

## LONG-TERM MIGRATION FROM REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AND ROMANIA

**Abstract:** *This article analyses the main trends and dimensions of long-term migration in the Republic of Moldova and Romania over the past three decades. The main destination for both the population of the Republic of Moldova and the population of Romania are Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Great Britain, Canada and the USA. At the same time, very important migratory flows from the Republic of Moldova were directed to the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Czech Republic, while the population of Romania migrated with higher intensity to Hungary, Austria and Belgium.*

*The comparative study shows that the largest flow of migrants in Romania was in 2007, the year of joining to the UE. The number of migrants was over 550 thousand and the emigration rate was 26‰. In the case of the Republic of Moldova, the emigration intensity was particularly high during 2007–2011, the emigration rate being of 15‰–18‰. Specifically to both countries are the negative net rate during the analyzed period. The results of the study show that the population loss for Republic of Moldova are higher than for Romania.*

**Key words:** *flows of migrants, long-term migration, net migration rate, rate of migration, Republic of Moldova, Romania.*

**JEL:** *J11, J18, R23.*

### 1. Introduction

For more than two decades, the Republic of Moldova and Romania face with the mass emigration of the population, a phenomenon that falls into the third and fourth migration period in Europe after the Second World War (Garson, Loizillon 2003). An important role in the evolution of this phenomenon in both countries has economic migration. The economic migration that began in the mid- '90s as a temporary / circulatory migration has long transformed into long-term migration with establishing residence in the host country.

This paper proposes a comparative approach to the long-term emigration process in the Republic of Moldova and Romania in the period after the fall of the Iron Curtain to the present. The paper does not analyse short-term migration trends, migration to work and studies. By long-term migration, we understand moving people across countries over a period of more than one year. The results of the study are presented to the limit of the availability of statistical data on international migration.

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## 2. Data and definitions

For the analysis, data from the *International Migration Statistics* database of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) were used. This database presents data on flows and stocks of the immigrant population in the all countries of the world to OECD countries. The data refer to the entries number of aliens who have a long-term residence permit or an indefinite period and who are virtually free of any limitation on the exercise of an economic activity, so the data refer to the category of migrants *for settlement* (UN 1998).

There are several reasons why we opted for migration from these two countries to be analysed based on OECD data. First, the data presented are the result of a standardized process that allows the comparison between countries. Secondly, the OECD database comprises a larger number of countries than the Eurostat database, so we can include in the analysis the USA, Canada and other countries. The third reason is that the data correspond to the criteria recommended by the United Nations for the definition of migrants (UN 1998).

Other sources of data used are national statistics provided by statistical institutions from Russian Federation, Ukraine and Israel.

In the most analysed countries from the EU, Canada, the USA and Australia, the criteria for registering *migrant flows* refer to the population who obtained the residence permit in the host country either for the long-term or for an indefinite period, excluding the renewal of the permits. Criteria for registering immigration flows in Russia have changed several times, for which reason the number of immigrants was either underestimated or overestimated (Chudinovskikh 2005). Starting with 2011, migration statistics include people registered for 3 months who have extended their stay for another 9 months, so it includes long-term immigration as defined by the UN. In Ukraine, immigration flows are registered according to the place of residence.

It should be noted that the statistical data used in the analysis shows legal immigration in the destination countries and does not include clandestine immigration that was particularly high in the '90s.

## 3. Results

After the fall of the communist regime, the long-term migration from the Republic of Moldova and Romania can be divided into ethnic migration and social-economic migration. The flows of ethnic emigrants were particularly dominant during the period 1989–1995. Migration from socio-economic reasons began in the mid- '90s and has now become a phenomenon of immense scale in both countries, the main determinant of international mobility of the population.

### 3.1. Long-term migration flows from Republic of Moldova

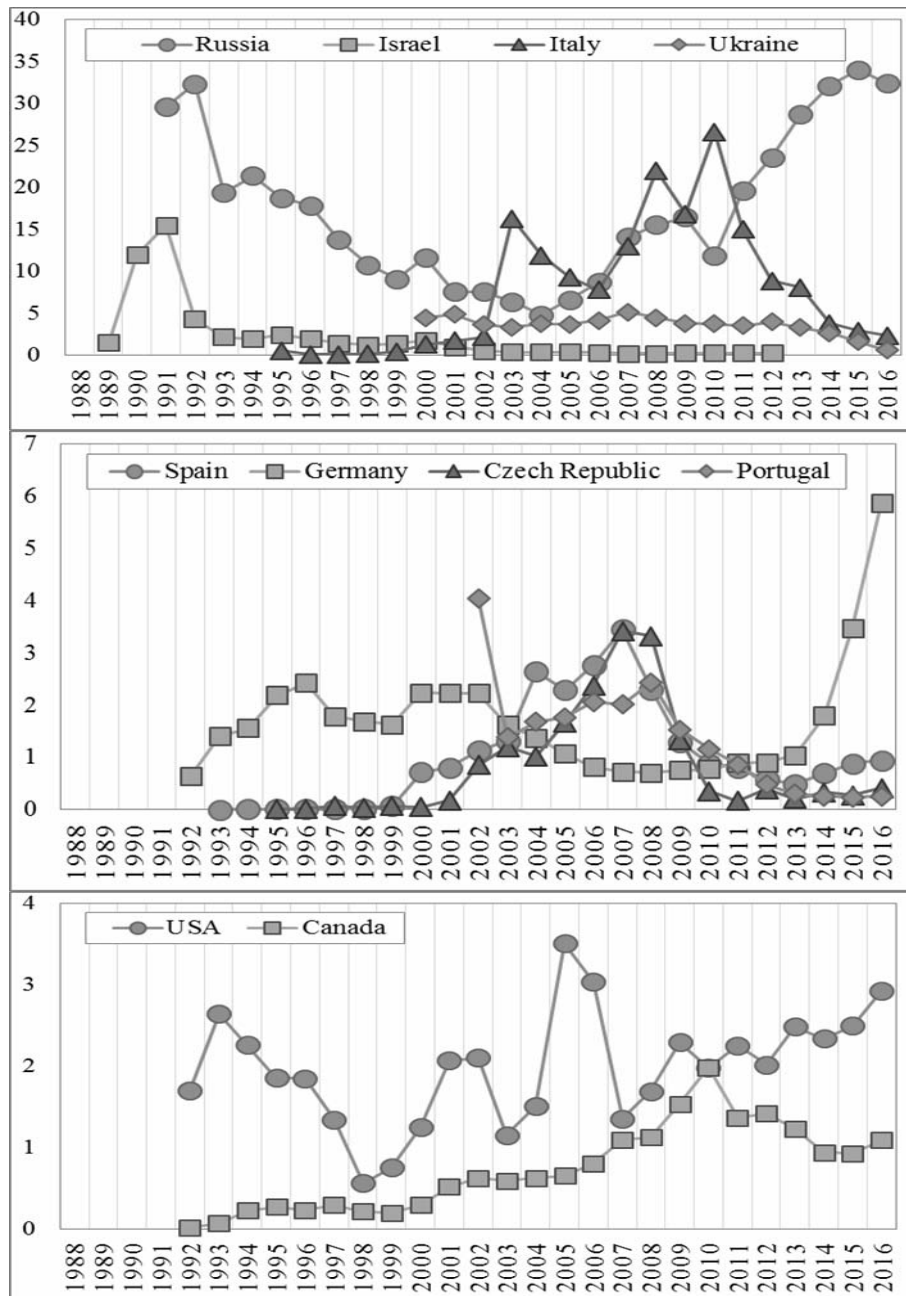
In the literature of the Republic of Moldova, there are four stages of evolution of the phenomenon of emigration. *Extended migration profile of the Republic of Moldova* divide the phenomenon into the following stages: 1990–1994; 1995–2000; 2001–2006; from May 2006 (Vremiş et al. 2012; Poalelungi et al. 2017). The other four stages of migration evolution are: 1990–1995, when the ethnic migration occurred; 1995–2000, began temporary migration to work; 3rd stage is the period of intensification of the migration to work, the legalization of illegal immigrants in EU countries, family reunification in host countries and is the period 2000–2010; the beginning of the fourth stage is considered the period after 2010, as some structural changes are observed in the migration process (Tabac 2018).

In the first stage, long-term emigration was higher due to the return to the historic homeland of the main ethnic minorities. Ethnic migration was composed by Germans, Jews, Russians and Ukrainians and had five favourite destinations: Israel, Russia, Ukraine, Germany and the USA (Vremiş et al. 2012; Gagauz et al. 2016). The extent of migration during this period is estimated at 175 thousand.

After the exhaustion of ethnic migration began the waves of temporary emigration to work in the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Soon, these two countries have added work emigration to Turkey, the Czech Republic and the countries of Southern Europe. Typically, migration to work in the EU countries and Turkey was clandestine. The migration with the change of residence was less representative in the period 1995–2000, but data for the next two decades show that “temporary” labour migration has transformed into long-term emigration over time (Fig. 1). These major transformations have been driven by migration policies promoted and implemented by host countries. Higher migratory flows in Spain, Portugal, and Italy in the early 2000s are the result of amnesty policies for illegal immigrants (Strozza 2010). The number of migrants who legislated their stay in Italy in 2003 was 16 thousand; another 12 thousand acquired a residence permit in 2004. In Portugal in 2001, about 10 thousand were legalized and another 4 thousand in 2002. In Spain, the number of official Moldovan immigrants increased 11 times in 2000 compared to 1999. During 2000 and 2005, almost 60 thousand migrants obtained the right to legal residence in Italy, Spain and Portugal. Migration flows in these three countries increased steadily over the coming years due to family reunions following the regularization of illegal immigrants (the share of residence permits in Italy for family reasons increased from 16% to 52% in 2007–2011<sup>2</sup>). The estimated number of people who have been granted residence permits in these countries in 2006–2011 is over 120 thousand.

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<sup>2</sup> Estimation based on Immigrants.Stat data, (<http://stra-dati.istat.it/?lang=en> accessed at September 19<sup>th</sup> 2018).



Sources: OECD International migration statistics, Federal State Statistics Services of Russia, State Statistics Services of Ukraine and (Sheveliov 2014).

Figure 1. Long-term emigrants from the Republic of Moldova to the main destination countries, 1988–2016 (thousand).

From Figure 1 it is obviously that the most significant as volume is the migration to the Russian Federation and Italy. Generally, specific to the Republic of Moldova since the mid-1990s is the orientation of migration on two main vectors, one to the CIS countries and one to the EU countries. The main destination country in the CIS is the Russian Federation, which receives the largest number of emigrants from the Republic of Moldova each year and the main destination in the EU is Italy (*Fig. 1*). Emigration to Russia has been and is being favoured, by the lack of visa regime and lower migration costs compared to other countries. In the West, the first migrations were more difficult due to the reluctance of the governments of the European states towards the immigrants of the ex-Soviet countries and the high costs for migration. Migration to the EU is nowadays as accessible as ever, immigration policy has become friendlier with the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, but the accession of Romania to the European Community in 2007 has had a positive impact on the holders of dual citizenship (simultaneous ownership of Moldovan and Romanian citizenship). The strongest difference between eastern and western migration is the period of stay in the destination country. The share of those who migrate in the long term is higher in the EU than in Russia, where migration is mostly achieved in the short and circulatory way.

Other European destinations of emigrants from the Republic of Moldova are the Czech Republic and Germany. Emigration in the Czech Republic started at the same time as emigration in Southern Europe, had the same reason – looking for a job, but the severe conditions for obtaining a residence permit (10 years of legal work until 2003) has discouraged settlement here. The migration flows to Germany were higher and more stable between 1993 and 2003 than 2005–2013 flows. The data show that between 65–75% of migrants who left for 2006–2010 returned to the country (Tabac 2017).

Since 2011, new trends have been observed regarding the long-term international migration in the Republic of Moldova. It has been noted that migration flows to European countries such as Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, the Czech Republic has dropped significantly and the migration to Western European countries such as Germany, France and Great Britain is continuously expanding. Changes are also seen in the characteristics of migrants, namely the share of young people (by Zwager, Sîntov 2014; Gagauz, Penina, Tabac 2016), persons with higher education, middle and high income (IDIS VIITORUL, CBS-AXA 2018; IPP 2017), as well as and family migration in Western European countries, especially in the UK and Germany (Tabac 2017).

### ***3.2. Long-term migration flows from Romania***

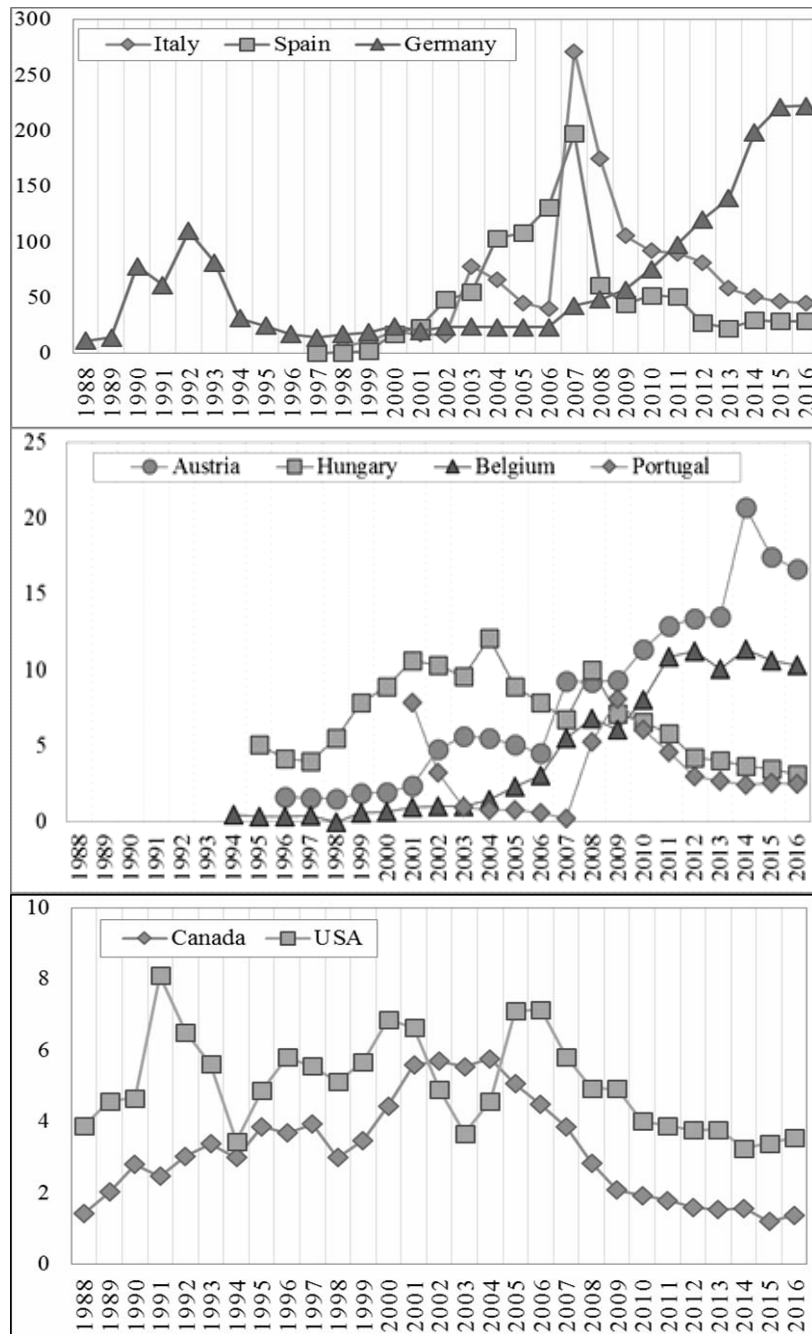
Studying the migration to work of Romanians, the sociologist Dumitru Sandu highlights in 2006 three stages of migration: 1990–1995 – the migration of Romanians to work in Israel, Turkey, Italy, Hungary and Germany; in the years 1996–2002, Spain

and Canada joined to the five countries; the third phase started in 2002 shows the massive emigration to temporary work in Spain and Italy (Sandu et al. 2006). The authors of the *The Fourth Wave: The Brain Drain on the Route Romania-West Countries* suggests that since 2007 the fourth wave of permanent labour migrations has started in Western European countries (Alexe et al. 2011). Already in 2010, analysing definitive migration of Romanian after 1989, based on national statistical data, Dumitru Sandu highlights five distinctive steps: the 1990–1992 period is dominated by the German migration; 1993–1995 there is a considerable reduction of emigration on the account of Romanians (not ethnic Germans); in 1996–2001 migration to Germany is added to migration to Canada and the USA; in the years 2002–2006, a fourth corridor is added to France; beginning with 2007, the year of accession of Romania to the EU, returns to the three classic corridors: Germany, Canada and the United States of America (Sandu 2010).

In the 1988–1995, the migratory flows in Romania were mainly formed by German ethnic groups, Hungarians and a small number of Jews, with destinations in Germany, Hungary, Israel, Canada and the USA (Chindea et al. 2008; Alexe et al. 2011) (Fig. 2). The total numbers of emigrants in this period is 476 thousand; over 87% emigrated to Germany.

After ethnic and religious migration, under the economic pressure of the mid-'90s, the temporary emigration of Romanians to work abroad begins (Sandu 2010) disguised as a request for political asylum or taking the form of clandestine migration (Remus Gabriel, Horváth 2009). Due to the more rigorous control of irregular immigration in the countries of Western Europe, the Romanian migratory flows in this period are reorienting to Italy, Spain and least to Portugal (Rotariu, Voineagu 2012). The entry of Romanian citizens into the countries of Southern Europe in the late '90s and the early 2000s took place in most cases in a clandestine way, but very soon, the legalization prospects appear (the amnesty between 1998 and 2002 in Italy and the amnesties of 1996 and 2000 in Spain). The visas withdrawal for Romanians in the Schengen area since 2002 has had an even more impact on emigration to Italy and Spain, and these two countries have become the main destinations of the Romanians (Rotariu, Voineagu 2012).

According to the data, the most important long-term migrant flows in 2000 were fixed in Germany (24.2 thousand), Italy (19.3 thousand) and Spain (17.5 thousand). Significant changes took place in 2003, with Italy (78.4 thousand) and Spain (55 thousand) registering a three-four times increase in the number of migrants compared to Germany (23.8 thousand), where migration is maintained at the same level by 2007 (Fig. 2). Estimated based on OECD data, slightly more than 970,000 Romanian citizens have obtained a residence permit abroad during the period 2002–2006 (the period between visa-free travel to the Schengen area and EU accession). Of these, 46% were in Spain, 25% in Italy, 12% in Germany, 5% in Hungary, and 3% in Austria, Canada and the USA.



Source: OECD International migration statistics.

Figure 2. Long-term emigrants from Romania to the main destination countries, 1988–2016 (thousand).

The accession of Romania to the European Union gave a new incentive to the population for emigration. The data show rising flows of Romanian migrants in all EU countries since 2007, the total number estimated for this year being 550 thousand. The largest increase of migrants was in Italy (from 40 thousand in 2006 to 270 thousand in 2007). The total number of Romanian migrants who obtained a residence permit in the destination countries (including Canada and the USA) during 2007–2013 is about 2.2 million people<sup>3</sup>, which speaks of a high intensity of the migration phenomenon.

Another period of amplification of the long-term international mobility of Romanians is the period starting with January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, being caused by lifting of restrictions on the labour market in Austria, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg Malta and Spain. Total flows of emigrants in the last three years, 2014–2016, vary between 350–360 thousand people annually; a higher number was registered only in 2007. The EU countries where Romanians continued to expand during these years are: Germany, Austria, France, the Netherlands, Belgium (since 2013), Denmark, Great Britain (available estimates of immigration to the UK show volume flows in 2015–2016 of 56 thousand and 55 thousand people). At the same time, the flows of major emigrants in Spain and Italy in the past indicate major declines since 2012–2013.

### ***3.3. Emigration effects on population evolution***

From an economic point of view, international labour migration produces particularly positive effects, which cannot be said about the demographic impact of the phenomenon. In this respect, demographers always point to the negative effects of long-term migration on the medium and long-term population evolution. Or, temporary and / circulatory migration to work regularly practiced over the years, turns into permanent migration with the change of residence in the host country. Such a situation is characteristic to Romania and the Republic of Moldova. After 20 years of massive labour exodus (1995–2015), immense stocks of immigrants originating in these two countries were formed in the destination countries while the total number of the population was continuously declining (Ghețău 2007; Gagauz et al. 2016). The numbers in 2016 show 3 million 035 thousand immigrants from Romania living in OECD countries and 225 thousand immigrants from the Republic of Moldova<sup>4</sup>. If we had statistical data on the stock of immigrants from the Republic of Moldova to the CIS countries, then, certainly, the stock of migrants would have a different size. In this context, we mention only the 280 thousand migrants born in Moldova, who at the census of 2010 were residents of the Russian Federation (Tabac 2018). An even more remarkable number of long-term immigrants

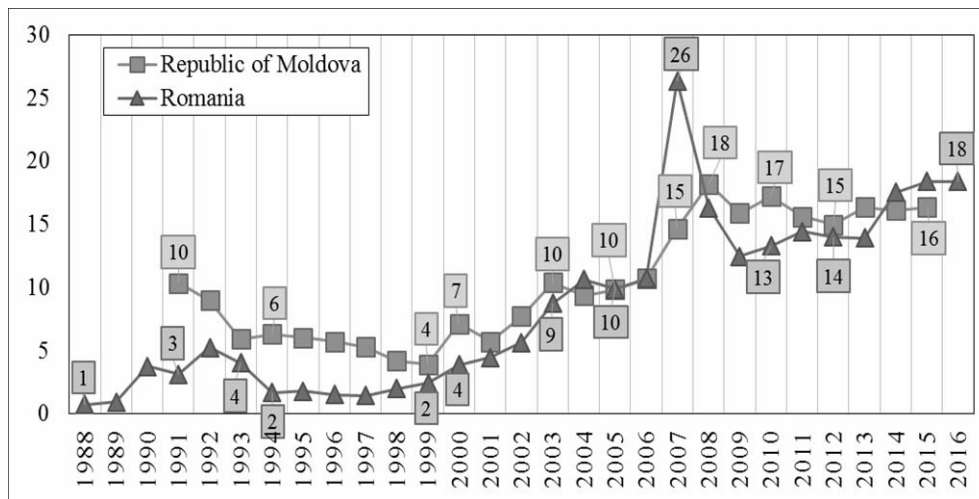
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<sup>3</sup> Due to the lack of statistical data, the calculations do not include migration to the UK.

<sup>4</sup> The data source is OCDE International migration statistics.

comes from the World Bank from the *Bilateral Estimates of Migrant Stocks* database in 2017. According to them, in 2017, the stock of immigrants from Romania in the world was 3 million 663 thousand and of the Republic of Moldova – 1 million 025 thousand.

The dynamics of the emigration process in relative values is presented in *Figures 3 and 4*. At calculating, the migration indicators, as a denominator was used the total number of emigrants estimated based on OECD data and national statistical data in other destination countries (Russia, Ukraine, and Israel). As a numerator, the number of the population extracted from the Eurostat database was used for Romania, and for the Republic of Moldova, the population recalculated according to the methodology of Max Planck Demographic Research Institute in Rostock, Germany (Penina, Jdanov, Grigoriev 2015).

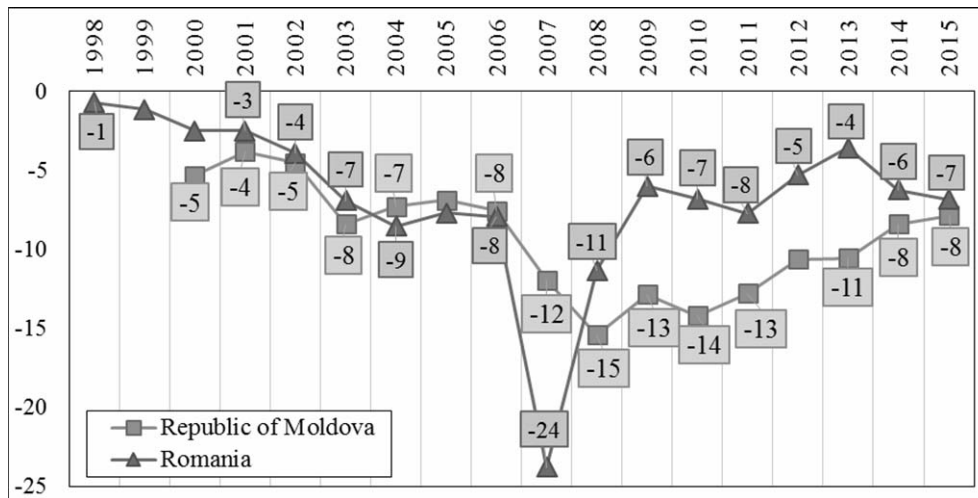


Sources: OECD International migration statistics, Eurostat, Federal State Statistics Services of Russia, State Statistics Services of Ukraine, (Sheveliov 2014) and (Penina, Jdanov, Grigoriev 2015).

Figure 3. Emigration rate from the Republic of Moldova and Romania, 1988–2015 (for 1000 inhabitants).

The comparative analysis shows that until 2000 the long-term emigration from the Republic of Moldova was higher than in Romania, the emigration rate in 1991 being 10‰ and 3‰, respectively. Towards the end of the '90s, the difference is decreasing and already in 2005 and 2006, the emigration rate is equal in both countries of 10‰ and 11‰, respectively. In 2007, when Romania became a member of the EU, the emigration rate was 26‰ – the highest in the whole period – increasing by 15‰ compared to 2006. The procedures for legalization and reunification of families in host countries did not passed alongside for citizens of the Republic of Moldova who in 2007–2011 emigrated more intensively than before, the emigration rate fluctuating between 15‰ and 18‰.

We note that the international migration of the population is far from exhaustion, in both analysed countries the migration rate of the population has stabilized and remains high throughout the period 2011–2016. The emigration rate in Romania in 2011–2013 is 14‰ and in 2014–2016, it is 18‰. In the case of the Republic of Moldova, the emigration rate in 2011–2015 is at stable level at 15‰–16‰.



Sources: OECD International migration statistics, Eurostat, Federal State Statistics Services of Russia, State Statistics Services of Ukraine, (Sheveliov 2014) and (Penina, Jdanov, Grigoriev 2015).

Figure 4. Net migration rate in the Republic of Moldova and Romania, 1998–2015 (per 1000 inhabitants).

Specifically to both countries is negative external net migration, plus the natural decline (Ghețău 2007, Gagauz et al. 2016). The results show that in the context of a similar emigration from both territories (Fig. 3), net migration in the Republic of Moldova is higher than in Romania, so the pace of return of Romanian migrants to the country is comparatively higher (Fig. 4). As a value, net migration to Romania was higher in 2007–2008, being  $-24\%$  and  $-11\%$ , respectively. In the case of the Republic of Moldova, net migration is particularly high throughout the 2007–2013 period, with annual values between  $-11\%$  and  $-15\%$ .

#### 4. Conclusions

After the fall of the communist regime, free movement in the world has become a fundamental right for citizens of the Republic of Moldova and Romania. A large number have been those who benefited from the opportunity to travel abroad for work, study, visiting or for tourism. Many are also those who have changed their place of residence abroad. Of course, the migration has advantages and disadvantages both for beneficiary countries and for countries of origin. However,

it is natural that migrations with the establishment of residence by a colossal large number of people abroad become a matter of concern to the Governments of the countries of origin. Now, the migration for the Republic of Moldova and Romania has become a national phenomenon with major implications for all spheres of social life. The decline in the population in the two countries is determined more by permanent mass emigration than by low fertility. In the future, it will be much more difficult to replace citizens who have left the country than to invest in the development of the local labour market, education and health. No further investment will be able to compensate the loss of human capital of the young, educated and able to work population.

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