

## PROFILE AND TRENDS OF LABOR MIGRATION FROM REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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*At the beginning of the third millennium labor migration becomes an important factor of economic development, reasons that make this phenomenon in the scientists' attention. Migration is considered a major issue facing many developing countries, including Moldova. Free movement of human capital increases the welfare of all market participants and thus create the necessary incentives for improvement of individuals and continuing economic development. But this phenomenon is bad for the country of origin of migrants. Migrating brain is a loss to society, because the money invested in human capital formation cannot be recovered. So the export of human capital points to a problematic situation in the country of origin to exporters.*

Migration is an important phenomenon in Republic of Moldova, taking into account that a significant share of people of working age are involved in this process, and remittances from the last years was about ¼ from GDP. In the top countries after the attractiveness migration, according by increasing the absolute number of migrants compared to country population, Republic of Moldova ranks 151 of 207 countries of the world. In 2009 Gallup Institute performed a research in 135 country of the world, based on new methodology, Gallup Potential Net Migration Index, that reflects the wish of respondents to go in other country. After these researches, Republic of Moldova rank 110, which once again proves that our country is very less attractive from migration point of view.

Beginning with second part of 1990 years, flow of moldovan migrants has become a phenomenon of proportions. So, according to opinion of experts in this field, can be identified *four steps of migration*:

1. *The period which covers the years 1990-1994*, which is characterized by worsening of economic situation in the country and increasing poverty. This led to the appearance of commercial migration, consisting in crossing borders of other countries in order to procure goods and their marketing in the country.

2. *1995-2000 years* started with an economic stability, but in 1998 country again was affected by a strong crisis that has damaged the labor market. As result, has developed the spontaneous labor migration, mainly to Russia and Italy. In the same time, grows the illegal migration and human trafficking.

3. *Period 2001-2006* is characterized by promoting legalization and regulation of illegal migration, was signed bilateral agreements about labor migration. In the same years, was highlighting seasonal migration to Russia and female migration to Italy.

4. Step beginning with 2006 is characterized by the fact that illegal migration is replaced with legal migration, concretized by signing agreements with destination countries of Moldovan migrants [10].

In the last twenty years, in Republic of Moldova, the number of migrants has strongly increased. Apart from NBS of Moldova, there are and other institutions which presents estimates of the number of workers Moldovans being abroad, from information submitted by them exist significant differences (table 1).

**Table 1. Information about the number of emigrants with work purpose  
from Republic of Moldova**

<i>Anul</i>	<i>Number of emigrants, persons</i>	<i>Source</i>
2005	394 500	NBS, estimation based on annual survey of labor force
	600 000 – 1 000 000	Information and Security Service of Moldova
	567 000	International Organization for Migration
2006	571 000	According to information presented by census from 2004
	310 100	NBS, estimation based on annual survey of labor force
2012	328 300	NBS, estimation based on annual survey of labor force
	820 222	Border Police Department
	756 000	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration

*Source: made by author based on sources mentioned in the table.*

The information presented indicate the existence of discrepancies between official data presented by NBS of Moldova and estimates by the International Organization for Migration or discovered during studies, for example from the CBS AXA.

According to information presented by Border Police Department, at the end of 2012, the number of moldovan citizens being abroad was 820 222 persons, from they 384 169 was men and 436 053 women. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, based on information presented by diplomatic missions of Republic of Moldova, estimates the number of moldovan migrants on 756 thousand persons [9, p. 20].

This gap in information demonstrates that our state does not have adequate tools for migration measuring and promoting a policy for their regulating. It is very difficult to present corectly volumle of population migration in conditions of differentiation in existing information regarding the number of Moldovan migrants, especially taking into account the possibility to emigrate through Transnistria.

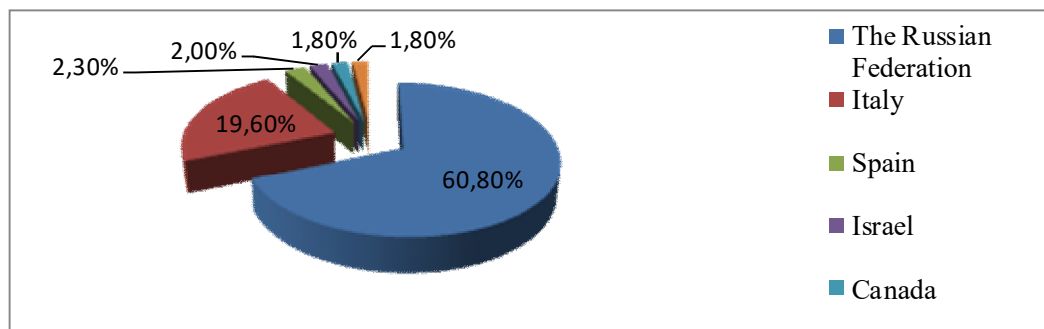
Unfortunately, in spite of actions promoted by governments for directing the migration into legal areas, the number of legal migrants from Moldova is very reduced, compared with number of people who work or is looking for a place of work abroad.

Talking about other element of the international migration, *imigration*, we can say that, according to informations presented by NBS, every year in Republic of Moldova, emigrate about 2000 strangers, of which 51,3% have specialized secondary or higher studies, mostly from them being men. The origin of imigrants is following: Israel (20,7%), Ukraine (14,3%), Romania (11,5%), Russia (10,7%) and Turkey (10,3%). At the end of 2010, the number of strangers in Republic of Moldova, who have permanent residence permits amounted to 15 546 people, but those who have temporary residence permits amounted 4500 peoples. The goal of imigrations, usually, is to reunion the family, studies, employment [8, p. 99 ]. But, because in Moldova is obvious the preponderance of migration, in this paper we will focus on research trends and effects of this process.

In Republic of Moldova are identified the following *types of international migration*:

- short term migration, especially, to Russia;
- long term migration to country from migrație Europe;
- definitive migration, especially in Canada and USA.

Moldovan migrants have main destinations: Russia, Italy, Portugal, Ukraine, Spain and Canada, migrant flows by destination countries are different.



**Figure 1. Distribution moldovan migrants by destination countries, 2012**

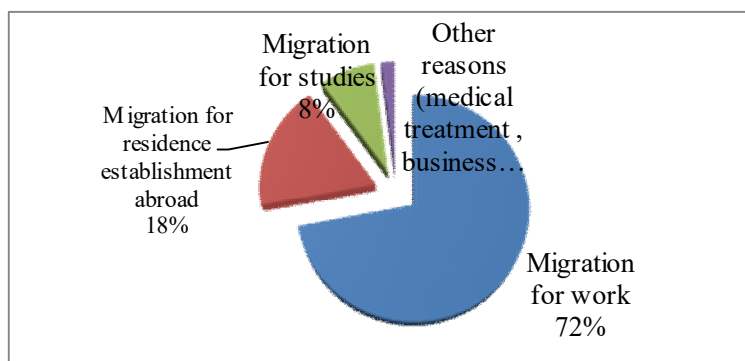
*Source: taken from source 9, p. 21.*

According to information presented by NBS, most of migrants work in Russia – 69,2% and in Italy – 14,2% [6, p. 6]. Informations presented by MIA for 2012 differs slightly in the following sense (figure 2.2). It highlights the concentration trend of Moldovan migrants in big cities. In ten cities: Moscow, Rome, St. Petersburg, Paris, Lisbon, Padua, Milan, Istanbul, Odessa, Tyumen is about 75% of our citizens [5, p.26].

The gender distribution of migrants show that, for all analized period, prevail emigration of the female population (exceptions are 1992 and 2001, when only about 49% were women). According to data of MIA, at the end of 2012 they were abroad 384 169 men and 436 053 women [9, p.17]. From the perspective of gender, in France and Portugal migrant communities are balanced, but in Italy prevail female migrants, and in Russia and Britain - male.

Analyzing the distribution by age of migrants, we observe that, especially in the last period, people 26-40 years are the most active in the migration processes, while the population over 61 years has a smaller weight in number of migrants. The average age of migrant men is 36,6 years and women is 38,5 years [6, p. 7]. The study recently promoted – „Mapping of Moldovan diaspora in Italy, Portugal, France and United Kingdom of Great Britain (Cartografierea diasporei moldovenești în Italia, Portugalia, Franța și Regatul Unit al Marii Britanii) – reveals that younger contingent of migrants are in UK (52,0% have 18-30 years) and France (49,1% have 18-30 years) [1]. But in Italy and Portugal, comparing with France and Great Britain, there is a greater number of Moldovan migrants aged over 41 years, including over 50 years. The age structure of migrants is determined, first of all, by migration motivations.

Initial motivation of international migrants from our country was determined by the needs and interests of a financial nature, having intention to leave temporarily (figure 2).



**Figure 2. Migration structure by objectives**

*Source: made by author based on source 1.*

This is confirmed by the fact that migrants, initially, invested in the purchase and renovation of buildings in Moldova. Gradually, intentions began to change, migrants focusing more to the permanent establishment abroad, confirmed by the exodus of young people, which studies and have a legal work, and the large number of migrants who reunite family abroad.

Of course, the majority of Moldovan migrants change their jobs in destination countries, most of them working as builders and households. In table 2 we present occupations of our citizens before and after migration. Analyzing this information, we observe that majority of migrants do not activate according to their qualification, that lead to damage the human capital from the professional point of view.

**Table 2. Migrant distribution by economic activity of workplace  
 before their leaving and during their stay abroad, %**

<i>Fields of activities</i>	<i>Before leaving</i>	<i>After leaving</i>
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	43,3%	2,8%
Industry	9,5%	2,6%
Constructions	13,1%	56,5%
Trade	11,6%	9,7%
Hoteluri și restaurante	2,2%	3,6%
Hotels and restaurants	5%	3,6%
Services provided to private households of the population	0,2%	18,7%
Other activities	15,1%	2,5
Total	100%	100%

*Source: taken from source 6, p. 13.*

Summarizing the research results, we highlight the following trends of migration of Moldovan citizens:

- increasing the number of migrants (756 thousand persons 2012, according to Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration;
- focus the migration flows (over 60% from migrants are in Russian Federation, and 20% are in Italy);
- migration flows are more younger (56% from migrants have 25-44 years);
- feminization of migration flows (50% from migrants are women);
- increasing the importance of economic factor in migration determination (72%);
- intensification of circular migration (the period of stay abroad of most migrants is up to three months (25%) and up to one year (34%);
- intellectualization of migration flows (23% from migrant have higher education or secondary specialized);
- concentration of migrants mainly in construction (56,5%) and householding (18,7%).

We note that, in the last time, in the evolution of international migration in Moldova is observed the following trends:

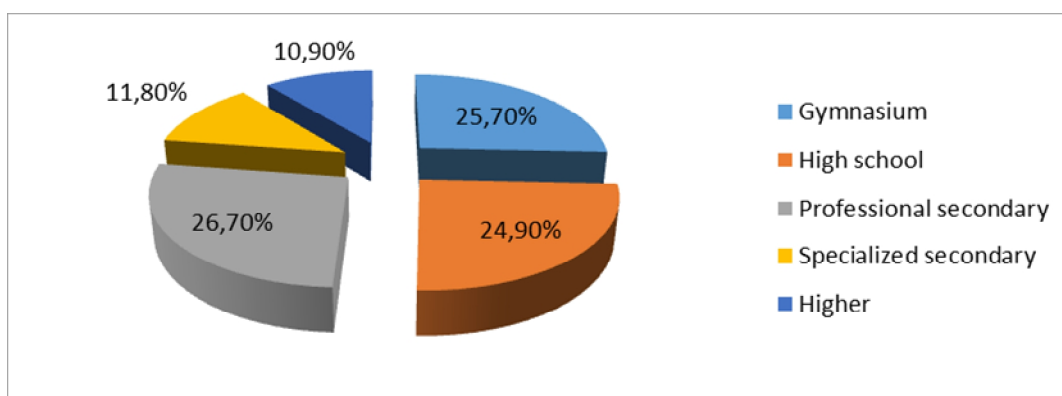
- changes in the duration of migration (from short term migration to long term migration);
- changes in the direction of migration (from the Russian Federation to European Union). In conditions of last political events, when after signing the Association Agreement with EU, Russian Federation has tightened the conditions of stay for Moldovan citizens on its territory, trend of Moldovan migrants to move may change. Due to the fact that from April 28, 2014 the EU has liberalized visa regime with Moldova, it happened an increasing flow of migrants to European countries, where working and living conditions are much more civilized.

According to the characteristics described, we reveal that Moldovan migration has a „maturity level” relatively low. This conclusion may be confirmed by a number of empirical research and, especially, based on data IASCI-CIVIS 2010: 67% of long-term migrants consider their residence work and status regularized and family reunification is 21%. Also, only 36% from migrants have a bank account in the migration country, and many engaged in unskilled labor in migration country, leading to a situation of disqualification [2]. These findings support the opinion of the low level of integration and prosperity of Moldovan migrants. In this context we mention incipient character of Moldovan diasporas, which more corectly could be called „migrant associations”,

while essential mission of diasporas is to promote and maintain national identity. According to the Bureau of Interethnic Relations, Moldovan migrants has formed over 120 associations, with an average of 40 members, that means that only 1% from all migrants actively participates in the work of defending the rights of nationals and preserving national values [13].

Some experts from Republic of Moldova declares that brain exodus may paralyze the national economy of Republic of Moldova [3]. Statistics about migration shows that national economy is severely affected by the intellectual exodus. Alarming trends can be observed in the education and medical field. In the last twenty years, over 40% of medical workers has abandoned their profession, most of them migrating abroad. And the education system shows a lack of skilled workers. So, Republic of Moldova lose intellectuals, namely those persons who can generate development of the country [12]. Every years, Ministry of Health issued 500 certificates proving medical studies (necessary for employment abroad), from them: 200 for doctors (which constitutes 50% of the number of doctors, graduates of postgraduate studies trained for medical work) and about 300 for medical workers with secondary education. It is estimated that the numbers of migrant medical workers are much higher (about 35 000 persons), knowing that most of them (mainly nurses) working informal in the care sector and only units working legally in medicine [7].

According to informations presented by NBS Moldovan migrants can be characteriyed by the level of education: from the total number of migrants – 332,5 thousand, higher education have about 36,1 thousand migrants, specialized secondary – 39,1 thousand, professional secondary – 88,9 thousand, high-school studies, secondary education – 82,8 thousand, gymnasium studies – 83,6 thousand and primary education – 2,0 thousand migrants (figure 3).



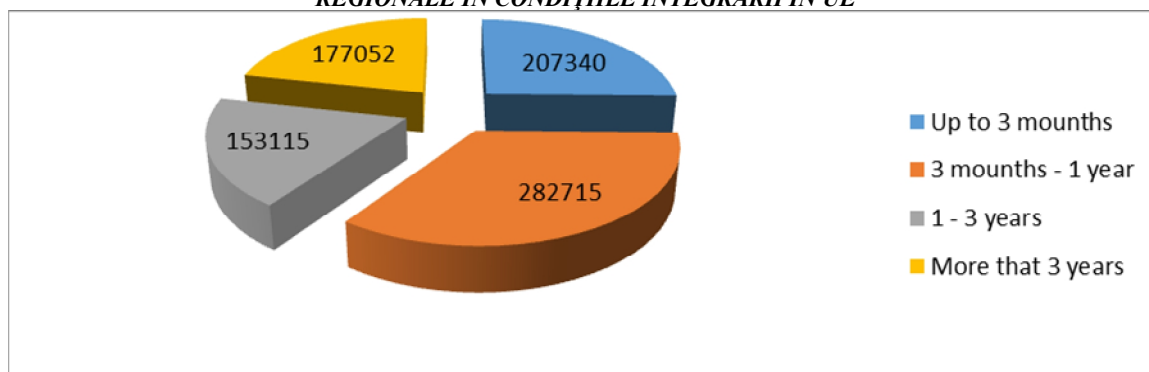
**Figure 3. Migrant distribution from Republic of Moldova by the level of education, 2013 year**

*Source: made by author based on information NBS [14]*

It is interesting to note that migrants with higher education represent about 10.6% from total, while as a share of the workforce they represent 22,7%, and in period 2005 – 2010 the number of graduates increased by 63%. In the same time labor market needs skilles workers, and about 80% of registred vacancies are for candidats with secondary education [8]. However, for candidates with higher education, chances of finding a job are bigger, reflecting young people with higher education accept to be employed in areas that are far from their specialization.

Starting from the definition of circular migration, that explain this phenomenon by seasonal and temporary migration, we see that the vast majority of migrants from Moldova participates in this type of migration (figure 4).

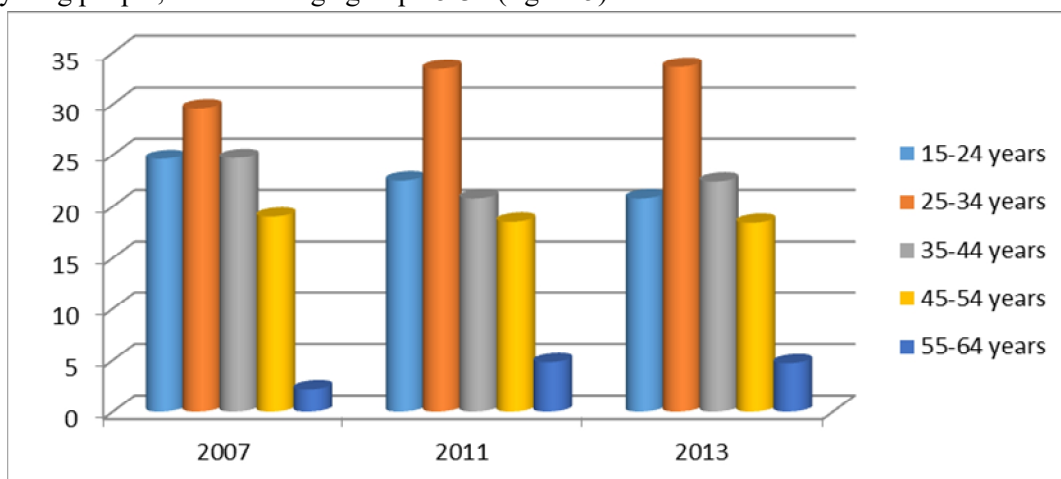
In Republic of Moldova, circular migration is more highlighted in the last two decades. According to information of Labour Force Survey, in period 2007-2013, about 300 thousand moldovan citizens were working abroad, most of them were men. In 2012 these migrants were working, predominant, in following countries: Russian Federation (61,7%), Italy (18,8%), Turcia (2,9%), Portugal (2,6%), Ukraine (2,1%), Israel (1,6%), Greece (0,8%), Romania (0,7%) and in other countries (8,6%) [9, p. 51]. Depending on the residence, it highlights the fact that the largest share of migrants live in rural areas.



**Figure 4. The number of Moldovan citizens living abroad, after duration of stay, at the end of 2012, persons**

*Source: made by author based on source 9*

Analyzing informations from figure, in can be observed that number of migrants from cities decreases, while the number from villages increases, that again confirm the villagers impossibility to find a work place in their native village. Depending on the age, talking about circular migrants, we attest that most mobile part of the population are young people, the first is age group 25-34 (figure 5).



**Figure 5. Circular/temporary migration of workforce by age, for years 2007-2013**

*Source: made by author based on information NBS [14]*

Starting with benefits of circular migration, we consider that involved states in process of workforce external migration (nowadays, practically all states) should take more measures to extend circular migration programs, treating them as measures to develop legal migration channels for low skilled workers, middle and high in developing countries. But the most sustainable solution to support circular migration, in our opinion, would be to treat her it the theory of systems and regulate the entire migration process from antemigration step, going, arrival/receipt, stay, return and reintegration.

In Republic of Moldova, also, can be observed and return migration. The results of IASCI-CIVIS 2010 reflect that most respondents intend to return in the country (figure 6).

Persons who work in EU would like to return in the country after six years, who work in CIS – after four years, but before their returning they expect good employment opportunities and a favorable business environment (figure 7).

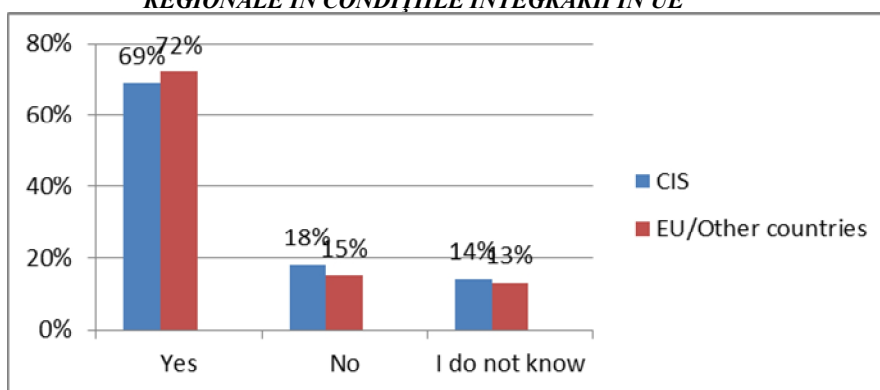


Figure 6. The migrants intentions of permanently returning in Moldova

Source: taken from source 2

An important condition for returning we observe that is accumulation of necessary money, namely realization of main goal of migration. According to study „Work force migration” from 2012 of NBS, the main reasons of returning in country are (table 3):

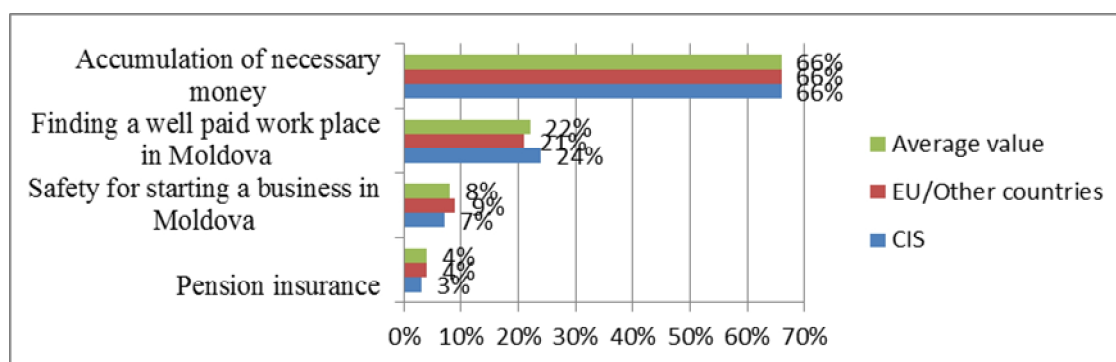


Figure 7. Prevailing conditions for returning in Republic of Moldova

Source: taken from source 2

After economic crisis from 2008, many experts forecast a massive return of Moldovan migrants, but this did not take place. According to researches, during crisis, around one hundred Moldovan migrants were addressed to the consulates of the Republic of Moldova for returning home [11, p.14]. Surveys promoted by research centers CASE-Moldova (2008) and CBS AXA (2009) proved that migrants do not want to return home even with the shrinking wage, because even this wage will be higher than at home.

Table 3. Migrants distribution by reasons of returning in country, %

Reason of returning	%
Holiday/vacation	11,5
Registration/preparation of documents for legalization	10,2
Family responsibilities	27,4
Expiration of the contract/work permit	6,0
Health reasons	9,4
Did not find work/clients abroad	10,4
Seasonal work	5,9
Making/achieve the goal	9,0
Poor working conditions/low salaries; uncertainty/instability, exploitation/deception/theft,	7,3
Other reasons	2,9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: taken from source 6, p. 15

Often returned migrants suffer a failure in integrating into the labor market in the country, usually because of low wages, lack of jobs (especially in villages) or an unfavorable business environment. According to CBS-AXA survey, former migrants are not too willing to start a business (table 4).

**Table 4. The intention of former immigrants to have their own business, %**

<i>Action</i>	<i>CBS AXA, 2008</i>	<i>CBS AXA, 2009</i>
Now i have a business	6,8	2,4
I had a business in the past, but i do not plan to begin a new business	2,6	5,2
I had a business in the past, and i plan to begin a new business	1,7	1,9
I do not have any business, but i plan one	14,5	17,5
The number of potential entrepreneurs	23,0	21,8

*Source: taken from source 4*

In this context, the causes that conditioned such an attitude are small profits, increase production costs, etc. Thus, these cases turns back into factors that determine the continuity of migration. Of course that exist examples of success by returning migrants, due, especially, to knowledge and skills obtained abroad. In the same time, we must recognize that there are some factors that prevent the return of migrations, the strongest referring to the fact that children are enrolled in the education system of the destination country, after that comes the purchase of housing, recognition of qualifications and acceptance of the value system of the host country.

Generalizing consulted literature, we find that migrants returning on the national labor market has a number of benefits:

- contributes to increasing economic performance;
- stimulate absorbtion of technological progress;
- promotes modern labor relations, competition;
- contributes to develop a work culture compatible with the Western European and American;
- stimulates the opening and development of transnational companies;
- stimulates the development of transnational social activities;
- promoting the dissemination of entrepreneurial attitudes.

Besides these, once with increasing flows of return migrants, increases and the *pro democratic attitude of population*. In the context of the mentioned benefits, Moldovan government should focus on promoting the return of Moldovan migrants. For this purpose, first is necessary to improve the entrepreneurial environment in the country, because it is a slow probability that migrants will come back to the actual level of wages. In this way, first, it would be possible to motivate migrants returning, human capital enriched with new knowledge and experiences, and second, would reduce youth migration from the country.

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