

INTRODUCTION

This briefing presents selected relevant findings from the qualitative research carried out by the Romanian team under the WP4 of the Growth, Equal Opportunities, Migration and Markets (GEMM) Project. One should bear in mind that our sample targeted only migrants active on the labour market (mostly employed but also temporary unemployed) and only in some activity domains (ICT, medicine and finance for the highly skilled; construction, transport and care work for the low skilled), so the findings from our analysis may differ from official statistics and/or the findings of other researches.

FINDINGS

REASONS TO MIGRATE

Experts' from recruitment agencies voice



4 out of 5 experts from public recruitment agencies and 2 out of 5 experts from private recruitment agencies **indicated 'money' or incomes.**



1 expert from a public agency and 3 experts from private agencies evoked **professional development and/or career advancement opportunities**, but only with reference to the highly qualified migrants.

Migrant's voice



22 evoked **income and/or standard of living as their reasons to migrate**; most of these were low education (16), married (13) and over 35 years old (12); gender does not seem to play a role in this regard (11 men and 11 women).



10 referred to **education, professional development and/or career advancement and they were mostly highly educated (9), males (9) and under 35 years old (8); 6 married and 4 singles.**

„ ... it depends on what kind of persons we are speaking of; there are persons with university degrees and high qualifications and these people look for a safer social and political environment and a society, so to say, developed, where social services have reached an acceptable level, while persons with lower qualifications or unqualified look for incomes that they may bring back home and turn themselves round” (RO.RO.AG.10.M.40)

„The answer is one-fold: for a better living, because in our country we have nothing to do. We were working in our kitchen garden, money was scarce, there were no available jobs.” (RO.SP.AC.5.M.40)

..... I've chosen to come here because at that moment I thought that going to the best university in the world means better education” (RO.UK.AC.1.M.25)

MIGRATION CHANNELS

Most of the interviewed migrants have not contacted any recruitment agency or undertaken any administrative steps in order to get a job in the destination countries. Only 3 prospective migrants mentioned that they asked a “hunting” agency to help them in getting more information about the destination country and about jobs; other 3 actual migrants who worked in Germany were hired by a German employer, mediated by a recruitment agency and 1 actual migrant from UK used a recruitment agency from UK to find a hosting family.

“... I went to job fairs, I visited the main recruitment websites but often the recruiters found me and weekly I participated at interviews. [...] I used a recruitment agency from Poland which told me about the company from Leipzig and finally I was invited and tested at the company where I work now.” (RO.GE.AC.1.M.33)

“My brother in law was taking care of (finding jobs); being there since long time ago he had some connections and found jobs for us, sometimes on daily basis, sometimes in agriculture, as he could, until I found a stable job in the bakery.” (RO.DE.AC.3.F.27)

ADAPTATION DIFFICULTIES



Adaptation to host societies was much more difficult for migrants who did not know the local language, which was the case of most participants in our research.

“I stayed one month at home, at my sister, about one month, until I found a job; I went to interviews but since I didn't know the (Spanish) language I didn't understand; it was difficult but within one month I found, they accepted me as I could speak ... and in time I begun speaking and after that I found employment easier.” (RO.SP.AC.6.F.47)

„... even now we stay several people in the same room, in the same apartment, in a house, but at that time it was even more crowded ... there have been the four of us, the three of them, some other three and one more, hence ten ... some lived in the living room” (RO.SP.AC.1.M.36)

„ After the Christmas Holidays (she had spent holidays in Italy at her sister) ... I went with my sister to her workplace (in a restaurant); the owner saw me and said come to work with us in the kitchen. My sister had been cleaning there and I had come along to help her ... The next day I went to work and remained there eight years.” (RO.IT.AC.2.F.39)



Major difficulty encountered by the Romanian immigrants, mainly at the beginning of their life abroad. Very few could afford to rent a dwelling there and very few had benefited from (initial) accommodation provided by the employers. In most cases they had to live with family members, relatives or friends already settled there, who at their turn had been forced by the high level of rents to live in small apartments, already crowded.



Of high concern for all migrants, except those who started with education or vocational training who were, in general, recruited since their practical stages associated with education or training.

16 out of 28 Romanian migrants have relied on social ties for finding their first job abroad; in some cases the use of social ties was complemented with direct job search and even with applying to recruitment agencies.

11 out of 14 of highly educated migrants have either received direct job offers from the employers (4) or have applied to the services of recruitment agencies (5), or undertaken direct job search on the spot (2).

WORK TRAJECTORIES

As of the time of our field research, circa one third of Romanian actual migrants (10) had achieved a higher professional status in the host countries as compared to their professional status as of the time of leaving their home country, while another third (9) had remained at the same level. Only a small number of actual migrants had moved to tower professional position (4) and almost the same number (5) had completed higher education in the destination countries and obtained highly qualified positions.

EXPERIENCES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

10 out of 28 Romanian migrants had experienced unemployment: benefitted from unemployment allowance, 5 have not registered as unemployed either because they were living and working illegally in the destination countries (3) or because meanwhile they were working on the black labour market (2); in 4 cases the jobless immigrants have had particular reasons to do not register as unemployed (returning to Romania for a while during the crisis, being actually housewife, failing to register in due time because misunderstanding with employer). 18 participants have not experienced unemployment, yet in the case of self-employed there have been periods not covered by contracts with beneficiaries.

„I have been (working) from 2007 through 2011 with legal forms at the same restaurant; after its closure I have been unemployed in 2011 but I worked without legal forms to another restaurant; after this, having resigned from the other restaurant, from 2014 through 2015 I was unemployed (again).” (RO.IT.AC.2.F.39)

“This is the third (job) ... for a Romanian, where I worked 8 years and this one where I have 2 years. I was unemployed for 8 months, during the crisis, in 2012. ... Yes, (it was paid) 980 Euro per month unemployment benefit.” (RO.SP.AC.5.M.40)

IDENTITY

ROU Romanian first

Those feeling themselves first and foremost Romanians, this is they are Romanians first. This category is dominant among Romanian actual migrants.

22 out of 28 actual migrants, regardless the receiving country, are proud that they are Romanians. They have the feeling of belonging to Romanian social and cultural space.

“I feel myself a Romanian...I still love my country, I was born there and if we could have found jobs, maybe we would have not migrated.” (RO.SP.AC.2.F.47)



EU European first

Migrants who feel themselves more Europeans include only few cases (we met two interviewees of this type as a Romanian migrant woman from Italy says:

“[...] I feel more European but I felt it before coming here.” (RO.IT.AC.5.F.36)



Confused identity

Those feeling confused about their identity. Some of Romanian migrants feel they should say that they are Europeans not Romanians when they are asked what country they are from due to the negative image of Romanians projected by local media.

“Sincerely I feel less Romanian [...] the links with home country has begun less strong even though I like Romanian food [...] there are people and people, being Romanian is not always a proud in Spain because there are many who made bad things here.” (RO.SP.AC.3.M.31)

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encouraging and stimulating better and larger cooperation between public and private recruitment agencies, including within the EURES network, in a view to best use their potential of providing suitable information and advice for prospective and actual migrants.
- Developing improved regulations regarding the responsibilities of migrant parents towards their children left behind along with improving cooperation between child protection services from the sending and receiving countries in a view to minimise the negative impact of parents' migration on the personal and professional development of their children.
- Promoting and supporting community projects aiming at facilitating social adaptation of migrants to host communities and improvement of their social life.
- Enhancing the efforts in both sending and receiving countries to minimise the access to the black labour market as a means to avoid underemployment and improve the use of human capital.