

Data, trends and policies – Migration in Romania and South-East Europe

After the collapse of the state socialist regime, the international migration rates in Romania, particularly the emigration, rose to unprecedented levels. Next to the fact that the evolution of the legal framework mirrors attempts to harmonize the Romanian institutional system with international norms, as well as a continuous preoccupation with the organization and internal reorganization of the institutions involved in the management of migration, one can observe that the Romanian state was not able to administer or even to register the process of international migration. Due to methodological inconsistencies and problematic institutional mechanisms, the Romanian system of migration management is ineffective, and many times provides discordant or erroneous data. The following examples illustrate this well. At the time of the parliamentary elections in 2012, the official number of persons entitled to vote was 18.4 million, whereas the official number of the usual resident adult population – delivered by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) – was 17.4 million. Or, according to the statistics of the World Bank, in 2010, 2.8 million Romanian citizens resided abroad, but the number of emigrants registered by the Romanian authorities between 2001 and 2011 was only about 128,000 persons. Finally, in light of the flow statistics of the main receiving countries, one can realize that the Romanian emigration statistics capture less than 10 percent of the legal outflows from the country.

It is also readily observable that Romania does not represent a unique case in the region with regard to migration processes. Actually, South-East Europe represents the main sending region for European and North-American migratory systems. According to World Bank statistics, in 2010, more than 17 million South-East European citizens were living abroad. Moreover, Romania is not a unique case in what concerns the problems in the administration and management of migration and its effects either.

In this respect, the similarities and differences between the South-East European states are learned by complex research activities conducted within the framework of the transnational project called SEEMIG. The project aims to better understand and address longer term migratory, human capital and demographic processes of South-East Europe, as well as their effects on labor markets, national and regional economies. The main goal of the project is to empower public administrations to develop and implement policies and strategies by using enhanced datasets and empirical evidence. SEEMIG is carried out in partnership by research institutes, universities, statistical offices and local government bodies from eight countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Slovenia). The partners from Romania are the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities (ISPMN), the Municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe, and the Harghita County Council.

The SEEMIG project was launched in summer 2012 and it is going to be finalized by the end of the next year. By this time, among other activities, two reports have been elaborated for each country, reports that discuss, on the one hand, the historical migratory profile, and on the other hand, the administrative and statistical data concerning migration. Currently, research is focused on the comparative analysis of data provided by country reports, as well as compiling a transnational database. Findings will feed into recommendations concerning the reform of data production

systems, strategy building and policy implementation addressed to institutions involved into the management of migration.

To evaluate the current situation of research activities and to discuss the following steps, partners met in Belgrade, on the 19th and 20th of September, 2013. More information about the project and research results are available on the webpage www.seemig.eu.

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www.seemig.eu

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