

RESEARCH ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE IMMIGRATION PHENOMENON IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: *It is obvious that international migration is a phenomenon affecting all the countries and regions of the world, and Romania is no exception. Romania is not only a country of origin, but also a country of transit and destination. The purpose of this research is to study the phenomenon of immigration in Romania. The statistical analysis of immigration data provided by the United Nations, Eurostat, the National Statistical Institute of Romania, the International Organization for Migration, the International Organization for Migration, the Office for Romania was chosen for statistical analysis. The evolution of the international migration stock highlights the increase in the number of migrants from one year to the next. Thus, if in 1990 Romania had a level of 135,825 migrants, in 2019 the value amounted to 462,552 migrants, the highest level in the period 1990-2019. However, immigrants are not frequently interested in Romania. Rather, Romania is a transit state to developed countries.*

Key words: *international migration, immigration, Romania.*

JEL Classification: *F22, O15, R23.*

1. Introduction

The United Nations uses the term “international migration” to refer to people living in a country or region other than the one in which they were born or whose nationality they belong to (United Nations, 2019a).

According to the Statistical Yearbook of Romania (National Institute of Statistics, 2019a), “international migration represents the change of habitual residence in another country and, respectively, from another country in Romania”. Emigrants are those who previously had their habitual residence in Romania and who cease to have their habitual residence in its territory for a period of at least 12 months. Immigrants are those persons who establish their habitual residence on the territory of Romania for a period of at least 12 months after having previously had their habitual residence in another country. Also, international migration is considered to have two forms (National Institute of Statistics, 2019a): permanent international migration, determined by the change of permanent residence from and in Romania, and long-term temporary international migration, determined by the change of habitual residence from and in Romania, for a period of at least 12 months. The balance of international migration is determined, for each year separately, as the difference between the flow of immigrants (number of immigrants, Romanian citizens, foreigners or stateless persons, who previously had their habitual residence in another country and established their habitual residence on the territory Romania, for a period of at least 12 months, in the reference year) and the flow of emigrants (the number of emigrants who previously had their habitual residence in Romania and established their habitual residence in another country for a period of at least 12 months, in the reference year).

Romania is not only a country of origin, but also a transit and destination country. It is true that the research of the emigration phenomenon has shown a special interest in the specialized literature, because, in the last years, over 3 million Romanian citizens have chosen to obtain residence in another country. Thus, the authors Constantin, Nicolescu and Goschin (2008) approached the issue of Romania's external migration from a European perspective, accompanied by that of asylum, in the study "European Perspectives on Approaching Asylum and Migration". The paper addresses the legislation, policies and institutions in the field of migration in the European Union and Romania, including a

statistical (quantitative) analysis of emigration and immigration flows of Romania, focusing on labour migration (Constantin, Nicolescu and Goschin, 2008, p. 3). Based on quantitative and qualitative analyzes, the paper includes a series of considerations regarding the predictable evolutions of the migration phenomenon. The authors Roman and Voicu (2018) analyzed the flows and labor migration trends and their impact on economic and social life in Romania. The economic consequences concern the financial aspects, the quality of life, the volume of money transfers. The most severe problem is the temporary abandonment of minors by migrant parents and the fact that the authorities are thus forced to formulate policies to monitor the situation, which would involve additional costs (Roman and Voicu, 2010, p.64).

In the literature there are also studies that have analyzed immigration in Romania. Thus, the authors Toader, Smirna, Jurca and Cernat (2010) conducted a research to identify the needs of immigrant workers on the Romanian territory, as well as to record and analyze the views of other actors involved in the phenomenon of immigration for work purposes (union representatives, managers, Romanian workers), with reference to the solutions to improve this process, to increase the adaptability of workers and companies on the labour market (Toader, Smirna, Jurca and Cernat, 2010, p.13).

Alexe and Păunescu (2011) conducted and published a complex study on legal immigration and integration of foreigners in Romania. The aim of the paper was to improve the degree of knowledge of the immigration phenomenon and the importance of integrating foreign citizens in our country. This study includes four major research components: documentary research on immigration, research on the perception of the Romanian population on RTT (third country nationals), qualitative research among RTT on the path of integration into Romanian society, qualitative research on identifying methods and information channels regarding RTT issues (Alexe and Păunescu, 2011, pp.8-9).

2. The immigration phenomenon in Romania

The purpose of this research is to study the immigration phenomenon in Romania, and less the emigration phenomenon. Therefore, the statistical analysis of data on international migration and immigration provided by the United Nations, through the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Eurostat (the European Commission department responsible for publishing comparable statistics for Member States), the National Institute of Statistics of Romania, by the International Organization for Migration (Migration Data Portal, Center for Data Analysis on International Migration), by the International Organization for Migration, Office for Romania.

The evolution of the international migration stock highlights the increase in the number of migrants from one year to another (United Nations, 2019b). Thus, if in 1990, Romania registered a level of 135,825 migrants, in 2019 the value amounted to 462,552 migrants (Figure 1), the highest level in the period 1990-2019. The year 2015, considered to be the peak year of the migration crisis, was characterized by a significant increase in international migration, with 103,837 people compared to 2010, respectively by 59%.

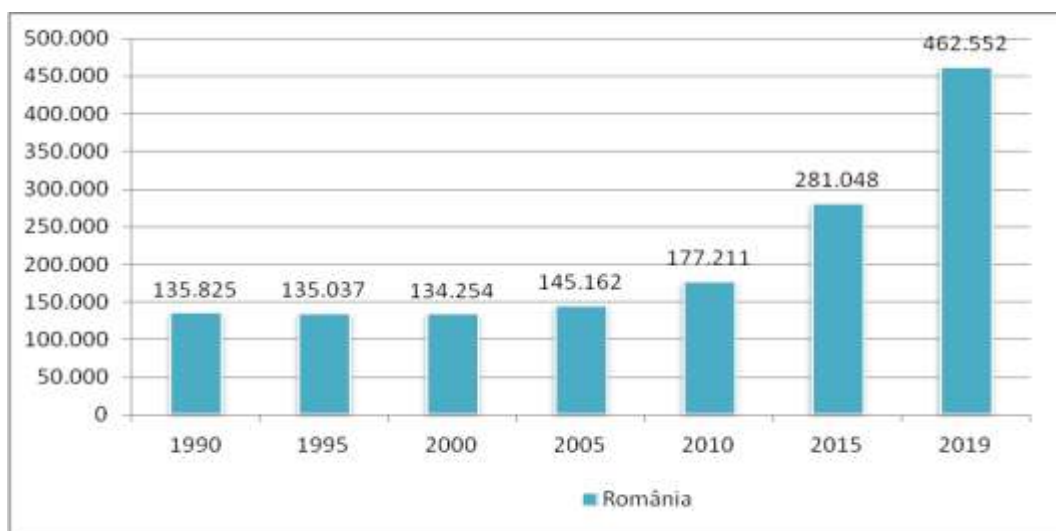


Figure 1. The evolution of international migration in Romania

Source: United Nations, 2019b. *International Migrant Stock 2019*. United Nations: Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division. [online] Available at: <<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.asp>> [Accessed 3 January 2020].

As a share in the total population of Romania, the stock of international migration represents, in 2019, 2.4%, four times higher than the share value held in 1990 (0.6%) (Figure 2). The increase in this share was continuous, from 0.6% in 1990, 1995 and 2000, to 0.7% in 2005, 0.9% in 2010, 1.4% in 2015, and 2.4, in 2019. For comparability, the share of international migration in the total population in 2019 was 11% in Europe and 3.5% worldwide (United Nations, 2019b).

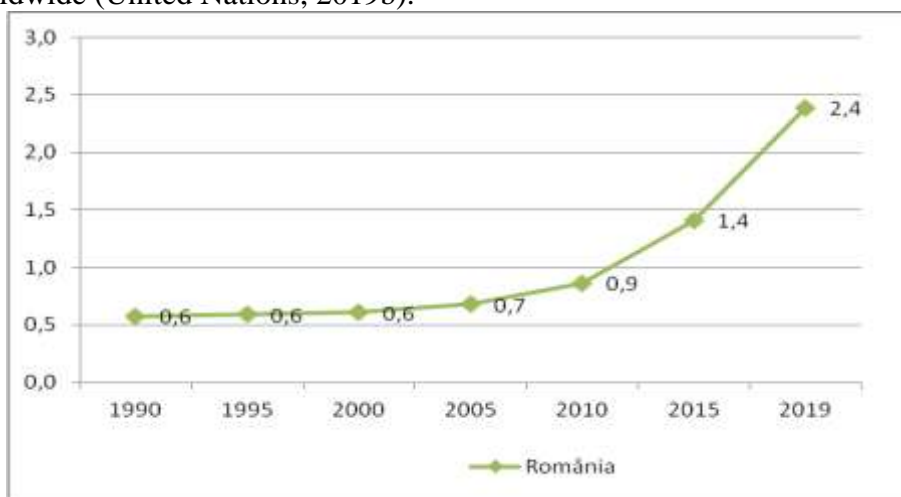


Figure 2. The share of international migratory stocks in the total population of Romania

Source: United Nations, 2019b. *International Migrant Stock 2019*. United Nations: Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division. [online] Available at: <<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.asp>> [Accessed 3 January 2020].

The analysis of the international migration stock, according to gender, highlights the preponderance of the male population, in 2015 and 2019. In the previous period (1990, 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2010), women had a higher share comparing to men (Figure 3). For comparison, in Europe and worldwide, in 2019, migrant women had higher shares. In

Europe, the share of the female migrant population was 51.4%, and worldwide, 47.9% (United Nations, 2019b).

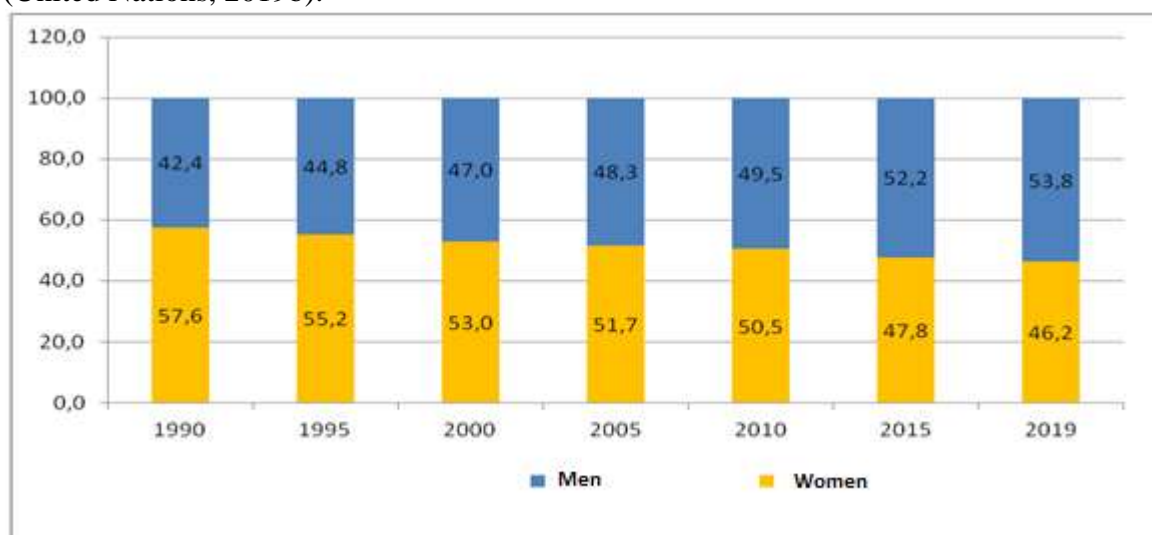


Figure 3. The share of the international migration stock in the total population of Romania

Source: United Nations, 2019b. *International Migrant Stock 2019*. United Nations: Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division. [online] Available at: <<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.asp>> [Accessed 3 January 2020].

According to the National Institute of Statistics of Romania, the permanent international migration registered the same increasing trend, in the period 1991-2017 (National Institute of Statistics, 2019). Thus, Chart 1 highlights the evolution of the permanent international migration phenomenon in the last almost 30 years.

Chart 1. Permanent international migration (determined by address change)

Year	Permanent immigrants	Permanent emigrants	The balance of international migration with address change
1991	1,602	44,160	-42,558
1995	4,458	25,675	-21,217
2000	11,024	14,753	-3,729
2005	3,704	10,938	-7,234
2010	7,059	7,906	-847
2015	23,093	15,235	7,858
2016	27,863	22,807	5,056
2017	50,199	23,156	27,043

Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2019. *Statistical Yearbook of Romania 2018 - time series*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.insse.ro/cms/ro/tags/anuarul-statistic-al-romaniei>> [Accessed 4 January 2020].

If in 1991 a number of 1,602 permanent immigrants was reported, in the following years it reached 11,024 permanent immigrants, in 2000, and 50,199 permanent immigrants, in 2017. In the case of permanent emigrants, the highest value was recorded in 1991, when 44,160 Romanians emigrated permanently. Gradually, in 1995, 2000 and 2005, the number of permanent emigrants decreased, and the trend will change after 2003, in order to increase the number of permanent emigrants.

Analyzing the balance of permanent international migration (Figure 4), it is observed that it was negative in the period 1991-2010, the number of permanent emigrants exceeding that of permanent immigrants. The balance becomes positive after 2012, when

the flow of immigrants exceeds that of emigrants. In 2017, a fairly important balance was registered, of 27,043 people (50,199 permanent immigrants and 23,156 permanent emigrants).

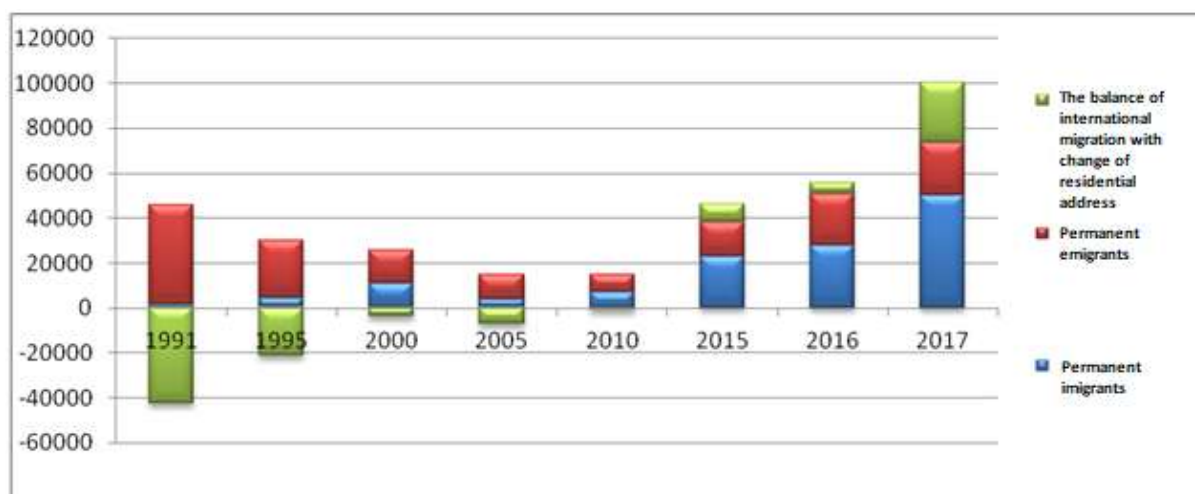


Figure 4. The balance of permanent international migration

Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2019. *Statistical Yearbook of Romania 2018 - time series*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.insse.ro/cms/ro/tags/anuarul-statistic-al-romaniei>> [Accessed 4 January 2020].

Regarding the long-term temporary migration, determined by the residence change (Chart 2), it is found that in the period 2008-2018, the flow of immigrants registered a linear, insignificant increase. The years 2017 and 2018 are highlighted by an increase in the number of immigrants, which reached, in 2018, the value of 181,344 people. The number of emigrants, on the other hand, fluctuated quite a lot. The year 2008 represents the peak year for the analyzed period, when the number of emigrants exceeded 300,000 people.

In the period 2008-2013, the trend was to reduce the number of emigrants. Starting with 2014, the number of emigrants started to increase continuously, reaching the number of 238,926 people, in 2018 (Chart 2).

Chart 2. Long-term temporary international migration

Year	Immigrants	Emigrants	The balance of international migration
2008	138,929	302,796	-163,867
2009	135,844	246,626	-110,782
2010	149,885	197,985	-48,100
2011	147,685	195,551	-47,866
2012	167,266	170,186	-2,920
2013	153,646	161,755	-8,109
2014	136,035	172,871	-36,836
2015	132,795	194,718	-61,923
2016	137,455	207,578	-70,123
2017	165,946	219,327	-53,381
2018	181,344	238,926	-57,582

Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2019. *Statistical Yearbook of Romania 2018 - time series*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.insse.ro/cms/ro/tags/anuarul-statistic-al-romaniei>> [Accessed 4 January 2020].

Figure 5 shows the balance of long-term temporary international migration. For the analyzed period, it was, in each case, negative, because the flow of long-term temporary

emigrants exceeded the flow of long-term temporary immigrants. It is observed that the net migration increased from 2008 to 2012. After this year, the balance decreased again, to the value of -57,582 people, in 2018.

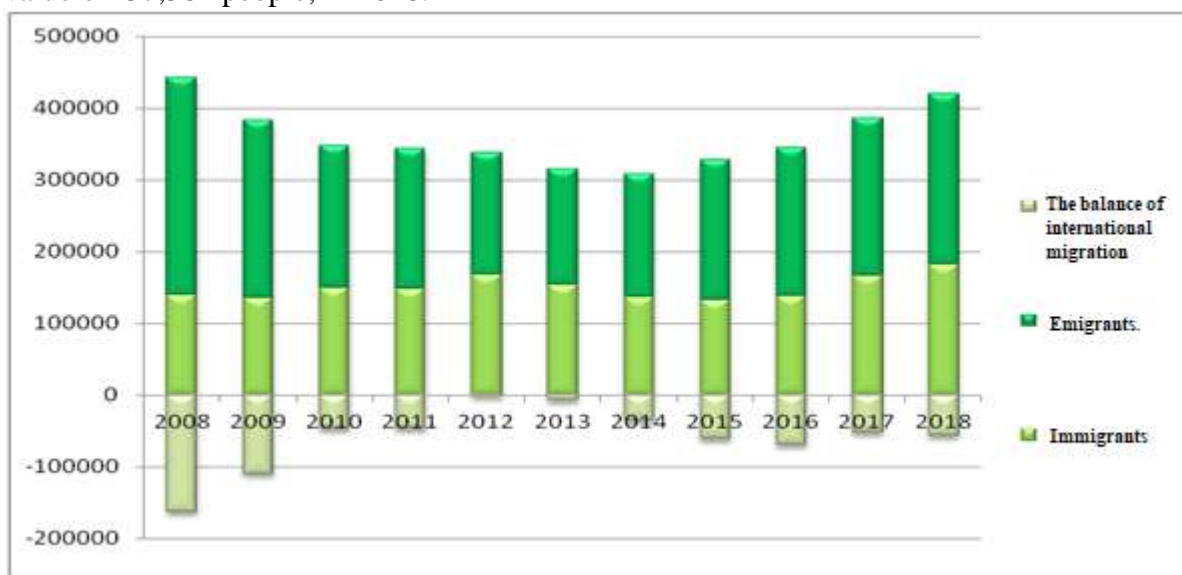


Figure 5. Balance of long-term temporary international migration

Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2019. *Statistical Yearbook of Romania 2018 - time series*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.insse.ro/cms/ro/tags/anuarul-statistic-al-romaniei>> [Accessed 4 January 2020].

Analyzing the international migration by age groups, it is found that, during the period 1990-2019, the migrant population became rather young. If, in 1990, the migrant population aged between 20 and 64 years represented 50.4%, and the population over 65 years had a share of 48.1%, in 2015 and 2019, the situation changed significantly in an interesting way. The migrant population under the age of 19 represented, in 2019, 46.1% of the total migrant population, people aged 20-64 accounted for 44% of the total migrant population, and the population over the age of 65 had a weight of 9.9% (Figure 6).

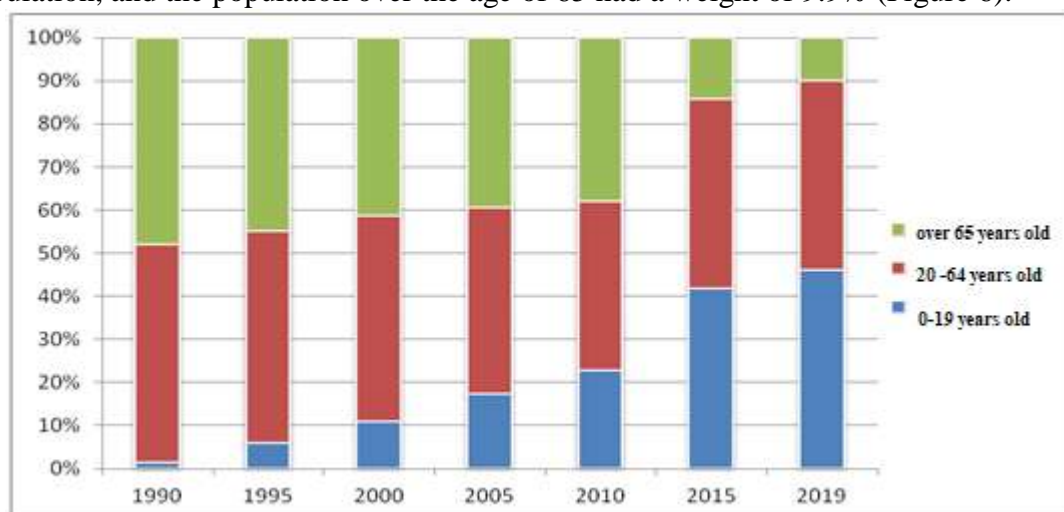


Figure 6. The structure by age groups of international migration, in the years 1990-2019

Source: United Nations, 2019b. *International Migrant Stock 2019*. United Nations: Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division. [online] Available at: <<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.asp>> [Accessed 3 January 2020].

In this context, the calculation of the average age of international migrants shows its reduction, from 64.3 years old (in 1990) to 50.9 years old (in 2010), 25.5 years old (in 2015) and 22.8 years old, in 2019 (Figure 7).

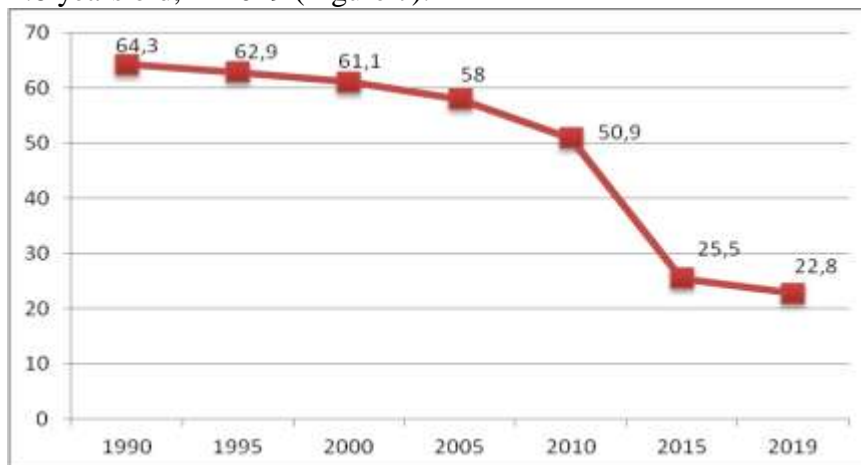


Figure 7. Average age of international migrants, in the period 1990-2019

Source: United Nations, 2019b. *International Migrant Stock 2019*. United Nations: Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division. [online] Available at: <<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.asp>> [Accessed 3 January 2020].

Analyzing the structure of permanent immigrants, by country of origin, in 2017 (National Institute of Statistics, 2019), it is observed that most of them come from the Republic of Moldova (61% that is 30,543 people) (Figure 8). In the second place is Ukraine, with a share of 10% (11,404 people). It is followed by Italy and Spain, with 1% each, and Germany and the United States of America, with 1% of the total number of permanent immigrants in Romania. The category "Other countries" included Austria, Canada, France, Israel, Syria, Turkey, Hungary, etc. Analyzing the situation in Turkey, it is found that in the period 2006-2012, it was among the top five countries considering the origin of foreign citizens (permanent immigrants) in Romania (National Institute of Statistics, 2019).

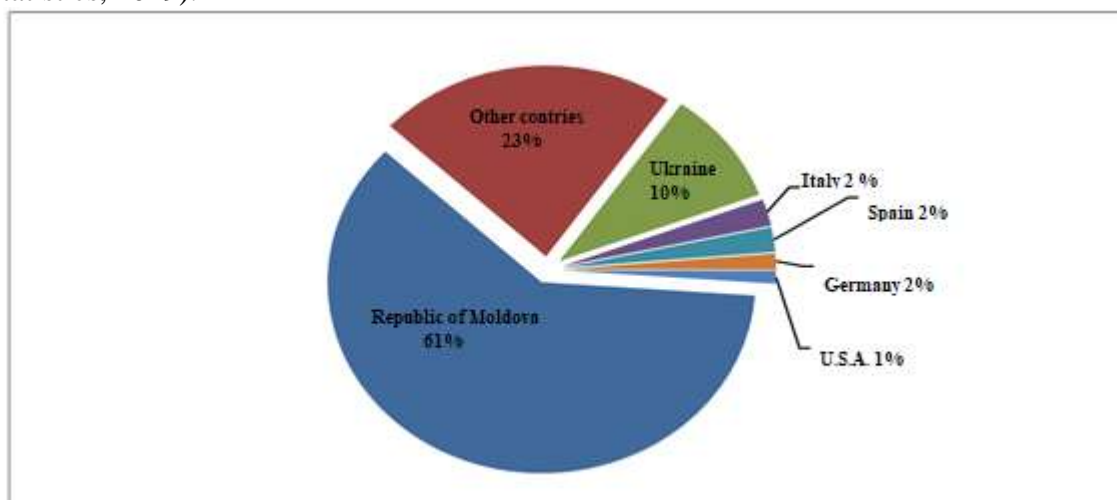


Figure 8. The structure of permanent immigrants, by country of origin

Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2019. *Statistical Yearbook of Romania 2018 - time series*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.insse.ro/cms/ro/tags/anuarul-statistic-al-romaniei>> [Accessed 4 January 2020].

The analysis of immigrants by citizenship, at the level of 2017 (Eurostat, 2019), highlights the fact that, out of a total of 177,700 immigrants, a share of 82.5% were nationals, 15.1% non-nationals and 2.4% with unknown citizenship (Figure 9).

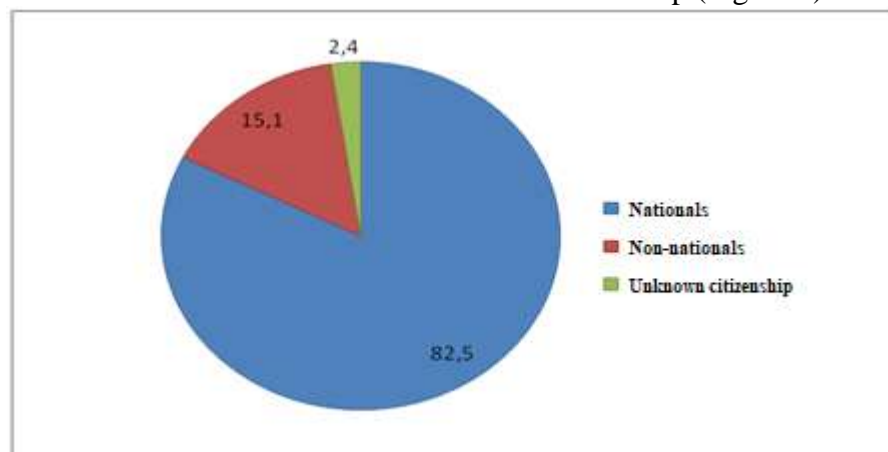


Figure 9. Classification of immigrants by citizenship category

Source: Eurostat, 2019. *Statistics on migration and the migrant population*. [online] Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics/ro#Fluxuri_migratorii:_Num.C4.83rul_igran.C8.9Bilor_din_.C8.9B.C4.83ri_ter.C8.9Be_c.C4.83tre_UE_a_fost_de_2.2C4_milioane_.C3.AEn_2017> [Accessed 15 November 2019].

Thus, Romania occupies the first position in the ranking of Member States, according to this criterion, with the highest share of national citizens in total immigrants (citizens born in Romania, with habitual residence abroad: 95,200 people, 53.7%, or immigrants born in abroad: 78,400 people, 44.2%).

Among the non-national immigrants from Romania, estimated at 111,411 people (0.6% of the total population of Romania), in 2017, 56,750 people held the citizenship of another Member State of the European Union (0.3% of the total population) and 54,352 people were citizens of non-EU states (0.3% of the total population).

Romania is considered a friendly country, with a 5th level naturalization rate, calculated on the basis of the total number of citizens granted and the number of foreign residents (Eurostat, 2019). At the level of 2017, 6,800 people obtained Romanian citizenship. Out of these, 6,500 people came from non-EU countries (94.9%) and 300 people were classified with unknown citizenship (4.7%) (Figure 10).

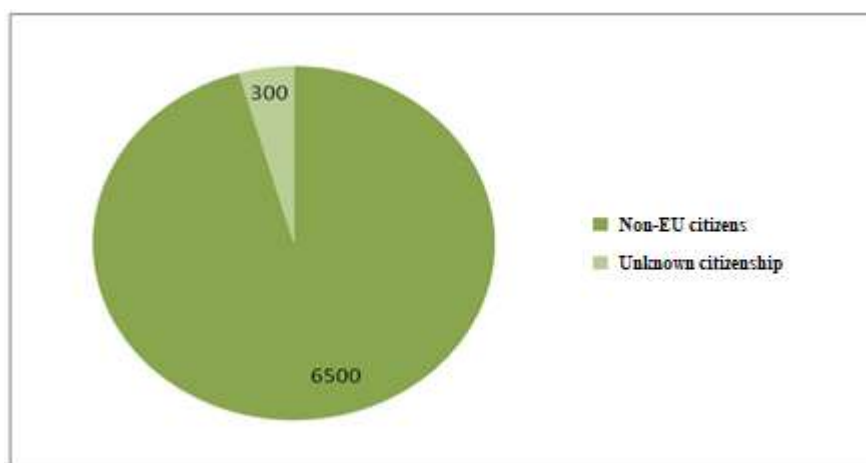


Figure 10. Classification of immigrants who acquired Romanian citizenship, 2017

Source: Eurostat, 2019. *Statistics on migration and the migrant population*. [online] Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics/ro#Fluxuri_migratorii:_Num.C4.83ru_l_igran.C8.9Bilor_din_.C8.9B.C4.83ri_ter.C8.9Be_c.C4.83tre_UE_a_fost_de_2.2C4_milioane_.C3.AEn_2017> [Accessed 15 November 2019].

Romania offers the possibility to immigrants from outside the European Union to study, research or work, with the obtaining of the residence permit, the right to social security and family reunification. Third-country nationals legally residing in Romania may obtain the right to family reunification for the spouse, minor children and the spouse's children, if they meet certain specific conditions (for example, the obligation to have adequate housing and sufficient financial resources). Upon entering Romania, family members receive a residence permit and the right to access education, the labour market, vocational training and equal treatment in relation to other third-country nationals (European Commission, 2014).

In some cases, immigrants need international protection because they face the risk of major prejudices if they return to their country of origin. The vast majority of refugees and asylum seekers are hosted by developing countries, often neighbouring countries. Romania's duty is to protect those in this difficult situation.

At the level of Romania, the refugee stock, including asylum seekers, registered an obvious evolution in the period 1990-2019. Thus, in 1990, 651 refugees were reported; in 2005, the number of refugees amounted to 2,320, and in 2019 it reached 5,370 refugees (Figure 11).

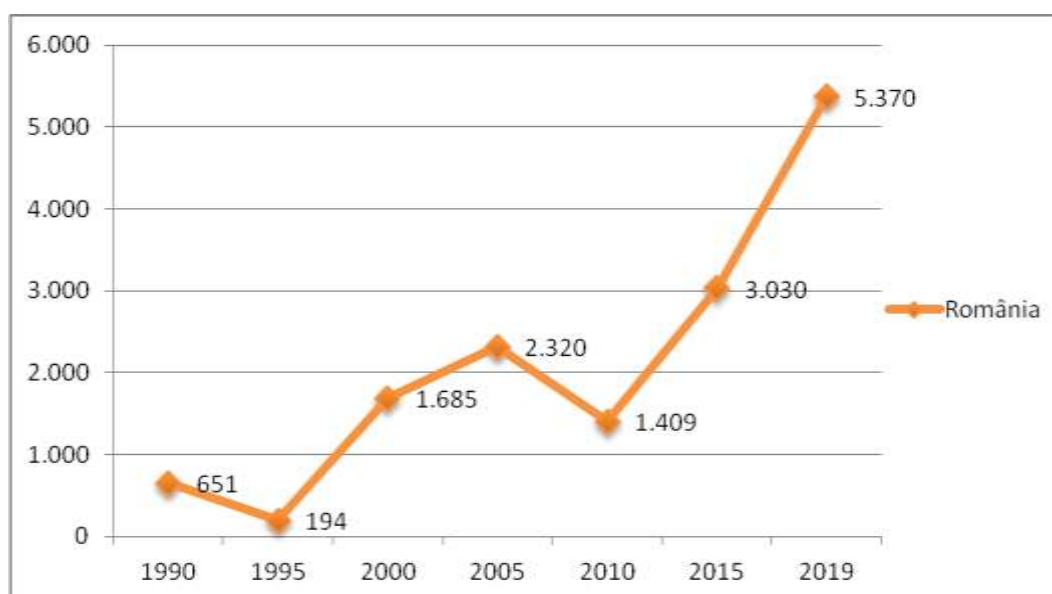


Figure 11. Number of refugees, including asylum seekers, registered in Romania

Sursa: United Nations, 2019b. *International Migrant Stock 2019*. United Nations: Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division. [online] Available at: <<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.asp>> [Accessed 3 January 2020].

Regarding the number of beneficiaries of international protection living in Romania, the data of the General Inspectorate for Immigration show that their number increased from 2,905 people in 2016 to 2,830 people in 2017 and 4,056 people in the first half of 2018 (Cojocariu, 2018, p.20).

Also, the General Inspectorate for Immigration informs that, in the first six months of 2019, a number of 792 people requested the granting of international protection from Romania (General Inspectorate for Immigration, 2019a), 11% less than in the first semester of 2018. Out of these, 464 applications are applications for international protection in the administrative stage. Most asylum seekers come from countries such as Iraq, Syria and Bangladesh, and most applications have been submitted to centres in Timisoara and Bucharest.

For 240 cases, refugee status was granted or subsidiary protection was granted (91 people received refugee status and 149 people received subsidiary protection). There were 94 applications for access to a new asylum procedure, compared to 125 in the similar period of the year 2018.

Within the Regional Centers for Procedures and Accommodation of Asylum Seekers, located in Bucharest, Giurgiu, Timișoara, Galați, Rădăuți and Maramureș, territorial structures specialized in asylum issues, the procedures for receiving, registering and resolving asylum applications are carried out, providing assistance to asylum seekers during the procedure and integration assistance (social counselling and material assistance, problem-solving support, information and education, access to social activities, psychological or legal counselling, labour market access and participation and relations with local authorities). 760 asylum seekers were accommodated in the six specialized centres, 947 people received counselling and approximately 700 cultural orientation sessions.

Regarding the cities / counties of residence, most beneficiaries of protection live in Bucharest (56%), Galați (20%), Timiș (8%), Maramureș (6%), Giurgiu (5%), Suceava (5%), (Cojocariu, 2018, p.21).

In the first six months of 2019, 523 people, benefiting from a form of international protection, followed the integration program: 221 were from Syria, 111 from Iraq, 33 from Iran and 158 from other countries. The General Inspectorate for Immigration reported, in the first six months of 2019, the resettlement operation for 109 refugees of Syrian origin, who are temporarily in Turkey and Jordan.

Immigrant access to the labour market is the first step towards integration. According to the General Inspectorate for Immigration (General Inspectorate for Immigration, 2019b), in the first five months of 2019, 8,749 employment notices were issued, out of the 10,497 applications received. Thus, a percentage of 43.7% of the quota approved for 2019 was used.

Most permits were issued by the immigration structures in Bucharest (2,667) and the counties of Constanța (999), Ilfov (912), Brașov (505) and Timiș (355). Out of these, 7,649 were issued for permanent workers, 695 for detached workers, 234 for ICT, 116 for highly qualified. Most foreigners are from Vietnam, Moldova, Turkey, Nepal and have chosen to work in construction, restaurants, trade, shipbuilding and floating structures in Bucharest and the counties of Constanța, Ilfov, Brașov and Timiș (General Inspectorate for Immigration, 2019b). A number of 332 job applications were rejected and 1,426 applications were under analysis procedure.

Romania also becomes interesting for highly qualified people from third countries, holders of the European Union Blue Card (temporary residence permit that aims to encourage the immigration of highly qualified specialists from third countries to meet the demand for skilled workers in the European Union) (Inspectorate General for Immigration, 2019b).

Some immigrants may try to enter the EU territory (by land, water or air) either illegally or using false documents. Most of the time, they have the support of criminal organizations and sometimes continue to depend on them even after they arrive in the EU. However, the majority of illegal immigrants entered the EU legally with a temporary residence visa and did not leave after its expiration. In order for the European immigration policies to remain sustainable and credible, Member States must work together to tackle illegal immigration (European Commission, 2014, p.6).

The Support Program for Voluntary Humanitarian Assisted Repatriation and Reintegration (RVAR), implemented by the International Organization for Migration, Office for Romania, in 2017-2020, aims to contribute to strengthening migration management in Romania through safe, sustainable repatriation and socio-economic reintegration of 80 migrants per year by 2020.

Thus, in 2018, over 3,000 immigrants entered Romania illegally either through the land border, from Serbia and Bulgaria, or through the Black Sea, an unusual route, unexpected and very rarely used in the past. Most of them have applied for international protection in Romania (International Organization for Migration, 2018).

A number of 985 migrants participated in counselling and information sessions on the voluntary repatriation program at the nationwide level. Out of these, 709 were men (72%) and 276 were women (28%) (Figure 12).

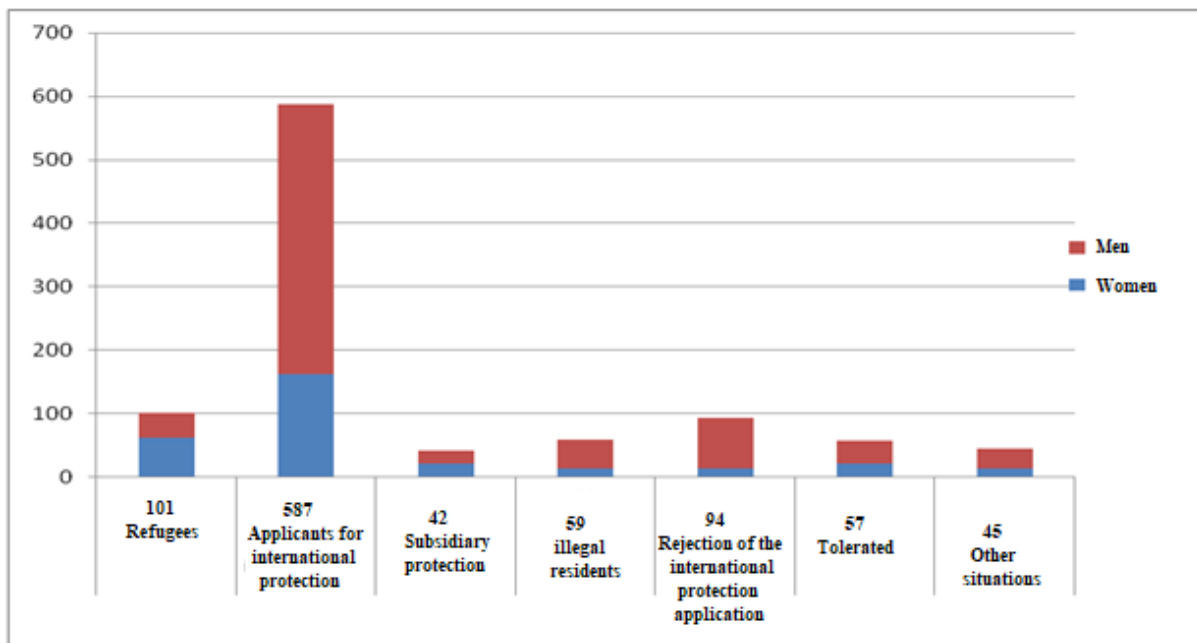


Figure 12. Number of immigrants participating in counseling and information sessions

Source: International Organization for Migration, 2018. *RVAR Stage I - Progress in implementing the program of voluntary humanitarian assisting for repatriation and reintegration in Romania (April 27th, 2017 - April 26th, 2018)*. [online] Available at: <<https://oim.ro/ro/resurse/rapoarte-oim/645-rvar-etapa-i-progresul-implementarii-programului-de-repatriere-voluntara-umanitar-asistata-si-reintegrare-in-romania-27-aprilie-2017-26-aprilie-2018>> [Accessed 4 January 2020].

Regarding the status of these counselled immigrants, 101 received refugee status, 587 applicants for international protection, 42 received subsidiary protection, 59 were considered illegal residents, 94 were in the situation of rejection of the application for international protection, 57 were tolerated and 59 in other situations (Figure 12).

The immigrants who were counselled in 2018 came from Iraq (945 people), Afghanistan (79 people), Pakistan (74 people), Iran (39 people), Kosovo (34 people) (Figure 13). Most were women, mostly from Iraq (50.4%).

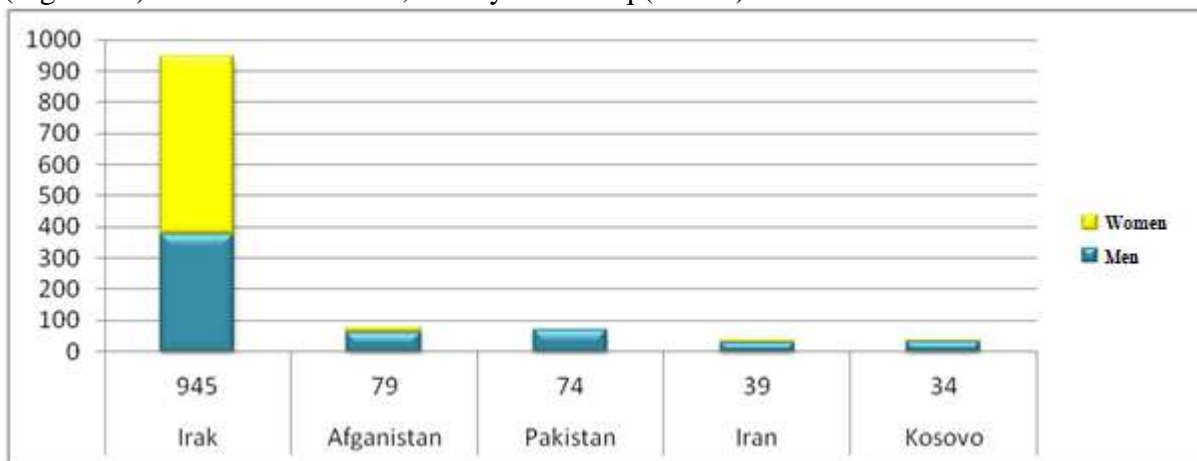


Figure 13. Number of immigrants participating in counselling and information sessions

Source: International Organization for Migration, 2018. *RVAR Stage I - Progress in implementing the program of voluntary humanitarian assisting for repatriation and reintegration in Romania (April 27th, 2017 - April 26th, 2018)* [online] Available at: <<https://oim.ro/ro/resurse/rapoarte-oim/645-rvar-etapa-i-progresul->

implementarii-programului-de-repatriere-voluntara-umanitar-asistata-si-reintegrare-in-romania-27-aprilie-2017-26-aprilie-2018> [Accessed 4 January 2020].

A total of 102 migrants from over twenty countries of origin (30 women and 72 men) benefited from the voluntary repatriation procedure. A number of 25 migrants from nine countries of origin received personal development courses, and thirty people received reintegration assistance.

Regarding the status of repatriated migrants, the largest share was held by applicants for international protection (49 people). 25 immigrants had illegal residence, 2 were refugees, 18 applied for international protection, 2 were tolerated and 6 were in another situation (Figure 14).

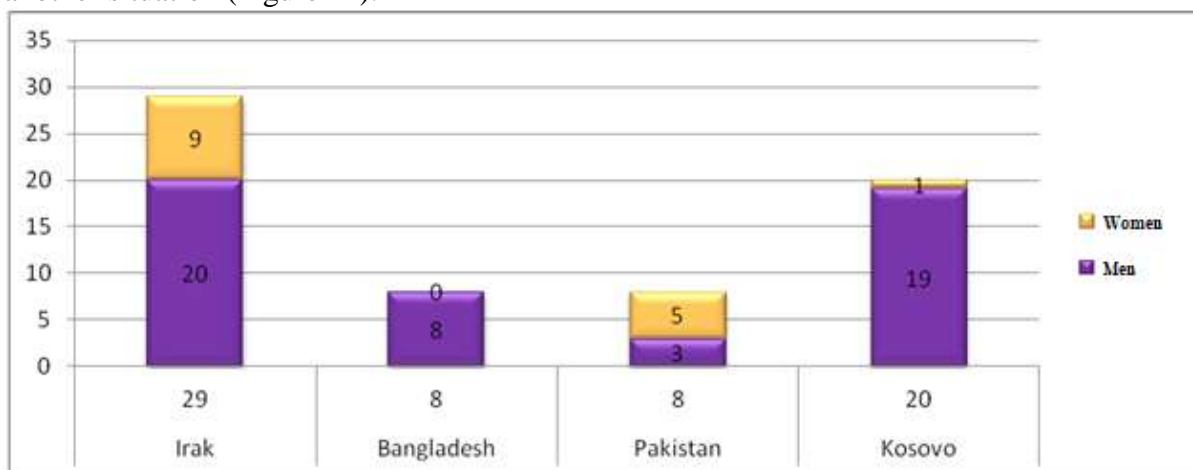


Figure 14. Number of voluntarily repatriated immigrants

Source: International Organization for Migration, 2018. *RVAR Stage I - Progress in implementing the program of voluntary humanitarian assisting for repatriation and reintegration in Romania (April 27th, 2017 - April 26th, 2018)*. [online] Available at: <<https://oim.ro/ro/resurse/rapoarte-oim/645-rvar-etapa-i-progresul-implementarii-programului-de-repatriere-voluntara-umanitar-asistata-si-reintegrare-in-romania-27-aprilie-2017-26-aprilie-2018>> [Accessed 4 January 2020].

Some of the migrants who have chosen to return home have also received financial support for reintegration which can be used, upon arrival in the origin country, to open a small business, to rent a house / apartment or to buy various necessary goods (International Organization for Migration, 2018).

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