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## Labour migration from Eastern Europe and its impact on socio-demographic processes in these countries

### Report<sup>1</sup>

Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons

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### Summary

Concerted action should be taken by the countries of origin of labour migrants and the European countries where they come to work, in order to alleviate the negative impact of labour migration on the countries of origin, while doing everything needed to preserve the positive aspects.

This report highlights the challenges associated with labour migration, outlining the targeted social initiatives required to help families left behind in the countries of origin, especially families affected by the departure of a primary caregiver, bearing in mind the needs of children in this context. Children left behind because of parents' employment abroad require special assistance. Public authorities should provide clear information on opportunities and risks associated with labour migration and adopt policies to facilitate labour migrants' return.

Specific measures to support integration of migrant workers in Northern and Western European countries are also needed to enhance social cohesion and greater co-operation with non-European Union neighbours, including fostering diversity and better living together. Efforts should be made to ensure that such processes become self-evident and naturally embedded in the everyday functioning of European societies. A positive image of migrants in Europe should be promoted through joint activities in the fields of human, economic and social development.

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1. Reference to committee: Doc. 14246, Reference 4280 of 10 March 2017.



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## A. Draft resolution<sup>2</sup>

1. Labour migration from eastern European countries to the European Union and other western European countries is a complex phenomenon, with both positive and negative consequences for the countries of origin. The positive effects include the reduction of unemployment and of the resulting social tension; the steady influx of remittances which, on an individual level, raise the living standards of families back home and, on the national level, improve the commercial balance of the countries of origin; possible investments into joint enterprises; promotion of the culture of these countries abroad, etc.
2. There are also negative consequences that cannot be ignored. Some countries experience brain-drain, fall in population, or lack of contributions to the social funds which may become problematic in the long run. The sending countries may face serious social problems within families and local communities. The situation of children left behind by parents who have emigrated to work is particularly worrying.
3. The Parliamentary Assembly calls for concerted action by both sending and receiving countries to alleviate the negative impact of labour migration on the countries of origin, while doing everything needed to preserve the positive aspects.
4. The Assembly invites national parliaments to regularly monitor progress in the implementation of the European Social Charter (revised) (ETS No.163), giving specific priority in this context to all provisions of Article 19 of the revised Charter; It invited those countries that have not done so to ratify the revised Charter.
5. As regards sending countries, the Assembly:
  - 5.1. invites national parliaments to regularly assess the situation in the member States with regard to labour migration and to mitigate the negative effects of this migration, including through job creation in sectors where labour migrants are employed abroad, fighting bad management practices and corruption, introducing legislative reforms encouraging the return of skilled workers and prevention of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, especially women;
  - 5.2. calls upon the authorities in the sending countries to take urgent actions to support the vulnerable population, especially families affected by the departure of a primary caregiver, especially the mother, to prevent family crisis, weakening parent-children relationships and risks of indefinite separation that may cause the alienation of children from their parents and have, overall, long-term negative psychosocial consequences;
  - 5.3. calls for the improvement of social care and support systems, in order to prevent and address abandonment and neglect of children left behind by parents working abroad, which is detrimental to their development. Specific measures are also needed to accompany these children's transition into adulthood. Systems such as "SOS families" should be supported, allowing children to stay until they can be reunited with their parents. All measures must be taken in the best interest of the child;
  - 5.4. asks that measures be taken to ensure that children left behind because of parents' employment abroad do not drop out of school or risk lowering their education level. Specific psychological support and counselling should be provided in this context, as necessary;
  - 5.5. encourages public authorities to set up support systems for potential labour migrants, providing clear information on opportunities and risks associated with labour migration, including through public awareness campaigns. Channels of communication, including in rural areas, should be set up to inform labour migrants about new opportunities in their home countries;
  - 5.6. proposes that governments adopt policies to facilitate labour migrants' return and resettlement in their countries of origin, recognising and validating their vocational experience acquired abroad;
  - 5.7. encourages member States to consider other specific action and good practices, such as: local migration focal points acting as connectors between diasporas and their communities of origin; databases mapping the impact of migration and allowing investment opportunities to be identified; consultation of migrants on local priorities, integrating their suggestions in development plans; establishment of Hometown Associations that bring together local governments, local populations, internal migrants and the diaspora to collaborate on local development initiatives and to strengthen transparency and build trust between the diaspora and the local governments in the process.

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2. Draft resolution unanimously adopted by the committee on 25 June 2019.

6. Given that most sending countries are not members of the European Union, the Assembly invites the European Union institutions to bear in mind at the same time the positive and the negative consequences of labour migration when devising their labour mobility policies. It invites the European Union institutions to include specific measures in their co-operation programmes and action plans addressed to non-European Union Council of Europe member States from which European Union labour migrants originate.
7. As regards receiving countries, the Assembly calls for:
  - 7.1. every effort to be made to put a stop to unofficial labour migration which can in worst cases lead to forms of modern slavery and trafficking, as identified by the Council of Europe's Group of States on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA);
  - 7.2. public authorities to make greater efforts towards the integration of labour migrants to enhance the positive impact of labour migration, promoting diversity and better living together, endeavouring to ensure that such processes become self-evident and naturally imbedded in the everyday functioning of European societies;
  - 7.3. social integration of labour migrants to be improved through specific action addressed to them, available in the languages of sending countries, and communicated through various channels, including through diaspora organisations and social media;
  - 7.4. improvements in frameworks for recognition of qualifications for third-country nationals and related support procedures for professional insertion.
8. The Assembly calls upon European Union member States to:
  - 8.1. develop European Union-wide job-matching databases compatible with labour migration channels and schemes;
  - 8.2. increase opportunities for intra-European Union mobility by lowering barriers, such as income requirements, for seasonal workers, students who have graduated, and other legally present third-country nationals;
  - 8.3. harmonise administrative procedures and transferability of labour and residence rights, allowing for a certain degree of standardisation for test procedures and application forms for labour migrants, for example.
9. Receiving countries should also allow refugees to access more favourable European Union labour migration schemes. The Assembly calls for a greater application of the Council of Europe initiatives towards the recognition of qualifications of refugees, and, namely, of the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees.
10. Finally, the Assembly, recalling its [Resolution 2175 \(2017\)](#) and [Recommendation 2109 \(2017\)](#) on "Migration as an opportunity for European development", invites national parliaments to review progress in achieving the recommendations put forward therein. It reiterates its invitation to enhance co-operation between the Council of Europe, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the OECD and the European Union, with a view to promoting a positive image of migrants in Europe by developing joint activities in the fields of human, economic and social development.

## B. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Ionuț-Marian Stroe, rapporteur

### 1. Introduction

1. Migration from Eastern Europe is a phenomenon of major importance. It is massive in scale: Eurostat data shows that, in 2017, more than 4.5 million Ukrainians, 3 million Romanians, approximately 2.5 million Poles and close to 1 million Bulgarians had moved to a different European Union country. It is mainly driven by economic incentives and thus it is mostly people of active working age who choose to migrate.

2. Labour migration from Eastern Europe has both positive and negative consequences for the socio-demographic development of the countries concerned. Some of the net positive aspects for the countries of origin are the influx of remittances from labour migrants, the encouragement of investments into joint enterprises, the added skills of former labour migrants who decide to return to their home country to work or to start their own business, the reduction of unemployment and the promotion of their cultures abroad.

3. However, emigration for employment purposes in some eastern European countries has created significant social and demographic problems: brain-drain, reduction of population, lack of contributions to social funds, and serious family issues, including the worrying social problem of children being left behind (children whose parents have emigrated, leaving them with grandparents or other relatives).

4. In its [Resolution 2137](#)(2016) on the impact of European population dynamics on migration policies, the Assembly expresses concern “about the negative impact of labour migration from some eastern European countries and its effect on their population dynamics and on the social situation of migrant families”. It also points out the problem of children who are separated from their parents for extended periods of time and left in the care of their extended family, after the parents decide to travel great distances to work in countries where they find employment with higher wages. I therefore decided to look deeper into this problem, in particular concentrating on such countries as the Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania and Ukraine, where the situation is of particular concern.

5. I was appointed rapporteur on 20 September 2017. The committee authorised me to conduct a fact-finding mission to Poland, which took place on 22-24 October 2018 and provided me with substantial content for my work. The report is focused on countries with particular labour migration issues, namely Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, my own country Romania and Poland.

### 2. Scope and aim of the report

6. This report addresses the economic, social and demographic impact of Eastern European migrants' decision to migrate. I have decided to widen the scope of the report, especially given that there is a report on the “Impact of labour migration on left-behind children” by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development<sup>3</sup> which touches upon the negative impact of migration in their countries of origin with a specific focus on children. I have only briefly addressed this issue in the chapters below. I would also like to assess the impact of labour migration on the country of origin as well as the impact on the host country.

#### 2.1. Definitions

7. The report takes as a departure point the international commitments member States entered into at European level, with regard, in particular, to Article 19 of the European Social Charter (revised) (ETS No. 163). The existing UN instrument – the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families<sup>4</sup> – had not been ratified by European Union member States, despite the calls by the European Economic and Social Committee encouraging the European Union and its member States to do this as early as 2004. The Conclusions of the European Committee for Social Rights are cited as references in the decisions taken with regard to the implementation of the relevant articles of the European Social Charter (revised).<sup>5</sup> This being said, I should recall that the European Social Charter (revised) has been ratified by 34 Council of member States, and other 11 countries have signed but not yet ratified it.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, a number of countries that ratified the convention either did not accept at all the provisions of Article 19, or only accepted a few of them.<sup>7</sup>

3. [Doc. 14537](#).

4. Adopted by General Assembly Resolution 45/158 of 18 December 1990, entered into force on 1 July 2003.

5. See AS/Mig/Inf (2018)28, excerpt from the Digest of the case law of the European Committee of Social Rights <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168049159f>

6. [https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/163/signatures?p\\_auth=hPp45Mv4](https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/163/signatures?p_auth=hPp45Mv4).

8. A distinction should then be made between various categories of labour migrants, since their acceptance, legal protection, and impact in the receiving country differs tremendously: first, the intra-European Union labour migrants, the labour migrants from countries benefitting of an association agreement or visa-free arrangement with European Union (some of the Council of Europe member States), and labour migrants from outside Europe, the latter being at risk of severe exploitation and trafficking.

9. Some thought is also given to what is meant under the term "social and demographic impact" in this report, i.e. which social and demographic characteristics should be assessed. Previous reports focused mainly on the economic impact, which is different from the social and demographic one. The term "socio-demographic" groups the sociological and demographic characteristics, including, for example, age, gender, education, migration background and ethnicity, religious affiliation, marital status, average size of family/household, heritage, employment and income, as well as medical history, birth and death rates. Different index variables are formed on the basis of socio-demographic variables.<sup>8</sup>

10. In order to conduct a comparative analysis of such data, a standardisation of the independent variables would be necessary. This would mean clarifying the cultural or national concepts underlying each variable in each culture and country participating in the relevant surveys. For example, what dimensions are used to define *private households*; or how are the education system, the labour market, the tax system, the welfare system, etc. organised? Comparing behaviour of the respondents across different surveys, using standardised data, would allow for a better predictability of future trends and provision of public services that would cater to the needs of those who demand such services.

## **2.2. An overview of labour migration in some countries in Central and Eastern Europe**

11. Studies on demographic trends in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) show that the region is a place of significant migratory flows and of intense demographic changes connected with increasing life expectancy and a decline in fertility rates, leading to population ageing. These processes are particularly intense which, combined with the general persistent dominance of emigration over immigration, leads to serious demographic, social, economic and political challenges. In the years 2005-2010 Slovakia, Hungary, Poland and Romania were among the ten countries with the lowest fertility rates in the world (1.33) (UN 2013).<sup>9</sup>

12. Although world-wide the number of people will continue to grow, mainly as a result of the demographic explosion in less developed countries, especially on the African continent, a negative population growth rate is expected from the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century on in the most developed countries. As a consequence, according to moderate estimates, by 2050 the population in Europe will have decreased by 96 million including 83 million in CEE. Thus, the population in CEE will have shrunk by 27% (UN 2004). The largest (20 to 30%) decrease in the number of people in the world is forecast in five countries in the CEE region: Bulgaria, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine and Belarus. The population of post-communist countries such as Latvia, Romania, Croatia, the Russian Federation, Lithuania and Georgia is projected to decrease by over 15%. In other CEE countries a slightly lower population decline is expected, e.g. by around 11% in Poland (UN 2013). Additionally, the age structure of the region's population will be strongly affected, with the share of people of working-age markedly decreasing. Statistics appear thus to show that Europe would benefit from labour migration, which would over time help invert the population ageing trend.

13. As regards the impact of labour migration on sending countries, there are clear economic benefits such as decreased unemployment and substantial remittances (9.3 billion USD<sup>10</sup> for Ukraine in 2017, 4.9 billion USD for Romania<sup>11</sup> and almost 1.2 billion USD<sup>12</sup> for the Republic of Moldova), which make up a substantial part of the national GDP and help improve the trade deficit. On the other hand, there are very serious downsides, for example the disruption of family life and of the demographic equilibrium. Population projections

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7. AS/Mig/Inf (2018)28.

<https://rm.coe.int/1680630742>.

8. Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik, J. H. P. (2016). Standardisation and Harmonisation of Socio-Demographic Variables. *GESIS Survey Guidelines*. Mannheim, Germany: GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences

([https://www.gesis.org/fileadmin/upload/SDMwiki/Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik\\_Standardisation\\_and\\_Harmonisation\\_of\\_Socio-Demographic\\_Variables.pdf](https://www.gesis.org/fileadmin/upload/SDMwiki/Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik_Standardisation_and_Harmonisation_of_Socio-Demographic_Variables.pdf)).

9. Migration and Socio-Demographic Processes in Central and Eastern Europe: Characteristics, Specificity and Internal Differences, CEEMR (<http://www.ceemr.uw.edu.pl/vol-2-no-1-june-2013/editorial/migration-and-socio-demographic-processes-central-and-eastern-europe>).

10. <http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/economic/493614.html>.

11. <http://www.business-review.eu/news/romanians-living-abroad-sent-home-record-usd-4-9-blm-in-2017-up-42-pct-166466>.

12. <https://seenews.com/news/remittances-to-the-Republic-of-Moldova-rise-262-yy-in-jan-c-bank-603196>.

for Eastern European countries are generally negative, indicating a rapidly ageing population, which raises questions about the viability of the current system of social security. In addition to the social security system (pensions, health care), one should also look at the problems related to the changes to social support in families (grand parents' ageing, no longer able to assume the roles of care takers). These issues will be looked into in greater details in the following chapters, with specific examples from Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, as well as from my own country, Romania.

### **2.3. Labour migration in Ukraine**

14. As shown in an assessment by The World Bank, Ukraine is one of the five largest suppliers of migrants in the world, along with Mexico, India, China and the Russian Federation. More specifically, the number of Ukrainian migrant workers abroad is close to 2 million, making up to 9.1% of the economically active population of Ukraine.<sup>13</sup> The main reasons that Ukrainian nationals leave their country is the very low average remuneration namely of 237 euros per month and the high level of unemployment (9.6%) which make external labour migration the only way to provide for an agreeable level of living for many working-age Ukrainians.<sup>14</sup> Their emigration process is facilitated by the fact that citizens of Ukraine tend to receive the highest number of residence permits in the European Union.<sup>15</sup>

15. Labour migration has a double impact in Ukraine: economic and demographic. Its impact on Ukraine's economic development is significant, yet ambiguous. On the one hand, the additional money flowing into the country contributes to poverty reduction, stimulates the domestic production and supports the balance of payments; on the other hand, the outflow of workers abroad reduces the supply of the domestic labour market and creates risks for the stability of the social security system. In addition, migration leads to the loss of skills, as highly trained people perform mainly unskilled work abroad.<sup>16</sup>

16. There is a danger of underestimating the entrepreneurial potential of migrant workers and their relatives left behind in Ukraine. Migrants engaged in business activity abroad are not inclined to get involved in entrepreneurship upon their return to Ukraine, given the unsatisfactory conditions for entrepreneurial activity there. That is why what is vital for Ukraine is not so much the assessment of the existing effects of remittances, so much as the assessment of the potential effects of unimplemented entrepreneurial activity on return migrants and their families. Apart from the economic effect, favourable conditions for entrepreneurial activity – including an economic climate free from corruption – are a prerequisite for the return nature of labour emigration, which has become vital for Ukraine under the conditions of the prospective shortage of labour. The possible financial effect of the entrepreneurial activity of migrants is a practically un-researched area in terms of the impact of migration on the socioeconomic development of Ukraine.<sup>17</sup>

17. Regarding the demographic impact of labour migration, Ukraine currently faces a severe demographic crisis as its population rapidly shrinks and ages. With adults of child-bearing age and around 70% of labour migrants being female, there are less and less children being born every year, and as a result, the population had dropped by nearly 20% by early 2016.<sup>18</sup> In addition to this, the majority of migrants have a rural or small town origin, which means that their migration seriously undermines the life of small communities.<sup>19</sup>

#### *2.3.1. The situation of children left behind*

18. Children left behind in Ukraine are commonly divided into two categories: those who are left behind but whose parents eventually will return and those whose parents will not return. According to an IOM study, one in every five left-behind Ukrainian children is permanently abandoned.

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13. Bohdan Hnatkivskyy, "Labour migration and its impact", *International Business and Global Economy* 2015, No. 34, p.103.

14. Oleksii Pozniak, "External labour migration in Ukraine as a factor in socio-demographic and economic development" [2014] CARIM-East Research Report, available at [http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/24857/CARIM-East\\_RR-2012-14.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/24857/CARIM-East_RR-2012-14.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y), p.6.

15. Eurostat, "Residence permits for non-EU citizens" [2017].

16. Bohdan Hnatkivskyy, *op.cit.*, p. 110.

17. Oleksii Pozniak, *op.cit.*

18. Oleksii Pozniak, *op.cit.*

19. Liza Yanovich, "Children Left Behind: The Impact of Labor Migration in Moldova and Ukraine", *Migration Policy Institute* [2015], available at <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/children-left-behind-impact-labor-migration-moldova-and-ukraine>.

19. According to the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport, there are about 200,000 children left behind in Ukraine. In the regions most affected by immigration, nearly one-quarter of all children are raised by one parent. The majority are adolescents, an age during which many studies find that children are most vulnerable and in the case of transnational families in Ukraine, many left-behind children experience abandonment and neglect, which could prove detrimental to their development and transition into adulthood.<sup>20</sup> Juvenile delinquency is also a widespread problem among children left behind.

20. Furthermore, labour migration not only has an effect on the children but also on the family as a whole. It often happens that the departure of the primary caregiver, especially the mother, is accompanied by a general crisis of family relations and socio-economic conditions.<sup>21</sup> In particular, long periods of parents being away from their families seriously undermine parent-children relationships and families could be indefinitely separated causing the alienation of children from their mothers.<sup>22</sup>

### *2.3.2. Ukraine's response to the challenges of labour migration*

21. Projects initiated in Ukraine, in collaboration with IOM and the Italian government address job creation and reduction of pressure to migrate by supporting the voluntary return of migrants; maximizing the value and directing the flow of remittances; and establishing intercultural development programs. Programs also include transnational welfare initiatives to support left-behind children and migrant parents, and to provide training for psychologists, caregivers, parents, and school teachers to better address the needs of the left-behind and migrants themselves.<sup>23</sup>

22. Moreover, in 2007, a joint ordinance from the Ministries of Education, Public Health, Family and Youth, Labour, and the Interior encouraged the main social service providers to improve collaboration and to consider families separated by migration as potential beneficiaries of services created more generally for families in difficult situations. Alternatively there are also other provisions in place for children left behind who can find a home in one of the SOS families in Ukraine where they can stay until they can return to their families or move to another form of family-based care.<sup>24</sup>

### **2.4. Labour migration in the Republic of Moldova**

23. Another country deeply affected by the demographic and social consequences of labour migration is the Republic of Moldova where this phenomenon seems to be particularly prominent. According to recent statistics, emigrants comprise 17.3% of the total population of the country,<sup>25</sup> due to the lack of jobs, low wages and high cost of goods and services.<sup>26</sup>

24. Regarding the positive impact of labour migration, the Republic of Moldova has one of the highest proportions of money transfers from abroad (otherwise known as remittances) relative to its GDP (gross domestic product), reaching the 31%. Nevertheless, these transfers do not directly contribute towards building the country's economy, since they are used for private domestic consumption, therefore not helping create sustainable economic growth.<sup>27</sup>

25. However, the most significant negative impact that labour migration has on the Republic of Moldova, is undoubtedly the demographic one. The base scenario for 2035 is that the Republic of Moldova will have 28.4% fewer citizens compared to 2014, taking into account the fact that its Total Fertility Rate is the lowest of all European Union, Balkan and Eastern Partnership Countries.<sup>28</sup> According to the Border Police of the Republic of Moldova, in 2014, there were 761.970 migrants out of 3.5m Moldovans,<sup>29</sup> a phenomenon that has

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20. Ibid.

21. O. Fedyuk, "The Gender Perspective in Ukrainian Migration" [2016]. In: O. Fedyuk M. Kindler (eds), "Ukrainian Migration to the European Union", IMISCOE Research Series. Springer, Cham.

22. Victor Kotusenko, 'Labour migration from Ukraine and its ethical implications ' [2007] available at <http://www.oikonomia.it/index.php/en/oikonomia-2007/ottobre-2007/626-labour-migration-from-ukraine-and-its-ethical-implications> p.12.

23. Liza Yanovich, op.cit.

24. SOS Children's villages international, available at <https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/where-we-help/europe/ukraine>.

25. MPC Team, "MPC -Migration Profile: Moldova" [2013], MPC Migration Policy Centre, available at <http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/publications/> p.1.

26. Olga Gagauz and Tatiana Tabac, "Demographic barometer: Impact of economic crises on demographic processes" [2016], available at [http://ccd.ucoz.com/\\_id/0/54\\_Barometru\\_eng.pdf](http://ccd.ucoz.com/_id/0/54_Barometru_eng.pdf), p.3.

27. World Bank Prospects Group, Annual Remittances Data [2013], available at [https://www.unicef.org/The\\_Impacts\\_of\\_Migration\\_on\\_Children\\_in\\_Moldova%281%29.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/The_Impacts_of_Migration_on_Children_in_Moldova%281%29.pdf) p.7.

been described as “demographic winter”.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, the Republic of Moldova is currently placed as the country with the highest decline in the world, estimated to lose 54.4% of its population by 2100.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, the forecasts prepared by the researchers confirm that by 2050, one in every three persons will be over 60 years old in the Republic of Moldova and the share of the elderly could constitute about 35–50% of the country’s population.<sup>32</sup>

#### 2.4.1. *The situation of children left behind*

26. The situation of children left behind is a particularly worrying side effect of Moldovan labour migration, with around 100,000 girls and boys considered to be social orphans because their fathers or mothers work.<sup>33</sup> Those children are a vulnerable category unlike any other and the consequences of their parent’s migrating are rather significant.<sup>34</sup> According to some experts, left-behind children face numerous adverse effects including problems related to school, such as deteriorating academic performance, declining attendance and a lack of motivation. More specifically, the parents’ involvement in organizing the school schedule is very important as they exercise a monitoring and orientating role. Subsequently, the lack of control and support created by the parents being abroad leads to 22% of migrants’ children missing school.<sup>35</sup> Health concerns may also arise, as children with migrant parents often do not have an easy access to healthcare services as needed. The use of drugs seems to be especially problematic, since the youth in the Republic of Moldova experiences a higher prevalence of injecting drugs than youth in European Union countries with 93.5% of young people knowing someone who uses drugs.<sup>36</sup> Family stability and personal development are also at stake, since children run the risk of developing psycho-emotional problems which can lead to youth unemployment and juvenile delinquency. Between 1993 and 2000, children left behind accounted for almost 60% of juvenile offenders.<sup>37</sup>

#### 2.4.2. *The Republic of Moldova’s response to the challenges of labour migration*

27. The first law on migration was adopted following the Moldovan independence in 1991 but the problem of the children left-behind was not dealt with until much later. Under the 2010-11 National Action Plan of the Republic of Moldova on the protection of children left without parental care, a partnership was created among the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection, and Family, Czech Development Agency, IOM, UN Fund for Population, and the State University of Moldova in order to build a comprehensive body of research to help create meaningful policies addressing the issues of left-behind children, families, and the elderly.<sup>38</sup>

28. Even though some first steps have been made, there are still important measures to be taken. In order to improve the well-being of children left behind, the governments could provide training to psychologists, social workers, and teachers who work with children and families left behind.<sup>39</sup> A recent campaign by Terre des hommes Moldova included activities and informative material providing advice on how to maintain a sound relationship between children and their parents working abroad.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, the International Migration Organisation also proposes that Moldovan authorities obtain additional support in the field of linking

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28. Alexei Buzu and Victor Lutenco, “Are we up to task? Assessment Report of the National Strategic Programme on Demographic Security 2011-2025” [2016], available at

[https://moldova.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Report%20English\\_0.pdf](https://moldova.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Report%20English_0.pdf).

29. Ibid.

30. Report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, “The impact of European population dynamics on migration policies”, Doc. 14143.

31. World Population Prospects, the 2015 Revision. Key Findings and Advance Tables, United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, New York 2015 available at

[https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/publications/files/key\\_findings\\_wpp\\_2015.pdf](https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/publications/files/key_findings_wpp_2015.pdf).

32. Maria Vremiş and others, ‘Extended migration profile on the Republic of Moldova’ [2012] (-) International Organization for Migration available at [http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/110\\_emp\\_report\\_updated.pdf](http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/110_emp_report_updated.pdf), p.108.

33. Anna Stemmer, (n1) p.55.

34. Alexei Buzu and Victor Lutenco, op.cit.

35. Liza Yanovich, op.cit.

36. UNICEF, “Mid-Term Review, Government of Moldova Country Programme of Cooperation 2007-2011), [2013] available at [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org) p.22.

37. United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Children and Migration, 2007, available at <https://gfmd.org/docs/belgium-2007>.

38. National Committee for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, “EU Helps Hundreds of Moldovan Families Address the Effects of Migration at Home and Abroad”, 2013, available at

<http://www.antitrafic.gov.md/libview.php?i=en&idc=94&id=235&t=/Press/News-and-Events/EU-HELPS-HUNDREDS-OF-MOLDOVAN-FAMILIESADDRESS-THE-EFFECTS-OF-MIGRATION-AT-HOME-AND-ABROAD/>.

39. Liza Yanovich, op. cit.

diaspora organisations in different countries, as well as considering diaspora associations as interlocutor and actor in the design and implementation of migration and development policies.<sup>41</sup> Finally, the UNDP proposes the Swiss approach which linked migrants with their native communities in the Republic of Moldova through a five-pillar approach: 1) appointing local migration focal points acting as connectors between diaspora and their communities of origin, 2) creating databases that map the impact of migration and make it easy to capture investment opportunities, 3) listening to migrant's voices and consulting them on local priorities, integrating their suggestions in development plans, 4) establishing Hometown Associations that bring together local governments, local populations, internal migrants and the diaspora to collaborate on local development initiatives and 5) strengthening transparency and building trust between the diaspora and the local governments in the process. This approach has been already used in the Chiscareni village and has shown great results.<sup>42</sup>

29. A number of measures could help mitigate the effects of this emigration, including structural changes in the economy, creation of jobs in sectors where labour migrants are employed abroad, fighting bad governance and corruption, legal reforms encouraging the return of skilled workers, and prevention of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants.

### **2.5. Labour migration in Romania**

30. The negative effects of labour migration were similar to those mentioned above as regards Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. Besides these negative aspects, however, migration has a number of positive consequences on sending countries' socio-economic development, in addition to the most commonly known effect of direct monetary transfers, or remittances. The most positive short-term impact is decreasing unemployment, as it can be experienced in all large sending countries such as Romania, but also Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria. If migration includes mainly otherwise unemployed people, also the budgetary impacts are positive (less unemployment benefit to be paid). Moreover, neither the favourable socio-political impact should be ignored, since high unemployment is generally accompanied by higher social tensions and, as a consequence, by higher budgetary expenditure on social stability (particularly in regions with very high unemployment rate). Migration reduced reform pressure on the Romanian government. For some areas/regions, migration for employment abroad released the pressure from the local labour markets, as well as the pressure from the social assistance schemes with respect to migrants which were their potential beneficiaries.<sup>43</sup>

31. As mentioned previously with regard to Ukraine, one of the socio-economic effects of labour migration on sending countries is the increased entrepreneurial activity. Work migration and the entrepreneurship are life strategies tightly interconnected. Work experience abroad positively associates both with entrepreneurial behaviour, and with the intentions to develop a business. As the migrant accumulates financial, human and relational capital abroad and satisfies his/her basic needs, he/she tends to invest this capital in productive activities, becoming an entrepreneur on his/her own. For an important part of the Romanian migrants, working abroad represents an intermediate strategy before putting into practice the entrepreneurial strategy, fact revealed by the strong connection between the work experience abroad and the entrepreneurial orientation.<sup>44</sup>

### **2.6. Labour migration in Poland**

32. On 22-24 October 2018, I carried out a fact-finding visit to Poland. I had the opportunity to meet with Mr Kilion Muniyama and Mr Jarosław Obremski, members of the Polish Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly in this committee; representatives of the Government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Mr Jerzy Bąkowski, Mr Janusz Wołosz, Mr Hubert Czerniuk), Ministry of Interior and Administration Affairs (Ms Beata Szczech, Under Secretary of State) and Office for Foreigners (Mr Tomasz Cytrynowicz), and Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (Mr Stanisław Szwed, Secretary of State); representatives of international organisations (Ms Anna Rostocka, Director of the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Office in Poland, and Mr Witold Naturski, Vicedirector of the European Commission Office in Poland); and, finally, representatives of

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40. Terre des Hommes, "Families without Borders – A campaign to help children left behind in Moldova", [2017] available at <https://www.tdh.ch/en/news/children-left-behind-moldova>.

41. Maria Vremis and others, op.cit., p. 233.

42. Stefan Liller, "Making the most of emigration"[2018] UNDP Moldova, available at <http://www.md.undp.org/content/moldova/en/home/blog/2018/making-the-most-of-emigration.html>.

43. Some Socio-Economic Effects of Labor Migration on Sending Countries. Evidence from Romania. By Ms Monica Roman and Ms Cristina Voicu, Theoretical and Applied Economics, Volume XVII (2010), No. 7(548), pp. 61-76 (<http://www.store.ectap.ro/articole/484.pdf>).

44. Ibid.

civil society and academia (Council of the Polish Migration Forum (Ms Agnieszka Kosowicz, President of the Board), and Centre of Migration Research (CMR) (Dr hab. Paweł Kaczmarczyk, Director), as well as Prof. Jean-Pierre Cassarino at the European Neighbourhood Policy Chair of the College of Europe in Natolin).

33. Over the past decade, Poland has become a prominent destination for non-European Union nationals,<sup>45</sup> mainly citizens of Ukraine, based on a so called “Pole’s Card”, a document proving the connection with Poland as a country of origin, Polish descent and Polish culture.<sup>46</sup> This is due to a number of factors, including growing demand for cheap labour, geographical and cultural proximity, and relatively liberal migration policies compared to those of other Central European countries.<sup>47</sup> Labour migration into Poland had shaped the development of some sectors, such as construction and farming, filling the gap for Poles that left the country. Ukrainians also account for over 53% of all foreign students in Poland, which as a whole is also growing. These statistics however do not systematically reflect temporary and seasonal labour migration. As regards asylum seekers, the main countries of origin are the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Tajikistan.

34. It should be noted, however, that despite a dynamic increase in immigration to Poland, it remains strongly a country of emigration with 2 397 000 Poles staying abroad, mostly in the United Kingdom, Germany, The Netherlands and Ireland. According to a 2013 survey, approximately 14% of adult Poles have worked abroad since 2004 (approximately a quarter for over a year); 69% have a family member or a close friend who lives abroad, and approximately 24% are open to immigration. Majority of Polish migrants or those considering leaving are young; according to a 2014 survey approximately 90% of Poles under 34 have considered some form of migration. Over the past decade or so, there has been a visible trend that migrants are increasingly likely to be young and well-educated. Most recently, Poland took measures to encourage return of those who left the country<sup>48</sup> and settled, in particular, in the United Kingdom. The effect of these policies needs to be further assessed and the measures taken could serve as an example to countries such as Romania.

### **3. Integration of migrants and their ability to contribute effectively to the economic, social and cultural development of European societies**

35. Europe faces great challenges in its efforts to ensure that migrants and their descendants are included and participate in society. Intolerance, xenophobia and racism, fuelling hate crime and discrimination against migrants or refugees and their descendants, raise concerns in many member States. At the same time, a number of European Union member States are promoting the equitable participation of migrants and their descendants in society, so that they can contribute to the European Union’s objectives for inclusive growth. The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) recognised in its Strategic Plan 2013-2017 that integration should take place in a framework that respects fundamental rights. One of the main challenges it identified was the integration of migrants and the rights associated with their ability to contribute effectively to the economic, social and cultural development of European societies.

36. European Union policies have an impact on labour migration in Central and Eastern Europe. The European Union is a major migration destination. According to the OECD, the European Union welcomes more migrants than any other single OECD destination – half of all recorded flows in the OECD are to its European Union members (European Union-OECD).<sup>49</sup> In the 2000s, the population of adults born outside the European Union rose by more than 42% in the EU15 countries alone, to more than 30 million, one-third of all migrants in OECD countries.

37. European Union member States have put in place labour migration frameworks to compete with other OECD destinations. Labour migration policy in individual European Union member States is the product of national policies that have evolved over past decades, driven by different national goals. However, there has been convergence across the European Union member States around the need to attract talents, including international students. Each European Union member State boasts its own comparative advantage in the competition for skills from abroad, and some benefit from the historical links with third countries which shape migration flows. Many member States impose education, occupation or salary requirements which can be barriers to recruitment, while others manage migration largely through numerical limits or volumes of

45. <https://www.pip.gov.pl/en/legality-of-employment/64080,info-for-foreigners.html>.

46. <http://www.migrant.info.pl/polish-descent-2440.html>.

47. The employers play a major role in deciding whether a person will receive a residence permit with the right to work: <http://www.migrant.info.pl/temporary-residence-and-work-permit.html>.

48. Government Programme to support Polish diaspora 2015-2020, with a biannual update for 2019-2020.

49. [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/fr/social-issues-migration-health/recruiting-immigrant-workers-europe-2016\\_9789264257290-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/fr/social-issues-migration-health/recruiting-immigrant-workers-europe-2016_9789264257290-en).

admission. Still others rely on labour market tests or trust the market to regulate itself as long as conditions are respected. A number of member States deny entry to all less skilled labour migrants, while others only admit them for seasonal activities.<sup>50</sup>

38. The European Union External Action Service inherited a framework for relations with third countries – the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) – in which the European Union can support negotiations with third countries but cannot offer them guaranteed channels for labour migration. The European Union also co-ordinates relations with third countries through its Mobility Partnerships, which act as an umbrella for co-operation, and by supporting different forms of exchange and capacity-building programmes. The European Union has taken on a public relations role, too, promoting the European Union abroad and providing information on migration policies in European Union member States.

39. To develop human capital applicable in more than one European Union member State, training measures and co-operation with education institutions could improve the talent mobility component of Partnerships. The European Union Blue Card Directive had contributed to open the path for regular labour migration. One should however, insist on the importance of streamlining the procedure for recognition of foreign qualifications – one of the main barriers to integration of labour migrants. More could be done as well to reduce the time it takes to obtain permanent residence.

40. According to the OECD, to improve the integration of labour migrants, the European Union could start by improving the framework for recognition of qualifications for third-country nationals and related support procedures. It could develop European Union-wide job-matching databases compatible with labour migration channels and schemes. It could also increase opportunities for intra-European Union mobility by lowering barriers, including for seasonal workers, students who have graduated, and other legally present third-country nationals. Harmonisation of European Union residence permits and other relevant policies could create an additional safety-net to support integration. A certain degree of standardisation may be necessary (test procedures, application forms for labour migrants, portability of residence periods in mobility, lower income thresholds for younger workers and new European Union graduates).<sup>51</sup>

41. Finally, measures should be taken to allow refugees to access more favourable European Union labour migration schemes. The Council of Europe initiative for the recognition of refugees' qualification should be made better known and applied in Europe. The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees, developed by the Council of Europe, is a document providing an assessment of the higher education qualifications based on available documentation and a structured interview. It also presents information on the applicant's work experience and language proficiency. The document provides reliable information for integration and progression towards employment and admission to further studies, even for those who cannot fully document their qualifications upon arrival.<sup>52</sup>

#### 4. Conclusions

42. The persistently high level of emigration from Eastern Europe couples with demographic changes, connected with the decline in fertility rates and increasing life expectancy, which lead to the permanent decrease in, and ageing of, native populations in this region. On the one hand, this may lead to decreases in the rate of emigration. On the other hand, modernisation, economic development and increasing labour market segmentation will bring about an influx of immigrants. As can be predicted, the demand for labour in certain States will result in a new immigration status for these countries.

43. Labour migration is a key factor for changing domestic legislation and practices in receiving States, including through standard setting based on the European Social Charter (revised) and European Union labour law.<sup>53</sup> More needs to be done for the implementation of Article 19 of the European Social Charter (revised) by the Council of Europe member States, beginning with the acceptance of all provisions of this article by those member States that ratified the Charter, and the ratification of the Charter by those that only signed it.

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50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/recognition-of-refugees-qualifications>.

53. Bearing in mind, for instance, the European Union Posted Workers directive that is shaping the labour migration policies in the European Union member States (<https://www.pip.gov.pl/en/legality-of-employment/65535,information-on-posting-of-workers.html>).

44. Greater efforts towards the integration of labour migrants could significantly enhance the positive impact of labour migration in the receiving countries. It would promote diversity and better living together. More needs to be done, however, for such processes to become self-evident and naturally imbedded in the everyday functioning of European societies. The recommendations in this report will propose ways in which these efforts could be translated into concrete measures at national and international levels, and how they could be promoted by national parliaments and the Council of Europe.