

# Romania

During the past one hundred years Romania was predominantly a country of emigration, with a rather impressive record regarding the number of persons involved, the outcomes<sup>1</sup> and the varieties of migratory arrangements. It is noticeable that in the 20th century a considerable part of the migratory flows was directly or indirectly connected with ethnic minorities, a type of migration largely characteristic for other countries of Central and Southeastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> These minorities were not simply refugees: they moved to states to which they had historical ties (e.g. Germany, Hungary), both in reaction to general and ethnic-based discrimination in Romania, and because they hoped for a safer and better life in those states. Political violence and deprivation generated by a largely ineffective and authoritarian administration represented another cause for flight and emigration for a large number of Romanians during and immediately after the demise of the Communist era.

## Background Information

**Capital:** Bucharest

**Official language:** Romanian

**Area:** 237,500 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population (2002):** 21,680, 974

**Population density:** 90.9 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>

**Population growth (natural increase in 2005):** -1.9 %

**Foreign citizens as percentage of total population:** 0.2 % (MIRA)

**Labour force participation rate (2005):** 62.4 % (INS)

**Unemployment rate:** 4.5 % (April 2007), 5.4 % (2006), 5.9 % (2005) (INS)

**Religions (2002 census):** 86.8 % Romanian Orthodox; 4.7 % Roman Catholic; 3.2 % Reformed; 1.5 % Pentecostal; 0.9 % Greek Catholic; 2.7 % other; 0.2 % no religion, atheist or not stated



The slow and socially burdensome transition from a centrally planned economy to an effectively functioning market economy (over the past one and a half decades) has provided another impetus for Romanians to search for employment abroad. The economic transition precipitated a rather drastic and lasting decline in the number of jobs available in the domestic labour market, and at least two million Romanians moved abroad as a result.

The population loss caused by these waves of emigration has started to negatively impact the further development of the Romanian economy. Emigration, combined with an ageing population, will likely make Romania turn to labour immigration in the future. Here the country will face considerable challenges, from finding a way of managing – and perhaps reversing – the outflow of workers to developing policies for managing the reception and integration of large numbers of immigrants, an area in which it has little experience.

## Historical Trends in Emigration and Immigration

### Aspects of migration before Communism

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries Romania was predominantly a country of emigration. In this period, the first large-scale outflow occurred in the context of the great wave of Eastern European migration to North America. It was mostly the population of Transylvania (incorporated into Romania after

1918) that was engaged in this flow; in the first decade of the 20th century alone, a quarter of a million inhabitants of this province (with a total population of 4.8 million in 1900) emigrated to the United States.<sup>3</sup>

In the wake of territorial changes in the course of the First and Second World Wars, Romania experienced large-scale population transfers. Approximately 200,000 ethnic Hungarians left Transylvania (which had been passed from Hungarian to Romanian authority) between 1918 and 1922.<sup>4</sup> As a result of the re-annexation of the northern part of Transylvania to Hungary in 1940, and in the framework of a population exchange agreement between Hungary and Romania, 220,000 ethnic Romanians left Northern Transylvania (then under Hungarian rule) and moved to territories under Romanian control.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, 160,000 ethnic Hungarians relocated from Romanian to

amount of permanent, legal emigration took place under the regime.<sup>8</sup> This is not as contradictory as it appears at first glance, as the actual purpose of this restrictive regime was not to prevent all forms of emigration, but rather to control outflows by restricting exit possibilities while allowing certain groups to leave (see below). By limiting departures, authorities hoped to reduce the number of asylum applications made by Romanians abroad; it was feared that asylum-seeking by a large number of Romanians would discredit the regime and threaten its legitimacy as a functioning political system, in the eyes of both foreign governments and remaining citizens.<sup>9</sup>

Ethnic minorities (Jews, Germans and Hungarians) were clearly over-represented among the group of people who legally emigrated from Romania during Communist rule. For example, although ethnic Germans represented only 1.6% of the population in the 1977 census, they constituted 44% of the emigrant population between 1975 and 1989.

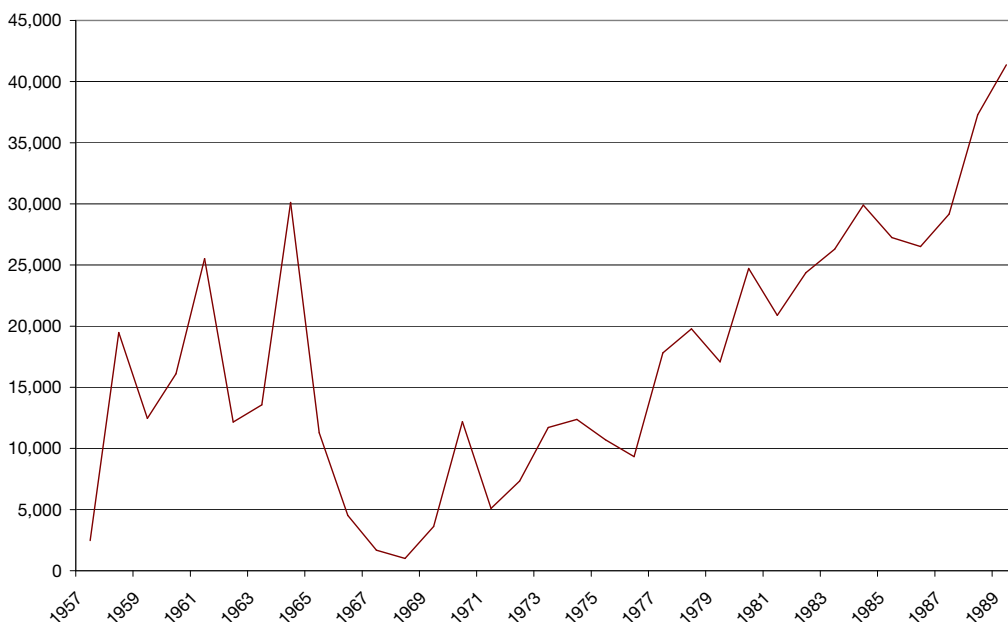
The emigration of Romanian Jews began immediately after the Second World War, and under the Communist regime the majority of the Jewish community (between 300,000 and 350,000 persons) moved to Israel or the United States. The emigration of both the ethnic Germans and the Jews were closely managed by the Communist authorities.

The case was somewhat different for ethnic Hungarians. Starting in 1985, this minority emigrated in increasing numbers to neighbouring Hungary. In this case the vast majority of those leaving used irregular strategies (crossing the green border illegally, staying in Hungary without residence permit, etc.). Their migration was not approved by the Romanian authorities, who were rather anxious about the potential negative impact of major, uncontrolled migratory outflows on the country's international standing.

Some patterns of temporary migration were also prevalent during the Communist era, notably for the purposes of education and work. Labour migration was exclusively state-managed, and a large majority of Romanian workers headed to the Middle East, particularly to the Persian Gulf area, where their labour activities were tightly regulated and family reunification forbidden.<sup>10</sup>

The inflow of foreign migrants was rather limited during the Communist era, as any alien – especially those from “unfriendly” countries – was considered by the authorities to be a potential threat. Visiting foreign citizens were monitored closely, even in the case when these foreigners visited their friends and family members; Romanians had the legal responsibility to report to the authorities any non-Romanian citizen they hosted in their homes.

**FIGURE 1: Romanian emigrants, 1957-1989**



Source: Institutul Național de Statistică (INS) (2006); SOPEMI

Hungarian territories. During the Second World War, the bulk of the Jewish population living on Romania's present territory was deported (by either Romanian or Hungarian authorities); the Holocaust reduced Romania's Jewish population of 780,000 persons by half.<sup>6</sup> Following the Second World War, approximately 70,000 ethnic Germans were deported to the Soviet Union, and many more were forcibly relocated within Romanian territory.<sup>7</sup>

### The Communist era (1947-1989)

During Communist rule, Romanian authorities exercised rather restrictive exit policies, severely limiting the ability of citizens to travel internationally. Passports were held by the police, and prior approval from the authorities was required in order to obtain the travel document. Those applying as emigrants to various embassies in Romania had social and economic rights revoked and were stigmatised and harassed by authorities. Despite this harsh stance on emigration, a relatively high

**FIGURE 2: Ethnic structure of the emigrant population (1975-1989) compared to the ethnic composition of the Romanian population (1977 census)**

	Share of general population (1977 census)	Share of emigrant population (1975-1989)
Romanians	87.0%	35.5%
Germans	1.6%	44.2%
Hungarians	7.9%	12.8%
Jews	0.1%	5.5%
Others	3.3%	2.1%

Source: Institutul Național de Statistică (INS)

There were some exceptions to this suspicious attitude toward aliens: foreign students, especially from the Middle East and African countries, were well represented at Romanian universities from the 1970s onwards. At its peak, the annual stock of foreign students rose to 16,900, representing 7-8% of all students registered at Romanian universities in 1981.<sup>11</sup>

## Immigration and Emigration since 1990

### Institutional and legal developments

Immediately after the fall of the Communist regime, passport administration and international travel were liberalised. Although some measures to curb the international travel of certain categories (those engaged in speculative migratory movement and possessing limited resources) were taken during the 1990s and at the beginning of the new millennium. For example, taxes were imposed on border crossings and those leaving had to prove that they were in possession of a certain amount of money. However, none of these measures drastically reduced the international mobility of Romanian citizens.

At the very end of the 1990s, as in other states, Romanian authorities started to implement a set of acts meant to regulate the international mobility of the labour force (both outflows and inflows). One major step was the creation of a specialised public institution to oversee this activity (Labour Force Migration Office) in 2002. This office is in charge of administering the inflows of foreign workers as well as providing information and guidance to Romanians wishing to work abroad. It is also active in the field of recruitment and work placement. To this end, Romania has signed bilateral agreements on labour migration (as well as contracts with private job agencies, in some cases). Though some private firms are active in worker recruitment and placement, the Labour Force Migration Office organises the majority of job placements abroad. In 2006 it provided 53,029 Romanian workers with foreign jobs (up 137% from 2002), mainly as seasonal workers in Germany (the major destination for this type of migration), Spain and Hungary. In contrast, private firms made only 14,742 placements, many of them involving summer work in the United States for students.<sup>12</sup>

In 2004 the Romanian authorities adopted a new policy in the field of immigration: the National Strategy on Migration. The major goal of the initiative is to provide a coherent legal framework for labour migration, asylum cases and naturalization. In addition, it is meant to promote institutional coherence by coordinating the activities of institutions active in the field of immigration, asylum and integration. Its stated objectives are to control and manage inflows, to prevent and combat illegal immigration, to improve protection for vulnerable migrants, to assist the social integration of alien residents, etc. The effectiveness and outcomes of this framework will only become clear when (and if) – as anticipated by the authorities – immigration to Romania increases.

### Emigration

In the first three years after the fall of Communism 170,000 persons legally emigrated from Romania. In 1990, emigration reached its peak, with 96,929 Romanians moving abroad. This emigration was the result of the liberalisation of travel as well as the turbulent economic and political environment in the country.

Again, ethnic minorities (especially Germans and Hungarians) were over-represented in the legal emigrant population; for example, 60,000 out of a total of 97,000 emigrants registered in 1990 were Germans. In the case of ethnic Germans, this emigration was encouraged by the assistance offered by the Federal Republic of Germany. Nevertheless, the main motivation for emigrating during this time was economic. At the beginning of the 1990s, highly qualified, young emigrants obtained long-term, legal residence in various European countries, the USA and Canada. Thereafter, more and more unskilled or poorly qualified persons from rural areas began seeking (mostly temporary) migratory arrangements.

During the process of transition and the restructuring of the Romanian economy (which took place roughly from 1990 to 2002), the employed population declined by 44%. More than 3.5 million jobs vanished, with the most dramatic decreases being registered in industry, where the number of jobs declined by half. In this context, a considerable number of Romanians left to seek economic gains abroad. In the last 17 years, the main countries of destination for Romanian labour migration have changed considerably, but three rather distinct phases can be outlined.<sup>13</sup> In the first phase (roughly between 1990 and 1995), when entry to various Western European countries was severely limited, Romanian workers headed mainly to Israel, Turkey, Hungary (mostly ethnic Hungarians) and Germany. In the second period (1996-2002), westward migration prevailed, with large numbers of workers going to Italy and, increasingly, Spain. The third phase of labour migration was symbolically inaugurated on 1st January 2002 when countries included in the Schengen space removed visa requirements for Romanian citizens, making a valid passport sufficient for entry. Major destinations since then have included Italy, Spain, Portugal and the United Kingdom. It remains to be seen how Romania's accession

to the EU (on 1st January 2007) will affect the volume of outflows or the countries of destination of Romanian labour migrants. It should be mentioned that eleven EU member states<sup>14</sup> have granted full and unrestricted access for Romanians to their labour markets. Others have imposed transitional arrangements barring Romanians (for periods of two to seven years) from entering their labour markets. Nevertheless, it is estimated that 3.4 million Romanians were working abroad in mid-2007, approximately 1.2 million of them legally.<sup>15</sup>

### Immigration

At the beginning of the 1990s Romania had a relatively modest level of immigration. Those immigrating to Romania during this time were mostly entrepreneurs, especially from Turkey, the Middle East (Syria, Jordan) and China.<sup>16</sup> By 1996 only several hundred foreigners had been issued work permits; by the end of 2000 this number had grown to 1,580.<sup>17</sup> Since then the number of foreigners with work permits has increased, from 3,678 in 2005 to 7,993 at the end of 2006.<sup>18</sup>

**FIGURE 3: The top five source countries of temporary foreign workers in Romania**

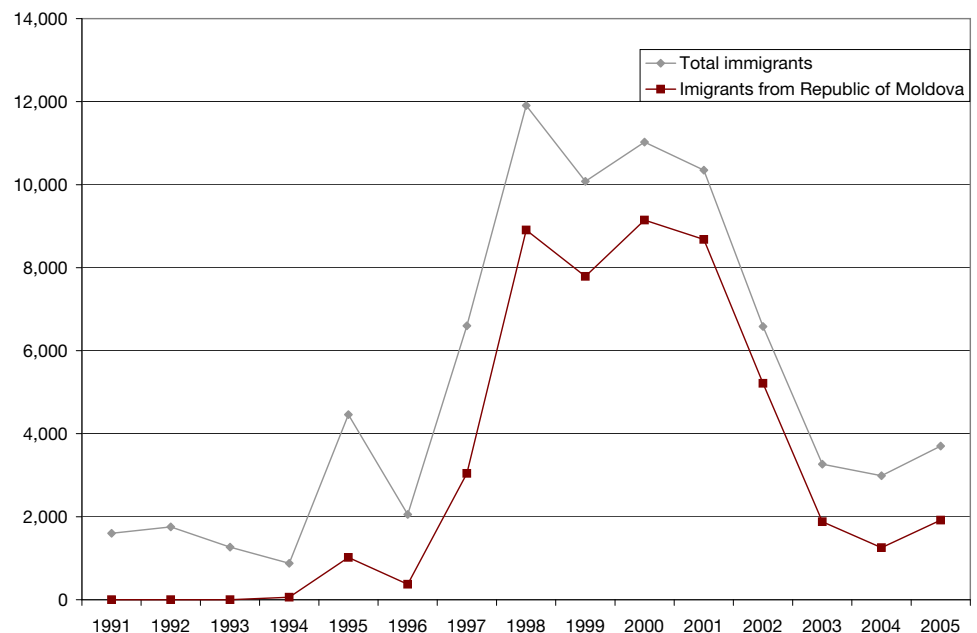
Country	Year	
	2005	2006
1. Turkey	1,481	1,721
2. China	529	1,129
3. France	155	310
4. Germany	55	200

Source: Ministerului Internelor și Reformei Administrative (MIRA) (2007)

The rise in the number of foreign workers is attributed to Romania's economic revival and partially to the opening of Romania's labour market in the context of the country's EU accession. Starting in 2004, the Romanian labour market began expanding, and in 2006 certain sectors (e.g. the clothing and construction industries) were facing labour shortages. It was under these circumstances that entrepreneurs started to import foreign workers.

In 2006 the major countries of origin of foreign workers were Turkey and China. A total of 82% of the foreign workforce in Romania was male, and 63% were registered in the capital city of Bucharest and the surrounding areas. Given the expected future growth of demand for labour (and the ageing of the Ro-

**FIGURE 4: Total number of immigrants and immigrants from the Republic of Moldova, 1991-2005**



Source: Institutul Național de Statistică (INS) (2006)

manian population) it is predicted that the stock of foreign workers integrated into the Romanian labour market might reach 200,000 – 300,000 in 2013–2015.<sup>19</sup>

As regards the future, Romanian authorities are expecting a considerable increase in immigration. It is estimated that between 2007 and 2010, 15,000 to 18,000 immigrants will arrive in Romania annually. This forecast is based on last year's slow but steady increase of foreign residents in Romania. In the last two years alone, the total stock of foreign residents in Romania increased from 45,900 at the end of 2005 to 48,200 in 2006.<sup>20</sup>

### Immigration from the Republic of Moldova

Starting in the second half of the 1990s, immigration from the neighbouring Republic of Moldova increased significantly. Building on historical ties,<sup>21</sup> mobility processes between the two countries were greatly enhanced by the 1991 Romanian Citizenship Law, which practically defined the migration of Moldovan citizens as a form of repatriation, stipulating that the descendants of former Romanian citizens can "reacquire Romanian citizenship by request even if they have another citizenship and they do not settle their domicile in Romania."<sup>22</sup> It is estimated that, as a consequence of this law alone, more than 250,000 Moldovan citizens might have received Romanian citizenship during the 1990s.<sup>23</sup> In these circumstances, the numbers presented in Figure 4 might under-represent Moldovan immigration to Romania, since many Moldovans have moved to Romania as Romanian citizens (and therefore might not appear in the statistics as part of the immigrant population).

It seems that immigration from the Republic of Moldova has not reached its end; a continuation of this movement (or even an increase in its volume) cannot be ruled out. In the context of its accession to the EU, Romania introduced mandatory visas

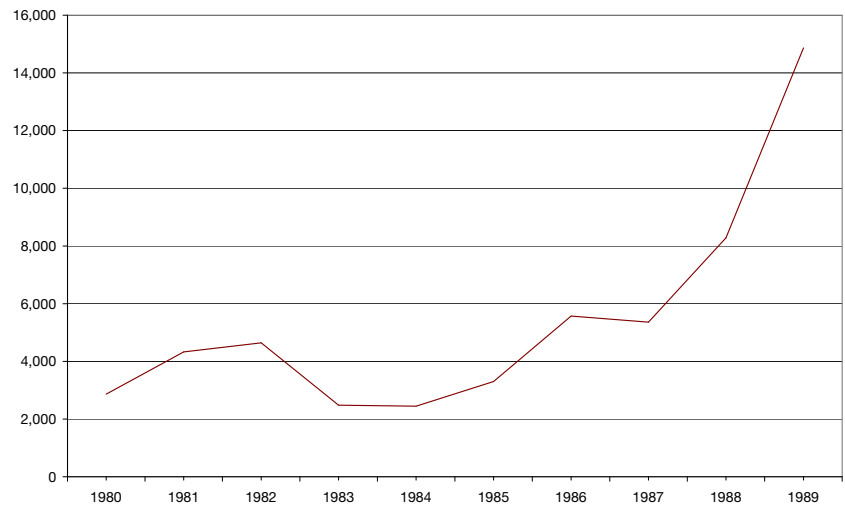
for Moldovan citizens. This has resulted in an exceptional increase in the number of applications by Moldovan citizens for Romanian citizenship. According to the latest reports, 500,000 Moldovan citizens (with accompanying children, approximately 800,000 persons) have applied for Romanian citizenship since the beginning of 2007, and it is predicted that this figure might increase to 1.8 million by the end of the year. This is extraordinary, considering that the Republic of Moldova has only 3.8 million inhabitants.<sup>24</sup>

## Citizenship

One of the major novelties introduced by the 1991 Law on Citizenship<sup>25</sup> was that it allowed for dual citizenship and made it for individuals (and their children) who lost or were forced to give up their Romanian citizenship under different historical circumstances to reacquire it. This measure paved the way for the repatriation of a variety of groups, like former legal and irregular emigrants who voluntarily renounced their citizenship and former Romanian citizens who were stripped of their citizenship due to the redrawing of borders. What makes this procedure interesting is not just the fact that those who qualify may retain the citizenship they hold prior to repatriation, but that they are exempted from the permanent residence requirement that otherwise applies to citizenship applicants. In other words, those reacquiring citizenship are not required to be legal residents in Romania in order to apply.

In the case of foreigners who wish to obtain Romanian citizenship by naturalising, sustained residence is a key require-

**FIGURE 6: Asylum applications by Romanian citizens in OECD countries, 1980-1989**

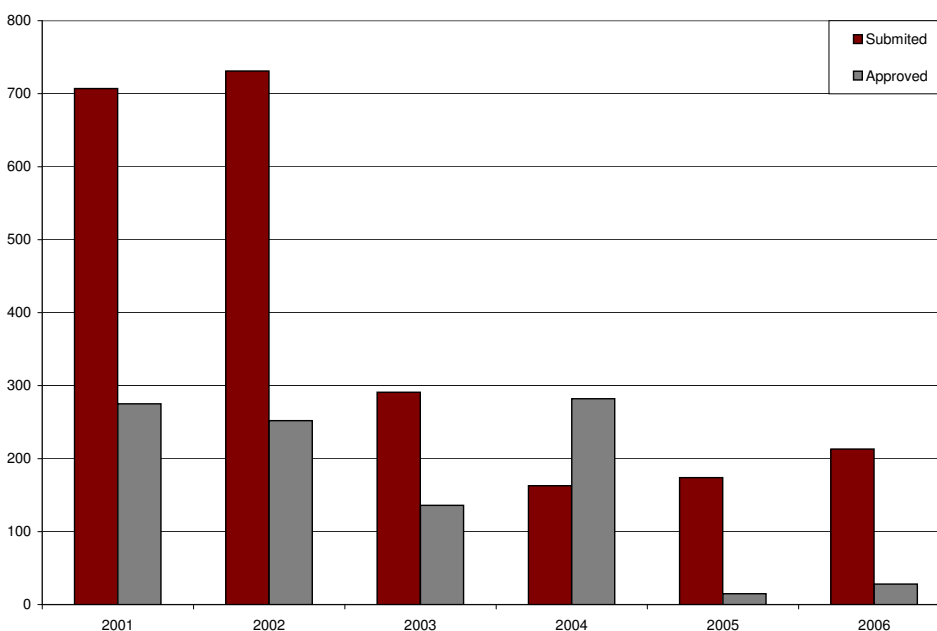


Source: UNHCR

ment. Persons married to Romanian citizens must have resided in Romania continuously for five years prior to application; all others must have eight years of uninterrupted residency.<sup>26</sup> Exceptions are made in the case of entrepreneurs who make a significant investment in Romania.

The latest reports by the Ministry of Justice, which is in charge of issues related to acquiring and reacquiring Romanian citizenship, show that the number of applications for reacquisition and naturalisation has declined. This is especially true of applications for naturalisation since 2000.

**FIGURE 5: Number of applications for naturalisation, submitted and approved, 2001-2006**<sup>27</sup>



Source: România Ministerul Justiției

## Refuge and Asylum

### Romanian refugees and asylum seekers

Throughout the Communist era, particularly in its final years, Romania was a major source of asylum-seekers. A considerable number of Romanians submitted asylum applications in Hungary, as well as in West European countries, the USA and Canada. They applied with rather high chances of recognition, as the basic policy assumption of the West in relation to asylum seekers coming from the Communist world was that there was no possibility to send them back.<sup>28</sup> By the second half of the 1980s, the number of asylum applications submitted by Romanian citizens in Western countries had doubled or even tripled compared with the beginning of the decade.

In the early 1990s, Romania continued to be a major source of asylum-seekers in Europe. Romanians represented the

second largest group (after citizens of the former Yugoslavia) applying for asylum in Europe in that time period with 402,000 applications submitted. A total of 350,000 of these applications were submitted between 1990 and 1994, three quarters of them in Germany.<sup>29</sup> This large-scale flight was above all a reaction to the hardships and deprivations endured by the country's population during Communism. The liberalization of travel opened a window of opportunity for many to seek a better life elsewhere. For many, the institution of asylum seemed to offer the only legal means through which to acquire an initial legal status in another country.<sup>(30)</sup> On the other hand, the transition from a Communist regime to a consolidated democracy has been rather problematic in Romania. In the first years of this process, the use of political violence by those in power, human rights violations, abuses of authority targeted at (ethnic, religious and gender) minorities and even mob violence directed against Roma were common.

In the case of certain minority groups, particularly the Roma, asylum migration was motivated by a sense of insecurity and increased vulnerability. For example, 17 cases of mob violence directed against local Roma communities were registered between 1990 and 1995, in which ten Roma people were killed and 295 houses belonging to Roma destroyed. The hesitance of the authorities to prosecute the perpetrators, or to take steps to prevent similar occurrences, lent passive support to the violence. In this context, a large number of refugees of Roma origin applied for asylum, most of them in Germany. In response to pressure from various international organizations (such as the European Council, OSCE, NATO) and the EU, Romania has improved its minority policies considerably over time, advancing anti-discrimination legislation and initiating large-scale integration programs. However, the Roma are still faced with prejudice and various forms of institutionalised discrimination. A considerable part of this population still lives in a marginal situation and is thus inclined to migrate.

### Refuge and asylum in Romania

In 1991 Romania ratified the UN Convention (1951) and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (1967). The asylum system in Romania underwent modifications in 1996 and 2000, before being harmonised with EU standards in 2006. The number of asylum applications has fluctuated from year to year, with 15,605 applications being received between 1991 and the end of 2006.<sup>31</sup> The number of persons applying for asylum in Romania each year has decreased considerably, from 1,150 asylum requests registered in

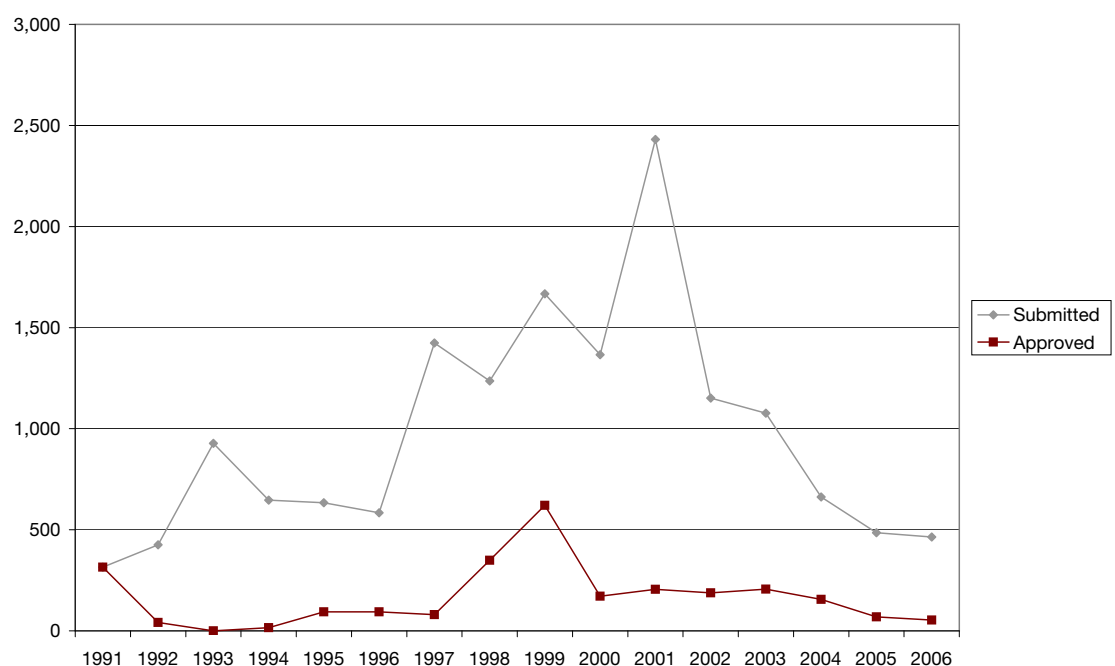
2002 to 380 applications in 2006.<sup>32</sup> This trend is in line with a Europe-wide decrease of the number of asylum applications and may be attributed to the relatively low rate of acceptance of claims in Romania, which may discourage applications.<sup>33</sup>

The number of asylum applications might increase in the near future, due to EU regulations, which assign responsibility for asylum applications to the state where an applicant first entered EU territory. Given the fact that approximately two-thirds of Romania's borders are with non-EU countries (Moldova, Ukraine and the former Yugoslavia), it is likely that a large number of asylum-seekers will enter through its territory. The Romanian authorities are already prepared for such a change; the National Office for Refugees (the Romanian governmental unit in charge of the implementation of asylum policy) has established new transit and accommodation centres for asylum applicants. In 2006 six such centres were operating, offering shelter for 1,312 asylum applicants, and another two such centres were due to open.

### Irregular Migration

Romania has been, and still is, mainly a source country (and to some extent a transit country) for irregular migration. Irregular practices (crossing the green border, residence in various countries without proper legal forms, etc.) became popular under the Communist regime, when avenues for legal migration were rather restricted, both for Romanians and for most foreign citizens travelling through Romania. However, even after the fall of Communism, labour migration from Romania was overwhelmingly irregular, as the majority of the Western European countries imposed entrance visas for Romanian citizens, making legal access to these countries rather difficult. This has

**FIGURE 7: Asylum in Romania, applications submitted and approved, 1991-2006**



Source: Ministerul Internelor și Reformei Administrative (MIRA), Autoritate pentru Străini (ApS)

since changed, and regularization programs, like those in Italy, have given many labour migrants with Romanian citizenship legal residence status and access to employment in some countries of destination. Nevertheless, it is estimated that a considerable number of the Romanian labour migrants were still irregulars in 2006, perhaps encouraged by the prospects of periodic regularization campaigns. For example, estimates place the number of irregular Romanian residents in Italy at 600,000, which is in addition to the 300,000 legal Romanian residents recorded by Italian authorities in 2005.<sup>34</sup>

### Human trafficking

During the 1990s, Romania became both a source and a transit country (for persons originating from Moldova, Ukraine and Russia) of human trafficking, with victims (including children) being trafficked to various places in the Balkan states as well as Italy, Spain, France and beyond.<sup>35</sup> In 2002, the International Organisation for Migration estimated that as many as 20,000 women were trafficked from Romania each year;<sup>36</sup> according to some estimates, 10-15% of them are minors.<sup>37</sup>

Trafficking in children is a particularly alarming phenomenon, with Romania being counted among the major southeastern European countries of origin.<sup>38</sup> Considerable pressure has been placed on the Romanian authorities to implement more effective policies for addressing the problem. Since 2001 a set of policy measures have been developed, among them a law to combat and prevent human trafficking. Since 2003, actions have become more focused on child trafficking. At the beginning of 2004, the government presented a Draft National Plan of Action for Preventing and Combating Trafficking with Children. Besides the enforcement of regulations meant to prevent or sanction trafficking, special institutions were set up to assist victims, including centres that underage victims of trafficking can return to and centres where adult victims of trafficking can receive counselling.

Despite these sustained efforts, a monitoring agency of the United States State Department, which conducts its efforts within the larger OSCE framework, and which is specialised in assessing the effectiveness of anti-trafficking policies, still listed Romania among the countries with a serious trafficking problem in 2006. While significant efforts are being made, the country has not managed to comply fully with the minimum standards of the US Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000.<sup>39</sup>

## Current Issues

### The impact of emigration

The economic impact of labour migration on Romania has not yet been assessed in comprehensive terms. It is only certain that the volume of remittances increased continuously until 2006. In 2002, the volume of remittances was estimated to be approximately USD 1.5-2 billion,<sup>40</sup> and Romania placed 23rd in the list of the top 30 developing countries with the highest volume of remittances received in that period.<sup>41</sup> Recent reports show that, since then, the volume of remittances has almost tripled: the National Bank of Romania reported the record

amount of EUR 4.8-5.3 billion for 2006.<sup>42</sup> It seems that a large part of this money goes toward increasing the overall living standards of migrant households, and only a small part is invested in entrepreneurial activities.<sup>43</sup>

Beyond the positive economic aspects for households, widespread engagement of Romanians in labour migration has several negative consequences, particularly on the lives of affected families. Perhaps the most problematic issue is the temporary abandonment of minors by their labour migrant parents. At the beginning of the 1990s, only one member of the household tended to migrate, meaning that only one family member (usually the father) was absent. Since then the number of women engaged in labour migration has increased. Now it is common for couples to migrate, leaving minor children behind without direct parental supervision. These children are not necessarily abandoned; rather, parental roles are assumed by relatives, neighbours or friends. However, the lack of direct parental supervision has led to a rise in social problems among children and adolescents, and the authorities in charge of child protection have been forced to formulate policies to monitor the situation. At the end of 2006, approximately 60,000 children were identified by the National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights as being at risk because one or both parents were working abroad; in one third (21,400) of these cases, children had been deprived of both their parents.<sup>44</sup>

### Managing the Romanian diaspora

Lately the Romanian diaspora has become an increasingly important issue on the political agenda. Since the votes and remittances of several million people count, politicians and authorities have started to address the issue of how to influence and strengthen the Romanian diaspora. The major emphasis of these policy actions is on identity and cultural reproduction (including support for Romanian language education abroad and subsidies for cultural activities and publications). A specialised branch of the central administration (presently called the Department for Relations with Romanians Abroad) has been operating since 1998, and in 2006 a law stipulating the conditions under which the organisation and activities of the diaspora are to be financed was passed. In 2006 the department offered financial support for 145 projects, totalling the equivalent of EUR 3.2 million.<sup>45</sup>

Among the latest developments in the field of diaspora policies, it should be noted that Romanians working abroad are now being viewed not only as potential voters or promoters of Romanian culture, but as a labour supply that can help fill growing shortages in sectors of the Romanian labour market. In early 2007 a special interdepartmental committee of the central administration, headed by the Prime Minister, was set up with the purpose of drafting a set of measures to encourage the return of Romanian labour migrants abroad.

## Future Challenges

In the 1990s, Romanian authorities tolerated labour emigration because it functioned as a safety valve, defusing the increasing social tensions generated by the collapse of Communism and the rather difficult transition to a market economy. It seems that this flow has become self-perpetuating and, even if the causes behind the massive labour migration have disappeared, a future continuation cannot be ruled out. However, the authorities are interested not only in containing this flow, but in creating the domestic conditions necessary to encourage Romanians working abroad to return to Romania. This is a challenging policy issue indeed: considerable economic adjustments (e.g. wage increases) would need to be made and programmes for the (re-) integration of returnees created. How the administration will go about designing and implementing effective policies in this field remains to be seen, since no concrete steps for implementation have been discussed publicly since the new immigration policy was announced at the beginning of 2007..

On the other hand, Romanian authorities will need to turn their attentions to attracting foreign workers in order to meet shortages in the domestic labour market. Since Romania has never experienced major inflows of foreign citizens, the authorities and society in general might have to face a genuine challenge in dealing with increased diversity and integrating a large number of newcomers. The National Strategy on Migration contains some rather general strategies in this area (e.g. relying on the experience of other EU member states). However, EU countries have different means of managing immigration and integration, none of which can be considered unequivocally as best practice. A recent survey<sup>46</sup> reveals that intolerant attitudes toward immigrants and immigration are not currently widespread among the Romanian population. However, it should be noted that Romanian society has only recently begun to face the social issues that arise from immigration. Recent conflicts between foreign and domestic employees working at the same firm<sup>47</sup> have shown that Romanian society (including the media) is still not prepared to face the intercultural issues that go along with increasing diversity, and that benevolent reactions on the part of the general public toward immigrants cannot be taken for granted.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Perhaps the most important was the vanishing of two large minorities, the Jews and Germans (each of which accounted for around half a million people at the beginning of twentieth century), from Romania's ethnic landscape.
- <sup>2</sup> For a review, see Münz (2002).
- <sup>3</sup> See Varga E. (1998).
- <sup>4</sup> See Münz (2002).
- <sup>5</sup> See Stola (1992).
- <sup>6</sup> See Rotman (2004).
- <sup>7</sup> See Pledna (2001).
- <sup>8</sup> See INS (2006) and SOPEMI (1994).
- <sup>9</sup> See Mueller (1999).
- <sup>10</sup> See Salt (1989).
- <sup>11</sup> See SOPEMI (1994).
- <sup>12</sup> See MMSSF (2007a).
- <sup>13</sup> See Lăzăroiu (2004) and Sandu (2006).
- <sup>14</sup> These are: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Sweden.
- <sup>15</sup> Tudorica, I. and Lucian, D. (2007): "Trei milioane de romani muncesc in strainatate." *Cotidianul*, 18 June.
- <sup>16</sup> See Lăzăroiu (2004).
- <sup>17</sup> See SOPEMI (2003).
- <sup>18</sup> See MMSSF (2007b).
- <sup>19</sup> See MIRA (2007).
- <sup>20</sup> See MIRA (2007).
- <sup>21</sup> Though Moldovans had been subjects of the Russian empire between 1812 and 1918, they became Romanian citizens in the period between the two world wars. Based on historical and linguistic ties, many Romanians consider the Romanian-speaking Moldovan population to be part of the Romanian nation, although this idea is disputed by considerable segments of the Moldovan elite. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Republic of Moldova became an independent state, and Romanian authorities initiated a process that is effectively bringing the two countries into a closer relationship (as the first step toward a possible reunification). One of the major components of this approach was to facilitate the movement of persons between the two countries as much as possible.
- <sup>22</sup> See Iordachi (2003): 29.
- <sup>23</sup> See Iordachi (2003).
- <sup>24</sup> See Ciobanu, C. (2007): "Un milion de moldovenii vor cetățenia română." *Cotidianul*, 5 February. Bucharest.
- <sup>25</sup> Modified in 2003.
- <sup>26</sup> If a person leaves the country for six months or more, that year is not counted toward the residence requirement.
- <sup>27</sup> The number of applications approved in a given year may be higher than the number of applications submitted in that year, as unresolved cases may be carried over from the previous year.
- <sup>28</sup> See Appelyard (2001).
- <sup>29</sup> See UNHCR (2001).
- <sup>30</sup> See Diminescu (2006).
- <sup>31</sup> See MIRA (2007).
- <sup>32</sup> See UNHCR (2007).
- <sup>33</sup> See Field and Edwards (2006).
- <sup>34</sup> See Bleahu (2006).
- <sup>35</sup> See Lăzăroiu (2000).
- <sup>36</sup> See Commission of the European Communities (2002).
- <sup>37</sup> See Limanowska (2005).
- <sup>38</sup> See Dottridge (2006) and Kane (2005).
- <sup>39</sup> See Miko (2007).
- <sup>40</sup> See Lăzăroiu (2004).
- <sup>41</sup> See SOPEMI (2006).



- <sup>42</sup> Depending on the sources and methods. For details see: Bobocea, M. (2007): "Expatrii romani au trimis acasa 1,3 mld. euro in decembrie." Ziarul Financiar, 20 February; Tudorica, I. and Davidescu, L. (2007): "Trei milioane de romani muncesc in strainatate." Cotidianul, 18 June.
- <sup>43</sup> See Grigoraş (2006). For more information on remittances in general, see Hertlein, S. and Vadean, F. (2006): "Remittances – A Bridge between Migration and Development?" focus Migration Policy Brief Nr. 5.
- <sup>44</sup> Source: internal statistics of the Governmental Department for the Protection of Children's Rights.
- <sup>45</sup> See Activity Report of the Department for Relations with the Romanians Abroad during January – December 2006. [http://www.mae.ro/poze\\_editare/2007.05.17\\_Report2006.pdf](http://www.mae.ro/poze_editare/2007.05.17_Report2006.pdf)
- <sup>46</sup> The study was carried out in the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania. It was conducted in December 2006, under the leadership of the author. The results of the study can be viewed here (in Romanian): [http://www.dri.gov.ro/documents/MINORITATI\\_Nationale.ppt](http://www.dri.gov.ro/documents/MINORITATI_Nationale.ppt)
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