

ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION REGARDING RETURNED MIGRANTS. CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

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Abstract. *The given article describes the trends of return migration, but also the situation of labor migrants returned to the Republic of Moldova, the factors that initially led to labor migration, and then to their return. The very process of migrants' return presents them with the same difficulties and challenges as in the case of their going to work abroad. Citizens returning home face a lack of jobs, impediments in the recognition of diplomas and qualifications obtained abroad, difficulties in the process of opening a business, etc. However, the state makes great efforts to stimulate the return of labor migrants, but also their (re)integration into society. However, according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948), the right of citizens to return to their countries of origin is a right recognized and reaffirmed in other international normative acts, such as the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families (United Nations Convention, 1990).*

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Introduction

In addition to economic and social benefits, labor migration can also generate certain major social risks related, first of all, to the loss of human capital, demographic imbalances, population aging, as well as increasing pressure on the social security system, etc. which any state of origin is interested in avoiding through its migration policies. In this context, for the countries of origin, the migration policy must be based, first of all, on the temporary nature of labor migration, and migrants should always have the opportunity and motivation to return home.

For countries of origin, such as the Republic of Moldova, the actuality of the problem of the return of migrants is determined by the following reasons:

- labor migrants represent a valuable demographic potential for the country;
- migrants are able to take risks, express themselves and realize themselves in a foreign, initially unfavorable environment;

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- labor migrants are people who have earned money and are able to invest it in the development of the economy and the community (Mosneaga V., 2012, 153 p.).

Return migration is considered to contribute to local development even more than remittances. It is obvious that a simple invitation to migrants to return home is not successful, if it is not complemented by offering a solid package of incentives that can make this option acceptable to the people concerned. The returned migrant must be reintegrated not only in the labor market, but also in society. Such problems as the access of the migrant's family members to health services, to social security benefits, to the educational system must also be taken into consideration. Maintaining the link between labor migrants and their country of origin will encourage their contacts and the participation of migrants in the life of their country of origin and thus facilitate their reintegration process.

The very process of return puts the migrants in front of the same difficulties and challenges as in the case of going to work abroad. Citizens returning home encounter impediments in finding a job, in recognizing diplomas and qualifications obtained in other countries, in the process of opening a business, in enrolling children in educational institutions, etc. In this context, the state that is interested in the return of migrants must make credible efforts to facilitate the process of (re)integration of returned migrants in the labor market, in general, in social networks, so that they become active citizens for the Republic of Moldova. However, according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right of citizens to return to their countries of origin is a right recognized and reaffirmed in other international normative acts, such as the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families.

The Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda provide for an equitable approach for various categories of citizens, including migrant workers. It is accompanied by a series of key tools and mechanisms for achieving people-centered economic development, being anchored in several of the objectives of the Global Compact for Migration (Global Compact on Migration, 2019), in particular: objective 3 with reference to providing information at all stages of migration; objective 12, regarding ensuring the certainty and predictability of procedures related to migration; objective 18 regarding the development and recognition of qualifications; and in a particular part of the objective no. 21 on facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration.

However, there is some negative self-selection in the process of returning migrants, as many returnees are less competitive compared to migrants who remain abroad. However, the capabilities and productivity of many returning migrants appear to be more advanced than they were when they left.

The return of migrants, especially the individually planned one, requires appropriate information and concrete measures that both public authorities and non-governmental organizations specialized in the field can provide.

At the moment, the issue of the return of labor migrants has become extremely topical due to the deplorable situation on the labor market. The Republic of Moldova has

one of the lowest employment rates in Central and Eastern Europe (42-43% in 2021). The low unemployment rate (3.2%) masks the extremely low level of activity and employment. The employment structure reveals that, for the most part, workers are concentrated in agricultural activities (21.5% of the total number of jobs), as well as in public administration, education and social assistance (22.9%) (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Another challenge for the labor market in the Republic of Moldova is the low level of labor productivity: the gross added value generated by an employed person oscillates around 30-40% of the average of the same indicator in Central and Eastern European countries (author's estimate). This fact shows how low the technological performance of Moldovan firms is and their limited capabilities to generate added value. A major problem affecting labor productivity is also the high level of the informal economy, which accounts approximately a fourth of the entire economy (NBS). The share of young people which are not in employment or vocational training (NEET)³ is 26.4%, which is twice the European average. In this context, a valuable group put back into the economic circuit would be that of returned migrants, who have gained experience of work in the countries where they worked and studied. For this reason, active policies are needed to stimulate the return and social reintegration of returned migrants.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the situation of returned migrants from the Republic of Moldova, the challenges they face, as well as the solutions proposed by the public authorities, so that the return of labor migrants avoids any social risks, and the value added by migrants to really contribute to a sustainable development of the Republic of Moldova. The article comes with a series of recommendations that would lead to the change of the socio-human life of returned migrants, as well as to diminishing the motives of migrants to go back abroad.

This article uses as factual material the results of the IOM Study "Migration for the purpose of work: The profile and current challenges of Moldovan migrant workers in the main destination countries, the provisions of legislative acts regarding integration opportunities" (ILO, 2020). Also, the article is based on some provisions of the National Employment Program for the years 2022-2026 (Government Decision no. 785, 2022), of the National Strategy "Diaspora -2025" (Government Decision no. 200, oh 26.02.2016), of the National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030" (Law no. 315 of 17.11.2022).

1. Literature review

For a more in-depth analysis of the given subject, factual data presented by the National Bureau of Statistics, by NEA, as well as some studies carried out by representatives of civil society, through the competition of international organizations, were used. In this context, the IOM study "Migration for work purposes: The profile and current challenges of Moldovan

³ NEET young people: young people who are not part of the employed population, do not study/learn within the formal education system and do not participate in any kind of courses or other training outside the formal education system. It is estimated for the age groups 15-24 years, 15-29 years and 15-34 years.

migrant workers in the main destination countries, the provisions of legislative acts regarding integration opportunities" (IOM, 2020) can be mentioned.

2. Data and Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in the elaboration of the article, such as: sociological observation method, document analysis, and statistical data. Statistical data of the National Bureau of Statistics, of NEA, as well as some data taken from various studies carried out in recent years were used.

3. Analysis of the situation regarding returned migrants

In the contemporary stage, the world economy is in full transformation. Modern industry is increasingly transitioning to a production model based entirely on automation and robots. This trend risks rendering the advantages of low- to medium-skilled labor irrelevant. Countries with technologically backward industrial sectors and a rather low degree of qualification of the labor force are particularly vulnerable in relation to the robotization process in developed countries, and the rate of liquidation of jobs in such countries is twice as high than in countries with a skilled workforce.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated trends in changing the content of work. People place greater emphasis on ethical, safe working conditions that allow for a better balance between personal and professional life. Remote work and virtual meetings are becoming a reality. Digital technologies have penetrated sectors that were traditionally seen as technologically backward, including agriculture. In the same context, the labor market follows an increasingly clear trend of accelerated growth of jobs that require a high level of qualification and remuneration, in parallel with the sharp increase in the gap between the wages of skilled and unskilled workers. Under these conditions, the economies of developed countries face a growing labor shortage, which leads to an increase in the demand for foreign specialists, a fact that stimulates the international labor migration of qualified specialists.

Against the background of these international trends, the Republic of Moldova faces a deplorable situation on the labor market, determined, in particular, by the unfavorable economic situation, the reduced capacity to create new productive and attractive jobs, the low level of wages compared to neighboring countries. For this reason, the labor market in the Republic of Moldova registers one of the lowest employment rates in Central and Eastern Europe (40.5% in 2022) (NBS, 2022). The low unemployment rate (3.2%) masks the extremely low level of activity and employment. The employment structure reveals that workers are mostly concentrated in agriculture (21.5% of all jobs) (NBS, 2022), as well as in public administration, education and social assistance (22.9%) (NBS, 2022). Another negative factor is the low level of productivity: the gross added value generated by an employed person oscillates around 30-40% of the average of the same indicator in Central and Eastern European countries (author's estimate), being

determined by the low technological complexity of Moldovan companies and the capacities their limited ability to generate added value. A major problem affecting labor productivity, competitiveness, public revenues and the redistribution of value generated in the economy is the high prevalence of the informal economy, which accounts a quarter of the economy. One way to prevent the growth of vulnerabilities and precariousness, including in areas related to the future of work, to prevent the growth of income inequality, to regulate industrial relations, as well as to ensure inclusive and effective governance of the labor market is to strengthen institutions of social dialogue. The reduced internal mobility of human capital is also a major constraint in the development of the private sector. The share of young people not in employment or vocational training (NEET) is 26.2% - among young people aged 15-29 (2022) (NBS, 2022), which is twice the European average. The three biggest obstacles to ensuring the performance of private sector companies are: (i) insufficient level of technical occupational skills, (ii) poor motivation and (iii) unsatisfactory work ethic.

In the background of these challenges on the labor market in the Republic of Moldova, which is facing an acute shortage of qualified labor force, which compromises the prospects of a sustainable development, the issue of the return of labor migrants becomes imperative.

In general, the Republic of Moldova has demonstrated an increased interest in the issue of return migration, Diaspora and migration policies since 2012, elaborating a series of strategic documents, such as the Mechanism for the integrated approach to the field of Diaspora, Migration and Development (DMD) and implementing a series of policy instruments and programs specific to the field. Moldova was one of the leading countries in the development of policies and mechanisms for an integrated approach to the field. This is due to the large number of labor migrants, but also to increasing migration trends. At that time, in the return and reintegration policies of returned migrants, the focus was rather on the objective of informing the diaspora about the economic opportunities existing in the country. Because they were centrally focused, migrant return policies looked at return migration at the individual level, providing services and reintegration tools for citizens rather than communities. As a result, even if there were coherent initiatives and policies, the level of awareness of them by return migrants was low and their impact was much less than needed. Thus, the number of beneficiaries of continuous training programs oriented towards the needs of citizens of the Republic of Moldova returned from abroad in 2020 was 1605 people (registered with unemployed status). At the same time, in 2020, 38 continuous training programs were authorized for operation (NEA, 2022). In 2020, a number of 47 people validated their skills in the non-formal skills validation and certification centers established within the Center of Excellence in Construction and the Center of Excellence in Services and Food Processing. In 2021, the number of this category of people reached 300.

In general, the success of return and (re)integration policies depends on the degree of sustainability of return and (re)integration. There are several important indicators that

can measure the sustainability of reintegration policies: the number of returned citizens; the number of returned citizens willing to leave again; the number of returned citizens who found a job; the number of returned citizens who opened a business; the number of returned and reintegrated mixed families; the number of open businesses and the ratio between the number of returned citizens, satisfied with the quality of life and the number of dissatisfied ones.

The Republic of Moldova must expand and create a new sustainable reintegration system. For this reason, one of the most relevant activities provided for in the 2017-2020 Action Plan regarding the (re)integration of citizens of the Republic of Moldova returned from abroad⁴ was the establishment in 25 districts of the Interinstitutional Referral Mechanism for citizens returned from abroad (IRM), which represents a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the implementation of the IRM, signed by public authorities that provide various services, such as: the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection; Ministry of Education and Research; The Ministry of Economy; National Social Insurance House; National Medical Insurance Company; The National Employment Agency, the Public Services Agency, the District Councils, the local specialized bodies in the field of education, the health department, the economy/and investment attraction department, the social assistance and family protection department, the Territorial Employment Service of Work, Territorial Agency of the National Medical Insurance Company.

IRM aims to ensure the provision of quality social and professional (re-)integration services for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova returned from abroad, in a coordinated and multidisciplinary manner. For its implementation, the capacities of all trained actors were strengthened, and the Diaspora Relations Office ensures the coordination of this process, including organizing information sessions for the institutions involved (Government Decision no. 724/2017).

In the same context, through the "PARE 1+1" Program during 2020, consultations were provided for 3694 people, 201 people benefited from training and 187 investment projects were approved for financing. Out of the total number of businesses accepted for financing, 73 businesses (39.0%) were created by returned migrant workers, and 114 (61.0%) businesses were established by first-degree relatives of migrants⁵. The main indicators of the support programs show that in 2020, 3717 jobs were created and maintained, of which 551 within the "Start for young people" Program, 620 within the "PARE 1+1 Program", 593 "Women" in business", 1953 through the Digitization of SMEs tool (ODIMM, 2019).

Having said this, it can be concluded that the authorities are interested in the return of labor migrants and are making major efforts to make this happen. However, various studies show that the situation of returned migrants is not the best, and a good part of the

⁴The 2017-2020 action plan regarding the (re)integration of citizens of the Republic of Moldova returned from abroad intr09_128.pdf (gov.md)

⁵ www.odimm.md

young population of the Republic of Moldova plans to migrate. Thus, according to the Generations and Gender Study Report (Report of the "Generations and Gender", 2021), 15.5% of respondents pointed out that they intend to move in the next three years to another country, the share of the city population with such an intention is higher than that of the village population, being 21% and 12.3%, respectively. Also, men have the intention to emigrate in the next three years to a greater extent than women, the proportion being 18.8% and 12.4%, respectively, and people with higher education and those who are single stood out with the highest shares in regarding the intention to emigrate in the next three years. Based on these, the Republic of Moldova needs a qualitatively new approach in managing the field of return and (re)integration.

At the same time, through readmission agreements concluded between Moldova and other states, the Migration and Asylum Office ensured the transfer of 758 people in 2020 (593 people from Germany and 137 from France). All persons were presented to be included in (re)integration programs at the local level. It is important that readmitted persons are (re)integrated successfully because usually these persons tend to emigrate repeatedly. It should be noted that the number of mixed families is increasing and hence the need for reintegration measures addressed to the families of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, affected by migration.

At the same time, the problems of those who have returned are accentuated. The migration situation in the Republic of Moldova continues to be critical. Thus, two thirds of the households of RM citizens, affected by migration, have one migrant abroad, 30.8% two or more, and the preferred destination countries remain the EU (72.7%) and the CIS (14.7%) (ILO, 2020). The migration profile of Moldovan citizens in these countries indicates either a circular migration (Russian Federation) or a close retirement age of migrants (Italy and Portugal). Migrants from the Russian Federation planned to return in proportion of 71%, Italy – 28%, Poland – 30%, Portugal – 21% (ILO, 2020).

Currently due to difficult travel conditions, the probability that a large part of these citizens will return home is very high, even if 50% of them declared that they had no intention of returning to the Republic of Moldova. Migrants from the Russian Federation planned to return in proportion of 71%, Italy – 28%, Poland – 30%, Portugal – 21%. A study conducted in 2020 by the International Organization for Migration, shows that 30% of respondents intend to return, of which 67% want to return as soon as possible, and 17% in 1-2 months, and another 18% do not they have decided on this for now. Men are more likely to return than female migrants (38% men vs. 25% women). The study shows that migrants who are in the country of destination based on their biometric passport are the most determined to return, constituting 44% of all respondents, followed by those with an EU passport (Romanian/Bulgarian) - 25% of respondents. It is found that the most likely to return are irregular migrants - 59% of the respondents of this group indicated that they intend to return. They are followed by respondents employed on fixed/short-term contracts, of which 43% intend to return. Those with service contracts expressed their desire to return

two times less - 21% and only 15% of those with contracts for an indefinite period plan to return (IOM, 2020).

When asked what their personal plans are after returning home, 32% of those who want to return home indicated that they plan to stay in the country for a longer period to get a job or open a business, while 28% of these respondents plans to return back.

Another study shows that 66% of respondents would like to return to Moldova, if decent job opportunities appeared, with a minimum salary of 1,200-2,000 EUR. The conditions for returning home would be strong governance and the rule of law, including the creation of jobs and investment opportunities (IOM, 2020).

According to the National Employment Program for the years 2022-2026, active labor market policies must improve the functioning of the labor market, a precondition being their targeting to the groups most at risk of exclusion and ensuring adequate funding. The review of targeting approaches and the volume of funding, the modernization of employment services and the expansion of active labor market programs will be accompanied by the strengthening of the administrative capacity of the National Employment Agency to manage service delivery to a larger group diversified by clients (short and long-term unemployed, unemployed young people, returned migrants, people with disabilities, women returning to the labor market after child care leave, refugees, etc.)

According to the IOM study "Migration for work purposes: the profile and current challenges of Moldovan workers in the main destination countries" (IOM, 2020), the main reason for returning to the country was emotional. Homesickness was mentioned by over 20% of returned migrants, in approximately the same proportions of men and women.

A second reason was mentioned the expiration of the contract/work permit, - 21% of the respondents. Family insistence also played an important role - 19% of respondents, especially women. At the same time, over 65% of Moldovan citizens living and working abroad said that they would generally like to invest in Moldova mostly in tourism and education (39% of respondents). The majority (88% of respondents) believe that the main impediment to the diaspora's contribution to the development of the Republic of Moldova is the high level of corruption and lack of trust in institutions. Among the three most important impediments to the development of Moldova and ensuring the well-being of the population, the respondents mentioned: the high level of corruption and the lack of justice (76%), the lack of well-paid jobs/business development opportunities (44%) and the large inequalities/ poverty among population groups (40%).

Moldovans abroad also believe that the Government must invest more in justice, in the rule of law (38%) and in opportunities for economic empowerment on the labor market (32%). The system of integrated approach to the return and (re)integration of returned migrants needs a systemic qualitative restructuring, based on responsibility at the individual, central and local level. Returnees require extensive services focused on economic, social, and psychosocial needs.

The study showed that returnees may face a wide variety of challenges, including: the need for unemployment assistance and job search; lack of savings; lack of medical

insurance; consultancy in the establishment and development of the business; the correspondence of jobs with the profile of the qualification obtained, the need to obtain the recognition of certain qualifications/skills or study documents obtained abroad; lack or expiration of identity documents; psychosocial problems or difficulties of (re)integration in the communities of origin; school (re-)integration of children, etc. The adoption of skills and habits, sometimes poorly aware, acquired abroad (e.g. speaking in Romanian with a foreign accent), the fear of competition shown by the locals who stayed in the country compared to those who returned home, in some cases generate attitudes of isolation and rejection within the community. These situations explained by individual and group psychology must be alleviated by the state and local authorities through a sustained effort.

Integrated and targeted programs could help these people return to the community, while capitalizing on their contribution to the development of the locality, taking into account the challenges and capitalizing on the existing opportunities at the community level, on which the success and sustainability of reintegration will depend. The system of integrated approach to return and (re)integration needs to move to a new qualitative level. The individualized approach to return and (re)integration sporadically contributes to the success of reintegration. The data shows that of the total number of returnees, more than 70% intend to leave again in the next 6 months, and 33.8% of the interviewees intend to settle down with their family abroad. In the opinion of the majority of respondents (33.7%-34.5%), the policies currently applied in the Republic of Moldova would not influence their decision to emigrate.

The Republic of Moldova does not have a mechanism to identify potential migrants, as this group is not regulated even in the current legislation. Thus, the number of people, potentially migrants, who benefited from the information services provided by the National Employment Agency cannot be estimated. NAE grants, through the National Reference System, information services, annually, to all those who apply. NEA informs about the advantages, disadvantages of migration and the risks of illegal migration during the 259 information seminars attended by 2937 people looking for a job. At the same time, during 2020, the Call Center recorded 1,985 calls that addressed the subject of emigration abroad. Informing potential migrants about the advantages, disadvantages of migration and the risks of illegal migration also takes place with the support of external donors and through international organizations (NEA, 2022).

The study showed that about 1/3 of the respondents (37% women and 28% men) called for information/services from private agencies in Moldova, about 30% both women and men - from private individuals abroad, about 20% each – to private persons from Moldova. Respondents from the urban environment and those with higher education prefer to turn for information to private individuals from the country or abroad, while those from the rural environment and the less educated - to private agencies in Moldova. At the same

time, only 13% of the respondents called on NAE and/or the territorial subdivisions, among which the proportion of men is almost 20%⁶.

Training for potential migrants is organized by Territorial Subdivisions for Employment of the Labor Force or by private employment agencies. Given that the declared intention of citizens to leave is high, it is important that the national mechanism for facilitating return and reintegration contains an information and counseling route for potential migrants, at their place of residence. At the current stage, the connection and communication between LPA and NAE is rather precarious. The focal points responsible for migration issues within NAE do not have a clear communication mechanism with those responsible for migration in the local public authorities (LPA). One of the challenges of migrants is the loss of qualifications obtained in the Republic of Moldova. Only 17% of the respondents of the study managed to obtain the recognition of the studies they did in the Republic of Moldova, another 19% believe that only partially, and 1/3 gave a negative answer. The loss of qualifications is related not only to the lack of agreements between states, but also to the fact that few of the migrants are informed about the procedures of the destination countries and the need to prepare documents for the recognition of studies and qualifications before departure.

Among the problems and challenges of migrants during the migration period can be mentioned the loss of job (12%), the negative impact on well-being. Many of those who have lost their jobs are forced to work undeclared and have difficult working conditions, without employment contracts or sick leaves. This fact can lead to situations of abuse and discrimination of migrants in the countries of destination, placing these people in the category of vulnerable people, who will need financial and social help on their return. Women are often subjected to even more difficult working conditions (reduced opportunities to go out, poor hygiene conditions, lack of days off, etc.). Thus, more than 94% of those who are in Israel are isolated from their families, relatives or friends.

Migrants who do not have an official status in the country of destination, and lose their jobs, are the most affected. They usually remain unemployed without unemployment benefits, without sources of income.

The greatest challenges of returned migrants are the lack of information, financial support and consultancy in employment and/or starting a business. The reintegration and support programs so far have not taken into account a large number of citizens of the Republic of Moldova, affected by migration, who could return. The study shows that 30% of respondents intend to return to the Republic of Moldova, of which 67% want to return as soon as possible, and 17% in 1-2 months. Male migrants are more likely to return (38% male vs. 25% female respondents). The most determined are those in a vulnerable situation, especially migrants from the Russian Federation: 71% of respondents from this country indicated that they want to return, of which 91% indicated that they want to return home as soon as possible. Further expanding communication and creating a clear and easy-

⁶ www.anofm.md

to-use system for all citizens affected by migration, regardless of educational level, remains another challenge.

The study showed that only 10% know about the existence of reintegration measures. A very small percentage declares that they feel protected in the Republic of Moldova, therefore the rest intend to emigrate again. Among those settled abroad, businessmen and highly qualified specialists do not express the intention to return to the Republic of Moldova. As a result, the Republic of Moldova faces a double exodus of citizens: those who emigrate for the first time and those who emigrate repeatedly. The study showed that the community's attitude towards migrants was negative - 53%, which will have a strong negative impact on the development of communities and the development of joint economic initiatives.

According to the study, the psycho-emotional state of migrants, especially women, is extremely vulnerable. The movements of relatives abroad have led to situations of mental stress for those abroad. Migrants' families break up, and family conflicts generate the need to return. Studies show that the most important reason for returning is the family situation. Although there are mental health centers in Moldova, migrants do not know or do not have access to psycho-social rehabilitation services. Practically, the most important conditions for the return of migrants coincide with the needs of the citizens who remained at home: corruption, high taxes, distrust in state institutions, but also the lack of own financial resources.

On the other hand, the main measures that would facilitate return and reintegration relate to: attracting foreign investments, effective implementation of new economic development projects that take into account the specific needs of returned migrants, creating jobs for those returned, supporting small businesses entrepreneurs through counseling and access to finance, promoting employment opportunities in agriculture at the local level, protecting the local market for agri-food products, creating opportunities for professional reintegration at home, reducing the underground economy, developing local social infrastructure, modernizing or creating networks of water and sewerage, the conclusion of bilateral agreements with destination states for the portability of pensions and other social benefits, etc.

The most important economic fields with potential for returnees are: agriculture, food industry, tourism and hotel industry. The citizens of the Republic of Moldova, affected by migration, specify that the economic recovery and the facilitation of return are correlated with the reforms in medicine and public health, education, culture and research. The returned migrants mention that they can contribute to the development of the Republic of Moldova by transferring knowledge and experience, by investing in the Moldovan economy by opening small businesses, by capitalizing on financial remittances, as well as by resetting the way of thinking and capitalizing on their own skills.

Quantitative studies, as well as qualitative ones, demonstrate a weak interaction between local authorities and returned migrants. This results in a lack of information regarding reintegration programs, available jobs, economic opportunities and business

opening. Also, in order to facilitate the return, it is important that in the pre-departure period, but also during the stay abroad, the connection with the local authorities is efficient and constructive.

Conclusions and recommendations

A sustainable process of return of migrant workers presupposes, first of all, a coherent and synergistic system (comprehensive and efficient) to stimulate the return and facilitate the (re)integration of migrant citizens, promoted by the public authorities, by ensuring the entire cycle of policies, services and products in the field, developed sustainable assistance and support tools. It is expected that according to the Government Activity Program for the years 2021-2025 "Moldova of the good times" and the "Diaspora 2025" Strategy (p. 3.2), "the Republic of Moldova will become by 2025 a country with a favorable environment for civic, social, economic and political manifestation for all its citizens, regardless of place of residence, and an attractive return destination for members of the diaspora. It will increase the sense of pride towards the country and the level of credibility on the international level thanks to the promotion of measures to protect, develop and realize the human and material potential of the diaspora".

Migration should be addressed as an inherent part of (sustainable) development. For this reason, among the basic solutions related to return migration are:

1. Consolidation of the institutional and policy framework and the efficiency of coordination and cooperation mechanisms at the national level in the field of return and (re)integration.
2. Guaranteeing respect for social rights and promoting community integration of returnees and their families by ensuring access to education, health and other public services.
3. Facilitating the reintegration and increasing the economic opportunities of people returned from abroad, by attracting investments, developing the entrepreneurial spirit and new skills, employment in the labor field, creating new support programs. Including businesses opened by returning women, women employed in the labor field.
4. Ensuring the access of returned migrants and their families to effective mechanisms of information, communication and effective participation in public life at the national/local level by organizing information campaigns on various current topics.

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