



## **CARIM EAST – CONSORTIUM FOR APPLIED RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

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# ***Moldovan Labour Migrants in the European Union: Problems of Integration***

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CARIM-East Research Report 2012/41



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**CARIM-East**  
**Creating an Observatory of Migration East of Europe**

**Research Report**  
**CARIM-East RR 2012/41**

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## **CARIM-East – Creating an Observatory East of Europe**

This project which is co-financed by the European Union is the first migration observatory focused on the Eastern Neighbourhood of the European Union and covers all countries of the Eastern Partnership initiative (Belarus, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) and Russian Federation.

The project's two main themes are:

- (1) migration from the region to the European Union (EU) focusing in particular on countries of emigration and transit on the EU's eastern border; and
- (2) intraregional migration in the post-Soviet space.

The project started on 1 April 2011 as a joint initiative of the European University Institute (EUI), Florence, Italy (the lead institution), and the Centre of Migration Research (CMR) at the University of Warsaw, Poland (the partner institution).

CARIM researchers undertake comprehensive and policy-oriented analyses of very diverse aspects of human mobility and related labour market developments east of the EU and discuss their likely impacts on the fast evolving socio-economic fabric of the six Eastern Partners and Russia, as well as that of the European Union.

In particular, CARIM-East:

- builds a broad network of national experts from the region representing all principal disciplines focused on human migration, labour mobility and national development issues (e.g. demography, law, economics, sociology, political science).
- develops a comprehensive database to monitor migration stocks and flows in the region, relevant legislative developments and national policy initiatives;
- undertakes, jointly with researchers from the region, systematic and *ad hoc* studies of emerging migration issues at regional and national levels.
- provides opportunities for scholars from the region to participate in workshops organized by the EUI and CMR, including academic exchange opportunities for PhD candidates;
- provides forums for national and international experts to interact with policymakers and other stakeholders in the countries concerned.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: <http://www.carim-east.eu/>

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## Summary

The purpose of the present paper is to consider the problems related to the integration of Moldovan immigrants in the countries of the European Union.

To complete this paper the method of secondary data analysis was used. The secondary data are produced by the analysis of statistical data and the results of sociology research held in the Republic of Moldova by state agencies and sociological services, as well as international agencies (World Bank, International Organization for Migration). At the same time some empirical and analytical material, research hypotheses and conclusions developed in scholarly research on the issues of international labour migration of Moldovan population were also used in the present paper. Moreover, the work on the paper also involved the analysis of primary data, based on our own sociological research, both previously published and conducted specifically for the present study.

Our assumption is that integration is a bilateral process of mutual adaptation likewise of immigrants and receiving countries (at the level of both state politics and citizens - population of the country). Integration was analyzed on the basis of MIPEX methodology with national integration policy index of the EU countries defined on the basis of more than 150 parameters structured according to seven principal groups. An important emphasis was made on the issues of acquiring the language of the country of residence.

One should note that these were related to perception and subjective assessment of labour migrants, as well as their real actions aimed at integration into common political and socio-economic space of the EU. Additionally those aspects of integration were considered which, as we think, are characteristic of the aspiration of the Moldovan citizens to really integrate with the EU countries.

In the conclusion it was shown that the process of social adaptation and integration of Moldovan labour migrants proceeds rather successfully. This integration process is complex in character, relates to all the spheres of social life, extends to political participation, employment and labour mobility, residence, access to citizenship, systems of education, social and legal protection, ensuring fundamental civil and political rights, as well as satisfaction of people's language, religious and socio-cultural needs.

Irrespective of the causes which drove them to emigrate, Moldovan immigrants in the EU countries show high level of integration and desire to enter the receiving community in the status of law-abiding citizens and civilized individuals. Their successful integration in the EU countries also greatly depends on the policy of the Moldovan state and its cooperation both with receiving countries and international agencies for ensuring rights and freedoms of Moldovan citizens, their legal and social protection abroad.

Among policy recommendation we would like to stress the necessity for Moldovan authorities to employ the methodology and foreign nationals' integration experience in realizing Moldovan policies and practices of both integration of foreign nationals – immigrants to the Republic of Moldova, and reintegration of Moldovan citizens, who have returned or yet to return home from the countries of the European Union.

## Introduction

The present paper addresses the issues related to the integration of Moldovan labour migrants in the countries of the European Union. This process is considered within the framework of the seven principal parameters groups such as acquisition of language, employment and mobility on labour market, family reunification, access to education, political participation, permanent resident status, citizenship and anti-discrimination. The paper shows the varieties of interpretation of these parameters (MIPEX index) on the example of national policies in the EU countries principally attracting Moldovan migrants. The paper extensively relies on both statistical data and results of qualitative sociological research, as well as on surveys held with labour migrants and experts.

Democratization of entry/exit procedures accompanied Moldova's rise as an independent democracy. This process also coincided with a deep crisis conditioned both by the collapse of the militarized administratively commanded economy of the Soviet Union and low efficiency of social and economic reforms held in the country. Dramatic decrease of the living standards of the population and integration into international democratic, cultural and educational space provided a stimulus for rising attitudes in favor of migration and people, thus, began to actively emigrate, both permanently (for permanent residence) and temporarily (to earn money, to study, *etc.*). Emigration vector, taking into account the great variety of the forms of emigration, is quite diversified. Among the most popular regions and countries of destinations are Russia, Ukraine, the USA and EU countries, with Russia and the EU countries being the most attractive in terms of international labour migration, both regular and irregular.

The share of Moldova's citizens among foreign nationals legally residing or staying in the European Union is insignificant. According to Cirlig (2012: p. 57-58) there are 166,977 in total, which makes up to 0.49% of all the foreign nationals legally staying in the EU countries. In certain EU countries, however, the share of Moldovan citizens is higher. These include: Italy (89,424 people or 53.6% of the total number of Moldovans in EU-27), Portugal – 21,353 people (12.8%), Spain – 17,536 people (10.5%), Germany – 13,214 (7.9%), Romania – 10,450 people (6.3%), Czech Republic – 8,435 people (5.1%). Among other countries with considerable number of Moldovans let us mention France, Greece and Ireland (Cirling, 2012: 57-58).

Those who reside in the EU illegally are 'invisible' to statistics agencies of the receiving countries. Yet it is exactly characteristic of Moldovan migration that apart from regular migration it also comprises considerable irregular share, mainly labour in character. A great number of Moldovan labour migrants in receiving countries have the status of irregular migrants conditioned by illegal entry, illegal residence or employment. Undoubtedly, this affects also the process of their integration in the countries of the European Union.

There are no uniform data on the number of irregular migrants from Moldova staying in the EU. Surveys testify that there are quite a lot of them. For example, only in Italy, which is the principal 'consumer' of Moldovan labour migrants within the EU, there are no less than 40 thousand people. According **to experts**: *'In accordance with official data provided by the Italian government there are 132 thousand Moldovan citizens legally staying on the territory of Italy. This figure was announced by the Italian Foreign Minister Massimo d'Alema during his visit to Chisinau this January. Yet, the embassy operates some other figures. According to our data the number of Moldovan citizens in Italy is about 200 thousand people. Italy, thus, has the second number of Moldovan migrants – members of Diaspora. Most of them arrived illegally. We acknowledge the efforts undertaken by the Government of Italy to gradually increase the number of Moldovan migrants managing to legalize their stay. If in 2006 there were only 5 thousand working places allowed for Moldovan citizens, then in 2007 this number grew to 6.5 thousand thanks to Flussi Decree and 38 thousand Moldovans applied for these jobs. Thus, we get our statistics – 132 thousand plus another 38 thousand.'* (Moraru, 2012: 105).

Problems of Moldovan citizens abroad has not been yet seriously studied by scholars in Moldova. This is conditioned by the fact that up to now the stress has been put on the research of the phenomenon of international migration of Moldovan citizens, identification of its principal directions and the number of Moldovan migrants including labour migrants. Within the framework of such research particular problems related to adaptation and integration of Moldovan citizens in certain EU countries were also studied (Perciun, 2006; Mosneaga, 2008; Deleu, 2009; Slobodeniuc, 2006; Mosneaga, 2001; Mosneaga, 2002; Mosneaga, 2006; Mosneaga, 2009, *etc.*). Of particular note in this respect is the work '*We are Building Europe. And not only...*' by V. Mosneaga and G. Rusnac (Mosneaga, 2005).

Yet, on the whole, research into the problems of integration of Moldovan citizens in receiving countries and the problems of their return/reintegration back home has only been initiated several years ago.

## Research Methodology

The purpose of the present paper is to consider the problems related to the integration (as well as reintegration) of Moldovan immigrants in the countries of the European Union (European, 2012: 156).

To complete this paper the method of secondary data analysis was used. The secondary data are produced by the analysis of statistical data and the results of sociology research held in the Republic of Moldova by state agencies and sociological services, as well as international agencies (World Bank, International Organization for Migration). At the same time some empirical and analytical material, research hypotheses and conclusions developed in scholarly research on the issues of international labour migration of Moldovan population were also used in the present paper. Moreover, the work on the paper also involved the analysis of primary data, based on our own sociological research both previously published and conducted specifically for the present study.

Our assumption is that integration is a bilateral process of mutual adaptation likewise of immigrants and receiving countries (at the level of both state politics and citizens - population of the country). This understanding of integration coincides with the approach adopted by the EU (European, 2012: 98). Integration of a migrant is thus understood as a process in which an immigrant becomes an inalienable part of a receiving society (Choenni, 2005: 139; van Krieken, 2011; Roßkopf, 2011).

Integration was analyzed on the basis of MIPEX methodology with national integration policy index of the EU countries defined on the basis of more than 150 parameters structured according to seven principal groups: labour market mobility, family reunification, education, political participation, permanent residence, citizenship and non-discrimination (Huddleston, 2011; Engels, 2011; Marik-Lebeck, 2011; Marxer, 2011).

One should note that these were related to perception and subjective assessment of migrants (primarily labour migrants as constituting an absolute majority among Moldovan migrants in the EU countries), as well as their real actions aimed at integration into common political and socio-economic space of the EU. Additionally those aspects of integration were considered which, as we think, are characteristic of the aspiration of the Moldovan citizens to really integrate within the EU countries.

## Literature Review

Problems of Moldovan citizens abroad has not been yet seriously studied by scholars in Moldova. This is conditioned by the fact that up to now the stress has been put on the research of the phenomenon of international migration of Moldovan citizens, identification of its principal directions and the number of Moldovan migrants including labour migrants. Within the framework of such research particular problems related to adaptation and integration of Moldovan citizens in certain EU countries were also studied (Perciun, 2006; Mosneaga, 2008; Deleu, 2009; Slobodeniuc, 2006; Mosneaga, 2001;

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Yet, on the whole, research into the problems of integration of Moldovan citizens in receiving countries and the problems of their return/reintegration back home has only been initiated several years ago. Among the works analyzing Moldovan labour migrants' integration abroad and, in particular, in the countries of the European Union, we should mention a monograph study by V. Mosneaga, V. Moraru and G. Rusnac devoted to labour migration of Moldovan citizens in Italy (Mosneaga, 2011). The problems of coming back from the EU countries and reintegration of Moldovan citizens in their home country in the circumstances of the global financial and economic crisis of 2008-2010 are treated in the works by V. Moraru, V. Mosneaga, G. Rusnac (Moraru, 2012). The work by V. Mosneaga, E. Burdelnii, L. Vasilieva, E. Malinovskaia (Mosneaga, 2012) analyses both the problems of the integration of migrants the countries of the EU Eastern Partnership (Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine) and the problems of return and reintegration in donor countries. The latter work also gives a comparative analysis of European CIS countries and Eastern neighbors of the European Union.

One should note that the above mentioned works rely on the data of quantitative and qualitative research held either directly by their authors or by other researchers studying the problems related to migration of Moldovan population.

### **Integration in the Countries of the European Union (EU)**

It is well-known that migration is a bilateral process and implies efforts to integrate on part of both migrants and receiving states. The latter develop and realize necessary integration policy in respect of foreign nationals - immigrants staying, residing and working on the territory of a given state. Within the European Union integration process realized on the basis of a nation state's integration policy is further supplemented by respective integration recommendations, standards and indexes at the level of the EU structures (Secretary-General, 2010). In July 2011 the European Union adopted and since then has been realizing the policy of integration of immigrants from 'third party,' that is non-EU, countries (Communication, 2011).

It is also well-known that the EU countries are not equal from the point of view of integration policy index on the whole (Huddleston, 2011: 11). Which means that those countries of the European Union that are most frequented by Moldovan migrants (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Ireland, Romania, Czech Republic, Germany and France) carry out integration policy which is characterized by adequate openness, positive understanding and implementation of integration processes. Yet, there also exist certain waivers or insufficient realization of integration for all or particular immigrants' groups from third party states (for non-members) (Huddleston, 2011: 11). This refers also to the immigrants from the Republic of Moldova.

**Language.** The process of migrants' integrations starts with the acquisition of the language of a receiving country. Language, as is well-known, is the chief and principal tool of interaction between migrants and receiving societies. Receiving countries consider the process of language acquisition as having important influence. Language proficiency is thus a necessary requirement of all the principal groups of integration index parameters. Acquisition of professional jargon is a condition for successful competition on the labour market and realization of the labour mobility principle. Knowledge of the language is a required condition for receiving the status of a permanent resident and citizenship, family reunification (for family members of immigrants), etc. Back in 1999 an exam of language proficiency as a prerequisite for permanent residence was held only Germany. Now this practice is legally established in other countries as well (Portugal, Czech Republic, Italy, etc.) (Huddleston, 2011).

One should note that language integration of Moldovan nationals in most countries of the European Union is rather successful. This is conditioned by the fact that in its native languages Moldovan population belongs to the same language groups with many countries of the European Union. It is



quite natural that the task to learn language is made much easier. Thus, Romance languages are close to the language of Moldovans, Turkic languages to that of the Gagauz, Slavic languages to Russians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians and all the Russian-speaking citizens of Moldova. **RL6.**<sup>1</sup>: *'It was easy for me to learn the language, since it is quite similar to Moldovan'* (Mosneaga, 2011: 33).

Let us mention also that in the countries of the EU there exists also social and language milieu close to Moldovan migrants formed by Jewish-Moldovan Diasporas in Germany, Israel and other countries. Nowadays, Russian-speaking milieu is a widespread phenomenon in many European countries. Situation is similar also with Romanian-speaking milieu within the European Union which is also greatly developed due to active formation of the European Romanian Diaspora in last 20-25 years.

The second factor is that Moldovan system of school education includes the study of many languages of the EU countries: Romanian, English, French, Spanish, Italian, German and Bulgarian languages. The great advantage of post-soviet education lies exactly in the improvement of language training. Many of lyceum graduates are fluent in several foreign languages.

The third factor should be stressed, namely that many Moldovan citizens were attending the language courses to study the language of their future receiving countries as a part of their preparation to emigration, including also labour migration. **RI.33:** *'My knowledge of Italy was superficial, but the choice of language conscious and carefully prepared. I enlisted for the language courses, got acquainted with legislation and traditions of the country.'* (Mosneaga, 2011: 21). Yet, this is hardly a mass phenomenon – the situation that may be accounted in most cases by the necessity to urgently leave in order to timely take a vacant job in the receiving country.

It is not always that easy. Labour migrants leaving for Spain and trying to study the language at home, prior to their departure, are often confronted with something peculiar to Spain – that is the necessity to know also the dialect of a particular region. **RE.6:** *'I attended the courses of Spanish in my native city. I thought I would be able to accommodate on the spot. Yet, it turned out that the spoken language of the region I moved to was quite different from that I had been studying at home and, therefore, it was quite difficult for me to work there. Yet, within two weeks I managed to accommodate to this'* (Mosneaga, 2009: p.142).

It is shown in practice that Moldovan labour migrants, unlike those from Russia and Ukraine, are rather quick in acquiring the skills of spoken language even without attending special language courses (Marques, 2008).

**Expert 7:** *'Moldovans working in Italy are doing well in this respect because Italian belongs to Romance languages and is very similar to Romanian. That undoubtedly is a plus for Moldovans. If somebody studies the language on his/her own, this process can continue longer than two months. Yet if one has contacts with local population and communicates with locals outside or at work place the period of acquiring the language becomes considerably shorter, that is about one month'* (Moraru, 2012: p.101).

Research shows that majority of Moldovan citizens seeks to acquire the language of the country they are staying in. This is undoubtedly linked to the understanding that language proficiency ensures broader access to labour market and possibility to find good and well-paid jobs. One should not ignore, however, the fact that study / knowledge of a language implies also respect for its people, their culture and traditions.

Sociological research held did not reveal labour migrants that do not know the language of the receiving country. Moreover, people usually proudly mention their language competence (Deliu,

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<sup>1</sup> Hereinafter while citing respondents' replies the following coding is used: RI – respondent from Italy (2008-2009 Survey), RE – respondent from Spain (2008-2009 Survey), RT – respondents from the EU countries (2010-2012 Surveys).

2009). There were also respondents who stressed that they are used to thinking and socializing with other Moldovans or even write poems in Portuguese (Gois, 2012), Italian and other languages.

**RI.16:** *'I can't claim I know this beautiful language perfectly, yet I try to study it properly. Up until now I have managed to give math lessons to Italian children and even translate into Italian poems I compose in my leisure time'* (Mosneaga, 2011: 32-33).

It is true, though, that *'the language of the stock of Moldovan labour migrants is not literary language'* (**Expert 6**) (Moraru, 2012: 104) and the opportunities for better employment and professional growth are quite limited. Quite often people stress the fact that the chances to get real language proficiency are restricted by language (linguistic) environment they live and work in. **RT.40:** *'It was really difficult in the beginning, since I did not know the language. But then I learned it. Yet it is spoken, not literary language. Therefore the spectrum of job opportunities is very limited... Yes, it was difficult to study the language. The majority at the factory were Moldovans. There were only three Italians. Thus we communicate mostly in Moldovan language and the circle of contacts, therefore, is restricted to one and the same people... Who can we practice the language with, if there is no any socializing with the Italians?'*

**Work and Labour Market Mobility.** Successful integration of a migrant into a new society depends on *availability of jobs*, opportunity to earn money to cover living expenses for a migrant and his family at home or in the host country.

According to the data of sociological research, majority of Moldovan labour migrants have jobs in receiving countries. For example in Italy, where Moldovan nationals are most numerous, in 2007 51,149 out of 64,526 legal Moldovan labour migrants were working uninterruptedly, that is for 252 days. Women make up 2/3 of all legally employed. Moldovan labour migrants are employed in service sector (especially household services and caring for disabled and elderly people) – 2/3; in industry and construction – 22.1%; fishery and agriculture – 5.2%. 6.9% did not indicate their sector of activity (Mosneaga, 2011: 14).

Common feature is that the absolute majority of migrants does not work according to their education, qualifications, job experience acquired at home, outside the receiving country of the European Union. Most often they are employed in non-prestigious economy sectors. The wages of Moldovan labour migrants, both man and women, are considerably lower than country's average, which is conditioned by the fact that wages in service sector are 50% less than in other sectors (data for 2004).

**Expert 6:** *'Monthly wages: according to the survey held by L'IMPS (National Institute for Social Forecasting) amount up to 650-1000 euro a month for women and 1000-1500 euro for men'* (Moraru, 2012: 109).

Important factor in this case is that Moldovan labour migrants are nationals of a country which is not a member of the European Union and, as the result, find themselves in less favorable circumstances on the labour market in respect of employment, qualification recognition and security of their rights.

At the same time the number of Moldovans employed in business sector in receiving countries is growing, which testifies to the fact that labour mobility acquires new opportunities. If back in 1998 there were only two individual enterprises organized by Moldovan nationals in Italy, then in the middle of 2008 there were registered 1,493 of them (96.1% after 2002; 40% in last two years). The majority of Moldovan businessmen work in construction – 70.2% (in the stock of all labour migrants in Italy – 39.1%) and in trade – 8.2% (all labour migrants – 35%). This testifies that formation of Moldovan businesses in Italy follows the same with other ethnic migrants' groups pattern. Yet, there is certain delay. Nevertheless, recently Moldovan nationals turn into fast learners. As the newspaper *'La Repubblica. Metropoli'* indicated (7<sup>th</sup> June 2009), by 31 December 2008 in Italy there had been registered 2,245 enterprises organized by Moldovan nationals. This figure can be compared to 2,213 enterprises registered by the same date by Ukrainian citizens (Mosneaga, 2011: 14-15).

Such labour market mobility is naturally characteristic for legal labour migrants. Situation of irregular labour migrants are much more complex and involves absence of state assistance and support in job search, readiness to take any job which would allow a migrant to subsist and, as the result, renunciation of professional career and status, absence of institutionalized protection mechanisms and dependence on individual moral qualities of an employer (kindness and humaneness), inequality in payment for work, absence of medical insurance, social protection and support. **RI.33:** *‘When a person stays legally he feels himself much more comfortable as compared to an illegal migrant. He goes out calmly, not afraid of being stopped and his documents checked. Legal migrants find it much easier to get a job’* (Mosneaga, 2011: 173).

Unfortunately, those who have experienced the ‘advantages’ of both illegal and legal stay and employment abound among Moldovan labor migrants. **RE.4:** *‘First of all, among the problems faced by a labour migrant I would name finding of a job, since everything else depend on it: payment for accommodation, living expenses and leisure activities. An illegal labour migrant has much less rights and the attitude of employers and local residents is much worse. Now I have a residence permit in the country I am staying in and think that now I have more rights and freedoms here’* (Mosneaga, 2009: 152).

Speaking about job search labour migrants mention a number of factors conditioning how successful it is. First of all it is the knowledge of country’s language. Second is taking into account employers’ mentality, since they are unlikely to hire strangers. Third is the level of professional skills of a job applicant. Fourth is legality of stay and fifth is availability of information on job offers. Job search can be alleviated by activating social capital and migration networking: relatives, acquaintances and friends working in the countries of the European Union. Let us mention also such thing as employing contemporary means of communication (internet) in job search process. One should also highlight the fact that while looking for a job Moldovan migrants do not wait for and have no hopes of any assistance from the receiving countries (both state authorities and local population). This, as we think, may be accounted by their experience from their home country, where Moldovan state does not provide any assistance and support in job search even inside the country. The sixth is help, assistance or reference from a person who knows the employer personally and who is treated by him with respect for his professional and personal qualities alike.

**RE.9:** *‘Relatives and acquaintances working in Spain are those who in most cases provide assistance in job search process to Moldovans. They use their connections and acquaintanceships and place a migrant in a job via a contract from their employer or recruiting network in Spain’* (Mosneaga, 2009: 150).

Adaptation and integration of a migrant to a great extent depend on availability of functional legal and social protection in the country of stay. Most palpably these problems are perceived by a migrant at the level of salary for his/her work and work of a local resident, availability of medical insurance, uses of leisure time, opportunities to really protect his/her rights in state institutions and courts of the host country.

**RE.3:** *‘Are you asking if a migrant receives less money for the same job than a citizen of a receiving country? Yes, there are such cases. In our company, for example, a Spanish national gets higher payments than we do, because we are foreigners and pay different tax rates. That’s how they have explained this to us. There was one case when a Romanian did not get the entire sum of the payment. He went to court. Trade unions helped him and the employer had to pay him everything and even more.’*

*‘What concerns human rights, I am not aware of the instances when a labour migrant went to court to protect his usurped rights. It is very difficult to sue them, especially if you are a foreigner and do not know well their laws and language’* (Mosneaga, 2009: 152)

**RE.12:** *‘I myself was in a situation when a labour migrant earned less than a citizen of the country. When I was asked to install street advertisements I was paid less than Spanish workers. They were paid 80 euro per day and I only 55-60.’*

*What concerns judicial protection, I think it is better not to face the law, since in Spain a trial can protract for long and you need money to pay a lawyer' (Mosneaga, 2009: 153).*

The status of a national of 'a third party country,' non-member of the EU, negatively affects pension provision of migrants. **RT.39:** *'We would not want to remain in Italy. Yes, we are trying to get Italian citizenship. If you are an Italian citizen your pension is higher. We both are of preretirement age and should care about our future. If you are not an Italian citizen, then your pension is low - at the level of a social pension. We have already worked for a number of years sufficient to be eligible for receiving a pension. You understand yourself, that there is a big difference in receiving just a social pension or a pension of an Italian citizen, which is significantly higher... it's all quite clear, no need in discussing it. Comparison is not favorable to a labour migrant. Even if legalized' (Moraru, 2012: 167).*

It is not surprising, therefore, that among irregular migrants, including Moldovans having no job, social and legal protection is virtually absent and there are incidents of unlawful, anti-social and inhumane actions.

**Expert 5:** *'There are emergencies almost everyday: deaths, deportations, instances when police brings in Moldovan citizens to correct travel documents, etc. Adopted children, abandoned children and Moldovan nationals in Italian prisons – they all are our citizens. Last year there were 15 Moldovan children detected, who had been brought to Italy by their parents and then abandoned to the whims of fate there. In 2008 there have been no such cases so far. Such children stay in child care institutions. I don't think a person who abandoned his/her child in a foreign country has a right to call him/herself a parent.*

*As of now, there are 190 Moldovans in Italian prisons. In accordance with Italian legislation the imprisoned are eligible to aid from their embassies if they ask for it. Even in situations, when investigation is not yet finished. As in this Milan case, when a young girl and her mother from the Republic of Moldova were the suspects. This case has been widely debated both in Italian and Moldovan media' (Moraru, 2012: 135).*

Moldovan authorities undertake certain efforts to alleviate the integration of Moldovan immigrants in EU countries. In this respect the signing of agreements related to labour migration can be mentioned. Such an agreement has been signed with Italy (2003) and now there are negotiations to develop and sign an agreement related to activities of joint enterprises. The Republic of Moldova seeks to sign bilateral agreements in the field of social insurance with countries with Moldovan labour migrants. Such agreements have already been signed with four EU countries (Portugal (2009), Bulgaria (2009), Romania (2010), Luxemburg (2011)) (Moraru, 2012: 91).

**Family Reunification.** It is well-known that guaranties to family life are an important condition for immigrants' integration. The countries of the European Union generally create favorable conditions for family reintegration, carrying out the policy of correspondence of national approaches to EU standards (Huddleston, 2011: 15).

Migrants have noted positive attitude to family reunification on part of the state authorities in receiving countries. Thus, as early as 2003-2004 Moldovan authorities noted 2.5 increase in the number of passports issued to children (Moraru, 2012: 58). This process continues assuming more palpable expression. In 2011 28 thousand children left Moldova for permanent residence abroad (not only the EU countries) for family reunification reasons (Lutenco, 2012).

**RI.39:** *'There is a law stipulating that people working legally and having residence permit can apply for Italian visas for their family members ensuring their entry for family reunification. Among my Roman acquaintances I know several families who did exactly this and now live all together in Italy... That is great!' (Mosneaga, 2011: 191).*

Because of these family reintegration policies a more balanced sex and age structure of Moldovan migrant community abroad is being formed. Demographic structure is changing and the number of

children is growing, both brought within the framework of family reunification and already born to reunited family in a host country.

Positive changes in this respect are also taking place in other European countries. Thus, in Italy, the principal recipient of Moldovan labour migrants in the European Union, women make up 2/3 of all legalized labour migrants.

**Table 1. The number of legal Moldovan labour migrants in Italy (2001-2010)**

<i>year</i>	<i>total</i>	<i>women, %</i>
2001	4,356	...
2002	6,861	71.9
2003	36,361	71.0
2004	37,971	69.0
2005	47,632	66.0
2006	55,803	65.1
2007	68,591	66.4
2008	89,424	66.4
2009	105,600	68.2
2010	109,000	64.4

Source: Mosneaga (2011: 9).

At the same time, the data on childbirths to Moldovan migrants allow deeper understanding of integration processes and their trends. According to information from the Ministry of the Interior of Italy, in 2001-2006 the birth of 2,043 children, whose parents were Moldovan nationals, had been registered. Undisputed is the tendency to growth in the number of children born in host countries.

**Table 2. Childbirths to Moldovan nationals (2001-2006).**

<i>year</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>Total</i>
Children in total	55	69	135	467	603	714	2,043

Source: Mosneaga (2011: 13).

**Education.** Favorable to integration policies of the EU countries are characterized by a situation when any child living in a country can attend any educational institutions, from kindergartens to universities, and attain the highest results he/she is capable of. 'In 2007-2008 academic year 12,564 Moldovans have been registered in the educational system of Italy. The growth of the number of students as compared with 2006-2007 was 21%. In pre-school institutions there were 9% of Moldovans; in elementary school – 29.7%; in secondary school – 27.1%; in universities – 34.2% (Mosneaga, 1011: 14). The majority of Moldovan students concentrate in the universities of Padua and Rome (Sapienza University). The most favored are the departments of Economics, Medicine and Surgery. Comparison with the analogous data of the stock of Moldovan migrants in Italy shows that the majority of Moldovan students had not been born in Italy, but moved there as the result of family reunification' (Mosneaga, 2011: 14).

One must note that while Moldovan migrants are employed at low status and qualification jobs, their level of education and training, readiness to integrate into receiving society is high. These circumstances exercise positive stimulating effect over migrants' children. Therefore, the cases, when parents tend to learn from their children's experience and get a new impetus to either integrate into the host society or return home are quite widespread.

**RT.15:** *‘Our daughters study in a Portuguese school. They are doing well. Much better than their Portuguese classmates. The younger is at her second year and does not have any problems at school whatsoever. It is a bit more difficult with the elder. She is 15 already and her fellow classmate girls dress much better, making her an object of mockery and derision. I think the reason is not only that she is badly dressed, but also that she studies better. Yet, she feels angry and does not want to go to school. Problems of adaptation and integration are particularly acute at this very age. She wants to get back home, to Chisinau.’*

**RT.17:** *‘Our elder son studies at a lyceum and is going to graduate in two years from now. He studies well, the school is proud of him. He shows one of the highest results in the school. With these results (average grade), if he retains them until the end of his school studies, he will be able to enter the university, the department of medicine including. For the Irish medicine is one of the most prestigious, if not the most prestigious, professions and it is very difficult to be accepted to a medical university. One has to get more than 90% grade as the result of his/her lyceum studies.*

*Our son wants to become a doctor. Yet one has to pay 5 thousand euro for studying at a medical university. Where shall we get this money? We will not be able to pay such a sum for education. One option for the son is to win a stipend to pay tuition fees. And if he does not? In this case we plan to get back to Moldova for our son to study medicine in Chisinau. That’s our plan, but we’ll see.’*

**Political Participation.** Granting civil and political rights to migrants is an important and essential indicator of trust on part of a receiving country. Real practice shows that the countries granting voting rights to migrants dispose of greater opportunities to create strong consultative structures. In the countries of the European Union (EU) political participation is treated in two ways: as a right to vote and as participation in consultative structures.

The countries of the European Union thus create certain opportunities for migrants’ integration into receiving society, as well as for realization of their civil and political rights. ‘Non-citizens of the EU can become candidates at local elections in 13 countries, vote at local elections in 7 countries, at national elections in 2 countries (Portugal and the United Kingdom). Consultative structures are present at local level in 11 countries. Yet they create insufficient opportunities for active migrants’ participation in perfecting policies. About half of the countries finance political activities of migrants, and in 1/3 of the countries migrants are being informed of their political rights’ (Huddleston, 2011: 19).

One should note that civil rights are enjoyed only by legal migrants and this concerns also Moldovan nationals residing in the EU countries. Unfortunately, we have no information on how they manage to realize their voting rights taking part in local, regional or even national level elections of the host countries. Yet, judging from the practice of participation of Moldovan citizens in Moldovan parliamentary elections held abroad, we can assume that they are not particularly active (Moraru, 2012: 75).

Participating in activities of immigrant consultative structures has become very popular. In Italy, Portugal, Spain and Greece Moldovans, legally residing there, are the members of administration in a number of municipal consultative structures. *‘Such a situation is visible, for instance, in Rome and other Italian cities. There are even cases when they were, or still are, the heads of such consultative commissions’* (**Expert 6**).

At the same time, as our labour migrants surveys and expert interviews show, the majority of Moldovan citizens in the countries of the European Union do not have sufficient access to information on the activities of state authorities of the receiving countries and the Republic of Moldova, influence over decision making process and realization of integration policy at national, regional and local levels. This situation may be accounted by a number of factors, including poor migrants’ inclusion onto information and communication space of the countries of the European Union, narrow concentration only at receiving higher wages, tiredness after working day, inadequate social activity, etc. **Expert 6:** *‘Moldovan migrants are barely acquainted with legislation, they have little information on Italian migration politics and practices’* (Moraru, 2012: 136)

**Permanent (Long-Term) Residence.** An important integration parameter for a migrant is permanent (long term) resident status. Many Moldovan immigrants do have such a status in the European Union. Thus in 2010 permanent (long term) residence permits had 36,290 people (15,5% of the total numbers of permits, received by Moldovan immigrants in the European Union (Cirlig 2012: 62).

This situation is accounted not only by the fact that Moldovan immigrants are nationals of a non-EU country. In reality for a considerable number of Moldovan labour migrants obtaining permanent residence is impeded by the necessity to first modify their illegal status to legal temporary and only then try to get permanent residence permit.

As our research into construction workers in the EU and Russia showed, it is much easier to transform illegal status into legal in the EU countries as compared to Russia.

**Table 3. Legal status of Moldovan migrants in host countries (%).**

<i>Legal status</i>	<i>Russia</i>	<i>EU countries</i>
<i>Initial</i>		
Illegal	82.7	78.1
Legal	13.5	29.8
<i>Modified</i>		
Illegal to legal	11.5	42.6
Legal to illegal	-	2.1
<i>Eventual</i>		
Illegal	71.2	27.6
Legal	25.0	70.3
No answer	3.8	2.9

Source: Mosneaga, 2005: 25.

Surveys show that migrants are quite realistic in their assessments of risks related to illegal stay and labour activities in Italy, Spain and other countries of the European Union. Illegal migrants are at higher risks to be cheated, detected, deported and, as the result, greater danger to transgress the laws of both morality and state.

**RE.9:** *‘Of course, there are considerable differences between legal and illegal labour migrants and most of all in respect of his/her rights’ protection and freedom of movement. Illegal migrants are more vulnerable to stress and less socially protected, whereas legal migrants have rights according to the law on foreign nationals and can get back home without impediment’* (Mosneaga, 2009: 151).

**Expert 6:** *‘Illegal migrants do not apply anywhere, they are afraid of being detected, especially after the law on Extradiction was adopted in 2008 as the result of new government elections’* (Moraru, 2012: 136).

**Citizenship.** Acquiring citizenship of one of the European Union countries enables Moldovan migrants to better integrate into host societies, enjoy equal rights and freedoms equal to those of other citizens of a receiving country and the EU. Recognition of dual citizenship allows Moldovan nationals to retain not only socio-cultural, but also legal connections to their homeland.

The number of Moldovan citizens who have applied for citizenship of one of EU countries has been growing recently. There were 4,931 of them in 2010 (the Eurostat data do not include information on applications submitted by Moldovans in Romania). In 2009 there were already 10,909 of them. From 2000 to 2010 43,882 of Moldovan nationals acquired citizenship of one of the countries of the European Union (mainly Romania, Portugal, Italy, Bulgaria, Germany, United Kingdom and Ireland) (Cirlig, 2012: 59).

‘In 2009 2,896 of former Moldovan nationals became the citizens of Portugal. In 2010 this number grew by further 2,675 and reached 5.571. Yet it is only the second result and Romania, who grants (‘resumes’) citizenship to Moldovan nationals, holds the first place. Italy is the third with 1,060 cases of granting citizenship’ (Cirlig 2012: 59).

Such low figures for Italy can be explained by the fact that previously to obtain Italian citizenship long term legal residence (10 years) in the country was required. Thus from 2002 to 2007 only 879 people acquired Italian citizenship, with the majority obtaining citizenship via marriage: Moldovan women were marrying Italian men. Only one Moldovan national got Italian citizenship through naturalization (Mosneaga, 2011: 13).

**Non-Discrimination**. As both real practices and the results of sociological research testify, Moldovan nationals working in the countries of the European Union do not suffer from discrimination based on racial, political or religious grounds. That is conditioned by the policies of integration and anti-discrimination carried out at both the EU level and in every particular country. On the other hand it can also be explained by the fact that Moldovan nationals evince great ability and readiness to adapt and integrate into a receiving society, seek to follow laws and norms of behavior of the host country, acquire its language, do not stand out radically in their appearance, and thus are not subjects to dislike and misgivings from the local population. Let us stress that it can likewise be explained by the fact that Moldovans belong to European (white) race and profess Christianity (Orthodox or Protestant). Total number of Moldovan citizens of gypsy origin (Roma people) is insignificant and they mostly go to work to Russia or, as the data from Bulgarian researches indicate, use Bulgarian citizenship to stay and work in the European Union (Marushiakova, 2012).

At the same time surveys show that certain discrimination does take place.

**RT.52:** *‘I once went for a month long training to Italy, to Milan and my sister came to visit me from France. She is married and has been living in a town not far from Cannes. We went for a walk round Milan and then took a city bus. The bus was overcrowded. People were literally hanging on each other. Yet their attitudes even in such a situation were rather sympathetic. We were speaking Romanian (Moldovan) in between ourselves. An Italian woman standing nearby showed her interest and asked us what language we were speaking. I answered her it was Romanian. You should have seen her face at the moment...*

*An empty space was immediately created around us, people just flew away. We very well felt their fear and suspicion. All sympathy gone away at once... Having got out of the bus we came to the conclusion that such an attitude of the Italians was principally the result of uncivilized behavior showed by Romanian citizens, mostly the Roma people. I then decided that I would never again tell anyone that I speak Romanian, only Moldovan’.*

It should be mentioned that many Moldovan citizens who have Romanian passport enabling them to freely stay in the European Union are not willing to publicize their Romanian citizenship. On the contrary, they stress that they are the citizens of the Republic of Moldova. The Moldovan passport does not awake the same level of suspicion among the EU population as Romanian.

Nonetheless, real and wide-spread discrimination most often stems from the status of a citizen of a non-EU country, and, in particular, from the illegal status of a labour immigrant. That is reflected in his/her working activities, wages and degree of social protection. **RI.39:** *‘All in all, I would advise everyone to work abroad only legally. The situation of an illegal worker in Italy gives other people an opportunity to abuse his position. The worker, thus, is totally unprotected and, as a rule, gets lower wages. It happens very often that illegal workers are simply left without any payment at all, since their employer knows that they can not complain to any authority. In any case the Law is not going to protect them’ (Mosneaga, 2011: 189).*

Migrant adaptation and integration in receiving countries is a very complex and ambivalent problem. Many factors contribute to it: particulars of immigration policies of a receiving country,



interaction between the state authorities and public organizations and the degree of toleration shown by the locals toward migrants.

Successful integration into a receiving society is linked by Moldovan migrants to the freedom of movement, entry of the EU countries and on the whole to **immigration policy** led by a certain country. They indicate some positive moments and, at the same time, feel certain restrictions, difficulties in acquiring entry visas, etc. These problems are undoubtedly related to the current economic and financial crisis and the necessity to protect citizens at domestic labour markets (Stanek, 2012).

**RE.9:** *'I would assess Spanish migration policy as conservative and closed, in particular to the migrants from Eastern Europe. The mechanism of receiving migrants and their subsequent integration have nonetheless been created there. Most often migrants are legalized by the decisions on illegal migrants adopted by the government or by job applications provided by employers'* (Mosneaga, 2009: 148).

**RI.35.** *'Italy is one of the countries, which gave full rights to those who came here to work. It legalized them and afforded a job. I think Italy is doing just right, leads very good migration policy'* (Mosneaga, 2011: 50). **RI.39.** *'Italy allows annual quotas for Moldovan guest workers. This is great!'* (Mosneaga 2011: 51). **RI.6.** *'Italy has somewhat toughened its migration policy recently, even though there are moments when authorities meet immigrants needs, for example, legalizing people illegally staying in the country'* (Mosneaga, 2011: 51).

Relations with representatives of the authorities (police and others) play an important role in the process of migrants' integration. **RI.38.** *'Italian police is the most democratic in the world. You can be arrested only in case policemen see you breaking the law. In all other cases you are left alone. They are willing to understand your problems, they are really civilized and yet very strict in respect of those who transgresses public laws'* (Mosneaga, 2011: 54).

**The institutions of civil society and, especially, the Catholic Church of the host countries** likewise play a great role in labour migrants' integration and social adaptation. The role of the Church in bettering socio-psychological environment is mentioned by all migrants irrespective of their personal religious attitudes. The Church, however, does not only care of the souls of its flocks, it also makes its viable contribution to everyday existence of labour migrants (both legal and illegal), offering them shelter, food, cloths, assistance in job search, social and legal protection. **RI.11:** *'The Church helps all migrants, whoever allies. It provides food and cloths for you and your children, or a place for a night sleep, or medical treatment, which you are sure to get, in case you applied there. I mean primarily the Catholic Church, but there are also some orthodox churches (Italian). In Romanian settlements there also are orthodox (Romanian) churches. The services there are mostly held in Romanian, but also in Greek and Russian'* (Mosneaga, 2011: 112).

The believers receive spiritual and moral support in the churches of Russian or Romanian Orthodox Church. In this respect the activities of Moldovan priests in Italy, Portugal and other EU countries should also be mentioned. Moldovan archdiocese, being a part of the Russian Orthodox Church, tries to send its priests, capable of preaching in Moldovan (Romanian) or Russian, to serve abroad, where there is a considerable Moldovan congregation.

**Expert 8:** *'Nowadays many orthodox believers from our country have gone abroad, mostly to Russia, Italy, Portugal and other countries of the European Union. But even there, staying far from their native land, mostly in Catholic countries, they feel need to profess the religion to which they had been baptized, as well as to confess, take the sacrament and pray in their native language.'*

*In such a situation Moldovan Orthodox Church did not stay aside. Therefore, many orthodox parishes have been organized within Russian Orthodox Patriarchate's department of external affairs for Moldovan believers staying abroad'* (Moraru, 2012: 147).

Respondents have also mentioned the positive role of non-governmental organizations – special services, which can help migrants in their process of social adaptation and integration. **Expert 1:** *‘Policies of social integration of foreign migrants in Spain are active in character. There are a number of non-governmental organizations providing social and psychological assistance to migrants. Let us mention such organizations as ARES, established in 1998 and OBATALA cultural association providing information services and social assistance to Romanian and Moldovan migrants. There are a lot of organizations providing volunteer services aimed at migrants’ integration. Volunteers from medical personnel and teachers in provide migrants with free of charge services their free time. The Church and Red Cross also play an important role providing assistance and free lunches to migrants. The Red Cross, for example, accommodates migrants having no place to live on its campuses. Many of these social activities, however, have recently been curtailed, due to the crisis which stroke Spain’* (Mosneaga, 2009: 148).

Actively forming Moldovan communities abroad, the diaspora, help to alleviate nostalgia, relieve migrants from the stress outside their home country, solve many vital and important to labour migrants problems related to job search, accommodation search, obtaining advice, establishing new interpersonal contacts and integration in a receiving country on the whole.

**RI.39:** *‘There is a full-fledged Moldovan diaspora in Italy, where you can apply to for any kind of assistance. Everyone stands for everybody there!... We even had and, I am sure, do still have places and locations frequented only by Moldovans!... It was extremely easy to acquire new acquaintances and friends there. And, of course, in most cases these were our compatriots. There is nothing strange in it: we are close people in a foreign land, so we are doomed to become friends’* (Mosneaga, 2011: 58).

Both respondents-Moldovans and experts indicated insufficient information, material and cultural and psychological support of Moldovan citizens abroad provided by the Moldovan State and its diplomatic structures.

**Expert 6:** *‘To improve living conditions of Moldovans in Italy, I think more close cooperation between the citizens, Moldovan embassy in Italy and the Government of the Republic of Moldova should be established aimed at promoting initiatives for socio-economic development both in Moldova and its communities abroad.*

*Moreover, there is a need in creation of Moldovan citizens’ association with participation of individual representatives from the Government of the Republic of Moldova. This association should not seek to send Moldovan citizens to work abroad. It should provide assistance and support to those who are already staying in Italy and to those who want to get back to Moldova’* (Moraru, 2012: 158).

To conclude, let us note that the process of social adaptation and integration of immigrants in the countries of the European Union (EU) is a complex bilateral process in which both the receiving society and immigrants themselves take part. Considerable experience of migrants’ integration has been accumulated and target policies are being realized within the EU. This integration process is complex in character, relates to all the spheres of social life, extends to political participation, employment and labour mobility, residence, access to citizenship, systems of education, social and legal protection, ensuring fundamental, civil and political rights, as well as satisfaction of people’s language, religious and socio-cultural needs. At the same time receiving countries expect immigrants to show readiness and will to integrate into social, legal, socio-economic and cultural spaces new to them. To create more favorable situation approaches are being developed common for the EU and the policy of harmonization of national practices with common communitarian standards is being realized.

Irrespective of the causes which drove them to emigrate, Moldovan immigrants in the EU countries show high level of integration and desire to enter the receiving community in the status of law-abiding citizens and civilized individuals. Their successful integration in the EU counties greatly depends also on the policy of the Moldovan state and its cooperation both with receiving countries and international agencies for ensuring rights and freedoms of Moldovan citizens, their legal and social protection abroad.

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