

# EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AS A DRIVING FORCE FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL MIGRATION

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## I. Introduction

Inequalities in terms of employment opportunities, as well as wages and quality of jobs are the most important driving forces of migration. Year by year, workers, with or without their families, temporary or even definitely choose to move to other more developed regions or countries in order to reduce the gaps between their employment and earnings related opportunities in between origin and destination regions/countries. This is also the case of Romania which started, at the beginning of this decade, to experience increasing migration flows for other European countries, while internal migration remained insignificant. Thus, migration for employment abroad became the most important component of Romanian migration during the recent years.

Even if, at the beginning, migration was considered a “relief” for the national labour market unable to generate new jobs for those affected by restructuring, the recent years came with the first hints on the possible negative effects of unmanaged migration: skill shortages, skill gaps, depopulated areas, etc. Moreover, after Romania’s accession to European Union, the other Member States have started to gradually open their labour market for Romanian workers which will probably determine an increase in the migration flows. Considered as a survival strategy at the beginning, now, migration for employment abroad tends to become a “life style” for many Romanians, in the common sense of the word.

## II. Methodological approach

In this paper we aim at understanding better the way in which the information on the employment opportunities, at local, national and international levels shape the Romanians’ behaviour with respect to migration.

We base our analyses on the finding of a national representative survey carried out in September 2007 on 1100 households. Survey sample was a random one, stratified by historic regions, area of residence and type and size of the locality. A surplus of 800 households was

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added to the initial sample from several micro-regions registering a higher migration rate than the national average (by previous surveys).

Regarding external migration, data gathered through a national survey in the origin country can provide reliable and valuable information on the profile and motivations of the returning migrants. Also, they can be used for estimating migration flows with caution as any household survey in the origin country misses an important category: households with all members migrated abroad. So, results can easily underestimate migration' dimensions. However, we can rely on data related to the structure of the migrants and future trends on short term.

### III. Propensity towards mobility in Romania

Most Romanians are opened for occupational mobility in order to attain better employment. Thus, more than half of the respondents declare that they would change their occupation for a better job, while more than a third of them say that they prefer unsecured jobs with high payment as against secured jobs with low payment. Also, almost half of the investigated individuals seem to be opened to internal migration and one third to external migration for employment purposes.

Also, individuals from the poorest households are equally opened to internal and external migration (38%) which means that they display a lower propensity towards internal migration than the national average and a higher propensity to migration for working abroad. In fact, individuals from households with a decent standard of living, but unable to buy expensive items register the highest propensity for internal migration (56%), while most opened to the idea of external migration are those from households which can afford expensive items with some efforts (40%).

Still, most Romanians value job security rather than the wage' level. However, respondents living in the richest households who have probably some savings declare in the highest share that they would prefer an unsecured job with high payment as against a secured and poorly paid one.

**Chart 1. Propensity towards mobility in Romania (%)**

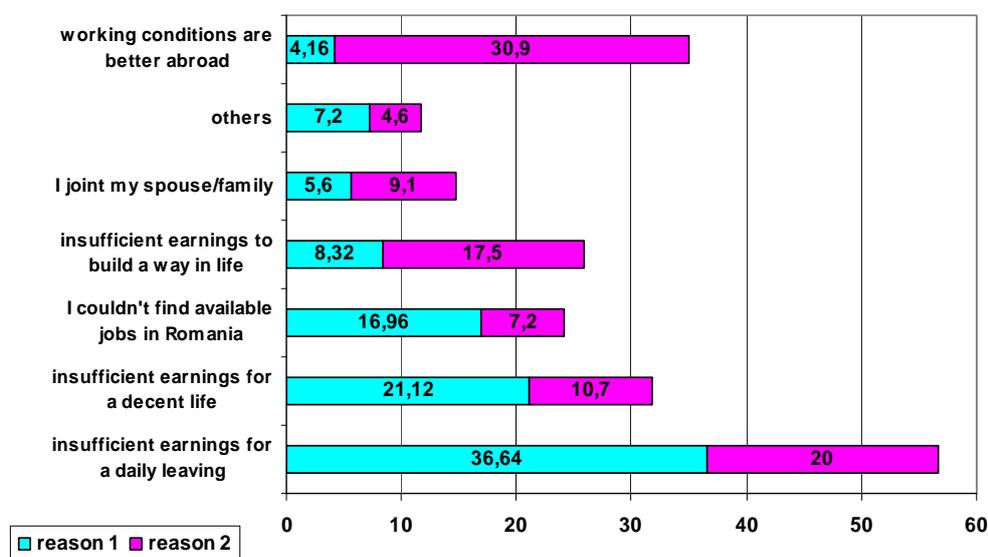


\* differences to 100% represent DNK and DNA answers

#### IV. Employment opportunities and external migration

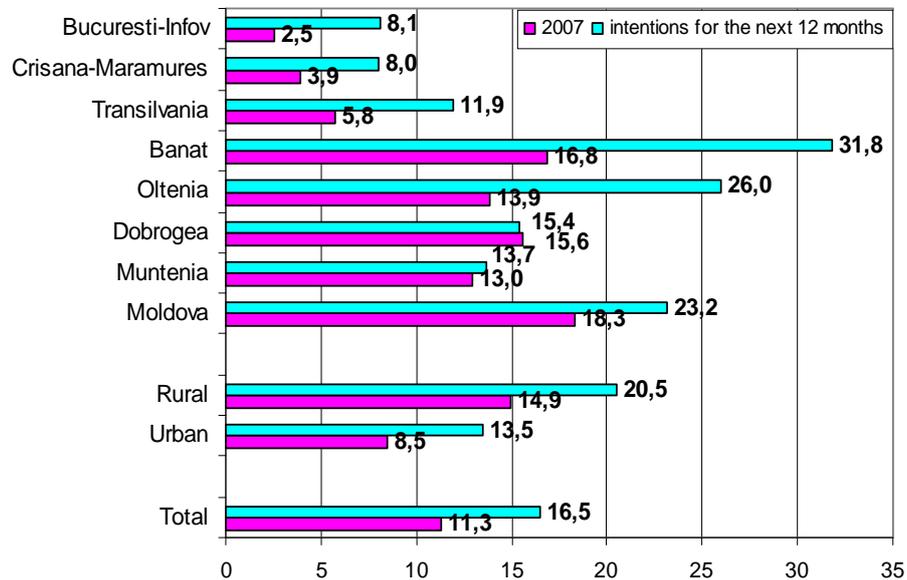
Insufficient income and lack of jobs represent the most important motivations of the Romanian migrants. Most migrants left the country due to insufficient earnings for the daily living or for a decent life. Also, more than 20% of migrants declare that lack of available jobs pushed them to migration. In fact, those migrating for urban areas are those looking for better jobs in terms of wages, while those migrating for rural areas are looking for any kind of jobs. However, better working conditions abroad represent the second reason for migration for more than 30% of the migrants. Moreover, Romanian migrants who are currently working abroad left from marginal positions on the Romanian labour market such as: daily worker, unemployed or self employed. So, it is obvious that better employment opportunities in terms of earnings and working conditions motivate Romanian workers to migrate abroad. Also, migrants are, generally, more opened to change as Romanian returning migrants declare that they would prefer an insecure job with high payment as against a secured one with low payment. Also, they are more opened to occupational mobility than the rest of the Romanian population.

**Chart 2. Most important 2 reasons for which Romanian workers migrated abroad after 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2002 (%)**



11.3% from the investigated households have at least one member currently working abroad, while 16.5% have at least one member intending to migrate for working abroad during the next 12 months. In fact, 15% of households from rural areas have members working abroad and only 8.5% from urban ones. It is obvious that lack of employment opportunities in rural localities pushes people to migrate to other places with more available jobs. Also, most migrants leave from households located in Moldova, Banat and Dobrogea regions. Based on migration intentions for the next 12 months, we can anticipate an increase of the migration flows from Banat and Oltenia, while Moldova will remain one of the most important pools for migration in Romania.

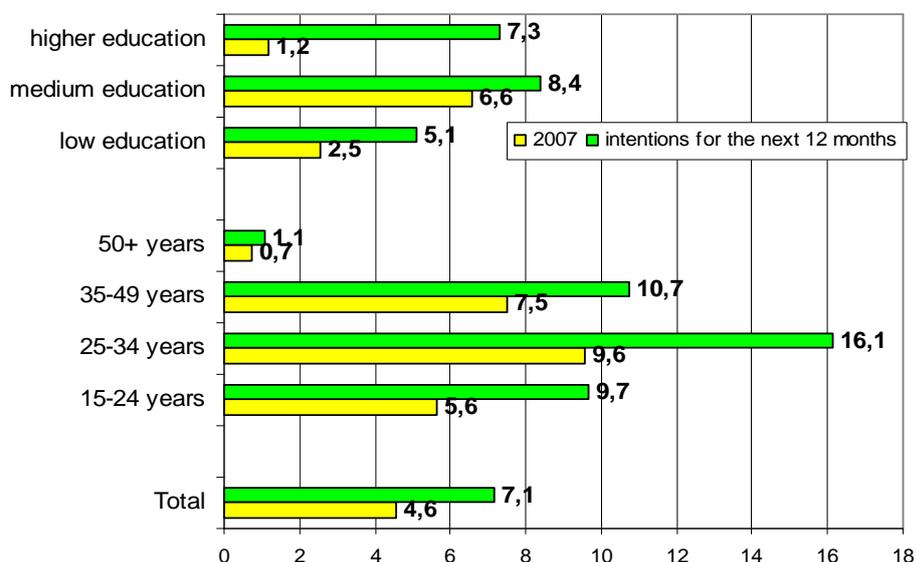
**Chart 3. Share of households with at least one member working abroad and share of households with at least one member intending to migrate for working abroad in the next 12 months, by area of residence and region (%)**



Romanian migrants currently working abroad represent 4.6% in total number of persons living in the surveyed households. Based on Romanians' intentions for migration on short term, it seems that migration flows will increase mostly among youth, as well as among those with higher education which could anticipate a brain drain phenomenon for Romania. However, Romanians intending to migrate for employment abroad during the next 12 month are overrepresented among housewives, unpaid family workers, long term unemployed, self employed and undeclared workers. In fact, many young people and people from rural localities, as well as other people from vulnerable groups in Romania experience lack of employment perspectives and career development opportunities which push them to temporary and permanent migration inside or outside the country.

Unfortunately, most Romanian migrants leave from a marginal participation on the labour market and return in the same vulnerable position. Still, there are some cases of migrants returning with accumulations of capital and know how from abroad who decide to start their own business in Romania. However, almost 70% of the returning migrants plan to migrate again in the next 12 months. One could say that, at least for some Romanians, migration represents a truly life style.

**Chart 4. Share of persons working abroad and share of persons intending to migrate for working abroad in the next 12 months, in total number of individuals living in the surveyed households, by age groups and levels of education (%)**



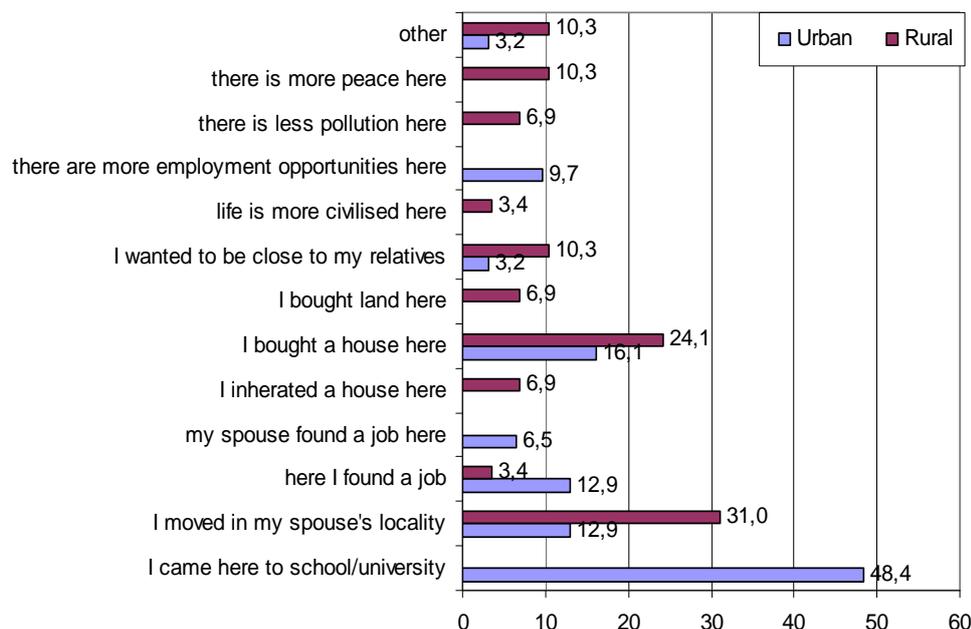
## V. Internal migration

Although Romanians seem to be opened to mobility, flows of internal migration display rather low levels in the recent years. During transition, a historical reversion of the migration pattern occurred as many Romanians left from urban localities where they have no employment and earning opportunities to rural localities where they survived by practicing a subsistence agriculture. In the recent period, although Romanian economy started to grow, migration to urban localities remains at low levels.

About 5% of the investigated population changed their locality of residence after 2002, out of which 52.5% live in urban localities and 47.5% in rural ones. In fact, almost half of the individuals who migrated in urban localities after 2002 changed their locality of residence in order to attend school, especially higher education institutions which are located in urban areas. Also, 16% of these migrants declared that they bought houses in their current locality of residence while 13% moved in her/his spouse's locality. Therefore, only 13% of them migrated in urban localities due to the fact that they found a job and 6.5% due to the fact that their spouse found a job. Moreover, 10% of the respondents were motivated by the fact that there are more employment opportunities in urban localities. So, we can conclude that employment opportunities are not the main driving force of the internal migration to urban areas.

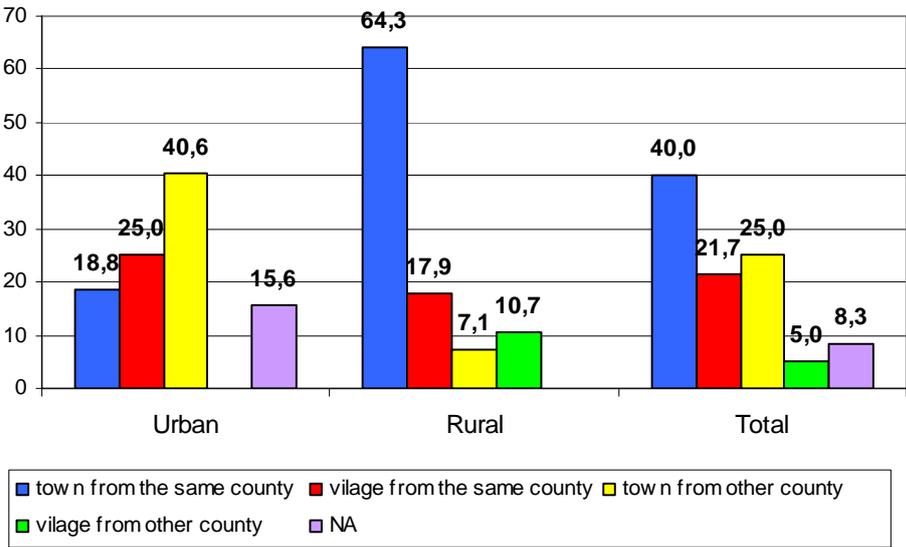
After 2002, Romanians migrated in rural localities by moving in their spouse's localities (31%) or due to the fact that they bought a house there (24%). Also, 10% of them were motivated by the peacefulness of the rural areas or by the desire to be close to their relatives.

**Chart 5. Reasons for which Romanians decided to change their locality of residence after 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2002, by area of residence (cumulative %)**



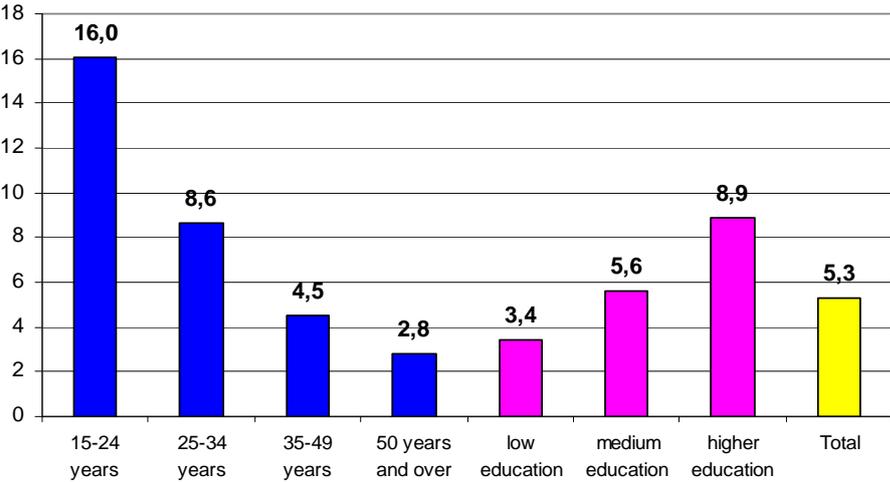
As it was expected, Romanians moved mostly within counties/judets as more than 60% of the respondents who changed their locality of residence after 2002 came from localities in the same county. Moreover, they came mostly from urban areas as, previous migration, 65% of them lived in urban localities and only 27% in rural ones (differences to 100% were not answers). Therefore, 59% of the Romanians who migrated in urban localities came from other urban localities (mostly from other counties) and only 25% from rural areas. Also, 71% of those migrated in rural areas came from urban localities especially from towns located in the same county. So, we can conclude that, after 2002, the most important flows of internal migration were those from urban to urban localities and from urban to rural localities of the same county/judet.

**Chart 6. Individuals who changed their locality of residence after 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2002, by area of residence and origin locality (%)**



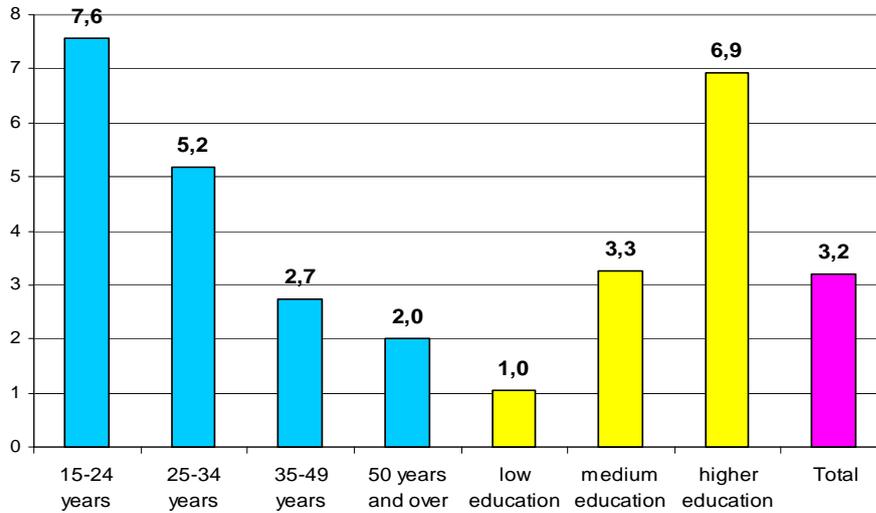
As other studies showed, youth display the highest propensity towards mobility. This is also the case of Romania as the share of young people who changed their locality of residence after 2002 is three times bigger than the national average. The higher the age is, the lower the share of individuals who have migrated in the last 5 years. Moreover, most individuals who have migrated after 2002 are those with higher education. As we can see, most Romanians who change their locality of residence come to school in large cities from other urban localities or migrate in rural areas from towns located in their proximity.

**Chart 7. Share of individuals who changed their locality of residence after 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2002, by age groups and level of education, (%)**



About 3% of the respondents declared that they intend to move in another locality from Romania during the next 12 months. Based on the respondents' intentions, we can anticipate that the migration flows will be higher among youth and individuals with higher education. So, the profile of those migrating will remain the same in short term.

**Chart 8. Share of individuals who intend to change their locality of residence in the next 12 months by age groups and level of education (%)**



## VI. Information of employment opportunities and migration

30% of the respondents have no knowledge on how requested is their occupation at local level and 44% at the level of other localities/regions of the country. In fact, people from rural localities display a poorer knowledge on the employment opportunities for their occupation at local and national level.

Moreover, we find out that lack of knowledge on the employment opportunities existing in other regions of Romania seems to become one the most important factors shaping internal and external migration, by inhibiting the first and stimulating the latter.

## VII. Conclusions

Without doubt, now more than ever, Romania needs to develop a better management of its migration flows, including policies for immigration and support for the returning migrants' integration. It is clear that Romanians' migration in the years to come will depend to the governments' capabilities to address development gaps and inequalities while increasing the access of vulnerable groups to employment and other opportunities.

Also, while employment opportunities motivate Romanians to migrate abroad, they don't play a key role in driving internal migration. Moreover, rural areas display higher flows of external migration and lower flows of internal migration. In fact, those who changed their locality of residence in Romania after 2002 were mostly young people going to school in large cities or people moving from urban to rural localities at their retiring.

Therefore, only economic development and reduction of the development gaps between regions and areas of residence coupled with improving information on employment opportunities will increase internal migration to the detriment of external one.