

EVOLVING PATTERNS OF LABOUR MIGRATION FROM ROMANIA IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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This paper examines the specifics of the migration process in recent years, from before the COVID-19 pandemic to the post-pandemic years. It focuses on the reasons why Romanian citizens choose to emigrate to other EU member countries and explores the factors that motivate their return. The paper also includes a bibliometric analysis of the literature on labour migration during the pandemic and post-pandemic period, with a focus on the works published in the period 2019-2024, as well as a detailed analysis of data collected at the Romanian level by the National Employment Agency (ANOFM), reported for the period January 2019 - September 2023. Main results entail clear trends and intentions of Romanians to work abroad in the coming years, considering the skills and competencies that will be required in the future in a globalized digital economy and the training and knowledge of certain fields of activity.

Keywords: Migration, Romania, labour market, productivity, globalization, European Union

JEL Classification: F2, F66, J61, R23

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1. Introduction

International migration has a worldwide impact, as every country is involved in some way, whether as a place where people are leaving, passing through, or settling. This occurrence results in various economic, demographic and political impacts, both positive and negative.

International migration, especially with the purpose of finding stable long-term employment, is a globally significant research topic. First and foremost, the interest shown is due to the magnitude of this movement of people, given that in 2019 there were more than 272 million migrants (82 million being from Europe), representing 3.5% of the world's population and 74% of all international migrants were of working age, aged between 20 and 64 were living around the world and especially in Europe (United Nations, 2019). United Nations reported a number of 462.6 thousand migrants in Romania in 2019. The number of migrants reached 281 million in 2021, and it is still rising.

On an individual level, migration can have numerous adverse consequences, such as causing family separation and resulting in a generation of children raised without parental guidance. These children often must work overseas, leading to psychological issues that are difficult to measure comprehensively.

Furthermore, due to migration, numerous villages and communes in Romania have experienced significant depopulation, leading to the closure of schools in those areas as a result of insufficient enrollment. This has had negative consequences on the local education system, as only elderly residents now inhabit these communities, lacking both financial resources and familial assistance.

A growing concern is the trend of highly intelligent young individuals leaving their country to pursue higher education abroad, with only a small fraction choosing to return due to disparities in culture and both social and economic factors, as well as a greater appreciation for different values and increased professional prospects. (Pripoaie et. al., 2022).

International labour migration has also depended on and still depends on global development, which has led to its intensification. This has been marked by the evolution of means and modes of transport, communication, and media, as well as the implementation at regional and transnational level of action plans and projects for the development and formation of strategic alliances between countries.

Within this framework, the present paper examines the intricate aspects of the migration process in recent years, spanning from the period preceding the COVID-19 pandemic to the subsequent post-pandemic era. The study delves into the rationales underpinning the

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emigration of Romanian citizens to other EU member states, as well as scrutinizes the determinants that influence their decision to return.

The paper is structured as follows: section 1 highlights the importance of this topical issue, section 2 details the theoretical underpinning through a systematic literature review and a bibliometric analysis, and section 3 presents the data employed in current research and its main findings. The paper concludes with policy guidelines and the implications of the current research.

The novelty brought by the current research consists in the detailed analysis of some reference data on migration from and to Romania of Romanian citizens, the data being collected in real and official way in Romania and obtained at the end of June 2023, being recent data, updated, with high accuracy and which allowed a good delimitation and detailing of the migrants' behaviour, as well as of the typologies and categories of people who left the country in the last years in order to get jobs abroad.

The research is also distinguished by its focus on Romanians who chose to return to the country during the period under analysis, and it is of interest to know the reasons and motivations behind their decision to return to the country in increasing numbers every year. Such information is extremely important for the authorities to identify and know in order to ensure, together with private partners, a favourable environment for Romanians returning to the country of origin, a favourable environment full of opportunities, so that the period for obtaining unemployment benefits is as short as possible, and successful placement on the labour market is achieved in the shortest possible time and with the maintenance of employment status for as long as possible. These aspects included in this paper can be a point of reference for future research on migrants' behaviour and a support point for authorities involved in providing jobs and placing unemployed people on the labour market.

2. Literature review

Migration is an unavoidable aspect of our daily existence, a reality which can be attributed to rapid globalisation and advancements in technology and information. Countries with large numbers of citizens working abroad in the EU, such as Romania, Poland and Bulgaria, have anticipated massive repatriations of intra-EU migrants who have chosen to leave their host countries for fear of unemployment, contact with COVID-19 or prolonged quarantine, as well as for fear of being in the vicinity of conflict zones.

According to the European Commission, Romania is projected to experience a significant population decline, potentially losing up to 30% of its residents by 2060 due to migration. This demographic shift is especially noticeable among the younger and economically active segments of the population, posing a considerable challenge to the country's long-term

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demographic stability and its ability to effectively strategise for the future (European Commission, 2019).

2.1. Analysis of the behaviour and particularities of Romanian migrants in the post - pandemic period

The migration of highly skilled people stimulates development and innovation activities in destination countries. Skilled migrants have significant resources of improved knowledge and greater availability of skills, which is generated by a combination of migration policies (e.g. temporary visa) or the labor market demand for higher technical and engineering skills. As skilled migrants bring with them specific skills acquired during their education, their direct impact on innovation activities in destination countries is expected to be positive. Most of the existing literature studies the effect of skilled migrants on the innovation performance of the country/region/province in which they reside. However, a geographical perspective approach cannot distinguish between the effect of immigrants who contribute directly to innovation and who work in innovative sectors. Also, it cannot be clearly distinguished between the effect of immigrants who work in other sectors in the same region. In this case it is necessary to adopt an industrial perspective, which allows to eliminate possible confounding factors and to identify the real contribution of immigrants to innovation (Fassio et. al., 2021).

As the European economic policy becomes increasingly focused on knowledge and knowledge economy and skills, the presence or absence of a developed tertiary sector becomes a dominant factor in explaining and preventing migration trends. The migration process has become highly selective in terms of age, favouring young, hard-working, mobile, skilled people, for whom relocation to another country or region is much easier to accept, with rapid and sustained adaptation, to the detriment of older, less educated and less skilled people, for whom such a decision to emigrate would be too difficult a challenge to overcome. Skilled migrants find jobs mainly in host countries' metropolitan areas and less in those countries' low-skilled regions. Moreover, educated and highly skilled migrants tend to concentrate in regions where the highly educated, native-born local population is also concentrated, further exacerbating intra-regional disparities. Also, migrants who are forced to leave their homes often settle in areas with limited employment prospects. When a large influx of forced migrants occurs in a financially disadvantaged area, it puts significant pressure on public services, infrastructure, and the economy, and can also damage the social and political structure, resulting in a decline in the attractiveness of the investment environment. In contrast, in developed nations, the presence of young individuals eager to work is expected to lead to a corresponding increase in investment and production and could also speed up the economy's sustained growth rate. (Dadush and Niebuhr, 2016)

Migration in Romania is primarily driven by various economic factors, as emphasized in a recent study. These factors include the significant disparities in salary levels and living standards between Romania and other Central and Western European countries, as well as the high youth unemployment rate (NEETs unemployment). In addition to these economic

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challenges, Romania must also tackle issues related to governance quality, transparency and effectiveness of public administration at both central and local levels, bureaucratic hurdles, a merit-based society, as well as the modernisation of the education and healthcare systems (Pripoaie et. al., 2022).

Upon their return to their home country, migrants don't bring only financial resources but also novel development concepts, fresh knowledge, and entrepreneurial expertise that they have acquired through their migration experience. Consequently, they undeniably play a significant role in the advancement and modernisation of their nation.

The development of technology is seen as an important factor in the rise of the unemployed, both in Romania and in Western countries. The automation of some processes will lead to the disappearance of some jobs and the emergence of others. In Romania, the main economic centres are Bucharest, Timisoara and Cluj-Napoca. These three cities also have the highest concentration of jobs. There are many IT jobs, as well as jobs involving communications. Candidates with at least one year's experience in the field are preferred, as are candidates who are willing to work full-time. It can be seen that repetitive jobs have almost disappeared as they have been replaced by industrial robots. It can also be seen that employers are looking for candidates with higher education. An analysis of data collection practices on labour migration and its particularities in Europe showed that most EU countries do not collect sufficient or sufficiently relevant data on migrants and their free movement, so the available data are not always comparable or valid to a very large extent.

2.2. Bibliometric analysis of the specialised literature on international labour migration and Romanian migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic times

Migration to and from Romania is of particular interest to authors, researchers and economists, so the literature in the field includes extensive, complex and frequently published documents that bring to the fore the latest events, concepts, causes or reasons that determine migration. The current research aimed to analyze a total of 1,193 articles indexed in Web of Science, published between 2018-2024, searched by two terms, "Romania" and "migration", and further processed using VOSviewer.

Figure 1 shows the bibliometric analysis carried out on articles indexed in Web of Science containing terms related to the migration process from and to Romania, whose appearance in the title, text or keywords was recorded at least 8 times. Thus, it can be observed that in addition to the terms that refer to the international migration of labour, especially of labour from Romania, such as "migrants", "immigration", "refugees", "mobility", "Covid-19", there are terms that analyze migration from the perspective of movement for the purposes of education, tourism, the search for cultural identity, innovations in various fields, such as medicine and the search for innovative treatments, aspects that support, in fact, the purpose and the reasons and motivations for which migration is practised to such a great extent. Given Romania's membership in the European Union and the free movement of persons and labour,

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Figure 1. Bibliometric analysis based on terms related to the migration of Romanians appearing more than 8 times in scientific articles, 2019-2024

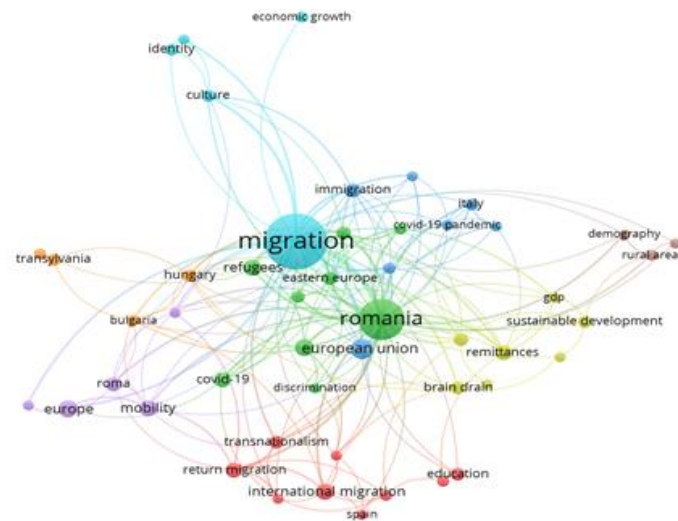
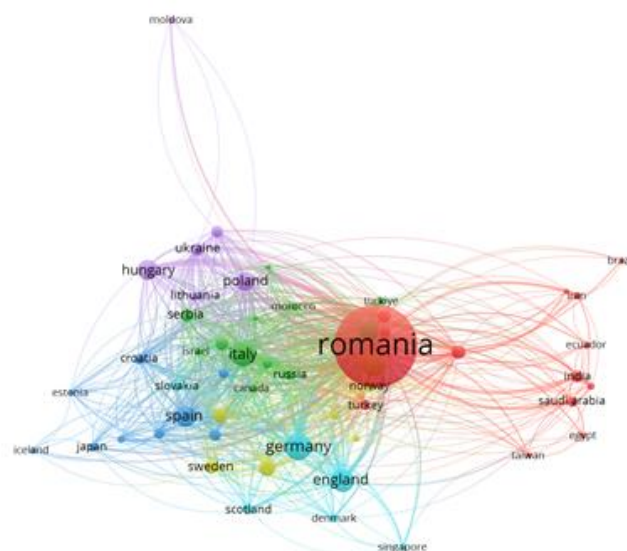


Figure 2. Bibliometric analysis based on terms related to labour migration of Romanians appearing more than 5 times in scientific articles, 2019-2024

The bibliometric analysis carried out on keywords identified at least 5 times in scientific articles and publications from 2019-2024 strictly related to the Romanian migration process is presented in Figure 2 and shows the strong links and correlations between "migration", "Romania", "European Union", "Covid-19".

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Source: Data processing using VOSviewer

Figure 3. Bibliometric analysis of the main countries of origin of the authors or publications analysed, 2019-2024

Publications also increasingly refer to the phenomenon of "return migration", which involves the return of Romanians to their country of origin, a phenomenon that was observed to accelerate from 2020, with the onset and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The literature also analyzes migration from the perspective of the countries of destination of Romanians, such as Italy and Spain, and the countries of origin of immigrants or refugees in Europe, such as Ukraine.

The literature on migration from and/or to Romania, as shown in Figure 2.3, is of major interest especially to Romanian authors, as well as to other economists and researchers from other EU Member States, host countries for Romanians who have gone abroad in search of work, but also countries from which many Romanians have chosen to return in recent years, such as Germany, Spain, Italy, Sweden or the UK. However, the process of Romanian migration is also closely monitored and analyzed in India, Japan, Egypt and Turkey.

2.3. Trends on Romanians' intention to migrate in the coming years

Engineering students exhibit a strong inclination towards migrating, with a perception of unfavorable employment opportunities and conditions in Romania compared to the more established European Union member states. Despite EU efforts to promote solidarity and cohesion in achieving sustainable development objectives and providing satisfactory employment across all member states, disparities persist, leading the younger generation to seek immediate solutions for their ambitions and aspirations (Ghergheș et. al., 2020).

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By 2025 there will certainly be major, thus not to be neglected, tensions between migrant and non-migrant communities, amplified by recurring fears of large flows of displaced people due to environmental pressures and conflicts in other countries and anxieties about the growing presence of populist parties in governments. The most important skills by 2025 include critical thinking and analysis, flexibility and stress tolerance. One solution to these challenges could be to improve educational programmes that should avoid focusing exclusively on providing information.

By 2030, Europe will be characterised by a climate of great uncertainty and uncertainty. On the one hand, there will be exciting developments as some Member States grow economically, as a result of major investment and involvement in research and development in technology, robotics and engineering. On the other hand, other Member States will experience bottlenecks, not being able to keep up with technological change, with significant obstacles to international cooperation for these countries, which will hamper efforts to cope with large numbers of people displaced by conflicts in Africa and Asia and to combat increasingly common massive cyber attacks.

Romania's absorption of refugees into the labour market will be more successful as the more locals classify refugees as in need of protection and they recognize their significant contribution to the workplace. The more effective the tools for assessing refugees' knowledge and skills, the more national organisations carrying out competency assessments will be more significant, and training and counselling resources for refugees will become more effective.

It is almost certain that by 2030 European societies will be made up of a combination of an ageing population, high dependency ratios and strained pension and welfare systems. New solutions, such as raising the retirement age, will not solve the long-term demand for labour, either in labour markets with high-skilled potential employees or in those where people have low qualifications and skills.

While the advancement of technology is a relative certainty, it is not clear how it might affect individuals' lives, especially their working lives. What technology has done for work has been revolutionary, innovative, enabling the rapid transfer of files, information, financial transfers to any corner of the world within minutes, as well as advanced, extensive telecommunications, virtual meetings and the possibility of re-entering work into the private space of the family, as was often the case in pre-industrial times.

If immigrants, Romanians or not, are mainly low-skilled, they will reduce average per capita income in the short term and encourage the adoption of less productive, labour-intensive technologies. On the other hand, if immigrants are mainly high-skilled, they may lead to an increase in the per capita income, also causing the economy's capital-labour ratio to rise in the long run. From a financial point of view, the main distinction between immigrants and

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natives lies not in the benefits they receive but in the taxes they pay. Because they have, on average, less education, immigrants earn less money and contribute significantly less to all levels of government in terms of taxes and contributions of all kinds in the host country (Koczan et al., 2021).

The country is no longer seen only as a country of emigration but has become a country capable of accepting and welcoming foreign immigrants in large numbers. In addition to the waves of migrants arriving in the country every year at an accelerated pace immediately after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, a pace also supported by the return of Romanians who left to work abroad, Romania has witnessed a new and unavoidable challenge, that of managing quickly and efficiently the transit of refugees from Ukraine and, subsequently, the process of adaptation and integration of those who decided to stay in Romania. There are currently 77,902 Ukrainian refugees in Romania (UNHCR, 2024), of which 6.500 Ukrainians were working in 2023 and are currently registered in REVISAL in Romania (Gov.ro, 2023)

3. Data and Methodology

Regarding the situation reported for Romania, the data collected and processed at the national level by the National Agency for Employment (ANOFM) was used in current research to obtain and analyse valid and viable information.

For the reporting period for which ANOFM provided available data, 01.01.2018-30.06.2023, 12,475 people were registered for unemployment benefits, of which 6,578 were women and 5,897 were men. Of these, 10,945 people had previously had one or more jobs, and 1,530 people were graduates of various educational qualifications with no experience and no job at the time of registration in ANOFM records. Of the 12,475 unemployed officially registered with the ANOFM, 10,875 people were receiving unemployment benefits in 2018-2023, while 1,600 people did not qualify for this national benefit.

Regarding the age of the unemployed registered with ANOFM, it was found that the age group with the most unemployed people was 40-49 years old (3,955 people), followed by 50-59 years old (3,130 people), 30-39 years old (2,165 people), 20-29 years old (1,797 people), under 20 years old (1,146 people) and over 60 years old (282 people). Also, 11,202 of the registered people were ethnic Romanians, 843 Hungarians, 343 Roma and 87 representatives of other ethnic groups.

The exit from the ANOFM register was made for two possible reasons of the registered unemployed, either departure from Romania for a period of up to 3 months, a reason declared by 9,744 persons, or departure from Romania for more than 3 months, a reason declared by 2,731 persons.

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4. Results

The data reported by ANOFM included reports on Romanians who returned to their country of origin, Romania, in the period 01.01.2019-30.06.2023 and who applied for registration as unemployed with ANOFM. It was found that 12,100 people returned, of which 4,269 were women and 7,831 were men. The number of returnees accelerated with the outbreak and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic when Romanians who had gone abroad to work decided to return to the country to be closer to family and friends and remained in Romania, either as unemployed, with or without benefits, or by getting jobs. Another interesting aspect observed in recent years is that Romanians who have migrated to Latin countries in Western Europe and intend to establish a business in their home country are more inclined to return to Romania than those who have migrated to non-Latin countries.

Table 1. Migration data collected by ANOFM, 01.01.2018-30.06.2023

Nr. crt.	County	No of registered persons	Gender		Unemployment benefit	Residence	
			F	M		Urban	Rural
1	AB	503	271	232	460	170	333
2	AG	332	175	157	314	149	183
3	AR	214	145	69	214	99	115
4	B	224	143	81	204	224	0
5	BC	316	139	177	189	104	212
6	BH	408	264	144	394	143	265
7	BN	264	143	121	252	97	167
8	BR	123	57	66	92	89	34
9	BT	179	71	108	145	68	111
10	BV	128	78	50	126	84	44
11	BZ	146	69	77	141	66	80
12	CJ	391	240	151	313	227	164
13	CL	101	48	53	96	48	53
14	CS	486	296	190	478	268	218
15	CT	364	205	159	176	188	176
16	CV	294	160	134	251	163	131
17	DB	105	54	51	102	30	75
18	DJ	257	133	124	248	131	126
19	GJ	491	279	212	487	204	287
20	GL	242	119	123	166	113	129
21	GR	44	24	20	34	27	17
22	HD	712	408	304	645	532	180
23	HR	635	335	300	616	279	356
24	IF	45	24	21	33	25	20
25	IL	141	84	57	137	78	63
26	IS	306	142	164	173	112	195
27	MH	240	110	130	239	110	130
28	MM	245	129	116	243	135	110

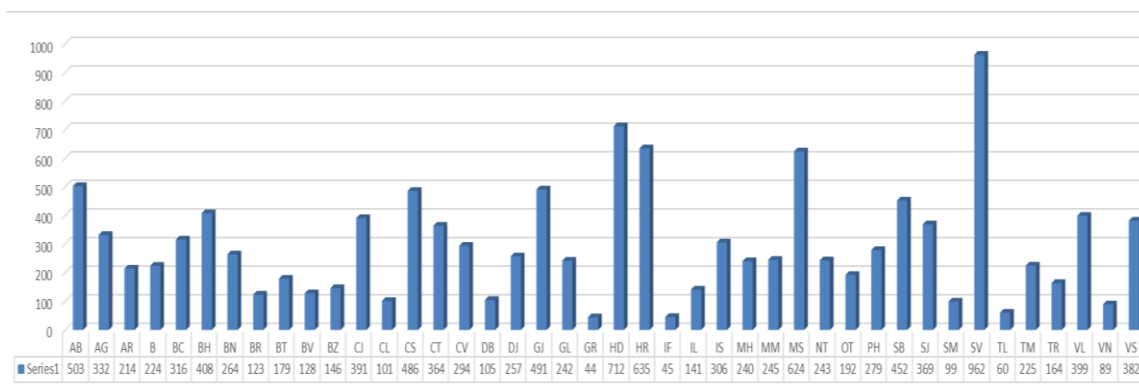
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Nr. crt.	County	No of registered persons	Gender		Unemployment benefit	Residence	
			F	M		Urban	Rural
29	MS	624	318	306	402	267	357
30	NT	243	113	130	215	57	186
31	OT	192	122	70	188	79	113
32	PH	279	157	122	265	125	154
33	SB	452	211	241	444	227	225
34	SJ	369	200	169	309	140	229
35	SM	99	50	49	89	36	63
36	SV	962	414	548	935	278	684
37	TL	60	27	33	56	32	28
38	TM	225	127	98	198	106	119
39	TR	164	68	96	112	64	100
40	VL	399	197	202	394	33	266
41	VN	89	43	46	82	11	78
42	VS	382	186	196	217	130	252
TOTAL		12475	6578	5897	10874	5548	6828

Source: ANOFM data processing, 30 June 2023

The majority of Romanian citizens registered with ANOFM during the analysis period came from rural areas, often nearly double the proportion of those from urban areas and were mainly female.



Source: ANOFM data processing, 30 June 2023

Figure 4. Distribution by counties of Romanian citizens registered with ANOFM who left the country in 2018-2023

Figure 4 shows the number of unemployed people who left the ANOFM register after going abroad, distributed by each county of Romania, with the results of the 42 regional organisational forms, made up of 41 counties and the capital of Romania, Bucharest, with its 6 sectors, being shown graphically. It can be seen that the most citizens registered with ANOFM who chose to go abroad for a period of 3 months or more were from Suceava county

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(SV), where the number reached 962 people, followed by those from Hunedoara (HD), Harghita (HR) and Mures (MS). Suceava county (SV) also recorded the highest number of rural citizens, three times the number of those from urban areas who left the agency's records and went to work across the border, a sign that living conditions in rural areas have become increasingly difficult, and the options for work have become extremely limited, as this environment is mostly marked by seasonal work, often undeclared, without a contract, paid by the day and of an uncertain nature, aspects that do not allow a decent living or supporting a family.

On the other hand, among the people registered as unemployed with ANOFM, in the counties of Giurgiu (GR), Ilfov (IF) or Tulcea (TL), very few people chose to go abroad to work, 44, 45 and 60 people respectively.

With regard to the status of the benefit recipients, it could be observed that more than 10 thousand people received some amount of money in the form of unemployment benefits during the period under review. The majority of the non-entitled citizens were of other ethnicities than Romanian, rejected citizens from non-EU countries, whose papers and documents were not in order or were non-existent, which is why they were registered with the Romanian authorities but could not be supported financially, and they eventually chose to go abroad, either to return to their countries of origin or to show interest towards other destinations within the European Union.

Table 2. Educational attainment, Romania, 2018-2023

Primary school	1051
Secondary school	2547
High-school	4300
Post high-school	387
Professional school	2756
Tertiary school	1006
Unknown	428
TOTAL	12475

Source: ANOFM data processing, 30 June 2023

The level of education and schooling of the unemployed registered with the ANOFM in 2018-2023 showed that most people had graduated from high school (4,300), while the tertiary level (university studies: bachelor, master, doctorate) was held by only 1,006 people. Among those registered were also people who had only completed primary school (1,051 people). There were also 2,756 graduates of vocational schools, although most of them have been abolished in Romania in recent years, but recently projects have been presented at national level to bring vocational schools back into the limelight and to allow the resumption of training

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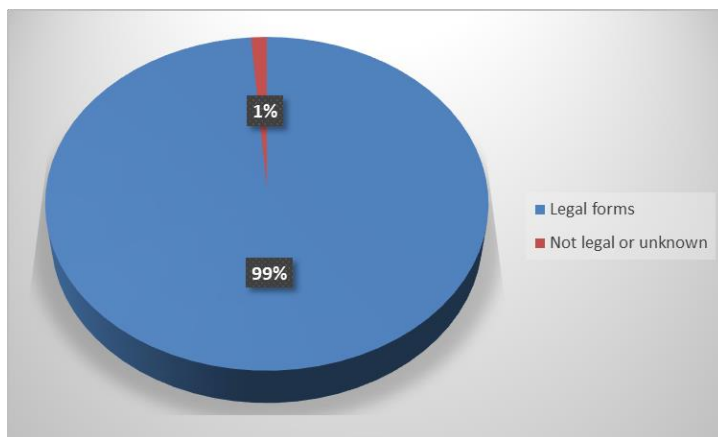
programmes proposed within them, being of great interest to a significant number of Romanian citizens, but also to employers looking for a workforce prepared for certain types of activities.

Table 3. Country leavers, Romania, 2018-2023

2018	3252
2019	2467
2020	2468
2021	1178
2022	1820
2023	1290
TOTAL	12475

Source: ANOFM data processing, 30 June 2023

The above table shows the number of people registered with ANOFM who left the agency during 2018-2023 to go abroad, either for a maximum of 3 months or for an indefinite period of more than 3 months. We see that the rate is decreasing, a sign that the decision to go abroad to work has occurred in recent years with much less frequency, especially following the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also in the post-pandemic years. Thus, more and more Romanians prefer to look for jobs in their home country, a situation that also applies to Romanians returning from abroad and registered with ANOFM, whose intention is to stay in the country and look for jobs in Romania.



Source: ANOFM data processing, 30 June 2023

Figure 5. Legal vs undeclared work, returned Romanians, 2019-2023

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Between 01.01.2019 and 30.06.2023, 12,100 Romanians returned to Romania and registered with ANOFM willing to obtain unemployment benefits. Of these, 1% (152 people) declared that they worked without legal forms, "on the black", abroad, while the rest had a work contract. Illegal practices, without state systems and institutions, are increasingly rare in the eyes of Romanians in recent years, an important aspect to be mentioned and appreciated, given the extremely high risks of such practices, as well as the lack of employee rights. The status of European Union citizens which Romanians hold, by virtue of Romania's membership of the European Union, guarantees them a series of rights in the case of legal forms of employment, as they are protected against abuse by employers and insured in the event of accidents at work, and their remuneration for their work is also guaranteed, which is why most Romanians want and choose to work legally.

Table 4. Number of returns in Romania registered at ANOFM, 2019-2023

2019		2020		2021		2022		30.06.2023	
Country	Number of returns	Country	Number of returns	Country	Number of returns	Country	Number of returns	Country	Number of returns
GERMANY	767	GERMANY	1183	GERMANY	1757	GERMANY	2289	GERMANY	2320
DENMARK	215	DENMARK	274	DENMARK	357	DENMARK	356	DENMARK	321
SPAIN	133	AUSTRIA	61	AUSTRIA	112	AUSTRIA	214	AUSTRIA	185
ITALY	41	SPAIN	57	FRANCE	66	SPAIN	66	SPAIN	38
PORTUGAL	41	ITALY	34	SPAIN	62	SWITZERLAND	31	SWITZERLAND	36

Source: ANOFM data processing, 30 June 2023

The data in the above table shows the ranking of the top 5 countries from which Romanians have chosen to return to Romania in greater numbers in recent years and which have been registered with ANOFM upon their return. Germany is the country that most Romanians have chosen to leave each year, with the number of Romanians arriving from Germany increasing each year. The number of Romanians arriving from Germany in mid-2023 exceeded the number of Romanians returning to the country in the previous year. This was also observed in total for the year 2023, when 3,059 Romanians were registered by 30 June, compared to 3,174 Romanians registered by 31 December 2022. Thus, the trend of return to the country is growing; in practice, it has doubled in the last year, which shows the growing interest of Romanians in the jobs offered at the national level by employers. In addition to Germany, there are other EU countries from which Romanians choose to return, such as Denmark, Austria, Italy and Spain, as well as non-EU countries such as Switzerland.

5. Conclusion

Even though the pandemic has had a significant impact on migration, it seems that some people working abroad intend to move again to seek higher earnings. Romania will also be

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influenced by this pattern, with its people having adapted to a unique lifestyle, a different approach to education, and a contrasting healthcare structure.

The emigration phenomenon in Romania has a dual impact on the labour market. On the one hand, the significant number of emigrants diminishes the available workforce and creates challenges in filling job vacancies. Also, the remittances sent back to the country by these emigrants positively affect the standard of living of their families left behind, consequently boosting the demand for goods and services in the local economy.

Although Romania's labour market has peculiarities and characteristics that do not allow it, for the time being, to be aligned with the recommended European benchmarks, it suffers new imbalances with each arrival in the country of migrants seeking employment. Romanians, as well as recent arrivals from abroad, will have to adapt to the new requirements of the new labour market, which are inevitable and more and more standardised in other European markets. Above all, the trends of digitisation and orientation towards the digital labour market will become urgently necessary to be known and taken on board by the new generations, as the digital area would acquire a special character of major importance globally in the future.

This research also raises an important issue facing Romania, namely the problem of migration and migrants, the causes of the mass departure of the labour force abroad and, most importantly, the consequences of this decision, given that an impressive number of migrants have decided to return to Romania because of the Covid-19 crisis, and their return has triggered a new imbalance on the labour market.

It is certain that in an increasingly globalised era, the targets set for 2021-2027 should also be seen from a global perspective. All Member States of the European Union consider openness to the world at large a prerequisite for global development and prosperity. Through education and training, this helps the Union achieve its most important goal of becoming the strongest and most stable knowledge-based and sustainable economy in the world.

The research aimed at analyzing the typology and categories of people who, despite receiving unemployment benefits from ANOFM, chose to leave the country to work abroad, mainly in EU member states or in European countries, but without knowing whether and to what extent Romanian migrants were subsequently employed abroad, this being one of the limitations of the research, due to the lack of data collected and published in this regard provided by other bodies and authorities in EU countries where Romanians obtained a job on the labour market.

This paper also analyzed the return of Romanians to the country since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and their registration for unemployment benefits. However, the paper did not take into consideration the job supply on the Romanian market at the level of the last reference year, 2023, those jobs needed for people receiving ANOFM benefits to be able to change their status from unemployed to employed. The forementioned analysis becomes the

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reference theme for future research, which will detail and analyze how supply and demand on the Romanian labour market reach a common point, especially in the case of people arriving from abroad, especially Romanians.

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