

## From white to black and white collars. On the present international migrations of Moldovan intellectuals. On censuses, migrations and palliative statistical methods

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The typical profile of the emigrant all over the world is known to include, among other things, a good representation of people with a medium level of education and the Moldovan emigrant does not represent an exception to this pattern.

But, as the last population census keeps unallowed silence on such a delicate social topic as migrations, we find ourselves forced to face the impossible situation in which any thorough analysis is – officially speaking – forbidden. Thus, in order to remove the statistical quasi-enigmas that join the present migrations of our fellow country men, between June 2009 and June 2010 we carried on an ample socio-geographical survey at the scale of the whole province, recording a number of 9,959 people who went abroad after 1989 for exclusively economic reasons. In order to achieve this goal, we made use of the directed (reasoned) survey method which, unlike the random survey, has the advantage of providing much more accurate information, focusing on a social group that is strictly delimited from the others according to a clearly shaped criterion – the participation in migrations in our case.

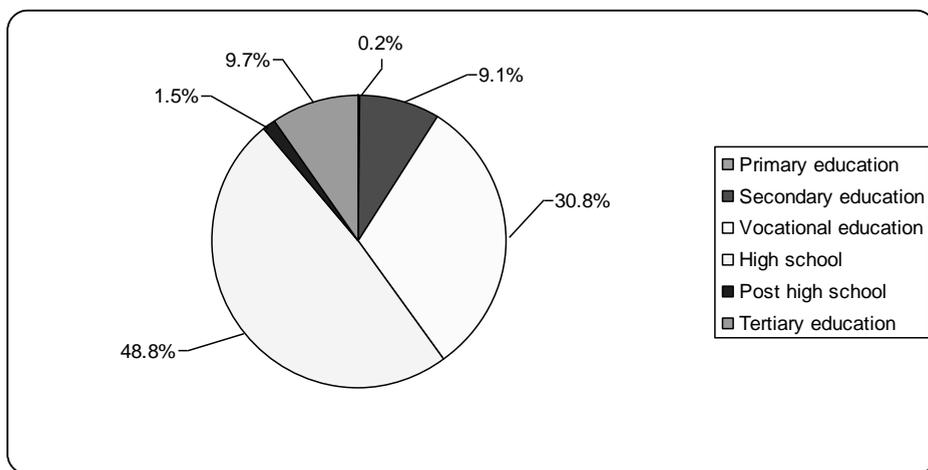


Fig. 1 – The structure of Moldovan emigrants by level of education

But as this approach could not have fully pointed out the structural characteristics of the flow of migrants, we also took into consideration, among other

things, the educational level of these people at the moment of their leaving the country. From this point of view, for easy-to-guess social and economic reasons, we consider that intellectual emigrants play a very important part as long as, by their leaving abroad, the country is deprived of a high quality human capital in the training of which the Romanian state invested a hardly neglectable amount of money.

Concretely, as figure 1 reveals, the average categories (vocational, high school and post high school graduates) represent 81.1% of the total number of Romanian emigrants of Moldova, this overrepresentation being grounded on the collapse of many industrial plants set up in the communist period but also on the incapacity of the Romanian educational system of providing the society with school leavers endowed with concrete lucrative skills (as it is especially the case of the high school educational system).

### Universities, faculties and graduates in post communist Romania

Without undermining the role and importance of any category of education (and implicitly of profession), from the social-economic point of view intellectuals are most important. Providing almost a tenth of the total flow (9.7%), the emigration of tertiary graduates is a very unprofitable business for any state as long as the investment made in education gets lost in favour of the destination country. Moreover, the balance of the well-instructed and innovating human capital has to suffer.

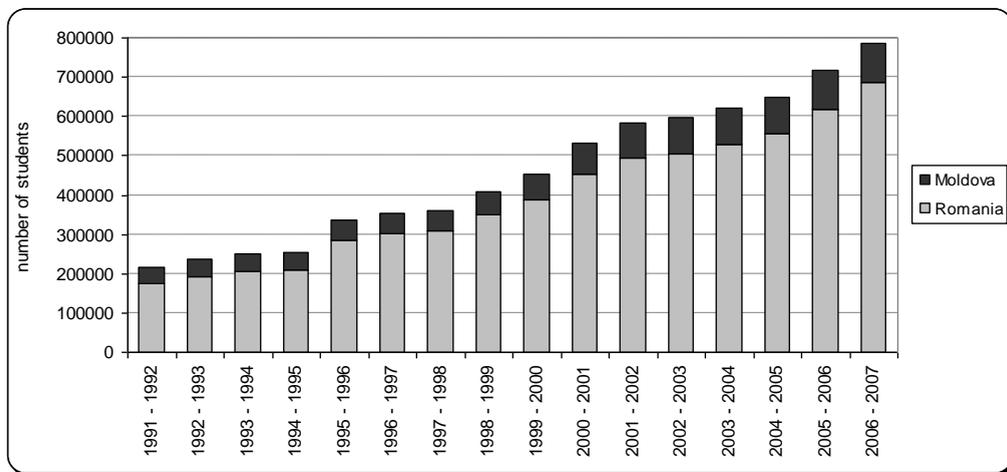


Fig. 2 – The evolution of the number of students in post communist Romania - Moldova’s share included (starting with 1995-1996 academic year private universities are also taken into account)

But if this is the general principle that works on all meridians, we must not forget that there are also particular characteristics which essentially modulate the initial thesis when summed up.

Thus, in post communist Romania the number of universities, students and implicitly graduates significantly increased. Previously, the admission to university used to be extremely rigid and difficult; on the one hand there was a small number of available places and exams were very selective; on the other hand the policy of massively industrializing the country promoted by the political power of the time demanded to massively employ average-qualified staff in secondary field activities. After 1989 the Romanian tertiary educational system has faced profound changes, the general trend being that of smoothing the access to this type of training for a larger and larger number of people. Thus, the first stage (that lasted until 1995) experienced the increase of the number of available places in universities on the level of both the whole country (with 18.5%) and Moldova (with 12.5%). Even though that growth was not to be neglected, a really spectacular evolution began after 1995, when the changes in the education legislation allowed the foundation of private universities (fig. 3). Consequently, if in 1989 in Romania there were 56 universities, eighteen years later their number was more than double (104). But what is even more important is the fact that the evolution of the number of students during the same period of time was even more accelerated, almost tripling (more exactly, it increased with 265.0%). However in Moldova the dynamics was rather more temperate, the number of students rising with 150.0% in the context in which, from the demographic point of view, this province traditionally has the youngest population in the country.

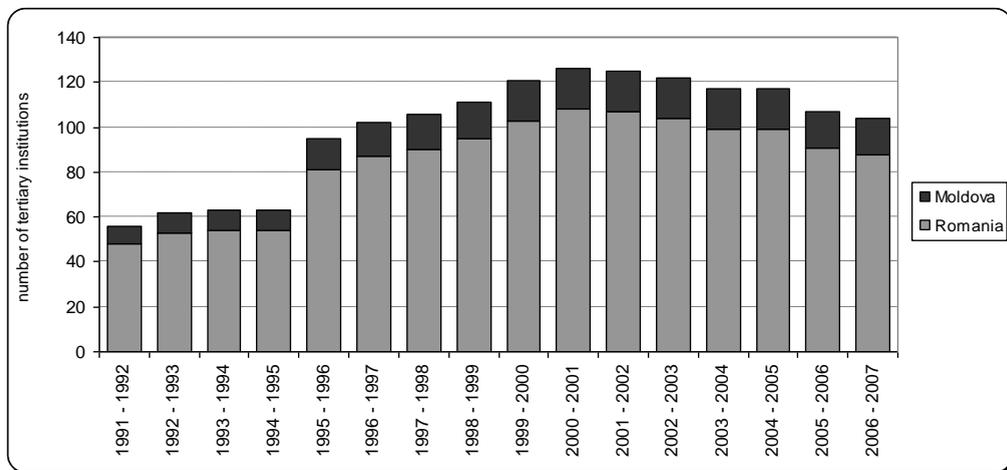


Fig. 3 - The evolution of the number of tertiary institutions in post communist Romania - Moldova's share included (starting with 1995-1996 academic year private universities are also taken into account)

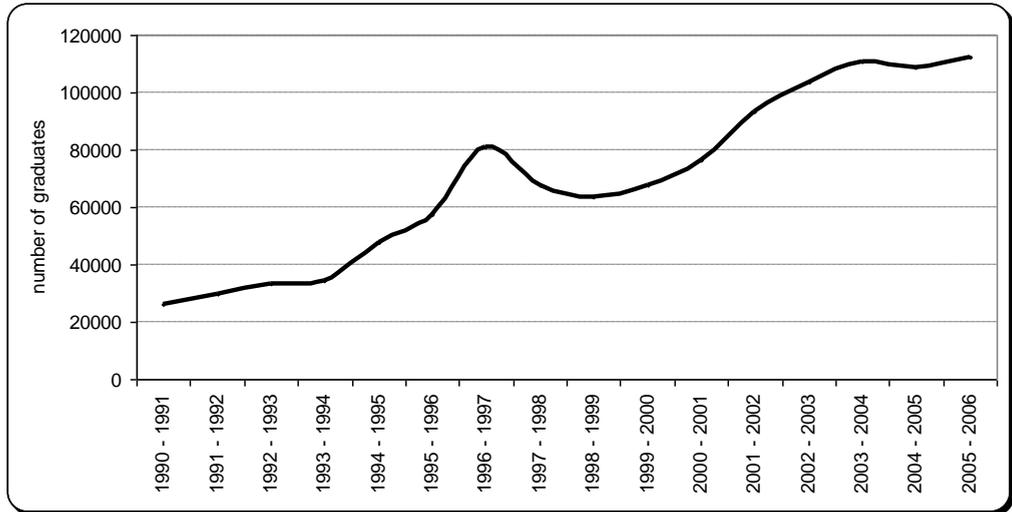


Fig. 4 – The evolution of the number of tertiary graduates in post communist Romania (starting with 1995-1996 academic year private universities are also taken into account)

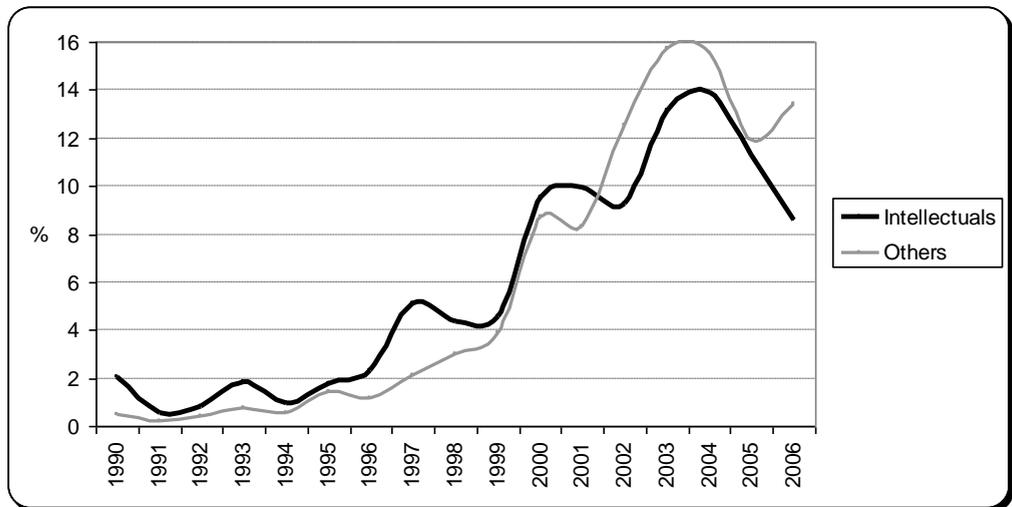
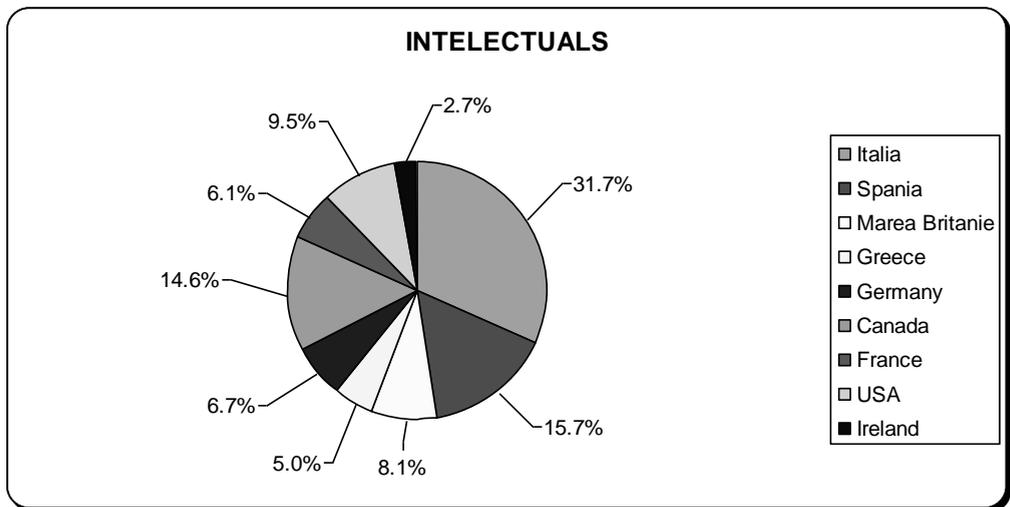
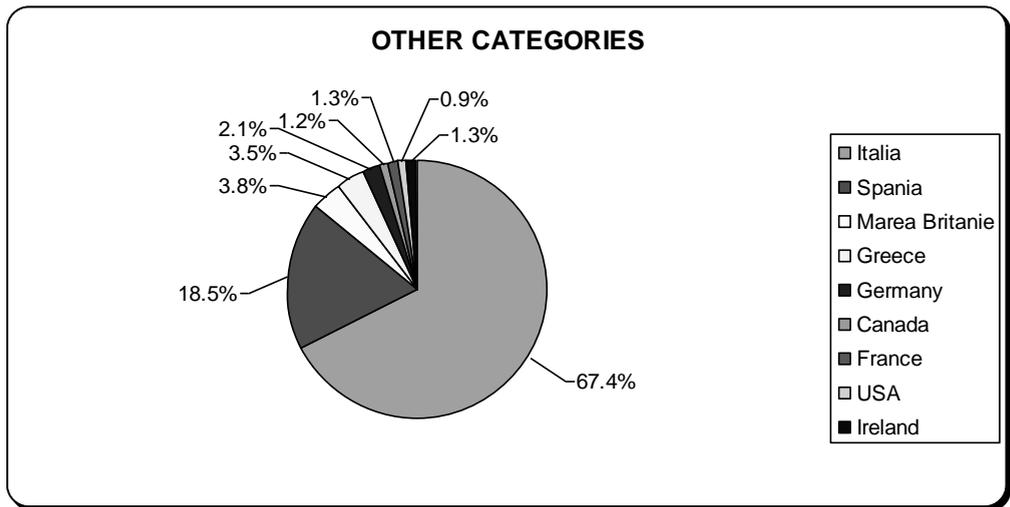


Fig. 5 – Moldova – differences between the dynamics of the emigration of intellectuals and that of other professional categories

Certainly, migrations abroad represented “a valve of evacuation” of this excessive production of graduates but from this point of view this elitist social category is most probable to also have distinct behavioural characteristics.



a.



b.

Fig. 6 – Emigrants' destinations by level of education

Under the circumstances in which during these years Romania has passed through a long and difficult period of political, social and economic transition, it is obvious that there is an „overproduction” of highly qualified staff. The possibilities of getting employed have drastically diminished: the industrial field has dismissed a large number of engineers; small hospitals and certain dispensaries have been closed; the educational system has faced a continuous quantitative narrowing due to the decrease of the natality rate and implicitly of the number of pupils; research centres suffer from chronic subfinancing.

Thus, on the level of the whole country, between 1990 and 2006 the number of graduates increased 4.3 times, from 25,927 to 112,244 (fig. 4). This evolution is even more impressive after the year 1995 when private universities began to completely legally function in Romania.

From this view point, what first draws our attention is the emigration dynamics (fig. 5), comparatively regarded between intellectuals and other socio-professional categories. From this perspective, what stands out is the more speculative character of university graduates whose departures abroad clearly prevailed immediately after 1989 and until the year 2000, when the more permissive regulations adopted primarily by the Italian state (the Turco-Napolitano Law) facilitated the access to migration even for less educated categories. Moreover, after 2002 (when a new emigrant-favouring law was applied – the Bossi-Fini law), these categories greatly caught up with the previous deficit and that was very obvious especially in the year 2004. As a matter of fact, it was then that Romanian emigrants became subject to a professional specialization: men working in the construction field and women as housekeepers (obviously, these jobs do not require a high level of education).

The structure by sex of the emigrated population reveals significant differences: a more feminized character in the case of intellectuals (among them women represent 47.1%) as compared to the others (44.2%). This is a clear (rather secondary) social and economic effect of women's tertiary educational background, which brings about a high degree of voluntarism and a more liberal perception on personal and professional life.

Instead, the general average age at the emigrating moment is higher for intellectuals (31.6 as opposed to 30.4 years old) – the natural consequence of the longer schooling period. The situation is rather different if we regard things separately, by sexes. While the average age of intellectual men is still higher (32.2 as compared to 30.0 years old), for women who do not have a university background emigration takes place earlier (at 31.1 as compared to 30.8 years old). The most logical explanation resides in the fact that they get married and have their first child at an earlier age (of course, this is not meant to speed up emigration).

Another point in which emigration has clearly different characteristics is that of the final destinations, which are more heterogeneous in the case of intellectuals even though, in both situations, the most important flows are oriented towards Italy (fig. 6, a and b). The fact itself does not have to surprise us: the lower the level of education, the more probable the access to Italy if we take into consideration both the bigger possibility of fast socio-professional integration (against the background of a consistent numerical presence of the Romanian community) and the well known cultural and linguistic similitudes. For intellectuals, instead, more selective destinations such as Canada, France, USA or Germany are more frequent, easier to get to.

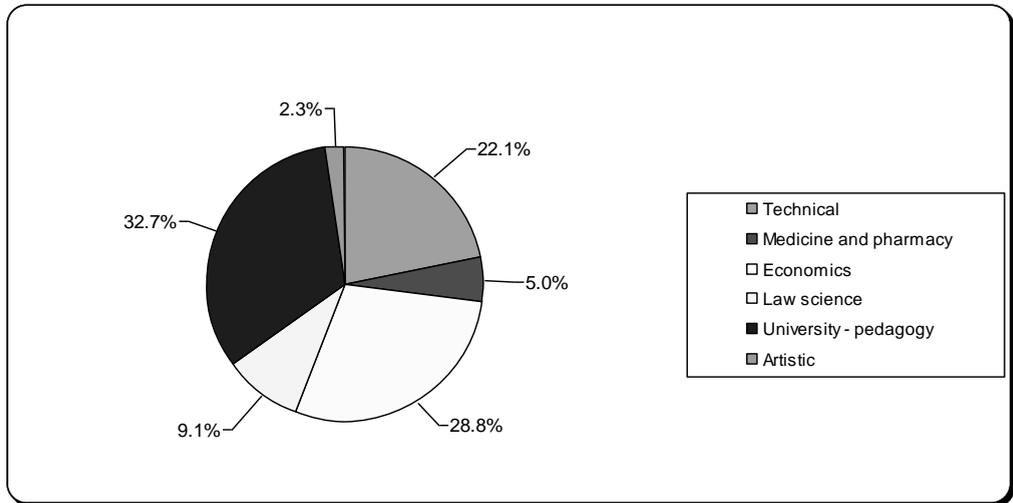


Fig. 7 – Tertiary graduates’ structure by group of specialization (2006)

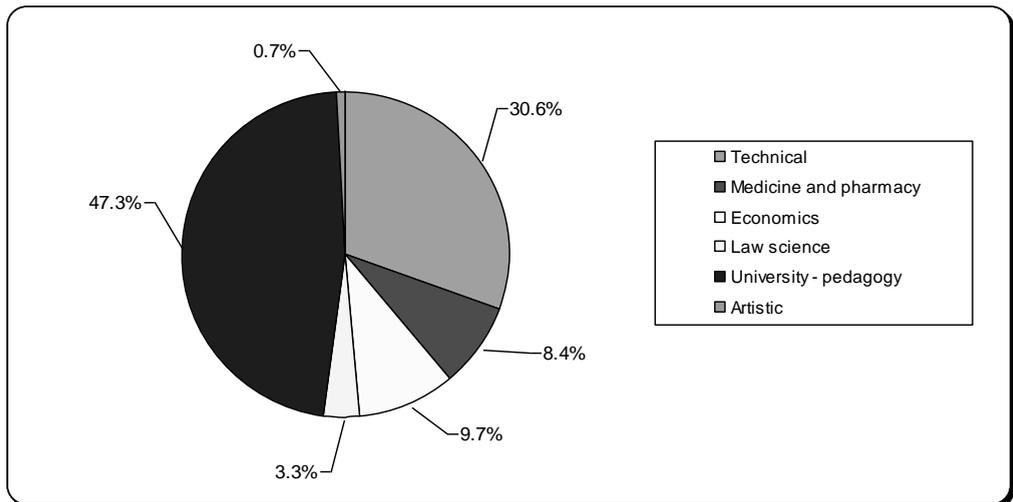


Fig. 8 – Intellectual emigrants’ structure by group of specialization (2010)

But intellectuals are not homogenous from the structural point of view and this makes them differently react to the challenges triggered by emigration. Thus, from the view point of their training field (fig. 7), most graduates are specialized in the university-pedagogy field (32.7%), economics (28.8%) and technical sciences (22.1%). But if we refer to emigrated intellectuals (fig. 8), this structure has a totally different shape: a clear overrepresentation of the university-pedagogy (47.3%) and technical fields (30.6%). Practically, in the first case we deal with the social and professional effect of a tertiary training that provides low financial satisfactions after graduation. In the second case it is obvious that the Romanian industry is no longer

able to swallow up a more and more numerous highly qualified labour force. Law and economics graduates seem to have more opportunities of professional success, their participation in emigration being smaller.

According to the data supplied by our survey, only 39.6% of the Romanian intellectual emigrants manage to professionally integrate themselves in the destination country in keeping with the tertiary training acquired in Romania. As regards this desideratum, medicine and pharmacy graduates have most chances of success – 99.6% of them find abroad jobs which are consistent with their university specialization. At the opposite point there are the artistic (only 7.8%) and, curiously enough, economics graduates (only 25.7%).

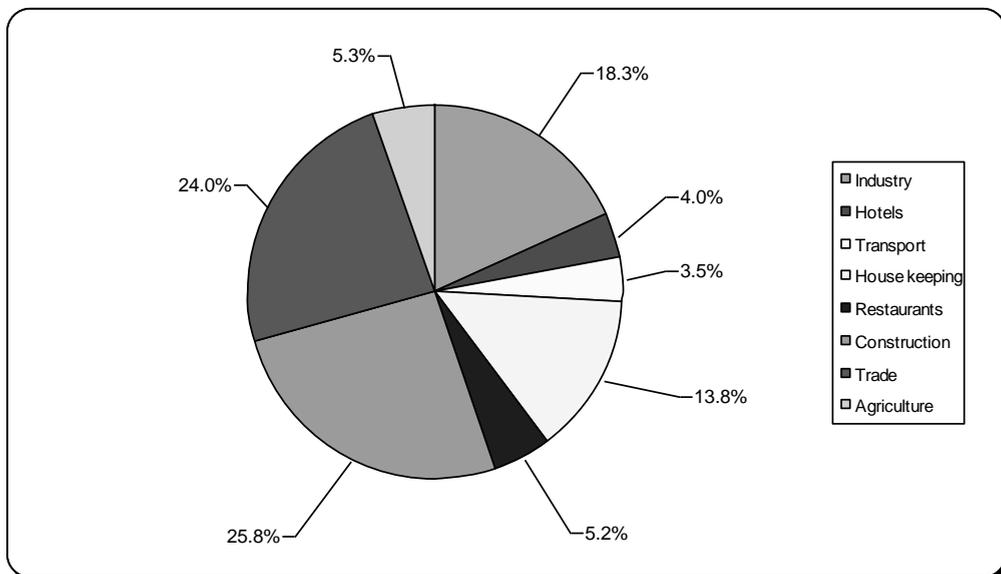


Fig. 9 – The professional structure of the Moldovan intellectual emigrants activating in the destination country in jobs which are not in accordance with their academic background (2010)

On the other hand, the Moldovan intellectual emigrants who did not manage to find abroad a job in compliance with the tertiary specialization acquired at home can be found in different fields of the labour market: construction (25.8%), trade (24.0%) and industry (18.3%), certain domains such as house keeping being definitely underrepresented in comparison to the rest of the emigrants (fig. 9).

### Short conclusions

The economic international migrations of our fellow country men must be regarded in a very realistic light, this being the only way in which the Romanian society can really take benefit from this phenomenon on all levels.

From this point of view, what stands out is the lack of decision on the political level, the Romanian state seeming not to succeed in taking advantage of this resource. Things get even more serious when it comes to highly qualified categories – an action that requires a financial and social effort that becomes more and more appreciated in the present-day society. Nowadays, the most valuable contemporary resource – the well trained human capital – seems to be totally neglected in our country and this fact is meant to have negative consequences especially in the present European context in which competing relations are getting more and more acerb and ruthless.

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