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Romanian Migration to Spain and Its Impact on the Romanian Labour Market

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How is it like to work in Spain?

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List of abbreviations

ANOFM	<i>Agentia Nationala pentru Ocuparea Fortei de Munca</i> (National Agency for Employment)
ASG	<i>Agentia pentru Strategii Guvernamentale</i> (Agency for Governmental Strategies)
CNP	<i>Comisia Nationala de Prognoza</i> (National Commission for Prognosis)
CRS	<i>Comunitati romanesti in Spania</i> (Romanian Communities in Spain) Survey (Sandu et al, 2009)
EU	<i>European Union</i>
ENI	<i>Enquesta Nacional de Inmigrantes 2007</i> Survey
DMS	<i>Departamentul pentru munca in strainatate</i> (Department for Work Abroad)
FEDROM	<i>Federatia Asociatiilor Romane din Spania</i> (Federation of Romanian Associations in Spain)
ILO	<i>International Labour Organisation</i>
INS	<i>Institutul National de Statistica</i> (National Institute for Statistics)
IOM	<i>International Organisation for Migration</i>
MMFPS	<i>Ministerul Muncii, Familiei si Protectiei Sociale</i> (Ministry for Labour, Family and Social Protection)
MMFSS	<i>Ministerul Muncii, Solidaritatii Sociale si Familiei</i> (Ministry for Labour, Social Solidarity and Family)
OMFM	<i>Oficiul pentru Migratia Fortei de Munca</i> (Office for Labour Force Migration)
SNSPA	<i>Scoala Nationala de Stiinte Politice si Administrative</i> (National School of Political and Administrative Sciences)
TLA	<i>Temporary Living Abroad</i> Survey (Sandu et al, 2006)
UB	<i>Universitatea Bucuresti</i> (University of Bucharest)
UNFPA	<i>United Nations Population Fund</i>
WB	<i>World Bank</i>

1. The evolution of Romanian migration in the post-socialist period

Migration from Romania was significant even before the fall of communism in 1989, but it largely concerned members of ethnic minorities (especially Germans, Hungarians and Jews) who permanently left Romania for Germany, Hungary, and Israelⁱ. This migration pattern continued in the first few years after the fall of the communist regime. However, after 1993, migration diversified in several respects. Ethnic Romanians became the dominant migratory groupⁱⁱ and migration patterns became more temporary, circular, and informal. Likewise, economic reasons for migration started to prevail.

Romanian labour migration between 1990 and 2006

Post-socialist Romanian labour migration is thus predominantly temporary. As detailed in Table 1, between 1990 and 2006 it has passed through three distinct phases (Sandu, 2006a).

Table 1. Main characteristics of the three phases of post-socialist Romanian temporary migration (1990-2006)

	1990-1995	1996-2001	2002-2006
Rates	Very low Below 5/000	Increasing Peaks of 6-7/000	High Between 10 and 28/000
Area of origin	More urban than rural	Balanced rural/urban	Balanced rural/urban
Gender	Predominantly male	Predominantly male	Balanced male/female
Age	Predominantly middle-aged, with older segment	Predominantly middle-aged, with young segment	Balanced middle-aged and young
Education	Vocational/high school and some university/college	Vocational/high school	Vocational/high school and some secondary education

Source: TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a).

In a **first period, 1990-1995**, temporary migration rates were rather low, with levels below 5 per thousand inhabitants per year. The first four destinations were Israel, Turkey, Hungary and Italy (in this order). Migrants had an urban rather than rural background (59% as compared to 41%), and were rather middle-aged (80% of migrants were in the 30 to 54 age bracket). Most of them were male (88%) and married (88%), and had vocational or high school education (78%).

Higher migration levels were registered in a **second period, 1996-2001**, which registered peaks of 6-7 per thousand inhabitants per year. In this period, the four main destinations were (in this order) Italy, Israel, Spain and Turkey. The characteristics of the

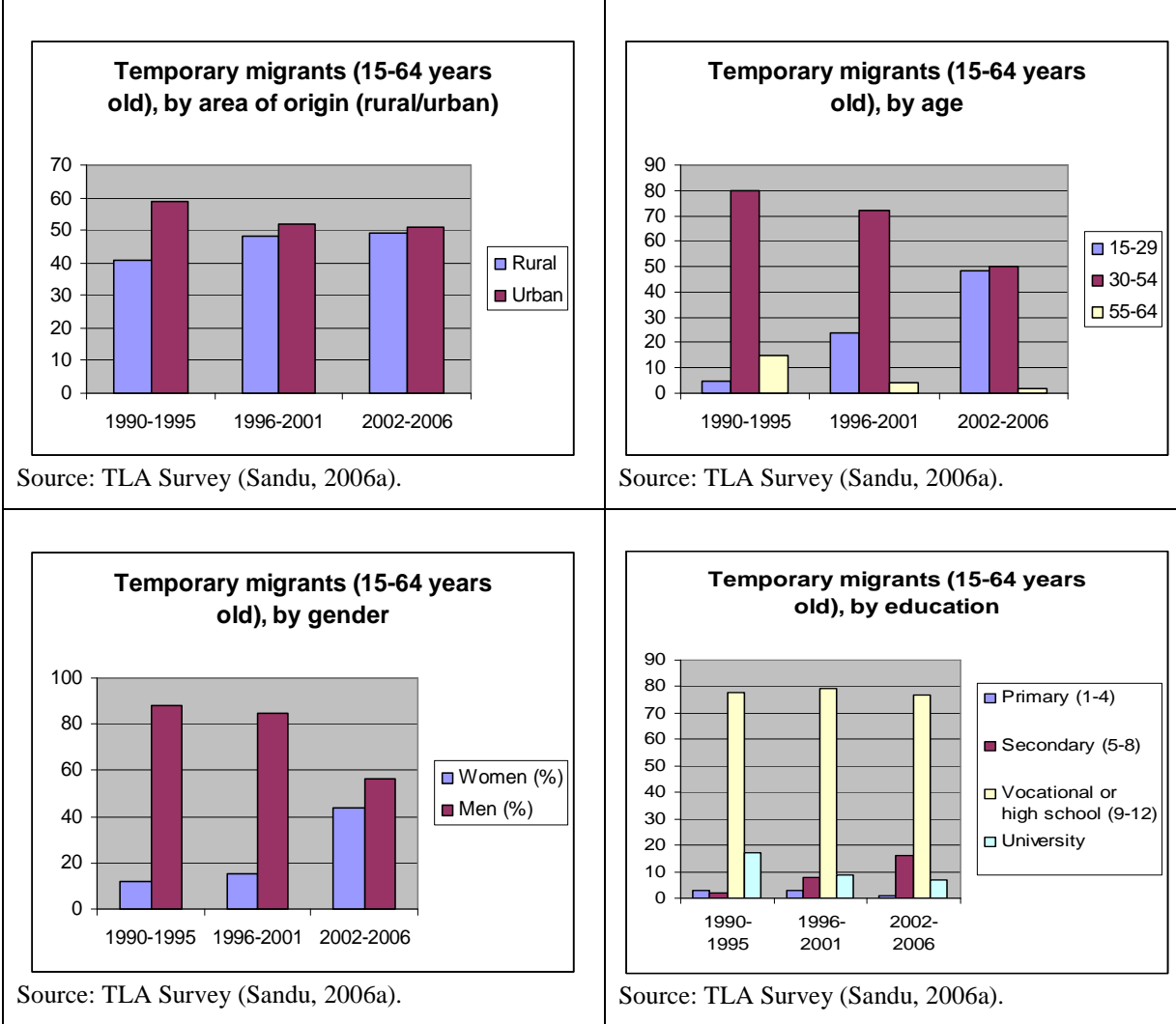
Romanian migrant population started to change, as migrants were increasingly coming from a rural background (48% of the total), and were not married (19%) and young (24% of them were in the 15-29 age bracket). Interestingly, migrants with vocational/high-school education continued to be dominant (79%), and much more important in the migrant population than in Romanian population in the 15-64 age bracket (where it reaches only 45%) (INS, 2002). A Soros Foundation opinion poll showed that in 2001 5% of interviewees had work experience abroad and 12% of interviewed households had a member who had worked abroad (Niculescu et al, 2006).

A **third phase** in Romanian migration began in 2002, when Romanians were allowed free access to the Schengen area. Working abroad became a mass phenomenon, with temporary migration rates reaching levels between 10 and 28 per thousand inhabitants per year (Sandu, 2006a: 14). Thus, 2002 constitutes an important landmark in the rise of Romanian migration to western European countries (Ciobanu and Elrick, 2009). While Romanian migrants still had to present some guarantees for their trip abroad (booking of accommodation in the destination country, 500 Euros in cash or an invitation proving financial support in the country of destination), the fact that entry visas were not anymore required dropped significantly the costs of migration (up to 2002, visa costs rose to around 1000 Euros)ⁱⁱⁱ. This had implications not only for the size of migration, but also for its composition. Before 2002, migration tended to be “very selective” (*ibid*: 208) as only those with a good economic and social (relational) capital could afford the cost and access the information and help needed in the migration process. After 2002, by comparison, migration became “more accessible”, as, presumably, people from different economic and social backgrounds engaged in migration abroad.

Between 2002 and 2006, migration flows were largely directed towards two main destination countries: Italy (50% of Romanian labour migrants) and Spain (24%). Migrants’ profile changed again. Migrants were almost as much male (56%) as female (44%), and came almost as much from a rural (49%) as from an urban background (51%). Migrants were also younger, with an important segment of them in the 15-29 age-bracket (48%) complementing the 30-54 age group (50%). While migrants continued to be mainly married (60%), there was also an important group of not married ones (31%). Finally, while migrants continued to have predominantly vocational or high school education (77%), a growing part had only secondary education^{iv} (16%). In 2006, 777.200 Romanians were estimated to have left Romania (Sandu, 2006a). In the same year, it was estimated that around one third of Romanian households had

at least one individual who was or went abroad after 1989^v (ibid: 13), and that 10% of Romanian adults have worked abroad in the past 17 years.

The following graphs summarise the main trends in Romanian temporary work migration in terms of area of origin, gender, age and education.



Romanian migration after 2007

Romania’s entrance into the EU in **2007** did not halt temporary migration. On the contrary, in 2007, according to Monica Serban (UB, 23-10-09) migration rates have increased, as a result of the “EU accession effect”. In 2007, some analysts estimated the number of Romanians abroad at around 2 millions^{vi}, with an additional segment of 300.000-500.000 migrants displaying high instability and short periods of staying abroad (UNFPA, 2007). In 2008, the 2 million estimate continued to be advanced (Erdei, 2008b) with some analysts raising the number of Romanians abroad to 4 million (Folcut, 2008). In the same year, the National Commission for Prognosis estimated the number of Romanians working

abroad to be of around 1,7 million persons, of which 250.000 had official employment contracts, 700.000 had been away for longer than a year on their own, and 700.000-800.000 were gone for periods shorter than a year (Erdei, 2008a).

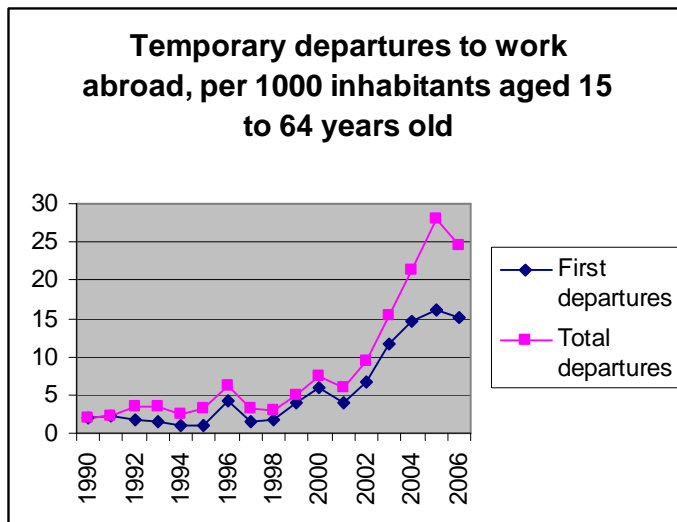
In 2007, a study on Romanian migration in the EU (Nitulescu, Oancea and Tanase, 2007) showed that Romanians who intended to work abroad were predominantly young, with a good level of education and had relatively high incomes (with an average of 570 Euros per month, i.e. double the net average wage in the Romanian economy). Their main destinations were Italy (23%), Spain (20%) and Great Britain (18%).

Even after Romania's integration into the European Union in 2007, the fact that the free movement of persons within the EU was not accompanied by the right to work in most EU member states, led to a "very peculiar configuration of European citizenship without European employment rights" (Hartman, 2007: 195).

Temporary, circular migration?

Romania's post-socialist migration has been characterised as "temporary", in that most of it has not lead to the permanent change in residence of the migrants, but instead to an increase in temporary sojourns abroad. Some analysts define Romanian temporary migration as migration during which "migrants alternate periods of low-qualified work abroad with periods – from several months to one year or more- in Romania" (Potot, 2005). In the words of the same analyst (Potot, 2000: 114), "contrary to fears from the European Union, (Romanian temporary migration) is not a massive exodus out of the country, but an intensification of the circulation inside the entire continent". This is because "the return to and success in Romania (is) its essential point".

The circulatory nature of Romanian migration is also captured by various surveys. A community census carried out in Romanian villages in December 2001 found out that out of the total number of those who have left the country, 59% have returned at least once to their home village, while 37% have returned at least twice (Sandu, 2005b). In the 2006 TLA survey, the circular character of migration is also shown by the fact that, while first departures have increased considerably after 2002, total departures have increased even more steeply.



Source: TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a).

Some patterns of circular migration before 2002 resulted from the fact that tourist visas needed to enter European countries limited sojourns to three months (Ciobanu and Elrick, 2009). For example, women working in domestic services (housekeeping, caring for children or elderly persons) would organize a system of “shifting couples”, whereby each three months two women friends or relatives would relay one another in the same job. The same pattern of three-month sojourns was also noticed after 2002 (Diminescu, 2009), when legal sojourns in the Schengen space were restricted to three months.

Another aspect of the circularity of migration is that many migrants’ migration history includes several destination countries and not just one. For example, up until 2002, they might use one country as entrance into the Schengen space, but would get work into another one. This was the case of migrants from Feldru studied by Ciobanu and Elrick (2009), who would use invitations from their ethnic German co-villagers emigrated to Germany to access the Schengen space, only to finally end up working in Spain. Monica Serban (UB, 23-10-09) also considers that a number of Romanian migrants to Germany went to work in Spain following restrictions to immigration in Germany. On the other hand, Diminescu (2009) estimated that two important Romanian flows to Spain passed through Italy (groups of peasants from southern Romania) and through France (especially Roma communities).

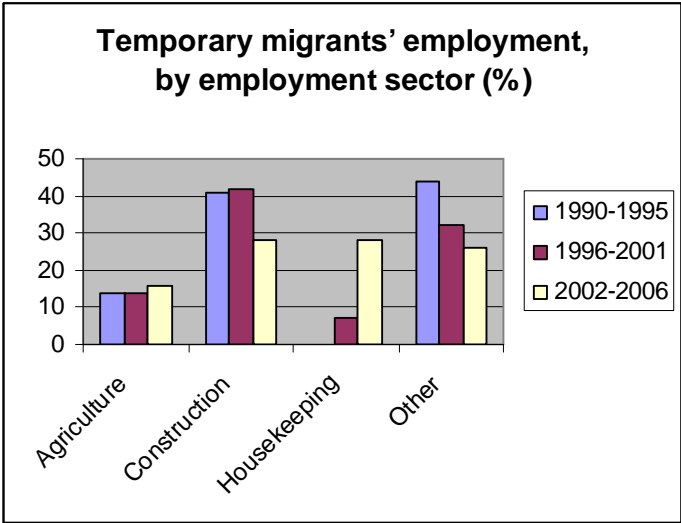
Some analysts (Stan, 2006: 31; Diminescu, 2009) estimate that visa restrictions before 2002, as well as, after 2002, the punitive measures enforced by the Romanian state for overstaying the 3-month period of legal sojourn in a Schengen country constrained, at least some migrants’ circular movements between Romania and their destination countries. Fearing punitive measures in case they returned to Romania after their sojourn abroad became irregular (such as, between 1997 and 2007, the interdiction to re-enter the Schengen space

(Stan, 2006: 10)), some migrants delayed their return, thus diminishing the growth of potential circular movements between Romania and European host countries. In any case, up until 2007 at least, for many Romanian migrants in Spain return trips to Romania were dependent on obtaining official residence permits (Potot, 2000: 110). Nevertheless, data presented by Stan (2006) in his study on Romanian irregular migration show that the 2002 lifting of visa led to increased movement across Romania’s borders (see also Diminescu, 2009): national border crossing by Romanian citizens increased with 5% in 2003 and with 8% in 2004 as compared to the previous year (p. 15).

Presumably, the accession of Romania to the EU in 2007 led to an explosion of circular movements, as now Romanian migrants are able to leave and return to their home country without restriction and punitive sanctions. It is true that, even after 2007, in many EU countries Romanian migrants have the right only to free travel (for periods of three months) and not to freely access national labor markets. Nevertheless, some migrants do know they can now travel only with the identity card, a document on which entry and exit customs stamps cannot be appended (Ciobanu and Elrick, 2009). Movements between Romania and European host countries are now easier, as it is not possible to bare migrants’ access to the host country on the basis of overstaying on a previous trip.

Romanian migration and employment at destination

While men were the first to emigrate, especially for work in construction, women also started to leave for work, especially in services or as domestic workers (Stan, 2006: 25). According to the Temporary Living Abroad (TLA) survey carried out in 2006 (Sandu et al, 2006), there has been a noticeable increase in migrants engaged in housekeeping, from 7% of migrants in 1996-2001 to 28% in the period 2001-2006.



Source: TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a).

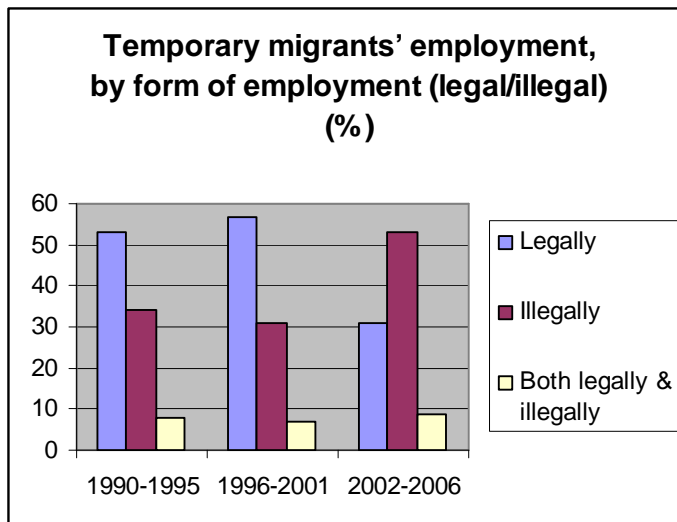
Between 2002 and 2006, the two other main sectors for Romanians working abroad were construction (28%) and agriculture (16%). This concentration of migration in different employment sectors is gender biased. Thus, while construction is dominated by men (98% of migrants engaged in construction are men), housekeeping is mostly a feminine job (88% of migrants engaged in domestic services are women). Agriculture is also mainly a male domain, but women also play a certain part (72% of migrants are men and 28% of them are women) (Sandu, 2006a: 21).

Table 2. Gender divisions and Romanian migrants’ employment in destination countries, 1990-2006 (%)

	Male	Female
Agriculture	28	72
Construction	98	2
Housekeeping	12	88

Source: TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a: 21)

Migration has also become more and more illegal in time, with the highest growth in the relative part of illegal migration into total Romania migration abroad occurring in the second and third period of migration. It is thus in 2002-2006 that illegal migration becomes dominant (53% as opposed to 31% legal migration) (Sandu, 2006a: 19). Those who work illegally are mostly housekeepers (78%), agricultural labourers (56%), and in a lesser proportion construction workers (40%). Thus, prolonging the sojourn in the destination country over the three months allowed by the tourist visa (before 2002) or by the regulations governing the free access of Romanian citizens to the Schengen space (between 2002 and 2006) or the free movement inside the EU (after 2007) was a common strategy used by Romanian migrants (Ciobanu and Elrick, 2009). The irregular situation in which they consequently found themselves is presumably easier to negotiate after 2007, as, as we have seen above, it is now possible to elude formal control of the duration of the sojourn abroad (through the use of identity cards for passing frontiers). This implies, on the other hand, that Romanian migration in the EU still retains an important irregular component in respect to both sojourn and work.



Source: TLA Survey (Sandu, 2006a)

The regional distribution of Romanian migration

Migration from Romania is differentiated along regions of departure and countries of destination, with particular regions preferably supplying migrants to particular countries.

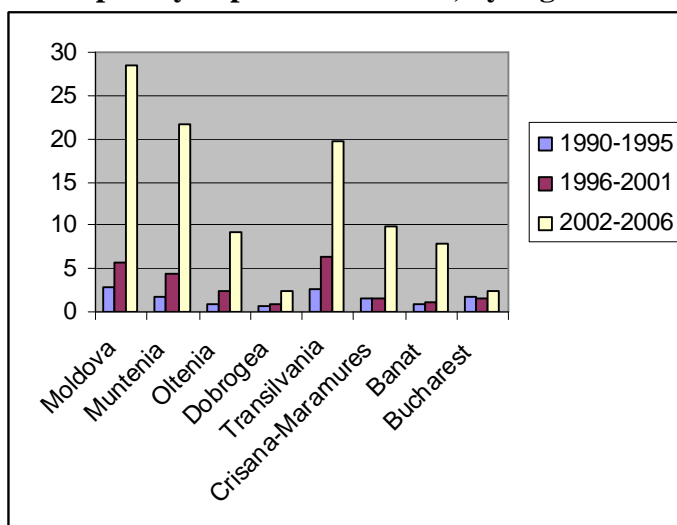
Figure 1. Historical regions and counties of Romania



Source: http://www.celendo.ro/HartiJudete/Regiunile_Istorie_ale_Romaniei_in_Prezent_cu_Judetele_aferente_Celendo.jpg

Up to 2001, the intensity of temporary migration abroad was similar for the three main historical regions of Romania, namely Muntenia, Moldova and Transylvania. After 2002, Moldova became the highest exporter of temporary labour (with a migration rate of 28,4 per thousand), followed by Muntenia (21,7/000) and Transylvania (19,7/000).

Graph 8. Temporary departures abroad, by region of origin (/000)



Source: TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a).

The evolution of migration to Spain

In 2007, Romanians represented 13,5% of all foreigners in Spain, making up the second largest community after Moroccans (Traser and Venables, 2008: 32). While official estimates at that date numbered 500.000 Romanians in Spain, unofficial ones put the number of Romanians (including irregular migrants) at 800.000 (*ibid*). Reflecting a rising migration trend, in 2008 the Spanish census recorded 728.967 Romanian citizens resident in Spain, which made Romanians the first minority group of the country.

Some analysts consider that, up to 2001, Romanian migration to Spain was mainly channelled through “non-governmental agents, such as various NGOs, international agencies such as the IOM, or private recruitment agencies” (Ciobanu and Elrick, 2009: 199). This seems to be confirmed by the fact that the Romanian private market for work abroad recruitment has increased every year: from 362 contracts in 2002 to 16.451 in 2007 (Chişu, 2008). Nevertheless, while Spain was the sixth most attractive destination for contracts mediated through private agencies (after the USA, Cyprus, Italy, Germany and Greece), the number of Spanish contracts officially declared by the latter was insignificant (494).

On the other hand, while having a much more important role to play state agencies did not manage either to capture the core of Romanian migration to Spain. The bilateral agreement on seasonal labour recruitment between Romania and Spain was ratified in 2002^{vii}. Founded at the end of 2001, the *Office for Labour Force Migration* (Oficiul pentru Migratia Fortei de Munca, OMF) was, between 2002 and 2006, the agency in charge with mediating contractual work abroad on the basis of bilateral agreements. Spain was a major destination

for this seasonal work (covering around a third of contracts), being for several years the second most important after Germany.

As we can see from the table below, with levels below 15000, state mediated contracts covered nevertheless only a feeble percentage of both departures to Spain and of Romanian migrants present in the country (Blaga, 2008). As some research has shown (Ciobanu and Elrick, 2009), while important, the bilateral agreements signed between the two countries did not constitute the major trigger of Romanian migration to Spain.

Table 3. Number of contacts mediated through the OMF

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total	22.305	40.197	35.456	42.758	53.029
Spain	2400			14.323	14.373
% of Spanish contracts in total contracts	11%			33%	27%

Sources: 2002-2004: (Stan, 2006). 2005-2006: (MMFPS, 2007), (MMSSF: 2006a).

In the opinion of Mrs. Camelia Mihalcea from EURES-Romania (19-10-09), migration to Spain reached maximum levels in 2002-2003, when unemployment was high in Romania as a result of the massive restructurings of state enterprises realised after 1997. The OMF took part in this process, by mainly mediating seasonal contracts in agriculture (more than 90% of contracts), but also, in its last years of activity, contracts for qualified work in other sectors. In her opinion, contracts in agriculture benefitted migrants with very low education credentials who were making a living from subsistence agriculture in Romania. “Those who are in the top (of education credentials) do not come to the public agency, but use (private) recruitment companies”. Moreover, the selection and most of departures for contracts mediated through the OMF were organised in Bucharest, an additional constraint and cost for potential migrants.

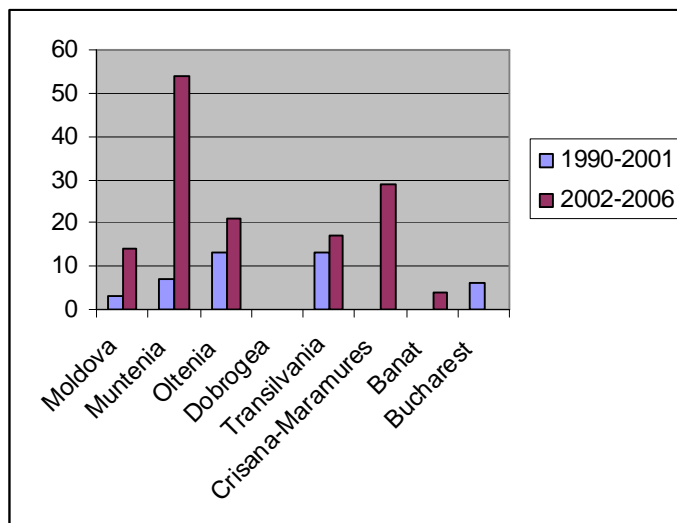
According to Mrs. Camelia Mihalcea, Romanian migrants became nevertheless more selective in time, starting not to accept everything that was offered to them. This selectivity was a result of learning processes linked to migration itself and to working through contracts mediated through bilateral agreements (more attentive to the defence of migrants’ rights). Thus, while at the beginning of bilateral agreements, people would queue for days and nights in order to get into the selection process, at the end of 2005 a significant proportion of contracts remaining unoccupied at the end of the selection. To the later contributed, of course, also Romania’s economic growth, and later, Romania’s accession to the EU and the fact that potential Romanians migrants have already left for Spain.

Given the feeble contribution of state and private mediators, it seems thus that, both before and after 2002, labour migration mainly passed through informal channels (namely, informal migrant networks, see Chapter 3). Moreover, for some analysts (Ciobanu and Elrick, 2009), Romanian migration to Spain grew as a result not so much of bilateral agreements than of the successive regularisation programmes adopted by Spanish governments (particularly those from 1996, 2000/1 and 2005). Indeed, especially for those migrants who could hook up to established migration networks, the prospect of these regulations constituted an important incentive to migration to Spain.

The origins of Romanian migration to Spain

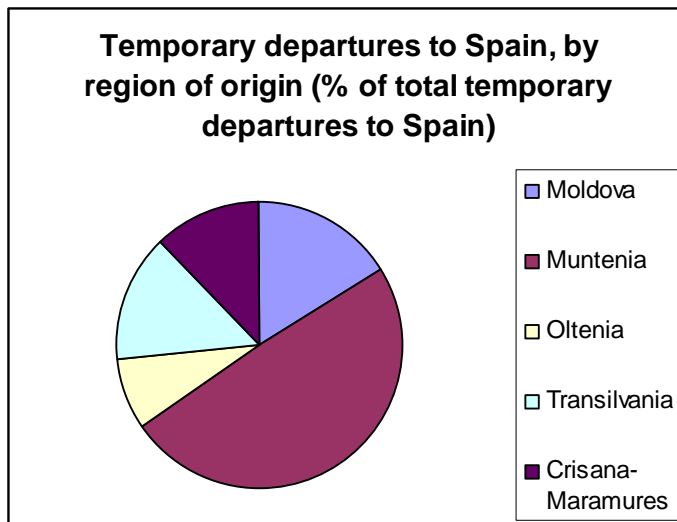
As seen above, while Spain became one of the main destinations of Romanian migration only after 1996, after 2002 it came to be its second most important destination after Italy. The increase in the importance of Spain as a destination country was not homogenous for all regions of origin, but was regionally differentiated. Thus, after 2002, Spain became the main destination of departures for Muntenia (covering 54% of departures from this region)^{viii}, and the second one after Italy for Moldova (14%), Oltenia (21%) and Crisana-Maramures (29%) (Sandu, 2006a: 16, 20, 27). The following graph shows the evolution of the rate of migration to Spain for each of Romania's regions, between 1990-2001 and 2002-2006.

Graph 9. Temporary departures to Spain, by region of origin (% of total temporary departures from the region)



Source: TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a).

In 2006, most of Romanian migrants to Spain were coming from Muntenia, with four other regions (Moldova, Oltenia, Transilvania, Crisana-Maramures) dividing among themselves the other half^{ix}.

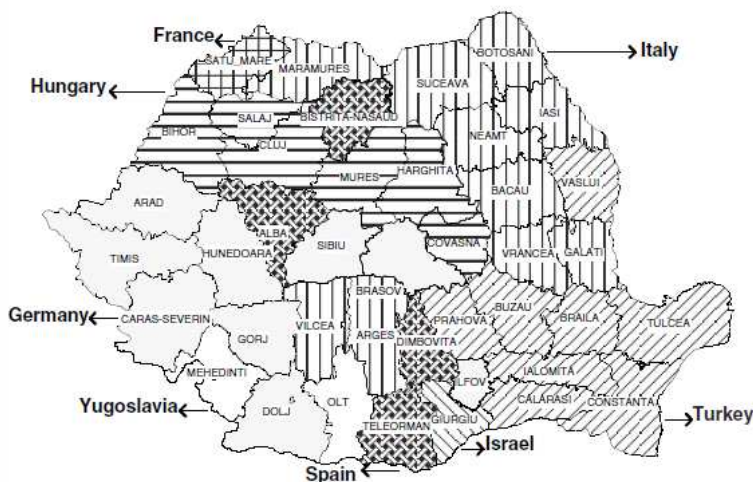


Source: TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a)

The prevalence of Muntenia as a region of origin for Romanian migration to Spain does not nevertheless help us to draw a more accurate picture of its origins. Muntenia as a region is big and varied enough to comprise both very developed counties (such as Bucharest, Arges, Prahova) and very poor ones (such as Teleorman, Ialomita, Calarasi). It follows that, in order to understand the origins of Romanian migration to Spain, we need to move from the regional to the county level.

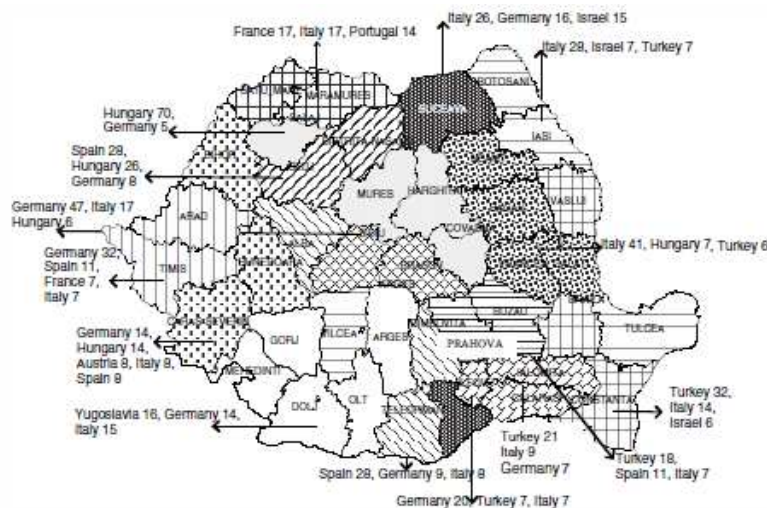
A community census carried out in December 2001 on circular migration from Romanian villages (Sandu, 2005b) found out that the counties where migration to Spain was significant were Teleorman, Dambovit, Alba, Cluj, Bistrita-Nasaud (in which migration to Spain reached 28% of circular migration from the county's rural areas), but also, to a lesser extent, Prahova, Buzau, Timis and Arad (11%).

Figure 2. Main destination countries for the circular migration of rural population



Source: (Sandu, 2005: 558)

Figure 3. Main regions of external circular migration of Romanian rural population



Source: (Sandu, 2005: 563)

While the 2006 TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a) does not specify the counties of origin for migration to different destination countries, it is probable that the 2001 departure counties have maintained themselves as main pools for Romanian migration to Spain (Monica Serban, UB, 23-10-09). Indeed, as the latter is based on networks developed around kinship, friendship and common locality of origin (see Chapter 3), it is probable that migration from particular zones has not only grown in intensity but has also tended to concentrate towards particular destination countries (such as Spain). This is shown by the example of the micro-region of Alexandria (county Teleorman) studied by the 2006 TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a). Here, the percentage of departures to Spain in total work migration rose from 20% in 1990-1995, to 76,6% in 1996-2001 and 86,4% in 2002-2006 (Sandu, 2006a: 38).

The table below summarises some data on the four counties which registered in 2001 the highest rates of temporary migration to Spain, namely Teleorman, Dambovită, Alba and Bistrița-Năsăud. The first two are in Muntenia, while the last two are in Transylvania. As we can notice, the profiles of the four counties are quite divergent. At one extreme we find Teleorman, a county with a collectivised countryside and an average state presence in agriculture (revealed by more than triple than average percentage of paid employment in agriculture), a lower than average proportion of paid employees in industry, a huge fall in paid employment between 1998 and 2006, and an unemployment rate more than double than the national unemployment rate in 2006. At the other extreme we find Bistrița-Năsăud, a county deemed to be a “bastion of peasant agriculture” (i.e. with low rates of collectivisation of land during socialism), with a higher than average proportion of paid employees in industry, an increase in paid employment between 1998 and 2006, and a significantly lower than average unemployment rate in 2006.

Table 4. Labour markets in Teleorman, Dambovita, Alba and Bistrita-Nasaud in 2006

	Teleorman	Dambovita	Alba	Bistrita-Nasaud	Romania
Post-socialist trajectories of agriculture¹	Collectivised countryside with average state presence	Collectivised countryside. Rapid and powerful peasant reconquest	Collectivised countryside with feeble state presence	Bastion of peasant agriculture	
Paid employment in agriculture²	9%	2%	4%	3%	3%
Paid employment in industry²	32%	42%	44%	42%	35%
Variation in average number of paid employees, 2006/1998³	-29%	-24%	-9%	+2%	-13%
Unemployment rates⁴	8,2%	6,0%	7,1%	3,2%	5,2%
Nominal average net monthly wage⁵	88%	99%	84%	87%	100%

1. Source: (Rey et al., 2007).

2. In 2006, as a percentage of total paid employment. Source: (INS, 2007a).

3. Source: (INS, 2007a).

4. In 2006, according to ANOFM (MMFPS, 2007).

5. In 2006, as a percentage of national nominal average net monthly wage. Source: (INS, 2007a).

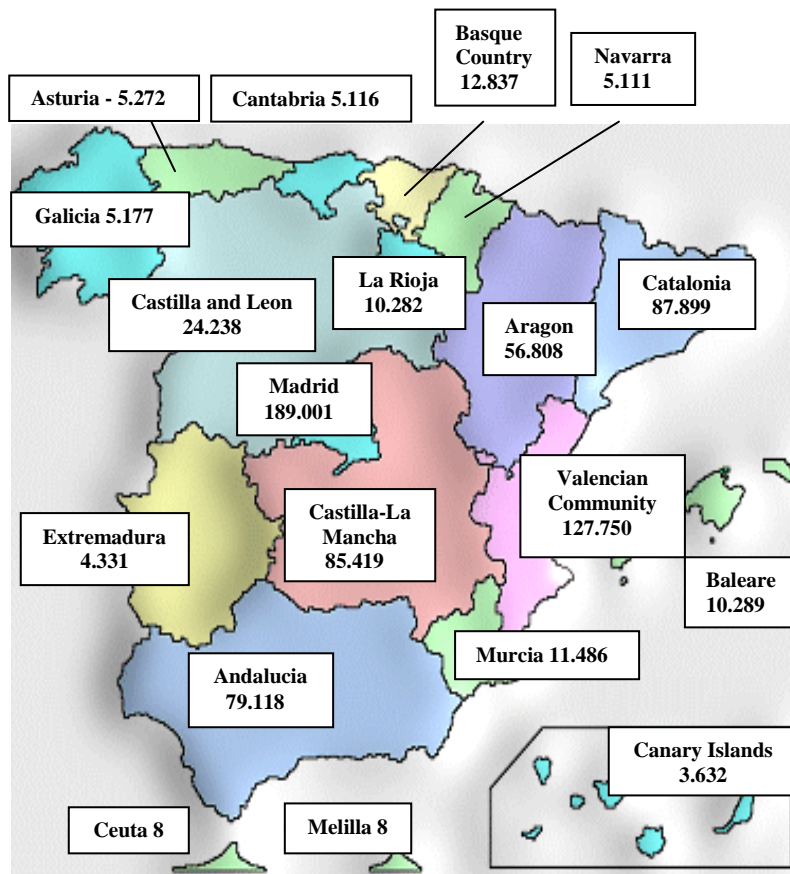
Given these discrepancies between these counties of migration to Spain, we could conclude that the relevant analysis of migrants' characteristics lies no more at the county level than it does at the regional one. A contextual analysis of the origins of Romanian migration to Spain needs then to fine tune even further its tools and descend at the level of migrants' localities of origin.

While there are a number of qualitative studies on Romanian migration to Spain that do take into account the configuration of migrants' localities of origin (Potot, 2000, etc.), it is difficult to make any inferences on their basis in the absence of quantitative surveys. The only concluding survey is the same 2001 community study (Sandu, 2005b), which nevertheless does not differentiate between migration to Spain and migration to other countries. However, even at an aggregate level of the total Romanian migration from rural areas, the study has drawn some interesting conclusions. As we will see below more in detail, the study found out that villages with high migration rates also had higher rates of *navetisti* (commuters to nearby industrial centers)^x, and had witnessed more important declines in commuting (*naveta*) between 1989 and 2001. Otherwise said, as will see in the next chapter, the profile of the Romanian migrant to Spain derives from the transformations that have affected the Romanian economy during the post-socialist period.

Two flows of Romanian migration to Spain

In 2008, the 728 967 Romanian migrants registered in Spain covered all Spanish provinces. Nevertheless, we can notice from the map below that Romanian migration was mainly concentrated in the autonomous communities of Madrid (189.001, or 29% of the total number of migrants in Spain), Valencia (127.750, or 19%), Catalonia (87.899), Castilla-La Mancha (85.419), Andalucia (79.118) and Aragon (56.808).

Figure 4. Romanian migrants registered at Spanish city halls at 20.06.2008, according to the Spanish National Institute of Statistics



Source: Based on the map of the Romanian Ministry of External Affairs, http://madrid.mae.ro/upload/docs/63624_Harta%20Comunitatii%20romanesti%202008.doc. Accessed November 2009.

Two Romanian migration flows to Spain were mainly studied up until now:

- a) Migration flows directed towards the southern region of Spain
 - b) Migration flows directed towards the Madrid region
- a) Romanian migration to the **southern region of Spain** was studied up until now mainly through qualitative research (Potot, 2003a, 2003b, 2005, 2006; Hartman, 2007, 2008; Ciobanu and Elrick, 2009), but also through the quantitative micro-regional survey of the TLA study (Sandu et al, 2006). The major destination of this migration flow is the province of

Almeria, where Romanian migrants of both sexes mainly got engaged in irregular seasonal work in intensive fruit and vegetable greenhouses (Potot, 2005). Called in Romania “*capsunari*” (from *capsuna*, strawberry; thus meaning “strawberry pickers”), these migrants generally have vocational education, and are coming predominantly from villages or small towns (Potot, 2006). Work relations in greenhouses are, because of their irregular character, exploitative, with migrants engaged in the “hyper-accelerated reproduction and turn-over of (their) cheap labour in the interests of capital” (Hartman, 2008). Nevertheless, despite the prevalence of agriculture as an employment niche for Romanian migrants in Almeria, some of the latter were also working in other sectors (Potot, 2005: 8). In Almeria, construction such an alternative employment sector for male migrants, albeit marginal and reserved to regularised migrants. A minority of female migrants would also be employed in services, as cleaners in the camping grounds and hotels of Costa del Sol.

A study realised by Ciobanu and Elrick in 2006-2007 (Ciobanu and Elrick, 2009) showed the interdependence between jobs in agriculture and other sectors of the economy (especially services), as well as between formal contracts and informal labour arrangements for Romanian migrants in southern Spain. Some of the Romanian migrants who have obtained an OMFM mediated seasonal contract in agriculture in Spain would return to Romania at the end of the contract (most popular ones being those of 3 and 6 months) in order to be registered in the OMFM database. Only this procedure would later give them the right to access similar contracts in the future. After registering they would go back to Spain and engage in informal work in agriculture, restaurants and bars in touristic localities in southern Spain, or again in domestic services such as housekeeping and caring for elderly people.

The Romanian migrants in the province of Almeria studied by Potot were mainly coming from the area surrounding the city of Rosiori de Vede, in county Teleorman (Potot, 2003a). She characterises this county as having “feeble urbanisation, a negative demographic balance, and one of the highest poverty rates in the country” (*ibid*: 68). The restructuring of former state industries led to an important pool of unemployed workers, some of who have returned to live in the countryside. Agriculture, the most important sector of the county at the moment of her research, was nevertheless only partially absorbing this excess labour, as the county was still home to large state agricultural farms. Being largely mechanised, the latter were employing only a small number of seasonal salaried workers^{xi}.

Migration constituted thus an important outlet for the county’s reserve labour force. Explored by the first pioneer migrants since 1993, Spain became a more popular destination after 1995 (Potot, 2003a). At the moment of her research, in 2003, migrants were mainly, but

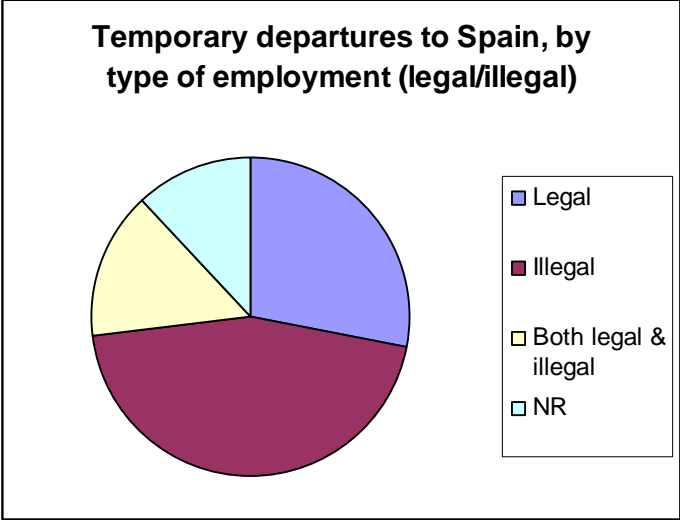
not exclusively, male, and had a working class background, often combining vocational education with work experience in both industry and agriculture. They declared having spent between 9 months and one year, sometimes more, in Spain, where they worked as undeclared agricultural workers.

c) Romanian migration to the **Madrid region** was the object of an ambitious study on *Comunitati romanesti in Spania (Romanian Communities in Spain)* carried over by a team of researchers from the University of Bucharest in September 2008 (Sandu, 2009a; but see also previously Serban, 2006)^{xii}. These migrants are in almost equal proportions male and female, and are working in construction (23%) and housekeeping (19%), but also in services and manufacturing^{xiii}. Most have medium-level education (more than 60% of them have at least high school education) and 38% of them were unemployed in Romania. These Romanian migrants tend to live in localities with high percentages of co-nationals. Indeed, over one third of Romanians (36%) in the Autonomous Community of Madrid lived in localities where Romanians were the dominant migrant group, while almost another third (29%) lived in localities where Romanians represented between 30 and 50% of the migrant population (Serban, 2009: 40).

While one might have expected the two destinations (southern and northern Spain) to be segregated along counties of origin, with southern agricultural regions in Spain attracting migrants from poorer counties in Romania, and northern industrialised regions attracting migrants from more developed counties, the actual picture is more complex than that. First of all, Romanian poorer counties have generated migrants who ended up in various employment sectors, not only in agriculture. Let's take as an example the Alexandria-Teleorman micro-region studied by the 2006 TLA survey, a micro-region where Spain has become the main destination country after 1996. The study (Sandu, 2006a: 39) found out that up until 2006 departures for work from the micro-region have led to employment in agriculture (17,5% of male departures and 16,7% of female departures) but also, and in a bigger proportion, to employment in construction (58,5% of male departures) and in housekeeping (53,8% of female departures).

In fact, the picture is even more complex, as many of the migrants who started their migratory career in Spain in agriculture would move, after the eventual regularisation of their status, up north to work in more lucrative employments (namely construction and housekeeping) (Potot, 2000: 110).

Given the importance of housekeeping, construction and agriculture for the employment of Romanian migrants in Spain, we can also expect an important segment of illegal employment for these migrants. In 2006, the TLA study estimated that migrants to Spain have worked in a proportion of 45% illegally and 28% legally^{xiv, xv} (Sandu, 2006a: 36).

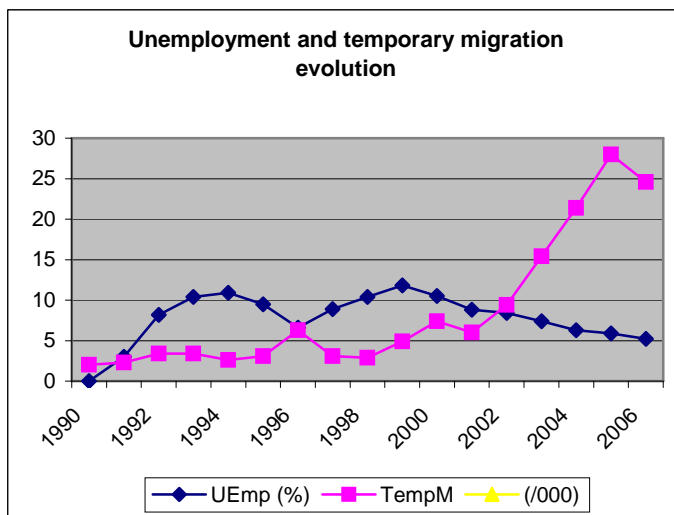


Source: TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a)

2. The impact of migration on the Romanian labour market

Given the “long decade” of economic and living standards decline of the 90s, some specialists estimate that “if it wasn’t for this incredibly wide movement of population, Romania would have known a social and economic crisis the size of which is difficult to imagine. (...) Euro-commuters (*euronavetistii*) vacated jobs, (and) lowered the unemployment rate to levels almost derisory given the social and economic situation of Romania – only 6-7% (by comparison – in 2005 the unemployment rate was of 8-9% in the three Baltic states, 10% in Bulgaria, 16% in Slovakia and 18% in Poland (Eurostat, 2006)” (Ghetau, 2007). Migration is thus seen as having contributed to a decrease in unemployment, and, after 2000, an increase in GDP, consumption, and VAT (Botezatu, 2007: 3; Colipca and Ivan-Mohor, 2008). According to Cristina Mocanu (INCSMPS, 21-10-09), “up to 2005-2006, migration constituted a relief for the (Romanian) labour market and its welfare system”.

There is possibly a case to be made for the relationship between the rise in migration rate and the drop in unemployment, but this would apply at a first glance only to the period after 2002. Indeed it is after this year that rates of migration, and especially temporary migration increased precipitously, while at the same time unemployment rates gave signs of a more durable decreasing trend after the sharp rise and fluctuations of the 90s (INS, 2007a).



Source: (INS, 2009)

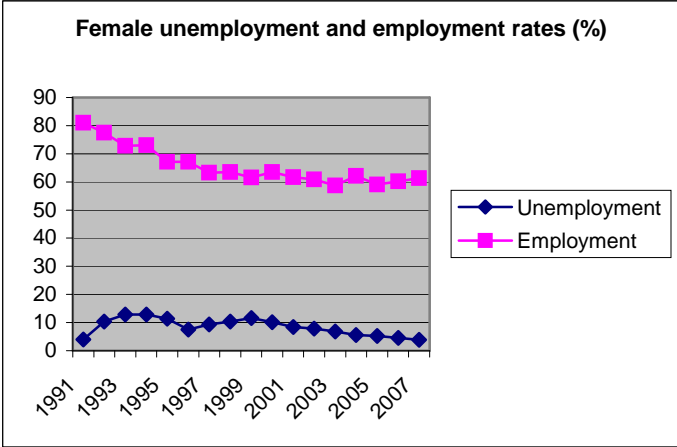
The link between out-migration and unemployment in Romania is also revealed in CRS survey on Romanian communities in the Madrid region (Sandu et al, 2009; Tufis, 2009). The study showed that while 10% of the studied migrants have been unemployed before leaving Romania, in 2008 only 6% of them were unemployed in Spain. Moreover, if 38% have been “without occupation” (i.e. both unemployed and inactive) in Romania, only % of them were still so in Spain. This makes us believe that migration served both to relieve unemployment

on the Romanian labour market, and to integrate or reintegrate into the labour market those who in Romania have been out of it.

Changes in unemployment rates after 2002 are, of course, not simply direct consequences of increased migration, as, in the same period, Romania’s GDP also displayed significant increases^{xvi}. Nevertheless, migration might have helped siphon excess workforce in the 90s and beginning of 2000s, and, in a later stage, even led to labour shortages in particular sectors such as construction or agriculture. This vision is also shared by a number of experts of the Romanian labour market (Cristina Mocanu, INCSMPS21-10-09).

Migration and the female labour market

The fact that, after 2000, employment rates have not increased, but, on the contrary, remained stable while unemployment decreased^{xvii}, is seen by some commentators as an additional indicator that the surplus workforce went not so much the national labour market as it merely left the country (Ciutacu and Chivu, 2007: 30). Other commentators caution nevertheless that low employment rates reflect low labour force participation rates of women and the elderly who are just keeping themselves out of the labour force (Mete et al, 2008: 30). They also imply that these rates have not much to do with migration, which they see as being predominantly young and male. Nevertheless, as we have seen, while the profile of the migrant did indeed become younger, migrants’ gender profile became after 2002 pretty much balanced in gender terms. Moreover, interestingly, after 1998, unemployment rates for women have generally been lower than male unemployment rates^{xviii}, while, after 1999, female unemployment started to decrease as well^{xix} (INS, 2009; LazaroIU and Alexandru, 2008: 226). The link between female involvement on the Romanian labour market and migration has thus to be reconsidered.

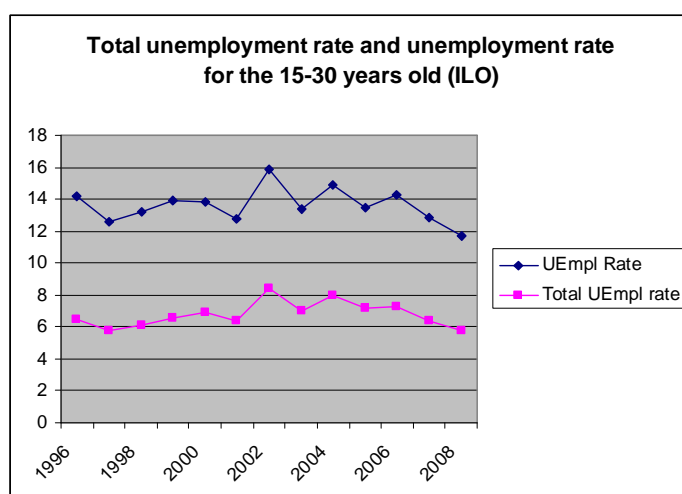


Source: (INS, 2009).

We have seen that the CRS survey (Sandu, 2009a) found out a considerable increase in the employment rate of migrants following migration. Indeed, while 63% of the studied migrants had a job in Romania, 89% of them had one in Spain in 2008 (Tufis, 2009: 93). Interestingly, this increase in employment was due to decreases not only in unemployment rates but also in rates of inactivity: the percentages of people declaring themselves to be students or housewives passed from, respectively, 15% and 10% in Romania to 2 and 3% in Spain. Thus, we could say that while some women did keep themselves out of the labour market in Romania (thus decreasing national employment rates), they used migration as a vehicle for re-entering the labour market, this time in Spain^{xx}. As many times this entrance was directed to the domestic services sector, migration thus transformed women's unpaid work as housewives into paid work for employers.

Migration and youth employment

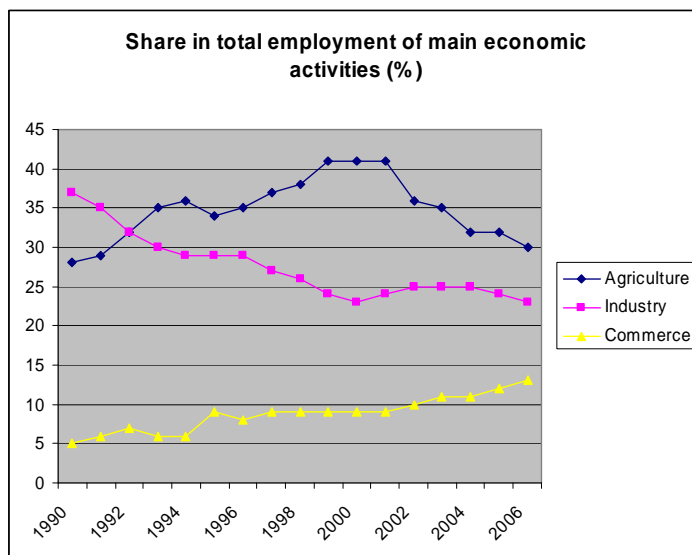
The impact of migration of the Romanian labour market could be made more visible if we look more in detail at the age composition of migrants. As we have already seen, young able-bodied people are overrepresented in Romanian temporary migration abroad. Indeed, while young people aged 15 to 29 years old made 48% of temporary migrants^{xxi} in the 2002-2006 period (Sandu, 2006a), they represented only 33% of total Romanian population in the 15-64 age bracket in 2006^{xxii, xxiii} (INS, 2007a). While it is to be expected that migration of young people has a bearing on the availability of labour in Romania, the concrete impact of this migration on Romanian unemployment or labour deficits is still to be determined. What can be said for now is that between 2002 and 2008 the number of unemployed people in the 15-29 and 30-54 age brackets decreased by, respectively, 24% and 26%, making us think that at least part of this decrease was due to migration outside Romania^{xxiv}.



Source: (INS, 2009).

Migration and the structural transformation of the Romanian labour market, 1990-2006

In order to understand the impact of migration on the Romanian labour market, we need to move from its gender and age variables to a more structural approach of its post-socialist transformation. A look at the evolution of employment among different activities of the economy will help us understand some of the dynamics of the Romanian labour market, as well as its relation to (both internal and external) migration^{xxv}. The graph below shows the share of total employment of main economic activities, between 1990 and 2006. What is remarkable is that the three main periods in which we could divide the evolution of employment in different activities of the economy are superposed to the three periods in the evolution of temporary migration trends distinguished by Sandu (2006a).



Source: (INS, 2007a).

At the end of the socialist period, Romania was combining a fairly considerable orientation towards industry (especially heavy industry), with a still important agricultural sector and a more modest service sector. In 1990, 37% of the total employment was in industry, while 28% was still in agriculture. Post-socialist transformations led, in a **first period (1990-1995)** to the decline in industrial production and employment, a sharp growth in employment in agriculture and a slower, but discernible growth in employment in trade. Both growths followed the privatisation of agriculture and trade infrastructure. In particular, land restitution (started in 1991) led to small subsistence farming becoming a safety valve for unemployed industrial workers, or, in the words of Cristina Mocanu (INCSMPS, 21-10-09), “playing a social protection role for unemployed workers”.

As we have seen above, in this first period, migration was more urban than rural (59% as compared to 41% of migrants) (Sandu, 2006a). On the other hand, migration from rural

regions was concentrated in more developed villages (UNFPA, 2007). As migration demands the mobilization of a certain amount of resources before starting to produce any income, migrants predominantly came from better-off villages, where industrial restructuring in the area led to villagers losing their status as commuter workers (*navetisti*) and eventually reorienting part of them towards work migration abroad.

A **second stage (1996-2001)** witnessed the accentuation of migration and employment trends seen above. As industry continued its fall, it came to invert its position in the employment structure with agriculture. In 2001, agriculture counted for 41% of total employment, while industry for only 24% (INS, 2007a). This trend was matched by a constant and important decrease of rural-urban flows in Romania, and a corresponding substantial increase in the urban-rural ones^{xxvi} (Sandu et al, 2004). This was the result of the fact that more and more urban unemployed or (early) retired employees chose the countryside as a refuge, with the help of an inherited plot of land. Agriculture became a “parking” strategy for both *navetisti* and returning city dwellers, waiting for opportunities to engage in better paid jobs.

In this second period, while temporary migration increased, migrants continued to have higher than average incomes and to come predominantly from more rather than less developed areas (Sandu et al 2004)^{xxvii}. Indeed, a community census carried out in Romanian villages in December 2001 (Sandu, 2005b) found out that villages with higher migration densities have larger proportions of young and educated people, as well as of *navetisti* and return migrants from cities, and are located closer to cities and modern roads. It seems thus that rural out migration was mainly the enterprise of those who have already been better connected to the larger Romanian economy and to its urban areas: “people have converted internal migration experience into external (circular) migration experience” (Sandu, 2005b: 567)^{xxviii}. Migration thus seemed to have been composed of a medium-qualified workforce of *navetisti* and city workers, or what Catalin Ghinararu (INCSMPS, 23-10-09) called the “residue of the socialist economy” in the new Romanian transition society^{xxix}.

This situation started to change **after 2002**. Agriculture’s share in employment dropped quite importantly, reaching in 2006 a record low level (for the post-socialist period) of 30% (INS, 2007a). While between 2002 and 2006 industry’s share fluctuated between 23 and 25%, the growth in the share of trade seems to have accelerated, the latter reaching 13% in 2006. In the same time, as we have seen, migration abroad from rural areas continued to increase its importance. During the 2002-2006 period, while rural population dropped from 47% to 45%

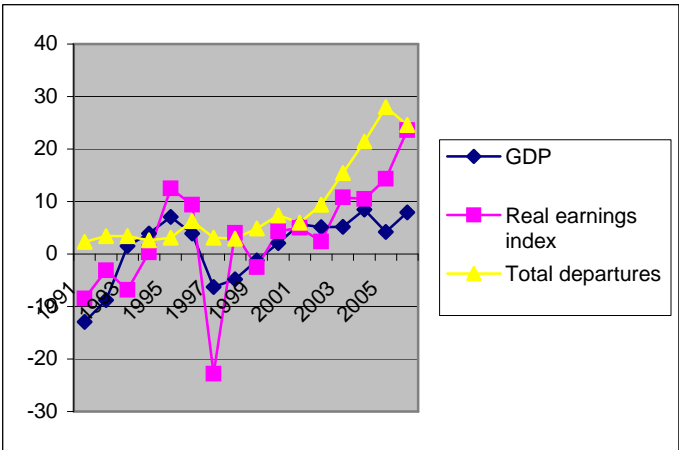
of the total population of Romania (INS, 2007a), rural migration came to constitute almost half of total migration.

The increasing importance of migration abroad from rural areas might thus be the result of the combined migration of local *navetisti*^{xxx} and of former city dwellers that had moved their residence back to the countryside. While both categories are better educated, they are also more reluctant to work in the subsistence agriculture nowadays dominating many Romanian villagers. From this point of view, migration might act at least partially as a valve for releasing the still important post-socialist labour pressure exerted on the Romanian agriculture^{xxxii}. Nevertheless, if migrants continued to depart from more developed villages, this means that less developed villages might have been left with fewer resources as their inhabitants are not able to avail of the migration valve.

Therefore, following Sandu (2005b), we could say that, in the first and second periods, the decline in industrial employment led to an exodus of industrial unemployed to agriculture and to increased flows from cities to the countryside. After 2002, agricultural employment began to subside, as temporary migration became a more viable alternative for many rural inhabitants.

These processes have to be put in the larger picture of the post-socialist transformation of the Romanian economy. Indeed, as we can see from the graph below, post-socialist changes in agricultural and industrial employment took place on the background of significant changes in the standard of living enjoyed by the Romanian population.

Graph 17. GDP variation (%), real earnings index variation (%) and total departures rate (/000), 1991-2006



Source: IMF, *World economic outlook database 2009*, (INS, 2007a, b), (Sandu, 2006a).

As we can see, between 1990 and 2000, both GDP and real earnings index registered many years of negative variation. The 90s thus witnessed a precipitous decline in the purchasing power of wages and in the living standards of the Romanian population. The

decade saw massive layoffs and persisting hyperinflation (for example, in 1993 inflation reached 256%) (Lazaroiu and Alexandru, 2008: 215). As a result, the average monthly net wage in Romania decreased from 187 euros in 1989 to 107 in 2000. (Ciutacu and Chivu, 2007: 38). Moreover, paid employment was continuously eroded after the change of regime. Indeed, the rate of employees (people in paid employment) in total population fell continuously in that decade from 34% in 1989 to 20% in 2000, stabilizing itself at around 20% only after that year (Ciutacu and Chivu, 2007: 29). Poverty rates increased from 20% in 1996 to 36% in 2000 (Sandu, 2005a: 38). As a result, during the 90s, differentials in wage and living standards between Romania and European destination countries were quite important.

After 2000, both GDP and wage increase started to be more sustained. According to Catalin Pauna (WB, 22-10-09) as the economy started to grow again, the excess demand on the labour market led to a rise in average wages. Interestingly, this was also due to the fact that the available rural labour force did not manage to respond to the increase in labour demand. As new jobs were mainly created in urban areas, and as villagers could not benefit anymore of the socialist commuting infrastructure, many of them chose instead of a shabby and expensive microbus to the near city the coach to Spain!

2005 was the first year when the net average wage went over to its 1989 level, to 199 Euro^{xxxii}. Still, in the same year, while the average GDP/capita of EU-15 was of 108,3 Euro, it was of only 34,7 Euro in Romania (Traser and Venables, 2008). As a result, migration to now established destination countries such as Spain and Italy continued even during these “Balkan tiger” years of Romania. Still in 2006, whereas in Romania the average salary was 200 Euro per month, in the same period in Italy, migrants could earn between 800 and 1400 Euro and send back home between 400 and 800 Euro (Stan, 2006: 25).

Migration and deskilling

As we have seen above, the improvement of Romania’s economic performance after 2000 has translated not in growing industrial employment, but in increased employment in trade activities. This growth reveals the ongoing transformation of Romania into a “service society” and the probable deskilling of its labour market as a result of the depletion of its skilled labour through out migration. It is nevertheless important to acknowledge that deskilling has probably already started in the 90s as a result of the transfer of industrial employees to the agricultural sector. The high rates of agricultural employment in Romania were seen by some commentators as an indication of hidden unemployment, or even high inactivity, as those engaged in subsistence agriculture were considered to be inactive on the

labour market (Valentin Mocanu, MMFPS, 23-10-09)^{xxxiii}. In the same time, it could also indicate a process of deskilling, as most agricultural employment in post-socialist Romania involves very low skills (and at most “traditional” agricultural skills which could only marginally be converted into waged employment). In 2006, 93% of the agricultural workforce was working on family exploitations (as either self-employed or as unremunerated family worker), while only 6% of it was composed of wage earners (INS, 2007a).

On the other hand, the post-socialist transformations affecting the educational system also lead to some de-skilling processes of the Romanian workforce. In the opinion of Valentin Mocanu (MMFPS, 23-10-09), but also of Catalin Pauna (WB, 22-10-09) and Cristina Mocanu (INCSMPS, 21-10-09), in Romania third level education is disconnected from the labour market. Indeed, it has produced high numbers of graduates in business, accounting and law, but less in some fields where there was a demand for highly qualified labour during the later years (such as engineering). On the other hand, as underlined by Valentin Mocanu, vocation training lost in breath and pertinence after the connection between vocational schools and enterprises institutionalised during the socialist period was severed.

According to Cristina Mocanu (INCSMPS, 21-10-09), it is only up to around 2004 that migration had as an effect the absorption of surplus workforce on the Romanian labour market. After that, it had a negative effect of lowering the skill level of the Romanian labour force. This opinion was also shared by Valentin Mocanu (MMFPS, 23-10-09). In a study to be published soon, Cristina Mocanu had found out that 30 to 40% of students of vocational education in Romania were only waiting for graduation so that to leave the country to work abroad. This meant that they would not continue their education for an additional year of qualification, thus contributing to lower the levels of skills available on the Romanian labour market. As the TLA survey found, between 2002 and 2006, a large majority of migrants had vocational or high school education (77%), a proportion much higher than among Romanian population in the 15-64 age bracket (45%) (INS, 2007).

The process of de-skilling is also revealed in the 2008 study on Romanian communities in Spain (Sandu, 2009a; Tufis, 2009). Indeed, according to the study, more Romanian migrants worked as un-qualified workers in the region Madrid than back in Romania (11% as compared to 9%). This increase in un-qualified positions following migration might nevertheless be even more important if we start to look carefully at the different occupational categories used in the study. The table below shows the way in which the study has classified the occupations of Romanian migrants in the Madrid region.

Table 4. Migrants' occupations in Romania and Spain (%)

Occupational categories	Occupational class	Occupation in Romania	Last occupation in Madrid
1. Heads of companies and employers, entrepreneurs	Class A (professional, managerial and intellectual occupations)	2	3
2. Intellectual occupations		4	1
3. Technicians and foremen	Class B (non-manual routine occupations and qualified workers)	3	1
4. Public servants		2	1
5. Workers in services and trade		21	43
6. Qualified farmers or in their own exploitation		1	0
7. Qualified workers		21	26
8. Unqualified workers	Class C (unqualified workers)	9	13
9. Without occupation		38	11

Source: (Tufis, 2009: 95), my translation.

As we can see, the study included in Class B (non-manual routine occupations and qualified workers) at least one problematic category, namely “Service and trade workers” (nr. 5). In Spain, nr. 5 includes a substantial number of unskilled labour working in the domestic services sector. Therefore, its place (or at least a large part of its contingent) is rather in Class C than Class B^{xxxiv}. Moreover, nr. 5 regards a category (workers in service and trade) which increased significantly following migration: from 21% in Romania to 43% in Spain. According to the study, 46% of the latter were working in domestic services as unqualified *menajere* (housekeepers). If we add these housekeepers to the unqualified workers officially counted in the survey, we arrive at a proportion of at least 31% of the migrants in Madrid having unqualified jobs – an increase of more than 3 times in the proportion of unqualified workers as compared to the initial situation in Romania!

Deskilling is also visible if we look at the evolution of higher qualified occupations in Class A and B. Indeed, many of them diminished in importance following migration. For example, “intellectual occupations” decreased from 4% in Romania to 1% in Spain, “technicians and foremen” from 3% to 1%, and “public servants” from 2% to 1%. The decrease in these occupations was balanced by an increase in three categories situated below them (unqualified workers, workers in services and trade, and qualified workers), fact which points to a deskilling trajectory for many higher skilled migrants. On the other hand, we should also notice that the considerable increase in workers in services in trade is probably accounted for not so much by the decrease in higher skilled work, as by the entrance into the labour market of those who were “without occupation” in Romania. In the light of the importance of un-skilled labour in services and trade, this entrance reconfirms the deskilling

processes related to migration^{xxxv}. This is also confirmed by the 2007 ENI study cited by Tufis (2009), which found out that 54% of Romanian migrants experienced descending mobility following migration (Tufis, 2009: 99).

Finally, the process of de-skilling through migration is also highlighted by the change in the gender and occupational composition of migration. The increase in female migration highlighted by the 2006 study on temporary migration (Sandu et al, 2006) changed the balance between employment in unskilled domestic services and employment in construction (an important part of which is skilled^{xxxvi}). Thus, whereas a 2001 community census found out that around 40% of rural Romanian migrants to Spain worked in construction (Sandu, 2005b), the 2008 study of Romanian communities in Spain found out that only 23% of migrants^{xxxvii} from the Madrid region did so^{xxxviii}. The difference between the two periods is even more significant if we take into consideration that rural migrants were probably in a higher proportion than urban migrants prone to migrate into agricultural jobs (rather than in construction), while migrants from the Madrid region were more prone to have construction jobs than migrants going to the south of Spain. This means that the importance of construction in the ensemble of Romanian migration to Spain probably diminished even more than these data would let us believe. The decrease in the importance of construction (a sector with an important skilled labour component) is at least partly a result of the concomitant increase of the importance of jobs in services and trade (a sector where unskilled work is current for migrants working even in areas other than the housekeeping sub-sector). Finally, deskilling as a result of migration is also evident if we compare the proportion of people working and trade and services in home and host countries: while in 2006 in Romania no more than 10% of the employed population worked in services and commerce (INS, 2007a), in 2008 43% of Romanian migrants in the Madrid area did so^{xxxix}!

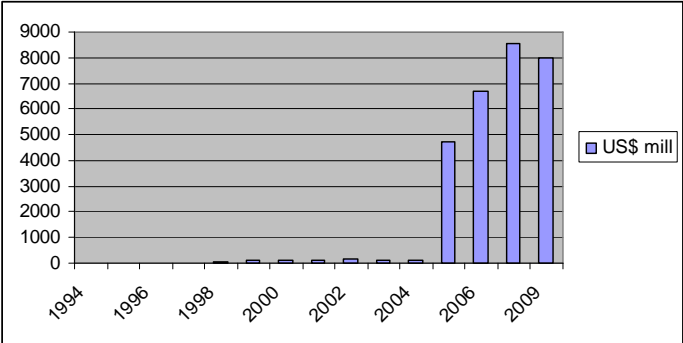
However, on a more general level, the impact of migration of the Romanian labour market is still to be seen. One important question is how much of the currently dominant temporary migration will be converted into permanent migration once migrants' situation in destination countries will permit it (i.e. for example by having worked enough years in a destination country to be able to apply for permanent residence and then citizenship). In 2002, a demographer estimated temporary migration at only 697.000 persons (Ghetau, 2007), but highlighted that this represented 64% of the total decrease Romanian population has registered between 1992 and 2002. He warned that, if temporary migration is continued or if it is even partially converted into permanent migration, it will have an important impact on

Romania’s available labour force. Other voices also warn against migration’s importance for the future of the Romanian labour market. As highlighted by Catalin Pauna, 2,5 million migrants represent 25% of the total labour force (n.b. Romania’s active population was of 10 million people in 2006 (INS, 2007)), which is enormous! Valentin Mocanu makes an even tighter evaluation. He contends that if we subtract the 2 million people practicing subsistence agriculture from the total employed population (n.b. of 9,3 million in 2006 (INS, 2007)), the later amount in effect to less than 8 million. 3 million migrants represent then more than a third of Romania’s employed population!

Remittances and the Romanian labour market

As in the case of other migration flows, Romanian migration has led to an important influx of remittances to Romania. In 2007, it was estimated that remittances amounted to between about 3 billion and 4 billion Euros a year in preceding years (Ciutacu and Chivu, 2007: 43). Data from the National Bank of Romania raised remittances to 7,1 billion Euro in 2007, or 5,9% of the GDP (Arpad, 2008). In 2008, the National Commission for Prognosis estimated that remittances sent to Romania by Romanians working abroad amounted to 7,5% of the GDP (Erdei, 2008a). The graph below shows the phenomenal increase in the volume of Romanian remittance after 2005.

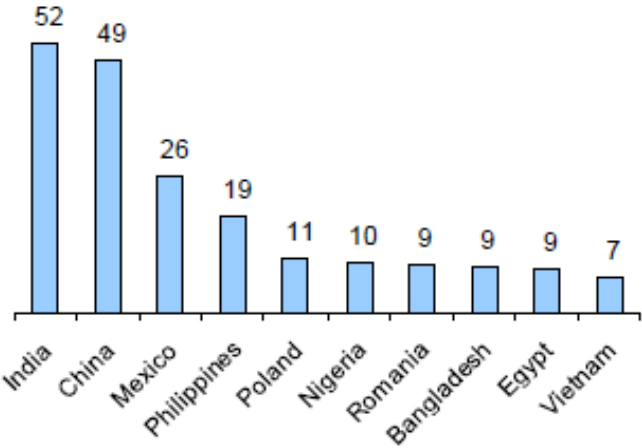
Graph 18. Workers’ remittances, compensations of employers and migrant transfers’, credit (US\$ million)



Source: (Ratha, Mohapatra and Silwal. 2009), Excel Data for Brief.
[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1110315015165/RemittancesData_Nov09\(Public\).xls](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1110315015165/RemittancesData_Nov09(Public).xls)

This increase put Romania in 2008 on the 9-th place among the top recipients of migrant remittances among developing countries.

Graph 19. Top recipients of migrant remittances among developing countries in 2008



Source: (Ratha, Mohapatra and Silwal. 2009: 3)

At a macro-economic level, remittances were credited with having contributed to both excess market liquidity and to strengthening the national currency (Ciutacu and Chivu, 2007: 42). The first effect was warded off only in the first decade of the new millennium by energetic measures on the part of the Romanian National Bank. With decreasing inflation also came a stronger national currency as well as a growth in GDP, which was thus seen as resulting more from BNR policies than from fundamental economic factors.

The impact of remittances on labour force participation was seen as debatable, as low participation rates in the labour force were not seen as being primarily driven by reliance on remittances from abroad. Indeed, those who are out of the labour force tend to be poor, whereas remittances tend to be provided to middle and higher income households (Mete, Bucur Pop and Cnobloch, 2008: 30). Nevertheless, while admitting there are still no studies on the topic, Cristina Mocanu (INCSMPS, 21-10-09) believes that for rural and small town households with relatively low incomes, remittances might have had an effect to pull some of their members out of the labour market.

The contribution of remittances to the ordinary lives of those who received them is nevertheless quite significant. Indeed, it is estimated that remittances in the period 2002-2005 amounted to around 50% of the total net wages received by Romania’s workers in the country (Ciutacu and Chivu, 2007: 42). Otherwise said, to whatever those left in the country earned through their work in Romania, their relatives and friends working abroad added an additional 50%. Information on remittances is nevertheless partial, as what is measured are generally bank transfers (Constantin et al, 2004). It is estimated that 40% of migrant transfers are made through informal channels. Monetary transfers are also made by other means, for example by

being brought cash into Romania by migrants, their family members, friends, bus drivers etc. This method is probably the most frequently one used by illegal migrants.

Remittances led to an increase the standard of life of those left behind, the boom in house construction, sales in equipment, household goods and cars, created jobs and stimulated consumption (Ghetau, 2007). Indeed, remittances were used for various purposes: current consumption (family allowance, paying for the education and training of children, health care), savings, investments in goods for long term use (such as dwellings, land, household equipment, cars, machines and agricultural tools), or the initiation of micro businesses or the setting up of family associations with a lucrative purpose (agro tourism, cultural tourism and the use of local natural resources) (Constantin et al, 2004).

Nevertheless, remittances mainly led not to investment in business and to job creation, but to conspicuous investments in house construction, household goods and cars (Hartman, 2007; Stan 2006; Potot, 2000). The 2008 CRS survey (Sandu, 2009b: 59) found out that 52% of Romanian migrants in the Madrid region declared they wish to buy or build a house in Romania in the next two years, while 32% declared they would like to open a business in the home country. There is thus a hierarchy in the destinations of remittance money in Romania.

Potot (2000) also noticed an interesting distinction in consumption orientation between middle-class migrants from cities, on the one hand, and village migrants from working class or farming backgrounds, on the other. Whereas the first mainly invest in cars and conspicuous consumption (brand clothes, holidays in luxury hotels in the mountains or at the seaside), the second will mainly invest in durable goods such as building a house. However, if the middle-class migrants studied by Potot developed small businesses, these were mainly very small on-the-spot arrangements which did not led to consistent employment even for its initiator. As a matter of fact, as Cristina Mocanu noticed (INCSMPS, 21-10-09), many Romanian migrants willing to start a business in Romania might have been confronted with the corruption permeating the Romanian economy at the local level. This could have deterred them from starting or continuing their business venture.

In the case of the Neamt migrants studied by Oteanu (2007), migrants would first invest remittances in the building of a house and only after invest in any entrepreneurial activity. The so-called “pride-houses” (Romanian?) serve as indicators of family welfare. In the 2006 TLA regional survey conducted on migrant households from Teleorman and Vrancea counties (Sandu et al, 2006), it was found that, of the total number of migrant households which invested money, 69% of those in rural areas and 74% of those in urban areas bought household appliances, and 59% of those in rural areas and 76% of those in urban expanded

and modernized their houses (Grigoras, 2006: 43). In the same study, 28% of respondents thought that money earned through migration should be spent first on house construction or purchase (28%), second on setting up a business (19%) and third on satisfying the basic needs of or providing a better living for one's family (12%) (Sandu, 2006b: 61).

But while household construction is usually seen as an instance of conspicuous consumption, it is also a job-generating activity, as it led to the development of a flourishing construction sector in many Romanian villages affected by migration. In the case of migrants from county Neamt studied by Oteanu (2007), it is interesting to note that some (returning) migrants were amongst those who invested in the construction sector by setting up small construction companies, usually operating on the black market (*ibid*: 41). These small enterprises can be as transitory as the so-called *ditte*. The latter are copied after the Italian model and consist of groups of 5 to 6 workers hired by the day or until the finalization of a construction project. Much more feeble investment on the part of migrants is directed towards livestock breeding or the processing of agricultural products. The same 2006 TLA regional survey on migrant households found out that, on the whole, while the percentage of "entrepreneurs" (i.e. people who invested their money in setting up a business) is higher among those who have work experience abroad as compared to the general population (10% compared to 3%), it still is generally rather low (Toth and Toth, 2006: 48).

On the other hand, Potot (2006) also noticed that returning migrants are contributing to the development of a new consumerist ethics in Romania. Indeed, they are among those who are driving up the demand for the products and styles of consumption promoted through the new forms of retail trade that have colonised Romania after 2000 (grand surfaces like shopping malls and shopping markets). Given that the development of these new forms of retail trade replaces, at least partially, former forms of retail trade (taking place in small shops, in peasant fairs, as well as through informal exchanges between family members, friends and neighbours), we could wonder if migration is not also indirectly contributing to important shifts in employment in the service sector. Moreover, as, by extension, the development of new forms of retail trade further marginalises agricultural production on small subsistence farms (which do not have access to this market), it also has an impact on employment in the latter sector. Finally, as noticed by Monica Serban (UB, 23-10-09), this rise in consumption is mainly a consumption of imported goods. The latter further contributes to marginalise domestic production, increase Romania's trade deficit and deplete its foreign currency stocks.

Migration and Romanian labour deficits

At the beginning of the new millennium, increased levels of migration, as well as the fact that the country was still affected by the 90s economic recession, led the Romanian government to a direct involvement in programs of labour recruitment abroad, as a means to ease the pressure on the demand side of the domestic labour market (Chivu, 2008). In 2001, the government established the Labour Force Migration Office (*Oficiul pentru Migratia Fortei de Munca, OMFM*), which aimed to offer consultancy services, assistance and protection to Romanian workers abroad, as well as to manage programs of labour recruitment abroad (Ciutacu and Chivu, 2007: 30; Stan, 2006; Niculescu et al, 2006). Subsequently, in 2004, the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family established the Department for Labour Abroad (*Departamentul pentru Munca in Strainatate, DMS*), which took on the coordination of OMFM (Stan, 2006). After 2007 and Romania's accession to the UE, the OMFM was disbanded, and its functions transferred to the National Agency for Employment (*Agentia Nationala pentru Ocuparea Fortei de Munca, ANOFM*) (Colipca and Ivan-Mohor, : 6), and particularly to the Romanian branch of EURES. EURES (European Job Mobility Portal) is a "co-operation network between the European Commission and the Public Employment Services of the EEA Member States"^{x1} seeking to encourage the free movement of labour across Europe and supported financially by the EU. While having inherited the OMFM expertise and personnel, EURES is decentralised: it has a councillor in every county of Romania, thus facilitating the selection and departures of migrants nearer to their home locality.

After 2005, more and more voices started to claim that migration began to have a significant impact on Romania's labour market, mostly by causing important labour shortages (Serban and Toth, 2007). Migration was also seen as contributing to the drop of employment and an increase in dependency rates in the country and thus as putting in peril Romanian social and health insurance systems (Cindrea, 2007: 26). More generally, migration was also credited to lead to a diminishing tax base available for the state as a result of the departure of young workers (Ciutacu and Chivu, 2007: 30). Qualitative studies on migration to Italy and Ireland also highlighted that irregular migration in particular led to both labour shortages and deskilling at local and community levels, as many irregular migrants perform low-skilled jobs sometimes at a variance with their qualifications at home (Stan, 2006).

According to a World Bank report, labour force migration and massive foreign investments in Romania have led to a severe lack of personnel (Ilie, 2007). Indeed, labour

deficits were noticed in construction, agriculture, tourism, construction materials, mechanical processing, clothing and leather goods industry (Cindrea, 2007: 26). Data from ANOFM (DMS, 2006) show that in 2006 there was a deficit of unqualified workers in the areas of packing solid and semi-solid goods (1.111), textile manufacturing (1.023), road, bridge and dam construction and maintenance (1.004), building demolition, brickwork, mosaic, faience, grit stone and parquetry (665), but also of sellers (617), security, access control and intervention agents (541), bricklayer plaster workers (395), carpenters (370), operator in textile confections (364). The most affected regions were the Western region and Bucharest (Lazaroiu and Alexandru, 2008).

One of the sectors most affected by the labour deficit was construction. In 2006, shortages in the construction sector were estimated by one employer organisation (*Patronatul Societatilor din Constructii; Association of Employers in Constructions*) to be as high as 300,000 workers, or 50% of the total labour deficit in Romania (Ciutacu, 2007). In the same year, PM Tariceanu blamed the labour deficit in construction on migration and saw it as “the reason why certain public works are being delayed” (Ciutacu, 2006). In 2008, the construction sector registered important labour deficits in 37 out of the 41 Romanian departments (Chisu, 2008). Bucharest was the city with the highest level of labour deficit in construction, with 9.000 vacant jobs. Construction companies in counties such as Timiș, Cluj, Constanța and Sibiu also had important difficulties in finding workers.

One year earlier, in 2007, a study conducted on 600 companies in the construction, textile and hospitality sectors (Serban and Toth, 2007) showed that around 15% of companies in the constructions and hospitality sectors were affected by labour deficits, whereas in the textile industry that proportion reached 30%. Over the three sectors, around 17.000 jobs have been vacant for over two months. Two thirds of company managers declared that in 2007 they found it quite hard or extremely hard to find new workers when needed. More than three quarters of them thought that Romanian workers’ migration outside the country was significantly affecting their capacity to hire staff. Nevertheless, only 13% of them were interested in the future to respond to labour shortages by trying to attract Romanian migrants back home.

In the opinion of Valentin Mocanu (MMFPS, 22-10-09) employers were complaining not only and not so much of the available numbers of workers, as of the skills available on the labour market. This was also revealed by a study commissioned by the Agency for Governmental Strategies (ASG) in September 2008 among Romanian employers (ASG, 2008a). The study found out that the lack of qualified personnel was the most cited factor

responsible for difficulties in labour recruitment (43% of employers), with labour force migration and lack of workforce lagging way behind (with, respectively, 10% and 7%).

According to Cristina Mocanu (INCSMPS, 21-10-09), it is also after 2007 that Romanian employers in the construction sector started to be very vocal in articulating fears of deficits on the national labour market. This was due to the fact that the growth of the construction sector was happening in the same time in Romania and in Spain. On the other hand, migration to Spain (and Italy) had as effects labour deficits not only in constructions but also in the domestic services sector. According to the same researcher, in Romania there is a “crisis of childminders and carers of the elderly”, as “they have left for Spain to be housekeepers, childminders and carers of old people”.

Interestingly, this latter labour deficit tends to be ignored in Romanian media and research, a possible indication of women’s place in the Romanian society. Another labour deficit until very recently not very much acknowledged in the media was the drain of Romanian nurses and doctors abroad. While this loss is visible in job vacancies statistics, women’s predominance in these sectors might explain at least partly why it has received less attention than the labour deficits in the male dominated construction sector.

Alarming accounts of the Romanian labour deficit reached their peak in 2008, when it came to be seen as a major impediment to Romania’s continuous economic growth. According to a declaration of the minister for labour, “Romania is confronted with a situation of crisis on the labour market, this phenomenon being a consequence of the migration process” (Erdei, 2008b). In the same year, the general director of Pirelli Tyres Romania saw the labour market crisis in even more apocalyptic terms, as representing “the highest risk with which Romania could confront itself in the following years in relation to foreign investments” (Standard.ro, 2008b).

Official data showed that, in 2008, the Romanian labour deficit was of around 83.000 persons^{xii} (ANOFM, 2008). The real figure for the labour deficit may have been much higher, with estimated figures going up to 100.000, and even, according to the minister for finance, 500.000 (Erdei, 2008b). Indeed, many Romanian firms did not declare the real number of their vacant jobs, and many jobs offered by recruiting firms (such as those for specialists and managers) did not even appear in the data of ANOFM^{xiii} (Chişu, 2008). The most affected sectors were seen to be constructions, heavy industry, car industry, textiles, and banks.

A study conducted by Manpower in 32 countries found out that 73% of companies in Romania couldn’t find qualified staff for their job vacancies (Manpower, 2008: 2; Standard.ro, 2008a). This made Romania rank first in terms of the difficulty of employers in

filling jobs, well ahead western and other eastern European countries. The zones most affected by the labour market crisis were deemed to be Bucharest and the West of Romania. The study considered that the labour market deficit was the result of a decade of migration of qualified labour towards other European countries. This was echoed by other commentators, who saw the causes of the labour market crisis to be demographic (the aging of the population coupled with the decrease of the birth rate), an inadequate educational program, but also the economic migration phenomenon (Filipescu, 2008).

Some analysts (Serban and Toth, 2007) see the labour deficit resulting from migration as affecting the development of Romanian enterprises both directly (by reducing their capacity to respond to market demand) and indirectly (by increasing human resources fluctuation and labour force costs). In the same time, the labour deficit might increase the recourse to better technology with direct results in production development and in the quality of products. The latter remains for now only a hypothesis, as it is not something which was, up until now, more precisely estimated.

Other analysts estimated that labour migration has increased pressure for higher wages (Banciu, 2007). If we look at Graph 17, we could see that, indeed, after 2002 the increase in temporary migration rates was accompanied as well by an increase in real earnings. This could arrive because, as we have seen above, migrants have become more selective, as they started to refuse positions they deemed having too low salaries or too harsh work conditions. But it could also occur because of the impact migrants have as employers of local workforce. Indeed, as Monica Serban (UB, 23-10-09) noticed, migrants generally might offer higher wages than locals who do not benefit from remittances from abroad. This phenomenon affects in particular informal work in agriculture (on family exploitations) and in constructions.

Responses to the domestic labour deficit

While the post-socialist image of Romania as eminently an emigration country is consecrated, it is important to acknowledge that, after 1989, the country has also started to receive more and more foreigners on its territory. For example, Chinese workers have been brought in to fill vacancies in the textile industry, a sector where low wage levels were unattractive for Romanians (Serban and Toth, 2007). In 2003, Romania granted around 10.000 residence permits to foreigners for employment, mostly to citizens from China, Italy and Turkey (Country report, 2003). By 2006 their number rose to 53.600, the most important countries of origin being Moldova, Turkey, China and Italy (Lazaroiu and Alexandru, 2008: 229).

However, up until recently, immigration was not encouraged by Romanian governments, as it is proved by the fact that expenses incurred by Romanian employers in employing a foreign worker were much higher than for a Romanian worker (DMS, 2006)^{xliii}. In October 2007, the Romanian government adopted the “National Strategy on migration for 2007-2010” (Ciutacu, 2007). The new migration strategy aimed to provide for the free movement and residence rights of EU citizens as well as to permit access to third-country nationals to employment in Romania. As a result, by lowering the barriers for employing foreigners in Romania, the access of foreigners on the Romanian labour market was facilitated. Whereas before 2007 an employer needed to pay a foreign national at least the average national wage, after 2007 foreigners could be paid with only the minimum salary in the economy (Business Standard, 2007). While this new policy results from Romania’s accession to the EU, it can also be seen as a measure of dealing with the increasing shortages encountered on the domestic labour market. Indeed, at the time of its adoption, it was estimated that foreigners will fill in jobs in industries with low and very low added value, such as in manufacturing, constructions and agriculture (Business Standard, 2007).

The alternative to immigration in finding a solution to the perceived labour market deficit was to encourage the return of Romanian migrants from abroad. In November 2006, PM Tariceanu declared he wanted Romanian workers “to come back home” and set up a working group with representatives from several ministries in charge of devising a strategy for informing Romanian workers abroad of the improvement in wage conditions in Romania (Ciutacu, 2006). In February 2008, the Romanian government adopted a “Plan to Encourage the Return of Romanians Working Abroad”, covering the period 2008-2010 (Chivu, 2008).

As the country was passing through a period of economic growth and increasing work opportunities^{xliv}, the Romanian government thus initiated several job fairs in Italy and Spain aiming to convince Romanian immigrants in these countries to return to work and live in Romania. For example, the job fair organized by the National Agency for Employment (*Agentia nationala de Ocupare si Formare a Fortei de Munca*, ANOFM) at Castellon de la Plana (in 2007?) regrouped five Romanian employers providing information on job vacancies (Chivu, 2007).

According to Cristina Mocanu (INCSMPS, 21-10-09) even if they were sometimes offering attractive qualified jobs, these job fairs nevertheless failed. The reason was that they were mainly directed to the construction sector, addressing thus only half of Romanian migration abroad. As many Romanian migrants working in construction abroad had brought their wives with them, and as job fairs were not also offering jobs for their wives, most

Romanian migrants did not take advantage of the opportunities offered by these job markets. Moreover, again according to Cristina Mocanu, the choice between a job in Romania and a job abroad was determined, for many migrants, not only by wage levels but also by their perception of the stability of the labour market, itself function of social welfare payments in each country. In respect to both wage and welfare levels Romania was still faring far below countries like Spain.

In 2008, the minister for labour declared that these job fairs determined only around 100 Romanians to return to the country, a paltry result considering there were hundreds of thousands of Romanian migrants in Italy and Spain. As a result, he advocated covering Romania's labour deficit by activating rural workforce and by using Romania's share in the European Social Fund to attract and maintain Romanians on the national labour market^{xlv} (Erdei, 2008b). Other commentators advocated the same position, and stated that it is more important to convince people not to leave the country, than to convince those who have already left to come back (Standard.ro, 2008b). Still others (Standard.ro, 2008a) hoped that a probable effect of rising wages in Romania would be the reduction of the labour exodus abroad. In the 2008 ASG study (ASG, 2008a), Romanian employers were favouring almost in the same proportion attracting Romanian migrants workers back home (67%) and the professional reconversion of workers in Romania (66%).

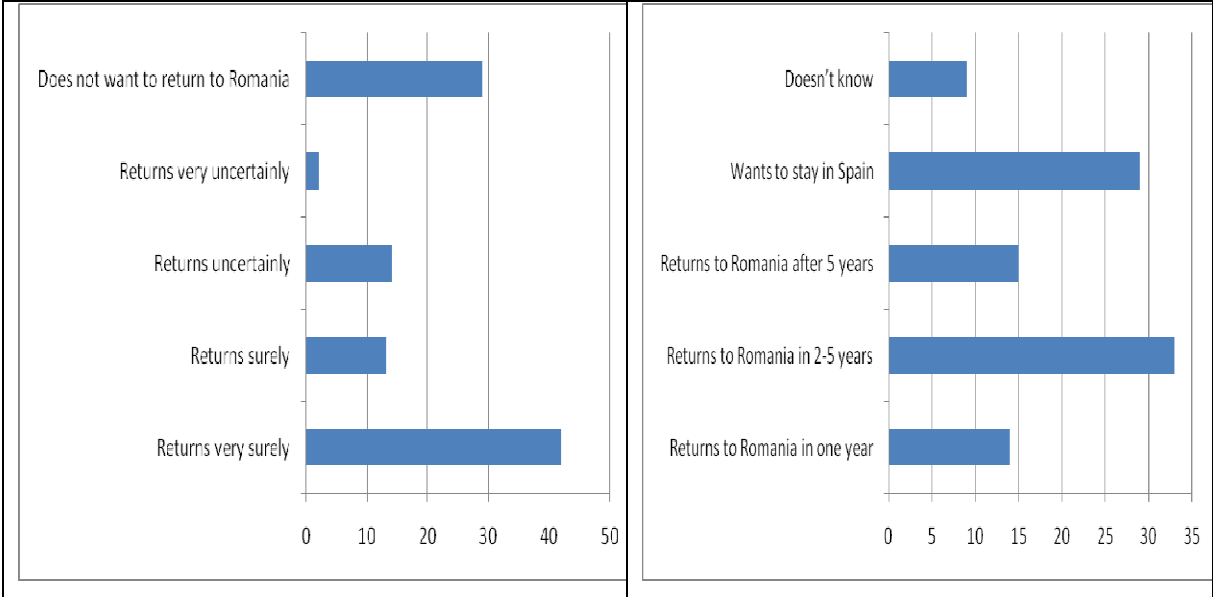
Returning migrants?

The rate of migrants who were forced to return home from various Schengen states increased sharply (by 55%) in the first two years after 2002 (Stan, 2006: 16-17). These returned migrants were mainly those who have exceeded the legal period of sojourn and were engaged in informal work. In the same period, other formerly illegal Romanian migrants returned home voluntarily, taking advantage of the new possibilities of free movement in the Schengen area after sometimes prolonged period of sojourn abroad. Given the increased temporary migration rates in the same period, these two forms of return would nevertheless indicate not so much permanent return but more of a phase in the circulatory movement of migrants. In the context of circulatory, temporary migration, the rate of return of Romanian migrants is thus difficult to estimate. In 2002, official estimates recorded 6.600 Romanian or ex-Romanians having returned home (Gheorghiu 2004), a tiny proportion of those that had left the country for work in that year.

The *Enquesta Nacional de Inmigrantes* (ENI) realised by the Spanish Instituto Nacional de Estadística at the end of 2006 and beginning of 2007 (cf. Sandu, 2009b: 45), found out that

only 7% of Romanian migrants wished to return to Romania. One year and a half later, the CRS survey found out that 71% of Romanian migrants in the region of Madrid wished to do so (*ibid*: 44). The difference is accounted for by the difference in the way the questionnaires was designed, but also by the fact that at the time of the ENI the beginning of crisis has already been felt in Spain, while Romanian governments denied being touched by it up until the very end of 2008. Moreover, the rate of return intentions diminishes if questions get more precise. Thus, only 42% of Romanian migrants in the Madrid region declared they intend to return “very surely” and 13% “surely”, while 14% were “uncertain” and 2% “very uncertain”. On the other hand, 14% of Romanian migrants in the Madrid region declared the wish to return to Romania in one year time, 33% in 2-5 years, and 15% after 5 years, while 29% of them wished to stay in Spain. All in all, only 32% of the migrants have very structured plan of returning to Romania, having declared that they will “return surely soon”.

Graph 12. Return intentions of Romanian migrants in the Madrid region, 2008



Source: CRS survey (Sandu, 2009b: 44)

Migrants who were the most probable to return to Romania were those who displayed relatively high incomes in Spain, a good material situation in Romania, relatively low education credentials and a feeble knowledge of Spanish (Sandu, 2009b: 47). They were also taking part more often in religious services, staying in Spain with the spouse rather than with another member of the family, and working in the informal rather than the formal sector (*ibid*: 63). Those with very structured plans to return to Romania were largely optimistic, at the time of the survey, about the evolution of the labour market in Romania. Interestingly, even those who wanted to remain in Spain were not very attached to the country or the locality where they were currently living (with rates of attachment of 21% and 25% respectively). In the

words of Sandu, “remaining abroad is more an identity dislocation in respect to the place of origin than a consolidation of attachment to places of immigration” (Sandu, 2009b: 58).

Given that migration is, for Romanians, a family affair (Sandu, 2009b), it is interesting to see that 45% of migrants saw the future of their children as being based in Romania, while another 24% adopted a transnational perspective by seeing it being as based both in Spain and in Romania. It seems then that, at least at the level of aspirations, Romanian migrants in the Madrid regions still largely remain attached to their country of origin. Nevertheless, the actual relocation of Romanian migrants back to their home country is a matter of not only finding a job there, but also of having a level of wages not very far away from what they have obtained in Spain. Thus, while the average individual income of Romanian migrants in the Madrid region was around 1400 Euros in July 2008, they were declaring to be ready to come back home for wages situated around 1000 Euros.

Finally, the TLA 2006 survey (Sandu et al, 2006) showed that the desire of migrants to return home was expressed not only in their explicit declaration to do so but also in the fact that they have invested in a house in Romania. Interestingly nevertheless, the same people who bought or built houses in Romania did so only after purchasing a house in Spain (Mihai, 2006: 70). This is probably an indication that they were considering making they stay in Spain permanent while also envisioning retirement in their Romanian home.

The crisis and the Romanian labour market

At the end of 2008 the global economic crisis started to affect more visibly Romania. The crisis was nevertheless denied. The minister for labour declared that the country was not still affected by it, as there were still 17,000 job vacancies yet to be filled (Simionescu et al., 2008). In the same period, other analysts expected dozens of thousands of employees to be fired in the following months in the textile industry, transport, food industry and constructions.

While Romanian public opinion oscillated between these extreme positions, it seems that, as Catalin Pauna noticed ((WB, 22-10-09)), there was no massive increase in unemployment in 2009, as companies tried to retain their workforce in the belief that the economy will recover.

Table 5. Unemployment rates (%), 2007-2009

	2007	2008	Sem II 2009
Unemployment	4,1	4,4	5,6

Source: (MMFPS, 2009a, 2008)

Nevertheless, according to Cristina Mocanu (INCSMPS, 21-10-09) Romanian governments did nothing to counter jobs losses during the crisis. Currently, the Romanian labour market is “frozen”, as “nothing will fundamentally change”. In the short term at least, as some important property development projects are still ongoing, constructions will continue to be a significant employment sector, albeit much of it informally. One small change will nevertheless be that the Romanian labour market won’t be influenced any more by the financial sector, as the current difficulty in obtaining mortgages will slow down housing construction in the medium term. On the other hand, less and less agriculture will act as a valve for layoffs from other sectors. Today’s unemployed have in a lesser proportion than those from the 90s, or even the 2000s, roots in the rural world, and thus the desire to go back to villages and to engage in subsistence agriculture. As a consequence, given the continued lack of alternative employment opportunities in rural areas, the latter will remain an important reservoir for migration. Finally, the increase in employment in services will be mainly driven by unqualified employment (in hotels, restaurants, retail trade, and real estate maintenance). This will be paralleled by the increase in innovative ways to perform undeclared work such as declaring oneself a “self-employed worker” (*lucrator pe cont propriu in ocupatii neagricole*).

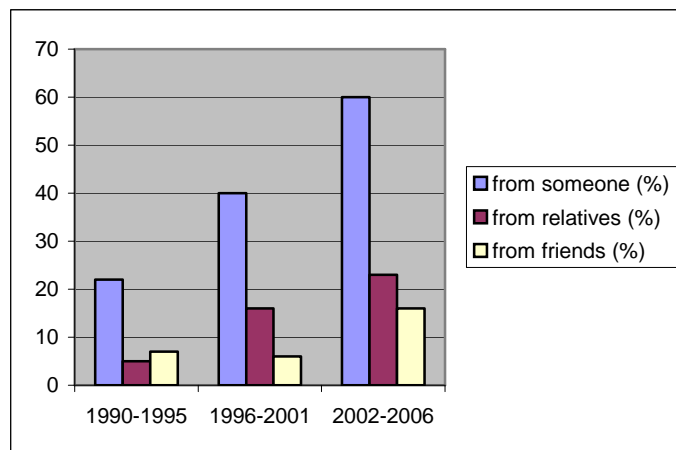
Moreover, under increased pressure from the IMF, the government has already announced for the next year cuts of 30% of jobs in the public sector (*bugetarii*), as well as important reductions in earnings of public sector employees.

3. Migration chains

The importance of informal networks in the migration process

The 2006 TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a: 33) found that assistance with departure for migration coming from relatives, friends or acquaintances grew steadily over times. Indeed, while only 22% of migrants benefited of this assistance between 1990 and 1995, 40% of them did in the period 1996-2000, and 60% in the period 2002-2006. This was seen as an indication that personal networks involved in the migration process expanded in time. In the period after 2002, departure abroad was most facilitated by relatives (for 23% of migrants) and friends (16%). Most of the locals helping with the departure of a migrant worker were already in the country of destination.

Graph 20. Proportion of migrants who have received help from someone, from relatives or from friends for their departure abroad, 1990-2006



Source: TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a: 33).

Assistance with finding a job in the host country also heavily relied on personal networks. The same survey found the use of formal recruiting agencies (either private or state supported) by migrants to Spain to be only partial and decreasing in time. For example, private recruiting agencies were used by only 20% of respondents in 1996-2001, but only by 2% in the period 2002-2006. The OMF was used by only 7% of respondents in the period 2002-2006^{xlvi}.

Other studies confirm the constant importance of personal networks for Romanian migration. The 2001 community study (Sandu, 2005b) found out that temporary migration is highly structured and involves networks based on kinship, friendship and residence in the same locality of origin. Thus, the 2700 villages with high migration rates (30/000) accounted for ¾ of the total number of returned migrants and temporary out migrants from Romanian villages for the period 1990-2001. This indicated that co-location, and particularly informal

relations based on it (such as friendship and kinship relations), are paramount to the development of migrant networks.

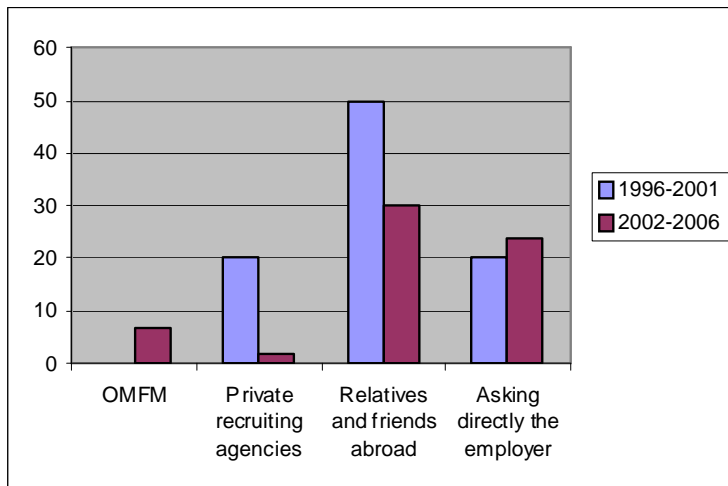
In 2004, a survey found out that of those who tried to get jobs abroad only 12% declared they have used state institutions, most having appealed to other migrants (35%), to private recruiting companies (33%) and to relatives (22%) (Stan, 2006: 19). A study conducted in 2007 on migration intentions in Romania found out that 73% of respondents had friends or relatives abroad, and 71% said they would be able to find work abroad by using these informal networks (Nitulescu, Oancea, Tanase, 2007).

Informal networks and Romanian migration to Spain

Studies on Romanian migration to Spain also highlighted the importance of migrant networks in the migration process. A study on work migration to Spain carried out in 2003 (Bleahu, 2004: 27) found out that many Romanian migrants have passed by other European countries (such as Germany, Austria, Italy), before arriving to Spain. One of the reasons behind moving away again was to follow relatives who themselves moved to Spain. Family networks were also paramount in finding accommodation and employment. The practice would be for a “pioneer” migrant in possession of a “*targetas por residencia y trabajos*” to rent an apartment in which he would later host incoming relatives and friends. Thus three or four families, or more than 10 persons, would leave in crowded apartments of two or three rooms. Nevertheless, the same researcher considered that with the growth in migration after 2002, informal migration networks diminished in importance, as they developed mechanisms of closure towards the increasingly numerous newcomers (Bleahu, 2004: 33). As a result, Bleahu saw this decline as an opportunity for more formal actors (governments, recruitment agencies) to intervene in management of work migration to Spain.

Her findings were bore by the 2006 TLA survey. The study found out that recourse to informal, personal links to relatives or friends abroad in finding a job in Spain, while still important, also decreased significantly from 1996-2001 to 2002-2006 (from 70% to 54%)^{xlvi}. In the same time, asking directly the employer doubled from 1996-2001 to 2002-2006 (from 10 to 23%). It seems that, in terms of finding a job, personal networks still remain important, largely surpassing the contribution of formal recruiting agencies, but that in time Romanian migrants have become bolder in directly accessing employers in the host country.

Graph 21. Means for finding a job used by Romanian migrants in Spain (%)



Source: TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a: 34).

This hypothesis was reformulated by Ciobanu and Elrick (2009) by passing from a strictly chronological dimension to one including along the latter the evolution of migrant networks. Thus, they remarked that recourse to formal mechanisms vs. informal ones is function of the development of migrant networks. In particular, migrants coming from the two villages studied by them (Luncavita in county Constanta and Feldru in county Bistrita-Nasaud) responded differently to the opportunities offered by bilateral agreements on seasonal work signed between Romania and Spain.

In Feldru, a multiethnic and multi-denominational village, migrant networks developed early in the 90s. Here, ties to ethnic Germans who had emigrated to Germany were instrumental in obtaining the visas and invitations needed to get access to the European Schengen space before 2007. Moreover, neo-protestant villagers also helped develop strong mutual help relations based on common religious membership. Thus Feldru villagers saw contracts mediated through the OMFM as being too costly, as compared to recourse to already established informal migrant networks. Indeed, for many rural people the documents demanded for the application involved trips to nearby cities as well as additional costs (for translating and certifying these documents). Instead, based on their already established migrant networks, Feldru villagers took advantage of Spanish regularisations after 1996 in order to considerably increase their migration rates.

By contrast, Luncavita is a village with a Romanian orthodox majority, where migration took off much later and migrant networks were much less developed than in Feldru. Whatever migrants' networks developed in Luncavita, they were structured not around common locality of origin, religion or ethnicity, but around kinship. This reduced their size and diminished their openness to villagers situated outside the kinship ties involved in them.

For Luncavita villagers, contracts obtained through the OMFV constituted therefore a good opportunity to get access to work abroad, particularly in Spain. Lacking access to developed migrant networks, and thus to timely information, they were equally less quick in responding to Spanish regularisations and in transforming the latter in opportunities for migration to Spain.

Other studies also found out that Romanian migration to Spain is built around networks based on kinship, locality of origin, as well as church attendance. In particular the latter is able to provide a closer-knit community space for both rural and urban dwellers. Hartman (2007) studied one such network, which was constituted by “lifelong members of a conservative Protestant church in Bistrita (...) (who) work in greenhouse construction in Spain for much of the year”. He noticed that “very little moral stigma of shame or ignominy” was attached within this religious community on “violating European immigration accords” (*ibid*: 190). According to his informants, “the church was the best place to find the contacts and connections to arrange a job or accommodation in Spain before setting off”.

According to Hartman, Romanian migrants to Spain have mainly been seen as being “*capsunari*”, unskilled seasonal strawberry-pickers. *Capsunar* has become an iconic term for all recent emigration. The term “has taken on a derogatory meaning, when applied to labor migrants, with connotations of dishonesty, selfishness and disloyalty to one’s country and family. *Capsunar* also suggests a certain buffoonery – the *capsunar* is a fool who is exploited by foreigners for her or his cheap labour” (Hartman, 2007: 194). It is interesting to note that, contrary to the negative image of *capsunari*, middle-class migration of urbanites to countries such as France of the type described by Potot in her article (2000) are seen locally in a very positive, gratifying light. Leading to the display, in the community of origin, of a new, migrant, life-style, migration has become “synonymous with success” (*ibid*. 102). On the contrary to *capsunari*, these migrants are seen as characterized by “the courage to leave and the force to make their project lucrative” (*ibid* 102). The difference in the status these two different types of migrants have in the locality of origin thus seems to be closely linked to processes of marking class boundaries. The *capsunari* are seen as being unskilled labourers in agriculture, and by extension of a lower, “peasant”^{xlviii} extraction.

At the beginning of 2000, Potot studied just a such a group of *capsunari* migrants who were working as agricultural labourers in the province of Almeria (Potot, 2000). She noticed that, mirroring the clandestine status they enjoyed at that moment, Romanian migrants were very discreet. Their discretion was matched by the leniency of authorities and employers. As some of her informants told her, as long as one worked, one was not disturbed, irrespective of

one's status. But as soon as the migrant stopped working, one would quickly be controlled and eventually directed towards one's country of origin. While the police did not do identity controls between siesta hours (12 to 17:00), every migrant present in the public space during working hours was vulnerable to being arrested. From this perspective, Romanians were seen to have an important characteristic, that of being physically indistinguishable from the Spanish. They also boasted of being the best integrated group into the host society, saw their Latin culture as close to the Spanish one, but also sustained a racial discourse on North Africans (Potot, 2000: 107). Spanish employers saw Romanian migrants positively, as having a responsible attitude towards work and less need of being controlled in their tasks, and as being efficient and taking initiatives^{xlix}.

Potot also noticed that Romanian migrants were more frequently qualified and more adaptable than other migrants (Potot, 2000: 109). Given their qualifications, Romanian migrants remained in their unskilled low-pay agricultural jobs only as long as they were clandestine. As soon as they managed to regularize their situation, they were moving north to better paid jobs. Once they obtained official papers, migrants were also able to go back to Romania for holiday.

The migrants in Potot's study were coming from several neighbouring villages in the county of Teleorman, in the southern part of Romania. She also highlighted the importance in the migration process of migrant networks, and especially of those based on co-location in the same locality, by remarking that in the region she has studied there were villages where there was no migration at all as well as villages from which people emigrate preferably (Potot, 2000: 112). It follows that departures occurred in a relatively familiar environment, and that, "in the end, the migrant network ends up in comprising the inhabitants in their entirety", as "theoretically, everybody has a link, more or less close, with a person who could support one in such enterprise" (ibid. 112). Again, in the county of Teleorman, a protestant church, the Adventists (*Adventisti*), were at the heart of migration. According to some informants, even if this confession remained in minority in the department, it represented an important proportion among migrants (ibid. 112).

Interestingly, migration was considered in these villages as neither particularly negatively (as in the case of *capsunari*) or particularly positive (as in the case of middle-class migrants to France). Here, migration was considered to be "a life strategy equivalent in every respect to another" (Potot, 2000: 113). This popular attitude to migration is echoed in the position officials developed vis-à-vis migration. For example, the mayor of one village

declared having encouraged migration towards Europe, and especially Spain, arguing that remittances benefited the local community (*ibid*: 114).

A qualitative study of migrants to Spain from the Neamt county (Oteanu, 2007) also highlighted the role of religious affiliation in the development of migration chains. Villages from the commune used as a case study had the highest migration rate in the country (34%) (*ibid*: 37). Migration to Spain started in this commune in 1998, being the second migration wave after an initial one to Germany and Israel in 92-93. A third migration peak occurred after Romanians were allowed free movement in the Schengen area in 2002.

One of the villages of the commune, Tamaseni, is overwhelmingly Roman-catholic with neighbouring villages being orthodox. According to Oteanu, “catholic villagers from Tamaseni mainly founded their migration strategies on church networks” (*ibid*: 38). The importance of religion-based networks is compounded by the active role taken by the Church in the migration process: the Church has sent priests to destination countries, encouraged labour migration to Catholic countries and kept statistical evidence about migrants in host countries. Due to their more powerful networks and the support of the Church, migrants from the catholic village started their migration earlier and got better accommodation and “better paid jobs than migrants from orthodox villages” (*ibid*: 39).

Parallel to Church networks, some villagers also relied significantly on family networks. Indeed, the importance of the extended family in the life of Romanian migrants was reaffirmed through the migration process. Family members continued to take their decisions, and particularly migration decisions, in a family context. They were also engaging in the exchanges of goods characteristic of the “mixed diffused extended family” (Mihailescu, 2000) developed by *navetisti* during socialist and post-socialist times – with the caveat that now the branches of the family engaged in mutual exchanges are situated in a transnational space. Indeed, given the predominantly temporary nature of migration and the fact that migration of both adults occurs only in lower-income families, the “split” family model, with branches in several locations, is still dominant. It is also interesting to see that, according to a survey carried out in 2001, larger households (of three or more members) were more prone to have migrant members than smaller ones (Sandu, 2007).

Apart from religious and kinship-based networks, migrants were also relying on networks based on common locality. The 2006 TLA survey (Sandu et al, 2006) showed that temporary work migration from the region of Alexandria (county of Teleorman) to Spain greatly intensified after 2002 (from 20% of departures before 2001 to 86% after 2002) (Sandu, 2006a: 16). This mirrored not only a concentration of migration on a limited number

of countries of destination but also its development on a territorial scale around some pillar-villages (Diminescu, 2009: 52)¹. Interestingly, neo-protestant high school graduates strongly marked migration from Alexandria region in the period 1996-2001 (neo-protestant migrants covered 38% of the total migration from the region in this period), but subsequently their importance decreased as a consequence in the increase in Rroma migration (Sandu, 2006a: 17).

The 2006 TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a) found that people who have worked abroad are more prone to find friends very important in their lives than the general sample (38% as compared to 25%) (Sandu, 2006b: 57). Nevertheless, they also found relations to be more strained abroad, with general wisdom among Romanian migrants being that “Romanians do not help each other” and that many family and friendship relations were torn apart following migration (Mihai, 2006: 71). The explanation lies in the increasing instrumentalisation of personal relations due to very charged work schedules that do not allow migrants to spend enough time with friends and family. Moreover, cohabitation in cramped places also puts strain on their social relations (*ibid*: 72).

Given the importance of personal networks in the migration process, Romanian migrants in Spain are concentrated in certain areas, with the most notorious ones being around Madrid in the Henares corridor (in 2006, in the town of Coslada, out of 70.000 inhabitants 13.000 were Romanians) (Mihai, 2006: 72 et infra). The associative life of Romanians in Spain turns around churches such as the Adventist community in Coslada (with a pastor from Romania from 1998) or the Romanian Orthodox Church in Madrid. Several formal associations were set up in the last years, with localities with large numbers of Romanian migrants having as much as 4-5 associations. While these associations gathered in the Federation of Romanian Associations in Spain (FEDROM) since 2005, they are seen as competing against each other and are distrusted by migrants (Mihai, 2006: 73). In these conditions, it seems that, despite its now more than a decade-long history, Romanian migration to Spain is still feebly anchored in formal institutions. As a consequence, informal networks would probably continue to be important for Romanian migration to Spain.

4. Probable evolution of migration flows in the next years

In 2007, a prominent Romanian demographer estimated that “it seems to be certain that negative net migration will be maintained at least in the next 10-15 years” (Ghetau, 2007). One year later, the National Commission of Prognosis (*Comisia Nationala de Prognoza*, CNP) estimated that Romania’s economic growth would nevertheless lead to a slowdown in emigration (Erdei, 2008a).

While acknowledging that it is very difficult to make predictions on the evolution of migration, in the 2006 the *Green Book of Population* (CNP, 2006) forecasted that in the next two decades migration will become increasingly temporary and less permanent, that illegal or uncontrolled migration will diminish relative to the legal one, and that work migration towards the UE will increase, with destination countries situated primarily in the west and south of the union (*ibid*: 18). Moreover, Romania will face increasing labour shortages due to both drops in birth rates after 1989^{li} and work migration. According to Ghetau (2007: 9), migration will contribute to labour shortages by depriving the country not only of its present productive labor force, but also of its future labour potential. Indeed, as 62% of net migration between 1992 and 2002 was situated in the most fertile age (between 20 and 40 years old), we can say that those who left the country also took with them the children they might potentially have (Ghetau, 2007). In the words of a Romanian migrant to Spain interviewed by Hartman, “it seems likely that Romanian labourers, whatever their legal status with regards to work, will be cleaning the toilets and building the plastic green houses – filling the gaps in the least desired employment sectors in Western Europe for quite some time to come” (Hartman, 2007: 195-196).

The 2006 TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a) found out that 11% of respondents aged 18 to 59 declared they would like to work abroad in the following year – which meant the temporary migration of around 1,4 million Romanian in the few following years. Important predictors of one’s intention to work abroad were previous experience of working abroad, having another family member with such an experience, being aged between 18 and 29 years old, and being a man. Spain was the second most popular country of emigration for these would-be migrants^{lii} (Sandu, 2006a: 21). Rural areas of Moldova and Banat were the areas with the highest percentages of would be migrants in total numbers of respondents.

Similar results were obtained in a study conducted in 2007 (Nitulescu et al, 2007) on actual and potential migration. The first three countries chosen as a future destination for work migration were, in order, Italy (23%), Spain (20%) and Great Britain (18%), showing a

possible change in migratory flows away from Germany to the UK. Southern Romania was the region where Spain recorded the highest percentage of respondents choosing it as a first destination for work migration (31%). The incomes of potential migrants to Spain and Italy were significantly lower than those of potential migrants to the UK, pointing thus to the probably lower educational credentials and work qualifications of the former.

Those who not only declared their intention to work abroad but also had already started to build a plan and to secure resources to do so (40% of would-be migrants) were mainly young people with a good relational capital who have previously worked abroad or who had a family member who had done so, and who also know some Italian or Spanish.

In 2006, European integration was seen as likely to lead to economic growth and an increase in salaries (CNPD, 2006: 18-19). As a consequence, Romania was deemed to become an immigration country, where repatriation will be replaced by other forms of immigration (asylum, refugees, illegal migration). But while in 2006 the National Commission for Prognosis estimated that around 400.000 foreigners will enter Romania's labour force until 2013 (CNP, 2006: 6), this prognosis was already adjusted to only 200.000-300.000 in 2007 (Business Standard, 2007; check ref CNP).

Romanian migration in the current context of crisis

By the end of 2008 Romanian officials started to acknowledge that Romania was hit by the crisis. The dire economic situation of Romania in 2009 is reflected in table 6, which shows the precipitous fall in GDP variation from 7,1 in 2008 to an estimated -8,4 in 2009.

Table 6. GDP variation and average earnings, 2007-2009

	2007	2008	2009
GDP (%)	6.2	7.1	-8.4
Average gross earnings (RON) ¹	1411	1751	1860
Average gross earnings (Euros) ¹	428	500	380
Real earnings index ^{1,2}	14,0	16,1	0,0

¹In September each year. ²Relative to same month in previous year.

Source: (INS, 2009b, 2009c; 2008); IMF, *World economic outlook database 2009*.

Experts' opinion in relation to the future of Romanian labour migration is nevertheless mixed. Mrs. Camelia Mihalcea believed that "the true migration happened before (Romania) accession (to the EU)" (EURES, 19-10-09). This opinion is shared by Mr. Valentin Mocanu (MMFPS, 23-10-09) who believes that in the last two years migration was not so massive as before.

The activity of EURES Romania is actually not very burgeoning. As we can see from the table below, the number of EURES-mediated Spanish contracts did not cease to fall after 2007^{liii}.

Table 7. Number of contacts mediated through EURES, 2007-2009

	2007	2008	First trimester of 2009
Total	37.639	52.389	77668
Spain	9.733	5.351	684
% of Spanish contracts in total contracts	26%	10%	0,9%

Source: (MMFPS, 2009a, b and c; 2008).

After the 1st of January 2009, Spain dropped restrictions for the access of Romanian workers to its labour market, and as a consequence bilateral agreements between the two countries were discontinued. This has probably led to an even further erosion of the importance of public channels of migration, with now migration being mainly organised by private recruitment companies and individual mediators. In the opinion of Mrs. Camelia Mihalcea (EURES), in the last years, Romanian migrants have preferred to officially mediated contracts either contracts arranged directly with the employer, or departures to Spain with the help of close family (spouse, cousin).

EURES Romania organised its last selection for contracts in Spain in March 2009, having since received no other request for organising selections from Spanish employers^{liv}. Mrs. Mihalcea's explanation is that, given the crisis context, whatever jobs are left in Spanish agriculture are more probably filled on the spot by the numerous Romanian migrants already present in Spain (and who, given the crisis, are ready to work even in low-paid and low-prestige agricultural jobs). In her opinion, "The time of the mass coach migration is over. There will still be migration (from Romania), but of small dimensions and quite specific (to particular sectors)".

After 2006, migration to Spain probably maintained itself to significant levels, as free movement opportunities following from Romania's EU accession decreased some of the costs of migration, and facilitated even more multiple sojourns between Romania and Spain (Monica Serban, 23-10-09). The propensity to continue this migratory movement to Spain is also shown by the fact that the 2006 TLA survey found out that 20% of its respondents wanted to leave to work in Spain in the following year (Sandu, 2006a: 31).

The return of Romanian migrants from abroad is also questioned in the new context of crisis. According to Dr. Paula Tufis (20-10-09), in 2008 Romanian migrants felt that the situation in Romania was getting better, while the one in Spain had already started to deteriorate. This is not the case anymore in 2009, as the situation in Romania considerably worsened. Moreover, many Romanian migrants are already established in Spain together with their families. And, "even if they return to Romania, they can go back again (to Spain)".

According to Cristina Mocanu (INCSMPS, 21-10-09) while future Romanian migration is definitely dependent on policies in receiving countries, it is not sure that in the short and medium term those who have already migrated will come back. As many of them have already brought their families with them, they will more probably continue to try to find work abroad. On the other hand, migration flows will not grow in intensity, but will either maintain themselves at the same levels as now or will only slightly decrease. This will happen even if destination countries might adopt discriminatory policies in regard to migrants, including measures seeking to send them back to their home countries. Currently, migration functions again as a valve for the Romanian labour market and welfare system. Moreover, migration also helps to maintain a certain wage level in Romania, as the return of important numbers of migrants would considerably increase the labour offer, and consequently would lead to an important fall in wages.

Catalin Pauna (WB, 22-10-09) also believes that Romanian migration will continue, but won't be mass migration anymore as now it will be more difficult for European destination countries to absorb it. Nevertheless, return migration will not take off, as the few opportunities that remain during the crisis are not located in Romania. Lay-offs in Romania will generate flows back to subsistence agriculture and a rise in urban unemployment. Rising unemployment might lead to a lengthening of education while might also adjust to the lower labour costs.

The continuation of Romanian migration in the near future is also a belief of Mr. Catalin Ghinararu (INCSMPS, 23-10-09). On the one hand, given Romania's economic performances and its geographical proximity to more developed European societies, migration into low-skilled jobs (housekeepers, domestic carers) will probably continue. On the other hand, migration into higher-skilled jobs will also continue. The phenomenon will be driven by the fact that, given the demographic structure of Romania, the proportion of people with higher education will increase in the near future. However, the resulting rise in expectations won't be matched by the offer on the domestic labour market. Thus, migration of over-qualified people (IT engineers, doctors) towards countries which are able to offer skilled jobs will continue. In Mr. Ghinararu's opinion, it is also possible that there will be at least some return migration (determined by the deterioration of Italian and Spanish economies, but also by rising xenophobia in Italy). In the context where Romania lacks opportunities to integrate them on the domestic labour market, these return migrants will constitute a burden for the national welfare system.

According to Monica Serban (UB, 23-10-09) in the last two years migration rates went down, as “we reach a point when there is nobody left to migrate”. Nevertheless, while migration rates weren’t reaching anymore the high levels of 2002-2003, they have not decreased dramatically. Moreover, migration will continue to be circular, with circulation expected to intensify in time. Contrary to this widely shared vision of a slight decrease of the Romanian migration abroad, Mr. Alfred Bulai, a sociologist at the *National School of Political and Administrative Sciences (Scoala Nationala de Stiinte Politice si Administrative, SNSPA)* considered that several thousands of Romanian migrants have already come back to Romania (Realitatea TV, 12:20 pm, 23-11-09). In his opinion, it was this massive return that was explaining higher participation rates at the 22nd of December 2009 presidential elections.

The latest developments in the Romanian society and economy brandish nevertheless the spectre of a serious fall in living standards for the Romanian society. Indeed, as we can notice from table 7, the average gross earnings in the Romanian economy have fallen from a high of 500 euros/month in 2008 to 380 euros /month in September 2009. The gap between Romanian and EU-15 wages might rapidly reach again significant levels, maintaining thus the pressure towards out migration on the Romanian population.

Moreover, as we have seen above, responding to pressures from the IMF, Romanian officials have already announced cuts of 30% of the workforce in the public sector, as well as drastic reductions in its earnings. This might have important implications for Romanian migration levels. According to Cristina Mocanu (INCSMPS, 21-10-09), after 1997-1998 the public sector became a major employer on the Romanian labour market, with local administration absorbing unemployed engineers and other highly qualified unemployed persons. In 2006, 930.000 people were working in the public sector, or around 23% of the 4,1 million Romanians in paid employment (INS, 2007a)! Depressed wages in the Romanian public services sector have thus encouraged public servants to migrate abroad ever since the fall of the communist regime. Some of them, especially staff with high-school and university education in the health care sector (nurses and doctors) increasingly went to work abroad in the same employment area, but for significantly higher wages. Others, such as teachers or public administration staff, took advantage of possible arrangements during summer holidays to engage in seasonal migration for work in the domestic services sector. While wage levels in the Romanian public sector improved in 2008, plans for its drastic restructuring might lead to their precipitous fall in the near future – and a possible significant increase in the migration of *bugetari* (public services workers).

Notes:

ⁱ This was complemented by state-controlled work migration to construction sites in the Middle East (Israel, Iraq) and Europe (Germany) (Potot, 2000: 113), as well as some trans-border movement of Romanians engaged in petty trade.

ⁱⁱ 92% of temporary migrants were ethnic Romanians in the period 1990-1995 (Sandu, 2006a).

ⁱⁱⁱ For a detailed description of the manner in which Romanian governments regulated, between 2001 and 2006, the travel of Romanian citizens to the Schengen space, see Stan (2006: 6-8).

^{iv} In Romania, primary education covers years 1 to 4, secondary education years 5 to 8, while high-school education years 9 to 10 or 9 to 12.

^v In 2004, 10% of respondents to a national survey declared they have at least one member of their family working abroad (OSF, 2004). While different surveys' methodologies may make comparisons among them difficult, the increase from 10% to 30% between 2004 and 2006 might also indicate an increase in temporary migration in this period.

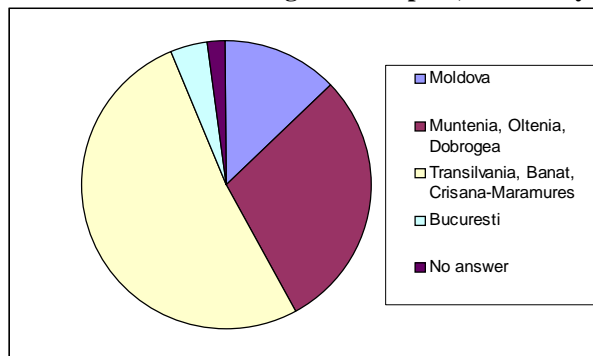
^{vi} Other analysts also advanced the same number, contending that of the 2 million Romanians working abroad in 2006 a third did so illegally (Giurgeanu, 2006). Other commentators rose the estimate even above 2,5 million in that same year (Ciutacu, 2006). It is worth noting that 2 million represented in 2006 9% of the total population of Romania!

^{vii} Law No. 464 (9th of July 2002) on the ratification of the *Agreement between Romania and the Kingdom of Spain on the regulation and management of labor force circulation between the two states*, signed in Madrid on 23rd of January 2002.

^{viii} This trend is also maintained in 2007, when another study (Nitulescu, Oancea, Tanase, 2007) showed that a large part of those intending to go to Spain were from Muntenia (38%).

^{ix} A survey realised in September 2008 by the Agency for Governmental Strategies (ASG, 2008) dressed nevertheless a portrait of Romanian migrants in Spain quite different than the one painted in the 2006 TLA survey. The ASG survey found out that migrants were urban rather than rural: 38% of them were coming from big cities, 33% from small towns and 29% from villages, with a majority of them coming from Transilvania, Banat and Crisana-Maramures (52%).

Distribution of Romanian migrants in Spain, in 2008 by region of origin (%)



Source: (ASG, 2008: 7).

The difference between the two surveys is most probably coming from the way in which the sample for the ASG survey was designed. The criteria used by the latter (ASG, 2008) were the size of Romanian communities in Spain (small, medium, large and very large) and geographical areas in Spain (Noreste, Levante, Sur, Centro, Norte, Noreste and Islas). Given the highly unequal distribution of Romanian migrants among both Spanish regions and Romanian communities in Spain (see further data presented in this chapter), the selection of respondents based on the random sampling of localities in Spain seem to introduce important distortions in the results of the survey. I will thus follow here the results of the TLA survey rather than this more recent one.

^x *Navetisti* are commuters living in villages but working in nearby industries and construction sites. During socialism, they formed a significant part of the Romanian rural population. Commuting (*naveta*) was one of the main means by which the socialist state was trying to control urban growth.

^{xi} For more elaborate discussion of the relation between the post-socialist structural transformation of the Romanian labour market and migration, please refer to Chapter 2.

^{xii} Unfortunately, the study does not give important details as to the gender composition of its respondents, or again as to their region or county of origin in Romania. Some of the data presented here were extracted by me from the data presented in the study.

^{xiii} Only 1% of migrants in the Madrid region have been working in agriculture in Romania, while none of them continued to do so in Madrid (Tufis, 2009: 95).

^{xiv} In 2006, Spain was identified as a country of destination for legal work migration of unskilled and semi-skilled workforce in construction, along with Portugal and Greece (CNPD, 2006: 17).

^{xv} The illegal aspect of Romanian migration to Spain is also showed by the fact that, in 2005, when Spain was already accounting for 24% of the total temporary migration, Spain accounted for only 14% of the 58.649 working visa granted to Romanian citizens by various foreign embassies (DMS, 2006).

^{xvi} Interestingly, Romania's GDP went over its 1989 level only in 2002, after which date its growth rate have remained at significant levels. In 2006, Romania's GDP was 42% higher than in 2000 (INS, 2007). See also, further in this study, discussions of the link between Romania's economic performance, migration and labour markets.

^{xvii} The steady drop in employment rates since 1989 has started to stabilize after 2000 at a rate of around 38% of the total population (Ciutacu and Chivu, 2007: 28).

^{xviii} The link between women migration and Romanian labour deficits might be even stronger. A 2006 UNFPA "Migration in Brief" note on Europe (UNFPA, 2006) states that "almost two thirds of Romanian emigrants are women", 50% of which have an upper secondary diploma and 17% a tertiary degree. It is not clear though if "emigrants" refer in the note only to permanent migrants (which is probable) or if this category also includes temporary migrants (in which case we haven't found any other source confirming these data).

^{xix} Cristina Mocanu (INCSMPS, 21-10-09) also points to the fact that male and female employment rates in Romania were not too divergent during the post-socialist period (n.b. their highest gap have been of less than 9 percentage points (INS, 2007)). This was due to the fact that, up until 2000, restructuring mainly affected masculine sectors (such as mining or heavy industry), while afterwards the development of female employment in the service sector rebalanced the gap between the two. Finally, according to Catalin Pauna (WB, 22-10-09) the "new economy" favours skills that are feminine rather than masculine (e.g. secretary). Moreover, as men were laid off, women had to keep or find a job so that to sustain the income of their households.

^{xx} This is an interpretation also echoed by Cristina Mocanu (INCSMPS, 21-10-09) who considers that Romanian female migration mainly concerned inactive women (either housewives or early retired workers).

^{xxi} Defined by the study as migrants in the 15-64 age bracket.

^{xxii} My calculations after INS (2007). Interestingly, the share of people in the 30-54 age bracket in the total number of temporary migrants was roughly similar with their share in the total Romanian population of work age (50% and 51% respectively).

^{xxiii} These findings are replicated in research on legal migration (CNPD, 2006: 17). The latter showed that in 2005 around 75% of migrants were in the 18-49 years bracket, and as such had a good productive potential. Moreover, around half of the migrants were in the 26-39 years bracket, being thus persons already formed and qualified, with a high work potential. Indeed, almost half of legal migrants had a secondary or higher education level (around 10-12% had third level education, while 35% had secondary or vocational training). By comparison, in 2006, proportions for the 20-49 and 25-39 age brackets in the total population of Romania were of 52% and 25% (my calculations after INS, 2007).

^{xxiv} In the same period, the number of ILO unemployed people in the 25-39 age brackets decreased by 33% (my calculations based on data provided by INS (2009)). Nevertheless, at least in 2006, unemployment for people under 25 still exceeded the EU average (Lazaroiu and Alexandru, 2008), which might indicate that at least at that moment there was still a pressure for them to emigrate in order to improve their employment chances.

^{xxv} I have chosen three paradigmatic activities, namely agriculture, industry and trade. An alternative option would have been to work on aggregate sectors (primary, secondary and tertiary), but this would have not helped us in highlighting some important trends in the Romanian labour market. In particular, in Romania, agriculture and trade are two activities where unskilled labour predominates.

^{xxvi} In 1997 the urban-rural flow surpassed the rural-urban one, and continued to grow afterwards.

^{xxvii} Many times reports on Romanian migration assert that migrants come predominantly from poor historical regions of Romania, in particular Moldova. The reality is that they predominantly come from more developed counties in Moldova, with low developed counties in both Moldova and elsewhere in Romania (such as Oltenia) being low sources of migration abroad.

^{xxviii} The study (Sandu, 2005b: 566) found out considerable variation in the rate of *navetisti* (number of commuters in 1990/1000 inhabitants in 1998) among different types of villages: in villages without migration experience the rate was of 79,6/000; while in villages integrated in the transnational migration system (with a migration rate of over 30/000) the rate was of 121,8/000.

^{xxix} According to Diminescu (2009: 52), whereas in 1989 30% of the rural population were *navetisti*, at the beginning of 2000s, only 10% of them was still commuting to nearby cities. Diminescu estimates a 29% reduction in commuting in Romanian villages.

^{xxx} Sandu (2005b: 568) directly links the decline in commuting with higher migration rates. Indeed, he found out that in villages with high migration rates the decline in commuting was also higher (at a national level, from 1,200,000 persons in 1989 to 400,000 in 2001).

^{xxx}ⁱ In 2006, 30% of the total employed population in Romania worked in agriculture (INS, 2007).

^{xxx}ⁱⁱ The dire economic prospect of workers in Romania is also shown by the fact that the proportion of total gross remuneration in GDP in 2005 was of only 24% in Romania, as compared to a EU average of 50% (Ciutacu and Chivu, 2007, 42).

^{xxx}ⁱⁱⁱ For Catalin Pauna (WB, 22-10-09) many of those who migrated from cities to the countryside were workers in the former “state” sectors, who have lost their jobs as a result of restructurings. They form an important part of the long-term unemployed category, with little chance of re-entering the labour market. This “old” labour force is deskilled.

^{xxx}^{iv} There is another problematic category, namely “Qualified farmers or working in their own exploitations” (nr. 6). In Romania, nr. 6 includes a majority of unskilled labour working on subsistence farms. I nevertheless leave it out of this discussion, as it is not relevant for the occupation of Romanian migrants in the Madrid region. Indeed, nr. 6 regards workers in agriculture which are absent in the Madrid region (0%).

^{xxx}^v 38% of the migrants declared themselves to have been “without occupation” in Romania, meaning they were either unemployed or were not active on the Romanian labour market (housewives, students, retired people). By comparison, only 21% of the migrants declared they were working in services and trade in Romania. The proportion of migrants who worked as un-skilled housekeepers in Romania is probably very low, as the demand for domestic services is not yet very developed in Romania. In the study, only 28% of migrants working as housekeepers in Spain were occupationally “immobile” (i.e. they worked as housekeepers in Romania; n.b. I wonder nevertheless if this data isn’t nevertheless also questionable, as *menajera* could mean in Romania both paid housekeeping worker and unpaid housewife).

^{xxx}^{vi} In 2008, 68% of migrants working in construction had qualified jobs (my calculations after Tufis, 2009: 95).

^{xxx}^{vii} This proportion is getting quite close to the proportion of migrants in the Madrid area working as housekeepers, situated at 19% in 2008 (Tufis, 2009: 96).

^{xxx}^{viii} Thus, the overrepresentation of construction among Romanian migrants was considerably reduced in time: in Romania, construction represented 4% of employment in 2001 and 6% in 2006 (INS, 2006).

^{xxx}^{ix} The 10% workers in services and trade do not reflect the actual numbers of those actually engaged in this sector. Indeed, there is an important informal component in the services sector labour market in Romania. On the other hand, as we have seen, some of those who went into the services sector in Spain have been drawn from those who were unemployed or have retreated from the labour market all together (such as housewives) in Romania. Nevertheless, if in these latter cases deskilling already began in Romania, migration to Spain did not reverse the process, but perpetuated it.

^{xl} <http://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?catId=27&acro=eures&lang=en>, accessed in November 2009.

^{xli} This represented around or 0,8 % of the total active population recorded in 2006 in Romania (INS, 2007).

^{xlii} In the banking sector there are over 10.000 vacant jobs, in IT 15.000 vacant jobs. None of these data appear in the accounts of ANOFM (Chişu, 2008).

^{xliii} Direct expenses included the compulsory medium brut wage (300 euro) and social insurance contributions (32%). Romanian employers also incurred indirect expenses, differentiated along the country of origin of the worker, one’s educational level and one’s work permit. Examples of indirect expenses are accommodation and maintenance for the worker. These indirect expenses may rise to up to 400 Euros (DMS, 2006).

^{xliiv} In 2008, Romanian unemployment rate stood at 4,8%, below the European average. Labor costs have also risen by 60% in real terms between January 2005 and July 2007 (Folcut, 2007), and average wages in industry have risen by 25% in 2007 as compared to 2006 (Standard.ro, 2008a).

^{xliv} The “Plan of measures to encourage the homecoming of Romanians working abroad” (see <http://www.mmuncii.ro/pub/imagemanager/images/file/Legislatie/HOTARARI-DE-GUVERN/HG187-2008.pdf>) covered the period 2008-2010 and aimed to:

- create and regularly update databases regarding Romanian citizens working abroad;
- launch an awareness and recruitment campaign among Romanian citizens working abroad, in order to encourage them to return to work in Romania;
- introduce a system of incentives for those Romanian workers abroad who wish to return home and find a job in Romania.

While some data concerning Romanian workers abroad have been produced, and some job fairs have been organized, it is not clear if anything effective was done about the last point, the introduction of a system of incentives.

^{xlvi} Other studies confirm the feeble contribution of the office in the total migratory movement of Romanians and more particularly to migration to Spain. In 2002, 25.000 Romanians took advantage of bilateral agreements signed by Romania with other European countries and left the country to work abroad. Of these, a large majority went to Germany (19.700), but only a small minority headed to Spain (2.400, or 11% of the total) (Countryrep 2003, Gheorghiu 2004). In 2004, just about 4% of the Romanians who tried to find a job abroad succeeded in getting a contract through the OMFM (OSF, 2005). One year later, the almost 43.000 contracts mediated

represented only 5% of the estimated number of Romanian workers abroad (rising to around 850.000) (Niculescu et al, 2006: 15-16). Between 2002 and 2005 the office has mediated around 140.000 work abroad contracts.

^{xlvi} Interestingly, the importance of illegal (smuggling) migration networks in getting people into the host country also decreased in time. Their number unveiled by Romanian border officers passed from 176 in 2002 to 34 in 2004 (Stan, 2006: 17).

^{xlvi} While in the official discourse the peasant is glorified as lying at the heart of the Romanian nation, in common parlance, the term is used in a derogatory manner to denote somebody who does not know how to behave, who is uncivilised.

^{xlvi} A study on the “Image of Romania in Spain” nevertheless dressed up a different image of the Romanian migrant as seen by the Spanish (ASG, 2008c). The study found out that 36% of respondents considered Romanian migrants to be hard workers, but also that around 60% had a “bad” or “very bad” opinion about them (18% and 43% respectively). The difference might be accounted for by the fact that this study was Spain-wide, thus including not only employers from the south, but also from the north.

¹ A similar pattern has been observed for another region in respect to Italy.

ⁱⁱ New entrances into the labor force from the cohorts born after 1990 will number 100.000 less persons per year as compared to those from cohorts born in the interval 1967-1989.

ⁱⁱⁱ 20% as compared to 34% for Italy.

ⁱⁱⁱ After 2007, contracts in Spain continued to cover mainly agriculture, in 2008 and 2009 even being exclusively in this sector. Most of migrants having signed a contract through EURES in 2008 were young, with ages between 26 and 45 years old, more than 50% being female workers (Chişu, 2008).

^{iv} The last period for which the MMFPS registers EURES-mediated contracts for work in Spain is the 1st trimester of 2009 (684 contracts, all of which were in agriculture) (MMFPS, 2009b). For the second trimester of 2009, there was no Spanish contract mediated through EURES (MMFPS, 2009c).

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Annexes

Temporary migrants (15-64 years old), by area of origin (rural/urban) (%)

	1990-1995	1996-2001	2002-2006
Rural	41	48	49
Urban	59	52	51

Source: TLA survey (Sandu et al, 2006)

Temporary migrants (15-64 years old), by age (%)

Age	1990-1995	1996-2001	2002-2006
15-29	5	24	48
30-54	80	72	50
55-64	15	4	2

Source: TLA survey (Sandu et al, 2006)

Temporary migrants (15-64 years old), by gender (%)

	1990-1995	1996-2001	2002-2006
Women (%)	12	15	44
Men (%)	88	85	56

Source: TLA survey (Sandu et al, 2006)

Temporary labour migrants (15-64 years old), by education (%)

Education	1990-1995	1996-2001	2002-2006
Primary (1-4)	3	3	1
Secondary (5-8)	2	8	16
Vocational or high school	78	79	77
University	17	9	7

Source: TLA survey (Sandu et al, 2006)

Temporary departures to work abroad, per 1000 inhabitants aged 15 to 64 years old

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
First departures	2,0	2,3	1,7	1,4	1,1	1,1	4,3	1,4	1,7	4,0	6,0	4,0	6,6	11,7	14,6	16,0	15,1
Total departures	2,0	2,3	3,4	3,4	2,6	3,1	6,3	3,1	2,9	4,9	7,4	6,0	9,4	15,4	21,4	28,0	24,6

Source: TLA survey (Sandu et al, 2006)

Temporary departures to Spain, by region of origin (% of total temporary departures from the region)

	Moldova	Muntenia	Oltenia	Dobrogea	Transilvania	Crisana-Maramures	Banat	Bucharest	Romania
1990-2001	3	7	13	-	13	-	-	6	7
2002-2006	14	54	21	-	17	29	4	-	24

Source: TLA survey (Sandu et al, 2006)

Temporary departures to Spain, by region of origin (% of total temporary departures to Spain)

	Moldova	Muntenia	Oltenia	Dobrogea	Transilvania	Crisana-Maramures	Banat	Bucharest	Romania
2002-2006	16	48	8	-	14	12	-	-	100

Source: TLA survey (Sandu et al, 2006)

Return intentions of Romanian migrants in the Madrid region, 2008

	Returns to Romania in one year	Returns to Romania in 2-5 years	Returns to Romania after 5 years	Wants to stay in Spain	Doesn't know
Return intentions (%)	14	33	15	29	9
	Returns very surely	Returns surely	Returns uncertainly	Returns very uncertainly	Does not want to return to Romania
Return intentions (%)	42	13	14	2	29

Source: CRS survey (Sandu, 2009).

Unemployment and temporary migration rates

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
UEmp (%)	0	3	8.2	10.4	10.9	9.5	6.6	8.9	10.4	11.8	10.5	8.8	8.4	7.4	6.3	5.9	5.2
TempM (/000)	2.0	2.3	3.4	3.4	2.6	3.1	6.3	3.1	2.9	4.9	7.4	6.0	9.4	15.4	21.4	28.0	24.6

Source: (INS, 2007) and TLA survey (Sandu et al, 2006)

Female unemployment and employment rates (%)

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
UEmp	4	10.3	12.9	12.9	11.4	7.5	9.3	10.4	11.6	10.1	8.4	7.8	6.8	5.6	5.2	4.6	3.9
Empl	81	77.5	72.8	73	67.1	67.1	63.3	63.5	61.5	63.5	61.7	60.9	58.7	62.1	59	60.2	61.3

Source: (INS, 2007).

Unemployment rate for the 15-30 years old and total unemployment rate (ILO), 1996-2008

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
UEmpl Rate	14,2	12,6	13,2	13,9	13,8	12,8	15,9	13,4	14,9	13,5	14,3	12,9	11,7
Total UEmpl rate	6,5	5,8	6,1	6,6	6,9	6,4	8,4	7	8	7,2	7,3	6,4	5,8

Source: My calculations after (INS, 2009) *AMIGO*. Data after 2002 are not comparable to the previous ones because of a change in used definitions

Share in total employment of main economic activities (%)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Agriculture	28	29	32	35	36	34	35	37	38	41	41	41	36	35	32	32	30
Industry	37	35	32	30	29	29	29	27	26	24	23	24	25	25	25	24	23
Commerce	5	6	7	6	6	9	8	9	9	9	9	9	10	11	11	12	13

Source: My calculations, based on data from INS (2007)

NB: civilian employed population

GDP variation (%), real earnings index variation (%) and total departures rates (/000), 1991-2006

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
GDP¹	-12,9	-8,8	1,5	3,9	7,1	3,9	-6,3	-4,8	-1,2	2,1	5,7	5,1	5,2	8,5	4,2	7,9
Real earnings index²	-8.5	-3.1	-6.8	0.3	12.5	9.4	-22.8	4.0	-2.5	4.3	5	2.4	10.8	10.5	14.3	23.6 ³
Total departures⁴	2.3	3.4	3.4	2.6	3.1	6.3	3.1	2.9	4.9	7.4	6.0	9.4	15.4	21.4	28.0	24.6

¹ Source: IMF, *World economic outlook database 2009*. <http://www.imf.org/>. Accessed November 2009

² As compared to the previous year. Source: (INS, 2007a).

³ In December 2006 as compared to December 2005. Source: (INS, 2007b).

⁴ Source: (Sandu, 2006a).

Workers' remittances, compensations of employers and migrant transfers', credit (US\$ million)

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
US\$ mill	11	9	18	16	49	96	96	116	143	124	132	4,733	6,718	8,539	9,380	8,000

Source: (Ratha, Mohapatra and Silwal. 2009), Excel Data for Brief.

[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1110315015165/RemittancesData_Nov09\(Public\).xls](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1110315015165/RemittancesData_Nov09(Public).xls)

The importance of relatives, friends and acquaintances for migrants' departures, 1990-2006

	1990-1995	1996-2001	2002-2006
Proportion of migrants who have received support from someone (%)	22	40	60
from relatives (%)	5	16	23
from friends (%)	7	6	16

Source: TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a: 33).

Means for finding a job used by Romanian migrants in Spain (%)

	OMFM	Private recruiting agencies	Relatives and friends abroad	Asking directly the employer
1996-2001	-	20	50	20
2002-2006	7	2	30	24

Source: TLA survey (Sandu, 2006a: 34).