedom of movement regarding persons and work force being a component of the formation of the internal market of the Union, correlated with the freedom of movement of capitals, products and services. The problems issued by this phenomenon of international migration brought along on the European level, but also in each of the member states, the need to adopt common policies able to manage relevant flows of people and resources.

In an effort to ensure consistency of EU policy on migration, the European Commission drafted, in November 2011, a document entitled *The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility*². This concept integrates migration, external relations and

¹ Romelia Călin, Radu Gabriel Umbreș, *Efectele migrației*, Editura Lumen, Iași, 2006, p. 21.

² Comisia Europeană, *Comunicare a Comisiei către Parlamentul European*, Consiliu, Comitetul Economic și Social și Comitetul Regiunilor, *Abordarea globală în materie de migrație și mobilitate*, Bruxelles, 2011.

development policy addressing The Migration Agenda in a comprehensive and balanced manner, in relation to the European Union's partnership with third countries. Global Approach to Migration is the most consistent and concrete manifestation of the close relationship between the Justice and Home Affairs institutions and the External Relations of the European Union, defining the appropriate means and tools through which the Union can meet the challenges of the current international environment, from the migration perspective.

Despite the benefits of immigration, public and the policymakers at the destination country usually believe that immigration can become an economic burden, as immigration is feared to lead to loss of jobs, heavy burden on public services, social tension and increased criminality (despite the evidence to the contrary). The main channels for negative economic outcome for the destination countries are increased job competition that allegedly brings down the wages for the locals, and the increased fiscal burden for caring for a growing population of immigrants. Incoming migrants need to be integrated into the labor force, which intensifies the competition for existing jobs. Especially in times of economic downturn, the general public and the policymakers tend to become more worried about the potential adverse impact of immigration on natives' opportunities, and immigrants can be used as scapegoats to blame for rising unemployment even though no strong evidence exists to show that immigrants take natives' jobs. A common worry is also a downward pressure on salaries caused by an influx of migrant workers. Still, in the OECD countries the aggregate effect of immigration on wages has been found to be very small both in the short run and in the long run, and similar findings in the context of South-South migration has been confirmed by Ratha and Shaw (2007). Simulations from a general equilibrium model by van der Mansbrugghe and Roland-Holst (2009) suggest that reducing migration will not necessarily result in higher wages for native workers in receiving countries, since lower levels of migration will also lower the relative return to capital, which in turn will put downward pressure on wages.

Integration and adaptation to a community distinct from the one of origin, means, for any individual, a considerable amount of effort. Despite this, there are elements that facilitate this process, and among these, sharing values, history, habits or common language elements are considered to be key issues. Thus, it is undeniable that among the foreigners who arrived in a country, it is easiest to adapt for those who have relatives, ancestors, or any kind of previous connections with this country. Moreover, many of them have significant contributions to the development of the society they arrive in through the range at which it operates.

The case of the Romanian Immigrants in Germany

In Germany, Romanian citizens are among the qualified and well-integrated groups of immigrants. It is true that the qualifications of immigrants from EU-28 countries is somewhat lower than that of immigrants from EU-8 countries, but is also higher than the level of qualification of the citizens from southern European countries that are established in Germany.³ According to the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW), the

³ DIW, *Zuwanderung und Beschäftigung, (Imigrația și ocuparea forței de muncă)*, DIW – raport săptămânal nr. 39 2013, Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, Berlin, p. 13.

qualification of immigrants from EU-2 countries has worsened in recent years. While among the Romanians and Bulgarians who came to Germany before 2007, only 36% had a professional qualification, among those coming since 2007 this proportion rises to 46%, 33% of the latter have a qualification, and 21 % are graduates⁴. By age, the best represented is the group of people aged between 25 and 35 years (average age: 33 years) and the average length of stay in Germany for that category is 5-6 years⁵. The Romanians and Bulgarians seeking work in EU countries are working mainly in constructions (21.2%), private households and home care (17.5%) and in hotels and gourmet (14.2%) (EC 2011). Among immigrants, 14% fail to get a job abroad with a skill level higher than in the land of origin, 22% remain at the same level of qualification, while 22% work in the destination country with a lower level posts qualifications, and 36% had not had any occupation in Romania⁶.

On the issue of the level of integration and adaptation to the German society, the Federal Minister for Labour and Social Affairs of Germany, Andrea Nahles said:

"I noticed that in Germany there are a number of workers from Romania who are very well integrated in the labor market there and in German society. I would like to reconfirm this. Sure there are in Germany a number of demographic challenges, for which we enjoy the presence of labor from Romania, which actively helps to stabilize the labor market ".⁷

According to information provided by the media, in the last 20 years, 20,000 to 30,000 physicians had left the country. According to statistics published by the German weekly DIE ZEIT, most foreign doctors working in Germany are Romanian. After OECD data, in Romania, a total of 1,000 inhabitants lies a number of active physicians 2.4. Thus, Romania is in this statistic, together with Slovenia, very slightly behind the UK (2.7 doctors per 1,000 inhabitants) and ahead of Poland (2.2 doctors), ranking second to last in the European Union (average EU: 3.4; in Germany: 3.7).

Romanian citizens, also citizens of the European Union, leave Romania preferably for those countries where they can expect to find work or where they already have personal contacts, therefore not in the countries where welfare systems are more developed. The assertion that there is a positive correlation between migration movements and the high level of unemployment in the country of destination, so that it would conduct a "tour to the German system of social protection" can not be proven empirically, by the Romanian migrants . The same situation applies on the case of internal across the EU⁸.

In Germany, the Romanians are well integrated in the labor market. Compared with the average immigrants from other Eastern states of the EU (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) and to those from Southern European Member

⁴ Ibidem, p. 15.

⁵ Oficiul Federal de Statistică, date oficiale la 31.12.2012.

⁶ Manuel Sofia Stănculescu, Victoria Stoiciu, *Impactul crizei economice asupra migrației forței de muncă din România*, Editura Paideea, București, 2012, pp. 54-58.

⁷ *Ministrul Muncii german: Romanii care lucreaza in Germania ajuta la stabilizarea pietei fortei de munca*, în Revista 22, ediție online din data 2.10.2014, disponibilă la <http://www.revista22.ro/ministrul-muncii-german-romanii-care-lucreaza-in-germania-ajuta-la-stabilizarea-pietei-fortei-de-munca-48244.html>

⁸ Corrado Giulietti, Martin Guzi, Martin Kahanec, Klaus F. Zimmermann, *Unemployment Benefits and Immigration: Evidence from the EU*, IZA Discussion Paper No 6075, Institut zur Zukunft der Arbeit, Bonn, 2011, p. 34.

States (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain), Romanians have the highest rate of employment of the workforce, rising to 60.2%. Unemployment among Romanians in Germany, which reaches 5.3%, is below average compared to the entire population of Germany (6.7%) and well below the average reported in the foreign population in general (14.7%).

In their capacity as citizens of the European Union, Romanians residing in Germany were in principle entitled to child benefit and if they meet certain conditions and have previously worked on jobs where they stopped paying social contributions, they have the right to receive a help of unemployment type I (Arbeitslosengeld I) and regulated by the Financial support Social Code (SGB II - Hartz IV). Financial support SGB II type not usually granted within three months after arriving in Germany. It is now legally controversial to what extent foreigners coming from the EU are unemployed in Germany are entitled to receive SGB II. In their recent jurisprudence, several German courts specializing in the particular case of social exclusion of EU citizens consider financial support type SGB II as a breach of European law. Compared with the overall foreign population in Germany, German Romanians who demand only the small proportion benefits. Currently, 7.4% of Romanians receiving financial support in accordance with SGB II. This figure is slightly below the national average German citizens receiving social assistance (7, 5%) and markedly below average for fully foreign population (16.2%)⁹. Romanian citizens share in total number of beneficiaries of social aid type SGB II in July 2013 reached a rate of 0.3%¹⁰.

The above figures on the successful integration of Romanian citizens on the labor market in Germany seem to be in contradiction with the problems that are being by some German municipalities when it comes to immigration from Romania and Bulgaria (eg Congress Cities in Germany in 2013)¹¹. Figures provided by the German Institute for the Study of Labour Market and Professions (IAB) show that Romanians' labor market situation differs from the average federal level in some places marked by a weak infrastructure. The Romanian unemployment rate rose to 18.7% in Duisburg, in Berlin to 21.6% and 19.3% in Dortmund. Even these figures are alarming but, while they are visibly under the average unemployment rate among foreigners living in these three cities. The figures show, however, that in these areas the inclusion is less good than the average across Germany.

The results of a study conducted by the Institute for Labour Market and Vocational Research in Nuremberg shows that after the cancellation of restrictions on the employment of migrants in Germany, the share of Romanians and Bulgarians with jobs increased by 14%. The number of Romanians and Bulgarians who have found work is higher than those who arrived in Germany since then. So something has not existed in Germany's economic history, therefore, both the labor market and social systems ending restrictions was a success. Moreover, one of the specialists who worked to conduct this study stated that *"Romanians are among the most integrated ethnic groups in Germany. They are much better integrated than all other ethnic groups from the countries that joined the EU in 2004. They are even better integrated than the Spanish and Italians. They are comparable with the*

⁹ Ibidem, p. 8.

¹⁰ Mathias Jobelius, Victoria Stoiciu, *Mitul „turismului social” Migrația cetățenilor români către Germania și alte state membre ale UE*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Berlin, 2014, p. 6.

¹¹ ASMK, *Abschlussbericht der Bund-Länder-Arbeitsgemeinschaft »Armutswanderung aus Osteuropa*, in *Ergebnisprotokoll der 90. Arbeits- und Sozialministerkonferenz*, Magdeburg, noiembrie 2013, pp. 140-188.

Americans, the French and the British who live in the Federal Republic. Among Romanians, unemployment is lower than among Germans. In fact, we found problems with this Romanian concerns. The Bulgarian unemployment rate is two times higher than among Romanians. The share of Bulgarians who receive social benefits is three times higher than the Romanians. We believe this is because from Bulgaria came different social groups than from Romania".¹²

The flawed economic structure and employment also influences the level of income. After nearly 25 years of transition, the average monthly salary in Romania does not exceed the gross amount of 2,278 RON, the equivalent of 506 euros (in Germany: 3391 Euro). It is estimated that approx. 70% of employees earn less than the average wage. Approximately 900,000 people earn minimum wage, around the amount of 200 Euro per month gross (900 RON). The low level of salaries is one of the reasons that Romania, along with Bulgaria, is the greatest risk of poverty in the EU. EU-8 comprises eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004: the Czech Republic, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Poland. EU-2 is countries that joined the EU in 2007: Romania and Bulgaria. The EU-15 Member States designated the group as part of the EU even before the two enlargements of 2004 and 2007.

According to the data provided by the European Statistical Office, 42% of the Romanians are living under the threat of poverty or social exclusion. In the Eurobarometer, 58% of the Romanians surveyed described their financial situation as poor (the EU average: 35%). Social protection systems can offset this situation. Public health system, for example, is underfunded, inefficient, and also marked by corruption. Of all EU countries, Romania has the lowest budget expenditure in public health, is the second lowest life expectancy and here is recorded the highest rate of infant mortality.¹³ All these poor social and economic conditions, compared with the European average, are leading to the departure of many Romanians abroad in search of better occupational prospects and higher incomes. In this sense, the motivation is the same for people who have low qualifications as for those with higher education, those with low wages and those with better incomes. Therefore, Romanians fleeing their country are not "immigrants driven by poverty", but people who rightly feel entitled to believe that in better economic and social conditions, they can make better use of their skills and qualifications. In this sense, these people make use of their right as EU citizens, to reside and work in another Member State.

According to the Euro barometer surveys¹⁴, the freedom of movement is perceived by Europeans as the most important achievement of the European Union, ranking better than introducing the euro, achieving economic prosperity or peace. However, European citizens have not benefited from this right to the extent that they were expected.

¹² *Minoritatea română din Germania, una din cele mai bine integrate*, în cotidianul Deutsche Welle, 10.02.2015, disponibil la <http://www.dw.de/minoritatea-rom%C3%A2n%C4%83-din-germania-una-din-cele-mai-bine-integrate/a-18246634>

¹³ Matthias Jobelius, Victoria Stoiciu, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

¹⁴ European Commission, *Geographical and Labour Market Mobility. Report. Special Eurobarometer 337 / Wave 72.5 — TNS Opinion & Social*, 2010.

When the freedom of movement was initiated 60 years ago, it was intended to encourage workers to cross borders in order to provide necessary temporary workforce in the industrial sector severely affected by the war. Now a considerable number of Europeans use this right. In 2009, through a Eurobarometer 27,000 people in the EU were surveyed on their experiences and intentions of mobility. The report, released in 2010 indicates that European citizens of the Member States that joined recently are more likely to be motivated to work abroad and the choice of the future destination countries is based on economic considerations, while people in the older Member States rather take into account specific factors related to lifestyle and cultural aspects in their decisions to migrate.

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