



Work trajectories and career growth

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Introduction

This paper is a contribution to the Comparative report on contextual and institutional factors to be delivered under WP4 of the GEMM Project.

The paper relies on the information provided by national research teams in their country reports on contextual and institutional factors, as well as in the country overviews of research literature in the matter. It is worth mentioning in this regard that only four country research teams have produced and submitted country reports on contextual and institutional factors of migration (BG, SP, IT, and RO).

The paper addresses the migrants' professional and career trajectories in their destination countries as revealed by our qualitative research carried out under the WP4. In consideration of their influence on migrants' professional and career trajectories, we also analyse their experiences of unemployment and discrimination at work. Besides, in consideration of the important role played by education in people's career advancement, we also analyse the changes in migrants' levels of education and how these changes influence their professional trajectories. To the extent that available research data allow we will point out features that are gender specific and/or are specific to certain categories of migrants, such as highly or low qualified, or nationality. The paper ends with some conclusions.

The theme of migrants' access to the labour markets in the destination countries and subsequently their work trajectories has been central in most studies regarding the economic migration phenomenon. Such studies have mainly focused on the difficulties encountered by the immigrants when trying to get a foothold on the labour markets from the destination countries and less on their professional advancement and career paths.

The main barriers identified in the literature are the language barriers, the fact that foreign qualifications are not readily recognised, and possible discrimination. These barriers are not necessarily acting altogether, everywhere and with the same intensity. For instance, Demireva & Kesler (2011) show some good outcomes for migrants from the EU8 and Romania and Bulgaria, as they differ from other migrants in not being more likely to enter unemployment or remain in unemployment compared to white British. A further barrier that partly explains the lower earnings of migrants in the UK is that qualifications obtained abroad are not recognised as equivalent in the UK (Dustmann and Theodoropoulos, 2010). In some opinions, migrant and ethnic disadvantage in the UK is mainly evident in the access to work, but generally smaller in earnings once employed (Blackaby et al., 2002, 2005; Dustmann and Theodoropoulos, 2010). In a rather opposite opinion, accounting for occupational segregation goes a long way to accounting for ethnic and migrant pay gaps. Occupations with a higher percentage of ethnic minorities also pay substantially lower on average (Brynin & Gueveli 2012). Similarly, in an interesting study Elliott & Lindley (2008) found that occupational segregation actually had positive effects for white migrants to the UK who cluster in high-paying occupations, while non-white immigrants are clustered in lower-paying occupations. This could point to the importance of discrimination as a substantial barrier.

Although important in all receiving countries, not only for the access to the labour market but also for professional advancement, the language skills seem to play a more important role in Germany. As Brücker (2015) noted, German language skills remain one key obstacle on the labour market for migrants. Migrants with better German skills are less often unemployed and work less often in a job they are overqualified for. Similarly, Aldashev et al. (2009) argue that the effects of language proficiency on earnings run through higher participation rates, employment chances and a higher probability of working in white-collar occupations. A second obstacle in Germany is the recognition

of foreign diplomas. Aldashev et al. (2012) analyse SOEP data and find that education obtained from abroad is valued less on the German labour market in comparison to educational attainment in Germany. The law for the recognition of foreign qualifications (“Anerkennungsgesetz”) which the German federal government and the state governments passed between 2012 and 2014 aimed at facilitating the recognition process and opened the process for a broader group. It is noteworthy that especially migrants working in regulated occupations profited from the new law (Ekert et al. (2017).

For instance, to low skilled jobs, the majority of Italians are concentrated in food trades and gastronomy (Del Prà, 2011; Haug, 2015; Pichler, 2017). Concentration of Italians in such professions may be due to the problematic recognition of university certificates or requirements of language proficiency in German (Haug, 2015). In this sense, Recchi and colleagues (2016) related that this constraint might be of great relevance for Italians who perform worse in acquiring language proficiency than other European citizens. Nevertheless, these jobs are usually low-paid and precarious (MiniJobs contracts), and, as such, may constrain Italians’ access to welfare benefits and rent subsidies (Del Prà, 2011).

In the UK and Germany, the institutional context of health care and IT is favourable for migrants while the market in Spain and Italy attracts and absorbs migrant employees in construction, restaurants and personal care. In most countries migrants experience initial downward mobility towards low skilled jobs and low-skilled sectors (Richter et al, 2017: 71). In the UK autonomous self-employment is a widely spread practice particularly for the low qualified, while in Italy the cooperatives mediate between employers looking for workers and workers registered as self-employed, thus easing the employment integration of Bulgarian immigrants (Zahova, 2015:109). In Northern Italy the well paid and stable employment in industry had attracted many workers when their jobs in the state enterprises in Bulgaria disappeared.

The level of education and qualification seems to be an important factor that make the difference as regards the immigrants’ access to the labour markets in the destination countries as well as their professional advancement. In this regard, Klekowski von Koppenfels and Höhne (2017) stress the high level of occupational attainment of the Spanish population in Germany and of Southern Europeans more generally but warn of a potential polarization within recent migrant groups (including Southern Europeans) in which high skilled individuals achieve greater success on the labour market than the average working population, while their lower-skilled counterparts fare worse than the average. However, it does not play the same role in all receiving contexts and with regard to all trades. For instance, in an online study of the psychological, socio-cultural and economic adjustment of 506 Southern European workers in Germany, Wassermann (2017) shows that while 64% of employed participants felt between ‘somewhat satisfied’ and ‘highly satisfied’ with their jobs, a significant proportion (48%) perceived having ‘rather more skills, abilities and/or qualifications than required’ by their jobs. It is notable that on a Likert scale from 1 (no perception of over-qualification) to 7 (strong perception of over-qualification), Italian participants perceived lower levels of over-qualification than Spanish and Greek participants, with respective average scores of 3.7, 4.39 and 4.37. Regarding occupational levels, the Labour Force Survey data presented by D’Angelo and Kofman (2017) show that roughly 62% of the Spanish-born UK population can be found in managerial, professional, or associate professional technical occupations, 42% of which are concentrated specifically in the professional occupations, which is more than double that of the UK-born rate. 12% of Spanish workers in the UK are employed in elementary occupations, which is a slightly higher concentration compared to the British-born (10% in elementary occupations).

The general economic context may also influence the social climate of reception: “*The economic crisis influences the phenomenon of migration conducting to deepening the xenophobic and racism attitudes*” (Stanculescu and Stoiciu, 2012). The features of the labour market in the destination country play the most important role in determining the sector(s) in which immigrants try to find jobs, the dimensions of the immigrants’ groups and even the structure by gender of those groups. The economic evolution in Western countries, along with changes in education and behaviours on the labour market, have led to a need for exactly that kind of labour force that had become redundant in its home country. This is also the case of migrant women; various factors are contributing to the growth of female emigration from Romania. Firstly, there is a growing demand in Western labour markets, particularly in Southern Europe, for workers in the domestic help and personal care sector. The latest immigrant legalization drives that took place in Italy (in 2002) and Spain (in 2005) clearly show this trend. Romanian citizens ranked first and second in those countries respectively in terms of the most numerous national groups of immigrants legalized; in both cases, the majority of stay permits granted were for work in the domestic help and personal care sector. (Abraham et al, 2014, Piperna, 2011: 189-290) This is a significant feature of Romanian migrants, mainly in the last years, which is called “feminized migration”.

A big number of Italians have moved to the UK during the years of the crisis. With regard to highly-skilled sectors, Italians have found employment in engineering, business and economics, and ICT sector (Triandafyllidou and Gropas, 2014), although assumptions should not be made that all highly-skilled migrants achieve to find a job reflecting their skills. Based on journalistic sources, McKay (2015) points out that highly-skilled Italian workers, especially immediately after their arrival to UK, in some cases are employed in low skilled jobs that do not require language proficiency in fast food outlets, characterised by bad working conditions.

In a qualitative research on Italian migrants in Berlin, del Prà (2011) states that more and more Italian migrants access high skilled sectors in the German labour market, highlighting the opportunities for these workers to advance their career and improve their quality of life in the German capital. This phenomenon concerns also Italian women who have traditionally showed lower employment rates in comparison with women from other sending countries (Pichler, 2017). New highly skilled migrants find usually employment in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics professions and health sector. With special reference to the latter, a proficient knowledge of German language is often required and represent a barrier to access good jobs in the sector. Moreover, nurses are likely to get jobs not corresponding to their skills (Pichler, 2017).

The fact that among the Spanish-born population, the tendency to migrate among low-skilled youth (the hardest hit by the economic crisis) appears to be lower than among university educated youth indicates that ‘the crisis narrative’ cannot adequately explain the new wave of Spanish emigration. The emerging literature on South-North European labour mobility suggests that there are political, social and cultural factors behind these processes that may be equally or even more important than the economic dimension. (Glorius and Domínguez-Mujica, eds. 2017; Lafleur and Stanek, eds. 2017; Triandafyllidou and Isaakyan 2016)

A comparative research carried out by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTUD 2014) stressed also that Italian youth are more likely than young people from Germany, UK, United States, China, India and Brasil to see no real opportunities of self-fulfilment and prospect of growth in their country. Asked about what they expect from a working experience abroad, the most usual answer from Italian students was, “Career opportunities I cannot find in my country” (21.4%), while both BRIC (26.7%) and great western industrial countries (25.9%) students typical answer was, “To build

my personal and professional future”. Given these attitudes, emigration is seen by a large percentage of young Italians as the only way to realize themselves (43% vs 35% in Spain, 19% in France, 11% in Germany and UK) (Bichi, 2017).

Finally, we should also mention that immigration policies in the destination countries also influence the immigrants’ chances to access the labour market and to achieve career advancement. In the Romanian researches on integration of the migrants in the receiving countries one may find discussions about models of integration policies in different countries. For instance, Anghel R. (2012) talks about the German policy integration model focused on German’s ethnic migration as privileged one or about Italian *laissez faire* model. They had advantages and disadvantages. *“Many Romanian Germans came to construct an idiom of separateness from local Germans. First, they complained about feelings of exclusion that they were not able to set up close ties to local Germans; some had a tendency to re-evaluate their “Romanian-ness.” Back when they were living in Romania, these ethnic German migrants had a clear sense of being German, and enjoyed a high symbolic status even when they came from ethnically mixed families. In Germany however, they complained they were considered Romanians, a label that was perceived initially as a degradation of the prestige they once held. Subsequently, they emphasized the commonalities they shared among themselves because of their previous life in Romania, and from their migration experience”*. On the other hand, *“laissez – faire model is seen as a set of institutional practices and a system by which migrants eventually acquires rights over the years.”* (Anghel, 2012: 327 - 328)

Algan et al. (2010) study the outcomes of migrants in Germany, the UK and France and point out that, while immigration policies are historically very diverse in these countries, there is a clear convergence in policies over time. They find the largest earning gaps as well as large gaps in employment for UK migrants, while they are on average most highly educated in the UK.

Our research findings confirm to a large extent the conclusions and statements contained in the research literature above referred to but go beyond the general aspects of migrants’ integration into the labour markets of their host countries and shed light on their main professional pathways and career advancement in the destination countries.

Professional and career trajectories

Our analysis of migrants’ professional and career trajectories started from comparing the last professional positions in their home countries with the current professional positions (as of the time of the interviews) of the 138 actual migrants in our sample. This allowed us identifying four categories: school-to-work trajectories, upwards trajectories, horizontal trajectories, and downwards trajectories. The largest category (41%) includes migrants with horizontal professional trajectories, i.e. people for whom migration has not resulted in any significant change in their professional positions (yet often achieving better working conditions). The next large categories include migrants with upwards trajectories (i.e. those who achieved higher professional positions in the destination countries as compared to their professional positions at departure) and migrants who at their departure had been still in education (or in-between education cycles) and acceded to the labour market in the destination countries (24% each). The smallest category includes migrants with downwards professional trajectories (11%) (i.e. those who held lower professional positions in the destination countries as compared to their professional positions at departure). This structure suggests that in most cases the economic migrants’ expectations for better professional positions and/or better working conditions and career advancement opportunities, as revealed by our analysis

of migrants' motivations, have been met. This also suggests that international migration of the labour force is often a factor of growth not only for the economy of the destination countries but also for migrants' professional careers. However, one should bear in mind that our sample targeted only immigrants active on the labour market (mostly employed but also temporary unemployed) and only in some activity domains (ICT, medicine and finance for the highly skilled; construction, transport and care work for the low skilled), so that the findings from our analysis may differ from official statistics and/or the findings of other researches.

Relevant differences between genders have not been noticed at the level of whole sample of actual migrants, yet women appeared to be a little bit more likely to fall in the school-to-work category as compared to men.

In respect of migrants' level of education (ISCED 1-4 versus ISCED 5-8) the only relevant difference refers to the upwards trajectory category, where migrants with lower level of education appeared more likely to belong (12 out of 40 in the case of initial education and 11 out of 32 in the case of current education) as compared to those with higher level of education (21 out of 98 in the case of initial education and 22 out of 106 in the case of current education), which can be explained by the very low initial professional positions (including unemployment) and higher propensity for taking any opportunity for moving to qualified or better qualified positions, including through on-the-job training, as compared to highly educated migrants.

School-to-work trajectories

The first category can be also considered an upwards trajectory, since migrants in this situation have obtained jobs to which they could not have access based on their initial level of education; however, we placed such trajectories in a separate category because in most cases their starting point was not on the labour market but in education. We did not name it education-to-work trajectory because education has interfered in many cases with migrants' professional trajectories at later stages as well.

Indeed, if looking only at migrants who passed from a lower (ISCED) level of education to an upper one, one may notice that for many migrants, especially from Eastern European countries, improving their level of education has been an integral part of their strategy for accessing the labour market in the destination country. This was the case of 18 participants in our research, of whom 11 Bulgarian, 6 Romanians and one Spaniard, almost equally distributed among genders. This suggests that in the perception of many migrants the education systems from their home countries do not provide real chances for accessing the desired jobs on the (international) labour market.

For two thirds of migrants in the school-to-work category the transition to the labour market has been done directly from the education system, while the remaining has been passing through some work experiences before continuing education, either in their home countries or in the destination countries, but in all cases the additional education has resulted in upwards work trajectories.

In only three cases the educational advancement referred to completion of upper-secondary (vocational) education (ISCED 3) or achieving post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4), while in all other cases it referred to completion of tertiary or post-tertiary education (ISCED 6-8).

Such was the case with a Bulgarian woman who studied pharmaceuticals in Berlin and then worked one year in a pharmacy before moving to a company for medicine production. Despite having to do some part-time jobs (including selling tickets for opera performances) in order to cover her education expenses she thinks that the higher educational status in Germany makes finding a job an

easy thing (BG.DE.AC.2.F.33). An IT specialist found his current job in internet-retailer company through university friends soon after graduating (BG.DE.AC.8.M.34).

Similarly, a young Romanian graduate from upper-secondary education (RO.UK.AC.1.M.25) wishing to work in the financial sector searched for the best universities in Europe and applied for admission in a British university; upon admission he applied for and obtained a loan for covering the education and subsistence expenses, which he has to pay back after getting employed and reaching a certain amount of salary; he received a job offer since before graduation from a bank where he had undertaken his practical stages as student. Another Romanian migrant (RO.UK.AC.2.F.31) had received an offer to continue higher education in France (ISCED 7) after obtaining her BA in medicine in Romania, along with doing paid practice there; following graduation (MA level) she moved to the UK and found easily a job as dentist with a private clinic in London.

As previously explained, continuing education abroad followed by obtaining good jobs in the destination countries has been mostly observed in the cases of Romanian and Bulgarian migrants; however, cases have been also observed among Italian and Spanish migrants who opted to conclude their studies abroad or get a specialization (Master), and, then, decide to apply for jobs in the British and German labour market and occupy good positions that reflect their skills (IT.UK.AC.1.F.37; ES.UK.AC.12.F.31).

A similar situation has been noticed in the case of medical doctors who often start their career from low-level positions, such as internships or working in laboratories, and, then, they apply for jobs that permit them to start their specialization. For instance, two out of three doctors of the Italian sample arrived to Germany without having any language competences, so it can be said that the insertion in apprentice programmes and low-grade positions is due to their lack of language skills (IT.DE.AC.8.F.28, IT.DE.AC.12.F.29, IT.DE.AC.19.M.28). Two doctors from Romania opted for continuing their medical education as resident doctors in Germany because in Romania they would have to pass a contest and, if it is successful they were not allowed to change the initially chosen specialty. On the contrary, in Germany, after having passed the language test and obtained the free practice permit, they could be employed as resident doctors and can change the medical specialty in the first years (RO.DE.AC.5.M.31; RO.DE.AC.7.M.31). This was also the case of a Bulgarian doctor who had started his specialization in Bulgaria and finalized it in Germany (BG.DE.AC.3.M.27).

Upwards trajectories

About a quarter of actual migrants in our sample have followed upwards professional trajectories. However, their weights in the national samples differed significantly. The question that arises is whether these differences reflect differences in the migrants' potentials for professional advancement or they reflect differences in individual strategies (i.e. achieving first a higher level of education and then applying for better jobs or taking up the first available job and then improving qualification level and moving to a better job). Our research findings have shown that in many cases the immigrants benefitted from specialisations and/or short-term training courses in the destination countries, which facilitated their access to better jobs.

To answer the above question, we merged migrants in the school-to work category with migrants in the upwards category (being both upwards trajectories as explained above) and noticed that the weights in the national samples become similar in three cases (IT, RO, and ES – around 1 in 1.8) and closer to these three in the fourth case (BG – 1 in 3). This suggests that, although other

factors such as individual motivations, quality of initial education, knowledge of foreign languages etc. may also influence the type of migrants' professional trajectories, the differences above referred to may be largely explained by the differences in migrants' individual strategies for accessing the labour markets and career advancement in the destination countries.

Based on the above analyses of school-to-work and upwards professional trajectories one may say that certainly education and training represent the main driver of migrants' career growth.

To illustrate the professional pathways of migrants in the upwards trajectory category we present below some relevant cases.

A Bulgarian dentist working in Spain admits that she has the chance of working with the newest implant technologies and this way she has developed her abilities much more than it would have been possible in Bulgaria (BG.ES.AC.3.F.47). A gynaecologist considers to have reached the peak of his career in a large Barcelona hospital as now he ranks just below his boss. Since this medicine business is hereditary and the boss' children would replace him at a given moment, there is no more space for growing up. However, this migrant thinks of higher achievements and imagines a clinic of his own where he himself would be the boss (BG.ES.AC.10.M.41). A nurse in Italy claims she had made the best of her competences at her current job but still thinks of even better perspective: she is often renewing her CV on the professional sites, *'in order to be up-to-date, 'cos you never know what might come up'* (BG.IT.AC.3.F.56). The country nationals are sometimes viewed as a reference point for assessing one's professional achievements. A financial expert residing in Italy accounts for his post-university professional development as *'a normal career path as any Italian'* (BG.IT.AC.5.M.42).

A young Romanian abandoned his university studies in IT after the first grade and emigrated to Italy for working in constructions; then he moved to the UK hoping to find better opportunities; indeed, he took courses in project management and at the time of being interviewed was employed as project manager (RO.UK.AC.3.M.31). A Romanian graduate from vocational high school (electronics) used to work as night watchman without work contract, then emigrated to Italy where he took a 6 months training course in programming and web design and was subsequently employed as programmer and web designer (RO.IT.AC.3.M.32). Another Romanian, holding the BA in economics but working as insurance agent, emigrated to the UK (in consideration of her language skills and previous experience under the 'Au Pair' programme) and was hosted by the same family she stayed with as 'au pair'; that family helped her to obtain qualification as dental assistant and at the time of being interviewed she worked as dental assistant and manager of one of the 12 dental clinics owned the that family (RO.UK.AC.6.F.36).

Similar cases have been identified by the Italian team. For instance, two Italian migrants who worked as interns in Italian banks moved to investment analysts positions in the UK (IT.UK.AC.10.M.28; IT.UK.AC.13.M.34), while a student working in a family firm in Italy became manager (bar tender) in London; at the time of interview, he was responsible for the personnel and found his new duties corresponding to his skills (IT.UK.AC.20.M.29). An Italian architect having migrated to the UK recounted that *'In fact, already in my third year of work, I worked on some crazy things, with incredible budgets, having contacts with extra-specialized professionals, who put at the disposal of incredible means'*. (IT.UK.AC.12.M.29)

Almost all Spanish informants who have changed jobs since the early settlement phase, presented their career evolution in a positive light, whether relative to the dissatisfaction they felt in their first job(s) or the belief that they have achieved progress through better work conditions, increased rank

and responsibility, or renewed professional challenges. Most respondents achieved career development or better working conditions by intentionally leaving previous positions and searching for new ones, although a minority of informants report having been fired at some point by previous employers, usually due to conflicts with superiors regarding work conditions. This suggests that subjective perceptions of migrants should be also taken into account when assessing their work trajectories. Indeed, the research findings regarding the migration of Italians and Spaniards to Germany and the UK have revealed that working conditions and opportunities for career advancement played a major role in migrants' motivations as compared to Bulgarian and Romanian migrants, for whom material advantages prevailed.

Some illustrations include: an IT engineer who went from working at a software firm in London to a major international bank as he was interested in working in financial services software (ES.UK.AC.11.M.47); a young financial consultant from the region of Catalonia who became an analytics manager in Berlin (ES.DE.AC.22.M.29); a low qualified migrant from Valencia who used to work odd jobs in construction combined with periods of unemployment during the economic crisis and who has become a lightning-rod installer in Berlin (ES.DE.AC.9.M.35).

Horizontal trajectories

This is the largest category of professional trajectories, with 41% of the total number of actual migrants in our sample (138). The weights of migrants from this category in the national samples differ but not very much (from 1 in 3 for Bulgaria and Italy through 1 in 6 for Romania, with 1 in 5 for Spain). Men in this category are better represented than women (33 out of 57 versus 24 out of 57) but this roughly mirror the structure of the sample, so that most likely gender is not a relevant influencer in this regard. On the other hand, either in respect of initial levels of education or in respect of current levels of education (as of the time of being interviewed) the weight of migrants with high levels of education (ISCED 5-8) is three times as higher than the weight of migrants with low level of education (ISCED 1-4). If taking into account that the national samples of actual migrants have been purposely conceived as to include one third low qualified and two third highly qualified persons (using as proxy the level of education), this suggests that the general orientation of migrants' professional trajectories does not depend upon their level of education but rather upon motivations and specific individual strategies. Our research findings have actually revealed that in many cases the migrants' motivations related only or mostly to earning more money than they could do in their home countries, as to improve the level of living of families left behind and to invest in houses and/or cars, sometimes even in small businesses in their home countries; such migrants often accept precarious jobs and precarious living conditions in the destination countries and have no preoccupations for career advancement. On the other hand, our research findings have also revealed that in many cases (especially among Italian and Spanish migrants to Germany or UK, but not only) the motivations behind migration related to working conditions and/or working environment, which do not require moving to a higher professional position.

To illustrate the experiences of migrants with horizontal professional trajectories we present below some relevant cases.

A Bulgarian steel worker having migrated to Germany went through various troubles (in terms of unemployment, illegal jobs, etc.) but eventually succeeded to get employed as steel worker and at the time of being interviewed was taking the necessary steps to set up, together with some friends, a company in steel construction; in doing this he didn't rely on connections with bigger firms but rather on tips by acquaintances and former clients (BG.DE.AC.10.M.40). A Bulgarian lawyer having

also had work experience in Poland and Germany migrated to the UK where he was employed as media lawyer (BG.UK.AC.14.M.44). Similarly, two Bulgarian doctors (BG.ES.AC.9.M.45 and BG.ES.AC.10.M.41) moved to similar positions in Spain, while a Bulgarian nurse (BG.IT.AC.3.F.57) did the same in Italy.

An interesting case among Romanian migrants is that of a 36 years old man who held two university degrees (one in constructions and one in marketing and economic affairs) but was unable to find a job that would have ensured a decent living for his family. Hence, he decided to emigrate, having as final target Canada and intermediary target the UK, where he hoped to save enough money for the next step. Thus, he gathered information on what qualifications would be suitable for getting a good job in the UK and opted for medical assistant; he registered with a post high-school for medical assistants and upon graduation worked for a while in a public hospital to gain some practical experience; then posted his CV on e-jobs and shortly was contacted by several recruitment agencies, of which one offered him three alternative jobs in the UK; he accepted a job of medical assistant in Warwick and was still working there at the time of being interviewed. He actually has no intention to change the profession, but just the country when feeling ready to move to Canada (RO.UK.AC.4.M.36). A medical doctor from Cluj-Napoca (Romania) was recruited directly by the hospital he is currently working with in Germany through a German doctor (recruiter) who had good connections with the medical system in Cluj-Napoca (RO.DE.AC.2.M.44). A similar trajectory had a telecommunication engineer from Bucharest who was recruited by a German company with the same profile through a recruitment company located in Poland (RO.DE.AC.1.M.33); he does not intend to change his profession but maybe the country of residence (nor excluding the return to Romania).

As regards Spanish migrants, horizontal professional trajectories have been mostly noticed among medical doctors (ES.DE.AC.13.F.39; SP.UK.AC.6.F.35) and other medical personnel such as dental technologist (ES.DE.AC.10.M.50) or nurse (ES.UK.AC.2.M.36), but also among 'blue collars' (ES.DE.AC.24.M.34; ES.UK.AC.8.M.34; ES.UK.AC.16.M.43). As already mentioned, many Spaniards having migrated to Germany or UK targeted both better working conditions and career advancement.

Almost half of the sample of Italian migrants falls within this category of professional trajectories. Most of them are professionals in ICT (e.g. IT.UK.AC.2.M.35; IT.UK.AC.8.M.40; IT.DE.AC.11.M.29; IT.DE.AC.21.F.29), architecture (e.g. IT.UK.AC.3.F.35; IT.UK.AC.6.F.30; IT.UK.AC.12.M.29) and medicine (nurses, e.g. IT.UK.AC.5.M.38; IT.DE.AC.17.F.25; IT.DE.AC.17.F.25) while the other worked in the hospitality sector (e.g. IT.UK.AC.9.M.26; IT.UK.AC.19.M.42; IT.DE.AC.6.F.50). Most of low-skilled workers and some high-skilled professional in healthcare (nurses) and in construction (architects/engineers) have looked for better working conditions and more stable jobs abroad rather than for career advancement.

Downwards trajectories

Only 15 actual migrants, representing 11% of our sample, have fallen in this category, which suggests that in general the decision to migrate have had positive effects for their professional trajectories. No relevant differences have been observed in respect of gender but as regards the migrants' levels of education we noticed that almost three quarters of migrants with downwards professional trajectories were highly educated (ISCED 5-8). This is not surprising if taking into account that several highly educated persons have decided to migrate just because they couldn't find jobs that would have provided for a decent standard of living in their home countries and either had

not been aware that their qualifications did not fit to the labour market requirements in the destination countries or being aware they were keen to accept any job that provides higher income than they had in the home country. Indeed, most migrants in this category are Bulgarians (10) followed by Romanians (4) in whose countries of origin incomes from work are well-known and being much lower than in Western European countries. The downwards trajectories of the four Spanish migrants identified in our case-study seems to be mostly the result of individuals' low local language fluency or lack of relevant previous work experience in the sector they aspire to work in.

The Romanian migrants in this category cover almost all assumptions above referred to. A successful economist having worked with a big Romanian company with subsidiaries abroad has followed her husband in Germany, where he had been offered a job as medical doctor (RO.DE.AC.4.F.34); she had been optimistic with regard to her professional trajectory there but shortly found out that the structure and content of economic educations in Germany did not fit at all with the Romanian education system in the matter; she was keen to continue her education in a German university but was discouraged by a consultant from the public employment service, who told her that even so she wouldn't have more chances to be employed because German companies prefer to hire young graduates in economics, which they could shape according to the company's policy; the only chance she had been given was to work as caregiver for elderly, which was unacceptable for her. Hence, for a long time she remained housewife and eventually found a job as translator with a police unit.

In a more difficult situation was a woman who graduated from post-secondary non-tertiary education in accounting. In Romania, she worked as shop-assistant (and accountant) with a small company, while in Germany she had to accept a job as housecleaner (RO.IT.AC.2.F.39). In a similar situation was a graduate from post-secondary non tertiary school for analysts-programmers, who actually worked as trade manager with a medium-sized enterprise in Romania and migrated to Germany together with his family (spouse and two children) based in misleading information provided by a friend of his already settled there (RO.DE.AC.8.M.43); he had been told that with his skills and sagacity he would easily find a well-paid job but actually he only succeeded to find unqualified jobs (so did her spouse too); however, they decided to remain in Germany in consideration of the better education and career opportunities for their children.

The picture of Bulgarian migrants with downwards professional trajectories is more complex. For instance, we have identified three university graduates working in low-qualified jobs: a teacher working as home assistant (BG.SP.AC.7.F.46), a musician working as event organiser (BG.UK.AC.13.F.47) and an IT specialist working as a cleaner (BG.UK.AC.12.M.36). We have also identified several specialists with short-term tertiary education (mainly 'blue collars') working in low qualified jobs, e.g. driver (BG.ES.AC.8.M.45; BG.IT.AC.7.M.48), home assistant (BG.SP.AC.5.F.60), builder (BG.IT.AC.1.M.40), or even cleaner (BG.ES.AC.2.F.50).

The only migrants from Spain with downwards professional trajectory were: a human resources consultant working as a receptionist in the UK (SP.UK.AC.5.M.30); a telecommunications engineer in London who decided to work part-time in telephone customer-service in order to spend more time with her young daughters and to improve her English language skills (SP.UK.AC.7.F-M.28-29); a construction worker who went from managing teams of construction workers in Spain to occupying a lower rank as a shuttering-carpenter on London construction-sites (SP.UK.AC.8.M.34); and a history graduate working as a house cleaner in Berlin (SP.GE.AC.8.M.28). No such cases have been observed among Italian migrants to Germany and the UK.

Experiences of unemployment

Experiences of unemployment were not frequently reported by the participants in our research. When they were, it mostly concerned low qualified migrants, especially during the initial stage of their migration experience, when many of them took-up short-term and precarious jobs with poor salaries. According to our research findings such cases prevail among Eastern-European migrants, for whom those low salaries are much higher than what they could have earned in their home countries. This is not surprising since this category of migrants actually fill the gaps in the labour markets from the destination countries. As these migrants become more adapted to the local labour market and learn how to move through it, newcomers (often co-nationals) take over these precarious jobs, then follow the same pattern. Nevertheless, some of the low qualified migrants, especially from among those having come only with the objective of earning money, keep working in those precarious conditions.

In most cases the non-employed migrants have not been officially registered as unemployed, either because they were living and working without work and stay permit in the destination countries (in the Romanian and Bulgarian cases) or because meanwhile they were working on the black labour market or have had particular reasons to not register as unemployed (returning to the home country for a while during the crisis, being a stay-at-home parent, failing to register in due time due to misunderstanding with an employer). During the periods without paid jobs our respondents have managed to cover the living expenses from savings and/or with support of family members; no critical situations have been reported.

I have been (working) from 2007 through 2011 with legal forms at the same restaurant; after its closure I have been unemployed in 2011 but I worked without legal forms in another restaurant; after this, having resigned from the other restaurant, from 2014 through 2015 I was unemployed (again). (RO.IT.AC.2.F.39)

I am unemployed but without unemployment (benefit) ... I don't receive unemployment benefit because a mess has occurred with my contract; in the firm I was working with the project was finalized – my contract was projects based – (so that) in two weeks my contract ended; I should have take up a new contract, to move to the airport, the things had complicated and in the end this was not needed anymore; this lengthened two months – from two weeks – and during that period I didn't submit the application for unemployment benefit because I knew that in 2 weeks ... and I didn't pay attention to that ... the deadline had passed and when they told me that it was not necessary anymore I could not apply for unemployment benefit anymore; and I remained unemployed without unemployment (benefit). (RO.ES.AC.1.M.36)

Very few respondents who experienced unemployment reported having received unemployment benefits (one Romanian in Spain, one Bulgarian in the UK, two Italians in Germany, and two Spaniards in Germany).

'This is the third (job) ... for a Romanian, where I worked 8 years and this one where I have 2 years. I was unemployed for 8 months, during the crisis, in 2012. ... Yes, (it was paid) 980 Euro per month unemployment benefit.' (RO.ES.AC.5.M.40)

'I worked for two years in Berlin. I paid also a lot of taxes. It's crazy. The tax rate is very high but you are entitled to the unemployment benefit. I can have the unemployment benefit for a year and I have to tell that the Agentur fur Arbeit works very well. They send to you a lot of job offers and I have to go to the interviews. [...] In Italy you are not sure if you will get the benefit because there are no money and they do not help you in seeking a job. It is obvious that you have to search by yourself.. Here I feel more that the State is pushing me' (IT.DE.AC.7.F.42)

A construction worker from Valencia become lightning-rod installer (ES.DE.AC.9.M.35), who suffered an injury in a workplace accident in Berlin followed by an unjustified dismissal by his employer, has eventually received compensation and used the period of unemployment as an opportunity to refocus his professional goals and acquire training that would help him achieve them. He was in regular contact with the Job Centre in Berlin that was his liaison both for welfare benefits and searching for better jobs. The Job Centre financed a course in climbing that would qualify him to work at heights at construction sites or on high-rises with a harness (without scaffolding). In addition, after acquiring the climbing license, the Job Centre also helped him secure his current job as lightning-rod installer by partially subsidising his salary during the first year of employment.

Experiences of unemployment have been also reported by our highly qualified respondents but to a much lesser extent. These cases generally refer to situations when such immigrants hold university degrees that do not fit to labour market demand in the destination countries, so that they either have to accept low qualified positions or to take additional training (e.g. in the case of medical personnel in Germany and the UK), during which they have to cover the living expenses by themselves.

... the education they get (in Germany, in economics) is completely different from ours ... I wanted to become a shop girl; (I was asked) but why do you want to become shop girl while having graduated higher education; (the employers) want a crude labour force, which they can frame; indeed, but you are to aged; yes, OK, then in what trade? To become caregiver for elderly. I tried to undertake a 10 days practice as nurse in the hospital my husband works with; I realized that that it's not the trade of my dreams.... My only chance of integration in Germany would be to set up my own business or to register as self-employed, to work for myself and to pay all taxes and duties to the state. (RO.DE.AC.4.F.34)

For the young university-educated man from Seville who had become stuck in low-skilled and exploitative work patterns, the eight months he spent in unemployment were difficult. He describes having lost his sense of purpose and feeling demoralised. Given that he was in less regular contact with the Job Centre and less proactive in refocusing his professional goals than the respondent described above, there came a time when the unemployment office required him to enrol in an 'integration' course that was designed for immigrants and Germans alike with limited knowledge of German institutions and job-application skills.

It was a course that taught you how to turn on a computer, how to use Word, all of it in colloquial [Berliner] German. Although I knew a bit of German, I couldn't understand it at that level...It was a huge class with lots of immigrants, all of them much older than me. The average age was forty or fifty years old. Seventy percent of the students were German...I know I shouldn't say this, but you could tell that these were people who hadn't done anything in their lives. And they [the Job Centre] would make us go there...it felt very forced. Those of us who weren't German didn't know what we were doing there [there were lessons on the German constitution]. And if you missed a single class they would stop giving you the social benefits. So I felt like I was being forced to go. After that, I started searching for work like crazy and within a week I found a new job. (ES.DE.AC.8.M.28)

Experiences of discrimination

Discriminatory behaviours can take several forms and can be more or less explicit. Since the general aspects of discrimination are analysed in another chapter, in this section we only refer to discrimination in the labour market, more specifically to discrimination of immigrants at their workplace.

In the labour market discrimination can reduce the opportunities to be hired or increase the probabilities of being fired for some individuals in comparison with others with the same skills and abilities, but it can also take place within the companies in the interactions among colleagues, in the relations with supervisor and boss and impact on workers satisfaction, career opportunities, benefits, wages.

As a general matter we may say that experiences of discrimination at the workplace have not been quite frequently reported by our informants. Moreover, such experiences have more often been reported by Italian and Spanish migrants compared to Romanian and Bulgarian migrants, which at first sight, is quite surprising, considering the negative public image of the latter group fostered by media and political discourse in the destination countries. Indeed, one may have expected more frequent reports of experiences of discrimination on the behalf of our Eastern European informants compared to our Southern European ones. Upon closer examination, however, we noticed that in several sectors, such as construction, agriculture, ICT, finance, and sometimes also in health (hospitals), immigrants, especially in Berlin and London, typically work in international teams. In such professional environments in particularly cosmopolitan cities, there may be few occurrences of for discrimination on the basis of ethnicity or nationality, at least on the part of the employers. On the other hand, it is also a matter of expectations and personal perceptions and feelings; for instance, the Romanian migrants appear not to pay as much attention to aspects of discrimination while for many Italians and Spaniards, discrimination of all kinds, though rarely experienced directly, appeared to be a more sensitive issue. Besides, the comparative analysis of the answers to the questions regarding experiences of discrimination provided by the actual migrants from different participating countries has revealed differences between the ways they perceived the working environment from the perspective of discriminatory practices, which we present below.

To start with Romanian migrants, we have to emphasize that only in three cases our respondents have evoked experiences of discrimination at work, of whom one referred to initial stages of his career and one referred to a single experience (not from colleagues or employer but from a customer). Thus, a former trade manager in a middle-sized enterprise from Romania, who migrated to Germany along with his family based on misleading information provided by a friend of his who was already settled there and did not succeed to go beyond the position of handler (RO.DE.AC.08.M.43), was convinced that in Germany discrimination operated mostly on the labour market so that there were jobs for Germans and jobs for immigrants (among which Romanians). A Romanian migrant who was working in construction at the time of the interview and who had registered as self-employed recounted that at earlier stages he faced discrimination at work but not anymore in his current position (RO.IT.AC.1.M.40). Finally, a Romanian nurse in Italy (RO.IT.AC.6.F.49) recounted that some time ago a female patient (with many medical problems, unemployed and choleric) reproached her that Italians cannot find jobs because of the immigrants, but afterwards apologised; she did not remember another case of discrimination.

On the opposite side, the majority of Romanian respondents declared having not been discriminated against (yet some of them had heard about such situations) and some have even recounted positive experiences:

... it seems that people are not treated there (in Romania) the way foreigners treat people here. I am very satisfied where I work; I am respected. ... They were wealthy (her first employers) but this is not what matters to them; they are wealthy but they are respectful to you, you have a say ... like you belonged to the household. They ask you if you have understood, they take you to the place and tell you < 'look, this is what I meant you should do' >; without screeches or affronts (RO.ES.AC.6.F.47)

For other migrants Germany and Germans appeared to be preferable:

Honestly, I have also been in Italy and Spain but Germany seems to me more kind and the rights are better than in other countries, and the fact that working on the black labour market is not quite usual as in other countries. ... (Germans) are not as racist as (people in) Italy and Spain. Because many Romanians are doing many bad things when hearing that one is Romanian, for example in Italy and Spain, they point their finger at that person. Here I was told that there are two groups: good and bad. (RO.DE.AC.3.F.27)

Actually, several Romanian immigrants in Germany told us that according to their experiences Germans are not as 'cold' as the saying goes but just have a different mentality on social relationships; they are polite and respectful with everybody but hardly enter into close relationships with people they do not know very well (including foreigners).

We also encountered opposite opinions; for instance, a 35-year-old woman working as a telecommunications engineer in Milan (BG.IT.AC.6.F.47) considered that there was discrimination on the basis of gender as well. *'Being a woman working in telecommunications is another minus, because my colleagues are entirely male.... There is discrimination on the basis of gender or origin, but here again it depends on how you react, how you show that you are capable... and we are talking about technical things...'*

Several highly qualified Italian and Spanish immigrants shared the opinion of both Romanian and Bulgarian highly skilled immigrants that in the sectors where working in international teams is the rule (especially ICT and finance, that are dominated by multinational companies and are very internationally oriented) there is little room for discrimination on an ethnic basis.

The company is a European multinational: France, Italy, Spain, Great Britain.. these are the main branches. The managers were one Italian and one Spanish but the top management was from the UK (IT.UK.AC.8.M.40)

There is no discrimination. In this company German people are the minority, therefore it would be weird finding discriminatory behaviours (IT.DE.AC.16.M.31)

Similarly, a Spanish nurse working in a London hospital was quite thrilled with his international work environment:

[On most medical teams], it is normal for each person to be from a different country and that's something I love about London. Our teams are made up of between six to ten people and there is usually a mix of nationalities. I work with English people, Scottish people, Portuguese, Filipinos [...] with Italians, with Germans, Australians, it's a mix...Serbians, Poles [both physicians and nurses] Indians, Sri Lankans, Bangladeshis [...] It generally [fosters] a nice environment. I always say that it's as if you are travelling, each person tells you stories about things in their country, [...] about the food or about how the health system works in their country... (SP.UK.AC.2.M.36)

In some cases the diversity is considered, in itself, a strength of the company. In the UK also the legislation against discrimination was cited as a strong incentive.

No discrimination at all [...]. In my sector is the opposite. Diversity is an advantage because it is exactly what we sell. We need to be able to create new things, mix different experiences, mix job experiences... innovation, creativity ... so it is an advantage' (IT.DE.AC.11.M.29)

I never had any perception of discrimination .. also because the company does a lot against discrimination. They send emails, organize meetings to make employees understand that discriminating is not only illegal but it does not make any sense. [...] I am part of the HR team and I recruit people. When I am interviewing people I was told not to discriminate on the basis of race, age, gender, religion etc.. According to the law you risk your job. You have to be careful as here it is very easy to be fired. (IT.UK.AC.2.M.35)

The situation is not perceived in such a positive light in all sectors and for all the respondents, of course. Problems evoked by the Italian respondents referred mostly to the perception of subtle differences in the ways natives treat them. Brief sentences, jokes, allusions even simply perceptions. As explained by an Italian architect working in the UK:

As time goes by I understood that there are some mechanisms very incorrect and sinister that are very difficult to detect, among polite behaviours. When you notice them you feel very disappointed. There are several ways to discriminate, to make you feel uncomfortable (IT.UK.AC.12.M.29)

When I arrived, I was the only one foreign born: forty Germans, all in German, I did not speak any German and it was a nightmare. [...] They treated me as I was idiot just because I did not understand [...] Every time, when the top manager gave to me an assignment – he spoke very well English – my team leader – who did not feel at ease speaking English – subtracted it to me and assign it to other people. It was not because I was not good but because he was not able to communicate with me in English (IT.DE.AC.13.F.28)

In all the other sectors, in particular in low skilled occupations, someone who has only a basic knowledge of the language – English or German – is treated differently by colleagues because of the communication problems. “*If you do not speak the language you are nothing*” as an Italian in Berlin remarked (IT.GE.AC.15.M.28).

If you do not speak the language, for them you are nothing... they do not answer your questions, they get upset if you do not understand, they do not see you (IT.DE.AC.15.M.28)

You talk to a colleague and he does not change his way of speaking. You are struggling to understand and he keeps speaking at the same pace. [...] I once asked a girl why and she told me “English is our language. It is up to you learning to speak it (IT.UK.AC.9.M.26)

Some patients who are old tell “go away! Send to me a German colleague” (laugh). My colleagues complain with patients because of this. Also in that case I saw they were on my side (IT.DE.AC.17.F.25)

With customers it happened to me several times that when they understand I am not German they start using Berlin dialect to confuse me [...]. Once I tried to speak in English and I was told “here we are in Germany and we speak German”. The person told me this politely and kindly but I felt bad.. and for me the language is still an issue. (IT.DE.AC.1.F.23)

As regards Spanish immigrants having participated in our research it should be emphasised that the large majority of informants in both Germany and the UK reported feeling well integrated in their work-teams and having a good relationship with managers and senior employees. In most cases, any exclusionary and hostile work environments they have experienced were in previous jobs at earlier stages of the settlement process. Nevertheless, we present several cases in which respondents have been subject to exclusionary, discriminatory or abusive behaviour on the part of employers or

colleagues. As will be shown, most of these negative workplace experiences are strongly linked to nationality/ethnicity and gender.

There is very little comradery, here [at work]. The Irish go on their own, although, even amongst themselves, it's not as if they [display much solidarity] ...Then, for example, the Romanians are with the Romanians, they are very united, and then, there's me. (ES.UK.AC.8.M.34)

There are similar reports of exclusion based on workplaces divided into ethnic and national groups (mainly in London) which respondents describe as having been a challenge for their workplace integration in previous jobs, most notably in lower-skilled sectors, such as restaurant and manual work. However, feelings of having to work extra hard in order to be accepted into a new environment are not limited to lower and medium-skilled work.

An architect in Berlin who speaks excellent German and who is married to a German with whom she has a young daughter considers herself very well integrated into Berlin professional and cultural life. Nevertheless, she describes a previous work environment in which her experience as a Spanish-trained architect was never fully valued:

In the studio I worked at for five years, it was all about mimicking the German way of working, speaking perfect German, writing perfectly in German...it's as if we had to be German, or as German as possible in order to work there. There wasn't a single moment in which I got the sense that any of the foreign employees [of which there were many] were seen as an added-value. (ES.DE.AC.17.F.38)

A female physician who had moved to Berlin in order to settle down with her long-time German partner, after a six month trial period was automatically offered a permanent position, which she remarks would have been unthinkable in Spain, not long after signing her new contract, her boss (the physician in charge of the practice) called her to his office:

He asked me if I had any plans of getting pregnant and that if I did, that now was not a good time. (ES.DE.AC.13.F.39)

He even used threats in order to make his point, although she did not disclose her and her partner's wishes to have a baby soon. Shortly after, she became pregnant but miscarried. Though her boss never found out about this first pregnancy, she feels that the stress and pressures at work had a role in her miscarriage. Needless to say, the pressures at work escalated when she had a second pregnancy several months later and disclosed it to her boss. This time, the threats took on an explicitly violent form, to the extent that her gynaecologist gave her an order to stop work well before her maternity leave was set to begin. The fact that she was a young Spanish physician and new on the scene of the Berlin medical community dissuaded her from reporting the abuse to any organisations such as the Berlin Chamber of Physicians, for fear that it could affect her chances of finding work in the future. Once her first child was born and her maternity leave over, she simply quit the practice and looked for a new job, this time being more careful in filtering through offers and attended interviews at several private practices before choosing where to work next.

Though reports such as these are rare, they deserve mention as significant examples of the intersectionality of gender and migrant status as the basis for unequal treatment. The above case of gender discrimination might come as a surprise, given the reputation of German employers to foster a supportive work environment for mothers and fathers alike (confirmed by numerous informants in the German sample). It may be less surprising, however, if we consider the migrant status combined with the female gender of the victim of discrimination. Though the case presented above is particularly extreme, two other women in the German sample explicitly refer to having experienced

some kind of discriminatory treatment at work (as evidenced by unequal pay or hostility from colleagues) on the basis of what they believe to be their gender and migrant status.

Where informants in the healthcare, financial services and engineering sectors tend to express a great deal of satisfaction with and strong integration into teams of international workers, respondents with experience as kitchen aids, waiters and manual workers offer accounts of less harmonious multicultural workplace relations. Indeed, in contrast to the many glowing depictions from professionals of what it is like to work in nationally diverse office environments, lower-skilled individuals, such as the Canary Wharf shuttering-carpenter (ES.UK.AC. 8.M.34) cited above do not so readily feel the benefits of multicultural teams. Instead of pointing to the opportunities for learning and exchange that arise in such stimulating work environments, they are more likely to emphasise dynamics of exclusion and boundary drawing, ethnic competition and inter-group suspicion.

Conclusions and policy recommendations

The starting point in migrants' professional trajectories in the destination countries consists of getting a foothold in the local labour market. This generally proves to be a more straight-forward process for university educated individuals, especially in the ICT and financial services sectors, as well as for those having completed their education in the destination country and individuals in possession of job offer prior to their arrival in the destination country. On the other hand, labour-market integration is more challenging for those who arrive without prior work agreements or who do not have access to support from professional and/or social networks, and with little knowledge of the local language. Immigrants in the latter category often find themselves in the situation of having to accept short-term jobs below their qualifications or that do not reflect past work experience with in precarious working conditions. As a result, these individuals frequently change workplaces.

From the perspective of maximising the use of human capital, there is a high need for innovative and more effective policy measures to assist migrants in their labour-market integration. This refers not only to the receiving countries, where there is a high need for advisory and guidance services for immigrants, but also to the sending countries, where advisory services for emigrants do exist (both public and private) but rather few prospective migrants make use of their services.

Our research findings have shown that in most cases the immigrants succeed to maintain their professional status in the destination countries (for many of them this is actually what they expected) and in many cases they achieve professional development and career growth. This suggests that international migration of the labour force is often a factor of growth not only for the economy of the destination countries but also for migrants' professional careers. These findings have also revealed that in many cases the immigrants have improved their levels of education while in the destination country and that this has also contributed to their professional advancement, especially in the case of initially lower-educated migrants.

This confirms the role of education as an important driver of career growth but also as a means for adaptation to and integration into modern labour markets, and hence should be supported by both sending and receiving countries.

A wealth of good practice has been already accumulated in the area of international educational exchange programmes, some of which also evoked by our respondents as helpful for their migration experiences (e.g. Leonardo da Vinci, Erasmus +), but the incidence of such programmes among

migrants (especially those low-qualified) is most likely very low. Therefore, both governmental and non-governmental organisations concerned by the labour force migration phenomenon should be encouraged to raise awareness among prospective migrants with regard to available opportunities for participation in international mobility and especially lifelong learning programmes, and to assist them in applying/registering with such programmes. Meanwhile, the EU Lifelong Learning programme may consider the needs of immigrants for further professional training and develop specific actions within the programme addressing their needs.

Experiences of unemployment were rarely reported by the participants in our research. When they were, they overwhelmingly concerned low-qualified migrants, especially during the initial stage of their migration experience. According to our research findings, such cases are most prevalent among Eastern-European migrants, for whom those low salaries are much higher than what they could have earned in their home countries. This is not surprising since this category of migrants actually fill the gaps in the labour markets from the destination countries.

In most cases the non-employed migrants have not been officially registered as unemployed, and hence very few respondents who experienced unemployment reported having received unemployment benefits (one Romanian, one Bulgarian, two Italians, and two Spaniards). However, no critical cases have been reported, since immigrants employ different strategies to face unemployment spells (returning to the home country for a while during the economic crisis, being a stay-at-home parent, working on the black labour market, etc).

The unemployment is by itself a temporary waste of human capital if not accompanied by active measures for reinsertion into the labour market but it may also result in further loss of human capital when leading to acceptance of jobs under the qualification of the incumbents. Therefore, more effective measures for protection and integration into the labour market of the immigrants who are jobless (including those who are not officially registered as unemployed) are necessary in a view to minimise the loss of human capital at the EU level.

There are also few reports of experiences of discrimination at the workplace; more experiences of discrimination at work were recounted by Italian and Spanish migrants compared to Romanian and Bulgarian respondents. We have identified three main forms of discrimination at work: discrimination among ethnic groups working on the same (low qualified) assignment, discrimination by employers/senior managers on the basis of ethnicity/immigrant status, and gender-based discrimination associated with immigrant status.

This is something that most European countries already prohibit but our case-studies suggest that more efforts should be made to ensure effectiveness of such anti-discrimination laws.

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