

Narrative Report

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR *MIGRATION AND IDENTITY IN A CHANGING EUROPE: BUILDING PARTENERSHIPS AND FOSTERING COMMUNICATION* Oradea, Romania, 23-25 November 2006.

Organized by University of Oradea- Research Centre for Identity and Migration Issues

The topics proposed for this seminar were the following:

- I. Labour migration and the protection of the migrant workers: legal instruments, methods and institutions involved in managing this process;
- II. Illegal migration and its consequences. Visa Policies of the CEE states;
- III. Social and economical impact of migration in origin and destination states;
- IV. Migration and the new European identities;
- V. How to network? Perspectives for a future cooperation.

Topic I: *Labor migration and the protection of migrant worker: legal instruments, methods and institutions involved in managing this process*

The discussions of the first roundtable focused on labor migration and the protection of migrant workers. This section offered a multidisciplinary approach of the topic as it brought together expertise on migration issues from diverse fields of activity in countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Participants dwelt on four case studies analyzing labor migration issues from Romania, the Czech Republic and the Republic of Moldova, which were presented by one public official, two academic researchers and one NGO representative.

Ms. Daniela Nicoleta Andreescu, State Secretary and Head of the Department for Labor Abroad in the Romanian Ministry of Labor, Social Solidarity and Family, opened this roundtable on Friday, November the 24th. Ms. Andreescu, who acted as a key speaker of the session, focused her presentation on the importance of legal instruments, methods and institutions managing the Romanian labor migration abroad. She pointed out that, in the Romanian case, the main instruments for managing labor force emigration are bilateral agreements between the Romanian Government and the Governments of other states. In addition, Andreescu highlighted the benefits of public institutions' involvement in promoting and supervising legal migration. According to the present legislation in Romania, the Department for Labor Abroad, along with other competent institutions, promotes the protection and safety measures regarding the rights and freedoms of the Romanian citizens working abroad, as well as the prevention of any form of abuse. Moreover, as a result of setting up the institutional and legal framework concerning migration, there is an increased number of Romanians preferring to work legally abroad, usually with a contract, intermediated by the Romanian public institutions, which provides for certain rights and protection.

Furthermore, the discussions in this roundtable brought to light a significant issue in dealing with labor migration, namely the availability of reliable statistics. Most participants acknowledged that the task of gathering information on transnational mobility is a challenging one. Andreescu pointed out that building up and centralizing a valid database on migration is difficult, as for instance Romanians use multiple channels (i.e. official contracts, private agencies and personal relations) to get a job abroad. However, most of the Romanian workers, around 48%, obtain a contract abroad on the basis of bilateral agreements, while only 10% are recruited by private work agencies. According to the data gathered by the Department for Labor Abroad from various official sources, there is an estimate of 1.3 million Romanians working abroad legally. Nevertheless, Andreescu claims that there is no reliable information on Romanians abroad having an illegal status. Similar statistical data limitations were reported by participants from other countries too.

In order to better grasp the spread of migration phenomenon, Mr. Vasile Ciocan from the University of Oradea, Romania, suggested that one should distinguish between classic migrations (permanent) and circulatory migrations (temporary). He illustrated the usefulness of conceptualizing migration differentially by pointing out that Romanian labor migration falls under the circulatory migration pattern and it seems quite unlikely that one could properly understand the real number of Romanians working abroad if one uses only the conceptual tools of classic or permanent migration.

In subsequent discussions, different methodological designs for studying migration were proposed. Thus, some participants suggested that macro-statistical approaches should be complemented by micro-studies concerning immigrants and their integration on the labor market. For instance, Ms. Romana Cucuruzan, researcher in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, stressed that beyond numbers there are persons whose life matter. Hence, she believes that several important questions regarding immigrants should be answered: who are they, which are their main reasons for emigration, which is their level of education, training and qualifications, the kind of jobs they have, their employment status, the way of finding a job in the host country? Drawing on the results of a micro-study, Cucuruzan sketched a profile of Romanian immigrants in Spain: women, young and very young, medium and highly educated, without relevant work experience at home, opting for a long stay and for a possible return to the country of origin, working legally but under their qualification, finding a good match between salary and the kind of the job performed, generally satisfied with living conditions, professional relations and with the 'new life'. According to Cucuruzan this profile fits the job opportunities for immigrants in a typical segmented labor market. For instance, in Spain immigrants work only as exceptions in the superior segment of the labor market with high salaries and career perspectives, (i.e. IT, banking, financial services, etc.). It is more likely to find immigrants in the inferior segment, with low salaries and low career prospects (crop collection, constructions, hotel assistance, domestic services - covered by unskilled immigrants).

Even under these circumstances, Cucuruzan maintains that until recently one could notice a negative perception on East-West migration due to several reasons: the high unemployment rate; immigrants, even the legal ones, as source of jobs' thieving and social dumping. However, according to the participants to the roundtable, migration has not only negative but also positive sides. Citing the 2006 EC report, some participants

pointed out that after 2 years of working restrictions for the new EU members, the fears seem exaggerated and restrictions constitute a barrier to a better functioning of the labor market, as well. Therefore they suggested an attitude reconsideration focusing on migrants' positive role in the EU economy. Consequently, one of the points which exemplified the benefits of labor mobility was the issue of remittances as a positive facet of migration both for origin and destination countries.

In the ensuing discussions, participants touched upon the immigration policies intended to fill the gaps in the labor markets of the new EU member states. Ms. Marie Jelinkova from Charles University, Prague, examined the critical shortcomings in immigration policy in the Czech Republic. She pointed out that while there is an obvious need for immigrant labor force, the Czech migration policies are inconsistent in attracting and integrating workers from abroad. In this sense, Jelinkova mentions, along with other factors impeding immigration, the complicated legal and institutional procedures of migrant integration, very limited possibilities to learn the Czech language and no system of regional counseling centers for immigrants. According to Jelinkova, the existing gap between labor demand and supply, combined with the complicated bureaucratic and legal environment to get work permission led to the emergence of a client system, and the dependence on middlemen. Jelinkova argued that this is a system which benefits the organized crime groups, the clients and the Czech business man. It also fosters a criminalization of migrants and this, combined with a poor development of legislative provisions, encourages human trafficking and forced labor. The emergence of a so-called "black market of labor" in Eastern Europe has been also noticed by another participant, Radu Bostan, representing an international organization for the protection of women rights in Moldova. He also mentioned that there is a general lack of experience in dealing with migration in Eastern Europe and problems might arise if the gaps in the labor market, left behind by emigrant workers looking for better paid jobs in other countries, are not filled in with new immigrant labor. Bostan illustrated this situation with the case of Moldova, which faces a dramatic depopulation, especially in rural areas. Citing information gathered by Moldovan institutions from families living in rural areas, Bostan claimed that around 50 percent of the persons fit for work emigrated abroad. In addition, several participants argued that, in the near future, decision-makers in Eastern Europe should focus not only on managing protection of their labor abroad, but should also develop strategies to attract and integrate new immigrant workers for solving the problems of their own labor market.

Summing up, the discussions in this roundtable pointed out not only the theoretical and legal aspects concerning labor migration but also suggested practical recommendations based on everyday experiences of citizens from Eastern and Central Europe. Thus the roundtable offered favorable premises for getting a thorough picture of the topic discussed. Moreover, the multi-facet dialogue contributed and enriched conference outputs, by raising issues and suggesting directions for future actions and research.

Topic II: *Illegal migration and its consequences*

1. Documentary film - **Parallel Worlds**, produced by IOM

Commentaries: Mr. Ciocan, on the basis of his working experience at the Border Police, stated that examples presented in the film are frequent and real. Regarding the institution of re-admission (example of which has been observed in the first film scenes), it is very important in the migration area. Mr. Ciocan added that states confront themselves with problems when they don't have re-admission agreements among them. In those cases, they have to take the whole responsibility – as a result of the Geneva Convention. As concerns Romania, as an external border of the European Union, it will face high expenditures when it will not have the possibility of using the re-admission towards certain states.

2. Presentation: Vasile Ciocan-Maior, University of Oradea, Department of International Relations, “The Cross-Border Area of Good Neighbourhood - “Integrated Filter” in Securing the Borders”.

Mr. Ciocan said that, generally, we speak about cooperation at supranational and regional levels. The cross-border area of good neighbourhood represents a very important filter in stopping the migration phenomenon. He presented a map of Europe on which have been drawn the lines of the Eastern EU border – past, present and future – with the aim of presenting the significance of the principle of geographical border from Romania's and Bulgaria's perspectives – as future Eastern EU borders. He showed, on the above-mentioned map, that the length of the Eastern border will shorten with 28%; he considered that this shortening will represent a big advantage for the material support of the securitization; Romania will play a very important role as it will be part of the main line of migration, and as it will have to manage 27% of the EU Eastern border. By its new position, Romania will also estrange the border from the Central of Europe. Therefore, the Central European countries will have to understand that will be very important to provide technical and financial assistance to the border countries, as these countries will have to solve all the problems regarding asylum, re-admission, etc.

Mr. Ciocan has also stressed on the difference between classical and circulatory migration; the classical one represents the most difficult problem for Europe because of the danger of terrorism and of the organized crime – in general.

Mr. Ciocan pointed out a change in the approach of borders in Europe: during the Iron Curtain they have been seen as fortresses; now they are seen as the “circle of good-neighbourhood” – that means the surrounding of Europe by countries with which to develop relations of good-neighbourhood. Europe's interest is to have democratic governments at the border, no inter-ethnic conflicts (examples – Balkans, Georgia, etc.), and it invests important amounts of money in these countries. In the context of this circle, the evolution is towards an improvement of the relations regarding the border crossing with the third countries.

Regarding the concept of ‘integrated filters’, it maintains the lines of border control in stages; the control will be made in larger spaces, as not to affect the free movement of persons; therefore, the role of institutional and interregional cooperation will be increased.

The discussions following the presentation of Mr. Ciocan, were concentrated on issues as:

- Asylum system in Romania: it functions properly, as it is implemented in accordance to the European legislation; the asylum seekers have the possibility of staying in Romania and of receiving the staying rights / to demand the foreign missions from Romania to emigrate in another state; the problem with which Romania is confronted is that the asylum seekers use Romania for other purposes;
- The consequences for the Romanian immigrants who travel illegally in the EU: the laws of states are different on this issue; in this regard, Romania will probably adapt the 112 law to the EU legislation. It was also mentioned the difference between the Schengen space and the European space; the Romania's integration in the EU does not mean free movement of persons and goods immediately; these will be obtain after the transition periods.
- The organisations in charge with the asylum seekers in Romania: the government and its specialized agencies; the centres placed in Bucharest or in the border towns;
- The development of the circle of good-neighbourhood with Moldova, after Romania's integration in the EU: as many of the Moldavian citizens have Romanian passports, the 'circle' will mean to give a special statute to this country with regard to the entrance and departure from Romania; they will get easier the visa (it will not be paid, and will be made in a week, and also in emergency procedure), and the citizenship; there is also the possibility of developing the "small border traffic" with the counties close to the border, so that the crossing to be made on the ID basis, and no working license to be needed. Regarding the double citizenship of the Moldavian citizens, it will be eliminated; they will have a national and an European citizenships; but, they will have to prove with the right of staying.
- Romania – an immigration country: after the EU integration, Romania will be much more such a country; from that moment, Romania won't be considered anymore as a country that produces immigrants, in the classical sense; therefore, the migration will become a circulatory one and the movement will be easier and freer; Romania will become a contact zone that will adopt a tough policy regarding the immigrants; in Romania, the immigrants are Chinese, Pakistani an, Turks, Moldavians, etc., so it will have to build a strategy for integrating them in the Romanian society; because their labour force is needed in Romania, the employers will make pressure on the government in order to accept this labour force; the Romanian society is not yet prepared to accept immigrants with a different skin colour; the Romanian government doesn't have a clear policy regarding the emigration / immigration;
- The institutions involved in the management of the migration phenomenon: at this moment, in Romania and Bulgaria there are institutions that don't know their task in the migration issue; in Romania, the institutions that have a task on this are: the ministry of administration and interior, ministry of education, ministry of work, ministry of foreign affairs, ministry of finance, ministry of health, the national bank, etc.; the local authorities interact with the families of the migrants.

3. Documentary film - **Parallel Lives**, produced by MTV

Commentaries: it is a preventive film; in the EU countries, the ordinary people don't know about the victims of the sexual abuse in their country, as these phenomena happen underground. Prof. Ioan Mircea Pascu stated that victims have little life experience (if you are protected by the environment to which you belong, you don't become easily a victim); that the e-mail address mentioned at the end of the film don't reach the victims group as they are not frequent users of the Internet, so that other means have to be identified; the victims don't have to be stupid or un-educated – they may be simply in a wrong circumstance or they may have taken a wrong decision. It has also been mentioned that the Romanians know about the sexual trafficking, but they consider that this happens to 'others', not to the persons from their near environment. Also, the mass consumption society affects the mentality of the individuals, and the migration phenomenon.

Topic III - *Social, economical and political impact of migration in origin and destination states.*

Laetitia Duval, University of Rennes 2, France, PhD Student

Macroeconomic Determinants of Bilateral Remittances. Evidence from Romania.

First, it was presented the research question and the methodology of the study. The study is analyzing the determinants of remittances, the reasons of migrants to remit. The econometric model employed has been applied on a new dataset from the National Bank of Romania. Secondly, it has been depicted the available data on remittances. The volume of the international remittances has increased and has now reached a peak, according to World Bank, at about 200 billion USD; also, it has to be emphasized that these are official data that do not consider unofficial money transfers.

The case of Romania has been analyzed because there has been a very strong growth of the remittances. Remittances are modeled as a function of independent variables of the host country; among the variables are the economic size, financial environment, labor market and migratory policies. The remittances represent 10% of the host country GDP and this is an increasing trend.

Regarding the findings of the study, in contrast with previous results, unemployment was found not to have an influence; the possibility to find employment in the informal labor market does not influence the level of remittances. Another independent variable was the type of the host country, being either an old migration country or a recent migration country. The interaction variable, host country and unemployment it has a significant negative impact on remittances.

The level of education is higher in the old migration country and it can be said that with an increase in human capital, there is an increase in remittances. As a general conclusion, the macroeconomic variables influence the volume of the remittances; the immigrants who remit the most are the newly emigrated who seems to have perspectives on returning.

Agnieszka Fihel, Warsaw University, Faculty of economic sciences, Centre for Migration Research:

Emigration from EU8 countries after May 1st, 2004. Selected features and impact on Polish labor market.

The migration pattern has significantly influenced the European labor market. After 2004, there has been an inflow into UK, but it is not a new phenomenon. According to the UK laws, a migrant is a person who lives in UK not longer than one year. In UK, the Working Registration Scheme has registered 260.000 Polish people, 50.000 Lithuanians (1.9% of the national Lithuanian labor force) and this proportion has an ascending trend, as it was relatively easy to obtain a work permit.

The migrants are young people aged between 18 and 34 (82%); only 7% have dependants, so we can say there is a migration of lone individuals, not whole families; this means that they are not going to settle down in UK.

What was the impact of emigration on the labor market in Poland? First, there has been an export of unemployment; however, losing labor force has an impact on demographic policies. A significant part of the emigrants were highly educated people, generating a brain-drain effect. Secondly, there is the seasonal migration, of Polish migrants in Germany; bilateral agreements between Poland – Germany has made this process easy; in 2004, in Germany were 330.000 seasonal migrants, the vast majority being Polish, working in agriculture. This process has been a way to help poor Polish people to get an income.

Seasonal migrants, 1995 – 2001. The probability of finding a seasonal job in Germany discourages people to look for a stable job in Poland. The effect of exporting unemployment is limited to some groups of people. In the 1980s, there have been 700000 emigrants 15% with high degree (7% of the population). In 2000, according to OECD, most of the Polish expats had secondary education (42%). The brain overflow process refers to people who are mobile, but in many cases, they cannot find a job at home. The brain-drain process, after 2004, had occurred in the same specializations. The rate of unemployment is 16% in Poland; there are sectors with labor shortages, hence the need for immigrants. In UK the labor migration has produced the brain-waste process; the twenty-eight most important occupations for immigrants in the EU8 are the *3D jobs*: Dirty, Difficult and Dangerous.

In conclusion, first, it can be said that the migration occurs due to lack of opportunities; secondly, it produces labor shortages in some specializations; thirdly, In UK the labor migration has produced the brain-waste process.

Zaiga Krisjane, University of Latvia, Department of Human Geography:

New trends of international migration in Latvia

Latvia is an emigration-dominant country, due to political, social and economic influences. There has been a decrease in migration from 1990 to 2005. In 1997 the citizenship' law has been changed, making it easier to obtain it. The migration to the East countries became weaker, many people go illegally. Most of the Baltic states have lost population; this have a negative influence as it leads to a decrease in the fertility rate of the country. Main destination of long-term migration: Russia (70%), Germany. Outflows from Latvia in the period 1998 – 2002 reveal a new trend, as most of the persons are circulatory migrants.

The profile of the potential Latvian migrant, depicted through qualitative interviews, is young people, students, especially young men with tertiary education; also, from rural parts, with no jobs; they migrate on a short period (there is a problem of data validity, as they rely on the opinion of the person interviewed). Main destinations: UK (48%); Ireland (31%); Sweden (6%); Germany (16%). The reason why a large number of people immigrate to UK is that children learn English in school and there is a more positive attitude in the destination country; with Germany there are close cultural similarities.

Currently there is a demand for migrants due to fast economic increase in Latvia; in some branches, like in construction, there are labor shortages. Also, the population aging affects the provision of services. Russians are the most welcomed immigrants because of the similar ethnic structure, the existence of relatives.

Katerina Janku, University of Ostrava, Department of Social Geography and Regional Development, PhD Student

Monetary and non-monetary remittances with marginalized emigrants' families

The term "remittances" is usually used in economic discourses on migration. It denotes monetary transfers from working migrants to relatively poorer environments they emigrated from. The author propose to use term remittances in broader, than only monetary sense, in the meaning that the perspective of transnational/state/local-ism uses. The study regards remittances in a broader context, in families, not only for individuals and as a two-way money-flow.

The study focuses on Czech Roma ethnics who are asylum seekers and their relatives. The research had two locations: Toronto, 2000 and Czech Republic, in 2003-2004. The research method uses unstructured interviews by visiting households, with presence at special events.

Remittances" are a tool of strategic reproduction of the trans-local family. Families/ adult men and women, children, adolescent and seniors are trying to keep and ameliorate its social position through strategies of reproduction. The trigger of remittances is the physical distance and social-cultural distance in the everyday life. Remittances are moments of overstepping these distances, temporary relief.

Home-community gives

Money as help to figure debts back in Czech; Money to pay a flat to be kept while others went away; Video tapes as a way to keep in touch; Czech football team dresses as presents; Identity for Canada-born kid baptized in Czech; Social ties for Canada-born kid who's celebration of babtization; Medicaments as domestic products; Symbol of continuity of identity; Visits to look after kids; Housing for visits; Visits to deal with homesickness of both parts

Immigrant-community gives

Money in a place of birthday present; Money for buy ½ half of pig; Video tapes as a way to keep in touch; Cloths as presents; Cloths as material support; Beddings as material support; Symbol of perspective of family upgrading development; Phone calls as catch-up with daily routine; Service for relatives who came to make some money; Housing for visits; Visits to deal with homesickness of both parts; Strategic information about migration and settling-up possibilities.

Ethnographic perspective on migration – can the „voice of the underground“ that is being transferred and interpreted by scientists actually influence the debates and decisions on immigration and economic politics that so severely influence (immigrants’) daily reality?

Topic IV- *Migration and New European Identities*

The presentation of Mr. Traian Chebeleu followed the topic of European Identity. The question that remains is which are the borders of Europe? During the Cold War Europe was considered to be the Western states but now the concept of European Identities can be applied to Balkans states and also to Turkey and Ukraine which are taken under consideration for the European citizenship in the future. Therefore, the European identities are defined not only by the geographical component but also by the concept of migration and mobility.

European identity is defined by the fundamental rights and it is on the basis of a liberal democracy which have been taken to the extent of political identity. Furthermore, EU identity means cooperation between the states members and exchange in order to build this identity that represents a commonly accepted set of norms and values.

The critics of Europeanization process are pressuring the EU decision makers because they believe that the role of the EU identity is over emphasizing. The main argument is represented by the economical factors that attract the phenomenon of migration. This argument can not be ignored since migration is a permanent and continues element of European growth. That is why a program to sensitize the public opinion has been conceived called *Promoting the Human Face of Migration* and also an international law has been adopted and supported by the Migration Agency.

UNESCO, which deals with problems regarding EU identity, promotes the values and the respect between nations on the cultural heritage and multicultural diversity. One of the programs is dedicated to prevent illegal migration.

The discussions were mostly based on the Romanian situation, the consequences of migrants in Spain and Italy, where Romanians are constituted in a large number and the absence of real data of their actual figure. The consequence of the Romanians working abroad on Romanian economy the situation of remittances and the unemployment rate in Romania which is under EU average, somewhere between 5% and 6%.

The questions that have been raised were concerning the future of migration of Romanians now that they have been accepted into the EU that will transform their status from migration to mobility. Although, Romania will be a member state from January 2007, it is the other states experience such as Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia that the ex-migrants will continue to be preserved as outsiders in Western Europe. The EU policies try to regulate the migration flows by imposing policies for a number of years 2, 3 plus 2 years for the labor market in old member states. EU legislation is to certain extent based on resistance, which has also been the case to the debates that followed after Mr. Traian Chebeleu presentation.

Ms. Zaiga Krisjane from Latvia stated that being an EU member they do not need working permits in several countries, the most popular among Latvians being Ireland

where they are allowed to apply for social security after one year of paying taxes and working there.

The experience of the 2004 EU member states differs from one state to another, therefore the comers Bulgaria and Romania will have a different status than the states that have been accepted two years earlier.

In Slovenia one of the major problems involving migration phenomenon is represented by the political asylum which is a problem that has not been solved although there are several NGO's and Ministers that are dealing with this issue. The lack of good communication between NGO's and Ministers affects the outcome of the migration process. Most of these problems concerning political asylum are very common within the new member states but also in countries with a long tradition and economical prosperity like Sweden. The future of Europe is uncertain concerning migration vs. mobility.

The guest from France, Laetitia Duval has argued there is considerable debate over the impact of immigration on destination countries, but the economists find a lot of positive gains for the countries of arrival. However, she mentioned that sometimes the public opinion of the Western Europe, e.g. French society, perceives migrations from East as something undesirable and worry about that. Laetitia Duval believes that researchers should not ignore to consider this fact. The position of Ms. Duval has launched a debate, among the participants, on how migrants should be treated in the Western Europe. For instance, Ms. Katerina Janku from the Czech Republic argued that we can not call ourselves truly liberal until we will be able to accept migration and mobility as a good thing and when the Prime-minister of Czech Republic will be a Romanian or a Gypsy. Only then we will be able to say we are living in a democratic society and people move from one place to another and what is important is their working capacity not their nationality.

V. *How to network? Perspectives for a future cooperation.*

The discussions of this topic had a central theme the finding of the solutions of further cooperation and interaction. To further this aim the participants were requested to fill in questionnaires with the following questions:

- a. Please express your opinion on the topic and on the academic level of the seminar.
- b. If and how do you think that you can involve in and contribute to the building of the network on the migration issue.
- c. Could you take the responsibility to prepare the materials which are to be published on the site on a monthly updating?
- d. Could you suggest some partners from your country in order to obtain European grants and funds?
- e. Could you take the responsibility of finding partners (public institutions, universities, NGOs, media, etc.) from your country in order to enlarge the network?

In conclusion, after the centralization of the answers, for the second and third phases of the project, the most of the participants have expressed their interest on

a further collaboration and willingness to participate in the experts' network on migration. Also, they expressed their intention on finding new partners to enlarge the network and to contribute to the electronic journal on migration.