



THE CONTRIBUTION OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT TO MIGRATION POLICY IN MOLDOVA



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DECEMBER 2007

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2006 the European Training Foundation¹ (ETF) launched a pilot study on the links between migration, the education and training system, and the labour market. Since knowledge on the impact of migration on the education/skills and labour markets is limited, the ETF research approach included a review of the existing literature, fact-finding missions and field surveys in five ETF partner countries, namely Albania, Egypt, Moldova, Tunisia and Ukraine. Some of these countries are new sources of migration to the EU, and some are traditional sources.

For the Moldovan part of the study, a local company called the Centre for Sociological, Politological and Psychological Investigation and Analysis (CIVIS) was contracted to carry out the field survey and the first level of data analysis. A fact-finding mission to Moldova took place from 8 to 13 October 2006, and involved an ETF team of experts and an international expert, Professor Richard Black from Sussex University (UK). Key national stakeholders in the Moldovan context were visited during the mission, including the Ministry of Economy and Trade, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Ministry of Internal Affairs – Bureau of Migration and Asylum, National Bureau of Statistics, National Employment Agency, Hancesti Municipality, National Confederation of Employers (CNPM), Confederation of Trade Unions (CSRM), National Women's Studies and Information Centre, Moldova Microfinance Alliance (non-profit organisation), Institute of Public Policies (IPP) and local offices of international organisations such as the EC Delegation in Moldova, ILO, World Bank, International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Soros Foundation.



For the survey in Moldova a sample of 2,020 people was used (1,010 potential and 1,010 returning migrants). The results have been collected in the database and have been further analysed by the ETF² and international expert. The findings and preliminary conclusions from the study were presented to relevant stakeholders in a validation workshop held in Chişinău on 30 May 2007. The results of the debate have been fed back into the final draft of the report with a view to publication and presentation to the wider public.

The survey data show a potentially massive outflow of migrants from Moldova, with 44.0% of the population aged between 18 and 40 years having indicated that they are seriously intending to migrate. Analysis of the sociodemographic profile of the potential migrants confirms that intentions to leave

are approximately equal for employed and unemployed populations. Moreover, there are only insignificant differences between the intention to leave rates of people with different education levels.

In a comparative analysis of the educational areas of potential and returning migrants, the following three major education fields were identified:

- engineering, industry and construction;

¹ Established in 1990, the European Training Foundation (ETF) assists its 30 partner countries in developing high-quality systems for human resources development. Its role is to share expertise and advice on policies in education and training across regions and cultures. Working on behalf of the European Union, the ETF helps its partner countries to develop people's skills and knowledge to promote better living conditions, active citizenship and democratic societies that respect human rights and cultural diversity.

² The ETF team working on the migration project is: Natalia Popova, Ummuhan Bardak, Carmela Dorian Monteleone, Jesús Alquézar and Francesco Panzica.

- social sciences, economy and law;
- services.

Potential migrants who expressed a desire to continue their studies currently plan to specialise in social sciences, economy and law.

Fifteen years ago the number of people with vocational education was four times greater than the number who had university degrees. Currently the ratio is 1:1. Every year there are around 25,000–30,000 graduates with diplomas in law and economics who have no employment opportunities in Moldova, resulting in a serious intention to migrate immediately following graduation.

The survey data show a mismatch between the educational areas and the demands of the Moldovan labour market. While education focuses mainly on engineering, industry and construction, social sciences, economy and law, and services, employment among potential migrants is concentrated mainly in the areas of agriculture, construction and trade. Returning migrants find employment in these same sectors. Their work experience abroad is also in these sectors, with one exception, namely domestic work instead of agriculture. Many of the people who have migrated are not employed according to their basic specialisation. Thus, medical doctors and teachers have to work as builders and domestic workers. This fact is confirmed by the survey data, which show that 35.0% of returning migrants with university education have worked in construction, while 28.0% have worked as domestic workers.

The main destination countries for Moldovan migrants are Russia and Italy (around 60% of the migration flows). Analysis of the survey data for potential migrants and returning migrants shows a decrease of the migration flow to Russia and an increase to Italy. Generally, around 45% of the potential migration flows are towards EU countries. Men migrate more towards Russia and Portugal, while women migrate more towards Italy and Turkey.

The main factors that promote migration in Moldova are the unsatisfactory living and working conditions, and the difficulty of finding jobs. The data give a clear demonstration of this: the vast majority of respondents who intend to migrate (92.6%) are convinced that their departure might improve their financial situation. On the other hand, the survey of returning migrants shows that the job abroad does not always meet expectations; thus, only around 55% of returning migrants assess their material condition on their return as being better than before departure. Improvement of financial condition is more significant for people who have worked in countries outside the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region.

Remittances play an important role in helping families to cover basic needs. Rural migrants in particular dedicate a significant portion of their funds to purchasing long-term household commodities, such as a house/apartment, or to finance children's education. In this respect it is worth mentioning that only 7.0% of returning migrants use the money earned abroad to start up their own businesses. Half of returning migrants plan to migrate abroad again.

The experience and skills acquired in the workplace abroad often help returning migrants to find better employment opportunities: this is confirmed by the fact that 46.9% of the returning migrants in the survey have found employment on their return to Moldova. However, most frequently the experience gained abroad has not assisted returning migrants to find better employment, especially as they have worked in areas other than those they were qualified for, and could not use the experience gained abroad in their country of origin. Some respondents even state that they had learned nothing abroad because they were only exploited. Indeed, more than 50% of returning migrants have not worked since their return.

Policy implications

General

- The survey results clearly demonstrate the existence of a skill mismatch on the Moldovan labour market, especially for highly skilled workers (university graduates), who are unable to find employment locally and are therefore forced to migrate.

- Linked to this issue is the fact that the training provided at university in Moldova results in an oversupply of lawyers and economists, among other professions. However, the survey results for returning migrants show that most of the university graduates have worked in construction and household work. Moldovan young people included in the study do not believe that education will give them a chance of a better life in Moldova.
- Given the current state of the Moldovan economy, people with a high level of qualification are not in great demand. The government has identified that there is a lack of professionals at medium technical level and since 2006 has given special incentives (such as free accommodation) to boost VET enrolment. These efforts should be continued and supported by a parallel investment in updating VET so that it corresponds to real labour market needs.
- Very low salaries and poor working conditions are among the main reasons for leaving the country. The issue of the creation of good-quality, decent jobs needs to be urgently addressed in national economic development planning.
- Legal channels for labour migration are used by very few people as a result of limited opportunities, a lack of information and a lack of trust in the system. Creating more legal channels for labour migration and giving adequate information on and support for legal migration should be accompanied by a public awareness campaign on the risks of illegal migration. In addition, improved knowledge of EU best practices in the field of labour migration management should be promoted.
- Initially most migrants go to Russia because it is cheaper, and an easier destination for language and entry reasons. However, it also offers fewer benefits, and hence there is now a re-orientation towards Western Europe. This trend should be further monitored and taken into account in the labour negotiations that the Moldovan government is conducting with EU countries.
- Measures and incentives, developed jointly with the private sector, for attracting highly skilled migrants back home on a permanent or temporary basis should be considered in order to mitigate the adverse effects of 'brain drain'.

Specific

- Capacity building of the National Bureau of Statistics in the field of migration is essential, and in particular cooperation projects between the statistical offices of the sending and receiving countries on aligning data collection methodologies and knowledge sharing. It is important to gather data on migrants in terms of their level of education (by ISCED 1997 classification), professional profile (ISCO) (as far as is possible) and gender. In particular, data should be collected on the skill oversupplies and shortages in the local labour market'; this can then be taken into consideration when designing measures for managed/circular migration and for the prevention of brain drain, and in negotiations of new bilateral labour agreements.
- The capacity of the Ministry of Economy and Trade in terms of labour migration management needs to be improved. The Moldovan government is currently negotiating labour and re-admission agreements with some EU member states, albeit on a limited number of quotas. In future this would require appropriate preparatory training and facilitation of the skill matching of migrants with the labour market needs of receiving countries.
- There is ongoing work by the Moldovan government and various international donors on improving the use of remittances. This effort should be linked to the overall improvement of the business environment and investment climate. Providing support and incentives for returning migrants to start businesses in Moldova should therefore be seen as a priority. The development of training modules for communities heavily affected by migration on the optimisation of the use of remittances should be considered. Information on starting a small business and entrepreneurship learning measures can therefore contribute to the strengthening of the overall development effects.

- The National Employment Agency should promote education and training measures for returnees, or participation of returnees in existing VET provision. The current plan for the creation of a register for potential migrants and their skill profiles could be useful for the future management of migration schemes.
- The National Employment Agency may establish a contact centre through which expatriates working in specific professions can be put in contact with potential migrants for the purpose of sharing information and experiences that may be useful for obtaining recognition for qualifications. This centre could also act as an information centre that evaluates qualifications and provides advice and information on recognition issues.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Migration flows and their characteristics

Because of its scale, migration is one the most serious issues in Moldova. According to the estimates of the National Bureau of Statistics, migrants accounted for 20.3% of Moldova's economically active population (309,000 people) in the second quarter of 2006, though the true figures could be even higher. This fact is confirmed in the IMF report 'Republic of Moldova: Selected Issues' (February 2005), which states that the migration flow figures 'should be seen as low estimates, since existing data only cover workers who officially declared that they were emigrating'.

There is significant variation between recent data from various studies carried out by Moldovan public institutions, international organisations and national non-governmental organisations in respect of the extent of emigration from Moldova. According to the census conducted in October 2004, a total of 273,000 people residing in Moldova were absent. Other members of the domestic household declared them to be abroad. Of the total number of those who were abroad, 130,000 people, or 47.7%, were abroad for over a year. It should be noted that those aged 20–29 represented the largest share of this group (37.7%), followed by those aged 30–39 (23.1%) and 40–49 (19.7%). Migrants accounted for 8.1% of the total population covered by the census, while in 12 districts of the country the people that were abroad accounted for 10–12%. Most of those who were temporarily absent had gone abroad to work or to look for a job (88.7%), to study (6.5%), or for other reasons (4.8%)³.

On the other hand, the National Report: Labour Market 2005 prepared by the National Employment Agency refers to the data of National Bureau of Statistics, according to which the migration flow in 2004 was assessed as 345,000 people, and in 2005 394,000 people. Another detailed study carried out by CBS AXA at the end of 2004 showed that during the period 2003 – 2004 the number of Moldovan emigrants amounted to around 571,000 people (of which 172,000 people had been abroad during that period and had come back for a time, and another 399,000 were abroad while the study was being conducted)⁴. At the same time, another 119,000 people expressed their intention to go abroad in the next six months, taking the migration potential to approximately 690,000 persons. It was estimated that over 70,000 Moldovan citizens went abroad for the first time in 2004 alone. The CBS AXA study emphasises that the migration flows will not decrease in the near future, given that only around 14% of the migrant interviewees returning from abroad said that they would not go abroad again.

This conclusion is also supported to a certain extent by the constant increase in the level of remittances coming from abroad. According to the Moldovan Central Bank, the amount of remittances from abroad was USD 233 million (or 15% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2001. In 2002 this figure increased to USD 309 million (16% of GDP), in 2003 to USD 464 million (around 25% of GDP), in 2004 to USD 700 million (around 27% of GDP)⁵; in 2006 the share of remittances from abroad reached 31.7% of the country's GDP⁶. As a result, Moldova's level of dependence on remittances is the highest in the world.

Press analysis of the period May – October 2004 reveals a number of other studies on the size of the migration phenomenon in Moldova⁷:

- around 280,000 in 2003 and around 300,000 in 2004, according to a study carried out by Moldova Microfinance Alliance (Moldova Suverana (Sovereign Moldova), 6 May 2004; Capitala (Capital), 2 June 2004);

³ National Bureau of Statistics, *Informative note on Census data of population in 2004: Migration of Population*, nr. 15-06-18. www.statistica.md

⁴ CBS-AXA (2005): 'Migration and remittances in Albania'. Report prepared for International Organization for Migration in Moldova, European Commission Food Security Programme Office in Moldova and International Monetary Fund Office in Moldova.

⁵ Moldova: tendencies in economy', September 2005, available at <http://www.met.dnt.md/report/met2005q3ro.pdf>

⁶ According to World Bank estimates.

⁷ CBS-AXA (2005): 'Migration and remittances in Albania'. Report prepared for International Organization for Migration in Moldova, European Commission Food Security Programme Office in Moldova and International Monetary Fund Office in Moldova.

- 600,000, according to a study conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (Saptamana, Week 7 May 2004);
- 650,000, according to the official accounts (Jurnal de Chişinău, 6 July 2004);
- 600,000, according to the Migration Department (20 August 2004);
- an increase in the number of people who had been abroad in the past two to three years, from 25% to 29%, with the number of migrants increasing from 450,000 to 600,000 people (surveys carried out by the Public Policy Institute, April – November 2003).

The data of the National Bureau of Statistics show a negative internal migration balance in Moldova, which means that more people are leaving their place of residence in rural areas. The tendency is to migrate to large towns. Only the municipalities of the country saw a positive migration balance during the past two years: Chişinău (the number of those arriving was 7.9 times higher than the number of those leaving), Bălţi (3.3 times higher) and Cahul (1.6 times higher). This is because there are more job opportunities in municipalities, and the living conditions are better than in rural settlements. This characteristic of internal migration – migration of a larger number of people from rural areas – is the same for external migration. Rural emigrants constitute around 70% of the flows, compared with 30% who are urban emigrants, indicating that life in villages is continuing to degrade.

Migration is determined by a series of 'push' and 'pull' factors. Moldovans are pushed to go to abroad because of the poverty in their country, the lack of employment opportunities, the low salaries and the lack of money, which damage the economic security of individuals. Migration is also favoured by successful individuals because of remittances and the social networks already established abroad (relatives, acquaintances and close friends who already live and work abroad). From one point of view this situation is favourable for Moldova, as labour emigration is a short-term solution to such burning issues as unemployment, excessive labour and lack of income sources in many families. In the long term, however, it undermines the local labour market and the development of the domestic economy in general.

The analysis of the sociological surveys on migration in various periods reveals a gradual change in the reasons for migration. Initially, one of the main reasons for Moldovans to go abroad was the lack of financial resources and employment opportunities in Moldova⁸. However, this factor of limited employment opportunities was absent in the study conducted by CBS AXA at the end of 2004. Instead, the lack of financial resources to cover daily consumption needs was a persisting factor here. The explanation could be that Moldova started to provide a wider variety of job opportunities than in previous periods (mainly in the urban settlements and large towns), but the salaries offered were not sufficient to ensure a decent standard of living. It should also be mentioned that migration in Moldova between 1988 and 1999 had a commercial character (commercial migration – the purchase of goods from abroad and their sale on the Moldovan market); commercial migration was gradually replaced by labour migration in the years following 2000.

Migration destination

The 2004 census data show that Russia is the main destination country for Moldovan emigrants, absorbing more than a half of the total number (56.2%). Italy follows with 19.4%, then Romania (3.9%), Portugal (3.5%), Ukraine (3.1%) and Turkey (3.0%). The other destination countries account for around 11% of emigrants; these include the Czech Republic, Poland and Israel. A large number of emigrants go to Russia because of low travelling expenses, its enormous labour market and the fact that most Moldovan citizens have knowledge of the Russian language.

It should be noted that migration of Moldovans to Russia and other CIS countries has more a seasonal character with multiple exits and entries than migration to the European countries. Moldovan migrants in European countries encounter difficulties if they go back to Moldova, as most stay abroad illegally and risk not being able to return to work.

⁸ According to the study 'Human Trafficking from Moldova for Labour and Sexual Exploitation', carried out by CIVIS for the International Organization for Migration at the end of 2002.

Another report by Sleptova⁹ gives some quantitative estimates based on research carried out in destination countries.

- Czech researchers estimate that there are some 2,000 Moldovan workers in the country. At the same time the Moldovan Information and Security Service reports that no less than 40,000 migrant Moldovans are employed in the Czech Republic.
- According to German authorities there are some 31,400 Moldovan workers in Germany. Most of them are employed in the construction sector in eastern Germany.
- Moldovans constitute the largest group of foreigners sent to Poland by Germany as a result of illegal attempts to cross the border (over 1,000 persons per year).
- More than 10,000 Moldovan migrants were sent back from Portugal, Spain, Turkey and Israel over a two-year period.
- The Federal Visa and Immigration Service in Stuttgart declare that there are over 55,000 migrant workers from Moldova in the Schengen space. Most of them are there illegally, having overstayed their visas, and are often taken to court and held liable for unlawful activities (such as thefts). The data, however, are incomplete, since they were collected before EU member states started to unify migration control systems by introducing the Eurodac system.

The choice of destination country varies according to the gender of the emigrants. Male migrants in particular prefer the CIS countries (Russia, Ukraine) and some countries of Western Europe (Portugal, Germany), while female migrants prefer Italy, Spain, Turkey, Greece and Cyprus. This is determined by the specific needs of the labour markets and the structures of social security system of the destination countries. Another factor is the migration policy approach followed by destination countries. As a result, over 50% of Moldovan migrants in Italy work in the social care system and housekeeping. The same situation occurs in Turkey. On the other hand, 60.2% of Moldovan migrants in Russia and 40.6% of those in Portugal carry out heavy manual work, mainly in the construction and repair sectors¹⁰.

Gender and skill composition of migration flows

The October 2004 census shows that there are more male than female emigrants, with males making up 57.0% of the total. According to the estimates from CBS AXA, the ratio is 65.9% (242,087 people) to 34.1% (125,111 people) in favour of males. Young men aged between 21 and 30 (37.3%, or 90,184 people) are the largest group, while females aged between 31 and 40 (35.9%, 44,948 people) are the largest category of women migrants. As for education level, the census reports that more women migrants have higher education (11.6%) and secondary professional education (15.3%), compared with male migrants, of whom 7.2% have higher education and 8.0% secondary professional education.

The data of the 2004 census reveal that 76.0% of migrants had general secondary education or compulsory general education. This is also confirmed by the sociological study carried out by CBS AXA, which shows that by 2004 a large proportion of migrants had secondary education (41.5%), with the remainder having vocational education (27.9%), higher education (19.6%) and all those with less than secondary education (10.9%). A large proportion of migrants who have a low level of education migrate to CIS countries, which are preferred by men, as has already been mentioned. They work mainly in construction and repair. The largest proportion of emigrants to Western Europe, especially Spain, Portugal and Greece, have higher education.

It should be mentioned here that only 27.3% of Moldovan emigrants work according to their qualification. The majority (70.0%) perform work that has nothing to do with their occupation or

⁹ Sleptova, E., 'Labour migration in Europe: special focus on the Republic of Moldova', available at www.ipp.md/public/biblioteca/50/en/St-Sleptova-fin.doc

¹⁰ CBS-AXA (2005): 'Migration and remittances in Albania'. Report prepared for International Organization for Migration in Moldova, European Commission Food Security Programme Office in Moldova and International Monetary Fund Office in Moldova.

qualification from their country of origin. The main areas of activity are construction, agriculture, transport, housekeeping and the sex industry¹¹.

1.2 Labour market trends and education levels

The general trends in the Moldovan labour market over the past five years have shown a constant decrease in the rate of activity of the economically active population (from 59.9% in 2000 to 49.7% in 2004), and in the employment rate (from 54.8% in 2000 to 45.7% in 2004). This decreasing trend in relation to the economically active population continued in the second quarter of 2005. Both the economically active and the employed populations fell by 0.2%, despite the fact that GDP rose by more than 8%.

With regard to the sociodemographic characteristics of the population, it was reported that the proportion of men who are active (50.4%) is greater than the proportion of women (47.7%). As to the urban population compared to the rural population, the proportions are 52.5% to 46.4% respectively. With regard to age, the highest rate of activity (74.0%) was registered in the category 50–54 years. According to experts from IDIS 'Viitorul', although young people represent a higher proportion of the economically active population, they prefer not to work (only 27.0% of people aged less than 30 years are employed) because of the unsatisfactory working conditions and low salaries. Thus, there is a marked trend towards ageing, especially in the education and health service sectors¹². The main problems faced by the labour market are:

- the lack of vacancies in the national economy;
- the difficult and demanding working conditions and the low salaries that are available;
- the mismatch between the level of qualification of unemployed people and the labour market requirements;
- the limited employment opportunities for women, young people, new graduates and others.

According to the ILO, the number of unemployed people is 103,700 in 2005, which is 12,700 fewer than in 2004. The unemployment rate is 7.3%, which is 0.8% less than in 2004. Some significant variations were registered according to the sex and area of residence. The male unemployment rate is 8.7%, while the women's rate is 6.0%; the rate for those from urban areas is 11.2%, and for the residents from rural areas 4.0%. Thus, there are more unemployed men (57.7% of the total unemployed population) and people living in urban areas (69.9% of the total). At the time of the research, only 1.6% of people were in training. It should be mentioned that 85.0% of the total number of unemployed people are experienced individuals. The average duration of unemployment was 22 months. Around half of all unemployed people had been without work for a long period (more than one year).

The unemployment rate among young people aged 15–24 years fell from 22.3% in 1999 to 11.7% in 2005. There is a difference here between the sexes: for young people, the unemployment rate is higher for men than for women (19.1% and 18.3% respectively). The proportion of young unemployed people in the total unemployed population was 31.8% in 1999 and 27.5% in 2005. The proportion of those who have been unemployed for six months or more has increased among young people from 48.0% in 2004 to 50.6% in 2005¹³.

According to the data presented in the National Report: Labour Market 2005, 351 Labour Club seminars have been organised; 3,976 unemployed people took part, which is 364 more than in 2004. Some 54.0% of the total number of participants took concrete steps towards overcoming unemployment: some 23.0% found employment and 30.0% were directed to professional training

¹¹ Sleptova E., 'Labour migration in Europe: special focus on the Republic of Moldova' (www.ipp.md/public/biblioteca/50/en/St~Sleptova~fin.doc) with reference to. Moshneaga, V., 'Labour Migration and security threats: general aspects', *Moldoscopia* 2001, XVI.

¹² IDIS 'Viitorul', *Economic monitor: quarter analysis and forecasts*. Nr. 3, quarter 3, 2005. www.moldova.org/download/rom/456

¹³ National Bureau of Statistics, *Informative note: labour market in the Republic of Moldova – employment and unemployment* nr. 09-01/47, 2005. www.statistica.md

courses. Of the 59,900 unemployed people registered during 2005 at employment agency, 4,621 people (8.0% of those registered) graduated from professional training courses.

Education and skill shortages and/or oversupply

According to the data from the census of 2004, some 11.1% of the total population have higher education, 10.5% specialist secondary education, 33.3% secondary education, 31.8% compulsory general education, 10.1% primary education and 2.2% no education. A larger proportion of women than men have completed university studies (11.9% of women, 10.3% of men) and secondary vocational studies (12.7% of women, 8.0% of men). More men have secondary education (35.9%) than women (30.9%). With regard to place of residence, more people from urban areas have completed university and secondary vocational studies (19.7% and 13.9% respectively) than those from rural areas (5.3% and 8.2% respectively).

Moldova began a reform of its education system in 1995 with the approval of the Law on Education, a move brought about by the necessity of integrating and adjusting the national education system to the European system. The education system in Moldova consists of pre-university education – primary level, lower secondary level, secondary general (high school), secondary vocational (vocational school) and secondary specialised (college) – and university education.

Pre-university education has been characterised by a decrease in the number of students at practically all levels. The number of students in primary and general education fell by 106,000 between 1998 and 2004, mainly as a result of the significant decline in the birth rate. At the same time a reduction was noted in the attendance rate in primary education (down to 93.0%) and secondary education (down to 88.0%).

There has also been a decrease in the number of students in the secondary vocational education sector, with vocational schools using only 60% of their capacity. The situation is a result of the general tendency to develop the education system with higher education as a priority, since as it offers more opportunities to find a job. Hence, the number of students in higher education establishments is constantly increasing by an average of 10% per year. The number of students in universities has doubled over the past ten years¹⁴.

Another negative factor affecting the labour market is that the existing structure of secondary vocational education institutions does not correspond to the current requirements of the labour market. Consequently, only a little over half of vocational school graduates and a third of college graduates are able to find employment. It is therefore necessary to achieve a better match between the supply and the demand. The Council of Europe experts – who consider that the relationship between education and training and the labour market should be strengthened in order to ensure that education and training programmes are in line with changing labour market demands – also recommend this¹⁵.

It should be mentioned here that in professional training for unemployed people at employment agencies the emphasis is placed on the occupations/professions that are in demand on the labour market: these include locksmith, electro-mechanic (repairing domestic equipment and appliances), production line worker, steriliser-worker, barmen/waiter, referent, radio mechanic, salesperson, tailor/sewer, operator of steam boiler, plasterer/house painter, electro-gas welder, tractor driver, computer operator and barber. These are also the professions that are popular with unemployed people.

Experts at the National Bureau of Statistics consider that there is an abundance of specialists in all the sectors of the national economy, but that the vacancies remain unfilled because of the unsatisfactory working conditions and low salaries. This has been partially confirmed by some of stakeholders interviewed during the fact-finding mission, for example the representatives of the ILO and the Confederation of Trade Unions.

¹⁴ 'Moldova: tendencies in economy', September 2005. available at www.met.dnt.md/report/met2005q3ro.pdf

¹⁵ Venckevicius, T., 'Review at the country level of employment policy in the Republic of Moldova', Council of Europe, 2005. www.mec.md/Files/0/recomandari.doc

On the other hand, employers' representatives consider that some sectors of the economy are still experiencing shortages of qualified specialists, for instance the service, construction and agricultural sectors, particularly as a result of the impact of large-scale migration¹⁶.

1.3 Legislative framework and policies for migration

The management of migration may be divided into three distinct types of action:

- management prior to migration (first phase), when people prepare to leave the country: preparation of necessary documents for departure and for travel abroad;
- intermediary management, when the migrants are already abroad;
- post-migration management (third phase), when migrants who have worked abroad come back to their country of origin.

Two basic laws in Moldova regulate the migration process:

- Migration Policy of Moldova, Decision No. 1386-XV of 11 October 2002. This envisages the prior objectives, principles and directions for regulating and developing the migration processes in Moldova. The document also describes the main public authorities responsible for migration management and the tasks and expected results of migration policy.
- Law on Migration No. 1518-XV of 6.12.2002. This includes migration principles and objectives and the powers of the administrative bodies dealing with migration problems, and stipulates the basic rules of emigration and immigration.

Another two important documents for migration management are the EU–Moldova Action Plan (EUMAP), which establishes the strategic cooperation objectives between Moldova and the EU, and the National Action Programme on Migration and Asylum approved by the government on 15 March 2006. One of the EUMAP objectives refers to the management of migration flows. Points (44), (45) and (47) of EUMAP contain stipulations that concern the estimation of proportions and the efficient administration and management of migration flows to, through and from Moldova. Among the specific objectives enumerated in these points are:

- estimation of the proportions of migration flows, including through the creation of a database;
- tackling illegal migration according to the EU standards;
- adoption and implementation of the National Action Programme on Migration and Asylum (migration problems);
- initiation of a dialogue and signing of readmission agreements with the EU and the main countries of origin and transit;
- setting up of a joint group of experts to analyse and formulate policies on labour migration to the EU;
- examination of the possibility of Moldova being invited to take part in EU programmes on migration (ARGO, AENEAS).

Under Moldovan legislation (Conception of Migration Policy of Moldova and the Law on Migration), between August 2003 and April 2006 the National Bureau for Migration and Asylum was the responsible institution in charge of ensuring the rights and social protection of Moldovan citizens temporarily working abroad. The Bureau was initially called the Migration Department, and subsequently the National Migration Bureau.

¹⁶ Interview with Jana Costachi, National Project Coordinator, ILO International Programme on Migration

Government Decision No. 970 of 7 August 2003 on the institution of the Migration Department envisaged the taking over of the functions related to migration from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Information Technologies (the present Ministry of Information Development). This created a centralised management of the migration flows, thus avoiding duplication of activities by different institutions and insufficient coverage of some aspects of migration. Yet on 6 April 2006 the Moldovan Parliament introduced amendments to the Law on Government, through which the National Migration Bureau was liquidated. Some of its responsibilities were reassigned to the Ministry of Economy and Trade, the others to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Thus, the Ministry of Economy and Trade is responsible for such issues as the elaboration and implementation of policies and the regulation of processes regarding migration of the labour force, the issuing of working permits to foreign citizens, employment abroad and the protection of Moldovans working abroad. On the other hand, the functions relating to management of immigration flow, the issuing and extension of visas, the granting of immigrant or repatriate status, functions related to refugees and asylum, and other migration issues were assigned to the Ministry of Internal Affairs¹⁷.

The liquidation of the Bureau certainly generates uncertainty as regards progress towards implementing the requirements of EUMAP. This has caused delays of several months in the implementation of the plans and strategies projected for 2006 (including the National Action Programme on Migration and Asylum and the projects implemented by the IOM in Moldova). Owing to institutional deficiency and the dependence of some policies' success on subjective factors in Moldova, but also as a result of the complexity of the migration phenomenon, it is rather difficult to forecast what the effects of the National Migration Bureau's liquidation will be.

According to a recent law amendment on labour migration, the mandate of the National Employment Agency, which comes under the Ministry of Economy and Trade, includes both emigration and immigration, and the agency is in charge of implementing labour migration among other employment policies. It will be responsible for placing Moldovan migrants abroad in the future, but this will happen only when bilateral labour agreements between Moldova and other countries are signed. It is also responsible for the work permits of foreigners who come to work in Moldova. The Moldovan government has established a quota of 0.05% for foreigners working and studying on its territory. Some 500–700 permits are usually issued every year, which is below the quota.

Bilateral/multilateral labour agreements, tools for transparency and recognition of qualifications

The management of the intermediary phase is regulated by cooperation agreements only for migrants who stay legally abroad. Cooperation agreements refer specifically to the recognition of Moldovan migrants' qualifications in destination countries, these being described in the introduction of the agreement.

The second regulatory aspect relates to pensions and other social indemnities from which Moldovan migrants working abroad may benefit. In general there are two ways in which migrants working abroad can contribute to pension schemes. The first is implemented through agreements concluded between Moldovan authorities and those of destination countries. The second implies that the migrant makes individual payments (a nominal amount established by the law) to the Moldovan social insurance budget for five years, which then serves as basis for the minimum pension. Tools are currently being developed to allow migrants to pay any amount they wish as a contribution, in order to benefit from larger pensions in the future.

In respect of these issues, labour cooperation agreements in the area of migration were initially signed only with neighbouring CIS countries such as Russia (1993), Ukraine (1994) and Belarus (1994). During the period 2002 – 2006 the following agreements were signed:

- the Agreement between Moldova and Italy in the area of migration signed on 27 November 2003, which took effect on 1 May 2004; the entry quota was increased from 2,500 in 2005 to 5,000 in 2006, in order to encourage legal migration;

¹⁷ Government Regulation 529 from 17.05.2006 concerning the reorganisation of certain specialised central bodies of public administration. http://old.justice.md/lex/document_rom.php?id=9B67934B:5716AB25

- the Agreement between Moldova and Greece on the regulation of labour force migration (Moldovan Government Decision No. 720 of 28 June 2004);
- the Agreement between Moldova and Korea on labour force migration and social protection of migrant workers (Moldovan Government Decision No. 696 of 21 June 2004);
- the Cooperation Agreement between Moldova and Azerbaijan on labour force migration and social protection of migrants (2005).

Other agreements are still being negotiated, despite this process having been started some time ago:

- the Agreement between Moldova and Portugal on temporary stays of Moldovan migrants in Portugal for the purpose of working (the expectation was that this would be signed in 2006, but this did not happen);
- the Agreement between Moldova and Spain on the regulation of labour force migration between the two countries (Decree No. 1471 III issued by the President of Moldova on 8 September 2003 to start negotiations);
- the Agreement between Moldova and the Benelux States on cooperation in providing work for workers (Moldovan Government Decision No. 1086 of 8 September 2003 on the start of negotiations);

In addition, another 16 agreements of cooperation have been initiated in the field of migration; these are to be examined by the foreign counterparts.

As for a regulatory framework on the recognition of qualifications, according to the Law on Education No. 547 of 21 July 1995 in Moldova, the Ministry of Education is responsible for the recognition and validation of the qualifications. The issue of recognition has three aspects:

- recognition by Moldova of the education and qualifications obtained abroad by Moldovan citizens;
- recognition by Moldova of the education and qualifications of foreign citizens/students;
- recognition abroad of the education and qualifications obtained by Moldovan citizens or foreign citizens in educational establishments in Moldova.

The signing (in 1997) and ratification (on 1 November 1999) of the Lisbon Convention constitute real support for the adjustment of tactics and modalities in relation to the recognition and validation of qualifications in line with European requirements.

The method of recognising diplomas and other qualifications is facilitated by the signing of bilateral agreements on the reciprocal recognition of study documents, scientific degrees and didactic titles with such countries as the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria, and by the signing of a multilateral agreement with the countries of the CIS. However, the number of countries that have signed agreements on the recognition of the study documents is fewer than the number of destination countries of Moldovan emigrants.

According to the Decision of the Ministry of Education No. 143 of May 2002, the higher education institutions of Moldova provide an annex to the diploma formulated in compliance with the European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES), the Council of Europe and UNESCO, which constitutes an important instrument for promoting higher education qualifications. The supplement to the diploma is issued in a widely used European language. Inclusion of Moldova in the Bologna Process may also contribute to the enhancement of international transparency and the facilitation of the recognition of university and professional qualifications.

Migration management practices

Post-migration management refers to policies for the provision of assistance to migrants returning to their country of origin. These policies relate to various aspects, namely social, psychological and economic assistance. The first two phases – management prior to migration and intermediary management – are more concerned with cases of human trafficking.

Migration is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, the management of which necessitates a complex set of activities at both the political and the socioeconomic level. It should be mentioned here that some aspects of migration are included in the socioeconomic development strategies generated by the Moldovan government, including the Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy, the government's Activity Programme 'Country's Modernisation – People's Welfare (2005 – 2009)' and the National Programme 'Moldovan Village (2005 – 2015)'. But it is premature to assess the efficiency of these programmes, given that they have only recently been launched.

The fact that the authorities have initiated studies on migration (through the agency of the National Bureau of Statistics), and that other studies administered by international donors have been carried out, is very important. By means of these studies it has been possible to start examining the multifarious aspects of migration – its causes and flows, and its consequences at economic and social level, and at the level of individual/family and society.

As far as economic assistance is concerned, a EUR 1 million project – Beyond poverty reduction: Development of a legal, regulatory and institutional framework to target migrants' remittances towards increase of entrepreneurship activity in Moldova – has recently been launched. The European Commission is funding 80% of the project expenses and the Ministry of Economy and Trade of Moldova, the ILO and the IOM are implementing it.

The project focuses on developing a national remittances programme in order to strengthen the capacities of public servants in the development of strategies related to the business environment, to promote the establishment of a national organisation for the development of small and medium businesses and to carry out awareness-building campaigns for the promotion of money-transfer channels. It will train migrants and their families in the creation of a business or extension of an existing business, and will establish ties between Moldovan nationals abroad and their country of origin. The project activities will include the development of a guide on starting a business for inexperienced entrepreneurs and a manual on financial services aimed at assisting beginners to use appropriate financial services. The partnerships between Italian financial institutions – Italy being one of the main destination countries – and Moldova for the promotion of established transfer channels and investment of remittances in income-generating activities will be strengthened.

In addition to this project, there are also other cooperation activities between international and local organisations aimed at providing theoretical and technical assistance to returning migrants in the development of their entrepreneurial abilities. Migrants who come back to their home country usually have no practical skills for establishing a business and need training in accounting, management, marketing and legal issues. In order to organise such training courses the IOM is cooperating with the Moldova Microfinance Alliance, which provides consultancy at all stages of a new business – starting with registration and the development of a business plan – and includes the provision of legal services throughout the entire process.

Specialists from the Moldova Microfinance Alliance maintain that it is important for those who have returned from abroad to start a business in their own country, and to understand that they can earn good income at home. In this respect the Alliance provides technical assistance and supports the development of a number of savings and credit associations, which are a type of mini-bank. Their aim is to direct financial resources from banks towards agricultural producers.

Another project launched by the IOM in Moldova – Development of the Centre of Migration Information Resources for the period 1 August 2005 to 31 July 2006 – was set up to strengthen the information capacities of the National Migration Bureau and to create an electronic database. During this period the five modules of the database have been formulated, the data that need to be introduced have been identified, and the procedure for visualising the data by the relevant state institutions has been determined. By the beginning of 2006 the first two modules of the database had been implemented, namely 'Visas' and 'Immigration'; these are intended to automate the data on invitations to enter

Moldova and visas issued. The third module, 'Refugees', has been finalised, but its implementation was suspended following the liquidation of the National Migration Bureau¹⁸.

Overall, the activities of government institutions give an impression of 'one step forward and two steps back'. It should be noted that the authorities started taking measures in migration management only when emigration reached crisis proportions and the international organisations began insisting that action be taken.

¹⁸ Catrinescu, N., 'Individual assessment report of implementation of EU–Moldova Action Plan: migration (legal, illegal migration, readmission, visa, asylum)', available at www.europa.md/upload/File/migratie.doc

2. METHODOLOGY

a. Objective of the assignment

The objective of the assignment was to provide local knowledge for the ETF, including:

- information on the phenomenon of migration and its links with education and training and labour market issues in Moldova;
- information on national legislation and the institutional framework related to migration;
- sample design of a field survey with two types of respondents (potential and returning migrants), and implementation of this survey;
- organisation of meetings with relevant national stakeholders.

b. Areas covered by the study

The research project covered the whole of Moldova except Transnistria, including both rural and urban settlements.

c. Research strategy

The project included the following stages, making use of both qualitative and quantitative methods:

- preliminary desk research;
- fact-finding mission and meetings with national stakeholders;
- nationally representative survey of potential and returning migrants;
- validation meeting;
- elaboration of country migration profile based on the findings.

d. Description of the activities

Stage 1: Preliminary desk research

The desk research aimed to provide background information for the country migration profile. Statistical data, legislative materials and bilateral agreements, as well as existing research and other materials on migration and related issues, were reviewed and analysed during this stage of the project.

Stage 2: Fact-finding mission (9–13 October 2006)

Meetings with the main national stakeholders were organised in order to collect relevant information for the objectives of the assignment. Most stakeholders had been identified during the first stage of research (preliminary desk research).

The following national stakeholders were visited during the fact-finding mission.

Institution	Person
Ministry of Economy and Trade, Department for Human Resources Development	Ecaterina Buracec, Consultant
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport	Valentin Crudu, Vice-Minister Ion Ciobanu
National Bureau of Statistics	Elena Vatcarau, Chief of Department for Labour Market and Demography
National Employment Agency	Anatol Iatuc, Chief of Administration and Human Resources Department
National Bureau for Migration and Asylum	Eduard Vecverd
Trade Unions Federation	Ion Pregelzu, Chief of Legal and Socioeconomic Protection Department
National Confederation of Employers	Vladislav Caminschi
National Women's Studies and Information Centre	Zinaida Onica, Social Programme Director
Institute of Public Policies	Arcadie Barbarosie, Executive Director
State University of Moldova	Valerie Mosneaga, Head of Political Sciences Department
Moldova Microfinance Alliance	Boris Ghencea, Director
Soros Foundation Moldova	Doina Rosca, Programme Director
UNDP	Mihail Peleah
ILO	Jana Costache, Programme Coordinator
EC Delegation	Angela Cerba
World Bank	Alexei Ionascu, Social Sector Operations Officer
IOM	Martin Wyss, Chief of IOM Mission in Chişinău

Stage 3: Nationally representative survey of potential and returning migrants

Research method: nationally representative survey/poll.

Research technique: face-to-face interview based on a structured questionnaire and carried out in respondents' homes; 64 interviewers were involved in the fieldwork.

Target groups: two groups were included: potential migrants and returning migrants. A 'potential migrant' is anyone who is aged 18–40 years and lives in Moldova. Potential migration is intended to be broadly representative of the young adult population (18–40 years) as a whole in order to have a control sample of those in the same age group who are not actively seeking to migrate. A 'returning migrant' is someone who:

- left the survey country aged 18 or over;
- has lived and worked abroad continuously for at least six months;
- returned at least three months ago and within the past ten years;
- was present during the fieldwork and available for interview.

Those who had returned within the past three months, or more than ten years ago, were not included in the survey.

Research tools: written questionnaire. Two questionnaires were used, one for the potential migrants' survey and the other for the return migrants' survey. The questionnaires were developed by the ETF and the international expert, and finalised with the help of CIVIS. The average length taken to complete the questionnaire was 30–35 minutes.

Sample size: 1,010 potential migrants and 1,010 return migrants.

Fieldwork period: 22 November – 28 December 2006.

A. Sample design for potential migrants' survey

A two-stage cluster sample was used: the first-stage clusters were 12 regions chosen to represent the geographical diversity of the country, and the second-stage clusters were villages with up to 3,000 inhabitants. The clusters included areas with high and low levels of development, areas with high and low levels of international migration, and both rural and urban areas.

- **Stratified** – Two stratification criteria were applied.
 - **Region** – Twelve regions similar to former territorial administrative units (counties) were chosen.
 - **Category of locality** – These were villages up to 3,000 inhabitants, villages with 3,001 inhabitants or more, regional centres and municipalities.
- **Stratum size** – Strata volumes resulting from the division of population by regions and categories of localities were calculated proportionally to the total population in each stratum based on the most recent official data (1 January 2006) provided by the National Bureau of Statistics.
- **Random** – Localities, households and respondents were randomly selected.
- **Multiple stage** – Three random stages were used.
 - **Locality** – The 93 localities included in the sample from each stratum were randomly selected, based on a table of random numbers.
 - **Household** – A number of routes were assigned for each locality, depending on the number of households to be interviewed, but no more than six questionnaires were allowed to be filled in on any one route. The random 'Step Three' was used to select households for interviewing. In urban areas only one apartment was selected from each apartment building. If a potential respondent declined to be questioned, the interviewer moved to the following house or apartment building. Field operators recorded the location of households on the routes.
 - **Person** – The interviewer recorded all household members aged 18–40 living in each household selected. Even if more than one household member met the criteria for being surveyed, only one was interviewed, according to the 'closest birthday' procedure (the potential respondent with the birth date closest to the interview date was selected).

Representativeness of potential migrants' survey: The sample is representative for the entire population of Moldova aged 18–40, excluding Transnistria. The marginal sampling error is $\pm 3.1\%$.

B. Sample design for return migrants' survey

A two-stage cluster sample was used: the first-stage clusters were 12 regions chosen to represent the geographical diversity of the country, and the second-stage clusters were villages with up to 3,000 inhabitants. The clusters included areas with high and low levels of development, areas with high and low levels of international migration, and both rural and urban areas.

- **Stratified** – Two stratification criteria were applied.
 - **Region** – Twelve regions similar to former territorial administrative units (counties) were chosen.
 - **Category of locality** – These were villages with up to 3,000 inhabitants, villages with 3,001 inhabitants or more, regional centres and municipalities.
- **Stratum size** – Strata volumes resulting from the division of population by regions and categories of localities were calculated proportionally to the total population in each stratum based on the most recent official data (1 January 2006) provided by the National Bureau of Statistics. The rural/urban proportion was adjusted using official statistics on migration.
- **Not probabilistic** – The first 93 localities were selected randomly, as for the potential migrants' survey (these are the same localities). The remaining 47 localities were selected using the 'snow ball method' in order to complete the necessary sample of at least 1,000 return migrants. Households and respondents were selected using the same snow ball method.
- **Multiple stage** – Three non-random stages were used.
 - **Locality** – The first 93 localities included in the sample from each stratum were randomly selected, based on a table of random numbers.
 - **Household** – Households were selected using the snow ball method.
 - **Person** – The interviewer recorded all household members who:
 - had left the survey country aged 18 or over;
 - had lived and worked abroad continuously for at least six months;
 - came back at least three months ago and within the past ten years;
 - were present during the fieldwork and available for interview.

Even if more than one household member met the criteria to be surveyed, only one was interviewed, according to the 'closest birthday' procedure (the potential respondent with the birth date closest to the interview date was selected).

- **Quotas** – quotas were fixed for basic sociodemographic characteristics of return migrants (sex, age group, education, type of residence and destination country) based on up-to-date official statistics and other research.

Difficulties encountered in the field

For the potential migrants' survey the main difficulty was to find people aged 18–40 years, especially in rural areas, where many localities are inhabited mainly by elderly people.

For the return migrants' survey, there was a high number of refusals for two main reasons: fear of being robbed (as they had returned with money), and fear of being approached by law enforcement agencies (when they had worked illegally).

Stage 4: Validation meeting (30 May 2007)

Once a draft version of the country migration profile had been elaborated and approved by the international consultant and the ETF, a validation meeting was organised in Moldova. The following relevant national stakeholders were invited to attend the meeting.

Government institutions	Name and function
Ministry of Economy and Trade	Larisa Stucalov, Head of Labour and Salary Policies Unit Ecaterina Buracec, Migration Policy Unit
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport	Ion Ciobanu, Head of Youth Department
National Bureau of Statistics	Vladimir Gonta, representative of the Department for Labour Market and Demography Elena Basarab, Chief of the Employment Department
National Employment Agency	Raisa Dogaru, Chief of the Employment Department Arcadie Josan, Chief of the Labour Force Migration Department
Non-governmental organisations	Name and Function
CIVIS – Centre for Sociological, Politological and Psychological Investigation and Analysis	Eduard Mihailov, Director Ruslan Sintov, Executive Director
National Confederation of Employers (CNPM)	Vladislav Caminschi, Chief of Internal and External Relations Department
Confederation of Trade Unions (CSRM)	Sergiu Iurcu, Vice-Director
Moldova Microfinance Alliance (MicroAllianza)	Boris Ghencea, Director
International organisations	Name and Function
ILO Moldova Office	Ala Iripciu, National Correspondent
UNDP Moldova Office	Mihail Peleah, Programme Associate
IOM Office in Moldova	Georgeta Mincu, Project Assistant for the use of remittances
World Bank Moldova Office	Iaroslav Baclajanschi, Analyst Economist
Soros Foundation Moldova	Doina Rosca, Programme Director, Civil Society
Radio Free Europe	Daniel Lachi and Elena Moldovean, reporters
Development of the Vocational Education and Training System in Moldova	Jean Dukonson, Programme Associate
ETF	Name and Function
ETF	Milena Corradini, Country Manager
ETF	Ummuhan Bardak, Migration Expert
ETF	Francesco Panzica, Migration Expert

During the validation meeting the preliminary main findings were presented and validated.

3. POTENTIAL MIGRANTS

3.1 Short description of whole sample group

Respondents' age and gender

The total sample of the survey covered 1,010 people, of whom 55.4% were women and 44.6% men. The respondents' age groups were distributed as follows:

- 18–24 years: 37.1%;
- 25–29 years: 20.0%;
- 30–40 years: 42.9%.

Civil status and family composition

More than a half of those interviewed (56.4%) were married, 5.3% were engaged, 33.8% were unmarried and 4.5% were either divorced or widowed. The majority of respondents (59.2%) had children.

Nationality

The majority of respondents were Moldovans (79.4%), with the remainder having the following nationalities:

- Ukrainian: 6.8%;
- Russian: 5.5%;
- Gagauzian: 3.1%;
- Romanian: 2.7%;
- Bulgarian: 1.8%;
- Other nationalities: 0.7%.

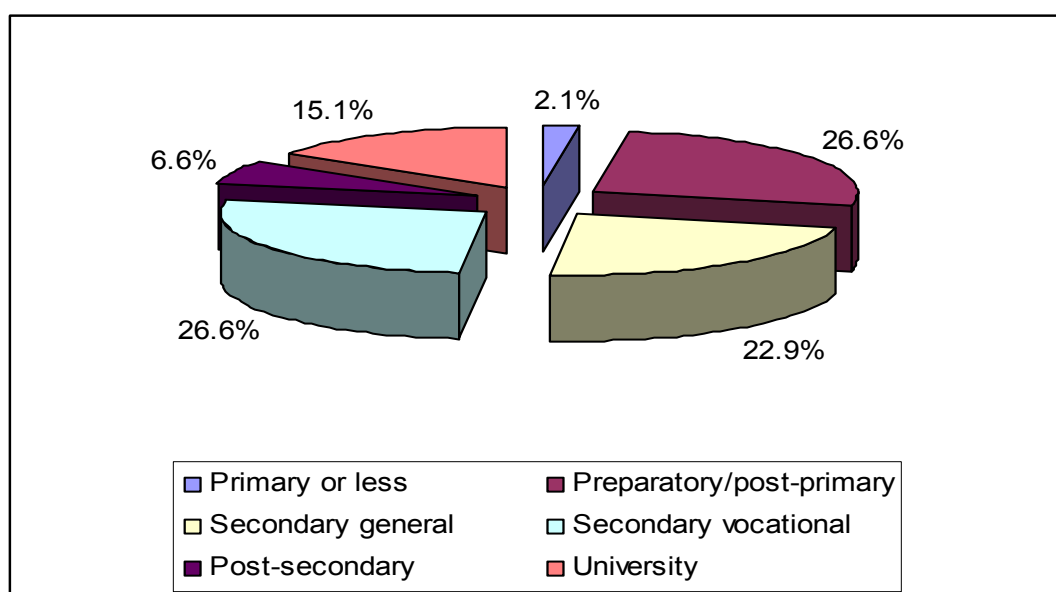
In terms of communication within the family, Romanian/Moldovan was the language usually spoken: 78.0% of respondents used it as their mother tongue, while 16.0% spoke Russian. Only 7.7% of respondents had a second language, the most frequent of which was Russian (5.4%).

Russian is the most frequently spoken language after the mother tongue. Respondents were asked to provide a list of up to three other languages besides their mother tongue. The most frequently quoted were Russian (67.5% of respondents who spoke another language), followed by English (16.5%) and French (15.5%).

Level of education

Some 15.1% of respondents had higher education and 6.6% are college (post-secondary) graduates. Almost one in four respondents had either secondary or vocational education (26.7%), while 22.9% had complete secondary education (11 grades, lyceum) and 26.6% had incomplete secondary education (9 grades); 2.1% of those interviewed had completed four grades or fewer.

Chart 1. Level of education of potential migrants

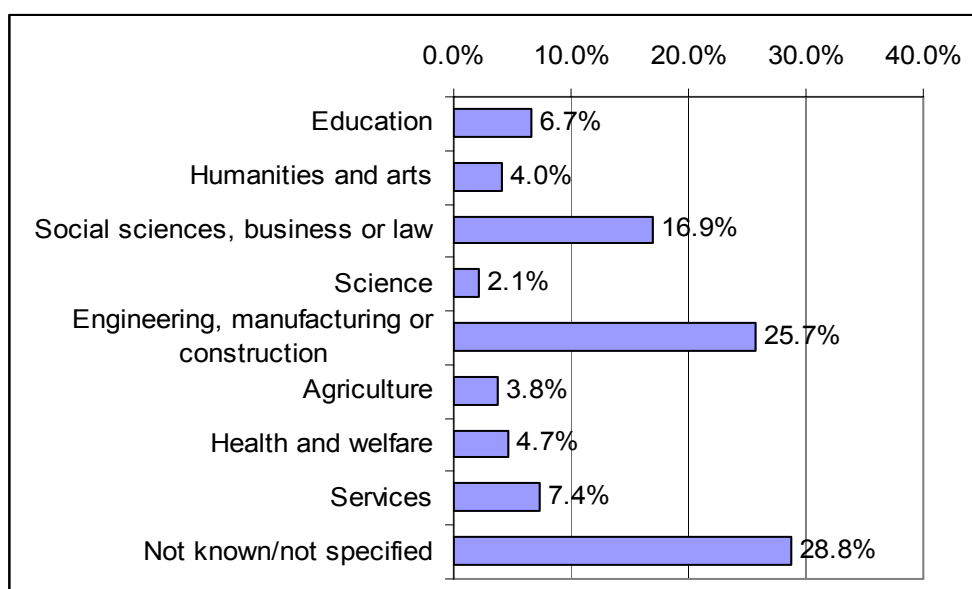


N= 1010 respondents

Analysis by gender reveals that there were more women with higher education (post-secondary and university) than men (25.4% and 17.3% respectively), while more men than women had a low level of education (preparatory or less) (33.1% and 25.2% respectively).

Among those who had completed secondary education or higher, the subject areas studied by the respondents mainly focused on the following: engineering, industry and construction (25.6% of respondents with complete secondary education or higher) and social sciences, economics and law (16.9%). Other fields of study had a less significant share (see Chart 2).

Chart 2. Areas of study of potential migrants



N=720 respondents who had at least graduated from secondary school

Generally speaking, the survey results show that women were more oriented towards education, health and well-being, social sciences, economics and law, while men were more oriented towards industry, engineering and construction, services and agriculture. The reasons for choosing the fields of study were diverse, the main factors being:

- personal interest: 59.4%;
- in order to get a job: 12.8%;
- encouragement from other people: 10.8%.

There was a more prominent trend towards choosing an area of study in order to get a job for respondents aged between 30 and 40 years (16.1%).

Only 26.2% of potential migrants said they would like to continue their education or go on to other training courses. Young people aged between 18 and 24 years were more likely to continue their education (45.3%). In terms of area of residence, the number of urban respondents (36.7%) intending to continue their education was higher than the number of rural respondents with the same intention (19.4%). At the same time, results show that the wish to continue in education increased with respondents' socioeconomic status.

Respondents intending to continue their education also preferred such fields as social sciences, economics and law (38.5%) and engineering, industry and construction (15.5%). Comparing the respondents' current intentions with their current fields of education, there was a higher level of interest in social sciences, economics and law and a lower level of interest in engineering, industry and construction. An analysis of respondents' socioeconomic status reveals that those with a higher socioeconomic status favoured study areas that ensure a high and well-paid socio-professional status – social sciences, economics and law (49.3%) – while those with a lower status opted for those areas that are less prestigious in Moldova – engineering, industry and construction (26.7%) and education (16.7%).

The majority of the potential migrant population (85.6%) expressed the belief that education helps people to improve their living standards, and 84.8% considered that it is important to invest in education and studies. The impact of education on living standards and the importance of investment in the education system were highlighted mainly by respondents with high socioeconomic status.

Employment situation

Almost half of those interviewed (51.4%) had done paid work during the past seven days to earn a living. The correlated analysis reveals that the employment rate was higher among men (58.9%) than women (45.4%), which is in line with official statistical data; it was higher among urban residents (62.3%) than rural ones (44.2%), and among people with high and medium levels of education.

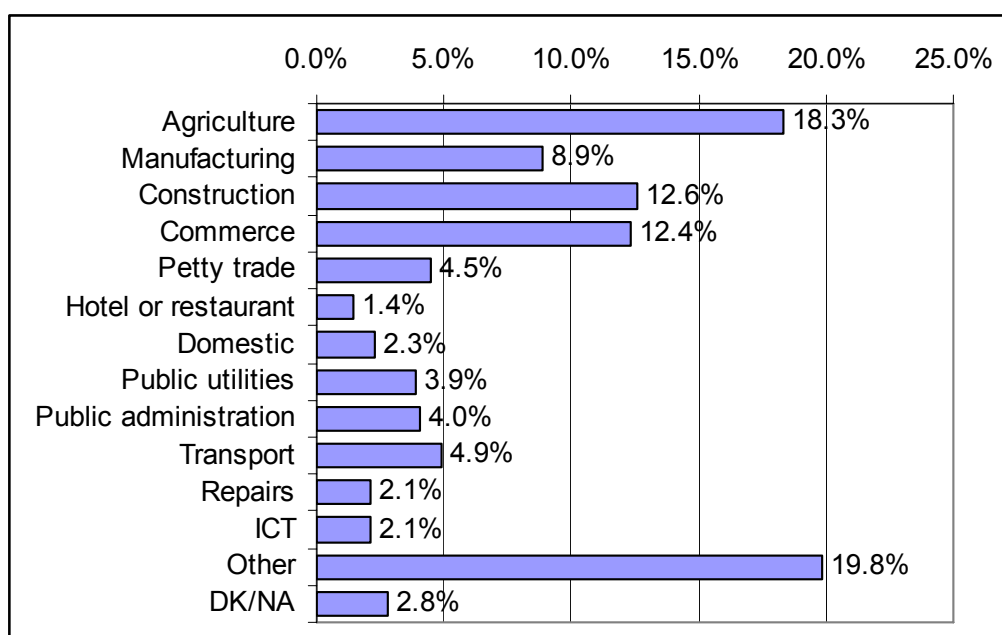
Of the 48.6% respondents who stated that they had not working during the seven days prior to the day of the interview, a significant number (40.1%) said that they could not find a job. This response was especially frequent among rural residents (50.6%) as compared with urban ones (16.6%), and for areas in the north of the country (50.4%) compared to other regions. As education levels increased, the number of respondents who could not find a job decreased. At the time of the interviews 21.6% were enrolled in an educational institution; this would be the case for almost all of those aged between 18 and 24 years, particularly those from urban areas.

The employed individuals who were interviewed worked in:

- agriculture: 18.3%;
- construction: 12.6%;
- trade: 12.4%;
- manufacturing industries: 8.9%;
- education: 6.8%;
- transport: 4.9%.

Some 33.5% worked in other fields of activity (for instance, health, security, public services and reparation services), a proportion that is less than 4% of the total number of employed persons.

Chart 3. Potential migrants' main fields of activity



N= 842 respondents who had ever worked

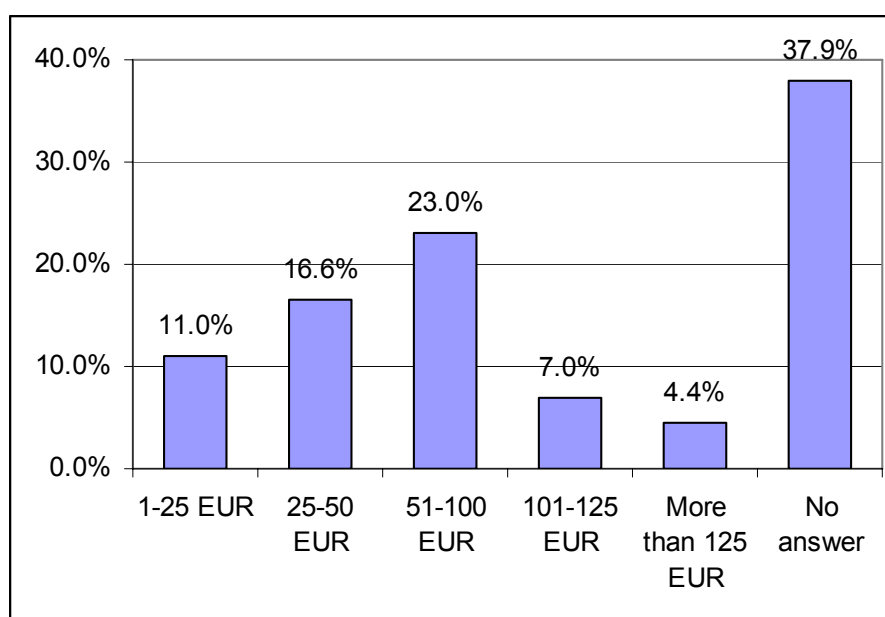
A large majority of respondents (61.8%) worked as employees, but the proportion of casual workers (24.5%) was also significant: this is a category of employees who do not have a fixed place of work and hence no stable source of income; thus, they could be easily classified as a vulnerable category. The category of casual workers more frequently included men, rural residents and individuals with a low level of education. In terms of ethnicity, Moldovans (26.8%) much more frequently worked as casual workers than Russians (6.5%) or Ukrainians (11.7%). Casual workers were more prevalent in agriculture and construction.

With regard to skill level, 46.0% of respondents worked as unqualified workers (75.9% of these being respondents with low levels of education) and 37.4% were employed as qualified workers. Some 3.6% had management functions: 2.9% medium-level management and 0.9% top management; and 8.3% of respondents worked as professionals, with 24.8% of these respondents having a high level of education. The data collected demonstrate a clear influence of educational level on work level: people with low levels of education were employed mainly as unskilled workers, while those with high levels of education worked mainly as skilled workers and professionals.

Income level

The survey data regarding respondents' monthly level of employment-related income shows that 52.2% of those who worked had a monthly income of less than EUR 100 (see Chart 4), of whom more than half earned less than EUR 50 a month, or had an income level less than the minimum living salary estimated by the National Bureau of Statistics in Moldova (MDL 800 per person in 2005).

Chart 4. Potential migrants' net monthly income



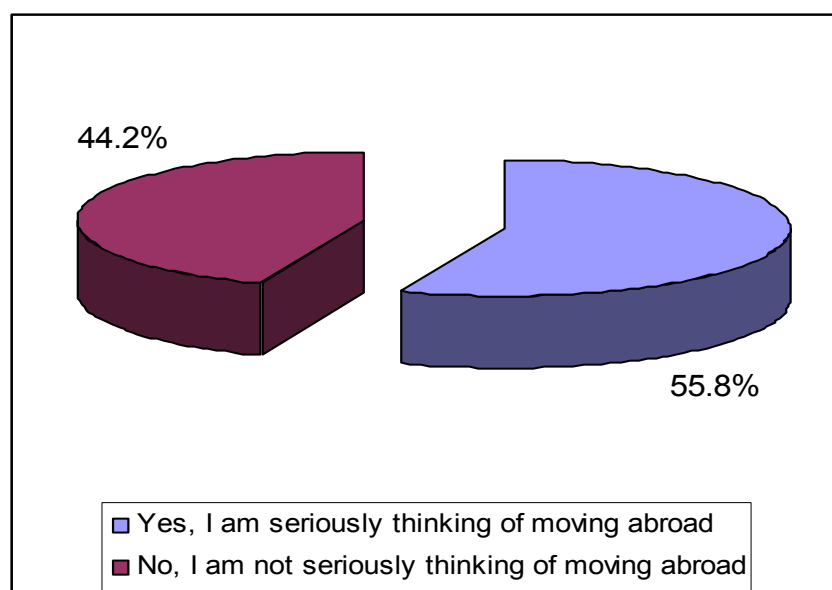
N=842 respondents who had ever worked

Some 11.4% of respondents earned more than EUR 100 a month. (The high non-response rate should be taken into account here, since some individuals with high incomes refused to respond.) Incomes higher than EUR 100 occurred mainly among men (17.5%), in urban areas (17.8%) and in the central zone of Moldova (15.2%). There was no significant difference in the level of income by the educational level of respondents.

3.2. Assessment of intentions to go abroad

Almost one in two respondents (44.2%) was currently seriously thinking of going abroad to live and work. Correlation of these results with respondents' sociodemographic indicators reveals that it was mainly men (51.6%) and persons aged between 18 and 24 years (52.8%) and 25–29 years (47.5%) who intended to go abroad. There were almost no differences when analysing the intention to go abroad from the point of view of residence, region, educational level and employment status. Additional cross-analysis reveals that the intention to migration was higher among people who did not have their own house (55.6%), compared with those owning a house (41.8%), as well as among people living in large households (with more family members).

Chart 5. Intention to emigrate



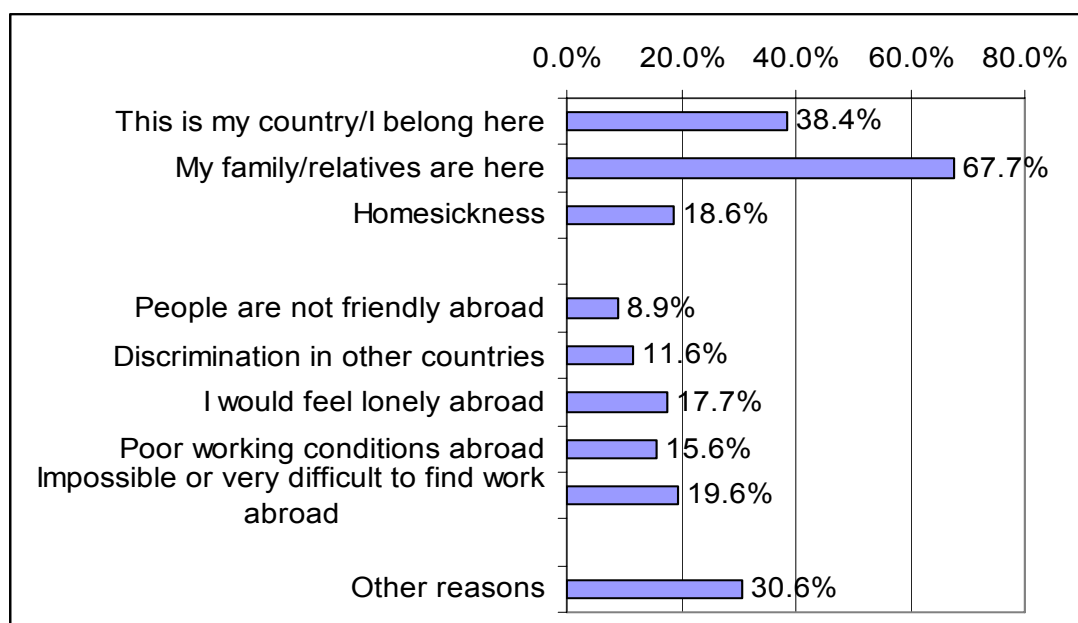
N= 1010 respondents

As Chart 5 shows, 55.8% of respondents were not intending to move abroad. The reasons stated by respondents for the lack of such an intention were diverse, depending on each respondent's personal, financial and family situation. Generally speaking, the reasons for staying in the country can be classified into two categories:

- reasons related to the country of origin;
- reasons related to the destination country.

The survey data show that reasons related to the country of origin were more important than the reasons related to the destination country when analysing the intention not to move abroad for work. From respondents' answers based on three possible options, it can be concluded that the decision not to move abroad was most often determined by the fact that the individual had relatives in the country (67.7%) and the fact that the individual had a strong connection to the country ('this is my country'/'I belong here' (38.4%) (see Chart 6).

Chart 6. Factors preventing respondents from leaving the country (three options)



N=564 respondents who currently had no intention to live and work abroad

The most significant reasons relating to the destination country for the intention to stay in the country of origin were the following:

- the impossibility or difficulty of finding a job abroad: 19.5%;
- the fear of feeling lonely/isolated abroad: 17.7%;
- poor working conditions: 15.6%;
- discrimination in other countries: 11.5%.

Respondents also mentioned other reasons, of which the most significant were:

- the presence of a small child: 2.3%;
- a wish to continue in education: 1.6%;
- a lack of money for emigration: 1.5%;
- poor health: 1.5%;
- low incomes abroad: 1.5%;
- the lack of emigration opportunities (1.1%).

When asked to choose the most important reason, the first two reasons invoked referred to the country of origin, namely: relatives in the country (35.9%) and 'this is my country'/'I belong here' (15.1%). People invoked the impossibility or difficulty of finding a job abroad (7.4%) less often than the first two reasons. The link with the family was more prominent among women (40.5%) than men (28.4%), while the patriotic spirit was mainly exhibited by men.

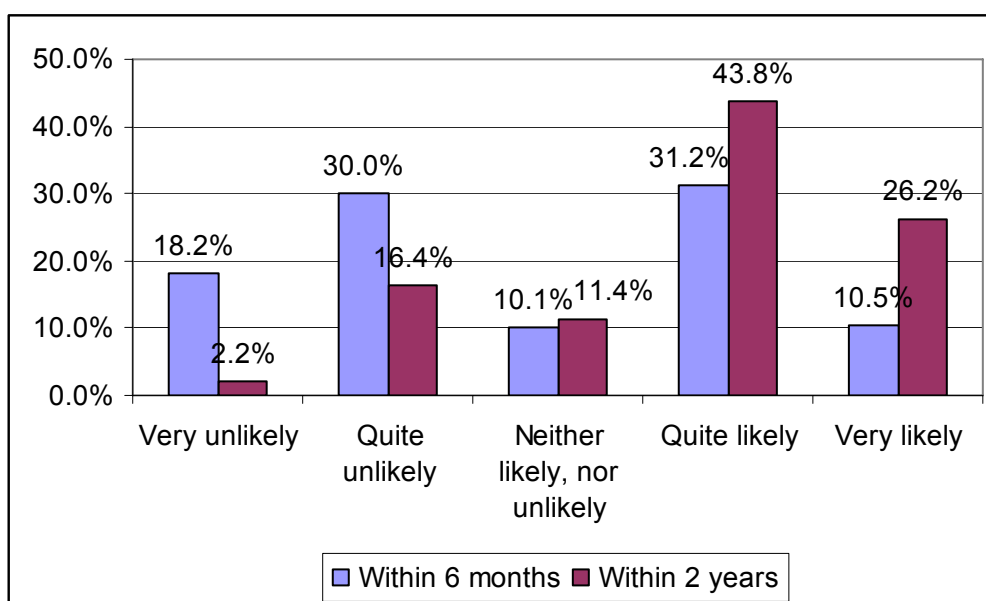
The answers of those who did not intend to go abroad (55.8%) do not offer a clear view on whether the experience gained while working abroad would offer them better employment opportunities when back in their home country. Thus, 32.8% of respondents considered that such accumulate experience

would be an advantage when looking for a job in their country of origin (especially people with medium and high levels of education), while 34.8% had a totally opposite view and 32.4% expressed general uncertainty in this regard.

The answers to the questions on the well-being of individuals who had worked abroad as compared to those who had stayed in their country of origin were totally different. The majority of respondents (65.2%) who did not intend to go abroad considered those who had come back from working abroad to be in a better or much better situation than those who had not been abroad. The perception of emigrants as having an improved level of well-being compared to those who had stayed in the country of origin was much more evident in rural areas (70.4%) as compared with urban localities (57.4%) as a result of the discrepancy between urban and rural incomes.

Of the total number of respondents who were seriously thinking of going abroad to live and work, 41.7% stated that they would probably leave Moldova during the six months following the survey (see Chart 7). The intention to leave within the next six months was more frequently expressed by men and individuals with incomplete secondary education. The proportion of people intending to go abroad during the following two years amounted to 70.0%.

Chart 7. Likelihood of moving abroad

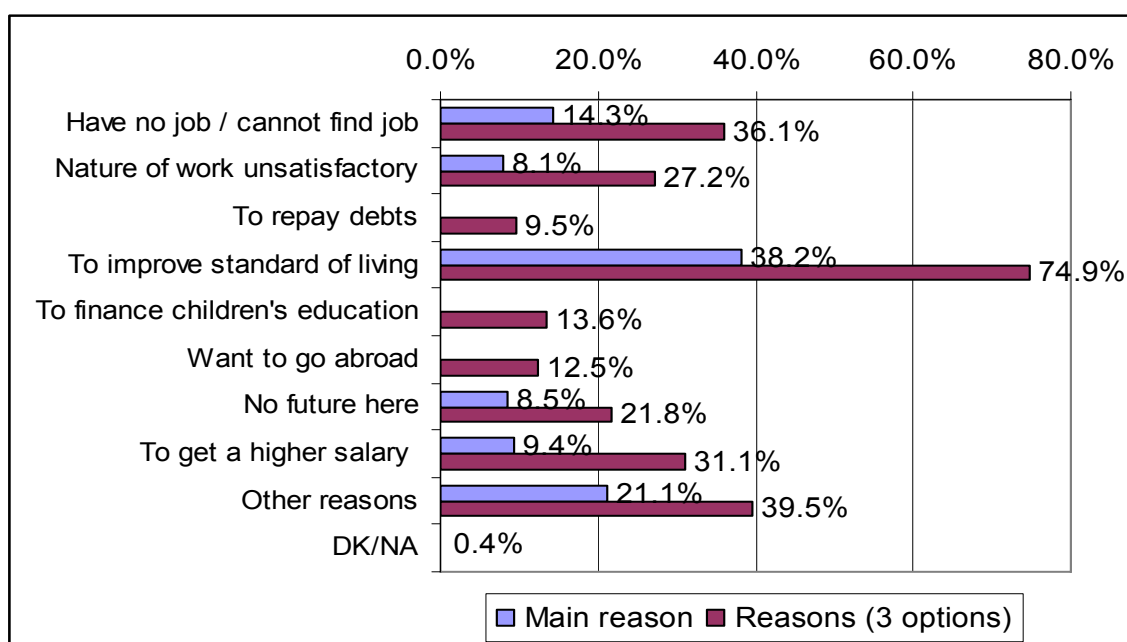


N= 446 respondents who were currently thinking seriously of living and working abroad

The intention to leave within the next six months or two years depended on the ability to finance migration, the knowledge of the language of the main destination country, the level of information about the destination country, and the availability of documents such as passport, visa and work contract for the destination country. On the other hand, the intention to migrate did not depend on an intention to attend training in Moldova to prepare an individual to live and work abroad, nor on awareness of any government scheme or of recruitment companies.

The factors influencing people to migrate abroad for work mainly related to unsatisfactory living and working conditions (especially employed respondents), as well as to the difficulty/impossibility of finding a job in the country of origin (especially people with low levels of education and those who were unemployed). In other words, the survey results demonstrate that migration was almost exclusively determined by unsatisfactory financial conditions (see Chart 8) that were insufficient to cover people's daily needs.

Chart 8. Reasons for moving abroad



N= 446 respondents who were currently thinking seriously of living and working abroad

The results confirm that the vast majority of respondents intending to go abroad for work (92.6%) were fully convinced that the move could improve their financial situation.

Chart 8 shows that around a fifth of those intending to leave abroad considered that 'there is no future in Moldova', thus revealing a lack of prospects for a normal life in the country. In this context, emigration was perceived by the population as the only viable solution, as people in Moldova do not have decent living conditions: they cannot find jobs (this situation being more acute for rural residents and those with incomplete secondary education), and even if they are employed, they are not satisfied with the working and payment conditions, which are not adequate for a decent standard of living. It is interesting to note that people with higher socioeconomic status more frequently stated that 'there is no future in Moldova'.

Based on this information, the people with an intention to migrate may be described in three ways:

- those who had a general intention to migrate, i.e. those answering that at the time of the survey they were seriously thinking of moving abroad to live and work;
- those who were very likely or quite likely to leave Moldova within the two years following the time of the survey;
- those who were very likely or quite likely to leave Moldova within the six months following the time of the survey.

The first group, which includes the second and third groups, can truly be considered as 'potential migrants'. This group accounts for 44.2% of the total sample of people initially defined as potential migrants because of their sociodemographic characteristics, particularly their age (18–40 years). As for the future prospects (for the next two years), the percentage of people with an intention to migrate reaches 30.9% of the total sample. However, the percentage of people with more or less concrete and immediate intentions for migration varies. Thus, only 18.4% of whole sample of respondents expressed a really serious intention to migrate in the six months following the time of the survey. But even in this case the potential migration flow would be quite high. In terms of real figures, it amounts to between 181,524 and 216,886 people with a serious intention to leave Moldova during the six months following the time of the survey.

Subsequent analysis within this chapter will refer mainly to the first category of people named 'potential migrants', i.e. the 44.2% of people who at the time of the survey were seriously thinking of moving abroad to live and work, and where possible will compare their characteristics with those of

other 18–40-year-old respondents (55.8%) who were not seriously thinking of moving abroad at the time of the survey.

3.3. Sociodemographic and educational characteristics of potential migrants

Analysis of the sociodemographic profile of potential migrants highlights the following characteristics that influence the intention to migrate.

- gender: 51.6% of men said they intended to migrate, compared to just 38.2% of women. Of these, 39.1% of men said they would likely go in the next two years, and 24.9% in the next six months, compared to 24.3% and 13.2% respectively for women.
- age: 52.8% of 18–24 year olds and 47.5% of 25–29 year olds intended to migrate, compared to 35% of those aged 30+.

Note: These findings/trends also correspond with existing official statistics on the gender and age characteristics of migrants (presented in the introduction to this report).

- family situation: Those without children were more likely to say they intended to migrate (50.2%) than those with children (40%). Those without children were also more likely to have short-term plans to move. This is consistent with migration being more prevalent among young men.
- current educational level: 47.9% of those who had not completed secondary education (low level of education) intended to migrate, compared to just 43.7% of those who had completed secondary level but not university (middle level of education), and 38.6% of those who had completed university education (high level of education). This trend was the same in the case of plans for the next six months.
- future education plans: Those intending to study further were more likely to plan to migrate (51.3%) than those who did not intend to study further (41.6%). The people who were more likely to migrate were those who were intending to study services (62.5%), social sciences, business and law (53.9%), and engineering, manufacturing or construction (53.7%). This is consistent with at least some of the migration being undertaken in order to complete education. However, educational plans were not associated with the likelihood of moving soon.

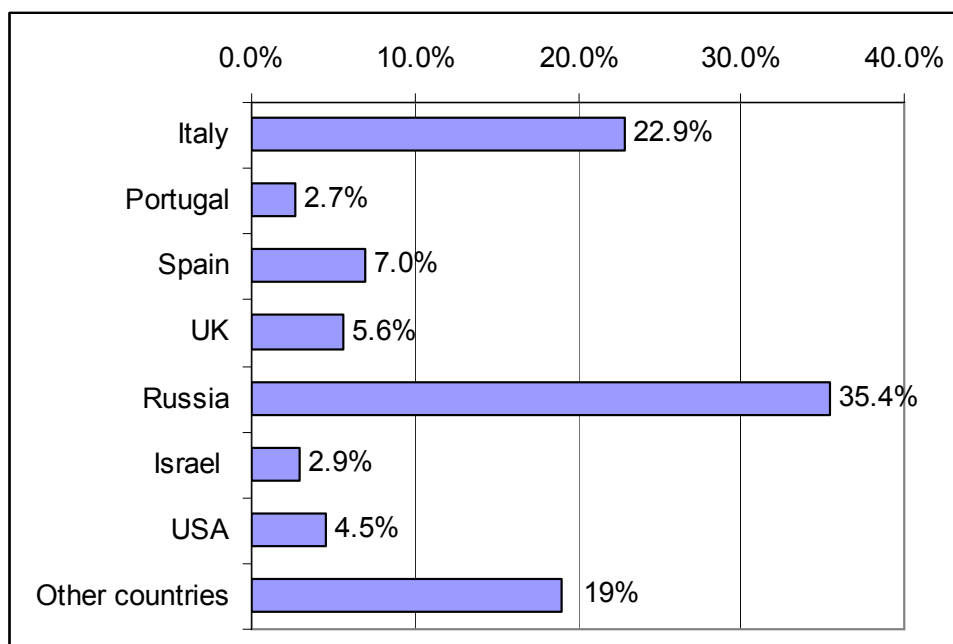
On the other hand, the following factors are less important.

- educational field: The pattern of fields already studied, and the fields of future study, were not significantly different for those planning to migrate and those not planning to do so.
- marital situation: The difference between intention to migrate of married and unmarried people was not significant (6.0%), and decreased to 2.0% in terms of the earliest future migration intentions.
- language: There was no clear relationship between mother tongue and intention to migrate. However, English speakers were more likely to intend to migrate (53.9% of English speakers intended to migrate), whereas French speakers were less likely (only 39.0% of French speakers).
- work: Those not currently working were only slightly more likely to have an intention to migrate overall (46.0%), and no more likely at all to be planning a move soon. Similarly, unskilled workers were slightly more likely to have an intention to migrate than skilled/professional/management workers, but no more likely to intend to move soon. As for work type, an intention to move abroad during the next six months was more evident for casual workers (24.3%) than for other work type categories.

3.4. Expectations of potential migrants

Looking at the main destination countries to which potential migrants intended to move, almost 58% of respondents had an intention to move to either Russia (35.4%) or Italy (22.9%) (see Chart 9). It is interesting to note that according to the survey results, only 1.5% of the potential migrants indicated Romania as a destination country. One possible explanation is that Romanian labour market conditions are not attractive enough for Moldovans, in spite of a common language, but this does not exclude the possibility of using Romania as a transit country.

Chart 9. Destination countries for migrants from Moldova



N= 446 respondents who were currently thinking seriously of living and working abroad

In terms of the sociodemographic categories of respondents, it can be stated that Russia was favoured by:

- men (40.9%) as compared to women (29.4%); women prefer Italy (31.8%, compared to 14.7% of men);
- Moldovan citizens of Russian and Ukrainian ethnic origin; ethnic Moldovan/Romanians share their preferences between Russia and Italy;
- married people (40.5%) compared to unmarried (28.6%);
- people with low levels of education (45.3%) compared to those with medium levels (31.5%) and high levels (28.8%);
- rural residents (38.8%) compared with urban (30.3%);
- people living in the northern (47.9%) and southern (39.6%) parts of the country as compared with those in the central part (27.1%);
- people from low (40.7%) and middle (37.6%) socioeconomic levels, as compared with those from high levels (17.7%).

A comparison of intentions to migrate to EU countries reveals that the EU as a whole is a very important destination for Moldovan potential migrants, having a cumulative total that is almost the

same percentage as that of all other countries put together. Thus, of the sub-sample of potential migrants, 49.1% (or 21.7% of the whole sample) intended to migrate to EU countries, while 50.9% (or 22.5% of the whole sample) planned to move to other countries.

As for the intention to migrate by destination country, the proportion of potential migrants seriously thinking of migrating in the next six months was higher for other countries than for EU ones: 51.5% of people intending to migrate elsewhere said they were quite likely or very likely to migrate in the six months following the date of survey, compared with 31.5% of those intending to migrate to the EU.

The sociodemographic profile of potential migrants by destination (EU and elsewhere) was as follows.

- Young people (18–29 years) were more likely to plan to move to the EU than older people (30–40 years) – on average, 51.0% compared to 44.0%.
- Women were more likely than men to plan to migrate to the EU (55.1% and 43.5% respectively).
- Unmarried individuals were more likely to migrate to the EU (52.9%) than those who are married (46.3%).
- Those without children were more likely to plan to go to the EU (54.1%) than those with children (44.8%).
- Education also influenced the destination of migration, with people with middle and high levels of education preferring EU countries (on average 52.0%), compared to those with low levels of education (40.3%).
- Those intending to study further were more likely to plan to go to the EU (55.9%) than those not intending to study further (46.1%).
- There was also a regional influence on the migration destination, with those living in the central part of the country more likely to plan to move to the EU (59.4%) than people living in northern (41.3%) and southern areas (34.4%).
- First language did make a difference: Moldovan/Romanian mother-tongue speakers were more likely to intend to move to the EU (25.3%) than Russian mother-tongue speakers (just 11.1% – most Russians planned to move to Russia).
- Whether or not an individual was working did not appear to influence plans to move to the EU; nor did work level (professional, skilled, unskilled).

The majority of respondents intending to move abroad (65.5%) thought that it was very or quite likely that they would move to the main country of destination to live and work. One in seven respondents (14.1%) was not sure about his/her departure, and one in five respondents (19.7%) considered departure for the desired country to be not at all or less likely.

Special attention should be given to the reasons for choosing the destination country. The most important ones were as follows:

- the opportunity to work and earn money: 39.2%;
- the chance to gather/save money: 20.0%;
- the presence of friends/relatives in the destination country: 14.3%.

The correlated analysis shows that men were more influenced by the opportunity to work and earn money, and women by the presence of friends/relatives in the destination country.

Half of those wishing to emigrate (51.8%) were unable to finance their move abroad. The majority of these were women (60.7%), young people aged 18–24 years (57.6%), rural residents (55.6%) and unemployed individuals (57.5%). When analysing by destination country, it should be noted that the likelihood of having financial resources for migration was higher for neighbouring countries such as Russia (66.5%), Ukraine (55.6%), Turkey (50.0%) and Poland (50.0%).

A large majority of respondents (80.2%) were not aware of any state programmes or companies that help people to find work abroad. On average, one in ten respondents (9.9%) was aware of private employment companies, and only 6.1% had some information on state programmes in the relevant field. Probably as a result of their limited access to information, rural residents were still less well informed than urban ones. Those who were most well informed about private employment companies and state programmes were young people aged 18–24 years (19.2%), a fact explained by their high level of access to different information sources, including the Internet. In terms of educational levels, the higher incidence of awareness was seen among people with secondary general and higher education.

Although they were aware of such programmes, around a quarter of respondents (27.3%) did not think they would participate in them or use the services offered by private employment companies. The main reasons for potential migrants not to apply to such programmes would be the high cost of the services, the fact that they are considered corrupt, and the lack of employment opportunities that appeal to the potential migrants. Nevertheless, the limited scope of this survey does not allow generalisation on this point.

With regard to the field of activity and skill level expected by respondents while abroad, the results are as follows.

- The main fields of activity expected in destination countries were construction (31.8%) (mainly chosen by men) and household services (16.2%) (mainly chosen by women), while 16.7% of respondents did not know the field in which they were going to work. By destination country, Russia was mainly mentioned in relation to construction and trade, and Italy for domestic and care services.
- With regard to work skill level, half of respondents expected to work as unskilled workers and 30.0% as skilled, while 16.5% of those interviewed did not know what kind of work they would do. Cross-analysis by current work level reveals that expectation for work level abroad did not correlate with current work level. It should be noted that around 40–50% of respondents currently working as skilled workers or at middle or high management levels expected to work abroad as unskilled workers.

In terms of respondents' skills in the language of the destination country, 55.6% of those who intended to migrate spoke it fluently or fairly well, while 35.3% had a fairly low level of skill or did not speak it at all (19.0% answered 'neither well nor badly'). Of course, language knowledge was high (over 90%) for such countries as Russia, Ukraine and Romania.

The most important information sources about the main destination country were family/friends in the destination country (31.3%) and previous own experience in the destination country (29.1%). A large number of respondents who were seriously thinking about moving abroad (68.2%) planned to enrich their knowledge about the destination country mainly with the help of family/friends in the destination country or country of origin, and through TV or radio. Generally, people with secondary general education and higher education would also access such sources as the Internet and printed media more often. In other words, these categories of respondents would try to vary their sources of information.

In addition to seeking information about the destination country, one in five respondents (21.1%) said they would attend training courses in Moldova to prepare for living and working abroad. Young people aged 18–24 years, females, urban residents and those from high socioeconomic groups said they would welcome such special training. The level of education of potential migrants also affects the level of interest in attending such courses: twice as many potential migrants with high (28.8%) and middle (24.2%) levels of education planned to attend some training before leaving Moldova than those with low levels of education (12.2%). Additional cross-analysis revealed that people who wished to migrate to the EU were more likely to be interested in attending pre-departure training than those planning to migrate elsewhere (26.5% and 15.9% respectively).

The purpose of attending these courses was almost exclusively to learn the language of the destination country (77.7% of those who said they would attend pre-departure training), rather than for vocational or cultural orientation. It is important to note that language training was mentioned more often by those intending to migrate to EU countries (86.2%) than those planning to move to other countries (63.9%).

It can be concluded from the survey that a significant proportion of respondents were not aware of the need to obtain visas, medical insurance, work contracts and even international passports in order to move to such countries as Italy, Germany, France and Portugal. The level of information is especially low with regard to medical insurance and work contracts. In terms of available documents, international passports were at the top of the list for most respondents intending to emigrate: 78.9% already had an international passport. The situation was the complete opposite for visas and work contracts: only 5.6% of potential migrants had work contracts and 5.4% visas, as these documents are the most difficult ones to obtain.

Some 34.9% of respondents thought they would have difficulties obtaining the documents they did not yet have but which they would required to enable them to move abroad, especially for such destination countries as Norway, Cyprus, France, Ireland, Canada, the UK and Portugal. Another 28.4% considered that they would not have any difficulties, while 36.7% did not actually know whether or not they would have any difficulties in obtaining the necessary documents.

In terms of the length of time respondents planned to spend abroad, only 7.0% who were intending to migrate planned to stay abroad permanently, and these were mainly young people aged 18–24 years. Most people planned to stay abroad for a short period – up to two years (67.3%). Cross-analysis by destination country reveals that respondents planned to spend a shorter period in neighbouring countries (such as Russia, Ukraine and Romania) than in EU countries, while in the case of Italy, for example, almost half of potential migrants planned to spend up to two years and a quarter from three to five years.

Overall, around a third of potential migrants said they intended to go for less than a year, and another third for one to two years. However, those planning to migrate to the EU were much less likely to plan to go for less than a year, whereas over half of those planning to migrate elsewhere said they would go for less than a year (see Table 1).

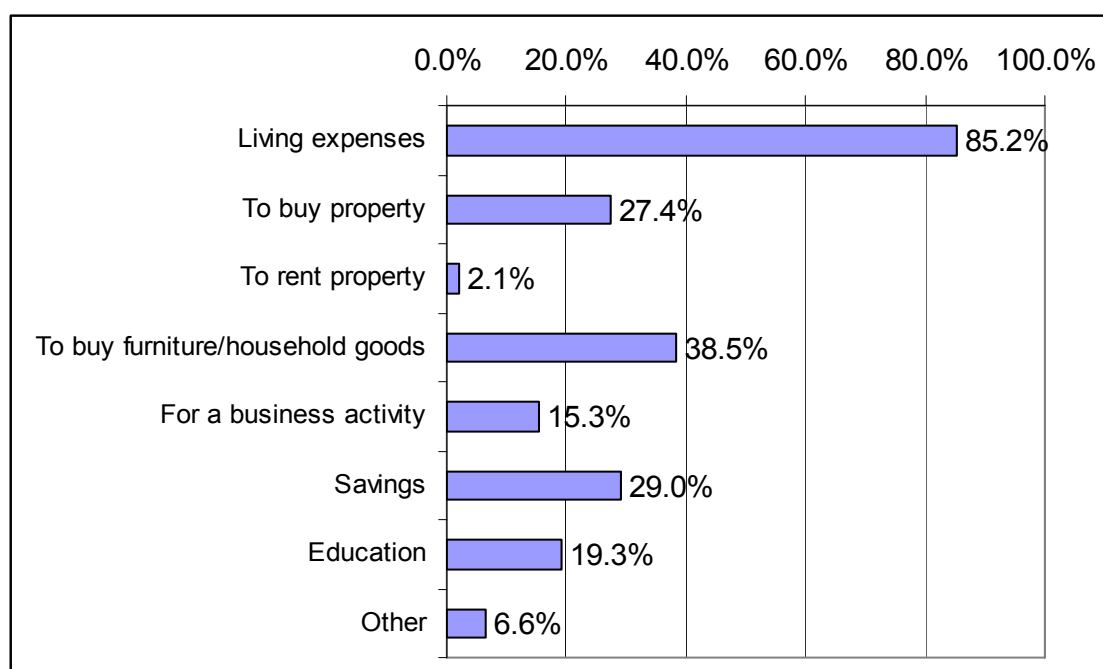
Table 1: Length of planned stay by destination

Likely length of stay	EU	Elsewhere	Total
Less than 1 year	33 (15.1%)	121 (53.3%)	154 (34.5%)
1–2 years	98 (44.7%)	48 (21.1%)	146 (32.7%)
3–5 years	67 (30.6%)	30 (13.2%)	97 (21.7%)
Over 5 years	9 (4.1%)	9 (4.0%)	18 (4.0%)
Forever	12 (5.5%)	19 (8.4%)	31 (7.0%)
Total	219 (100.0%)	227 (100.0%)	446 (100.0%)

Potential migrants with low levels of education were the most likely to be planning to go abroad for no more than two years (78.4%), whereas those who had completed university education were the least likely to be planning to go abroad for such a short period (52.5%). At the same time, skilled workers were more likely (27.7%) than unskilled workers (18.4%) to plan to go abroad for a longer period (three to five years), which is consistent with the impact of education on the length of stay abroad.

Of respondents who intended to leave, 86.5% planned to send money from abroad. The areas of expenditure in which remitted money was to be spent (up to three options) were living expenses (85.2%), buying furniture/household goods (38.5%), savings (29%) and buying a property (27.4%)

Chart 10. Purpose of money to be earned abroad (three options)



N= 379 respondents who were currently thinking seriously of working and living abroad and who planned to send money home

Only 15.1% of respondents intending to emigrate planned to use the money earned abroad to start up a business, these being mainly respondents with higher socioeconomic status. More rural residents (43.7%) were interested in using the money earned to buy durable goods than those from urban areas (28.5%).

Cross-analysis by perceived conditions of respondents' financial situation shows that sending remittances from abroad for living expenses was common for all types of household, both for those with sufficient income to cover basic needs and for those with insufficient income. Families with inadequate financial situations tended more often to spend remittances on the purchase of households goods and property.

In this context it should be mentioned that the vast majority of respondents intending to emigrate (93.6%) believed that when they returned home they would have a better or even much better situation than their current one; 4.0% did not think the situation would change, and 0.4% expected their situation to get worse.

Apart from the financial benefits, more than half of the respondents (54.5%) considered that the experience accumulated abroad would help them to find better employment opportunities when they return to their country of origin (this being mentioned more often by respondents with higher levels of education). One in six respondents (16.1%) thought that experience abroad would be useful for employment in Moldova, while almost a third of respondents (29.4%) gave no definite answer.

An optimistic view of the usefulness of experience gained abroad was more prevalent for young respondents aged 18–24 years and respondents with higher education. The lack of trust in the value of experience from abroad stems from the fact that in the majority of cases, people intending to emigrate expected to be employed in totally different fields of activity (mostly unskilled) from that of their actual qualifications.

4. RETURNING MIGRANTS

4.1. Sociodemographic and educational characteristics of returning migrants

Age and gender

The survey sample covered 1,010 migrants who had returned to the country of origin, 36.5% of whom were women. The distribution of respondents by age is:

- 18–24 years: 20.2%;
- 25–29 years: 16.3%;
- 30–40 years: 31.7%;
- 41 years and over: 31.8%.

Civil status and family composition

The majority of respondents (70.8%) were married or cohabiting; 22.0% were single and 7.2% were either divorced or widowed. The majority of respondents (70.2%) had children.

Nationality

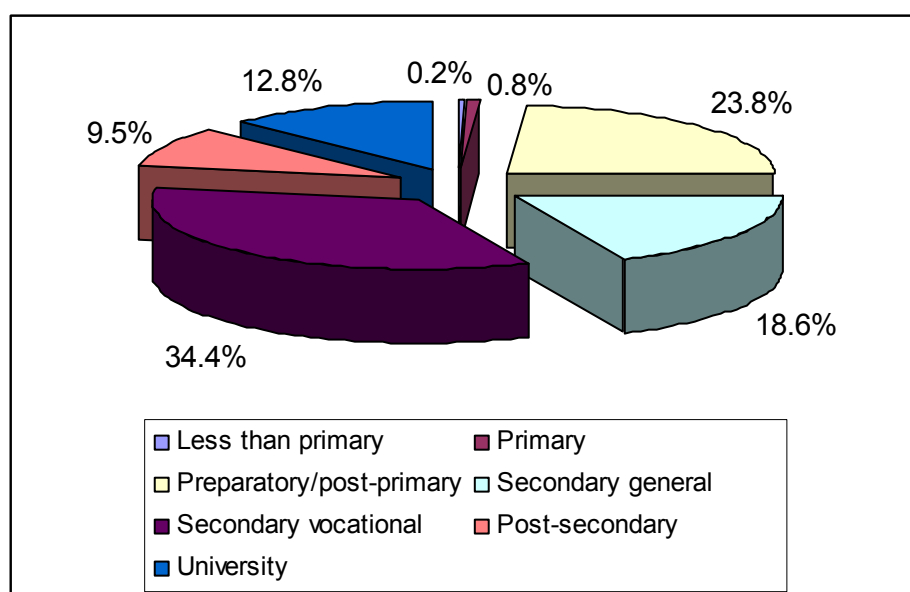
The majority of respondents (83.6%) were Moldovans. The main language of communication within families was Romanian/Moldovan; 14.2% spoke Russian, 4.5% Ukrainian and 3.8% Gagauzian.

As well as their mother tongue, the majority of respondents also spoke Russian (83.6%); 12.9% spoke French, 11.6% Italian and 10.1% English. The survey also shows a higher incidence of people with high and medium levels of education speaking international languages such as English and French. The share of returning migrants who had not mastered any language other than their native tongue is three times lower than the same share set for potential migrants.

Level of education

A third of respondents had secondary vocational education (34.3%), 18.6% had completed secondary education (11 grades, lyceum), 12.8% had higher education and 9.5% were college graduates (post-secondary, non-university); 23.8% of returning migrants had incomplete secondary education (nine grades), and 1.0% had finished only four grades or less.

Chart 11. Level of education of return migrants



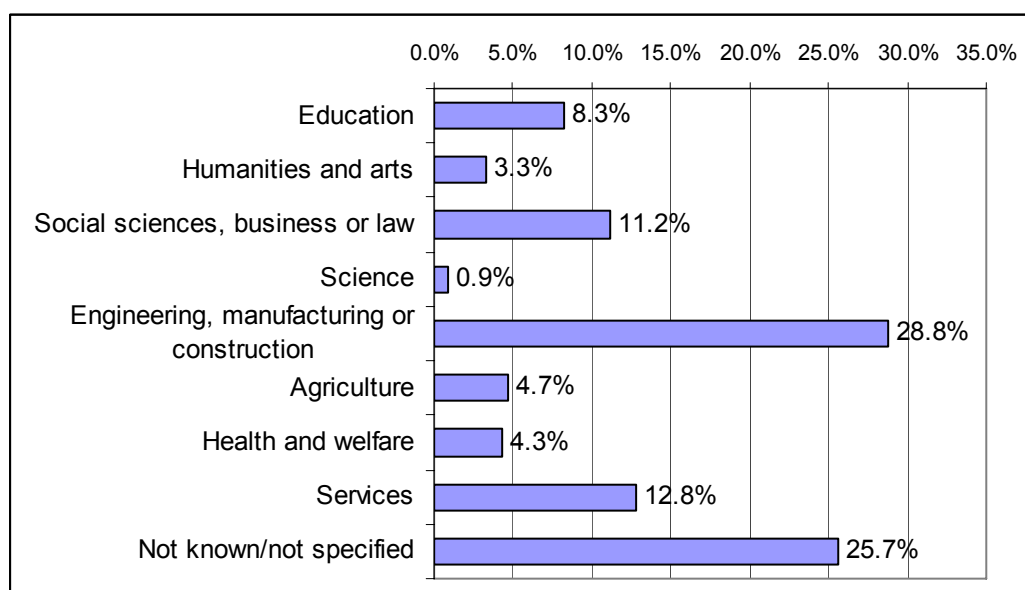
N= 1010 respondents

Analysis by gender reveals that there were more women with a high level of education (post-secondary or university) than there were men (28.5% and 18.7% respectively), while there were more men with a low level of education (preparatory or less) than women (26.8% and 21.1% respectively).

Among those who had completed secondary education or higher, the returning migrant population mainly studied the following fields of education: engineering, industry and construction (28.8% of respondents with complete secondary education or higher), services (12.8%), social sciences, economics and law (11.1%) and education (8.3%). Other fields of education had a less significant share (see Chart 12).

Men were more oriented towards studying engineering, industry and construction (34.5%) and services (19.2%), while women also gave priority to engineering, industry and construction (19.6%) and education (16.2%), social sciences, economics and law (12.5%), and health and well-being (10.0%). Residents in urban areas chose social sciences, economics and law more frequently (15.8%) than rural residents (8.4%); the opposite applies for services, which was a field chosen by 15.6% of rural residents as compared to 8.1% of respondents from urban areas. At the same time, people with high levels of education were more oriented towards social sciences, business or law, education, and humanities and art, and those with medium levels of education to engineering, manufacturing or construction and services.

Chart 12. Fields of education of returning migrants



N=760 respondents who had completed at least secondary general school

Choosing the field of education was influenced by personal interest (65.0%), and less by the possibility of obtaining a job (14.1%). Only 0.4% selected the field of education in order to be able to move abroad. The majority of returning migrants (83.2%) thought that education helps people to improve their living standards, and 84.6% considered investment in education to be important.

Despite the importance attributed to investment in education, migrants did not give sufficient attention to training courses that would help them to adapt easily to the destination country. In this context, 95.0% of returning migrants did not attend any training courses before going abroad. Only 4.0% had taken foreign language courses, especially those who had stayed in Western countries.

4.2. Migration history

The survey reveals that most respondents stayed abroad for a short period of time: 41.5% stayed for up to one year and 70.0% for up to two years. The correlated analysis indicates that the duration of stay was shorter in CIS countries than in Western countries.

The reasons most often mentioned by migrants for moving abroad for work were the following:

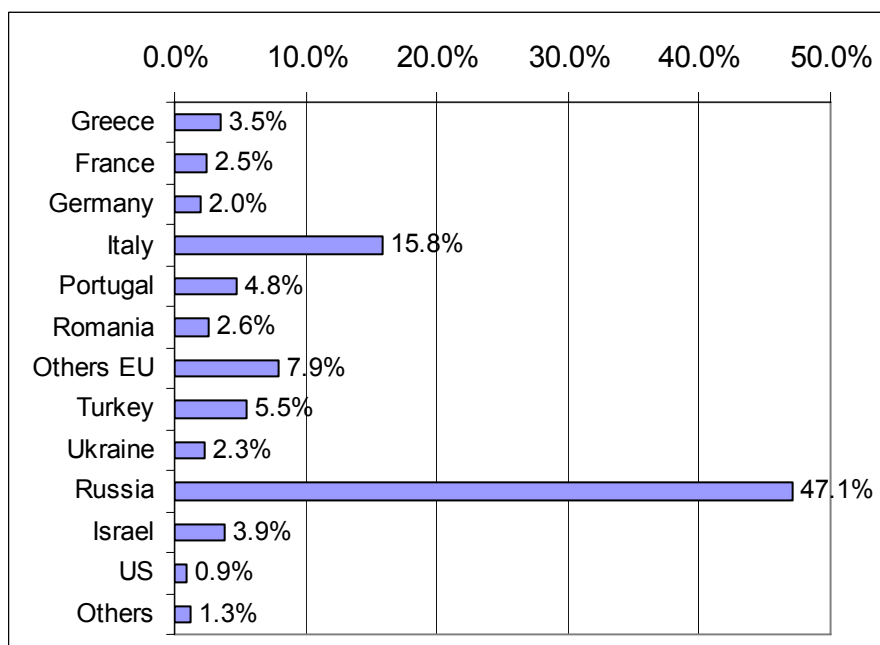
- unsatisfactory living standards: 75.7%;
- unsatisfactory working conditions: 26.3%;
- the difficulty/impossibility of getting a job within their country of origin: 57.6%.

This last factor was especially relevant for returnees with a low level of education. The factors that prompted returnees to move abroad were actually the same as the ones for the potential migrants who were intending to move abroad. In the majority of cases (74.7%), the decision to move abroad was taken by the individuals themselves, while only 2.3% of such decisions were completely led by other people.

The majority of respondents (93.4%) stayed within one country and 6.6% in several countries, mainly in the EU. The main first destination countries for Moldovan returnees were Russia (47.1%) and Italy (15.8%) (see Chart 13). With regard to the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents, Russia and Portugal were the most favoured destinations for men, while women preferred Russia, Italy and Turkey. People with incomplete secondary education (45.3%) preferred to go to Russia. Moreover, the analysis of data reveals a clear relationship between education and the selection of

destination country. Thus, 60.5% of returned migrants with a high level of education lived and worked in an EU country, as compared to 38.5% of migrants with middle and 28.4% with low level of education. In the case of Romania, 2.6% of respondents went there as a first destination, and the same percentage of people declared Romania to be their main destination.

Chart 13. First destination countries for returning migrants from Moldova



N= 1010 respondents

Returning migrants cited four main factors that influenced the selection of their destination country:

- opportunity to work and earn money: 74.6%;
- opportunity to save up: 52.3%;
- presence of friends/relatives: 34.7%;
- knowledge of the language of the destination country: 33.9%;
- ease of obtaining an entry permit (for CIS countries only): 17.2%.

In general such reasons as the need to save money and the presence of relatives in these countries were more important in the selection of an EU country than they were in the case of other destination countries.

In the majority of cases (55.9%, or 83.7% of those who were married when they migrated), the migrants interviewed had gone abroad without their spouse because of financial constraints. On the other hand, it appears that the presence of a spouse favoured to a certain extent the level of social inclusion in the destination country. Thus, 64.5% of migrants who moved abroad with a spouse mentioned very frequent/frequent contacts with local inhabitants, compared with 58.9% of respondents who migrated alone. At the same time, social inclusion is also influenced by education, with migrants who had higher levels of education benefiting more often from contacts with local people in the destination countries.

While abroad, 94.9% of respondents did not attend any training courses. It was mainly migrants to EU countries who benefited from training courses abroad, the majority attending some language courses or other training offered in the workplace. It is important to emphasise that more people with a high level of education undertook training abroad (twice as many as those with medium levels of education and three times as many as those with low levels of education).

The migrants interviewed mainly worked initially in construction (46.8%) and domestic services (19.4%) in their first destination countries. Less significant proportions of migrants worked in trade (7.8%), agriculture (5.5%), industry (4.3%), transport (3.4%) and catering (3.0%). Men worked mainly in construction, and women within trade and household services. A third of respondents did not have a stable job, being casual workers. Around two-thirds of migrants (especially women) had undertaken unqualified work. It is also important to mention that two-thirds of migrants with higher education were employed as unqualified workers. Similarly, unqualified activities were performed more often by migrants in EU countries (71.9%) than those in other countries (61.7%). A more detailed analysis reveals that in Russia only 57.8% of migrants performed unqualified work compared to 75% of those in Italy (see Table 2 below). The difference can be explained by the prevalence of domestic service, which is the main activity carried out by Moldovan migrants in the European countries. This finding is consistent with 75.3% of females mentioning unskilled work services, compared to 61.6% of males.

Table 2: Relationship between destination country and the first job held abroad

		First work level abroad											
		Professional		Middle management		Skilled worker		Unskilled worker		Don't know		No answer/not applicable	
First destination country	EU	5	1.3%	4	1.0%	92	23.5%	282	71.9%	5	1.3%	4	1.0%
	Other	14	2.3%			206	33.3%	381	61.7%	7	1.1%	10	1.6%
First destination country	Italy			2	1.25%	32	20.0%	120	75.0%	2	1.25%	4	2.5%
	Russia	11	2.3%			174	36.3%	277	57.8%	7	1.5%	10	2.1%
	EU (Other)	5	2.2%	1	0.4%	60	26.0%	162	70.1%	3	1.3%		
	Other	3	2.2%			32	23.0%	104	74.8%				

It is rather difficult to gain employment abroad, a fact confirmed by the 38.1% of returning migrants who had experienced situations in which they could not find a job. This was rather more frequent in the case of respondents emigrating to EU countries (50.3%) than those going elsewhere (30.4%). Some 42.9% of such migrants had looked for work for one month or less, while one in four had looked for 2 months.

Respondents confirmed that jobs abroad have high workloads: 76% of returning migrants had worked over 40 hours per week. Almost 30% of them had worked more than 60 hours per week. The number of women (18.2%) working more than 80 hours per week (double the standard working week) was twice the number of men (7.5%) working the same number of hours. This kind of double working week was mainly registered within the household services field. In terms of destination country, it was revealed that in general the working schedule is less intensive in countries outside the EU.

Almost all respondents (97.6%) maintained the link with their country of origin while they were abroad. The majority of respondents (81.3%) sent money home, especially those from rural areas (84.0%) and those who were married (86.4%). Some 48.5% sent money home at least once a month, while 45.9% sent money at least once a year. Again, respondents from rural areas and those who were married sent money home more frequently and on a regular basis.

In the majority of cases, the money sent from abroad was used for daily living expenses (95.1%) and buying furniture/household goods (33.4%). One in two migrants sent money from abroad in order to save up or to cover children's education costs, while 15.5% of migrants used the money to buy property (house or flat). Only 2.9% of migrants stated that the money from abroad was invested in a business, which demonstrates once again that remittances from abroad contributed only to the migrant's family and the country's maintenance and not to the country's economic development.

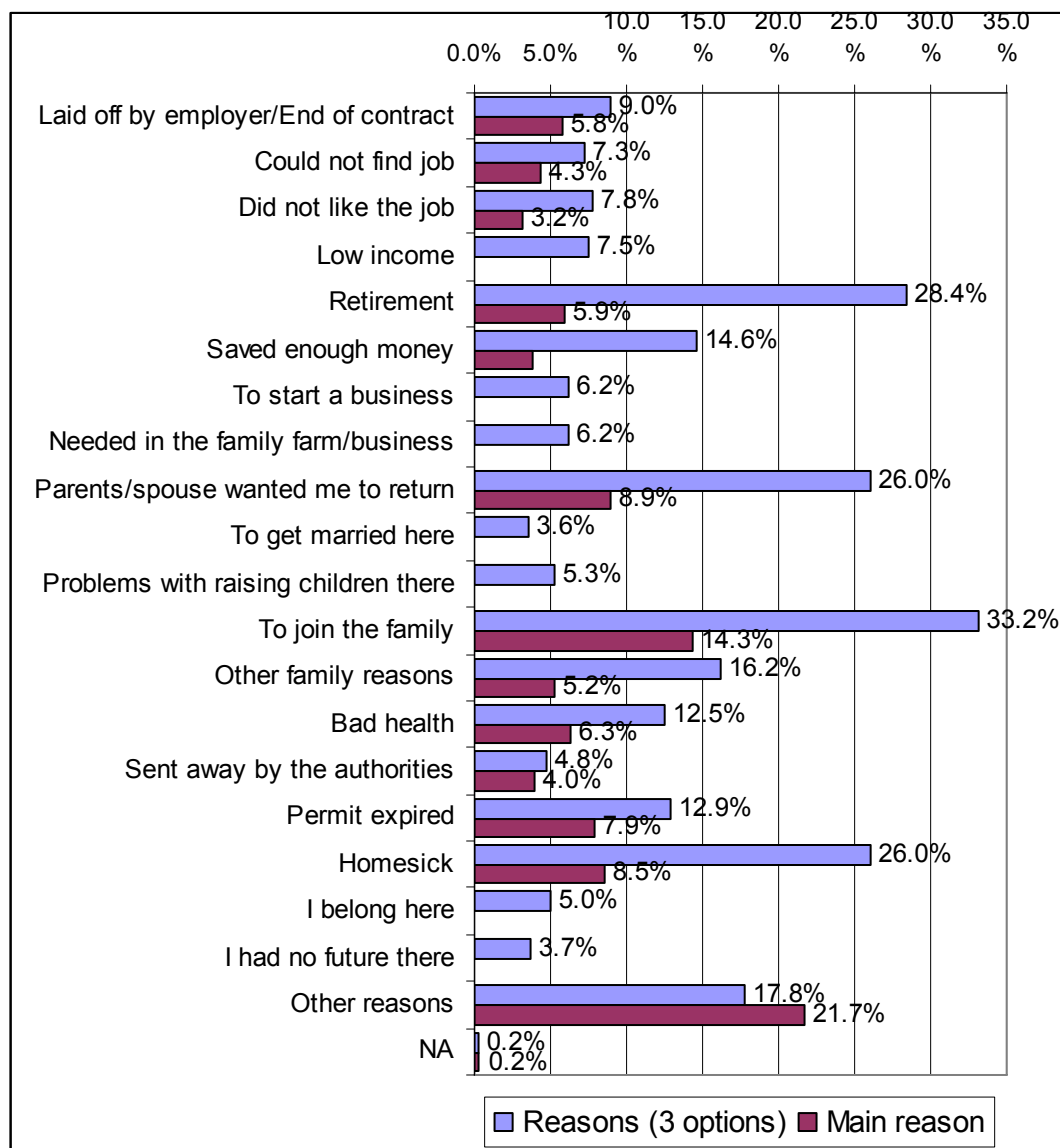
4.3. Experiences of returning migrants

The responses most frequently show that migrants were determined to come back in order to join their family and parents in their country of origin: 33.2% of migrants confirmed that their return was influenced by the desire to join their family, and this occurred more for respondents with high and

medium levels of education. Another important factor that encouraged migrants to come back to their country of origin was the feeling of loneliness while in the destination country (28.4%) (see Chart 14).

A total of 14.6% of returning migrants gave as a reason for their return the fact that they had earned sufficient money; 12.5% cited their own poor health (especially people over the age of 40); while 12.9% returned home because their residence permit had expired. Returning migrants with a low level of education were determined to come back more often than those with a high level of education.

Chart 14. Reasons for return to the country of origin

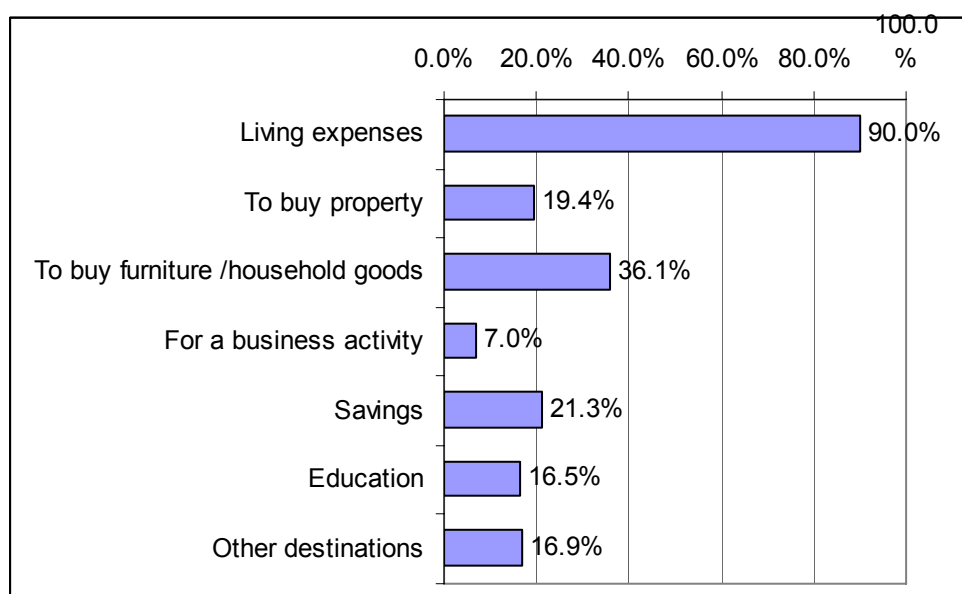


N=1010 respondents

On arrival in the country of origin, 94.8% of respondents knew of no official programme or scheme that would support people returning home from abroad. Among those migrants who were aware of official schemes for return to the country of origin, 26.4% benefited from these schemes, having mentioned specifically the services of consulates and embassies of Moldova in destination countries.

On their return to the country of origin, most respondents (76.5%) brought along money that they had earned from their work abroad. The money they had saved up was spent mostly on the everyday needs of the household (90.0%) and the purchase of long-term household commodities (36.1%). Use of remittances for business purpose was quite insignificant (only 7.0%), though there was a clear influence of destination on the use of remittances. Thus, four times as many EU migrants (12.6%) invested money in businesses as non-EU migrants (3.1%).

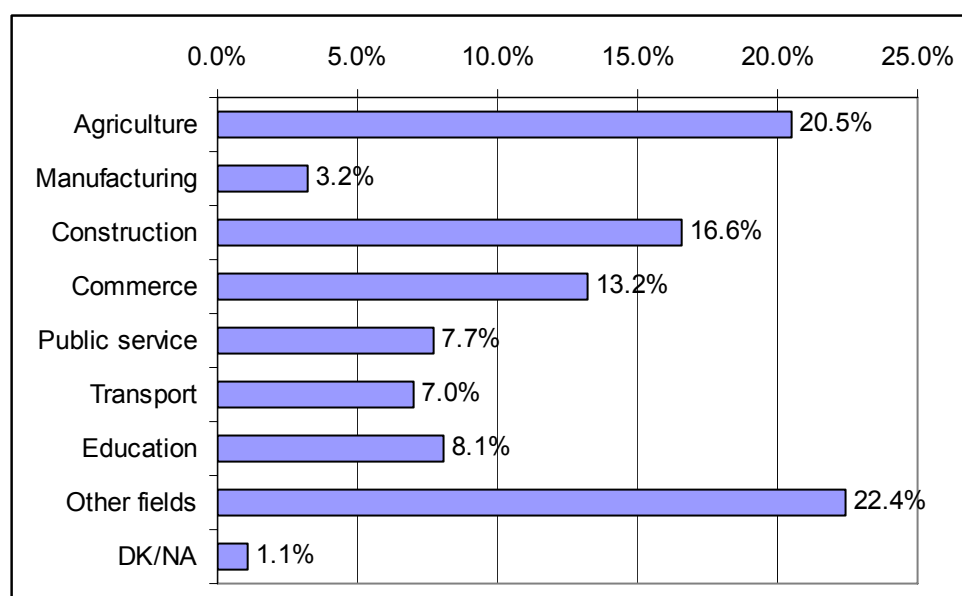
Chart 15. Use of the money earned abroad (three options)



N= 773 respondents who had returned from abroad with money/savings

On their return to Moldova, 46.4% of the migrants found employment, with a higher rate for those aged over 30 and those with a university education. Returning migrants were employed primarily in agriculture (20.5%), construction (16.6%) and trade (13.2%). Less significant proportions were employed in education (8.1%), public services (such as the supply of water, gas and electricity) (7.7%) and transportation (7.0%) (see Chart 16).

Chart 16. Fields of employment of returning migrants



N= 469 respondents who had worked on their return to Moldova

The analysis of migrants' employment situation on their return in terms of their destination (EU/non-EU countries) reveals that employment was not influenced by destination: almost the same proportion of returning migrants gained employment after returning to their country of origin (47.7% and 45.6% respectively). Similarly, the influence of destination on the period necessary to gain employment was not strong. Thus, 36.2% of non-EU migrants gained employment immediately on their return, compared with 29.9% of EU migrants. The difference is not significant and can be explained by the

fact that non-EU migrants, particularly those from CIS countries (mainly Russia), more often gained employment as casual workers (20.2% against 13.4% for EU migrants) and unskilled workers (43.3% against 35.8% for EU migrants). As for type of workplace, more non-EU migrants gained employment in agriculture (24.8%) than EU migrants (13.9%), while more EU migrants, particularly those from Italy, gained employment in education (11.8%) than non-EU migrants (5.7%).

It is important to note that 19.8% of EU migrants started their own business on their return as compared to 7.8% of non-EU migrants – 2.7 times more. Such businesses were set up mainly by migrants aged 30+ and those with high and middle levels of education.

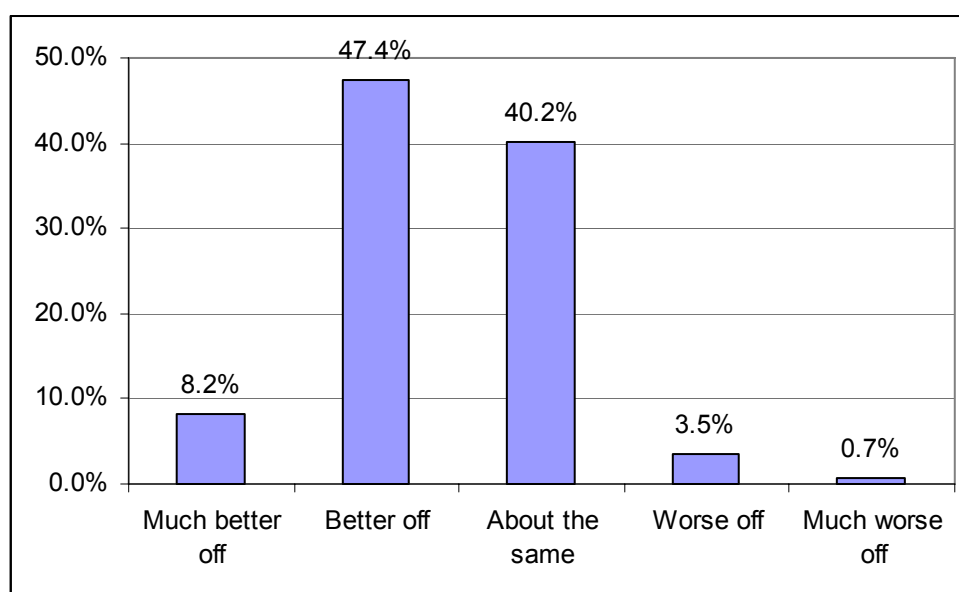
The main source of employment information for returning migrants was relatives, friends and acquaintances. Their assistance allowed 51.4% of the employed migrants to find a job, especially those with low levels of education. The second most important source of information was the mass media. Individuals with high socioeconomic backgrounds and with high and medium levels of education, and those who worked in Western countries, were more proactive in the search.

Overall, the general experience (as well as workplace skills) acquired abroad assisted returning migrants to find better opportunities for employment, this being confirmed by 46.9% of respondents who were working. Experience acquired abroad was more useful to men (51.6%) than to women (37.9%), and more useful to urban inhabitants (54.3%) than to those from rural areas (42.0%). The analysis by migration destination (EU/non-EU countries) shows that the destination had little effect on better employment prospects at home, though EU countries were slightly favoured (49.2% against 45.4%).

Experience acquired abroad had not helped some of the respondents to find better employment opportunities for a number of reasons, the main one being that they had worked in different areas from the ones in which they were qualified. Thus, they were unable to apply the experience they had acquired abroad in their country of origin. Some respondents said that they had learned nothing abroad, since the work they were doing was not experience but exploitation by their employers. Several returning migrants said that employers in Moldova did not need the experience they had acquired abroad.

A total of 97.8% of returning migrants did not benefit from pensions or other social benefits following their stay abroad. The main reason for this is that the great majority of the migrants (86.2%) had made no contributions to a pension scheme. A plausible reason for this situation is that the migrants were not regular workers (that is, they were working informally), although only 2.0% acknowledged having done so. In comparing their financial situation on their return with the one prior to departure, around half of returning migrants assessed it as being better (47.4%) or much better (8.2%), while 40.2% maintained that their financial situation had not changed (see Chart 17 below).

Chart 17. Evaluation of financial situation on return to Moldova



N= 1010 respondents

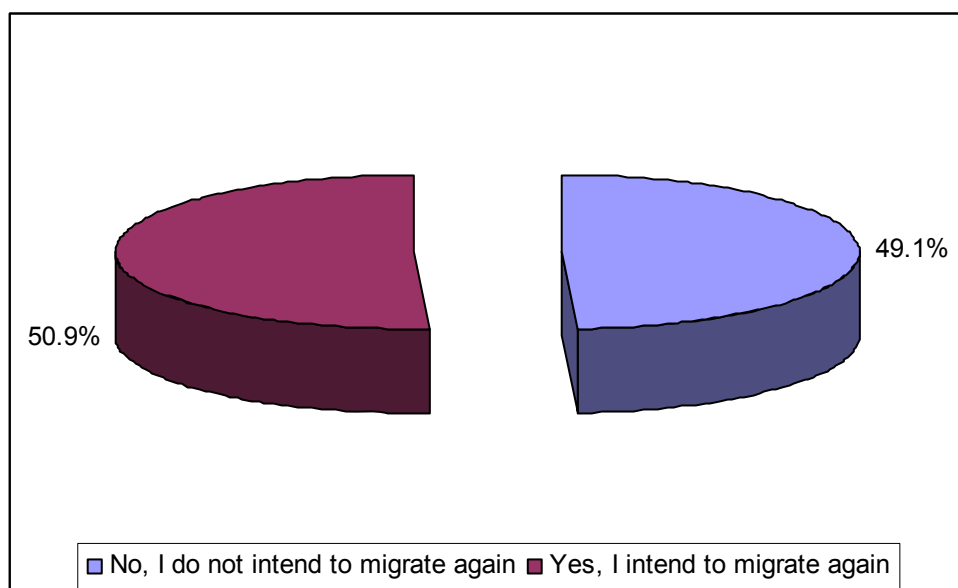
Those migrants who evaluated their current situation as being better than prior to departure (the better assessment was mentioned more often by EU migrants) cited a number of factors, including the fact that they had savings, were purchasing or building a house or apartment (or had built or renovated their house), or had purchased a car or long-term household commodities. Last but not least, the money earned abroad allowed migrants to pay for their children's education, or even the launch of a business.

The individuals who assessed their condition as having worsened explained this by referring to the fact that they had been left without a job on their return (and were unable to find a job), or that the salaries offered to them were insufficient to cover living expenses. At the same time, life was perceived to be more expensive in the country of origin, with higher prices relative to available income.

4.4. Future intentions of returning migrants

Half of returning migrants (50.9%) intended to leave and work abroad again, in particular those who had recently returned (three to six months). Intentions to move abroad again were more frequent expressed by men (52.9%) than women (47.4%), rural residents (55.5%) than urban residents (42.7%), and those with low socioeconomic status (61.1%).

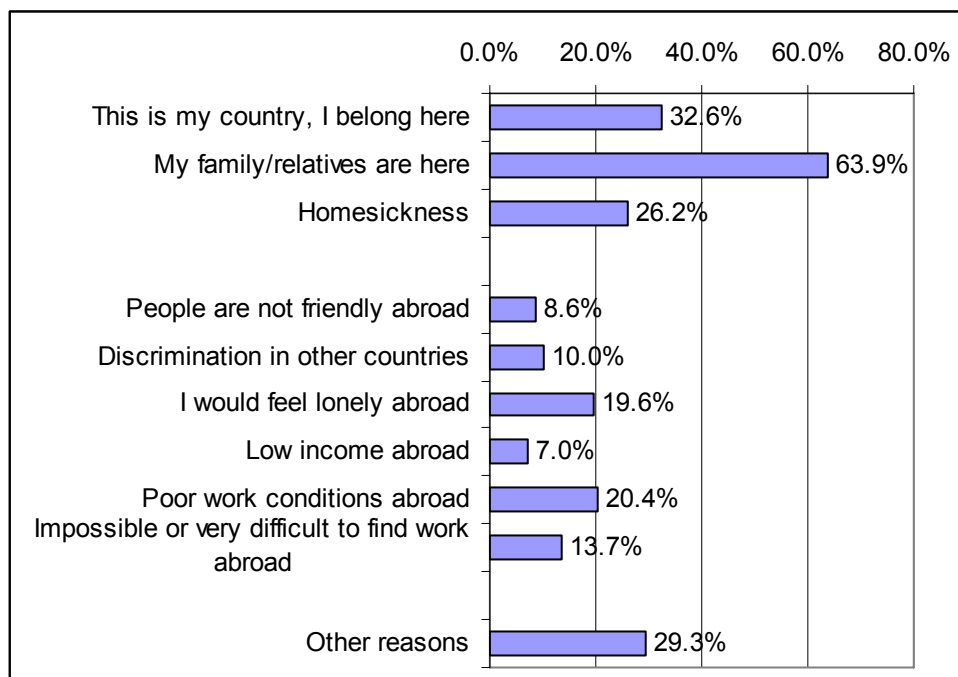
Chart 18. Returning migrants' intention to emigrate



N= 1010 respondents

The decision not to move abroad was most often determined by the presence of relatives in the country (63.9%) and 'this is my country'/'I belong here' (32.6%), the latter reason being mentioned more often by EU migrants than non-EU migrants. The patriotic feeling could be explained by the longer period spent abroad by EU migrants.

Chart 19. Factors preventing respondents from leaving the country (three options)



N= 496 respondents who currently had no intention of living and working abroad again

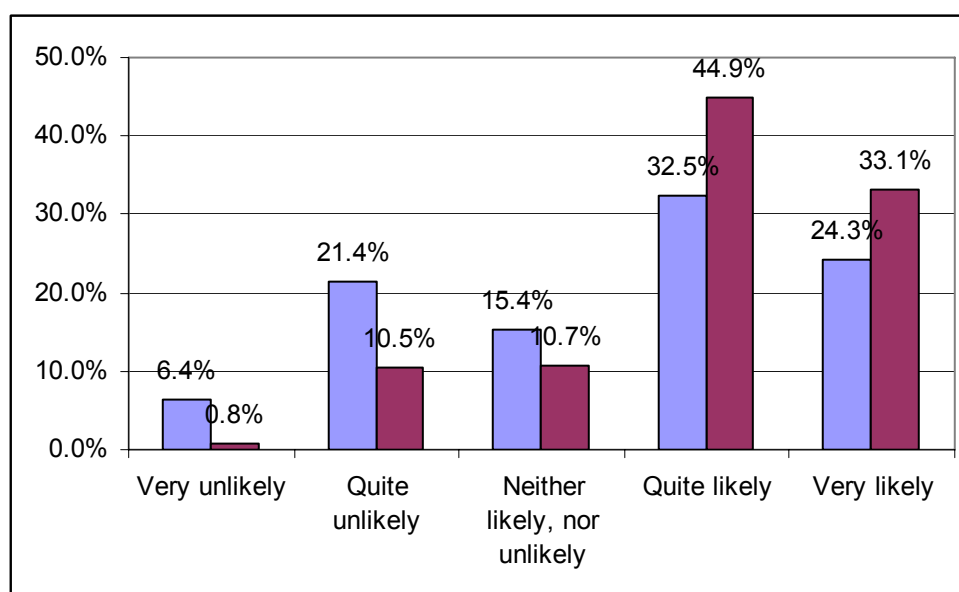
The most significant factors relating to the destination country that affect the respondents' decision to stay in the country of origin were as follows:

- poor working conditions: 20.4%;
- fear of feeling lonely/isolated abroad: 19.6%;
- the impossibility or difficulty of finding a job abroad: 13.7%.

The first of these was particularly relevant for CIS countries and for migrants with low levels of education,

Of the total number of returning migrants who were seriously thinking of moving abroad to live and work, 56.9% expressed the probability that they would leave Moldova during the six months following the survey (see Chart 20), while 15.4% had not yet decided. Cross-analysis reveals that the probability of migrating increased in proportion to the ability to finance the process of migration: the number of those intending to migrate within six months was double for people who were able to finance the move, compared with those unable to do so. Similarly, the propensity to migrate again soon was slightly more likely for non-EU migrants.

Chart 20. Returning migrants' likelihood of moving abroad

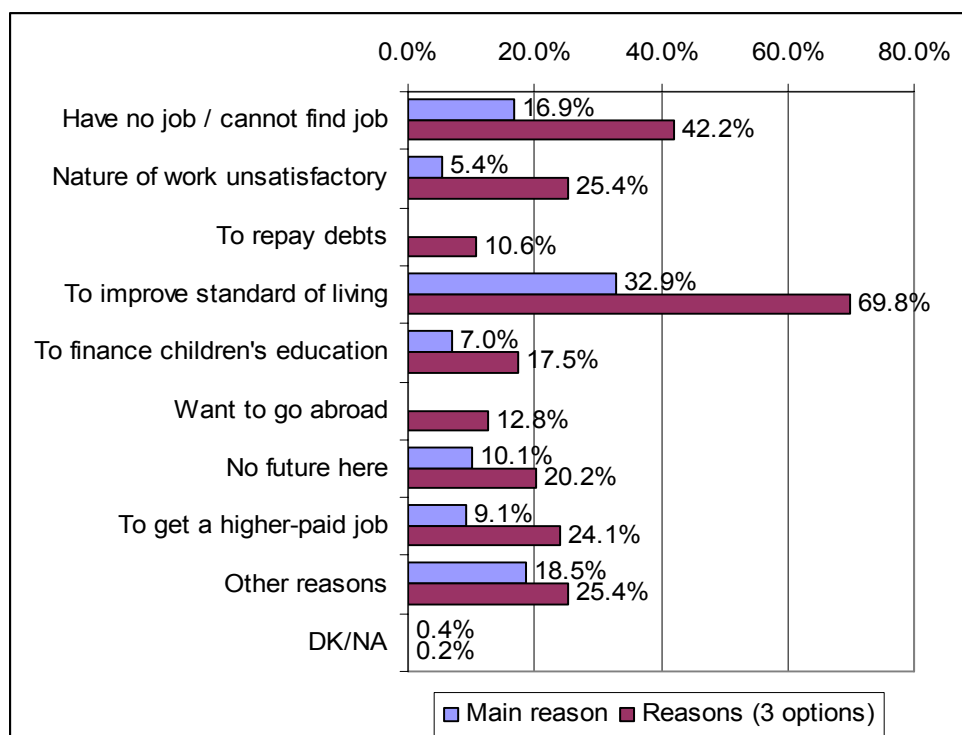


N= 514 respondents who were currently thinking of living and working abroad again

The proportion of people intending to move abroad during the next two years was 78.0%. The reasons why returning migrants planned to migrate again mainly related to unsatisfactory living and working conditions, as well as to the difficulty or impossibility of finding a job in the country of origin, especially for those who were unemployed after returning, and for migrants with low and medium levels of education. In other words, the survey results indicate that migration was almost exclusively determined by unsatisfactory financial situations which were insufficient to cover people's daily needs in Moldova.

Chart 21 demonstrates that almost 20% of those intending to move abroad considered that 'there is no future in Moldova'. In this context, emigration was perceived by the population as the only viable response to unsatisfactory living conditions in the country of origin, a lack of job opportunities (this factor being more acute for rural residents), and poor wages and working conditions.

Chart 21. Reasons for migrating again



N= 514 respondents who were currently thinking of living and working abroad again

Cross-analysis by educational level reveals that migrants with high and medium levels of education were more often encouraged to migrate by the need or wish to finance their children's education, compared with migrants with low levels of education.

Countries targeted by migrants are the same as those they have been previously:

- Russia: 44%;
- Italy: 17.3%;
- (4.1%),
- France: 3.7%;
- Israel: 3.5%;
- Spain: 3.3%;
- UK: 3.3%;
- USA: 2.7%.

The majority of respondents intending to move abroad (71.9%) thought that it was very or quite likely that they would move to the main destination country to live and work. One in eight respondents (12.6%) was not sure about their departure, while another 12.7% considered that departure to the desired country was not at all or less likely. In general it was emphasised that migrants were likely to keep the same destinations as the ones they had before their return. This was confirmed by the fact that over 80% of all returning migrants planned to migrate again. Moreover, 80% and more of migrants returning from Italy and Russia who intended to migrate again would try to go to the same countries.

Special attention should be given to the reasons for choosing the destination country. Respondents were asked to select three options, and the following are the most significant reasons given:

- the opportunity to work/earn money: 71.6%;
- knowledge of the language of the country: 46.5%;
- in order to gather/save money: 36.3%;
- had friends/relatives in the country: 33.1%;
- had lived in this country before: 23.9%.

The correlated analysis shows that in choosing the destination country, men were more motivated by the opportunity to work and earn money, while women were influenced by the presence of friends/relatives in the destination country.

The proportion of returning migrants who intended to move abroad and who were able to finance their departure themselves was higher than that for potential migrant: around 65.0% were able to finance their departure as compared to 40.6% of potential migrants. The ability to finance migration was higher for non-EU migrants (especially those intending to migrate to neighbouring CIS countries) than for EU migrants.

Analysis of answers relating to the expectations of migrants who wished to move abroad again in relation to their fields of activity demonstrates that they intended to undertake the same activities as they had previously performed abroad. At the same time, a higher share of migrants expected to work as casual workers and perform unskilled work. It is important to note that almost a third of those who worked in skilled jobs in their home country expected to work as unskilled workers abroad. Cross-analysis by educational levels reveals that in general, people with low levels of education more often expected to work as casual and unskilled workers abroad. However, the proportion of people with high levels of education expecting this type of work was also quite high, varying from 23.0% for casual work to 46.0% for unskilled work.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Key conclusions from potential migrants' survey

The survey data show a potential massive outflow of migrants from Moldova, with 44.0% of the population aged 18–40 years expressing an intention to migrate. However, further analysis indicates that the propensity to migrate decreases in relation to the imminence of future plans. Thus, 30.9% of population aged 18–40 years was likely or quite likely to migrate in the next two years and 18.4% in the next six months from the date of survey. But even if we consider only this latter group of people to be serious potential migrants, the flow is rather high, accounting for 181,524 to 216,886 people.

Analysis of the sociodemographic profile of potential migrants confirms that intentions to leave were approximately equal for the employed and unemployed populations, but varied according to educational level: the propensity to migrate was higher for people with low or middle levels of education. However, the proportion of highly educated people intending to leave Moldova was also quite high (one person in every three who has a university degree). A comparative analysis of the educational areas of potential and returning migrants shows that they both received education in three major areas:

- engineering, industry and construction;
- social sciences, economy and law;
- services.

It is also important to mention that potential migrants who expressed a desire to continue their studies were currently planning to specialise in the areas of social sciences, economics and law.

The survey data show a mismatch between educational areas and opportunities in the labour market. Thus, while education was focused mainly on engineering, industry and construction, social sciences, economics, law, and services, employment was almost completely different: potential migrants have had work experience mainly in the areas of agriculture, construction and trade. Migrants who returned home after working abroad obtained employment in the same areas (agriculture, construction and trade). Their work experience abroad was continued in the same main areas with only one exception: domestic labour instead of agriculture.

The main destination countries for Moldovan migrants were Russia and Italy, with most of the migrants (around 60% of the migration flow) aiming to migrate to these two countries. When a non-CIS destination country is selected, migrants were motivated more by the opportunity to save money and by the presence of their relatives/friends in these countries. CIS countries were selected mostly because of the easier opportunity to work and because of the knowledge of these countries' languages. A comparative analysis of the survey data for potential and returning migrants shows a decrease of the migration flows to Russia and an increase to Italy. The EU as a whole is a very important destination for Moldovan migrants, since 49.0% of the potential migration flow was towards EU countries. However, in terms of the most immediate future plans, the propensity to migrate in the next six months was higher for non-EU countries (51.5%) than for EU countries (31.5%).

The sociodemographic profile of potential EU migrants was as follows (i.e. categories of people with a higher propensity to migrate to the EU):

- young people aged 18–24 (52.8%) and 25–29 (47.5%);
- more men (51.6%) than women (38.2%) planned to leave (in general, women migrate more towards Italy and Turkey, while men migrate more towards Russia and Portugal);
- unmarried individuals and those without children;
- people with middle or high levels of education, as well as those intending to study further;

- people living in the central part of the country;
- Moldovan/Romanian mother-tongue speakers.

The main factors promoting migration in Moldova were unsatisfactory living and working conditions, as well as the difficulty of finding, or the failure to find, jobs in the country of origin. In other words, the survey data show that migration was conditioned almost exclusively by the unsatisfactory material conditions of the respondents, which did not allow them to meet their daily needs. This situation has fostered a pessimistic outlook on the part of individuals in respect of their future in their home country, with a fifth of migrants believing that there was no future for them in Moldova.

In this context, the data clearly show that the absolute majority of respondents who intended to leave to work abroad (92.6%) were convinced that their departure might improve their financial condition. On the other hand, the survey of returning migrants shows that working abroad did not always meet these expectations; thus, only around 55% of returning migrants assessed their material condition on return as being better than before departure. An improvement in financial situation was more often reported by individuals who had worked in countries other than those of the CIS.

The situation described above regarding factors promoting migration was consistent with the time that individuals expected to spend abroad. Up to 90% of Moldovan potential migrants planned to work abroad for no more than five years, i.e. just to save the money necessary to live in their home country. This trend was mainly specific to CIS countries, migration there having a more seasonal character. Expected duration of migration was influenced mainly by such variables as destination, level of education and professional skill level: EU migrants, and migrants with high levels of education and professional skills, intended to spend longer abroad than other categories of migrants. It should be emphasised that even if the percentage of people intending to leave Moldova for ever is not yet significant (only 7.0% of people with an intention to migrate, or around 3.0% of whole sample), most of them were young people aged 18–29 years.

The survey data attest that migrants were aware of the fact that they would not be able to carry out their professions and use their education and skills abroad. Thus, around 40–50% of respondents currently working as skilled workers, or at middle or high management levels, expected to work abroad as unskilled workers. These figures are consistent with educational levels: 45.0% of potential migrants with a high level of education anticipated doing unqualified work abroad.

Use of pre-departure training, especially vocational, is important in enabling migrants to move abroad and to carry out their professions and use their skills there. However, its use is very limited: only around 20% of potential migrants would follow such courses, mainly young people and urban residents, people with a high level of education and EU migrants. Moreover, in most cases these courses cover only the acquisition of language skills, while very little attention is given to vocational skills.

The limited use of pre-departure training could be explained by the fact that currently most migration has an unofficial character, since few labour agreements have been signed between Moldova and destination countries. On the other hand, the survey data show that 80.0% of potential migrants were unaware of any state or private programmes to assist people to go abroad.

5.2. Key conclusions from returning migrants' survey

In order to describe the level of education of returning migrants, it is important to note that the survey for returning migrants is not a representative survey based on random sampling procedures. The sample was designed based on existing official statistical data, and respondents were selected based on quota procedures according to statistics. This is why the aspect of education needs to be extrapolated with caution. However, if we compare the data from the returning migrants' survey and official statistics, on the one side, and the data from the potential migrants' survey on the other side, a clear increase in the propensity to migrate is evident for people with high levels of education (almost three times greater than for other groups).

Education also has an effect on migration destination, the majority of returning migrants who were working in an EU country being university graduates. Apart from education, the choice of an EU destination was also influenced by gender (more females), residence (more urban inhabitants), region (more people from the central part of the country) and nationality or mother tongue (more

Moldovan/Romanian language speakers). These trends persist, as shown by the potential migrants' survey.

The main factors behind the decision to return home are related to personal and family reasons, such as the desire to join the family and homesickness. This contrasts with the reasons for leaving, which were mainly economic and job related.

The main and immediate benefit of migration for migrants' households was remittances, which were mainly used for daily living expenses, this being confirmed by 80.0% of the returning migrants. Rural migrants in particular used a significant portion of the funds saved to buy household commodities and property (house/apartment), and to invest in children's education.

It is generally quite difficult to obtain employment abroad (according to the experience of around 40% of returning migrants), especially in EU countries. The survey on returning migrants clearly demonstrates the impossibility of Moldovan migrants applying their professional skills abroad, as two-thirds of returning migrants (especially women) carried out unskilled work (over 60% of returning migrants with higher education were also employed as unqualified workers).

Most of those who worked abroad were not employed according to their qualifications. Thus, medical doctors and teachers had to work as builders and domestic workers, this being confirmed by the data of this survey, which show that 36.0% of returning migrants with university education had worked in construction and 28.0% as domestic workers. The number of people with vocational education was four times greater than the number who had university degrees in early 1990s. This ratio is currently 1:1, and every year 25,000–30,000 graduates qualify for such occupations as lawyers and economists, with no employment opportunities in their country of origin; most of these have a serious intention to go abroad as soon as they graduate.

The level of education seems to be more important for social inclusion abroad: more migrants with a high level of education benefited from contacts with local people than those with medium or low levels. At the same time, the presence of a spouse was slightly more likely to favour contacts with local inhabitants.

The survey data shows that migrants could neither apply their education and skills abroad, nor acquire new skills while they are abroad, this being demonstrated by the fact that 95.0% of returning migrants did not attend any training while they were abroad. General experience and workplace skills helped about 47.0% of returning migrants who obtained employment on their return to find better opportunities. The experience was more useful for men and urban residents. However, the 'professional' experience gained abroad was not valued in the home country, mainly because the areas of work pursued abroad were different from the migrants' areas of specialisation.

On their return, migrants obtained employment in their home country mainly in the same working areas as actual potential migrants, that is, agriculture, construction and commerce. In this context it is important to note that the main sources of information on employment for returning migrants were friends and acquaintances and the mass media, rather than specialist employment services.

With regard to employment in the home country, it is important to highlight the propensity to start a private business. The actual figures show that an insignificant percentage of returning migrants were interested in such opportunities (only 7.0%). However, this is potential that should be valued, and a number of programmes have recently been started in this field (mainly supported by international donor organisations). The sociodemographic profile of returning migrants who were more likely to start their own business was as follows: people aged over 30 years, with a high or medium level of education who have lived and worked in EU countries.

A very limited number of returning migrants (2.2%) received pensions or other social benefits. There are two reasons why Moldovan migrants did not benefit from such support. Firstly, the great majority of migrants worked unofficially and were not able to contribute to a pension scheme (although only 2.0% of returning migrants who were interviewed confirmed they had worked illegally abroad). Secondly, people who worked abroad could have received pensions on their return home only if Moldova had concluded a social security agreement with the destination country. When there was no such agreement, the Law on Social Insurance has an article providing that the respective person must pay a nominal contribution for five years in order to receive a minimum pension on return.

Half of returning migrants planned to migrate abroad again, being forced to take this decision by the need to improve the living conditions of the household, by the lack of employment opportunities and

unsatisfactory work conditions in their country of origin. The reasons were the same as for potential migrants, which confirms the consistency of the data.

A comparison between the potential and returning migrants shows a stronger trend of propensity to migrate among the returning migrants than potential migrants. Thus, 28.9% of returning migrants said they were likely to go abroad in the six months following the survey, compared with 18.4% of potential migrants. The explanation could be that returning migrants had already had experience of living and working abroad, as well as experience of earning money, which is ultimately the most powerful factor influencing migration.

5.3 Policy implications for the future

Moldova experienced a massive economic decline shortly after gaining its independence in the 1990's. Rapidly declining living standards combined with an inadequate policy response to quickly address the new situation forced the Moldovan labour force to search employment opportunities outside their home country. At first, the emigration could be described as a way to escape the dismal situation at home, but today as the migration trend has continued for over a decade, more people are tempted to try their luck abroad. The cost of migration has been decreasing due to the migrant networks abroad. This has also led to an increase in the remittances that are sent back to Moldova. Even though migration started as a reaction to acute poverty and the remittances indeed played a major role in alleviating poverty, a long term sustainable growth strategy cannot be based on migration and remittances.

Emigration seems to be a second best option weighted against staying at home, if only the domestic economy would provide reasonable prospects for the future. As migration is a household-level decision one needs to ensure that the economic opportunities perceived from the household level are attractive enough to divert the mass-migration and investment flows back towards the Moldovan economy. The households need more and better jobs in order to supply for their families. The ideal situation would be to provide employment in their home country rather than forcing the households to migrate abroad. Therefore, key reasonable policy option may be to invest in job creation in Moldova – including through incentives to small and medium enterprises – while simultaneously acknowledging the demand for migration, and working to facilitate this through agreements with selected countries to allow short-term or seasonal work permits. The government has already signed some labour agreements, but they have not produced enough opportunities for safe, legal migration, and not improved the situation of Moldovan migrants abroad so far.

On the whole, Moldova had an educated labour force despite recent drawbacks, and there is a potential to increase private investments on productive uses. However, Moldovan firms indicate that policy instability, legal and regulatory burdens, corruption and crime as well as access to finance are important constraints to business. Administrative barriers are a major hindrance for growth and employment creation in the private sector. According to the Doing Business statistics published by the World Bank, Moldova fell down to the general 'ease of doing business' ranking of 103 out of 175 countries in the annual review from 2006. The need to address the unfavourable investment climate is critical. An improved business environment will play a decisive role in diverting the migration and investment flows and ensuring a more sustainable base for economic growth in Moldova. Reducing the amount of red tape, fighting corruption, and ensuring a transparent and equitable system of legislation correctly enforced would improve the productiveness of the Moldovan economy and increase its attractiveness for FDI.

A further cause of concern in terms of productive employment is the deteriorating levels of human capital. The population is rather well educated today due to the legacy of the socialist times. However, unless the high levels of spending are restored, the reserve of human capital will soon be depleted. At the moment, the number of pupils is declining rapidly, especially in the country side, due to household migration to the urban centres or abroad and anecdotally due to the absence of migrant parents putting their children in school. On the other hand, the demand for university education is on the rise and demonstrated by the ever-increasing popularity of private universities, as the children of the migrant families often use remittances to finance education. In general, the households receiving remittances invest in longer education of their children compared to households without migrants (Lücke et al., 2007). This is a positive effect of migration, but only if the economic situation in Moldova is improved in the near future so that the children do not choose to migrate abroad after gaining their education.

Ensuring adequate returns to education in Moldova, by improving the compatibility of the supply and demand of educated workers through fostering of economic development and improving working conditions for professionals, constitutes a challenge that Moldova needs to solve in order to put its development on a sustainable path. Additionally, ensuring that the quality of education remains at a high level requires an increased focus in the future: Human capital in the country is currently deteriorating rapidly and even though the alarming signs cannot be immediately observed, losing its advantage in the labour market would be destructive to the whole economy. Investing in education should be a long-term priority of the government.

Migration and education are deeply intertwined processes. Education is certainly a key factor among the complex forces that drive modern day migration. People may migrate because they have acquired skills that can be used in foreign labour markets, or because they wish to study and acquire training abroad to enhance their professional opportunities. Alternatively, underdeveloped training opportunities may undermine people's socio-economic perspectives, thereby encouraging them to seek opportunities abroad. A central issue in the international mobility of workers regards the recognition of qualifications and of technical training. Migrants with unrecognised competencies may jeopardise their socio-economic perspectives: this generates frustration among migrants as well as labour market tensions; it also reduces their integration perspectives while decreasing their positive impact on the economy. It is therefore in the interest of both governments and migrants to ensure the recognition of skills acquired in different countries, especially in the contemporary context of internationalisation of higher education.

The survey reveals that the current situation is not the most optimal option where a meaningful win/win situation between Moldova and the EU countries in terms of HRD. There may be some benefits for the individual and the employers that he or she works with in the EU country, but this is a largely a random outcome. In fact, it is seldom the simple act of migrating, but rather the conditions under which migration takes place that determine the developmental impact of migration. Migration is not focussed on areas where there are skill shortages in the EU and the learning benefits of working and living in an EU country are not systematically captured, i.e., the experience is largely random. There are few mechanisms – if any - for the migrant to internalise the returns from migration, or for the externalisation of the benefits at the system or country level. A co-operative strategy to create a win/win situation is absent. Under these circumstances, immediate concern and measures should focus on concrete and practical issues for policy practitioners that can provide right conditions facilitating the developmental impact of migration. There may be scope for improving the situation and creating a win/win situation for migration in an HRD sense that would focus on the following mechanisms:

- Better distributed information and knowledge of skills needs and opportunities in the EU and in partner countries;
- More transparency of migrant skills within the EU labour market, i.e., the use of promotion of the use of EU CV format, and related transparency tools such as the Diploma Certificate supplements.
- Offered opportunities for migrants to have their skills assessed and made more visible – either in the member state of destination, or in their own country, through a bilan de competence approach as in France or an assessment centre approach as in Romania. These approaches could be used to make clear in the EU situation the individual's stock of occupational and personal experience; their knowledge and skills acquired through work, training, and social life; and their overall potential. This would provide a stronger basis from which the individual could manage and exploit their personal resources and contribute when in the EU.
- A similar process could be employed in the sending country for returning migrants – this could add additional include the same elements that covered in the 'bilan' and assessment centre approach, but also cover additional elements such as, the individual's occupational priorities and the use of their attributes in career choices and career changes. Recognition of skills acquired abroad could be supported by some form of certification or attestation.

The survey data clearly demonstrate the existence of a skills mismatch between the educational areas and demand on the Moldovan labour market. While education focuses mainly on engineering, industry and construction, social sciences, economy, law and services, the potential migrants were mainly

employed in agriculture, construction and trade. Returning migrants also found employment in these areas (agriculture, construction and trade). The work experience they gained abroad was continued in the same main areas, with only one exception: domestic work instead of agriculture.

It is necessary to improve cooperation between the Ministry of Economy and Trade, and Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in order to better meet the local needs of labour market. Given the current state of the Moldovan economy, people with high levels of qualifications are not in great demand. The government has identified that there is a lack of professionals at medium technical level, and since 2006 has been offering special incentives (such as free accommodation and scholarships) in order to boost VET enrolment. These efforts should be continued, and the VET system updated so that it corresponds to real labour market needs. Linked to these issues is the fact that the training provided by universities results in an oversupply of lawyers and economists, among other professionals, in Moldova. However, the survey results of returning migrants show that most university graduates had worked in construction and household work.

The lack of cooperation was even highlighted in discussions between the above-mentioned representatives during the validation meeting. It seems to be a vicious circle: the outputs of the activities of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport are not efficient because the Ministry of Economy and Trade does not provide data on labour market needs; and on the other side, the activities of the Ministry of Economy and Trade are not efficient in the field of human resources management because of the qualifications gained by new graduates of educational institutions. In this regard, the data provided by the Ministry of Economy and Trade representative are significant: branch ministries assess that there is a need for 5,600 workers with higher education and around 3,600–4,100 with professional education, while the need for vocational specialists is as high as 17,700–18,800 workers.

Very low salaries and poor working conditions were among the main reasons for leaving the country; these issues should be urgently addressed in national economic development planning. Unfortunately, the actual situation is very poor. During the validation meeting it was emphasised that there is a lack of sectoral economic development priorities and lack of skill needs of the local labour market for better education planning. The poor performance of labour market institutions is demonstrated, for example, by the fact that by end of May 2007 the Action Plan for Combating Unemployment among Youth for 2007 had not yet been approved.

The National Employment Agency provides vocational training services to unemployed people and offers jobs in social services, construction, industry and agriculture. Labour placement following graduation from an educational institution reaches the 65–70% level, while in some occupations the level is 80–100%. Over the past year, the National Employment Agency has managed a total of over 45,000 jobs nationally. However, the number of jobs has decreased from 1.5 million to 800,000 over the past five to six years. According to officials of the National Employment Agency, migration is not caused by high unemployment, but by low salaries and low-quality jobs. People prefer to migrate to earn a monthly salary of EUR 500–1,000 instead of an average salary equivalent to EUR 100 in Moldova.

Poor performance of the public employment services is partially the result of inefficient cooperation between the agency and employers, a fact emphasised during the validation meeting. This view is also supported by a research paper entitled 'Rapid Assessment of Employment Needs in regions Balti and Cahul in Moldova', conducted by CIVIS for the Moldova Employment and Training Alliance, a programme financed by the United States Department of Labour in partnership with Catholic Relief Services. During this research a higher number of vacancies were identified in the region than the number of vacancies offered by local employment offices, even though the number of employers contacted during the research was limited.

In addition to improving employment services, it is also necessary to improve management in the field of migration. This study revealed that the main efforts have been undertaken only by international organisations so far. However, capacity building of the National Bureau of Statistics in the field of migration is essential, and in particular cooperation between the statistical offices of sending and receiving countries on aligning data-collection methodologies and knowledge sharing. Here, it is important to gather detailed data on migrants in terms of their level of education (by ISCED 1997 classification), professional profile (ISCO), and gender as far as possible. In particular, data on skill oversupplies and shortages in the sending country's labour market can be useful when designing measures on managed/circular migration, prevention of brain drain and negotiations of new bi-lateral labour agreements.

The capacity of the Ministry of Economy and Trade in relation to labour migration management needs to be improved, since some of the responsibilities of the former National Bureau for Migration were delegated to this ministry. In this respect, it is important to emphasise that the consequences of liquidation of the National Bureau for Migration are quite negative: time and financial resources are necessary in order to reorganise the apparatus and personnel, and a number of programmes initiated by international organisations for capacity building have been interrupted.

In the context of improving migration management, it is necessary to promote legal channels of migration for the benefit of the state and migrants. Very few people currently use legal channels for labour migration as a result of the limited opportunities, lack of information and lack of trust in the system. Creating more legal channels for labour migration and giving adequate information on and support for legal migration should be accompanied by a public awareness campaign on the risks of illegal migration. In addition, improved knowledge of EU best practices in the field of labour migration management can be promoted.

The Moldovan government is currently negotiating labour and re-admission agreements with some EU member states, albeit on the basis of limited quotas. In the future this would involve appropriate preparatory training and facilitation of the skill matching of migrants with the needs of receiving countries. However, very few labour agreements have so far come into force, especially with EU countries. The results of this survey demonstrate a clear re-orientation of Moldovan migrants towards EU countries, and support the argument for the need for more labour agreements with volunteer receiving countries.

Another important aspect of migration management is the issue of remittances. The remittances, amounting to USD 855 million in 2006 through official channels, contribute to reducing poverty in households and to essential exchange rate operations¹⁹. In January 2007, USD 60.98 million was transferred to Moldova. Although the massive flow of remittances from abroad is favourable for Moldova, labour migration is a short-term solution for unemployment, excesses in the labour force and lack of financial resources. It is worth mentioning that only 7.0% of returning migrants use the money earned abroad to start their own business. Moreover, the phenomenon undermines domestic labour market and harms economic development in general.

The Moldovan government and various international donors are undertaking activities to improve the use of remittances. This effort should be linked to the overall improvement of the business environment and investment climate. Providing support and incentives for returning migrants to start businesses in Moldova should therefore be seen as a priority. Measures and incentives, in partnership with the private sector, to attract highly skilled migrants back home on a permanent or temporary basis can be considered in order to mitigate brain drain. The development of training modules on optimising the use of remittances for communities heavily affected by migration should be considered. Information on starting small businesses and entrepreneurship learning measures can contribute to the strengthening of the overall development effect. This need was also emphasised during the validation meeting, where a representative of the IOM mentioned the necessity of attracting investment to improve social dialogue between the state, the international community and civil society in employment, as well as the development of opportunities to create businesses at local level. In this context it is necessary to address the problem of bureaucracy and corruption, as these are among the main factors affecting the creation and development of private business.

¹⁹ *Eco – magazin economic* (Economic magazine), Ediția curentă, nr. 118, 11 April 2007.

ANNEX 1: ECONOMIC AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF POTENTIAL MIGRANTS

One in three of the households interviewed (33.5%) had four members and 27.9% of households had three members. One in five households (20.7%) included five to six persons; 14.5% one to two persons; and 3.4% seven or more persons. Generally speaking, large households (five or more persons) were more common in rural areas (31.2%) than urban areas (13.4%).

The most frequent type of dwelling was the house (mentioned by 74.7% of respondents), while 24.8% of respondents lived in apartments.

The great majority of respondents (76.8%) owned their own dwelling, 16.1% did not pay any rent (especially in rural areas) and 7.1% paid rent (especially in urban areas).

The number of dwelling rooms was as follows:

- one: 4.9%
- two: 19.5%
- three: 26.4%
- four: 21.0%
- five: 12.9%
- six: 8.7%
- seven: 2.3%
- eight: 1.7%,
- nine or more: 0.7%.

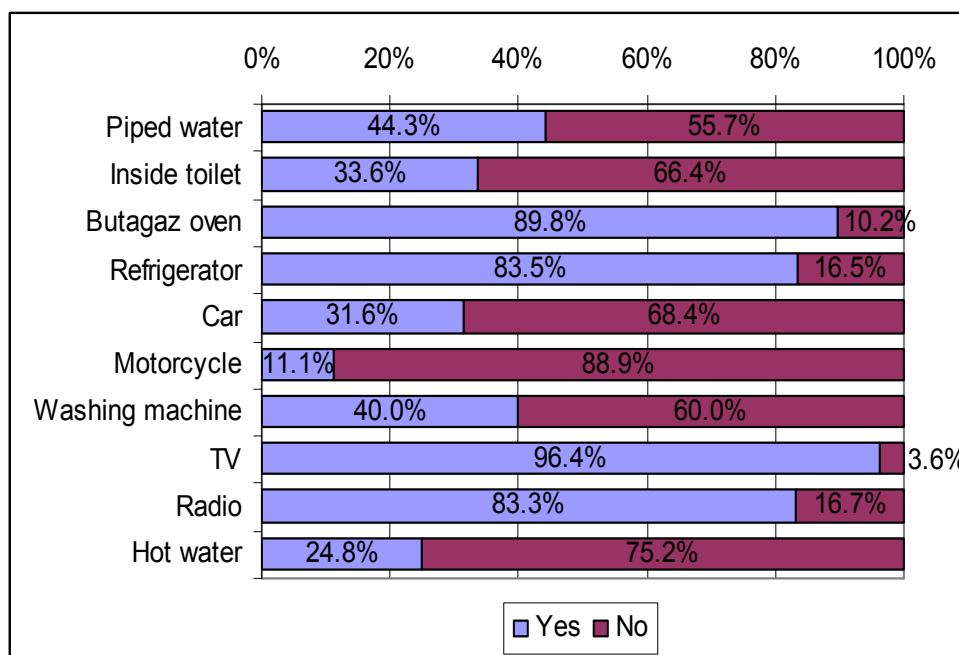
The most accessible goods and services for respondents (see Chart 22) were the following:

- TV: 96.4%
- gas stove: 89.8%
- fridge: 83.5%
- radio set: 83.3%.
- The most inaccessible goods and services were:
- motorcycle: 88.9%
- hot water: 75.2%
- car: 68.4%
- indoor toilet: 66.4%
- electric washing machine: 60.0%;
- piped water: 55.7%.

The services that ensure better living standards, such as hot water, piped water and an indoor toilet, were very rare in rural areas, especially indoor toilets (5.1%) and hot water (6.1%). At the same time, urban residents did not have full access to these utilities either. Almost half of respondents from urban areas (46.9%), especially those living in houses, stated that they did not have hot water; one in four

households (23.2%) from urban areas did not have an indoor toilet; and 16.5% did not have piped water.

Chart 22. Availability of goods and services in the household

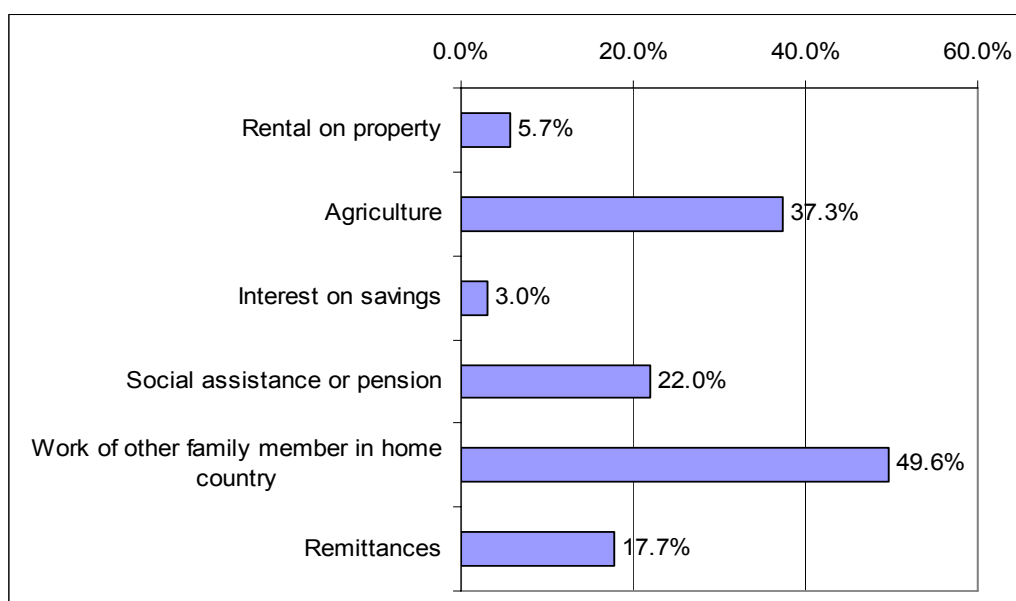


N= 1010 respondents

Although 55.8% of respondents owned their own agricultural plots, the vast majority did not derive any financial benefit from their plot, as around 70% of respondents who owned agricultural land indicated that their plot was less than 1 hectare. This would be just enough to cultivate produce for the household's own consumption. Only 7.8% of respondents who had agricultural property owned plots of 3–10 hectares.

The main income source for potential migrants (see Chart 23) was family members' employment (49.6%), followed by 'in kind' or cash income related to agricultural activity (37.3%). The pensions and/or social assistance of household members (22.0%) were another significant source of income (in quantity rather than value, as the minimum pension is MDL 360, which is around EUR 22 per month). Incomes relating to the rental of property and interest on savings were not so frequent in Moldova and represented 5.7% and 3.0% of income sources respectively.

Chart 23. Potential migrants' income sources (in kind or cash)



N= 1010 respondents

During the 12 months prior to data collection, 6.2% of interviewed respondents received one single sum of money from abroad, 11.6% received money from abroad less than once a month but more than once a year, and 4.6% received money once a month or more frequently.

The amounts received from abroad by respondents during the previous 12 months varied from EUR 10 to EUR 5,000. The majority of respondents received more than EUR 500 a year (56.7%), 18.1% benefited from EUR 501–1,000 and 13.7% from EUR 1,001–5,000. Some 11.5% of respondents refused to answer this question. Based on the information provided by the respondents who received financial assistance from abroad (in the case of three-quarters of respondents the financial help from abroad did not exceed EUR 85 a month), it can be concluded that the remittances from abroad were insufficient to maintain a decent standard of living for family members in the country of origin.

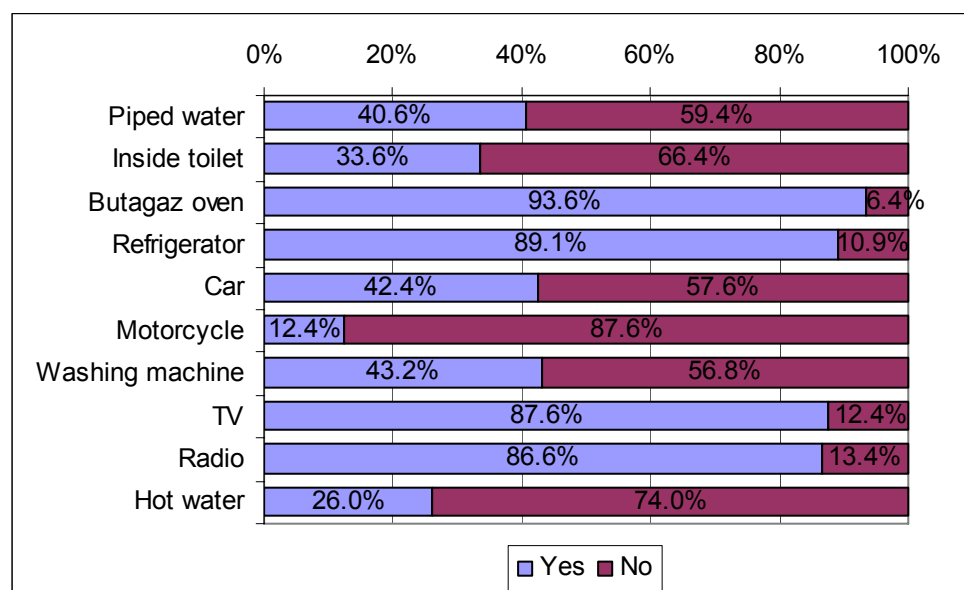
The self-assessed household financial situation of respondents reveals that one in two households (43.9%) was in a poor financial situation, in which the accumulated income was not enough to cover all the household's primary needs; one in three households (33.3%) had no security/stability for the future, and assessed the financial situation as sometimes sufficient, sometimes insufficient to ensure daily needs. Rural residents were less content with their financial situation (55.0%).

Cross-analysis of self-assessed household financial situation by neighbourhood reveals that respondents with average or insufficient financial situation generally assessed the economic situation of their neighbours as being better than their own.

ANNEX 2: ECONOMIC AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF RETURNING MIGRANTS

Around a third of the households interviewed (34.9%) had four members and a quarter (25.3%) had three members. Large households were more common in rural areas. The most accessible good and services for respondents were TVs, gas stoves, fridges and radio sets. The most inaccessible were hot water, indoor toilets, piped water, cars and electric washing machines.

Chart 24. Goods/services available in the returning migrants' households



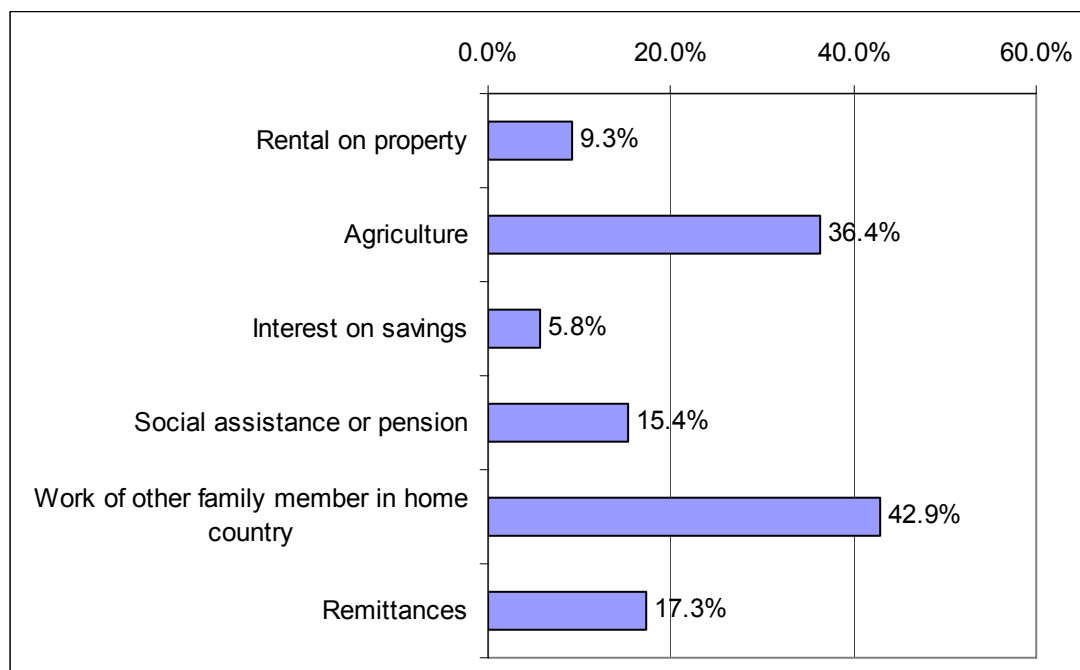
N= 1010 respondents

The services that ensure better living standards, such as hot water, piped water and indoor toilets, were very rare in rural areas. At the same time, urban residents did not enjoy full access to these utilities.

Although 62.7% of respondents owned agricultural plots, the great majority did not derive any financial benefit from them, as around 66.0% of respondents who owned agricultural land indicated that their plot was less than 1 hectare. This area would be just enough to cultivate produce for the household's own consumption. Only 11.2% of respondents who had agricultural property owned plots of 3–10 hectares.

The main household income of returning migrants was derived from two main sources: family members' employment (42.9%) and agricultural activity (36.4%). Incomes relating to the rental of property and interest on savings were not so frequent in Moldova and accounted for 9.3% and 5.8% of income sources, respectively (see Chart 25).

Chart 25. Returning migrants' income sources (in kind or cash)



N= 1010 respondents

In terms of income sources, it is important to mention that 17.3% of returning migrants reported receiving financial assistance from someone who lives and works abroad. But the number of persons actually receiving financial assistance from abroad was 20.2%. The difference between these two figures can be explained by the fact that some of the respondents did not perceive the transfers from abroad as a source of income, as these were not regular or frequent, or the amounts sent were very small.

The amounts received by respondents from abroad during the previous 12 months varied from EUR 6 to EUR 5,000. The majority of respondents received more than EUR 500 a year (58.3%). Some 21.6% of respondents refused to give an answer to this question. Based on the information provided by the respondents who received financial assistance from abroad, the financial help did not exceed EUR 85 a month. Therefore in most cases the remittances were not sufficient to maintain a decent standard of living for the family members in the country of origin. When comparing the economic situation of their own household with other neighbouring households, a third of returning migrants judged it to be better or much better. On the other hand, the majority of returning migrants (55.5%) judged the economic situation of their own households as similar to that of neighbouring households, while 11.6% said it was worse.

The self-assessed household financial situation of respondents reveals that one in three households (32.7%) was in a poor financial situation, in which the accumulated income was not enough to cover all the household's primary needs. Moreover, 36.2% of returning migrants' households had no security/stability for the future, assessing the financial situation as sometimes sufficient, sometimes insufficient to ensure daily needs.

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