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MIGRATION TRENDS AND THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

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Abstract. *This paper aims to examine the migration phenomenon in the current socio-economic context of Romania, with a focus on identifying the main determinants that act as either triggering or motivational factors. The analysis is based on a multidimensional framework that incorporates variables such as the unemployment rate, fluctuations in average wages both in Romania and across other EU member states, the estimated impact of remittances on economic growth, and other economic or political drivers that significantly contribute to the scope and complexity of migration. In the broader European context, Romania—alongside several other states—is currently facing serious demographic challenges, including the depopulation of rural areas, increasing migratory flows, declining birth rates, population aging, and the large-scale emigration of qualified professionals. These socio-demographic trends produce adverse effects across multiple sectors, including economic productivity, social cohesion, cultural sustainability, and environmental protection. Moreover, these dynamics are embedded in the broader post-communist transformation processes and the intensification of free labor mobility within the European Union, which, in some cases, reaches levels that disrupt the functioning of key systems such as industrial production, public health services, and vocational education and training.*

Keywords: *determinants of migration, socio-economic context, Romania*

The proposed study aims to analyze the phenomenon of international migration from Romania in the context of recent socio-economic transformations and the intensification of mobility flows at the European level. The main objective of the research is to highlight the economic, social, and political determinants of migration and to capture its impact on demographic structures, the labor market, and economic development. In particular, the study investigates the relationship between migration and poverty, focusing on the role of remittances in supporting families left behind and their implications for reducing social inequalities.

The objectives of the research are to identify the triggering factors of Romanian emigration (wage differentials, unemployment rates, government stability, social inequality), to assess the long-term socio-economic and demographic effects, and to analyze regional specificities, with a focus on the North-East

Development Region. The study also includes a bibliometric analysis of the specialized literature on migration and poverty, in order to outline the current state of knowledge and future research directions.

The hypotheses start from the assumption that Romanian migration is primarily driven by economic factors, but is amplified by social, political, and cultural conditions. Remittances reduce the level and severity of poverty in the country of origin, yet their contribution to sustainable investment and development remains limited. Migration is interpreted as a form of 'escape from poverty,' but in the long term it generates human capital loss, depopulation, and population ageing.

The methodology integrates statistical and econometric analyses (polynomial regressions, cluster analysis, hierarchical classifications), combined with data from Eurostat, TEMPO-INS, the World Bank, and the International Organization for Migration. The bibliometric analysis was carried out using the Web of Science platform (1976–2025), with VOSviewer employed for visualization of thematic similarities. Quantitative analysis was complemented by qualitative interpretations, including case studies and cultural and political perspectives on the phenomenon.

The results highlight Germany as the main destination for Romanian migrants, followed by Italy and Spain, while countries such as Austria, Belgium, or the Nordic states attract moderate flows. Between 2012 and 2022, emigration experienced fluctuations linked to economic and health crises, yet remained a constant feature of Romanian society. Remittances reached a record level of €6.5 billion in 2023 (2.76% of GDP), almost equal to foreign direct investment, underlining the diaspora's importance for macroeconomic stability. At the regional level, Iași County stands out with high levels of permanent emigration, correlated with lower wages and above-average unemployment rates.

The general conclusions show that migration produces ambivalent effects: it financially supports families through remittances, but at the same time it exacerbates demographic imbalances, the loss of skilled human capital, and regional disparities. Public policies should therefore aim to reduce inequalities, encourage return migration, and foster the productive use of remittances for sustainable development.

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