

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF IMMIGRANTS' INTEGRATION IN ROMANIA

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***Abstract:** In the last decade, Romania has seen a positive and slightly oscillating trend in terms of immigration, being recognised as a transit country. Before 2004, the number of immigrants in Romania was relatively small, especially from the Republic of Moldova, Turkey and China. After joining the European Union, Romania enters the circuit of intra-community mobility. Immigration policy focused on the phenomenon of immigration of third-country nationals, representing around 0.3% of the total population. The integration of immigrants into Romania is the result of a dynamic ratio between the collective dimension, put into value through expectations, social norms characteristic of society as a whole, and the individual size, whereby the immigrant must meet a cumulation of normal standards in society. The reality has led to a paradigm shift in addressing immigrants' integration policies in Romania, with the centre of gravity moving from equal treatment to immigrants to ensuring equal opportunities and access to all areas (economic, social, cultural) and participation in civil and political life.*

***Key words:** migration, immigration, migration policy, Romania.*

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### 1. Introduction

International migration affects almost all regions of the world. Over time, migration has borne a transformation, given by the international context, becoming, from a regional phenomenon, a global phenomenon. The migration phenomenon is quantification in about 3% of the world's total population (Constantinescu, 2008, p.249). This percentage has been maintained for the last 10 years.

The phenomenon structure the contemporary world, observing multiple relationships and implications, which make this phenomenon one of major importance for both states and individuals involved. Of these implications, economic-social ones are of particular importance. Migration and migrants do not only contribute to the economic growth of countries. Migration makes it possible to contact people with different traditions, habits and beliefs. This creates the prerequisites for a continuous development of the society in which we live.

Immigration is a reality of our day, the consequence of multiple discrepancies that exist between political systems, security, demographic situation and the economy of different countries. Officially, Romania is a transit country for immigrants, namely a source for international migration. In the last decade, as a result of economic, political and social developments, Romania has seen a positive and slightly oscillating trend in terms of immigration. From this point of view, research on immigration to Romania enjoys a special interest.

### 2. Conceptual framework on migration and immigration

Currently, the literature defines a multitude of terms specific to the phenomenon of migration. The author Rentea Georgiana-Cristina operates with the following concepts (Rentea, 2013, pp.122-125):

- Migration is the process of displacement of the individual, involving space (in terms of boundaries that they must cross), time (period spent outside the country of origin), purpose (economic, studies, family reunification, humanitarian protection);
- The migrant is the migrating person, who moves from place to place, without necessarily establishing themselves in a specific place;

- Emigration is the process of shifting the individual, departing from his country to another country, to live and work;
- The emigrant is the person who leaves for a country to live and work; for the country of destination, he is an immigrant;
- Immigration is the process of entering individuals within the boundaries of a state, with the intention of establishing themselves for a certain time, depending on the purpose pursued;
- The immigrant is the person who comes from a non-EU country and has voluntarily chosen Romania as a country of destination for work, business, studies, family reunification;
- Third-country national (RTT) means any person who is not a national of one of the member states of the European Union;
- The refugee is the person whose country of origin is outside the European Union, has forcibly left and obtained a form of protection in Romania, following the assessment by the competent authorities of the asylum application.

According to authors Erdeli et al. (1999, p.194), migration is "the process by which people change definitively or temporarily their place of residence". International migration is also defined as taking place outside the borders of a state, being motivated by the great economic disparities between states (Erdeli et al., 1999, p.194).

International migration theories help us better understand the causes that have been the basis of the migration process, explaining the migration of individuals from both macro and micro perspective. None of the theories can be considered complete, each with its own limitations, because "migration is too diverse and varied to be explained by a single theory" (Arango, 2000, pp.283-296).

The conceptualisation of migration has been accomplished over time by issuing theories, which are based on economic reasoning. A better understanding of the migration process can be achieved by calling on more disciplines and on a multi-level analysis (individual, group, national and international). The merit of having formulated the first set of deterministic rules on migration rests with Ernst Georg Ravenstein, who, between 1876 and 1885, tried to theorize international migration. His approach is later followed by Wilbur Zelinsky, who, in the work of "The hypothesis of The Mobility Transition" (1971), attempted to conceptualise migration as a stage development, generated by the modernisation of companies and the entry into the circuits international economic activities.

The most important researcher of the migratory phenomenon, Douglas Massey, appreciates: "International migration does not have its root in the absence of growth and economic development, but in the development itself". The author also speaks of a "migration culture", considering that the migration process brings changes in terms of social mobility and the lifestyle of immigrants.

After John Richard Hicks (1932), migration is mainly generated by the salary gap of workers from different economic spaces within the national states. Thus, migration is a redistribution of workers based on labour needs from poor in capital, but rich in labour, to capital-rich, but poor in the labour force. It relates to the importance of economic factors (from the country of origin and destination) in the triggering of the migration process.

Following the authors of Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) and Massey and Denton (1993), migration is given by globalisation and the penetration of markets beyond national borders.

Joppke (2001) defines migrants, who are citizens of the European Union, as privileged, compared to those in third countries. Migrants from third countries can benefit

from indirect rights at EU level due to the quality of family member of a European Union citizen and the bilateral international treaties. In the category of foreigners, citizens of the European Union have become increasingly invisible compared to the majority population. They no longer evodo inferiority complexes (Diechl and Blohm, 2003, pp.133-162).

The different application of the European Union's legislation, depending of the category of migrants, may constitute a source of discriminatory inequalities and practices. The most affected are illegal migrants, temporary residence migrants, who, because of their purpose, are ineligible for permanent stay (seasonal workers), migrants whose right of residence has been granted for family reunification purposes (Rentea, 2013, p.89).

### **3. Immigrants' integration in Romanian society**

Migration is a reality of our day. It is part of the daily life, requiring an analysis, an approach to the particularities of each category of migrants. It is a continuous, hard to manage and accurately measured phenomenon.

No state in the world has remained outside international migratory flows, with the quality of either country of origin, transit or destination for migrants or all three attributes simultaneously. It has been concluded that through effective management, migration and immigration can play a key role in the development and reduction of poverty, with clear advantages, which could be increased, and disadvantages, which could be minimised.

Migration should not be regarded as a negative aspect. It can contribute significantly to cultural exchange, economic development and progress of the host society, development of entrepreneurship, modernisation, remittances, diminishing unemployment, effects in the regional development plan, as can benefits to countries of origin and families of migrants. The negative effects, for host countries, are: impaired social unity, increased xenophobia, employment of indigenous people, decreased wages, imposing increased burdens on the social protection system.

Therefore, migration must be seen as a process to be managed and not as a problem that needs to be resolved. The consequences of migration to the source countries are immediate and long-term, since the highly qualified and qualified workforce is leaving, defending an imbalance in the labour market. As regards the consequences of migration on the country of destination, they manifest themselves in the long term.

Officially, Romania is recognised as a transit country for immigrants, i.e. a source country for international migration. Romania plays the role of transit country for migratory flows from the Eastern states, on their way to Western countries, with a high level of economic development. But Romania also becomes a country of destination. Romania's accession to the European Union and the tendency to increase living standards are factors of interest to migrants.

As a result of economic, political and social developments, Romania, in the last decade, has recorded a positive and slightly oscillating trend in terms of immigration. In the next period, the attractiveness of Romania will grow and transform itself into an immigration country. The posture of the country of immigration is not a negative aspect. Immigration can contribute significantly to the cultural exchange, economic development and progress of the Romanian society. It is expected to increase the number of immigrants to cover the shortage of labour and skills shortages in Romania.

The main objective of the Romanian authorities is to maximise the positive effects and limit the negative effects of immigration for our country and Romanian citizens. In this context, the Romanian authorities with powers in the field of migration undertake measures to streamline the management of immigrants' integration. The importance of these measures is all the more so that Romania is standing at the Eastern frontier of the European Union. There is a need to have good cooperation between authorities and

efficient management of human, financial and logistical resources in order to create a modern institutional and legislative framework in the field of migration and asylum.

The responsibility of the Romanian state is to establish clearly the categories of migrants that can be admitted and can be established on national territory, according to national interests, but in close correlation with the programmatic policies and documents adopted at European Union level, as well as respecting the rights of migrants. In addition, the Romanian State continues to adopt pragmatic measures to prevent and combat illegal immigration and removal from the national territory of migrants who no longer fulfil the legal conditions of residence (Stoica, 2014, p.92).

In Romania, services and assistance on the integration of immigrants are not entirely satisfactory, despite the efforts undertaken in recent years to align with international standards. The immigration integration policy in Romania involves equal treatment of immigrants, ensuring equal opportunities and access to all areas of economic, social, cultural and political life. The integration of immigrants into the Romanian society is real, and it is possible in the context of aligning national policies on immigration to the level of European policies to manage this phenomenon.

Immigrants arriving in Romania are hitting a lot of obstacles, including the unconsciousness of the Romanian language or an international language of movement, the lack of some of the citizens to communicate with and live, local customs, culture, unknown of Romanian law. Adaptation is much easier and faster when the immigrant has relations and connections with its own community (ethnic, national or religious).

In general terms, the process of integrating immigrants consists in knowing the language of the host country, access to the education system and the labour market, the possibilities of increasing professional mobility by raising the level of education and qualification equality before the law, cultural and religious freedom, respect for the laws and traditions of the country in which they live (Stoica, 2014, p.51).

The integration of immigrants into Romania is the result of a dynamic ratio between the collective dimension, put into value through expectations, social norms characteristic of society as a whole and the individual size, whereby the immigrant must meet a cumulation of normal standards in the new society (to respect the law, to have a job, to speak the language, etc.). Thus, the immigrant must voluntarily adhere to the values, beliefs shared in that collectivity, becoming similar in thought and behavior to the members of the society in which they want to live and work.

For the host society, the integration of migrants involves tolerance and openness, the agreement to receive immigrants, understanding the advantages and challenges of multicultural societies, providing unhindered access to information on the benefits integration, tolerance and intercultural dialogue, respect for and understanding of the condition, traditions and culture of immigrants, respect for the rights of immigrants.

Before 2004 in Romania, the number of immigrants was relatively small, especially from the Republic of Moldova, Turkey and China. Following accession to the European Union, Romania entered the circuit of intra-community mobility, immigration policy focusing on the phenomenon of immigration of third-country nationals.

According to General Inspectorate for Immigration, on 31 December 2016, in Romania there were 64891 foreigners from third states, with legal residence, of which: for family reunification – 27903; for studies – 14815; for work – 5611; persons with a form of protection – 2903; persons with long-term stay (with home in Romania) – 11140. Alongside Slovenia and Slovakia, Romania has the lowest percentage of immigrants in the EU, namely 0.3% of the total population.

#### **4. Perspectives for migration and immigration**

Globalization is expected to intensify international migration in the 21st century. This evolution will put its mark on the characteristics of future migratory systems. Current international migration is the result of social disparities between different regions of the globe and the realities of labour markets in the most industrialised countries. The countries of destination of international migration are very involved in this process, providing conditions and circumstances in which international migration survives, and even flourishes.

Immigration for better economic conditions remains a constant, but it is not necessary to ignore the potential of forced immigration, which records an upward trend. People will be motivated to emigrate to protect themselves or their families or to escape from the economic downturn of the society they live in. International immigration is determined by political, social and cultural rigidity or violation of human rights, but also by the failure of the governments of the source countries to solve the social problems of their citizens.

Other factors stimulating international migration are:

- Migration tradition – the existence of political, social and economic relations between countries of origin and destination, which also include encouraging this phenomenon;

- The global expansion of the services sector – migration from developing countries to those developed will continue, as the need for skilled force in the services sector requires this;

- Subsidies granted by developed states to farmers – labour migration prepared to developed countries with high-performance agriculture;

- Massive cross-border migrations due to trends in fragmentation of some countries;

- Decreasing the birth rate in developed countries – current projections indicate a decline in the population in developed countries; The simulations show that in order to compensate for the decline of Europe's workforce after 2020 and to maintain the level of employment consistently, four million immigrants are needed annually. The admission rate in Europe is about one million immigrants annually. Demographic changes will be carried out for the most part thanks to international migration; a partial resolution of this problem would consist in increasing the retirement age in these countries, by applying coherent employment policies, reforms in pension systems and increasing labour productivity;

- Ageing of the population in developed countries – ageing of the active population and increasing life expectancy lead to an unprecedented increase in the elderly population in developed countries.

The intensity of the challenges and the moment of their production will depend on the internal and regional context. The tendency to increase these stimuli, at least for the next decade, is real, the result being predictable. No country will be immune to the effects of the transition. The world will look different for over 30-40 years.

This foresight is based on the realities of past times. In the year 1800, Europe had 20% of the world's billion population, and Africa only 8% of this population. In the year 2000, the population of the two continents was roughly equal (Europe had 728 million, and Africa 800 million). Projections for the year 2050 indicate a population of 660 million in Europe (representing 7% of the world's population at that time) and 1.8 billion in Africa (20% of the world's population) (Stoica, 2011, p.152).

From a purely economic point of view, the transformation of countries from premises of origin to destination premises for international migration will take place only in a small number of cases; developing countries that have achieved this leap have been

able to seize the low cost of labour and intensive exports to the workforce. The majority of developing countries will, however, suffer negative effects associated with development processes and will increase the export of short-term work.

Increasing demographic, economic and security differences between world states and regions and the expansion of modern technologies in communications and transport will foster international migration, will help to strengthen the role of network migrants and reducing the costs of international migration. In this context, there are prerequisites for reconsidering the perception of international migration, in the sense of its transformation into a process that is largely carried out randomly. This process involves a very large budget, employing all the states of the world. The biggest challenge of the 21st century is how migration is guided in the interests of the security of states, but also of individuals.

With regard to the dynamics of immigrant flow, the natural growth of immigrant numbers is being forecast. In view of Romania's accession to the Schengen area, serious immigration management issues will arise. Romania will become extremely attractive to all categories of immigrants, both for legal and illegal immigration.

For proper management of the phenomenon, the necessity of Romania's endowment with equipment and technology at local and regional level, the preparation of human resources from all institutions of local and regional ability, appears.

## 5. Conclusions

Migration is part of everyday life. It is a continuous, hard to manage and accurately measured phenomenon.

In the situation of Romania, given the lack of previous experience in this field, the still small number of immigrants, refugees and limited financial possibilities, it is found that the integration services and assistance are not entirely satisfactory, in despite the efforts undertaken in recent years to align with international standards.

Globalization is expected to intensify international migration in the 21st century. Evolution will put its mark on the characteristics of future migratory systems. Current international migration is the result of social disparities between different regions of the globe and the realities of labour markets in the most industrialised countries. The countries of destination of international migration are very involved in this process, providing conditions and circumstances in which international migration survives, and even flourishes.

As for the dynamics of the immigration flow, there are expectations for a "natural growth" of the number of immigrants. In view of Romania's accession to the Schengen area, serious immigration management issues will arise. In this context, the efforts of institutions with powers to regulate immigration and the prevention of illegal immigration are required to be more closely concerted.

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