

## PROSPECTS FOR MIGRATION IN THE DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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### Abstract

Studies in specialized literature on labor migration have started from cases of voluntary immigration, where the motivation of immigrants is economic/social or related to family reunification. This is often generated by other causes, such as more favorable environmental conditions (environmental migration) or temporary jobs (seasonal immigration). The migration phenomenon, especially immigrants, also generates a series of negative effects having an impact on the social plane, on the labor market and on the living standards of the native population.

The aim of this study is to observe how the number of immigrants influences the population of the twenty-seven European Union member states, as, it is assumed, it would be much easier for these states or specialized institutions to manage the negative effects of labor migration.

Immigration is part of the phenomenon of international migration, a phenomenon that is also extremely relevant in relation to the native population of the countries involved, as well as having economic and social effects in those countries. In the host country, immigration increases overall demand for goods and services, creates new opportunities for consumption, intensifies the supply of goods and services and makes the labor market more flexible, while also raising the number of unemployed people in various fields of activity.

**Keywords:** immigrants, the migration phenomenon, refugees, labor market, political asylum

**JEL Classification:** I24, J15, J61, O15, R23

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## **1. Introduction**

The economic and social effects of migration have been identified over the year by studying immigration flows in the immigrants' favorite destination countries and in the European Union – Spain, Italy, Germany, the UK, and France. These studies and analyses over several years have shown that migration has both positive and negative implications at the level of the destination countries. Thus, in the host country, immigration increases overall demand, generates new opportunities for consumption, improves the variety of goods and services and makes the labor market more flexible in the medium and long terms. On the other hand, immigrants generate negative effects socially, on the labor market, on the living standards of the native population and on decisions to assimilate a new culture, traditions, and customs.

The aim of this study is to observe how the number of immigrants influences the population of the twenty-seven member countries of the European Union, as well as the management of the negative effects of the migration phenomenon by the institutions of the countries involved in this broad phenomenon. This topic has been chosen because immigration is a current phenomenon, which is extremely sensitive for some EU Member States as well as for immigrants.

According to the latest demographic statistics published officially by Eurostat, the population of the European Union has decreased by more than half a million inhabitants compared to 2020. Only seventeen EU countries have seen an increase in population after 2020, while seven countries have registered a significant decrease, among which we may mention Italy, Poland, Greece, and Croatia.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2022, the population of the European Union was 446.7 million, in a slight decrease from 2021. Although the population increased by 4% compared to 2001, the population decreased for the second consecutive year.

In January 2022, there were 585,000 fewer people in the European Union compared to the first day of 2020. The population of the European Union continued to increase annually until January 2020 and then began to resume the negative trend, which is attributed to casualties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

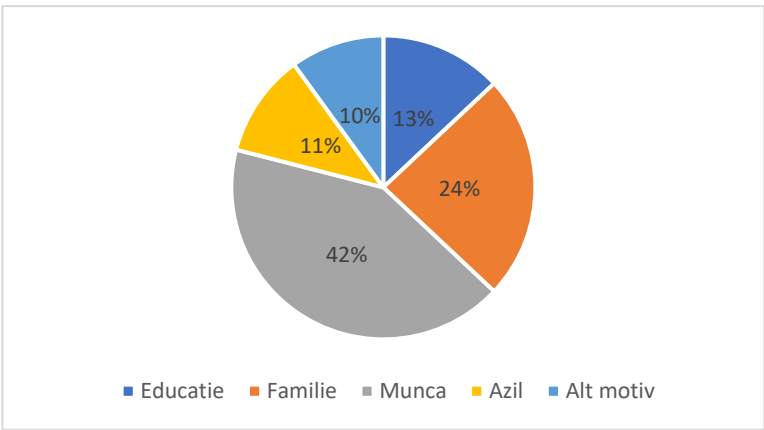
In 2022, 9.93 million non-EU citizens were working in the EU, out of a total of 193.5 million people aged between twenty and sixty-four, representing 5.1% of the total. The total number of employees in the age group twenty-sixty-four is 197.458 million, of which 9.927

million are non-EU nationals. In 2022, the employment rate among the EU working population was higher for European citizens (77.1%) than for non-EU citizens (61.9%).<sup>5</sup>

According to Eurostat figures from 2022, 2.25 million people immigrated to the European Union and 1.12 million people emigrated from the European Union, thus registering 1.14 million people as total net immigration into the European Union.

In 2022, almost 3.4 million first residence permits were issued in the EU, compared to 2.9 million in 2021, hence exceeding the figures recorded before the COVID-19 pandemic started (3 million in 2019). Compared to 2021, the number of first permits issued by Germany (+ 190%), Malta (+ 164%) and Ireland (+ 146%) more than doubled. 2022 saw a particularly large increase in asylum-related permits (+ 60%), but the number of permits issued for education (+ 29%), family (+ 28%) and other reasons (+ 47%) also increased compared to the previous year. On the other hand, the number of permits issued for work decreased compared to 2021 (-6%). In 2022, the first residence permits were issued in the European Union for foreign immigrants, as follows<sup>6</sup>:

**Chart 1. Residence permits for immigrants in the European Union for 2022**



Source: the authors' processing based on 2022 Eurostat data

The total population of the European Union is 446.7 million, out of which 23.8 million are citizens of the European Union and 38 million are citizens born outside the European Union, i.e. foreign immigrants from other continents: Asia, Africa, North or South America or other European countries (Ukraine, Russia, Republic of Moldova etc.).

Population density, i.e. the number of persons per square kilometer (km<sup>2</sup>), averaged 109 people per square kilometer in the EU in 2019, a value which varied significantly between Member States. The highest population density was observed in Malta (1 595 persons per

<sup>5</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/a2e95b51-c08a-462c-b4b7-c0a11bab32a7?lang=en>

<sup>6</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/9d961e67-a618-4485-8353-c0ec8b12808a?lang=en>

square kilometer), followed at a distance by the Low Countries (507) and Belgium (377). At the other end there were Finland (18 persons per square kilometer), and Sweden (25), with the lowest population density. Comparing 2019 with 2001, there was an increase in population density in around two-thirds of the Member States, with the largest increases in Malta (from 1 245 in 2001 to 1 595 in 2019), Luxembourg (from 171 to 240) and Belgium (339 to 377). Romania (96 to 83) and Lithuania (55 to 45) saw the largest decreases. In the EU, population density increased on average from 104 people per square kilometer to 109 over this period.<sup>7</sup>

## **2. Immigrant labor force assimilation in the European Union labor market**

On May 13, 2015, the European Commission adopted a new European Agenda for Migration, a document proposing a series of measures needed to meet the current challenges in the area of migration of persons, as well as a series of medium and long-term initiatives to provide solutions for better management of the migration phenomenon, in all its political, social, economic, and religious aspects at state level.

The implementation of the EU Agenda for Migration started with the adoption, on May 27, 2015, by the European Commission, of a first package of measures focusing on three strands of action: legal migration, temporary measures regarding the resettlement of persons in need of international protection, and the consolidation of operational capacity (search and rescue at sea). A second package of measures was adopted on September 9, 2015, and includes measures on return policy, the list of safe countries of origin, the EU emergency trust fund for Africa, the refugee resettlement scheme, funding for migration and security, balancing responsibility, and solidarity in migration issues.<sup>8</sup>

Migration policy should become a common policy rather than a communitarian policy, to ensure that all Member States have the same approaches, rules and regulations towards both internal migrants (those within the European Union) and external migrants (those from third countries). Such a comprehensive and unified approach can only be to the benefit of the European Union, especially in the social context strongly shaken by Brexit.<sup>9</sup>

The EU and its Member States are stepping up their efforts to establish an effective, humanitarian, and safe European migration policy. The European Council plays an important role in this respect by setting strategic priorities. Based on these priorities, the EU Council establishes lines of action and gives negotiating mandates to countries outside the EU. Moreover, it adopts legislation and defines specific programs. Over the past few

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<sup>7</sup> <https://insse.ro/cms/demography-in-europe/bloc-1a.html?lang=ro>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.mae.ro/termeni-conditii>

<sup>9</sup> Buță, Viorel; Radu, Andreea Mihaela (2019), Migration Of Labor Force Within The European Union, Revista Academiei de Științe ale Securității Naționale, Volume 1, p73.

years, the Council and the European Council have built a strong response to the pressures determined by migration<sup>10</sup>.

On December 20, 2023, the Council and the European Parliament reached an agreement on the five key regulations<sup>11</sup>:

- ✓ a new set of regulations on the management of asylum and migration situations
- ✓ new rules governing migration and *force majeure* situations.
- ✓ updating the fingerprint database
- ✓ a new set of regulations on the screening procedure
- ✓ a common asylum procedure

On February 8, 2024, the representatives of the EU Member States approved the three laws that had already been agreed upon between the Council and the Parliament in 2022<sup>12</sup>:

- ✓ uniform rules on asylum applications
- ✓ better reception conditions
- ✓ a new EU resettlement framework

In 2022, 9.93 million non-EU citizens were working in the EU, out of a total of 193.5 million people aged between twenty and sixty-four, representing 5.1% of the total. The total number of employees in the age group twenty-sixty-four is 197.458 million, of which 9.927 million are non-EU citizens. In 2022, the employment rate among the EU active population was higher for EU nationals (77.1%) than for non-EU nationals (61.9%).<sup>13</sup>

Since the beginning of Russia's military aggression in Ukraine in February 2022, Europe has received the greatest number of refugees since the Second World War.

On the European Union labor market, in 2022, non-EU citizens or immigrants were predominantly represented in the following economic sectors: accommodation and food services (HORECA) – 11.3%, administrative and support services – 7.6%, domestic activities – 5.9%, and constructions – 9.1%.<sup>14</sup>

As far as the labor market occupations are concerned, immigrants from the European Union are represented as follows: cleaning and housekeeping 11.4%, personal service workers 7.3%, care workers 5.5%, construction workers 6.1%, mining/construction/manufacturing and transport workers 6.0%, kitchen helpers 2.6%, agricultural and fishing workers 2.4%.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/policies/ipcr-response-to-crises/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/policies/ipcr-response-to-crises/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/a2e95b51-c08a-462c-b4b7-c0a11bab32a7?lang=enidem>

<sup>13</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/a2e95b51-c08a-462c-b4b7-c0a11bab32a7?lang=en>

<sup>14</sup> <https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe>

<sup>15</sup> <https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe>

Immigrants have a much higher share in some sectors than in the total labor force. In Germany and Italy, more than a quarter of the foreign workforce is employed in mining and industry. In Austria, Belgium, France, Italy and Spain, foreigners work predominantly in constructions.

Western European countries have seen a positive natural increase over the past two years, as well as a large arrival of immigrants from outside the space of the European Union. This last factor decisively explains the population growth in Spain (20%), Austria (15%), Belgium (14%), Italy (7%) and Greece (6%).

However, one country in the European Union is an exception. France, where the natural balance, favored by high fertility (18%), has contributed more to population growth than net migration<sup>16</sup>.

Migration data can be collected in destination countries, countries of origin or upon crossing the borders. The methods used to quantify migration rely on both official (administrative) and unofficial data (interviews with different people). The definition of migration varies greatly depending on the context in which it is treated: political, economic, social, and cultural. However, regardless of the contextual approaches to migration, there are two defining variables of international migration – time and space – which all definitions of migration include.<sup>17</sup>

### **The methodology employed in our research analysis.**

To better highlight the relationship between the migration phenomenon and the population of the European Union, econometric research was carried out using a simple regression model.

In this econometric research, several aspects were investigated:

To determine the relationships between the variable “total population” as the dependent variable and the variable “number of immigrants” as the independent/explanatory variable in this research.

To build a linear econometric model in order to analyze the extent to which it can answer the formulated research question.

The validation of the results through specific tests to see how well the “Output” type reports answer the formulated research question.

The prediction of the dependent variable “total population” according to the variable “number of immigrants” as an independent/explanatory variable.

The method proposed in this paper to answer the question under investigation is the analysis of a unifactorial econometric model for cross-sectional data.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> <https://adevarul.ro/stiri-externe/europa/prapastia-demografica-s-a-adancit-intre-europa>.

<sup>17</sup> Pescaru, C. M. - *International migration and european integration – factor of globalization [Migratia internationala si integrarea europeana-factor al globalizarii]*. In Rogojanu, D. C. (coord.) (2014).

Regionalizare si politici regionale, Iasi, Romania: Editura Lumen, pp.189-190

<sup>18</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs/data/database>

From an economic point of view, both variables, respectively the number of immigrants and the total population, can be considered as variables of interest in their quality of dependent variables. Thus, we select in our research the following variables:

Y – the dependent variable: the total population, expressed as the total population of the country concerned, measured in thousands/millions of inhabitants, i.e. the population of each Member State of the European Union.

X – the independent/explanatory variable: the number of immigrants, expressed as the sum of all immigrants in the territory of the country concerned, measured in thousands/millions of persons.

In order to build a simple linear regression model of the correlation between the number of immigrants and the total population, we will analyze the evolution of these two indicators for the twenty-seven Member States of the European Union in the year 2023, using data sets published online by Eurostat.

**Table 1 - Number of immigrants and population in the twenty-seven European Union countries**

| Country        | X - No. of immigrants | Y- Total population |
|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Austria        | 105.633               | 9.104.772           |
| Belgium        | 137.860               | 11.754.004          |
| Bulgaria       | 29.559                | 6.447.710           |
| Cyprus         | 23.442                | 920.701             |
| Czech Republic | 65.910                | 10.827.529          |
| Germany        | 893.886               | 84.358.845          |
| Denmark        | 64.669                | 5.932.654           |
| Estonia        | 17.547                | 1.365.884           |
| Greece         | 119.489               | 10.394.055          |
| Spain          | 643.684               | 48.059.777          |
| Finland        | 31.106                | 5.563.970           |
| France         | 386.911               | 68.070.697          |
| Croatia        | 26.029                | 3.850.894           |
| Hungary        | 82.937                | 9.597.085           |
| Ireland        | 97.712                | 5.194.336           |
| Italy          | 332.324               | 58.850.717          |
| Lithuania      | 28.914                | 2.857.279           |
| Luxembourg     | 24.644                | 660.809             |
| Latvia         | 10.909                | 1.883.008           |
| Malta          | 26.444                | 542.051             |

|               |         |            |
|---------------|---------|------------|
| Low Countries | 194.306 | 17.811.291 |
| Poland        | 214.083 | 36.753.736 |
| Portugal      | 43.170  | 10.467.366 |
| Romania       | 172.578 | 19.051.562 |
| Sweden        | 132.602 | 10.521.556 |
| Slovenia      | 28.455  | 2.116.792  |
| Slovakia      | 7.253   | 5.428.792  |

Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs/data/database><sup>19</sup>

**Table no. 2 – Statistical description for the number of immigrants from the 27-EU**

| <i>X - Immigration</i>   |             |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Mean                     | 146002,0741 |
| Standard Error           | 39704,43945 |
| Median                   | 65910       |
| Mode                     | #N/A        |
| Standard Deviation       | 206310,3192 |
| Sample Variance          | 42563947817 |
| Kurtosis                 | 6,827248747 |
| Skewness                 | 2,550785862 |
| Range                    | 886633      |
| Minimum                  | 7253        |
| Maximum                  | 893886      |
| Sum                      | 3942056     |
| Count                    | 27          |
| Confidence Level (95.0%) | 81613,64413 |

Source: the authors' processing in Eviews

**Table no. 3 – Statistical description for the 27-EU population in Eviews**

| <i>Y- Population</i> |             |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Mean                 | 16549057,93 |
| Standard Error       | 4286514,982 |
| Median               | 8858775     |

<sup>19</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs/data/databas>

|                          |             |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Mode                     | #N/A        |
| Standard Deviation       | 22273385,21 |
| Sample Variance          | 4,96104E+14 |
| Kurtosis                 | 2,769311052 |
| Skewness                 | 1,916182829 |
| Range                    | 82525654    |
| Minimum                  | 493559      |
| Maximum                  | 83019213    |
| Sum                      | 446824564   |
| Count                    | 27          |
| Confidence Level (95.0%) | 8811057,736 |

Source: the authors' processing in Eviews

In the tables generated above, we have the presentation of the mean of the variables, median, sum, sample number, minimum, maximum, and other statistical indicators.

**Table no. 4. Anova description of the simple regression model in Eviews**

| X - No. of immigrants |             | Y- Total population |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| X - No. of immigrants | 1           |                     |
| Y- Total population   | 0,910063977 | 1                   |

Source: the authors' processing in Eviews

Source: the authors' processing in Eviews

We may notice from the chart that the distribution of the points  $(x_i, y_i)$  can be approximated very well with a straight line (trendline), so it can be assumed that the econometric model describing the relationship between the two variables is a linear model:  $y = E(Y|X) = \alpha + \beta x + \varepsilon$ , where  $\alpha$  și  $\beta$  – parameters of the model.

| ANOVA      |           |             |             |             |
|------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|            | <i>df</i> | <i>SS</i>   | <i>MS</i>   | <i>F</i>    |
| Regression | 1         | 1,06829E+16 | 1,06829E+16 | 120,5319727 |
| Residual   | 25        | 2,21578E+15 | 8,86314E+13 |             |
| Total      | 26        | 1,28987E+16 |             |             |

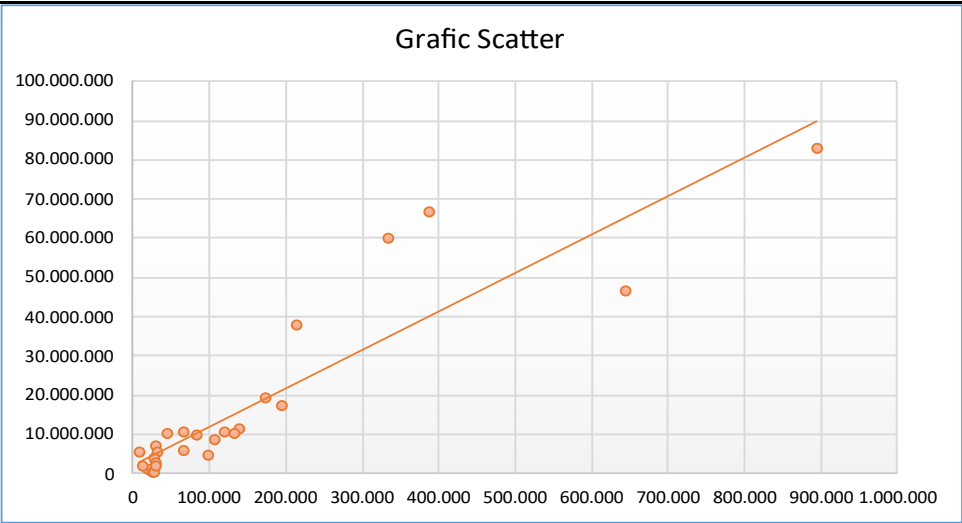
It may be noticed that  $\beta > 0$  (slope/slope of the line), which confirms the hypothesis that the two variables.

are in a direct positive relationship: increasing x leads to increasing y.

Thus, the correlation function allows us to add an extension to the Scatter plot, demonstrating how related the variables chosen in our research are to each other. The value below is a positive value, which therefore shows the close relationship between the two variables.

**Chart No. 1 – Scatter between the two variables analyzed: the number of immigrants and the population in the 27-EU**

| ANOVA      |           |             |             |             |
|------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|            | <i>df</i> | <i>SS</i>   | <i>MS</i>   | <i>F</i>    |
| Regression | 1         | 1,06829E+16 | 1,06829E+16 | 120,5319727 |
| Residual   | 25        | 2,21578E+15 | 8,86314E+13 |             |
| Total      | 26        | 1,28987E+16 |             |             |



Source: the authors' processing in Eviews

**Table No. 5. Regression Statistics**

|                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Multiple R</i>        | 0.910063977        |
| <i>R Square</i>          | <b>0.828216442</b> |
| <i>Adjusted R Square</i> | 0.8213451          |
| <i>Standard Error</i>    | 9414422.702        |
| <i>Observations</i>      | 27                 |

Source: the authors' processing in Eviews

**Table No. 6. – The t-Statistic test**

|                 | <i>Coefficients</i> | <i>Standard Error</i> | <i>t Stat</i> |
|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Intercept       | 2204200,817         | 2233800,689           | 0,986749099   |
| X - Immigration | 98,2510502          | 8,949238224           | 10,97870542   |

Source: the authors' processing in Eviews

For the regression to be valid, the value of R Square must be above 50%, or close to 1. In the case of this analysis, R Square has a value of 82%, significantly higher than the validity criterion, respectively very close to 1, which means that the relationship between variable X and variable Y is strongly linear.

|                    |
|--------------------|
| Significance F     |
| <b>4.71571E-11</b> |

Significance F is below 5%, which shows us that it is valid, and that the analysis is performed correctly in our research.

From the graphical representation of the points  $X_i$  and  $Y_i$ , we notice that their distribution can be approximated with a straight line. Thus, the econometric model describing the relationship between the two variables is the linear model.

$Y_i = \alpha + \beta x_i + \varepsilon_i$ , where  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are the parameters of the model.

Parameters of the model:

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \sum_{i=1}^n y_i = a \cdot n + b \sum_{i=1}^n x_i \\ \sum_{i=1}^n x_i \cdot y_i = a \sum_{i=1}^n x_i + b \sum_{i=1}^n x_i^2 \end{array} \right. , \text{ where } a \text{ and } b \text{ are determined from the system of equations}$$

$$446.284.564 = a \cdot 27 + b \cdot 3.942.056$$

$$173968E+14 = a \cdot 3.942.056 + b \cdot 168221E+12$$

Based on the data generated in Excel, in order to calculate the regression, it shows us the coefficients, respectively and b.

**Table No. 6 – Coefficients of a and b values for the simple regression model**

| <i>Coefficients</i>    |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Intercept</b>       | 2204200.817 |
| <b>X - Immigration</b> | 98.2510502  |

Source: the authors' processing in Excel

Thus, we find that the value of a is 2204200.817, and b is 98.2510502.

$$\hat{Y}_i = a + b_{xi} ; n= 27$$

The econometric analysis of these two variables used confirms the hypothesis that the total population level is explained by a direct relationship between it and the number of immigrants variable. These two variables are directly proportional, so that the increase in the number of immigrants in the European Union automatically leads to an increase in the total population of the countries concerned, which are also more involved in the migration process.

## Conclusions

The phenomenon of migration involves movements of popular masses of various nationalities and ethnicities and has been known since ancient times; it has grown in importance as society has experienced economic and social development.

The concept of migration is based on the free movement of people, which is synonymous with the freedom of individuals to move from one territory to another or from one country to another. In the European Union, the free movement of workers was one of the first rights acknowledged by Community law. The European Union was founded on a philosophy of free circulation of citizens from all over the world. The Member States of the European Union have faced specific situations regarding migration, adopting over the years a few different sectoral and social policies and positions on the migration phenomenon.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Tudorache, Carmen (2019), Evoluția fenomenului migrației în Europa, Revista Economie Teoretică și Aplicată, București, p.99.

The 1957 Treaty of Rome, which laid the foundations of the European Economic Community, was based on certain principles, among which ensuring the free movement of people between the then six founding countries.

The Treaty on the European Economic Community stipulates the right of every citizen of the European Union to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States, subject to the conditions laid down in the Treaty of Rome.

The underlying reasons for the migration phenomenon are economic (the improvement of living standards through increased income), social grounds (the desire to provide a better life for children, family reunification), professional goals (the desire for personal and professional career development) and political or religious rationales (the need to seek political asylum).

At the same time, labor migration provides a framework for an intercultural community, a permanent exchange of values, customs, habits, and traditions taking place between the host population and immigrants.

Also, because of the migration phenomenon, a transfer of technology and technical/scientific information between immigrants (the foreign labor force) and the host country occurs.

For the country of origin involved, labor immigration has a few major positive and negative consequences, as it brings about a series of changes in the numbers and structure of the labor force, influences consumption and investment in the economy, as well as the social behavior of household members on the labor market for the country involved.

According to the New Migration Pact that will be formally adopted in 2024 by the European Parliament, countries that are not on the external border of the European Union will have the choice between accepting refugees or paying into an EU fund for accepting immigrants to transit their country.

The main aim of the border control system will be to distinguish between those who need international protection and those who do not, i.e. social refugees who are forced to seek political asylum for political, social, or religious reasons. People whose applications for political asylum are unlikely to be granted are from countries such as India, Tunisia, and Turkey.

Immigrants from these countries can be prevented from entering the European Union and can also be detained at the border, as can people considered to be a security threat who enter the European Union with terrorist intentions.

The 2024 Pact states that migrants who stand the lowest chances of receiving asylum will be detained in centers so that they can be sent back to their country of origin or transit more quickly. This procedure will apply to people from countries where the average rate of acknowledgement of their refugee status in the EU is less than 20%. The EU is currently

facing an increase in unauthorized arrivals and asylum applications, to more than one million people by the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2023, according to the EU Asylum Agency (EUAA).<sup>21</sup>

The current phenomenon of migration, whether it takes a legal or illegal form, is an extremely important problem nowadays, because of the spread of globalization of consumer markets and the dysfunctional imbalances that have arisen in the European Union labor market. Strictly economic migration has led to more medium and long-term investments, increased competition, advanced entrepreneurship, and the fulfilment of EU employment goals. However, there are, of course, as always, apart from advantages, a series of negative aspects that become more numerous with the spread of the migration phenomenon, namely a higher crime rate and more terrorism acts in various countries in the European Union.

Romania has been a country of emigration for the last thirty years, providing workforce for the countries of the European Union. A large part of Romanian emigrants has preferred to leave for work in countries from the European Union (Italy, Spain, France, Germany, UK), where there are no labor restrictions. The main reasons why Romanians emigrate are of an economic nature: an improvement in the standard of living for those who remain at home, and the possibility of finding a workplace that is in line with their professional competences and which is paid according to the amount of work that they have put in.

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