



**Work Package 4: The Lived Experiences of Migration
Country Report on Contextual and Institutional Factors – Romania**

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Introduction

This is the second country report for Romania, which extends the analysis of our qualitative research data to the contextual and institutional factors with relevant impact on Romanians' migration. Since the actual actions of the migrants are the results of the interplay between their individual agency and the contextual and institutional factors, one may state that this report complements the previous one, thus enabling better understanding of the whole process.

Within the section regarding migrants' motivation from our first country report we have analyzed only the individual factors, while the contextual and institutional factors have been left for this second country report. Other country teams have approached all factors that determine or influence migrants' motivation in their first country reports. Therefore, this report contains a section that might not be found in the other country reports, namely a section regarding contextual factors of migrants' motivation. Similarly, while analysing the roles plaid by the recruitment agencies we limited ourselves to their role as recruitment channels, which now requires complementing that analysis with more specific aspects relating to their policies and practices that affect as institutional factors the migration of the labour force. These will be included also in a separate section, which might not exist in other country reports.

The report continues with the analysis of the aspects relating to Romanian migrants' arrival in the destination countries and their adaptation to the life from the host country. This includes travel and related problems that the migrants have faced especially before the opening of the Western labour markets to Romanians and Bulgarians, first housing and living conditions, methods used for finding the first jobs, satisfaction with these jobs, including income and work environment, as well as the sources of support (institutional and social ties) they relied upon.

The next section is dedicated to work trajectories and career growth. This includes the types of professional trajectories revealed by research data, new job search methods and/or changes in the job search methods, as the case may be, employment careers and career growth, experiences of unemployment, as well as sources of support in the search for better jobs.

The report continues with the analysis of the aspects relating to family and social life. This includes changes in family life, relationships with old and new friends and neighbours, political participation and community involvement.

In the next section we analyse the aspects relating to identity development and citizenship. This includes changes of self-perceptions, citizenship status, links and breaks with home culture, future plans and expectations.

At the end of this report we include conclusions drawn from the analyses undertaken in the previous sections.

This report does not include references since it is based only on our analysis of data collected through the qualitative research carried out by our team under WP4.

Since in the context of this report the national context in the destination countries is very important, while maintaining the structure of quotations used in the previous country report, namely type of participant (E = expert from recruitment agencies; PM = prospective migrant; AM = actual migrant), gender (M = male; F = female) and age we add the country codes (IT, ES, DE, UK). In case of identical characteristics we add also the number of the interview.

Contextual factors of migrants' motivation

As we have already mentioned in our first country report, the findings from our qualitative research have confirmed the conclusions of several studies and researches according to which the main reasons of labour force migration relate to the employment opportunities and living conditions, which both relate to the level of earnings.

Indeed, many participants in our research have evoked the lack of jobs for people qualified in industrial trades as a consequence of economic restructuring occurred after the change of political regime, as well as the sharp increase of the living costs as compared to the level of incomes from work.

„In Romania everything had started to get broken; the factory did not exist anymore; nothing, nothing had left, nothing was running, including agriculture.” (AM, F, 47, ES)

„It was very hard, at least for me. Prices were high as compared to earnings; we could not afford to buy the strictly necessary things ...I cannot say good things about Romania. ...

In the field of my studies, at Anghel Saligny, contracts had been concluded and when graduating the vocational training one got employed. I belonged to the generation that did not benefitted of any employment. (AM, M, 40, IT)

At the same time, our research findings have revealed that almost half of our migrant interviewees were fairly satisfied (satisfied or rather satisfied) with their living conditions in the home country. This does not mean that such migrants were not looking for better living conditions but it means that other factors have to be explored for accurate understanding of the migrants' motivation. Here we come to the socio-economic and political context of the decision making process regarding migration. The analysis of these aspects is based on the answers of prospective migrants to questions C2: “You’ve told me how you have been living recently. Now tell me how you feel about the overall life here in your country and city X” and C3: “What made you start thinking about leaving this country X?” and of the answers of actual migrants to questions C2: “So you’ve described what your life was like before you left. Now tell me how you felt about the overall society in your country of origin and/or the city you were living in at the time of your departure” and C3: “What made you start thinking about leaving?”.

The analysis of these answers revealed that 4 out the 10 prospective migrants and 16 out of the 28 actual migrants evoked also factors relating to the social climate (such as unfair competition for access to the labour market, practices of corruption and nepotism, large social inequalities) and/or to the

political climate (such as policy makers driving the country to the wrong direction, lack of trust in political bodies, ineffective social policies, especially in the fields of education and health and including also career opportunities).

Overall, we do not notice relevant differences in respect of gender and level of education; out of all migrant interviewees who evoked such contextual factors as having influenced their decision to migrate there have been 9 women and 11 men, while by levels of education there have been 10 with high education and 10 with low education levels. However, it is interesting to notice that among the four prospective migrant interviewees who evoked such factors there have been 3 highly educated against 1 low educated and 3 woman against 1 man. The number of cases is too low as to enable drawing other conclusions. The quotations below may provide a clearer image of how these factors are being perceived by Romanian migrants.

“... I like the landscape in my country; I don't like the laws, I don't like the policy there. ...

This is how I've seen in Romania that things are based upon the connections one has, including at the hospital and other places where I went. This is unfair.” (PM, F, 24, UK)

We (his wife and he) had been waiting that things would take the right direction, the politics, those where coming up; we didn't do politics because we didn't know how but we told ourselves that at a time things will be better; we have been waiting, and waiting, but we haven't seen anything and we told ourselves let's also try something else. (AM, M, 43, DE)

“... in Romania the hospital was paying me somehow but was putting me in a position of dependence upon a relationship in which, so to say, the patient had to sponsor the medical services. ... This is actually prostitution; one has to prostitute him/herself in order to obtain the money that in normal conditions s/he would be entitled to receive from the hospital in its capacity of employer.” (AM, M, 44, DE)

„Romania has been a beautiful country, as it still is, but one had no possibilities to do something; maybe I was not enough courageous, didn't want to make use of my connections, didn't follow the principle let my mother and my father help me. ...

I still feel that Romania does not seem trying to encourage you; it is the country that likes you sending money (home) but imputes you having left the country while in the meantime does not do anything to keep you in (your) country.” (AM, F, 36, IT)

One cannot say that without such perceptions of the socio-economic and/or political environment other people living in the same context lack the motivation to migrate.

“I was satisfied; I didn't leave because I wasn't satisfied but because I wanted more. I mean that I didn't leave because I was unhappy; I was happy. It was fine but I wanted more and I looked for such possibilities in Romania but didn't find them.” (AM, M, 33, DE, 6)

“We (his wife and he), in principle, had been pretty well established in Bucharest; we had our apartment there, everything was very well, we had been travelling through Europe, we had already big salaries ... , we started thinking to move for a certain period but not too long and live somewhere in Europe. And thus (this is my impression) after Germany announced that Romanians may work in Germany without work permit, I was recruited by a company from Germany...” (AM, M, 33, DE, 1)

Policies and practices of recruiting agencies

We have already discussed in the previous report the role of recruitment agencies as channels used by migrants in their endeavours to find suitable jobs abroad. Now we are enlarging our analysis by exploring also the other roles played by these agencies that are relevant for labour force migration phenomenon

In what concerns institutional factors or determinants which influence the process of migration to work abroad, the recruitment agencies have an important role. Regardless whether they are public or private, they are involved in the selection of candidates to work abroad, helping the candidates by providing reliable information, finding the desired jobs, learning foreign languages, keeping the relation with the employers etc. their importance increased after 2000 compared to other channels of recruitment (based mainly on social ties). The main policies and procedures the Romanian recruitment agencies used are further described.

Romanian public recruitment agencies function under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice by National Agency for Employment of the Labour Force. The activity for international migration is conducted by EURES department at the country level, as part of the European EURES network and by EURES agencies established at county and regional level. They work with hundreds of job seekers from different countries each year without targeting specific sectors. As public employment service they are mostly reacting to the request of the people in need (both job seekers and employers). With regard to the international migration of the labour force, their policy is to help Romanians in difficult situation to find a job abroad, mainly low qualified people.

Public agencies are preferred because they are free of charge and seem to be more secure.

The main practices of the recruitment public agencies

Working with foreign employers is the main channel of recruitment. The process is initiated by the employers, either through their national agencies or directly by approaching the Romanian Agency. In order to benefit of their services, the employers are requested to post their job openings on the website of their country EURES Agency.

The procedures of the Romanian agencies include:

- ✓ Posting the job openings on their website and advertising them at local level through county agencies;
- ✓ Organizing job fairs at county level, except the case of large number of job offers when such fairs are also organized at regional level or national level with support from the head quarter;

- ✓ Collecting CVs and contact data from the applicants (in some cases they only advertise the job opening as long as the employers ask to be contacted directly by the applicants);
- ✓ Overseeing the process and assist the person employed, including through labour attachés in destination countries (hired by Ministry of Labour of Romania);
- ✓ Keeping the communication by fax, email or face to face with job seekers (mainly through county agencies) and employers from the head quarter;
- ✓ With the occasion of job fairs organized by the Agency the participants are giving flyers with contact data of the agency's responsible personnel as well as of Romanian embassies in the destination countries;
- ✓ Obtaining feedback from the employers;
- ✓ In some cases, they simply intermediate or connect job seekers with employers;
- ✓ Providing information about and guiding on the destination countries;
- ✓ Providing free of charge vocational training courses, including keeping records with all job seekers who accessed their services, and sometimes information on new job openings and courses on foreign languages;
- ✓ Providing contact data and an application file containing a copy of ID cards and a CV to job seekers;
- ✓ Accessing the EURES portal and post applicant CVs upon registration on the portal;
- ✓ Organizing seminars and meetings with job seekers and advertise their seminars through social media (Facebook);
- ✓ Selecting the candidates upon employers' request.

The specific feature of the public recruitment agencies is based on the fact that their activity is financed from the state budget and no taxes from or fees by either the employers or job seekers paid. Sometimes the Agency pays the overall cost of those invited to job fairs. This is the most secure way to be hired.

Almost all European destination countries access the public agencies in order to find workers, mainly with low skilled profiles.

Most of the job openings come from Spain, Italy, Germany, UK and Denmark, even though in the past two years less and less people have been applying for unqualified jobs. Some interviewed experts argued that the working conditions and salaries are better when the migration is mediated by a public agency for similar employees.

The most employers that access EURES agencies come from Spain, Italy, Germany, UK and Scandinavian countries.

The main practices of the international recruitment private agencies

There are similar with the public recruitment agencies, maybe they are a little bit more flexible. They work upon request by beneficiary employers.

The main channel of recruitment starts with job openings. The private agencies work mainly with fewer countries or foreign agencies than public ones.

The services offered to job seekers, mainly to prospective migrants, include:

- ✓ Job offers;
- ✓ Post-employment assistance (solving problems at the work place);
- ✓ Partnerships set up with vocational training providers in the view to offer also vocational training/re-training and language courses to prospective migrants;
- ✓ Providing data based on the CVs;
- ✓ Developing online web recruitment platform (with paid access);
- ✓ Advertising their services through social media (Facebook and LinkedIn), local/regional newspapers;
- ✓ Checking the sustainability of the profiles (especially the qualifications, experience and knowledge of the required foreign language) in case of the ad-hoc applications;
- ✓ Assisting the applicants in writing the CVs and sending, along with qualification documents, to their partner employers;
- ✓ Communicating with the employers via email, phone or Skype;
- ✓ Offering detailed information on the job opening, working conditions, salary, opportunities for additional income, housing conditions and travel;
- ✓ Identifying the suitable candidates in accordance with the job description and expected profile requested by employer;
- ✓ Developing an application through phone calls in case of rural communities with high unemployment rate;
- ✓ Putting the job seekers in contact with the employers;
- ✓ Advertising the job openings on specialized job search portals, in local media, through flyers, contacting municipalities and public employment services at local level, preparing the employment files (for low-qualified jobs);
- ✓ Undertaking more targeted search (head hunting) using customized interviews guides and technical tests, including language skills in the case of highly-skilled personnel;
- ✓ Identifying the desired candidates through acquaintances and similar employed people.

Specificity of the services of private agencies

- Private agencies are preferred because they move faster than public ones;
- They do not work with employers from countries where work permits, residence permits or visas are required;
- Each private agency recruit about same number of people a year as the overall public agencies;
- The employers pays for the recruitment services;
- Not getting feedback from the employers (except where there are cases of complaints from the employers), but only from employees;
- Compared to public recruitment agencies, are assessed by their own experts as being more efficient, since the personnel is paid based on the their results;

A good suggestion for improving the management of migration is to improve cooperation between public and private employment agencies.

Arrival and adaptation to life in the host country

Initial knowledge about destination countries and support factors

For a better understanding of the issues relating to arrival and adaptation to life in the host country it is important to know whether the arriving migrants have had any prior experience of work and/or travel abroad or not, and if any members of their families had been already living there. We refer here to the actual migrants although these aspects are relevant for the prospective migrants as well, at least in what concerns their adaptation perspectives.

With regard to the actual migrants our analysis relies mainly on the answers to the questions B.1 and B.2 from Section B of the interview guide: “Previous experience of mobility” but also on the information regarding family members provided under Section A: “Introduction and personal background”.

According to our research data, out of the 28 actual migrants interviewed only 5 have had previous migration experience. However, out of the 23 interviewees without prior migration experience almost half (11) had travelled in Western European countries prior to their migration and almost one third (7) had members of their families already living in the destination countries; only five interviewees had neither previous experience of migration, nor relatives in the destination countries. Hence, for most of the actual migrants having participated in our research the Western societies had not been something unknown.

The situation of prospective migrants having participated in our research is not worse either; half of them (5) have had prior migration experience, also 5 of them have had relatives in the destination countries, and only two had neither prior experience of migration nor relatives in the destination countries (yet one of them having previously travelled abroad).

Travel arrangements

Coming now to the aspects of arrival and initial adaptation we rely on the answers of the actual migrants to the questions included under Section E: “Your arrival here” of the interview guide and to some extent also on the answers to the questions included under Section F: “Your life here now”.

Half of the actual migrants having participated in our research travelled by plane (14), of whom 9 travelled alone and 5 travelled along members of their families (mostly spouse). Out of the other half most travelled by bus/mini-bus (9, of whom 8 alone and one with her mother) and the remaining (5) by car (4, of whom 3 with family members) or mixed (illegal migrant using plane, train and car). In all cases, except two, somebody was waiting for these migrants (mainly relative or a family member having left first, but also representatives of the employer or of the university). One exception regards an IT specialist who should have been met by a friend in the airport but the friend didn't show up and the other regards a medical doctor who had two job offers and came earlier to explore the areas and get a personal image of the working climate in those hospitals.

The persons having been waiting for these immigrants in the destination countries in most cases have also offered them shelter and have been their first contacts in those countries; in many cases these contacts were extended to the friends and acquaintances of host persons/families and often these first

contacts were their first sources of support, including in what concerns finding the first job. In some cases, especially when work agreements had been concluded prior to arrival, the employers and/or agencies having mediated such work agreements have acted as sources of support.

The conditions of Romanians' migration differed very much from a period to another. Until the year 2004 when some of the Western countries opened their labour markets to Romanians the main strategy was to use illegal channels for entering the destination countries (mostly by presenting their travel as touristic trips); often the touristic visas were difficult to obtain for destination countries known as targets for Eastern emigrants (e.g. Italy, Germany, the UK) so that networks of guides have appeared and offered their guiding services to interested migrants from the closest country for which touristic visa could be obtained to the destination country.

"... my husband was already here ... in fact he came twice; he came once and after one month was expelled because was found clandestine and they expelled him to Romania ... the second time, same as me, he came with Austrian visa and had to cross the Italian border on the crook; there were some people who did this job; we had not realized how grave was what they were doing; our wish to come here was so high so that we came. ... the guides had the right documents and were waiting after the border ... and were accompanying us until the first railway station in the first town. ...

... (in my case) it was not quite similar because the passing failed, so we didn't meet the guides; after crossing the border, I don't know well what happened that we did not arrive at the meeting point or the guides didn't show up and we stayed overnight then we tried finding somebody to drive us ... 7 Km ... to the first town. ... the first car that stopped was police in plain cloth ... they drove us back to the Austrian border. ... fortunately, we had visa for one more day ... at 7 p.m. we arrived to the hotel in Vienna ... in the same evening we returned to the Customs and we succeeded to pass the border. We were very tired and the guide drove us to Rome. We paid, of course for the transport to Rome ... (she planned and started the trip with other three persons, of which two gave up and returned to Romania after the experience with Italian Police" (AM, F, 49, IT)

The main problem faced by illegal migrants was that they could not return to their families in Romania for many years (running the risk of being unable to go back as a sanction for having not observed the 3 months limit of their touristic visa).

"My father came for the first time to the UK in 2001. ... in 2006 he came to Romania because he was tired of living here alone; he stayed some 5-6 years alone and used to send money in Romania. He had found a job ... and his earnings were pretty good but after one year he realized how it was with education, how it was with the difference between the living standard from here and from Romania, and in 2007 we took the decision to move with the whole family to UK." (AM, M, 26, UK)

After 2004 and especially after 2007, when Romania joined the European Union, travelling by migrants to their destination countries has become much easier. However, the departure itself has not always been easy.

“It was hard, my God, when staying in the airport with all friends and family around you don’t realize because you are within your milieu, you are protected; at the moment when the plane has taken off and you look to your left, to your right and do not recognize anybody you realize that in two hours you will arrive somewhere else. ... Exactly, this was the sensation when I landed in Dortmund; I hadn’t time to think because I had to catch a train to Erkelenz. At the moment when I arrived to the guesthouse where I spent the first three days before starting my work here, ...nobody else was there and I heard German around; at that moment I know that I lighted a cigarette and told to myself that I was in a foreign country and nobody understands my language here... I remember that I was so hungry in that evening and the hostel served only breakfast ... and I asked if they had beer and I was told that they had; that lady spoke fast to me and I didn’t understand ... I stayed, I moved around, and the lady appeared and asked me how I liked the beer and I told her that I didn’t understand what she said; she took me along and shown me everything and I got familiar; I realized that even if you make mistakes you wouldn’t be penalized for that and begin speaking. I was at the lack during those days; I was at two steps from taking my suitcase and go home; something in me was broken, that self-confidences from home had vanished ... then I thought what a coward one should be to do something like that without having even met the people one was supposed to work with, without having lived here, and I said to myself no; I came down and I’m going to work...” (AM, M, 31, DE)

First impressions

The first impressions of Romanian immigrants at their arrival in the destination countries were generally positive; all of them appreciated the general standard of living and most of them liked the local people but in this regard personal experiences differed from a country to another and even within the same country of destination. Based on the information provided by our interviewees one may say that Spaniards have been the most appreciated by the Romanian immigrants for their openness towards foreigners but also for their way of being and for their lifestyle, which they found similar to Romanians in many points.

“... 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” (AC, F, 47, ES)

For other migrants Germany and Germans are to be preferred.

“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.” (AM, F, 27, DE)

Adaptation difficulties

Knowledge of local language

Adaptation to host societies was much more difficult for migrants who did not know the local language, which was the case of most participants in our research. Very few of them took language courses before leaving; some of them explained us that in their thinking at the time of leaving when looking for unqualified works one does not need to know the local language; those working in the ITC sector were already using English in their jobs and knew that it was going to be the same in the destination countries. We had expected that many migrants would have relied on the foreign languages learnt in school (all Romanian pupils in secondary school learn two foreign languages, mostly French and English) but this was not the case, which can be explained by the fact that without practice their knowledge of foreign languages was rather scarce. On the other hand, in Spain and Italy this wouldn't have been very useful since knowledge of foreign languages among host communities was rather low. Very few of them had actually thought about the importance of language skills for social integration. Medical doctors, for example, all knew that they were going to pass a language test in order to be accepted in the profession; however, some of them relied on learning the local language on the spot, which did not prove to be that easy.

„ at work I entered an extraordinary environment and everything has been fixed day by day; I worked one year from 2011 through 2012 until I had all documents in order; I had to take the language exam, I needed a diploma at that time, I had also to take the exam for the right to free practice, and all these took one year, (during which) I worked as apprentice. I've been working on weekends, I was speaking to people in a view to improve my language skills, and one year has passed very quickly. (AM, M, 31, DE)

“(adaptation was) Difficult, for me it was difficult ... and now that I speak Italian people are more reluctant towards migrants, ... towards foreigners; and for me it was surprising. I didn't expect that; although I came after the (big) wave of people arrived in Italy; and all were pleased, returned to Romania and were delighted with the life here, and with what they found here, and with how they were doing here.” (AM, F, 36, IT)

“I stayed one month at home, at my sister, about one month, until I found a job; I went to interviews but since I didn't know the (Spanish) language I didn't understand; it was difficult but within one month I found, they accepted me as I could speak ... and in time I begun speaking and after that I found employment easier.” (AM, F, 47, ES)

Housing

Another major difficulty encountered by the Romanian immigrants, at least at the beginning of their life abroad, related to housing. Very few of them could afford to rent a dwelling there and also very few had benefited from (initial) accommodation provided by the employers. Hence, in most cases they had to live with family members, relatives or friends already settled there, who at their turn had been forced by the high level of rents to live in small apartments, already crowded. The quotations below illustrate the diversity of situations evoked by our interviewees.

„At that moment I had a brother who lived here and was my point of support; it's very difficult to leave, to walk on the streets, to sleep where you can, and it's difficult and the point of support meant very much (to me). I had a place where to sleep, I had somebody helping me with money for a while as to be able to eat and to do not have to stay in the middle of the road; this means very much ... At the beginning the housing conditions were hard; we had been eight persons living in two rooms.” (AM, M, 40, IT)

„ ... it was something new, I didn't know what to look for, I didn't know how it was going to be, I actually had no choice, I could not remain in Romania (she came with her mother at 16 y/o) ... I've been living with my brothers but after my mother changed her job we lived together. My mother was taking care of an old woman and stayed there day and night.” (AM, F, 25, IT)

“ ... the hospital offered us the possibility to live all in the same building (guesthouse), where we had a shared kitchen where we met and talked each evening after the work program ...; it was a long period, we met there many people; some have come and left; we kept in touch (though) they spread all around Germany.” (AM, M, 31, DE, 5)

„My friends helped me ... they had come some years ago to Germany. ... I took the training course in another town; I rented there an apartment. ... I attended daily the courses and I had no income during that time; I had to spend all money that I had saved for courses.” (AM, M, 33, DE, 6)

„... even now we stay several people in the same room, in the same apartment, in a house, but at that time it was even more crowded ... there have been the four of us, the three of them, some other three and one more, hence ten ... some lived in the living room” (AM, M, 36, ES)

“I called my friend there; I asked him if he had something to work for me and he said yes. I asked him if I would have where to live if coming and he said let me call you in a couple of minutes. At that moment he lived with his uncle who has a three years old child; they were living in house with one bedroom, one living room, a kitchen and a bathroom. They were four and if I were to come I would have been the fifth ... I stayed one month on the account of that debt (that the uncle had to his father) until his uncle, who worked with a transport company, ... told that they needed driver assistants, and at that moment I said this is for me ...” (AM, M, 28, UK)

Finding the first job

Finding the first job was of course of high concern for all migrants, except those who started with education or vocational training who were, in general, recruited since their practical stages associated with education or training.

„... the third year, which was the last but one for me, was so conceived as to have the first two trimesters for learning and the third trimester along with the summer holiday combined into 6 months practice, and everybody was doing this, and when I finishes I also received an offer; I also had some interviews at the end and I received an offer to start working next year, and so I got it.” (AM, M, 25, UK)

In most cases the job opportunities were identified in advance by the migrants' relatives or acquaintances settled already in the destination countries but often they did not refer to specific jobs but to existence of a labour force demand in the destination countries, and hence specific job search was necessary upon arrival.

According to our research data the majority of Romanian migrants having participated in our research (16 out of 28) have relied on social ties for finding their first job abroad; in some cases the use of social ties was complemented with direct job search and even with applying to recruitment agencies. No relevant differences have been noticed in respect of gender but a significant difference has been noticed in respect of education level (13 low against 3 high).

„ After the Christmas Holidays (she had spent holidays in Italy at her sister) ... I went with my sister to her workplace (in a restaurant); the owner saw me and said come to work with us in the kitchen. My sister had been cleaning there and I had come along to help her ... The next day I went to work and remained there eight years.” (AM, F, 39, IT)

“My brother in law was taking care of (finding jobs); being there since long time ago he had some connections and found jobs for us, sometimes on daily basis, sometimes in agriculture, as he could, until I found a stable job in the bakery.”(AM, F, 27, DE)

A large majority of highly educated migrants (11 out of 14) have either received direct job offers from the employers (4) or have applied to the services of recruitment agencies (5), or undertaken direct job search on the spot (2).

“I left through a recruitment agency; everything started following an update of my CV on e-jobs.ro; and I updated it as available for working abroad and then, while thinking what step should logically be next, several agencies started calling me with offers ... for medical assistant. ... I have chosen an agency, I attended some interviews with the employer via Skype; I knew that they were placing labour force in the public health system and I was enchanted about this. Following these interviews (3 interviews) I was accepted, so to say, in all; it was mostly about a friendly discussion in which they proudly spoke about their conditions offered and the advantages one may have; they were accepting also assistants with 0 experience; there are many without previous experience After that I was called by the recruitment company who told me that I may chose from the three towns, the salary being the same; I have chosen a town that was better located; I undertook some search on Google about how is life there and I've chosen a small town (Warwick) in the centre of England.” (AM, M, 36, UK)

„... In some regions are organised public tenders for emergency services ... Eventually the state is responsible for these organizations, for these tenders that are organised at five years intervals. In this region, where we are, these non-governmental organizations have been eliminated since the first of January 2013 and the local authorities have taken over the organisation of the emergency services, and I'm now working for local authorities ... I participated in a contest ... I am full-time employed by the local emergency services and, besides, I am a trainer ... not only here but also for a school from a locality close to this one.” (AM, M, 33, DE, 6)

„In May I had the discussion with the principal; I told him that I wanted to come for learning the (German) language and possibly to get a job. He told me that I may come to learn the language at any time, to do also some practice; at the moment I am determined I may also take the probation and in case they have vacancies (at that time) they hire me They didn't have vacancies ... afterwards, one year and one month later, a position became vacant and I came back.” (AM, M, 31, DE, 7)

„... realizing that it was difficult to find a job I started volunteering; volunteering in fiscal domain. I succeeded to join a centre for fiscal assistance for natural persons; for example, in Italy there are offices that take in charge the (fiscal) statements of natural persons. ... I got employed) by the Bank at the beginning of December 2014. ... I received the offer from Transilvania Bank; this was my chance; I succeeded to get in contact with Transilvania (Bank) through an acquaintance, a Romanian gent having been working in the same office where I worked but being responsible for other activities; he was in the Union and I talked to him and I gave him my CV, and at a certain moment, when I was in Romania, at my mother, of course, he called me to advise me that a gent from Transilvania Bank was going to call me Things here function very much on recommendations basis.” (AM, F, 36, IT)

Work trajectory and career growth

While exploring work trajectories and career paths of the Romanian migrants we rely on the answers of the actual migrants to the questions included under Section F: “Your life here now” of the interview guide.

If maintaining as proxy indicator for qualification levels the levels of education (ISCED) our analysis of research data reveals that a large majority of actual migrants having participated in our research have remained within the same category of qualification (20 out of 28), while the remaining have moved either upward (3) or downward (5). This is not surprising if taking into account that two thirds of our respondents mentioned money and living standards as main reasons to migrate and only one third mentioned education and/or professional advancement, as pointed out in our previous country report.

Professional pathways

In a view to analyze the migrants' professional and career trajectories we have clustered them according to their initial and actual professional positions into four categories: High-High, Low-Low, High-Low, and Low-High. Apparently, in the first two categories the professional trajectories should be horizontal while in the second two categories these trajectories should be downwards and upwards respectively. While with regard to the last two categories this was actually the case, with regard to the first two categories our analysis has revealed a more nuanced situation.

Upwards trajectories

In the case of highly qualified migrants who have obtained highly qualified positions in the destination countries we have often noticed professional and career advancement (especially in the case of medical doctors having reached their specialization in the destination country, but not only) and only in one case the opposite. On the other hand, when exploring the professional pathways within the Low-Low

category we have found a similar number of upwards trajectories as in the Low-High category (3) and only one case of downwards trajectory.

Therefore, when discussing about professional trajectories of Romanian migrants we do not limit ourselves to analyzing inter-categories pathways (low-high or high-low) but also consider intra-category professional pathways. Thus, combining data on upwards and downwards professional trajectories of Romanian migrants we have 11 cases of upwards trajectories and 8 cases of downwards trajectories; the remaining 9 Romanian migrants have had horizontal professional trajectories. If looking now at the initial levels of qualifications of the Romanian migrants we notice that for 6 of the 17 highly qualified and for 3 out of 11 low qualified actual migrants having participated in our research the migration has not resulted in any relevant change in their professional trajectories.

When analyzing the subjective meaning of migration in our previous country report (meaning in that context life goals associated by migrants with the act of migration) we noticed that participants whose life goals related to professional development and/or career advancement (7 in total) were mostly males (5M, 2F) and highly educated (6H, 1L). If looking now at the professional trajectories we notice that within the High-High category 5 participants have achieved professional development and subsequently career advancement, while in the Low-High category 3 participants have followed this trajectory. This suggests that in the case of low qualified migrants professional and career advancement aspirations have emerged in the new living context from the destination countries, which one of our participants has explicitly stated.

"I came on the safe side, so to say, ... for three months to pick olives during the winter period. Afterwards I found work in constructions, at the same firm my brother was working with. After that ... I worked in agriculture and in 2010 I remained jobless; I kept searching for job for a long while and I found the current job, where they proposed me to take a vocational training course (programming and design) on the job; I took the 6 months course and then they employed me on a project and ... I worked for 8 months on that project. ...

Here one cannot speak about a career plan either; it happened to me to come up working in IT; it was because I took the advice to take that course that I found this job. ...

What makes me sad the most (is that), for good or for bad, I came here without (holding) university degree and hence I was not expecting to find something in a certain domain. In return, there are many persons coming with higher education, having very good professional qualifications, who do not expect to find something in their domain; (they) come to work as caregivers, as, I don't know, babysitters ... this is exactly what makes me sad. ... there is not the (right) mentality in Romania, nobody teaches you. Does not exist the motivational education, so to say ...

I've been lucky, this is all I tell you, because in Romania I didn't quite use to read; I started reading here books on personal development, many, and these helped me to self-motivate, otherwise I don't think I had any chance." (AM, M, 32, IT)

"I learned; at the beginning I was a drudge. ... I looked around and I learned a trade, and I liked it ... I learned the trade of plumber. ... Now we are doing heating installations, sanitary works, connecting-up radiators, toilets..." (AM, M, 40, ES)

"... I found a job after one week – 'batanta', a caregiver for elderly..."

Many years ago I had taken a course with the Red Cross; it was a diploma with no value in Italy, could not be recognised ... I told you that (the family she was working for) having a friend family of doctors who were looking for somebody for their medical cabinet, they said 'we propose you this girl; she's Romanian but it will be fine'. And I started working for them as secretary because I didn't have necessary qualifications to be employed as medical assistant... Meanwhile I graduate the post-secondary school for medical assistants and I took my diploma - in Romania, while continuing working; I was commuting ... and I continued working here (as medical assistant)" (AM, F, 49, IT)

„Yes, I started with that job (in a bank) but afterwards I moved to another company, also in the finance industry but with a different objective; it is an investment fund, not a bank. ...

It seems to me that, at least at certain extent if not to a large extent, I materialised the aspirations I have had when coming (here). I wanted to work in the finance industry since my departure but now I'm trying to do also something else; I'm trying to do not exclude the possibility to change the industry and to go towards the technological industry; to be more specific, a similar job but instead of being in the financial industry to be in a company of type Google or Facebook." (AM, M, 25, UK)

Downwards trajectories

With regard to the downwards professional trajectories our research findings revealed that such cases have occurred to a larger extent among highly qualified migrants (6 cases as compared to only 2 cases among the low qualified migrants). This has mainly related to options for higher education specialisations that on the one hand do not lead to well paid jobs in Romania (e.g. history, psychology, economics) and on the other hand do not respond to an actual demand on the Western labour market (especially in the case of economics, where the structure of education and of specialisations differ very much). In the case of low qualified migrants this relate mainly to people having graduated secondary education but opted for homecare jobs.

„... I've heard about this option to come <au pairs>, one had to stay with the family, to take care of children and they gave you pocket money. I came here, I integrated myself very well; a very kind family; I took care of their children. In time they helped me with qualifying as medical assistant in dentistry because they needed assistants and I took the courses here."(AM, F, 36, UK)

„The company (in Romania) was actually managed by me because the owner was a group of companies and each company had a director; he did not get involved except when problems occurred..."

My friend had told me that (in Germany) there were jobs, you may go to interviews, you know some English and you are going to learn German since you a smart guy. I came here with (my) family, I canceled my work contract from Romania, (I discontinued) children's enrollment with school, (so that)

going back was a difficult step. I woke up in another reality and since we are already here we are trying to repair; should we fail, we are going back. I'm fighting, we are far from what I wished.” (AM, M, 43, DE)

“My last job offered me the possibility to feel useful to the society, to have the power to decide, to earn my bread without needing financial assistance from my parents, who actually were pretty unable to offer me (such a support). I always aimed at finding a job with a multinational, with a concern where I may advance, not to limit myself to sell in a kiosk. ...

But the education they get (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.” (AM, F, 34, DE)

Self assessment of achievements

Our assessment of the actual migrants' professional trajectories does not necessarily fit with their own assessment, yet overall differences are not substantial. Most likely many of them have not assessed their professional trajectories at all. However, in a view to check our assessment with the perceptions of actual migrants having participated in our research, we analysed the answers to the question F.2.: “To what degree have you found what you were looking for?” The conclusion has been that 24 out of the 28 interviewed actual migrants had found what they had been looking for to a high degree (of whom 4 declared having found more than expected) and only 4 of them declared having found less (from 1% through “partially”). Those who reported very low levels of achievement (1% and <30%) have been a woman who followed her husband (medical doctor) in Germany and because her university specialisation obtained in Romania (economist) did not fit with economic specialisations in Germany, so that could not find a job in that area, and respectively a man who had held a management position in an important company from Romania and moved with his family (wife and child) in Germany based on misleading information provided by a friend of him from Germany (his wife and he ended up to do unqualified works but decided to remain there in consideration of better education and career perspectives for their son).

No significant changes in the job search methods have been revealed by our research. In the case of low qualified jobs making use of personal contacts and of social ties have remained the main methods; the only new method has been to place written announcements in mail boxes or to post such announcements in the streets by those offering homecare or cleaning services, which they learned from other immigrants working in that field. In the area of highly qualified jobs surfing specialised web portals, including recruitment agencies' websites, and direct contacts with medical units have remained

the main methods but the new personal contacts and professional networks started to play more important roles.

Experiences of unemployment

Less than half of the Romanian immigrants having participated in our research had experienced unemployment (10 out of 28) but only one benefitted from unemployment allowance. Out of the other 9 the majority (5) have not registered as unemployed either because they were living and working illegally in the destination countries (3) or because meanwhile they were working on the black labour market (2); in 4 cases the jobless immigrants have had particular reasons to do not register as unemployed (returning to Romania for a while during the crisis, being actually housewife, failing to register in due time because misunderstanding with employer). 18 participants have not experienced unemployment, yet in the case of self-employed there have been periods not covered by contracts with beneficiaries.

As of the time of our fieldwork 13 out of the 28 interviewed actual migrants benefited from social security (generally paid by the employers) but none of these 13 actual migrants had experienced unemployment, which explains to a large extent the situation described above.

During the periods without paid jobs the Romanian immigrants have managed to cover the living expenses from savings and/or with support by their family members; no critical situations have been reported.

“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).” (AM, M, 36, ES)

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

“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.” (AM, M, 40, ES)

Family and social life

The analysis regarding the family and social life of Romanian migrants after their arrival in the destination countries, in the period of time they lived in the new environment, is focused on the answers the migrants provided to the questions included at the section F “Your life here now” and section G “Neighbourhood, community and social life” in the Guide for actual migrants.

The aim of the analysis is to point out, on the one hand, the problems that Romanian migrants faced regarding changes in family life, relationships with old and new friends and neighbours, political participation and community involvement and, on the other hand, the outputs and outcomes of these changes.

The main dimensions of the migrants’ social life in the new environment. From work integration to social integration

Once arrived in the destination countries, the Romanian migrant focuses his/her activity on searching for a job and after that working as much as possible (see the first part of the Report). They confirm in this way that it’s about a migration for work. Here it’s worth mentioning that the employment includes two types of migrants, one made up of migrants who work based on formal contract (most of them) and another group (5 out of 28 interviewed actual migrants) who used to work without a formal work contract, at least for a period of their activity. The last ones could be viewed as vulnerable migrants, working mainly as caregivers and daily workers.

But, beyond work, or the adaption to work, the migrants try to integrate in the new society. So, beyond the integration at the workplace, the migrants try to integrate into the social life of the new environment or the new community. This could be named the social integration. The assessment of this integration takes into account the new social relations and civic participation in the new communities. Based on the intensity and the size of these social relations, the analysis of the interviews data show, mainly, two categories of Romanian migrants: one with low and fairly low integration of Romanian migrants into the social and community life and another with fairly high and high or full integration.

Low integration of Romanian migrants in social and community life

In the first case (or first stage for some migrants), Romanian migrants have only few social relations. They meet only with other Romanian migrants, old friends, relatives and/or work colleagues. Only few of them and only occasionally go out at restaurants, coffee houses or clubs. As a woman migrant in Spain stresses:

“We hang out with Romanians because we are friends, they come to us, we go to them [...] with Spanish we only meet on the stairs.” (AM.F.46.ES)

One can say that there is a culture of these relations. They are based on primary networks which core is formed on the interactions with friends and colleagues having mainly the same ethnic identity. This seems to be the new social capital of the new arrivals. It’s different from the culture named “street

corner society” of the migrants from the past America, from the beginning of the twenty century, the social groups which had some common goals.

The main feature of the culture of this category of Romanian migrants is the fighting with poverty by accepting to work everything that’s available to gain more money to help them and their families left behind in Romania. Their culture is based mainly on using their leisure time listening to radio, watching TV, talking over the phone and via internet apps with Romanian relatives and friends. The following are quotes, some illustrations for this low integration in the social life in the destinations countries.

A woman who works as caregiver in Italy says:

“[...] (I have friends) Romanian, yes. I have some Italian friends but they are more acquaintances.” (AM.F.36.IT)

A young Romanian dentist from Spain says:

“I don’t talk too much with others because I work very much. But, for instance, out godfathers are here, one is doctor and the other one is priest at a Romanian church in Spain. So, we have the family close to us. I talk enough with godfathers, Romanians to say so.” (AM.M.31.ES)

Or as the other migrant says:

“We use to talk with the people with know, most of them Romanians, but nor Britons.[...] After 6 years here I cannot say I have English friends.” (AM.M.25.UK)

A case of low integration can be met in Germany. A Romanian migrant who had his business in Romania in construction field, at which he was the economic director came in Germany mainly for the future of two his children, but didn’t succeed to learn well German and not to work at a high professional level, just worker in construction. He is not satisfied with the work and the family life as he states:

“In Romania, in 15 years, I argued with my wife, only once, in an evening. Here, over the past two years we argued about six months.” (AM.M.43.DE)

Some of this category of people could be well integrated in their work (paid activity) but not in the social life. For instance, a woman migrant in Spain is very satisfied with work but not with the social life in the destination country:

“When I came here, I was a stranger. I didn’t know what world am I in. Once I left the home, I didn’t like, but after some months here I found work and I saw how much money they paid me, yes, I can say that, now, is very well.” This is one the one hand, but, on the other hand, she said: “I cannot say that I’m sorry for coming here, but could have been better to find work in my country. There I was in my country, don’t pay the spendings I pay here, I could be with my family, with my mother. It could be better in Romania if I could get a job.” (AM.F.46.ES)

Some Romanian migrants from Italy, Germany and UK have a poor social life. For instance, a woman, customer adviser in Italy is satisfied with her living conditions, with her neighbourhood where Italians,

Romanians and Pakistanis live together, but she doesn't socialize with her neighbours. Her friends are mostly Romanians, but she also has some Italian friends. During her leisure time she likes visiting museums and walking in down town, but is not involved in other social or political activities. (AM.F.36.IT). This could be a pretty average level of integration.

From the perspective of the integration, CURS data show that low educated and qualified migrants are not very well integrated, most of them are at the level of primary integration, and they are pretty satisfied with work and living conditions. They have a poor social life limited mainly to Romanian friends and relatives.

High integration of the Romanian migrants in social and community life

In the second case it's about high or even full integration of Romanian migrants in the society of destination countries. For this category of migrants the intensity of interrelations between Romanian migrants, on the one hand, and institutional in informal social life of the receiving society, on the other hand, became very strong. Here is not only about the integration through work but a social integration at large. The Romanian migrants use to have a lot of relations with new friends, including local resident citizens, new neighbours and even a socio-political participation, mainly by participating as voters and candidates in elections as members of some associations, mainly political. (CURS interviewers learned that both in Spain and Italy some Romanian migrants succeeded, as candidates, to win in local elections and became representatives of Romanian communities in the local councils).

The situations for this category of migrants vary from a partially high integration to a well high integration as the following cases illustrate it.

Thus, some of Romanian migrants feel well integrated even though it's about an early stage of integration, as a worker in construction from UK says:

"I feel myself at home, but I also feel Romanian" (AM.M.40.UK)

Or as a migrant woman from Spain says:

"I'm satisfied with my neighbours, we know each other all in this residential area, with housing I'm content [...] it's about greeting each other when we meet." (AM.F.39.IT)

Some migrants feel they are integrated (satisfied) with the job, but not with the social life, as a migrant woman from Germany says:

"We integrated very well at the workplace... to change the job...will be difficult because here we learned all the procedures...but we don't socialize with others, except a Romanian family near our building." (AM.F.28.DE)

The next step to a high integration is to have local residents or native co-workers friends in the receiving country. As a Romanian doctor migrant from Germany says:

“Our friends are Romanian and German people. I have also German colleagues at the hospital. It’s ok. In the leisure time we use to play tennis” (AM.M.44.DE)

Of course the last step is to involve deeper into the professional and social activities. As an IT specialist from UK became self-employed as software developer, he seems to be very well integrated regarding the work he is doing. After he changed 7 jobs he succeeded to become an owner (shareholder) of an IT company together with a British IT specialist. He is living together with his girlfriend and his friends and he is in the process of buying the apartment where he lives in. As leisure he uses to spend time meeting with Romanian and other friend:

“[...] I have friends from former jobs who are Britons and Portuguese” (AM.M.25.UK)

He uses to play tennis, go to concerts, movies, theatre and PUBs etc. He is politically involved; he used to vote in the Romanian elections but also for the Mayor of London.

The other case of well integrated migrants who seem to be fully integrated we found in the UK as well.

From professional perspective, this Romanian migrant works in a large dental clinic with hundreds of dentist of various ethnic backgrounds (Asians, Eastern-Europeans and around 30% Britons). He enjoys the diversity of opinions.

He is doing what he was trained to do. He advanced professionally (career development) from a medical assistant to a doctor.

From the social life perspective, he is living in a rent apartment located in an average and mixed neighbourhood. His main connections are with Romanian migrants because he tries to help, he is a social activist trying to help the dentists through the organization where he is involved in with Briton co-workers and patients:

“In 2013 the Romanian Dental Society was established where for a period of 2 years I taught courses (lessons) ... I was involved at the political level. I participated in the establishing the European Party to fight against Farage, we protested in the streets, we had meetings with the representatives of the Pensioners’ Club etc.” (AM.M.35.UK)

Now he is the president of the Association of Dentist from UK and president of the Romanian World Council. He also uses to participate in the Romanian elections. He has a trial with the English state due to the interdiction for European migrants to vote, while all those from Commonwealth have this right.

Worth noticing that the high integration is in accordance with the level of education and qualification and with the strong knowledge of the language of the receiving countries. The UK is the most prominent case from this point of view.

The common things for both categories of migrants from the integration perspective are, on the one hand, the habit to visit the Romanian church located in their areas. Here is about the double relations

with other migrants and with God as a spiritual communion. And, on the other hand, the habit to watch TV programs both for entertainment and for information, including for learning the local language.

Identity development

Identity feelings

Analysis on the dimension of the identity development of Romanian migrants after the arrival in the destination countries or in the new environment is focused on the answers the interviews migrants provided to the questions included in section H-IDENTITY and section I-FUTURE in the Guide for actual migrants. It's mainly about self-perceptions, citizenship status, links and breaks with home culture, plans and expectations.

In what the identity perceptions concerns, Romanian migrants feel themselves more or less Romanians. A second category of feel themselves they are first more or less Europeans or they define themselves to the same extent/equally Europeans and Romanians. The last ones are some of Romanian migrants who have begun to lose their proud of being Romanians.

The category of Romanians first, anywhere in the world

The first category of Romanian migrants is made up of those feeling themselves first and foremost Romanians, this is they are Romanians first. This category is dominant among Romanian actual migrants.

As the qualitative data show most of interviewees (22 out of 28 actual migrants), regardless the receiving country, are proud that they are Romanians. They have the feeling of belonging to Romanian social and cultural space. This perception seems to be very strong even though the reason of this feeling is quite different from a migrant to another, as the following cases show.

A Romanian migrant from Italy says:

"I feel more Romanian because I'm a Romanian woman." (AM.F.35.IT)

Or as Romanian migrant from Spain says:

"I'm Romanian, I don't feel Spanish. I'm a Romanian who lives in Spain." (AM.M.36.ES)

Or another Romanian migrant who simply puts it:

"I feel myself a Romanian...I still love my country, I was born there and if we could have found jobs, maybe we would have not migrated." (AM.F.46.ES)

Some of them feel that they have remained Romanians because they do not perceive themselves as integrated in the new society of the destination country. This situation can be encountered very well in many cases, and this perception is mainly encountered at some Romanian migrants from the UK.

“Often, I feel than I’m not a part (of the Briton society) but I try to be a part of it. Everyone is on his own. In London, people (the migrants) do nothing else but work. [...] I can’t imagine having a family in London. (AM. M.25.UK)

Or as the same migrants says:

“I feel a stranger coming here to work [...] I do not have any feelings.” (AM. M.25.UK)

The category of Europeans first

The second category of Romanian migrants who feel themselves more Europeans include only few cases (we met two interviewees of this type), as a Romanian migrant woman from Italy says:

“[...] I feel more European but I felt it before coming here.” (AM.F.36.IT)

Or as a man migrants says:

“I feel here home but I feel that I’m also Romanian.” (AM.M.40.IT)

The category of neither Romanians nor Europeans- confused identity perception

The third category are those feeling confused about their identity. Some of Romanian migrants feel they should say that they are Europeans not Romanians when they are asked what country they are from due to the negative image of Romanians projected by local media. There are Romanian migrants who begin to feel less Romanians mainly because others Romanian migrants who do not like to work. As a Romanian migrant explained that this situation is worst because other Romanian migrants did wrong things:

“Sincerely I feel less Romanian [...] the links with home country has begun less strong even though I like Romanian food [...] there are people and people, being Romanian is not always a proud in Spain because there are many who made bad things here.” (AM.M.31.ES)

But in spite the fact that mass-media from the receiving countries exaggerates Romanian migrants’ negative behaviours, most of interviewees (24 out of 28) believe that Romanian migrants’ image is positive and accurately presented.

As our analysis show there is no direct positive correlation between education and qualification level and the feeling of identity as Romanian.

The impact of the live as an immigrant on the identity self-perception leads to positioning, on the first place, as a tendency, the quality of Romanian and, in the second place, the quality of European citizen. This hierarchy is also impacted by other factors, identity being a multidimensional variable influenced by many determinants, historical background being one of them.

Future plans and expectations

Romanian migrants' perception regarding their future is crucial when trying to reveal what will happen with their destiny in relation with Romania, as sending country. The main question for the Romanian migrants on how they see their future taking into account the future relation with both the receiving and sending country provided a diversity of answers. The key answer is linked with their intention to return or not to Romania, their sending country.

From this perspective the analysis of the qualitative data collected by CURS interviewers allow us to draw up 3 categories of migrants.

First of these includes the Romanian migrants who intend to return or to [re]migrate to Romania.

The other (second) category includes the Romanian migrants who plan to never return to Romania.

The last (third) category includes the Romanian migrants who are confused or undecided yet about their future.

Overall, we should state that most of the Romanian migrants (about half of them) from the countries under GEMM research have already decided to return to Romania.

In the opposite situation there are Romanian migrants who definitely decided not to return to Romania (6 out of 28). This category of Romanian migrants decided definitely either to remain in the current receiving country or intends to migrate in another country, but not Romania.

The third category of Romanian migrants (7 out of 28) didn't decide yet their future from this perspective (or didn't like to say). The data about their background (work conditions, language skills, family situation etc.) make us assume that most of them will finally return to Romania.

There are many reasons to explain this situation. One of them could be linked to the poor success of getting the citizenship of the destination country (1 out of 28) while other two are waiting for the approval.

These qualitative data are in accordance with some quantitative surveys data which show that over three-quarters of Romanian migrants from Spain and Italy will return to Romania in the end.

Further we will illustrate some cases for these three categories of Romanian migrants mentioned above.

Romanian migrants who intend to return to Romania

First category is about the Romanian migrants who are going to return to Romania sooner or later in a period of time that ranges between few months and 15 years.

The data show that most of the migrants from this category are low integrated in the receiving country and are rather with low education and qualification. Most of them feel strangers (*"yes, I feel like a stranger"* [AM.F.45.E5]) and have very strong relations with the family or relatives left behind in Romania. They want and are eager to come back to Romania as the same Romanian woman migrant

says: *“each time I came back in Romania I’m into the clouds...the air is different ...I feel the smell of the countryside home ... a special soul” [AM.F.45.ES]*

Another migrant woman from Spain says:

“I intend to work in Spain until retiring as long as we are able to work, until I’m eligible for pension ...to have a pension...6-7 years.” [AM.F.47.ES]

Some of Romanian migrants have begun to invest in Romania thinking at their retiring as a young migrant from UK says:

“[...] Now we bought a house and my thoughts are to return home in Romania.” [AM.M.28.UK].

Nonetheless, he plans to stay in the UK for about 10-15 years.

A similar situation can be met with a young woman migrant in Germany. Her family took a loan in Germany to build a house in Romania. She uses to go to Romania two times a year:

“I feel happy when I visit home” [AM.F.28.DE]

The other Romanian migrants decided to return to Romania but they do not know when will happen this as one of them says:

“I do not want to remain here. I will return home (in Romania) but only when I will have all I want and when the salary I would earn there would be enough for me” [AM.M.31.UK]

There are Romanian migrants who didn’t say directly but indirectly they are going to return to Romania as a migrant woman from Spain says:

“My parents, brothers, sister-in-law are in Romania [...] over the past 3 years I went each year home and I liked it. Where else is better than home?!” [AM.F.46.ES]

Some of Romanian migrants decided from the beginning to return to Romania in the end as a woman migrant from Italy said:

“I didn’t consider applying for Italian citizenship because I intend to return someday (e.g. when retiring) home.” [AM.F.49.IT]

Migrants who do not intend to return to Romania

The second category of people includes migrants who decided to remain in the receiving country or to migrate in other country than Romania. Some of them feel good in the receiving country as a young woman migrant from Germany says:

“I don’t feel a stranger here. I use to feel here like home [...] if my parents would come here more often I would say that Romania is here (in Germany)”. [AM.F.28.DE]

Others think that they will live well in the receiving country after retiring, as another migrant woman said:

“If God help us to have a pension ... it would be better to live here, even with a small pension. Anyway, from health system point of view, it would be better to live in Germany than in Romania...” [AM.F.34.DE]

We included in this category some Romanian migrants who neither intend to return home nor to remain in the current receiving countries. We met three cases in this situation. These people are highly qualified and educated, working in ITC and health sectors, knowing various foreign languages and having high expectation in life. One of them, a doctor, is going to leave Spain for the USA as he said:

“What is happening in Romania is of smaller importance for me than same with what is happening in Spain, because what is happen there does not have any impact on me. I will never return to Romania. It should be a very bad situation here as to go back to Romania. I will rather go to another country...my thoughts are at the USA.” [AM.M.36.ES]

For other Romanian migrants, a nurse, his dream is to move to Canada. So he does not intent to remain indefinitely in the UK as he said:

“I do not intent to remain forever in the UK. How long I will be here, I will be at the current job...”. Nevertheless, he is not sure due to the discrimination behaviour towards immigrants in the UK. He said in addition: “In 2022, regardless of my social situation I will be a Canadian citizen, together with my family, in a different society where the selection is not based on identity but on professional criteria.” [AM.M.36.UK]

Finally, the third one is a Romanian migrant from Germany, working as paramedic, this young Romanian migrant intent do the same profession (job) but nor in Germany even if he got the German citizenship. He said:

“In profession, yes but not in Germany. I think to go (to leave Germany)...to New Zealand. [AM.M.33.DE]

Undecided migrants

The undecided migrants are very easy to be defined. Their situation is based on uncertainty. Most of them are confused about their future as a migrant woman from Spain says:

“I feel in a way both Spanish and Romanian. I feel linked to the family, brothers, parents-in-law. One can feel well at home (in Romania) but you don't have money.” [AM.F.47.ES]

A young migrant in UK applied and waits for the Briton citizenship but also is waiting to see what facilities for children will have in order to decide which country to choose in the future.

“I think that when I will have children I will ask me whether London or England is the country we want to raise our children and send them to school ...” [AM.M.25.UK]

A young woman from UK tried to explain her confusion:

"I feel myself integrated in the British society but I don't feel a Briton woman...hard to say (for how long she will stay in the UK), is a destiny call ... depends of child's future, my welfare."
[AM.F.36.UK]

Many Romanian migrants who are confused about where they will live in the future are undecided, yet as a migrant woman from Italy said:

"[...] maybe I will return to Romania in case my boyfriend would like it, but, in case I will succeed to have my own house in Italy ...we will remain here." [AM.F.25.IT]

Or as a migrant from Germany says:

"I don't know if is possible prior to retirement ... after, it depends on opportunities."
[AM.M.44.DE]

Some Romanian migrants have very strong relations with Romanians remained home, but they don't know yet what the future will hold, as a young migrant from the UK said:

"I go often in Romania. This year I went 10 times in Romania but I stayed maximum 3 days, it's tiring enough. For the future is hard to say ... I believe that I will stay here for a several years but not too much. The ideal situation would be to do in Bucharest what I'm doing in London. I would like this."
[AM.M.25.UK]

Conclusions

The economic restructuring occurred after the change of political regime in Romania has led *inter alia* to a lack of jobs for people qualified in industrial trades previously required by the Romanian economy, while the education system was unable to adapt to the new requirements of the labour market. The transportation facilities that used to enable domestic mobility of the labour force have been discontinued, so that the employment opportunities have further decreased. The restitution of rural properties to the former owners did not help very much in the conditions of most rural households lacking the technical means for working the land in a profitable manner. Hence, large categories of workers have become redundant. On the other hand, the fall of the 'iron curtain' has not only open the way for the free movement of persons but also enlarged the access to information (including with regard to living conditions in other countries), which has led to higher aspirations among people having lived on the Eastern part of the 'curtain'.

The socio-economic development in the Western countries had led *inter alia* to the occurrence of a lack of labour force in several sectors, requiring mainly unqualified and low qualified labour force, but not only. On the other hand, the political evolution aiming at European integration has brought along large opportunities for peoples' mobility, including for education and work purposes. New and more permissive regulations have been adopted at the EU level to encourage mobility in education and on the labour market.

Our research findings have confirmed the important role of economic factors in the migration phenomenon but have also revealed that other contextual factors play important roles in the decision to migrate and the development of motivation to follow that way. Thus, our research findings have revealed that almost half of our migrant interviewees were fairly satisfied with their living conditions in the home country, which does not mean that such migrants were not looking for better living conditions but that other factors have to be explored for accurate understanding of the migrants' motivation. Our analysis revealed that 4 out of the 10 prospective migrants and 16 out of the 28 actual migrants evoked also factors relating to the social climate (such as unfair competition for access to the labour market, practices of corruption and nepotism, large social inequalities) and/or to the political climate (such as policy makers driving the country to the wrong direction, lack of trust in political bodies, ineffective social policies, especially in the fields of education and health and including also career opportunities).

Regarding the recruitment agencies, there are minor differences in terms of services provided between public and private ones. There are, however, differences between the two types of agencies in terms of fees and coverage, in the way that (1) the private agencies charge a fee for their services while all services provided by the public agencies are free of charge as they are funded through government budget and (2) the private agencies are focused on lesser professions only from some EU countries and do not cover countries where work permits or visas are required in comparison with the public ones which do not exclude such offers when available.

Until the year 2004 when some of the Western countries opened their labour markets to Romanians the main strategy was to use illegal channels for entering the destination countries (mostly by presenting their travel as touristic trips); often the touristic visas were difficult to obtain for destination countries known as targets for Eastern emigrants (e.g. Italy, Germany, the UK), so that networks of guides have appeared and offered their guiding services to interested migrants from the closest country for which touristic visa could be obtained to the destination country. After 2004 and especially after 2007, when Romania joined the European Union, travelling by migrants to their destination countries has become much easier. Besides, the already achieved experience of travelling abroad and the presence of numerous relatives and acquaintances of the prospective migrants in the destination countries have made it easier the adaptation of the new-coming migrants to the life from the host countries.

The social climate of reception, especially the openness towards foreigners has also facilitated social integration; this has been mainly evoked by actual migrants in the case of Spain and Germany.

The main problems of adaptation reported by the participants in our research related to language skills, housing, and job finding.

Not many shifts between qualification categories have been revealed by our analysis of research data; a large majority of actual migrants having participated in our research have remained within the same category of qualification (20 out of 28), while the remaining have moved either upward (3) or downward (5). This is not surprising if taking into account that two thirds of our respondents mentioned money and living standards as main reasons to migrate and only one third mentioned education and/or professional advancement, as pointed out in our previous country report.

In a view to analyze the migrants' professional and career trajectories we have clustered them according to their initial and actual professional status into four categories: High-High, Low-Low, High-Low, and Low-High. Apparently, in the first two categories the professional trajectories should be horizontal while in the second two categories these trajectories should be downwards and upwards respectively. While with regard to the last two categories this was actually the case, with regard to the first two categories our analysis has revealed a more nuanced situation. Therefore, when discussing about professional trajectories of Romanian migrants we do not limit ourselves to analyzing inter-categories pathways (low-high or high-low) but also consider intra-category professional pathways. Thus, combining data on upwards and downwards professional trajectories of Romanian migrants we have 11 cases of upwards trajectories and 8 cases of downwards trajectories; the remaining 9 Romanian migrants have had horizontal professional trajectories. If looking now at the initial levels of qualifications of the Romanian migrants we notice that for 6 of the 17 highly qualified and for 3 out of 11 low qualified actual migrants having participated in our research the migration has not resulted in any relevant change in their professional trajectories.

Less than half of the Romanian immigrants having participated in our research had experienced unemployment (10 out of 28) but only one benefitted from unemployment allowance. Out of the other 9 the majority (5) have not registered as unemployed either because they were living and working illegally in the destination countries (3) or because meanwhile they were working on the black labour market (2); in 4 cases the jobless immigrants have had particular reasons to do not register as unemployed (returning to Romania for a while during the crisis, being actually housewife, failing to register in due time because misunderstanding with employer). 18 participants have not experienced unemployment, yet in the case of self-employed there have been periods not covered by contracts with beneficiaries.

As of the time of our fieldwork 13 out of the 28 interviewed actual migrants benefited from social security (generally paid by the employers) but none of these 13 actual migrants had experienced unemployment, which explains to a large extent the situation described above.

During the periods without paid jobs the Romanian immigrants have managed to cover the living expenses from savings and/or with support by their family members; no critical situations have been reported.

Living in a society implies social participation and integration. From this point of view, the qualitative data revealed two categories of Romanian migrants: low integrated and high integrated.

Low integrated Romanian migrants were found in all 4 countries covered and are those migrants mainly low educated and qualified, adapted to work conditions, who basically formed small compact Romanian communities in the destination countries. They have predominantly Romanian friends and strong ties with the home country and their families left behind. Their social life reduced to listening to radio, watching TV, talking over the phone and via internet apps with Romanian relatives and friends, attending religious services at Romanian church from their living area.

High or full integrated Romanian migrants, found mainly in all 4 countries, but mainly in UK, are highly educated and qualified migrants with very strong knowledge of the language of the receiving country. They have succeeded to mingle very well with Romanians and the natives from the receiving countries even becoming socially active members of the new societies by participating in or being part of various NGOs or political parties. More integrated implies a social integration based on an improvement of quality of life.

From identity feeling point of view, most Romanian migrants (22 out of 28 interviewed) have remained Romanians first, speaking out and being proud of their origin, mainly due to the failure to integrate in the new societies. There are also Romanian migrants whose identity revealing poses them some discomfort due to the perceived stigmatization of Romanian migrants and just very few name themselves Europeans first or they feel in the same extent Romanians and Europeans or don't have an opinion (6 out of 28 interviewees). The data show, however, that there is no direct positive correlation between education and qualification level and the feeling of identity as Romanian.

In terms of future plans and expectations, qualitative data revealed three categories of migrants: migrants who have already decided to return to their home country, migrants who have decided to never return to their home country and the undecided (those still not sure whether they will return or not).

The first category, migrants who will eventually return to Romania and who from our qualitative data made up almost half of the interviewees, are low integrated in the receiving country and have still very strong ties with the Romanian society. They are rather with low education and qualification.

The second category, migrants who will never return (6 out of 28 interviewees), are split in two sub-categories: ones who will most likely remain in the current destination country because they have already integrated there and feel well and others, who are highly qualified and are working in sectors with high demand of personnel (ITC and health) and who most likely will move to another country (USA, Canada, New Zealand).

The third category, the undecided ones (7 out of 28 interviewees), though they have still fairly good ties with the Romanian society and socio-demographics characteristics similar with the first category which could mean that later or sooner they will return home, in Romania. Many of them depend, in terms of future plans, on the future developments in the receiving countries or in the home country.