

# Youths on labour market. Features. Particularities. Pro-mobility factors for graduates. Elements of a balanced policy for labour migration<sup>1</sup>

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**A***bstract.* The youths' labour market, and especially insertion employment has a series of particularities defined by aspects such as: flexibility, efficient employment, interest for career but also informal employment, external mobility, including brain drain, segmentation, employment precariousness, income disadvantages, etc. Therefore, also the labour market policy and particularly managing labour mobility especially through the economic and social effects that might be triggered on the local labour market in the origin country, presents a special importance under the conditions of the economic turnaround stage, by promoting new and sustainable jobs, based on knowledge and competences. In the present paper an analysis is made about the youths' labour market features, and the outcomes of an empirical analysis about graduates' migration propensity are presented. Suggestions are made for developing a balanced policy for youths' labour mobility to the benefit of the country of origin.

*Keywords:* youth employment, labour force mobility, labour migration/mobility management

*JEL Classification:* J48, J61, J53

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## Introduction

The economic-financial crisis of the last years affected the labour market for young graduates. Does this mean precariousness or flexibility? On one hand the numbers of young unemployed increased, the graduates' employment rate decreased, and on the other hand part-time, temporary employment is associated with the creation of new "niche" jobs for those with middle- and higher education, including young graduates.

At the same time, youths are more mobile on the labour market, frequently change their job while searching for advantages in career development and/or some of a financial nature and spend shorter time as unemployed between two jobs (men are more mobile and find quicker another job, just as tertiary education graduates have a higher employability).

Youths are the most mobile segment of migrating population, especially with respect to external migration. Aspirations related to incomes and professional career and the relative independence against family (single, without children) make them to show more openness for far away jobs, if these satisfy their expectations. Propensity to migrate of young graduates depends on opportunities for career advancement, attractiveness of the local labour market in the country of origin, and on the comparative restrictions/disadvantages – wage, living costs, type of employment, but also on external factors such as co-residence with parents and internal migration.

On the other hand, the situation of youths on labour market is difficult as they are regarded as a vulnerable group: they face more difficulties in finding a job due to the lack of work experience.

The risk of the precarious employment trap has increased for young people during the period of economic decline, and the lack of labour market flexibility in Romania led to informal employment in the country and temporary international migration/mobility, associated or not with informal employment. The youths' labour market in Romania is atypical against the one of other EU member countries, including the new members – for instance, in the year 2009, the share of temporary contracts in percentage of total employees between 15 and 24 years old represented 3.7 percents as against EU 27 level of 40.2% (EC, *Employment in Europe 2010*, p. 125).

The life model of youths in Romania is not preponderantly based on employment during university studies, as they are integrated into the parents' household and benefit from the necessary financial support to continue studies. Yet, there is a

low, but relatively increasing segment of youths who during studies obtain incomes from labour but their largest share is present in informal employment (in Romania only a low share of youths are employed during university studies and only few, by exception, during the upper-secondary studies).

These particular aspects of young labour force mobility requires adequate policies for attracting and stabilising them on local/national labour market that, on one hand should be adequate for their aspirations and potential, and on the other hand would allow for efficient employment within the real economy, with marginal positive benefits, both for employer and beneficiary, by a balanced management of mobility for employment.

### **Features of youths' presence on labour market. Flexibility vs. precariousness**

Young individuals' employment is much more volatile than the one of mature labour force. *Youths' labour market is characterised by decent employment deficit, jobs number decrease, employment precariousness (increase in the number of part-time jobs, and of temporary employment) and diminishing wages.* Youths' are faced also with increased difficulties on entering the labour market considering that during economic expansion there already were problems in creating jobs for them. The lack of employment prospects affects/compromises the labour market route and career development. Moreover, *unemployment among youths has specific vulnerabilities – increased sensitivity to economic activity variations, difficulty in creating new jobs for young people, longer unemployment periods, and easier entry into the informal labour market, which turns into a true refuge, particularly for graduates.* Romania is among the EU Member States with the highest unemployment rate among youths (about 3 times higher than the general unemployment rate) and an increase is expected. The crisis continues to “generate” precarious jobs for youths, poorly remunerated, often below their skill level, triggering loss/depreciation of competencies, long-term unemployment and discouragement, and increased poverty incidence.

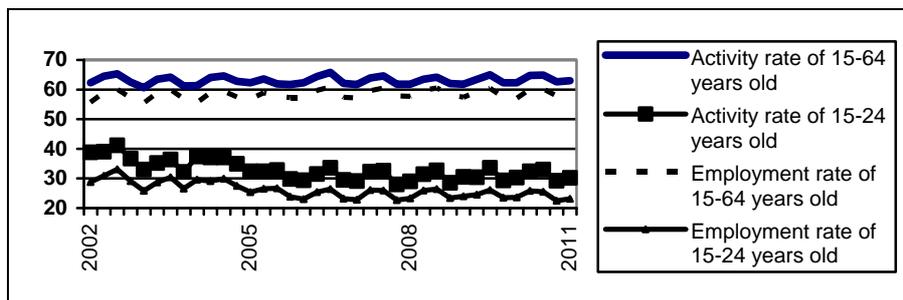
On the labour market there is a significant numerical and structural deficit between supply (outcome of education for vocational training) and demand (the necessities on the national labour market), amplified in certain fields by the free movement of persons (attractiveness of some well-paid jobs, not necessarily in the same field of training), so that a significant deficit of skilled personnel emerges in fields such as constructions, industry, services,

including health-care, while on the European labour market our citizens deliver preponderantly low/unskilled labour.

Because of the above briefly summarised considerations, and not only, the youths' labour market is different as challenges and restrictions being more vulnerable to the "attractiveness" of migration. In the following we shall present some features of this market that justify and also stimulate temporary and potentially definitive mobility of labour, on medium and long term.

The activity rate and employment rate of youths aged between 15 and 24 years is lower than the national average due to: smaller population cohorts (as a result of demographic decline), of extending the period of studies, of the weak employment attractiveness provided on the market and of the national employment model that does not promote youth employment during studies, but as an exception. As a result the two rates are placed by over 30 pp under the general average<sup>1</sup>.

*Youth activity rate and employment rate, 2002-2009*



*Source: Labour force in Romania – Employment and unemployment – Q II 2009, NIS.*

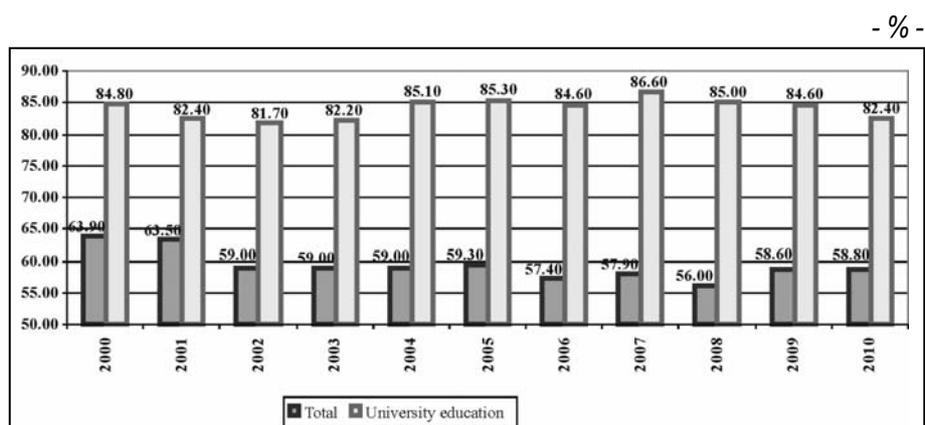
If we analyse the **employment rate by educational levels** for the population aged between 15 and 64 years we find as a trend of the last decade the diminution in the indicator value for those with upper-secondary and higher education, hence the labour market has losses with respect to labour force quality due to the higher adaptability for atypical employment channels, that is

<sup>1</sup> By the Lisbon objectives, the employment rate of working-age population in 2008 places Romania at a difference of 11 pp (70%) and for women at a difference of 7.5 pp (60% objective).

informal economy and external mobility. By field, the young individuals between 15 and 24 years are employed preponderantly in constructions, trade, hotels and restaurants, and those in the 25 to 34 age group in real estate transactions and trade. Men are more numerous in all socio-professional categories, partially justified also by the favourable period in women's life for having children, hence the lower share of participation to labour market.

At an employment rate of the working-age population (15-64 years) of about 59%, in 2010, 24.3% of the youths (15-24 years) were employed. The highest employment level is among higher education graduates (82.4%) for the same period and decreases to about 43% for those with low training levels.

#### Employment rate in total population and employment rate of those with higher education in the 15 to 64 age group



Source: AMIGO Survey 2001-2010, NIS.

Secondary education graduates have an employment rate varying on average around the national values, the employment rate in the rural area being in reverse proportion to the training level in the case of studies at pre-university level, as the opportunities provided in the rural environment occur in activities developed within agriculture (either paid or unpaid). The estimates (CEDEFOP 2008) show that up to 2015, approximately 30% of the jobs will require higher education and almost 50% at least upper-secondary education, with a significant decrease in number of jobs that require low skills levels.

Professional insertion of a graduate is strongly influenced by the school in which he/she studied, the field of study, the region's economic development level, the firms/companies where he/she developed internship, or worked during the period of studies, the recruitment companies where he/she sustained interviews, and attended conferences and trainings, etc. Occupational guidance already during upper-secondary education of youths towards the professional profile and choice of higher education training depending on the intended trade/profession for career development trigger higher employment rates for graduates and relatively shorter time of seeking a job "adequate/corresponding" to individual aspirations. From this perspective, the employment opportunity is in reverse proportion to the sum of the self-imposed restrictions of the graduate. This is also the reason why in 2010 for youths (15 to 24 years of age) the long-term unemployment rate (unemployment for six months and over) was 13.0% (10.3% in 2009), and the long-term unemployment incidence among young people 58.8% (49.5% in 2009), at an average unemployment rate of 7.3% in total (in 2009, 6.9%), and 22.1% among those aged between 15 and 24 years (in 2009, 20.8%). In 2011, the values of these indicators continues to deteriorate: the ILO total unemployment rate in Q1 of 2011 was 7.6%, and for youths aged between 15 and 24 years 23.6%.

In case of analysing the insertion rate of higher education graduates, this one is lower as compared to the average situation per total young people who take a job, and particularly for the first year after graduation, since a higher education graduate will search more and be more pretentious about the workplace – under the aspect of the professional profile of the job, but also regarding the provided remuneration level (very often much lower than the expectations of the graduates). Even if the state provides for fiscal facilities for youth employment (for instance, the employer shall receive for a period of 12 months the minimum wage in the economy), due to the complementary conditions (including the obligation to remain on the same job for at least 2 years) and of the high mobility of youths seeking a job corresponding to professional aspirations, the share of them resorting to these facilities is very low.

It is also noticed that women have an approximately 30% lower employment rate as compared to men. Yet, they record an enrolment rate in upper-secondary, respectively tertiary education significantly higher than in the case of men, a situation which explains the lower employment rate specific to them (V. Vasile, 2009). In 2010, only 10.4% of the jobs taken were addressed to youths with higher education, which represented the employment of 39174 persons, that is 2.7 times less than the ones with upper-secondary and post high-school

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education. The youth under 25 years of age employed in 2010 represented about 1/10 of the total<sup>1</sup>.

On medium and long term, job safety for youth with higher-education is relatively higher, but also the opportunities for mobility based on advantages at employment are more.

In general, young graduates are considered “on insertion” in labour market because of the disadvantage of lacking experience but the relative advantages are by far superior: potentially high productivity, adaptability and novelty acceptance, theoretical knowledge, they might be regarded as “relatively cheap”, the lack of experience decreasing the level of the insertion wage towards the minimum legal limits. The disadvantage caused by the lack of experience can be relatively easy eliminated by training on the job, which depends on trade and qualification level and attracts lower or higher continuing training costs. Yet, these costs are absorbed on medium term by outcomes and individual performance, if employment motivation is given. Motivation and satisfaction on the job are very important components for graduates and young individuals in general, and therefore they become more easily unemployed and search for a relatively longer period an adequate job.

It should be mentioned that the unemployment rate for the 23-34 age group is close to the general one, which leads to the idea that youths after graduation feverishly search for a job for a short period, with frequent changes and unemployment periods alternating with employment periods, until they succeed in finding a job or migrating for employment abroad.

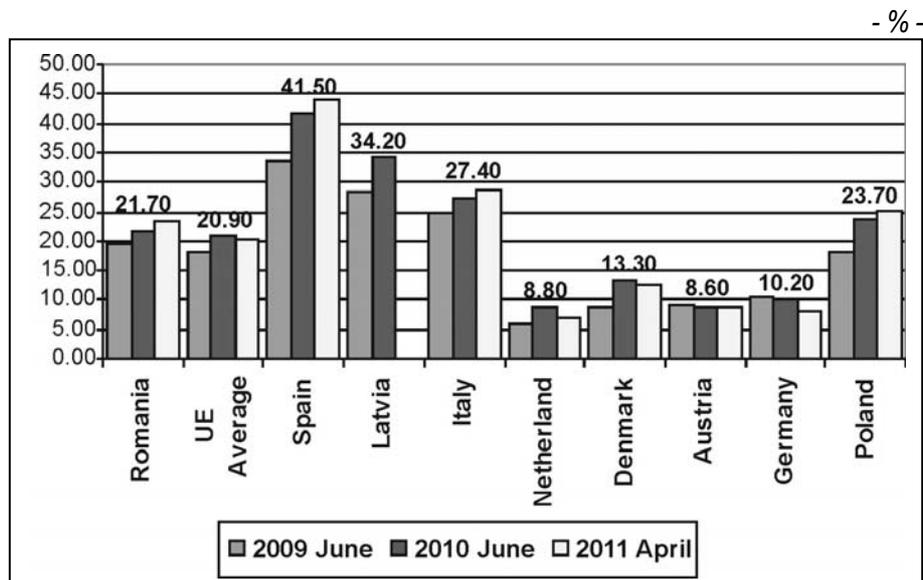
The financial crisis affected youths’ employment in all countries, but with different magnitudes depending on the intensity of economic recession and the economic development degree. Even though the youth unemployment rate was of up to 3 times higher than the national average, the share of youth in total unemployment remained relatively low, which shows the fact that young individuals have alternatives to employment much more facile and partially more attractive than other age groups, i.e. continuing studies with financial support from the family, migration for labour, or informal employment. During the crisis period, that is in 2009, Romania recorded a youths unemployment rate of 19.6%, in Spain, Latvia and Italy the same was placed between 25 and 34%, and in Poland a bit over

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<sup>1</sup> State of achieving the labour force employment programme of NALF on target groups by 31 Dec 2010, NALF, <http://www.anofm.ro/stadiul-realiz%C4%83rii-programului-de-ocupare-al-anofm-pentru-anul-2010>.

18% . If the EU-27 average and for developed countries the peak of crisis for youth employment was recorded in 2010, the situation by countries varies, depending on the encountered economic issues, the magnitude of the economic decline and the capacity of creating new jobs. In Romania, just as in Poland, Spain and Italy the employment crisis continues.

*Youth unemployment rate at the half of the period for the years 2009-2011*



Source: Eurostat on-line database – harmonized unemployment rate – age-class 15-24.

It should be mentioned that youths' labour market is faced with a much more exigent business environment, both under the aspect of potential and from the perspective of experience. If, as regards knowledge, the gaps are due to curricula non-adjustment to the dynamics of labour demand; for experience it should be mentioned that tradition in Romania is far from the model of West-European countries and the USA where youths during studies are employed in part-time or temporary system, gaining work experience, in general, or even specific to the field of professional training. Therefore, youths have more difficulties in finding a professionally and remuneratively adequate job in Romania, for which reason both fluctuation from employment to unemployment and vice-versa, and remaining for longer periods unemployed are an important barometer of the permanent

education system reform. Additionally, access to lifelong learning (LLL) and availability of employers to provide training on the job is lower during the crisis period, and young people who neither have possibilities nor wish to continue learning attempt to find a workplace, inclusively abroad. The school is less concerned in tracked studies and thematic statistical survey is realised at too long time intervals (at 10 years, AMIGO, complementary survey). The National Institute of Statistics, by a special survey in 2000 (Q III) regarding transition from school to active life, issued a true alert regarding the weak concern for retaining graduates on the national labour market and much less for involving local actors. But we can still remind the thematic studies realised by various institutions, through projects financed from domestic or international funds; yet these provide only for partial, fragmented captures related to the issue of young graduates on the labour market. Despite all deficiencies signalled already in 2000, the thematic statistical research was taken up again only in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2009. The outcomes reiterated the precarious situation of young individuals on labour market and the lack of stimuli/policies addressed directly to them, which should trigger sustainable effects in the flow from school to active life. A deficit aspect for both markets which affects the structure and profile of graduates is represented by the weak anticipatory character – the change perspectives of labour demands are not known, nor does the education system promote changes based on anticipating changes on labour market but only reacts more or less to the excess of graduates by fields, belatedly diminishing the schooling numbers for the places financed by the state budget. Currently, by the new law of education a stronger involvement of the responsible ministry for guiding graduates is attempted by fields of sciences and training levels, but it shall not be enough unless periodical researches and impact studies are promoted at least by generalising tracking studies and professional route of graduates for the first 5 years after graduation. The importance of such studies we believe is even more emphasised if we briefly present some of the outcomes of the survey, aspects that may represent push or pull factors for youths' migration.

- The inseration rate in labour market for individuals aged between 15-34 years who abandoned education, irrespectively when, in the period before the realisation of the complementary survey was of 24.4% at 6 months from abandoning education and of over 33.6% after a year since terminating studies;
- From the graduates of higher education a job had 60.9%, while, the corresponding share to those with secondary education was 35.0%, and 14.6% in the case of persons with low education level;

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- 39.6% of the persons residing in the urban area had a job, against 26.3% in the case of those from the rural area;
  - A certain form of training was pursued within the national education system by 32.9% of the persons aged between 15-34 years. Participation in education was more intense in the case of individuals aged between 15-19 years (83.3%) and for the age group 20-24 (45.6%);
  - At least one significant job had, up to the date of realising the survey, 82.0% from total youths who exited the national education system (54.9% were men and 56.8% resided in the urban area);
  - On the first job the majority of youths were employees (75.6%) and worked full-time (92.1%);
  - Between leaving school and starting activity on the first significant job 74.1% searched for a job by using active methods (directly contacting employers, or factors responsible for employment -37.9%).

Some considerations from the viewpoint of young labour force migration can be made:

- Access to higher education of youths in the rural area is about 1% for pre-university graduates and hence their propensity to migrate abroad for work in poorly skilled jobs is higher;
- Graduates from the urban area have higher expectations from the labour market – incomes and career, and therefore wait longer before finding and adequate job, change several jobs or migrate to continue studying and/or work, being much less dependent on family;
- The dynamics of the two markets under qualitative aspect is relatively similar. The survey reveals that the shares of employment and unemployment for young graduates against the age group in which they are included did not suffer significant/relevant changes – a similar situation is recorded also for the rate of advancement to higher education, which did not significantly improve. Moreover, the quality of education decreases, and young individuals are not prepared for the labour market;
- The market in Romania and youth employment still depend to a significant extent on the diploma, which is more important than proven competences and knowledge, especially in the public sector. “Learning” is done for diploma

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even if a rigidity of labour demand is noticed, i.e. an increased demand for competences, but in lack thereof, employment is made for a job requiring inferior training and/or the knowledge deficit is compensated with CVT on the job;

- The brain drain and brain shopping component in youths' mobility is more consistent and often encountered as they are mobile on larger areas and longer and/or definitive periods of time;
- The route to finalising education is relatively inflexible, with small opportunities for developing open routes of education, the option for the second change, continuing education, etc. – the cost-quality of education ratio is to the disadvantage of education, the quality of which is obviously decreasing particularly in the last years; effectively a flexible system is lacking for continuing training in a manner coherent and accessible to all, including by certification/continuing/transition from the formal system to the informal and non-formal one;
- Failing to identify adequate employment opportunities, even under the conditions of economic growth in 2000-2008, the activity rate decreased, the youths postponed entering labour market, on one hand by pursuing several faculties (sometimes in completely different fields, even without a well-defined finality of training) or continue their studies in the master/doctor studies, or on the other hand after graduation (or abandon), they activate on the black market or migrate for labour in low-skilled jobs, inferior to gained education.
- Finally, an important aspect of individual performance during active life is constituted by informal education related to the behaviour on labour market and professional development. The example of parents and extended family may define to a significant extent the behaviour on labour market of young graduates and their professional career. Youths with migrant parents understand the usefulness of gaining competences and search for performance employment in the adoption country of the parents becoming second generation migrants who gradually integrate or move on other migration routes for labour, only seldom opting to return to their country of origin, and just when the labour market can offer them adequate jobs, which is relatively increasingly difficult, as the prolonged recession, the crisis and lack of guidance in economic turnaround restrict the potential of the labour market to attract youths.

## **An Empirical Analysis of Pre-University and University Graduates' Propensity to Migrate. Characteristics by Educational Levels**

The empirical study of migration may ensure completion of the analysis regarding migration flows' structure and stocks. Because it is difficult to make a relevant survey on (either definitive or temporary) migratory population due to the lack of a relatively systematic, relevant and comprehensive database regarding migrating individuals, in our approach we decided on analysing the propensity to migration of youths in the last year of studies within the pre-university and university education (L. Vasile, 2011). Without claiming to have delivered a comprehensive study and a representative sample for the population cohort enrolled in one form or other of pre-university or university education, we consider that our approach allows for highlighting some attributes of the young population with respect to their migration potential.

Two categories of youths were considered for the analysis: a) young individuals in pre-university education, in the last year of studies, and b) students in the last year or studies within tertiary education, in the 3 years cycle. For both categories of individuals it was aimed to include in the sample those with a chance to graduate (without any left credits) before the last school semester. The analysis included students from Bucharest, and the Centre Region for which the migration propensity is somewhat higher in the case of pre-university education and from the following profiles: mathematics-computer science and economy (100 individuals filled in the questionnaire, from each town being selected 3 educational entities, to a share of 2/3 mathematics-computer science and 1/3 economy). For higher education were selected graduates from three profiles, i.e. law, economy and medical sciences, considering the opportunities provided by the European market for these professions. In total, 400 filled-in questionnaires were processed, the integral response rate to the questionnaire being of 58% for pre-university education and 84% for higher education. Contrary to the empirical researches based on representative samples, in our research we pursued to make a well-defined structure of respondents available. The research developed in two stages, one in 2007 and one in 2010, both being done in the month March for the respective year of analysis. The 2010 questionnaire included 4 additional questions regarding the migration trend during a period of crisis.

The questions contained by the questionnaire referred to several analysis levels, respectively:

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- a) Migration for continuing studies associated with temporary work during the period of studies;
  - b) The definitive/temporary migration trend for labour depending on the profile of the graduated school;
  - c) Purpose of labour migration: economic comfort, career development, etc.;
  - d) Degree of migration opportunities knowledge, the specific conditions, the rights of the migrating population, etc.;
  - e) Personal expectations;
  - f) Crisis impact on the individual migration decision.

The limits to our analysis were the following:

- From the category of respondents were discarded those with uncertain school situation regarding their perspective to graduate (those with remaining credits were excluded, eliminating thus the component of “maladjusted” and of the ones who wish only “a diploma/a paper” that would serve them, eventually, to find a job;
- The limited sphere of professions/specialties on graduation, due mainly to the difficulties of using a questionnaire;
- For analysis only the integrally completed questionnaires were retained and they were applied to a sample differing in size, the purpose being to pursue a certain “balanced” socio-professional structure on educational levels, i.e. 100 respondents each by educational levels, from the two locations, and within their interior a structure considered by us as balanced by educational profile;
- For higher education respondents were selected from the final year of the Bologna cycle, as in 2007 we were unable to select master graduates for all three profiles – legal, economic and medical – and on the other hand due to the high fragmentation of specialties for master courses.
- Half of the questions were open questions, in order to give respondents the opportunity to express their option comprehensively; such answers were harder to make a statistical inventory of, yet they allowed underpinning qualitative aspects that will be presented in the following; 40% were multiple-choice questions.

As a result of analysing the 400 completed questionnaires, some different characteristics can be extracted, differing by education levels and specialties:

- Youths within pre-university education have higher education readiness but are less informed about conditions, perspectives, issues that might emerge etc. They are mainly oriented to trades “on demand” with low qualification levels, which provide the opportunity of incomes without showing much concern for the professional perspective. Continuing education represents an alternative only to the extent to which parents have the necessary financial resources for supporting them during higher education. The costs of university education in Romania is prohibitive for the majority of respondents (83%), and only less than 10% consider that they might obtain a scholarship.
- For higher education respondents, the migration perspective is much more fragmented by self-restrictions and expectations and differs significantly by the professional profile; they are also more affected in their decisions by the crisis and its effects and have more determination in deciding for mobility conditioned by incomes and only thereafter by profession. There is still much confusion regarding diploma acknowledgement/recognition and the perspectives for master and doctor studies abroad. They are poorly informed about the advantages/disadvantages of entering the labour market just with higher education graduation and/or with master degree.
- Both categories consider that the perspective of a professional career provides for more certainty of employment abroad, yet they are ready to migrate for labour “in any acceptable conditions” for gaining experience on the labour market.
- Both categories consider that in the period of crisis and the period after recession, the Romanian labour market is less attractive from the perspective of incomes and only those with financial support from their parents are willing to wait for identifying an “advantageous” job.
- The career takes second place for most (78%), the main reasons being related to financial constraints.
- Against 2007, the migration propensity for labour is lower among those in higher education and relatively constant for those in pre-university education.
- The propensity for continuing training in a higher education form increases among graduates of higher education (acknowledging the necessity of master studies), and most of them consider that employment during studies abroad is a condition in order to survive.

- There is poor information about the perspectives for studying abroad and obtaining scholarships, only a low number of youths showing actual interest and being informed in this respect – about 7% of the higher education graduates can build in the future the highly-skilled staff, who are potential “candidates” for brain drain.

The main results obtained by processing the questionnaires based on the 6 modules of questions are the following:

For the module *“Migration for continuing studies associated with temporary labour during studies”*:

- Several higher education graduates intend to take master studies abroad and are ready to work during studies (69%), yet only 34% have made steps to this end (contacting universities, filling in applications, identifying opportunities, etc.);
- By profiles, the lack of successful career prospects in the country is increasingly marked for medical students (86%), followed by law students (63%), and finally economics students (58%);
- The solution of foreign companies as employers in the country is preferred by economists (91%), who are willing to stay in Romania; the medical graduates prefer two extreme alternatives: either to finalise their training in Romania and thereafter seek employment abroad below their profession (28%), or they prefer to work abroad under their training level (medical nurse, or other profession) and gradually validate their studies (as the case may be), and continue studying abroad, with weak return prospects (17%);
- Pre-university graduates are tempted to temporarily work abroad by postponing studies are giving up studying altogether (42%).

For the module *“Trend to definitive/temporary migration for labour depending on the profile of graduated school”*:

- For pre-university education there is no clear-cut dependency, only the intention to migrate can be extracted, but without students being knowledgeable, or undertaking steps in this respect (85% declare they are willing to leave if a favourable opportunity appears);
- Higher education graduates are more selective, they look for employment in their field of training (41%), and prefer the business environment for employment (54%), but they are not ready to develop entrepreneurial activities, for lack of financing (81%);

- Law graduates prefer a job within the organisational structures of the EU, and medical graduates look for jobs in countries where medical experts are sought for;
- Economists are less pretentious regarding clear matching of employment to the pursued specialised profile.

The module *“The migration for work purpose”*:

- For all categories the main motivation remains the economic one (78%), followed by the one regarding the lack of perspectives for a decent life in Romania (48%), and the professional motivation (39%);
- Pre-university graduates show no preference about the type of job, employment form, and field of activity, the level of incomes being decisive in 69% of the cases;
- Higher education graduates consider migration for work as the second solution to employment, the first being a well-paid job in Romania, and in parallel with continuing studies, family comfort during the beginning stage on labour market, and the financial supplement for continuing studies being the determinant elements; still, about 1/3 of the students state that they already work, but only 20% from them have advancement perspectives in career with the same workplace after graduation, the rest opting for changing the job.

The module *“Knowledge degree of migration opportunities, of specific conditions, of migrant population rights, etc.”*:

- Only 23% are familiar with the available information channels for possible employment abroad, the majority being in higher education (EURES network, periodical job fairs, online recruitment companies, etc.); “the social network” of information is a modality preferred by pre-university graduates;
- Only 15% are aware of labour market features in another potential destination country, the social protection and insurance system, the on-the-job exigencies, etc., and 10% know/have access to information on the sites of MMFPS/ANOFM with presentations of the country’s labour market;
- About 30% have family members, or know individuals/families that were/are working abroad.

The module *“Individual expectations from migration/mobility”*:

- 70% of respondents wish for “a better life” which presupposes “a good wage, better than in Romania”;

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- Only 15% have their life course already planned ahead and are consistent in achieving it, which implies also professional mobility in the EU area and not only for gaining experience;
  - 28% plan for a professional career abroad according to the university training profile, and have already undertaken steps to this end: applications for continuing studies, information and/or applications for employment in the future profession.

The module “*Crisis impact on individual migration decisions*”:

- The majority of respondents state that the period of crisis diminished employment prospects but intensified the intention of migration for incomes;
- 58% are disappointed with the lack of opportunities on the national labour market and 80% consider that obtaining a good job in Romania presupposes “acquaintances” and “intermediation”;
- 70% regard labour migration, on medium term as a solution at personal level for performance employment;
- 90% consider continuing studies as a form of postponing the confrontation on labour market, but 45% of them would give up studying anytime if opportunity shows up for working abroad, even for shorter periods of time (6 months, one year);
- 55% consider that “the social network” can be a support for facilitating integration with the labour market in the host country, but only if there are friends, relatives included in the network, considering that the Romanians are divided abroad and do not support enough each other.

These results, under the restriction that they do not represent the outcome of a survey on a representative sample, allow for highlighting the multiple facets of labour mobility and increasingly consistent (self) restrictions assumed by youths in their decisions to migrate. They consider mobility as an efficient employment opportunity and their vast majority is ready to make use of these opportunities. The remaining restrictions are financial and social (they prefer to leave in a smaller group rather than alone), and are less confident in the solid turnaround chances of the Romanian economy, which they regard as less friendly for young graduates.

## **Support elements for a balanced management of youths' mobility for labour**

Migration for labour as multinational process can be managed by efficiently correlated management at international, national and local level which would aim to maximise advantages for all involved actors and should consider their fluid character and dynamics, the permanently changing features. The policies in the field should be hence flexible, strongly influenced by the evolutions in the world economy, the political circumstances, the influence of various factors: natural, social, etc.

Individuals' mobility in the last decades was based on creating networks of migrant workers, in association with or independent of the Diaspora present in the respective regions. These networks of migrant workers have influenced increasingly the political decisions in the field and have supported also the development of some economic cooperation and assistance systems for the countries of origin. Moreover, the development and modernisation of communication and transportation network have facilitated spatial connections between individuals, generating the "transnational migration space"<sup>1</sup>. This expanded substantially the mobility area of workers who could transit between several locations.

Despite these openings, only some states have developed coherent strategies and policies in the field of migration, and one with significant migration flows supported only by legal provisions encounter difficulties in efficiently managing migration. Migration management, ignored in the period of the last decades appears as necessary for limiting the negative externalities it triggers – abuses, discrimination, modern exploitation, etc. Some experts have even called the period of the seventies up to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century "the quarter century of lacking management in the field of migration" (IOM). The last decade, particularly the period of crisis defined the need of an articulate management of workers' migration, especially for the young, highly-skilled ones, with professions and specialisations adequate to the new fields of inter- and trans-disciplinary activity, based on a coherent structure of policies. Long distance mobility and

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<sup>1</sup> The transnational migration space includes not only individuals' mobility but also the information flows, competences and remittances. The acceptance of double citizenship, multiple ownership in several states, and citizens' rights enjoyed during residence in the host country have expanded the meaning of member of a state, and developed, for instance, the European citizenship.

illegal migration associated with informal employment represent the huge challenges of the current international labour market. Mobility towards more prosperous regions is a characteristic of geographic expansion of humanity and will continue, yet other manifestation forms, a stimulating factor being represented by the development of international businesses (multinational and transnational corporations), which supported professional mobility, free movement of persons along with the other categories of capital. Migration management becomes thus a requirement for sustainable development and eco-development at local/national/regional level. Due to the complexity of the labour migration phenomenon, no “standard” policies can be developed for balancing international demand and supply for labour. Bilateral regulations between countries represent an important step in regulating migration routes. The second important step is defining the duration and form of migration, on which the necessity of complementary support policies both in the origin and host country depends. The Tampere Programme (1999) and subsequently the The Hague Programme (2005) identified, among others, the need of a partnership between the country of origin and the host country for managing migration flows, and in 2008 the importance of joint, integrated policies for promoting legal migration and integration, migration control, migration and development, etc. (Strengthening the Global Approach to Migration, 2008), based on inter-governmental cooperation was emphasised. The EU policy in the field of migration is based on promoting new technologies, security and cooperation and has in view 4 central fields of interest: a) policies for the good management of legal migration; b) strengthening measures against illegal migration; c) stimulating the identification and valuing of positive synergies between migration and development; d) integration of migrants. These policies are reflected in the European Union directives, but also in the strategies and programmes adopted in the field of migration. They take into account a coordinated approach to the migration issues, both of legal and illegal migration to the benefit of the European Union countries, but also of the supplying countries.

Facilitating mobility as an instrument of policy in promoting employment on the EU market by the Blue Card visas, after the Green Card model of the United States, attracts top professionals, especially young individuals: “we send a rather clear signal with the help of the Blue Card visas. Highly-skilled workers are welcome in the EU” (Barosso, J.M. President of the EC, 2008). The Blue Card programmes open a new way towards the EU, but the 27 immigration systems shall continue to exist. The EU states have now the most advantageous system of obtaining highly-skilled foreign workers. The crisis represented an opportunity for restructuring immigration policies for labour, increasing cooperation between

countries in the field and refining measures depending on the development priorities of the states/regions. In this context policy measures may be mentioned such as:

- identifying the specific demand by trades and professions for labour force at local level and stimulating the coverage of chronic deficits by migrant workers;
- sustaining legal migration and stimulating employers in using preponderantly recorded migrant workers;
- involving social partners' organisations in promoting legal migration;
- monitoring law enforcement for migrant workers in order to comply with legal work conditions, and national employment laws should incorporate provisions of international standards ratified by host countries.

## **Conclusions**

Migration management in the last period was more visible in the immigration countries for the labour force having as purpose to cover the deficits of labour and policies of social integration for migrant workers and their families. In the countries of departure, the emigration policy was especially a reflex of the immigration policies in the host countries or an answer at organisational level for enforcing international and regional agreements, focused on intermediation and facilitation of mobility.

Integration of migrant workers into labour market in the host country and local community represents important components of the integrated management of migration. It presupposes the correlation with other types of policies, respectively protection of human rights, the non-discrimination policy, the local/national/regional employment policy, social policies, social security and stability, public health, education, active citizenship, and economic development policies, in the context of sustainable development and environmental protection. But economic and social integration of the new migrants presupposes also the education of community's members, expressed in promoting inclusive behaviours, by understanding the comparative advantages that are provided by the migrant population for local progress and economic and social welfare of the community.

Due to the increased importance of migration for labour, the integrated management of migration, component of permanent/definitive migrants' integration remains relevant, but significant through the multiple effects become temporary, short-term, circular and multidirectional migration. The flexible and

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response management represent two very important sides of integrated management. Contrary to many opinions regarding the negative impact of migrants on labour market – competition for natives, or pressure on unemployment and, hence diminution of incomes, etc. – migrant workers are distributed, as a rule, in fields of activity and professions that have deficits on the national market – constructions, household services, health care system.

Immigration management is defined increasingly clearly by the national strategies adopted by member states (including Romania through recent adoption, in 2011, of the national strategy regarding immigration), and the orientations at the EU level. Yet, what is lacking currently is the policy of retaining skilled and highskilled labour force in the countries of origin, on the national markets. All countries are faced with exiting flows of young labour force, which is not compensated by entry flows (through immigration), yet the performance differences, of the quality of human capital that is leaving, against the entering one is more pregnant in less developed countries, including Romania. The loss of labour potential does not define only the potential GDP decrease, but also additional costs and net negative externalities – waste of investment in education, erosion of old-age public insurance systems, health insurance and unemployment ones, etc. In our opinion we consider as too much luxury for Romania the indifferent practical policy regarding the employment of young graduates, both the direct one due to weak development of some economic, financial and social support instruments for increasing the attractiveness of jobs' supply, and the indirect one of poorly coordinated national/local demographic, educational and entrepreneurship and national investment support policies, etc. Under the conditions in which the economic environment becomes hostile because of lack of coherence and adequate employment policies, due to exacerbated valences of market (self)regulation to the detriment of some strategies and clear directions of local development, external mobility for labour of young individuals represents short time answer and a multiplied loss on medium- and long-term, a self-limitation, a deliberate sanctioning of the future economic and social growth and development chances.

Free movement remains a fundamental right of the citizen, but failure to promote attractive policies of retention constitutes a lack of civic responsibility, and not only. For emigration countries, management of migration for labour by exit flows must constitute a strategic concern of valuing the national labour potential and of ensuring remittance incomes, effective value added of the national education system. The investment in education transferred to other markets, even through the system of remittances return does not compensate, the net loss being higher

as the education level of the migrant worker increases. Moreover, the risk of migration for labour turning into permanent fixture, leads on long-term loss at GDP level, and of the national demand of goods and services, but also to demographic loss which accentuates the structural deficits of labour resources by age groups and professional profiles.

In this context, migration management presupposes adequate policies of employment of graduates in attractive jobs that would allow for career development and, implicitly, remaining in the country, but also policies for returning to the country of origin after vocational improvement or temporary migration, in order to recover at least partially the potential labour force loss and the investment in education.

The return the country of origin represents first of all an increased pressure on the labour force supply, a potential increase in the unemployment rate, but can also represent also an advantage, at least at two levels:

if the intention is to continue activity as employee, the added experience, the work habits, including theoretical knowledge and practical skills may be put to good use through employment and leads, implicitly, to increasing labour performance and higher unitary value added. Also, the flexibility and openness towards accepting and valuing technological progress facilitates technological renewal and process and product innovation, or even technological innovation;

if the migrant workers return to the country of origin and opt for entrepreneurship and developing their own business, then on medium- and long-term the employment potential increases by creating new jobs based on business development, with important effects on restructuring economic activities and increasing the competitiveness of the country of origin economies. As self-employed or as entrepreneur, the migrant worker has triggering effects both in the area of employment and at educational level (young graduates, particularly highly-skilled, are more attracted to business/new activities based on high-tech, to niche activities and performance workers are permanently concerned by adjustment to/upgrading knowledge for efficiently answering future challenges of the job generated by technological and nanotechnology progress).

As a result, the pressure on labour market, which is present even through unemployment rate, is counter-balanced by the natural competition process, of selection and recruitment which forces towards a qualitative supply on labour market based both on knowledge and on working habits certified by the practice abroad (if exercised in the same profession it is more important) and on orientation towards new jobs that help to overcome the recession.

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To the policies promoted by the immigration countries, the emigration policies have developed mitigation policies – either completion ones (assistance for migrants returning to their country of origin), or of similar restrictions, which would diminish the impact on unemployment in the countries of origin and on the social assistance and insurance systems.

The adopted categories of measures refer to:

- support policies for employment and vocational training (for unskilled or low-skilled workers) for migrant workers returning to their country – Moldova and Nepal;
- granting credits for initiating businesses for migrant workers returning to their country, Mexico, India (the Kerala province);
- information campaigns or “crisis centres” – Poland, Uzbekistan;
- similar measures for halting immigration of persons in countries facing important flows of return (restrictions on entering of the low-skilled migrants, changing conditions for granting visas and work permits, the obligation of employment for at least the minimum wage; halting the granting of work permits, or their renewal for foreign workers; conditioning employment on accepting first native labour force).

Save for particular situations, such as the one generated by the recent crisis, the countries of origin are permanently faced with the “spontaneous” return of migrant workers, which is voluntary, not conditioned by administrative measures (finalising the specialisation/studies abroad, finalising the labour contract without renewal or subsequent return over a certain period of time, voluntarily renouncing the job abroad for various reasons, etc.). Therefore, in the countries of origin are required adequate policies of professional and social (re)insertion for them.

For good return migration management in the countries of origin must developed measures on one hand for preventing sudden and immediate return, and on the other hand, for managing return on expiry of the labour period, respectively:

- maintaining official, regulated migration channels, by ensuring the compliance with the rights of migrant workers in the country of destination;
- informing potential migrants on the characteristics of the labour market in the country of destination;
- second chance for migrant workers which returned forcibly in the country of origin;

- supporting entrepreneurial and counselling initiatives for starting up business for migrant workers returning in the country, including here by credits for supplementing the start-up financing of the business.

A new mechanism promoted by the states in the field and proven during the period of crisis was represented by the conclusion of bilateral agreements, with or without assistance from international institutions in the field for developing professional and social reinsertion programmes in the country of origin for the migrant workers, also by attracting national social partners and the private business environment.

Labour force mobility is therefore acknowledged as major contributor to better functioning of the labour market, on short, medium, and long term. In accordance with the flexicurity policy strategies can be developed for “balancing” mobility for labour, by facilitating any forms of voluntary mobility, from non-employment to precarious employment to a safe, sustainable workplace that would allow for career performance and progress. Equal opportunities and less discriminating policies for the payment of migrant workers may bring, on medium and long term higher profitability to employers and financial flows to the local/national budgets from dues and direct and indirect taxes corresponding to incomes from labour. Thus sustainable win-win schemes can be promoted and the risk of poverty reduced for employed workforce.

As possible measures for promoting balanced mobility we can mention:

- modernising employment public services by changing them into agencies for promoting performance employment by mobility;
- creating/promoting local, national, regional partnerships for supporting employment by integrating markets and supporting private employment agents;
- promoting the EURES network as key-instrument for international labour force placement in Europe.

In addition to supporting performance employment it is necessary to couple mobility policies on labour market with direct addressability policies for solving some major issues such as demographic ageing, markets’ globalisation, absorption of the technological progress by the business environment and social/cultural development, promoting green economy, with new, adequate jobs.

Supporting the restructuring processes on labour market – giving up obsolete jobs and creating some new, well-performing jobs, adequate to the economy of

the future; thus we be ensure a swifter and more efficient replacement/renewal of jobs by fields of activity, professions and occupations.

A facilitating step of such developments is represented by the Strategy 2010 which opens the opportunity for a new perception of efficiency and sustainability, including the benefits of labour force mobility, as a source of economic growth and competitiveness, of social inclusion and stimulating permanent education. Mobility and its benefits were reiterated in the documents promoting “smart and inclusive” economic growth (“Youth on the move” “Agenda for new skills and jobs”, European documents of stimulating learning and performance mobility for employment).

For Romania, the challenges in this direction are major – we require young and well-performing, well-trained and innovative workforce, yet the labour market potential of providing professionally and remuneratively attractive jobs remains low. It is a challenge for the national and local labour market policies, and it is a chance for sustainable economic turnaround on other employment structures, which are of more performance and addressability for the activities of the future, for the demand on medium and long term of new, modern, attractive, adequate and sustainable goods and services that support human development.

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