

The Dynamics of Population Emigration from Romania - Contemporary and Future Trends

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Abstract—The migration, as a socio-demographic process, concerns the movements of a person outside his community of residence within a given reference period, aimed to change his domicile or place in which they operate. It is also a complex, multinational process, which can not be measured and controlled at national level, but through effective management, focused on the welfare of those involved and on the main feature of the process of migration: mobility. In this context, the emigration policies of states are changing according to the dynamic of the world economy, to political change, and also with the influence of various factors, either social or natural. Thus, the present study, is taking into account the migration flows of the Romanian population, both before 1989 and especially after that date, and the migration policy and legislation of Romania and, implicitly, of the European Union.

Keywords—emigration, migration, migration flows, Romania.

I. INTRODUCTION

ISSUES regarding external migration from Romania are currently characterized by two dimensions related to the recent history: first, the years before 1989 (defined at political and social level by the communist regime), and secondly, the current period (the years after the events of December 1989, with multiple political and legislative changes), this long period of time being perceived as a “transition” never crossed by the nation.

In terms of historical sources, we can speak of early emigration processes from Romania’s present-day territory since the late nineteenth century.

Europe has been and will be a continent in which there are manifested significant migration flows, diversely directed; Europe is also a destination of such migration flows.

In the past 30 years, the European migration policies had a strongly restrictive nature, they being changed after 1990, when openness was promoted, together with a high degree of acceptance of immigrants from different world countries.

On the other hand, the population decline, in combination with professional qualifications - at European level - will result in a decline of the working age population in perspective, in the continent. In this respect, solutions must be found to eliminate this socio-economic phenomenon. This is where the European Union (EU) expresses its policy flexibility to address the issues of working age people from different countries.

The external migration from Romania, as an EU member, recorded a higher magnitude since Romania is at the eastern

borders of this multi-state formation. Within the literature devoted to these topics, one can notes the references related to forced and voluntary migration, with repercussions on immigration policies in different functional states of the European Community and beyond.

II. HISTORICAL ASPECTS REGARDING EMIGRATION FROM ROMANIA

A historical overview of emigration from Romania to the West can be made starting from the late nineteenth century. In this context, it is noteworthy to emphasize that by 1914, according to some sources, would have passed across the Atlantic Ocean over 239,000 people of Romanian origin, most focusing on the U.S. and Canada, the rest of them going to Argentina and Brazil. It was a massive voluntary migration, with a temporary character, as the Romanian emigrants hoped that they would earn more money and it will be possible to return to the country.

Moreover, the post-1880 period historiography has been exhibited an increased emigration, especially overseas, from Transylvania and Banat. Among the emigrants, 28.2% were Saxons and Swabians (especially those from rural space), Hungarians (19.7%), Ruthenians, Serbs, Croats (6.9%) etc. Of the total number of Romanian emigrants from Transylvania, by 1914, 6.5% had as destinations Germany, Austria and the Balkan countries. Furthermore, 69.7% of Romanian emigrants have turned to large American cities as Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh or Cleveland.

Most migrants were men (approx. 60%), and their will to establish families will led to the increase of the women’s share in the total number of emigrants. Typically, the origin of the Romanian emigrants was largely rural (81%), the rest being represented by craftsmen from various services in urban areas.

Against this historical background, the emigration from Romania during the interwar period focused, in particular, to countries such as Canada, Argentina or Brazil. So, according to some contemporary statistics, it is assumed that 11,700 Romanians fled to Argentina (of which over 2,000 have been returned to the country) and in Brazil, where the number of Romanians was lower than that of Bulgarians, Hungarians, Russians or Jews (approx. 2,000 persons). Moreover, the Jews, with the maximum emigration during the interwar years, totaled approx. 40,000 people, of which only 4600 were repatriated after the World War II. In addition to these considerations, it is noted that emigration to Brazil were banned in 1927.

Also, it can be evoked the presence of Romanian immigrants in the U.S.; the first Romanian immigrants in the present-day country’s territory is attested by the names of the soldiers participating in the union army during the

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war of secession. Regarding to the Romanian emigration to the U.S., there are generally distinguished four periods:

- the period from the late nineteenth century until World War I, when Romanian immigrants chose the states positioned along the Atlantic Ocean, and then the central areas, respectively New York City, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana etc.;

- the period between the first and second world war when Romanian immigration flows recorded a reduction, largely influenced by the new U.S. laws (e.g. the new law on emigration from 1924 limited the total number of immigrants to 150,000 persons per year, and for Romanians, insignificant as an ethnic group, at 903 persons per year);

- the 1945-1965 period, when the law from 1942 was amended, allowing immigration of approx. 10,000 people; the structure of these emigration flows was mainly influenced by political reasons, being constituted from the most valuable intellectuals and professionals from diverse fields;

- the period after 1965, that will meet the new U.S. legislation that cancelled the discriminatory rates; for Eastern Europeans was set a ceiling of 120,000 immigrants with a maximum of 20,000 from a specific country.

The Most Favored Nation (MFN) clause obtained by Romania in 1975 has largely facilitated the Romanian emigration. In the latter two periods mentioned above, the Romanian emigration was present throughout the U.S., Romanian-born population showing preferences for some urban settlements on the Pacific coast (Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, etc.).

Currently, the largest number of Romanian immigrants in the U.S. is found in states like New York (approx. 37,000 people), California (19,000), Ohio (13,000), Michigan (10,000), etc.

Following the Romanian out-migration phenomenon, one may also emphasize Canada as country of destination, where the first Romanian colonists settled in the central regions (Alberta and Saskatchewan), to the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Most Romanian immigrants came from Bukovina's Carpathians, Oltenia, Dobrogea, Banat and Transylvania, they being attracted to work in the fields of forestry, transportation, mining and agriculture. Canadian census made in 1921 registered for Saskatchewan Region a number of approximately 7,000 Romanians, and later, in 1926, their number was estimated at approx. 20,000 people. However, Romanian communities were established in the provinces of Manitoba (Winnipeg), Ontario (primarily in Toronto, Windsor and Hamilton) and Quebec. Currently, Montreal, Ontario, Quebec, Calgary, Saskatchewan are recognized as centers for polarizing Romanian immigrant population in Canada.

Statistically, it is noteworthy that the number of Romanian emigrants as a whole has experienced a fall in the early years of the communist regime, especially beginning with the reference year 1947, when they tightened the limitations for emigration from Romania to other countries. They were directed mainly to the Germans and Jews.

Regarding the regime established by Nicolae Ceausescu, there are some events that have affected emigration regime from Romania, especially the restrictiveness of laws in this

regard, which culminated in the oppression of the alleged out-migrants. Some estimates, obviously unofficial, indicate that during the presidency of Nicolae Ceausescu around 70,000 Romanian had been refugees in various countries (e.g. only between years 1980-1989, approx. 34,400 people were emigrated).

As a conclusion on the foregoing, the effects of the emigration process have been mainly triggered by the multiple political and social issues that Romanian society has crossed over some historical period, which, moreover, left their mark even on the contemporary.

III. ANALYSIS OF EMIGRATION FLOWS IN THE YEARS 1990-2007

During the twentieth century Romania was mainly a country of emigration, and this trend was maintained even under restrictive communist regime.

Ethnic migration always held an important share in total migration flows. Long term dynamic of permanent emigration (associated with the change of residence) falls on an upward trajectory until 1990 (when it reaches a point of maximum 96,929 people, determined by change of the laws governing this phenomenon, together with the political and social context at that time), and then predominantly descending.

In a first stage, in the early '90s, the ethnic motivation was the main factor to support a high level of external mobility associated with the change of residence. The largest departure flows started in areas with high ethnic concentration, especially in Transylvania, mainly to Germany and Hungary. Moreover, there were significant movements in this period of repatriation of Jews.

In a second stage, after 1994, permanent migration was strongly reduced, there becoming predominant temporary migration, often motivated by the career opportunities and chances of higher earnings; the out-migration was benefiting from the liberalization of the movement of Romanians within the Schengen area in the recent years, after Romania's EU accession.

Permanent legal immigration follows a path opposite to the emigration: after 1991 the emigration falls and immigration steadily increased, except for a temporary decline between the years 2004-2005. The two migration flows tend to equalize in 2007, permanent loss of native population being offset by permanent immigration associated with the change of residence.

The actual extent of migration flows is difficult to estimate for Romania, because the official statistical data is only offering records for the permanent migration (Fig. 1).

Official figures on migration reflect only a small fraction of the actual size of the phenomenon. For example, Spain, although it is not among the first destinations of permanent migration flows is, together with Italy, the largest recipient of temporary emigration, the estimated number of Romanians who are in Spain amounting to over half a million people according to official Spanish statistics and beyond one million people according to some unofficial estimates, and nearly 350,000 people in Italy (Fig. 2 and 3).

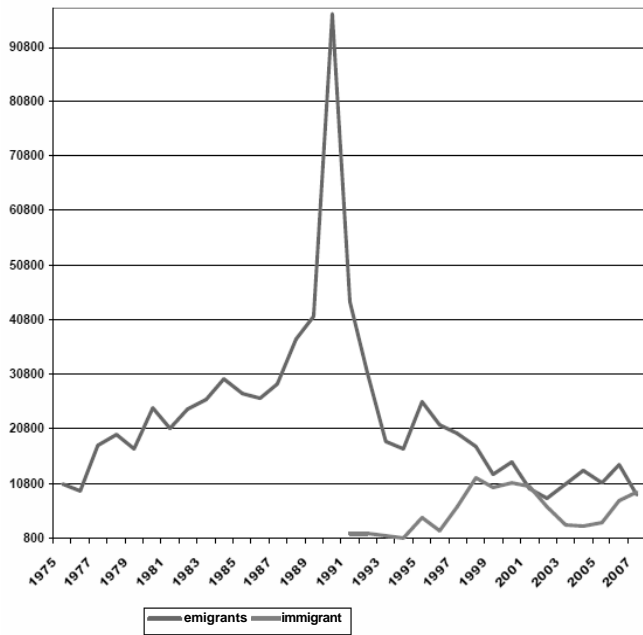


Fig. 1 Long-term evolution of the number of emigrants and immigrants

Massive departures of populations towards Spain and Italy have come predominantly from 2003 and continuing into the next period.

Since the official statistics do not provide a complete and accurate picture of migration flows, other information sources should be considered together with a variety of statistical indicators which contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon.

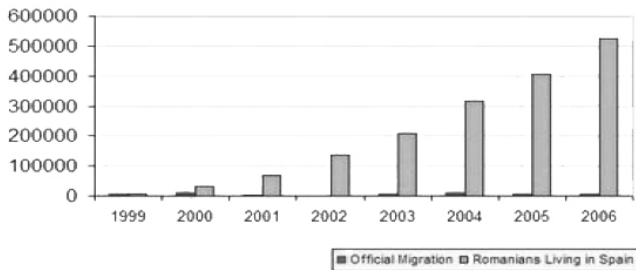


Fig. 2 Evolution of the number of Romanian emigrants in Spain (1999-2006)

A representative indicator for the extent of migration flows is the total migration rate, which represents the combined number of emigrants and returning immigrants per 1000 inhabitants (Fig. 4).

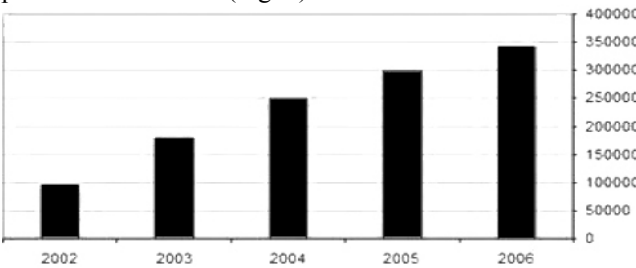


Fig. 3 Evolution of the number of Romanian emigrants in Italy (2002-2006)

In Romania, the total migration rate decreased from about 2 emigrants per thousand inhabitants in 1991 to 0.84 in 2007, registering many variations in this time.

The lowest levels of the indicator were recorded between the years 2002-2005. Since emigration flows have dominated up to 2006, the total permanent migration rate broadly follows their trend, with two moments of significant decline: during 1991-1993, a period dominated by the return of Germans, Hungarians and Jews to their motherland, and during 2000-2003, when the permanent migration is replaced by temporary migration for work.

The final immigration flows recorded a growth after 2005, become an increasingly important component of the indicator, and reached to offset emigration flows in 2007.

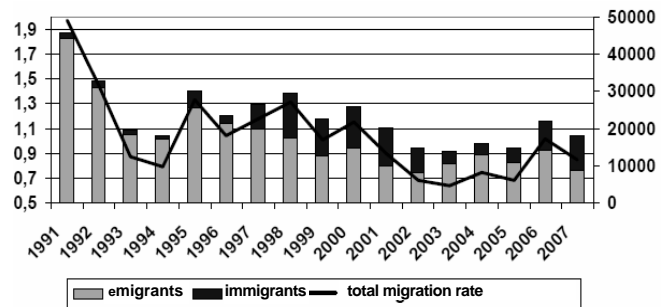


Fig. 4 Long term evolution of migration flows and of total migration rate

The emigration increase during the period 1991-2006 amplified the demographic decline of the Romania's population (where in 1990 the total population was of 23,206,720 inhabitants and in 2007 it fell to 21,537,563 inhabitants), due primarily to the negative values of natural growth, more and more pronounced from a year to another (Fig. 5).

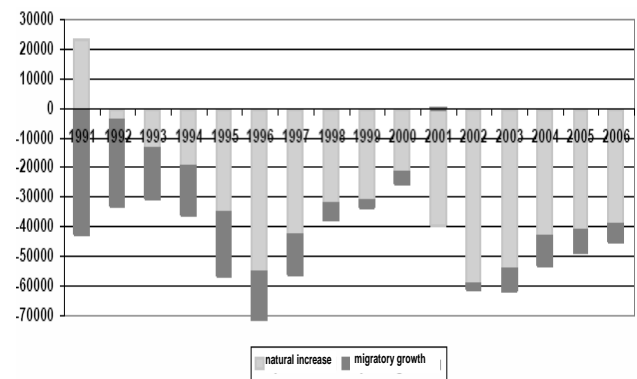


Fig. 5 Romania's population reducing by the combined negative effect of natural and migratory growth in the period 1991-2006

Compared with developed countries, Romania has not yet faced a massive influx of immigrants, yet their number is increasing since 2005 (Fig. 1), the permanent legal immigration currently equaling the permanent legal emigration. While the permanent legal immigration has been dominated by returns, temporary immigration was mainly motivated by the higher chances of finding employment in an economy that has been in recent years on an upward trend and begin to experience native labor shortages. Another component, more difficult to quantify, is the illegal immigration, the immigrants being in transit on Romania's

territory, usually the final destination being the Western Europe.

The National Strategy on Migration for 2007-2010 sets new benchmarks for national immigration policy, including the obligations which Romania has to assume as EU member as well as the necessary measures for the effective management of the phenomenon, in light of the gradual transformation of Romania from a transit zone in an area of destination for immigrants.

IV. STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EMIGRATION

Knowledge of profile of the emigrant/immigrant population requires registration of the defining characteristics such as age group, sex, education level, country or region of origin/destination.

Sex structure of emigrants has been dominated by women throughout the period 2000-2007. Predominance of women has become more pronounced in the recent years, in 2007 they representing over 65% of the total number of immigrants, compared with men who had a share of almost 35% (Table 1).

TABLE I

SEX STRUCTURE OF EMIGRANTS (2000-2007) – PERCENTAGE

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Male	46.08	50.51	45.38	41.35	37.72	37.58	37.62	34.97
Female	53.92	49.49	54.62	58.65	62.28	62.42	62.38	65.03

The structure of emigrants by age showed significant changes during 2000 - 2007, especially for the group of people between 26 and 40 years (Table 2), which increased its share from 38.75% in 2000 to over 57% in 2007. Smaller increases are found in groups 41-50 and 51-60 years age, all other age groups having a decreasing share in the analyzed period (group under 18 years fell from almost 30% in 2000 to 13.88% in 2007, and share of the emigrants between 18 and 25 years decreased from 10.26% to only 6.92%).

Comparing the age structure of migrants to the total population, it is noted that the migration propensity achieve a maximum rate among people between 26 and 40 years and is very low after the age of 50, which confirms the important role of work opportunities in the decision to emigrate.

TABLE II

AGE STRUCTURE OF EMIGRANTS (2000-2007) - THOUSAND PERSONS

Age group	Years								Total population
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
under 18 years	29.63	28.83	15.12	15.71	10.83	6.99	6.78	13.88	19.78
18-25	10.26	9.45	12.62	13.36	14.68	12.87	12.16	6.92	12.34
26-40	38.75	40.49	48.71	50.95	54.84	58.14	57.74	57.01	24.17
41-50	10.51	10.21	11.22	10.86	10.81	12.39	12.55	12.16	12.74
51-60	4.45	4.32	5.11	4.21	4.41	4.98	5.91	5.75	21.81
over 61	6.39	6.69	7.21	4.91	4.43	4.63	4.85	4.27	31.81

The ethnic structure of emigrants - after the predominantly ethnic emigration from the early 90s, this structure was highly dominated by Romanians, which in

2000 accounted for between 90% and 95% of the total, followed by Hungarians and Germans (Table 3).

Regarding the main destinations of permanent legal emigration 2000, they were directed to Italy, Germany, Canada and the U.S. 2007 statistics reveals as the preferences of Romanian emigrants two EU countries (Germany - approx. 1900 thousand people - and Italy - with 1400 thousands of Romanians), while for the North American continent, Romanian emigrants chose Canada (1787 thousand) and U.S. (1535 thousand) - Fig. 6.

TABLE III
EMIGRANTS BY NATIONALITY (THOUSANDS)

Nationality	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Romanian	13438	9023	7465	9886	11890	10301	13296	8589
Germans	374	143	67	20	36	93	85	12
Hungarians	788	647	489	661	1062	460	693	167
Jews	66	72	28	24	36	48	54	21
Other	87	36	105	82	58	36	69	41
Total	14753	9921	8154	10673	13082	10938	14197	8830

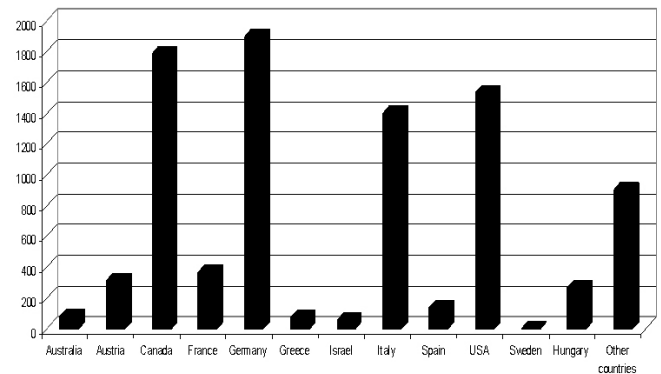


Fig. 6 Number of Romanian immigrants by country of destination (thousands) - 2007

The structure of emigrants by level of education (Table 4) recorded significant changes in the long term. After a peak of over 49% in 1990, the share of people with elementary education decreased to 16.38% in 2005, while the share of emigrants with high school and post-secondary education increased (53.77% in 2005), as well as the share of those with higher education (26.38% in the same reference year). Currently, it maintains the same trend, i.e. the emigration of persons with secondary and higher education, especially towards European countries.

TABLE IV

EMIGRANTS' STRUCTURE BY THE LEVEL OF STUDIES (%)

Year	Studies				
	Higher	Secondary or post-secondary	Technical professional	Elementary	Other situations
1990	6.00	17.90	11.80	49.20	15.10
1995	16.43	33.18	10.44	23.78	16.17
2000	22.94	32.13	5.08	16.19	23.66
2005	26.38	53.77	9.7	16.38	2.50

Regarding the territorial distribution of emigration flows, it appears that the main sources of emigration in the period 2000-2007 were the Center, North - East and Bucharest - Ilfov regions. A less significant emigration flow was recorded in the same period in the South (Muntenia) and South - West (Oltenia) of Romania (Fig. 7).

If it makes sense that areas with unemployment rates higher than average (national average unemployment rate in 2002 was 8.4%, while the north-eastern counties, for example, had the highest values - 10 to 15%, with a maximum in Vaslui - 15.9%) have an increased potential for migration among the workforce, however, it comes out that the Bucharest-Ilfov region, which is characterized by a smaller number of unemployed people (unemployment rate in 2002 was the lowest of Romania - 3%) is also an important source of emigration, but its characteristics are different from other areas.

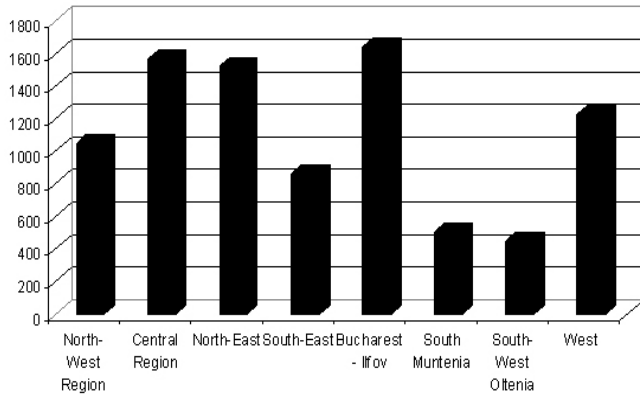


Fig. 7 International migration in Romania's development regions in 2007

For example, the Bucharest-Ilfov region owns a high number of emigrants with a higher professional qualification who decide to leave the country, motivated by better job opportunities and higher income levels, plus young people attracted by prospects of further education or specialization in better and more attractive conditions when compared with those of Romania.

V. PRESENT-DAY AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF EMIGRATION IN ROMANIA

From this point of view there are many arguments for further reduction in permanent emigration, in temporary migration for employment and the return of a part of the Romanians left to work abroad.

A first argument is that relating to the economic crisis that is manifested more clearly in Europe, and the growth forecasts are becoming more pessimistic in most countries with high numbers of Romanian immigrants.

Construction sector, which has attracted many Romanian emigrant workers are among the first industries affected by the reduced economic activity, with negative consequences on jobs, already felt by the emigrants. In this respect, Italy and Spain, two of the main destinations for Romanian emigrants, no longer present attractiveness now. The economic crisis begins to make its presence in Spain, where construction, "engine" of Spanish economy, went into decline, resulting in a significant increase in the number of unemployed people, including many Romanians. One can add to it the campaign started against Romanian immigrants, especially in Italy, leading many to reconsider the decision to emigrate or to remain in Italy.

Another reason is the scarcity of labor force in the country, because the emigration of a large part of Romania's population has created a labor shortage in many sectors of

the economy (construction, textiles and footwear, food, trade, health, etc.). According to regional agencies for employment, there is recorded an estimated shortage of labor for about 83,000 people.

Under these circumstances, today, one can speak of the problem of overcoming the lack of labor force in Romania with qualified personnel from other countries (immigrant workers), in order to support further economic development. All these will encourage future immigration for work, while raising issues of managing a relatively new phenomenon in Romania.

In this context, the negative impact of migration on the size and quality of Romania's labor force is manifested in several ways:

- going abroad of a significant proportion of well-qualified workforce;
- relationship between emigrated labor force and the prevailing workers is disadvantageous for Romania, in terms of quality, given that the skill levels of people coming into the country is lower than those who fleeing;
- aging of the workforce in some sectors (e.g. research and development), which is partly influenced by migration, etc.

VI. MIGRATION POLICY AND LEGISLATION IN THE EU AND ROMANIA

EU migration policies took into account four priority issues to effectively manage the migration process, namely: policies for regulation and control of migration flows, migration and combating illegal employment of foreign workers, immigrants and integration policies for international cooperation in this area.

These are reflected in EU directives and strategies and programs adopted for migration. They are considering a coordinated approach to the problem of migration, both the legal and illegal as the benefit of EU countries, but also the supplier states. However, EU has a series of programs and strategies concerning the migration, of which may be mentioned: the *Tampere Program* (1999) which introduces common asylum policy, *The Hague Program* (2005) for strengthening freedom, security and justice in the European Union, followed by the *Program for Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows 2007-2013* (2006) etc.

For Romania, the migration policies and legislation have had as priorities by the year 2007, the institutional and legislative harmonization, required to meet the EU *acquis* (the total body of EU law). In contrast, after EU accession, Romania received new duties, resulting of member status. This country now has some well-tuned strategies, policies, action plans for management of migration, but the biggest challenge occurs when they should be applied in practice. In this direction, there must be a modern management, performance, ensuring the best use of human and material resources allocated to this process. In this regard, among the recommendations and proposals aimed to improve the policy and practice of migration in Romania may be mentioned:

1. Romania should continue to permanently align to the European policies and legislation on migration, which is currently experiencing a more enhanced dynamic.

Here is a complex institutional framework, but also fragmented, leading to deficiencies in communication between the institutions responsible for migration and even between departments within the same institutions that have competence in various fields.

This raises need for better cooperation, coordination and intra- and inter-institutional information during the management of the migration process. Very helpful would be an integrated information system with information involving each institution and accessible to all the bodies involved.

Another issue is the lack of vision and an overview of the employees of the various institutions involved in various activities in the field.

Moreover, most institutions with expertise in migration should produce some data, studies and relevant analysis on this phenomenon. Also, consideration should be given to an improved cooperation between governmental and nongovernmental institutions.

2. From the financial perspective, it is required an effective and rational administration of the allocations for managing migration – both from internal and external sources, primarily from European funds. The measures taken in this regard should be accompanied at the administrative level with concern for staff training, the ability to identify real needs, to develop viable projects.

In the current European context related to migration and to the issues encountered by Romanian workforce abroad, our country should prominently make known its position and should promote a change of vision on mobility and migration of active population in Europe and beyond it. The existing Romanian legislation was amended and supplemented so that it now fully meets the EU similar.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The emigration from Romania has been strongly influenced by the communist regime and legislation of time, and the phenomenon also felt the influence brought by the establishment of democracy, after December 1989. Quantitative analysis of migration highlights the following issues:

- The permanent legal emigration decreases 1991, but the temporary emigration increases;
- The structure of permanent emigration in 2007 was dominated by women (65.03%), by the persons aged 26 and 40 years (over 57%) and by those with high school and post high school education (53.77% in 2005);
- After 2000, the main destinations of the permanent legal emigration were Italy, Germany, Canada and U.S.;
- Romania's main source areas of emigration, in 2005-2007, were the Center, North East and Bucharest-Ilfov regions;
- The economic crisis, the shortages of labor force in the country and perhaps the potential wages' increases will be arguments for the future reduction of the population departure over borders for work purposes.

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