

MIGRATION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES IN ROMANIA AND SWITZERLAND PROMOTING ACTIVE AGING IN THE WELFARE STATE

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The access of immigrant population on equal terms with other citizens, to Institutions of the welfare state is considered by most European countries the primary condition in order to facilitate their integration.
(Mircea Radu, 2006)

Abstract

The fact that Romania is in the process of economic development is a reality justified by national, European and international statistics regarding GDP and quality of life. Consequently, the average salary in Romania is low compared to the one in developed European states and so is the value of pensions granted to the elderly. Beyond that, social assistance legislation has some deficiencies that strengthen the flaws of social protection system and suggests that *welfare state* is a concept that has some distinct features in the case of Romania compared to the Western states model. The situation is even more exciting to be dealt with as we can identify specific features for people who are directly or indirectly involved in the migration process. Specific elements can be highlighted even more clearly in an analysis which shows two models of social protection for the elderly, such as that of Switzerland in comparison to the one in Romania. On the one hand, we distinguish a state with a western democratic tradition, a confederation structure which has close relations of cooperation in all fields with the European Union; on the other hand, we are referring to Romania, a country with a social and political pattern impregnated by Eastern influence. Therefore, this article proposes a theoretical analysis of *policies regarding social assistance and protection* for older people in Romania and Switzerland, as well as of *migration policies*, respectively of the conditions for the integration of migrant people in the two countries. The

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two countries have different elements concerning the social protection policy for elderly people. As for the second part of our analysis, namely the integration of immigrants, we can find some common points highlighted by the Migrant Integration Index, the two countries occupying close positions, respectively 21 for Switzerland and 23 for Romania.

Key words: *migration, social protection, policies, elderly people, welfare state*

Résumé

Le fait que la Roumanie se trouve dans un processus de développement économique est une réalité justifiée par les statistiques nationales, européennes et internationales concernant le PIB et la qualité de vie. Par conséquent, le niveau du salaire moyen est bas par rapport aux états européens développés et implicitement, la valeur des pensions accordées aux personnes âgées. Au-delà, la législation de l'assistance sociale a certaines lacunes qui renforcent les défauts du système de la protection sociale et suggère que L'État-providence est un concept qui présente une série de caractéristiques distinctes dans le cas de la Roumanie par rapport aux pays occidentaux. La situation est encore plus intéressante à être traitée, de plus qu'on identifie des caractéristiques spécifiques dans le cas des personnes qui sont directement ou indirectement impliquées dans le processus de migration. Les éléments spécifiques peuvent être mis en évidence et clairement dans une analyse qui montre deux modèles de protection sociale pour les personnes âgées, tels que celui de la Suisse par rapport à celui de la Roumanie. Nous avons d'une part, un état avec une tradition démocratique occidentale, une structure de confédération qui entretient d'étroites relations de coopération dans tous les domaines avec l'Union Européenne, et d'autre part, nous nous référons à la Roumanie, un pays dont le modèle social et politique a été imprégné par l'influence de l'Est. Par conséquent, cet article propose une analyse théorique *des politiques de l'aide sociale et de la protection sociale* pour les personnes âgées en Roumanie et en Suisse, ainsi que *les politiques dans le domaine de la migration*, respectivement les conditions *d'intégration des personnes migrantes* dans les deux pays. Les deux pays ont des éléments de différenciation en ce qui concerne la politique en matière de protection sociale pour les personnes âgées. Quant à la deuxième partie de notre analyse, à savoir l'intégration des immigrants, nous trouvons des points communs mis en évidence, comme l'Indice concernant l'Intégration des Migrants, les deux pays occupant des positions proches respectivement 21 pour la Suisse et 23 pour la Roumanie.

Mots-clés: *migration, protection sociale, politiques, personnes âgées, L'État-providence*

Abstract

Faptul că România se află în proces de dezvoltare din punct de vedere economic este o realitate justificată de statisticile naționale, europene și internaționale cu privire la produsul intern brut și calitatea vieții. În consecință, nivelul mediu de salarizare este scăzut comparativ cu stele dezvoltate din Europa și, implicit, valoarea pensiilor acordate persoanelor de vârstă a treia. Dincolo de acest aspect, legislația din domeniul asistenței sociale prezintă o serie de deficiențe care întăresc tarele sistemului de protecție socială și arată că *statul bunăstării* este un

concept care prezintă o serie de particularități distincte în cazul României față de modelul statelor occidentale. Situația este cu atât mai interesantă a fi dezbătută cu cât identificăm particularități specifice în cazul persoanelor care sunt implicate direct sau indirect în procesul migrației. Elementele de specificitate pot fi evidențiate și mai clar într-o analiză care prezintă două modele de protecție socială a persoanelor vârstnice, așa cum este cel al Elveției în comparație cu cel din România. Avem pe de o parte, un stat cu o tradiție democratică occidentală, o structură confederativă care are strânse raporturi de colaborare în toate domeniile cu Uniunea Europeană, pe de altă parte, ne raportăm la România, un stat al cărui pattern politic și social a fost impregnat de influența răsăriteană. În consecință, acest articol propune o analiză teoretică a *politicilor privind asistența și protecția socială* pentru persoanele vârstnice din România și Elveția, precum și a *politicilor din domeniul migrației*, respectiv a condițiilor existente în cele două state pentru *integrarea persoanelor migrante*. Cele două țări prezintă elemente de diferențiere în ceea ce privește politica de protecție socială a persoanelor vârstnice. Cât privește al doilea aspect al analizei noastre, respectiv integrarea imigranților, regăsim puncte comune evidențiate și de Indexul privind Integrarea Migranților, cele două state ocupând poziții apropiate, respectiv 21 în cazul Elveției și 23 în cazul României.

Cuvinte cheie: migrație, protecție socială, politici, persoanele vârstnice, statul bunăstării

1. The challenges of migration in Romania and Switzerland

According to recent data provided by the United Nations, the proportion of elderly population will increase in the long term; the phenomenon of aging is present, especially in Europe. It is estimated that the aging population has already reached a critical stage because the outlook for this century shows a natural decline and an excessive population aging. The National Institute of Statistics shows that the resident population of Romania on 1 January 2013 was approximately equal to the one of 1969, hovering around 20.01 million inhabitants. From 1989 to 2012 Romania's stable population decreased by over 3.1 million. It is important to note that more than 70 percent of the negative increase of the (stable) resident population from this period was caused by emigration (NIS 2014). In the past eleven years we have seen a rise in the average age of the resident population of the country from 37.8 years in 2002 to 40.9 years in 2013. On July 1st 2013 the Romanians aged over 60 years are 4.548.043 people, representing 21.4 percent of the total population as shown by the same institute.

We may discuss about increasing ageing population as a direct consequence of this situation is the quality of life in Romania. The quality of life as a concept *integrates objective and subjective indicators, a broad range of life domains and individual values*. Considerable agreement exists that quality of life is multidimensional and may be categorized within five dimensions: *physical wellbeing, material wellbeing, social wellbeing, emotional wellbeing, development and activity* (Felce and Perry 1995).

Research Institute for Quality of Life - from Bucharest, Romania - conducted a study in 2010 which revealed the opinion of Romanians about the most critical elements which define the quality of life: *taxes and the price increase, low availability of jobs, insufficient income*. An important financial indicator is represented by the the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which in Romania was worth 199.04 Billion US dollars in 2014, as we can see from the statistics reported by the World Bank. The GDP value of Romania represents 0.32 percent of the world economy and it averaged 84.94 Billion USD from 1987 until 2014, reaching an all-time high of 204.34 Billion USD in 2008 and the lowest record of 25.09 Billion USD in 1992, as represented in the graphic no. 1.

As we can see, there are important economic consequences of this movement and life quality of Romanians, since the volume of remittances was about seven billion Euros in 2007. There is also a social impact particularly on the lives of migrant families. The most problematic issue is the temporary abandonment of minors by their labor migrant parents, issue that forced the authorities to formulate policies for monitoring the situation, which involved more public spending. The Romanian external migration will be influenced in the future by how strong and stable the national economic growth will be, how much this growth will raise significantly the standard of living, and the immigration policies of western countries.

Unemployment rate is - also - a risk key factor which may promote a tendency to migrate to a foreign labor market. In the case of Romanians, we can see some fairly significant fluctuations during the period 1999-2013 (table no. 1), which led the population to migrate to the labor market of European countries. In terms of approaching the theme of migration in the Romanian space, Dumitru Sandu notes that Romania is experiencing a high number of people which migrate and return - about a third of adults have worked abroad at least once until 2008 (Sandu 2010: 12). Moreover, the author notes that "the Romanian migration of recent date, abroad, is largely a surprising and little-known phenomenon" (Sandu 2010: 11).

It is estimated that more than 3.5 million Romanians work abroad. What about the internal integration policies? We may say that newcomers in Romania enjoy just *half-way favorable* integration policies, but better than those in most Central European and Baltic countries. The issues of immigration and the process of integrating immigrants are relatively new phenomena in Romania, a country mainly known as a country of emigration and the incoming migrants can be split into two groups: voluntary and forced. Romania has adopted anti-discrimination laws in 2000 year, successively improved in 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2006, in line with the general European trend. In areas such as nationality, political participation and education, Romania is missing some fundamental principles becoming the norm across Europe; for example, dual nationality, jus soli, voting rights or equal access to education. Effective management of migration in

Romania it is imposed as a necessity in terms of transformation of Romanian from an emigration country mainly, in a country of destination (and transit) for immigrants. As a result of acquiring the status of EU member state, and in order to respond to the pressure of immigrants on the borders, Romania has adopted a legislation, has developed socio-economic reintegration systems for migrants and has taken some concrete actions for the beneficial managing of immigration, has adopted administrative and institutional reforms.

We may say that Romania is *open* to intra-community mobility (as a member of the European Union) and it's more interesting as a transit country for Eastern citizens.

On the other hand, Switzerland has a cautious approach regarding migration phenomenon, aspect which does not diminish the quality of the services for the integration of the hexogen population. Switzerland is among the countries in Europe with the highest percentage quota of foreigners in comparison with its permanent population: 21.9 per cent of the overall populations are foreigners. With regard to immigration for purposes of asylum, the Swiss quota (in percentage to the permanent population) has been the highest among the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the past few years. In Switzerland migrant families face some of the "least favorable" family reunion procedures, below most European countries. Referring to migrant pupils, they have the same challenges to educational access as other countries, but have better chances to learn languages and culture of their origin under the *The Intercantonal Agreement on Harmonization of Compulsory Education* (HarmoS Agreement) which is a Swiss agreement on schooling. Regarding the political participation, foreigners can vote in local and cantonal elections in several major cantons and enjoy basic political liberties.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) provided a study *From immigration to integration. Local solutions to a global challenge* which showed that in Switzerland, as in other countries, employment is viewed as a critical arena for "including the excluded" (OECD 2006). In a document produced by the Federal Commission for Foreigners it is stated that "a major part of integration occurs at the workplace; being employed also means social recognition" (Egger, 2003). *The Forum for the Integration of Migrants* (FIMM Suisse), founded in November 2000 in Bern, is the umbrella organization of associations for immigrants in Switzerland.

Using the statistics offered by of Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) Ruedin, Alberti, and D'Amato (2015), made a description of the Swiss immigration and integration policies during the period 1848 – 2014. In this research they identified three distinctive periods in the evolution of Swiss immigration and integration policy: *expansive, restricting, expanding* (graphic no. 2) arguing that „the changes in policies reflect the fact that immigrants are

increasingly accepted as a permanent feature of Swiss society” (Ruedin et al. 2015, p.1). Based on this paper and considering, also, the workshops and discussions organized by The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Ruedin argues that European societies (and policy makers) have interpreted immigration as a *challenge to social cohesion*, more than societies in other regions of the world. We have three main reasons for this approach:

- 1) a more diverse composition of migration since the 1970s (comprising immigrants with no particular ethical, cultural or historical ties with their countries of destination),

- 2) the end of exceptionally high economy growth rates in the 1970s,

- 3) a rethinking of the welfare state in the 1980s.

Justification of the importance of collaboration between Romania, Switzerland and the European Union (EU) is given by a wide range of agreements considering that EU has closer ties with Switzerland than with any other non-European Economic Area (EEA). Also, Switzerland is the EU's 4th largest trading partner, while the EU is Switzerland's largest, but also over one million EU citizens live in Switzerland, another 230 000 cross the border daily to go to work and 430 000 Swiss citizens live in the EU (European Commission, EU-Swiss relations Memo, 2014).

2. Analytical approach in promoting active aging for migrants

Why should we discuss about policies on migration and active aging in the welfare state? One simple answer is about feeling ourselves as *citizens of the world*, considering that all the people are trying to do the best in life and to achieve the material and spiritual goods necessary for their lives. Across this minimal projection, we may say that the *migration phenomenon* is the most familiar one for the human being, considering that people were a part of the mobility dimension since the beginning of their existence. The migration decision is influenced by different reasons, push and pull factors (Lee 1966, Boyle, Halfacree and Robinson 1998): starting with the environment and continuing with macro system context or individual expectations. During the time, the decision of the people to migrate had different perspectives and it is involving specific pattern's from country to country.

In the last few years we can see that Europe remains one of the most popular migration destinations in the world even if some states are practicing a strict border management. And Romania, as a country located at the eastern port of entry to the European Union (EU), is a crossroads for various migratory flows, continuing to be a country of destination, transit and, also, origin. Unfortunately, Romania witnesses the “brain” and “care drain” of its own citizens considering that more than 3.5 million Romanians work abroad. By the other hand, the country witnesses the transiting through, or the settlement on its territory, of third country nationals who are in search of wellbeing in Europe (IOM 2013).

In the case of Romania we can find an extent of the migration phenomenon after the 90s, so that until 2007, working abroad became a mass phenomenon, and the number of emigrants is still growing. After 2007, which marks the joining of Romania to the European Union, there was a slight decrease in the number of emigrants. We can find several forms of migration, such as: legal permanent emigration, temporary labor emigration associated with the term of *navetism* (Buja et al., p. 69), (which requires a continuing movement between the country of origin and the country of destination), but also the return of emigrants in Romania starting with 2008, as a consequence of the global economic crisis. Preferred destination countries by Romanians varied, according to the conditions and facilities offered to migrants and the porosity of the access offered by state borders and by the integration conditions. The right to free movement is guaranteed by the Constitution of Romania, every Romanian citizen has the right to emigrate and to return to his country. After the Revolution of 1989, a long process of regulating the entry and exit requirements for Romanians took place. With the integration of Romania into the European Union in 2007, efforts are made in order to implement the migration legislation and to have a harmonization with the Universal Charter of Human Rights.

In a report about the *migration trend*, Sebastian LazaroIU proposed six forms of migration for the period before 1989: *dissidents' defection, labor exchange, short distance border traffic, organized tourism to other communist countries, ethnic migration and student mobility*. Starting with the '90s, free movement of people was guaranteed by the new Constitution (art. 25) of the democratic regime and up to 15 percent of the population has left the country, for reasons like: permanent emigration (especially joining families abroad); ethnic migration; student mobility; labor migration back and forth, regular or irregular, sometimes covered under asylum seeking procedures; business migration (including short distance border traffic); brain drain; transit migration to other former communist countries boarding a Western country, with no visa restriction (LazaroIU, 2004:7). Romanians were involved in three main stages of labor migration between 1990 and 2006:

- 1990 – 1995: three immigrants per 1,000 inhabitants and the destination countries were Israel, Turkey, Italy, Hungary, and Germany;
- 1996 – 2001: seven immigrants per 1,000 inhabitants with the main destinations being Spain, United States, and Canada;
- 2002–2006 (after EU lifting visa requirements for Romanian citizens): 28 immigrants per 1,000 inhabitants, the main countries of destination being Italy (40% of all labor migrants), Spain (18%), Germany (5%), Hungary (5%), and Israel (6%).

Since 2000 Italy and Spain are preferred destinations for Romanians interested in a bidding labor market as to the wage levels. During 2000-2002, Romania steps up in bilateral agreements in the field of labor movement

materialized through partnerships with five states, namely Switzerland, Hungary, Luxembourg, Spain and Portugal. The agreement with Switzerland (150 individuals annually), one of the two agreements with Hungary (700 trainees annually), the agreement with Luxembourg (35 trainees per year) aim at people aged between 18 and 35 years, with at least 2 years training and the purpose of travel is related to improving professional skills, cultural knowledge and language (Buja et al., p.39 - 69).

The agreement between the Government of Romania and the Swiss Federal Council regarding the exchange of trainees was signed on 25th of November 1999 in Bern and was approved by the Romanian authorities through the Government Decision no. 579/3rd of July 2000. Beyond formal agreements between states, there are some *support tools* that are extremely useful for a better integration of migrants in new destination countries. For example the web page the *Romanians Home in Switzerland* (<http://casa-romanilor.ch/>) is a forum for debate, but also an important mean of informing the Romanians on various aspects of social life, representing a real support for their adaptation in the Swiss society.

It seems that the concern for the question of migration is a topical one and of particular interest to all citizens of the European community. As shown by the standard Euro barometer survey in the spring of 2015, *immigration* is the major challenge that EU is facing at the moment, being located primarily in twenty states and reaching record levels in Malta (65%) and Germany (55%) (graphic no. 3). Thus, immigration was the first among the topics most frequently cited at EU level by 38 percent (+14 percentage points), it is now far ahead of the economic situation (27%, - 6 percentage points), the unemployment (24% - 5 percentage points) and Member States' public finances (23%, - 2 percentage points). Noteworthy is the fact that 73 percent of Europeans say they are in favor of a common European policy in this area. Also, most Europeans say that they have a positive image of the European Union and confidence in the EU increased in from November last year.

3. Swiss and Romanian regulatory framework for the integration of elderly people

Ministry of Labor, Family, Social Protection and the Elderly People from Romania presents detailed information regarding social protection offered by the European Union member states as well as states with association agreements, such as Switzerland.

The Swiss social security system offers the following benefits: sickness and maternity, accidents at work and occupational diseases, invalidity, old age and death. It is based on three pillars:

- First pillar: public insurance designed to all people living and / or working in Switzerland;

- Second pillar: professional / occupational insurance mandatory for employed people and professional voluntary insurance for self-employed people;
- Third pillar: individual insurance, namely: unemployment benefits, family benefits, benefits in case of military service or other services, special non-contributory benefits.

Social insurance

The social security system in Switzerland is relatively fragmented, each sector having its peculiarities. This is due to the federal system (where the Confederation has no legislative power, this being exercised by the cantons) and direct democracy (with provisions for popular initiatives or referendums). Each resident in Switzerland must ensure himself/herself in the health insurance system within three months of birth or arrival in this State. Insurance is individual and people should contact the insurance fund that they have chosen. Daily allowance health insurance is optional, only if an individual employment contract or a collective labor agreement foresee a mandatory insurance.

People residing or working in Switzerland are required to join the basic federal insurance system for old age, descendants and the disability insurance system. However, only workers whose salaries exceed a certain threshold must join an occupational scheme (annual minimum salary for 2009 being of 20520 CHF).

Pensions

The insurance system for old age, descendants and invalidity is based on three pillars:

The basic insurance for old age and invalidity (AHV-AVS / IV-AI) (1st pillar)

Men are entitled to an old age pension at the age of 65 and women at the age of 64. It is possible to have an early retirement two years before the established retirement age, in which case the pension is reduced by 6.8% per year, or retirement can be extended by 1-3 years over the established age, in which case the pension is increased by 5.5 to 31.5% depending on the number of months of the extension. Pensioners are entitled in certain circumstances to receive a pension for children and / or a supplementary pension for the wife.

The occupational benefits system (2nd pillar)

Men are entitled to receive an old age pension at the age of 65 and women at the age of 64. Those who receive an old age pension are entitled to a pension for each child who would receive an orphan's pension in case of their death. Surviving spouse who has at least one child at the death of the husband, or has turned 45 and has been married for at least five years is entitled to benefits. The right ceases upon remarriage or death. The children of the deceased are entitled to a survivor's pension. This entitlement ends when the child reaches the age of 18, or 25 if the child is studying or disabled at least 70%, or upon the death of the orphan.

The individual benefits system (3rd pillar)

A person can achieve an individual old age pension, by signing a contract for individual benefit with an insurance company or a bank or subscribing to life insurance. For such assurance a tax reliefs provided and awarding conditions, the amount of benefit depends on the chosen insurance product.

The National Institute of Statistics shows that in 2014 the average number of Romanian pensioners was of 5.357 million people, down by 53 thousand over the previous year; the ratio of the average number of pensioners of state social insurance and the employees was 10 to 10, and the average monthly pension was 846 RON, up 5.1% over the previous year (NIS 2015). Romania, like many other European countries, is facing a demographic balancing driven by aging, leading to economic imbalances caused by the increased number of pensioners relative to the number of employees as a consequence of the policy of stimulating early retirement after 1990, and the emigration of young people abroad. Beyond these challenges, national and European regulatory framework provides measures to support the elderly. For example, the European Social Charter adopted by the Council of Europe on 3rd of May 1996, one of the fundamental European documents which provide the right to health protection, social security and healthcare, and the right to benefit from social services, was signed by Romania on 15th of May, 1997 and ratified by the Law no. 74/1999. In December 2013 the Romanian Government approved a draft law governing equalization standard retirement age to 65 years for women and men, respectively a staggered increase standard retirement age for women from 63 years (2030) to 65 years (2035).

The Law no. 17/2000 regarding social assistance for the elderly people provides the normative dimension necessary to provide a legal framework compatible with European standards in the social assistance field (Ros 2012, p. 91). The 3rd article of the *Law no. 17/2000 regarding social assistance for the elderly people in Romania* provides the situations in which a pensioner is granted protection: he has no family or does not dependent of a person; he doesn't have a home or the ability to secure living conditions through their own financial resources; has no income or insufficient income; cannot live alone or requires specialized care; he is unable to provide the socio-medical needs due to illness or physical or mental condition.

The Romanian Government, through the Decision no. 566/2015 approved the *National Strategy to promote active aging and protection of the elderly for the period 2015-2020* and the *Strategic Action Plan for the period 2015-2020*, which entered into force on 14th of August 2015. The analysis conducted by the Ministry of Labor, Family, Social Protection and Elderly People in this strategy shows that Romania will face in the coming years, a profound socio-economic transformation, due to demographic change. By 2060, it is estimated that the share of population aged greater than or equal to 65 years old will double from 15

to 30%. Also, the demographic dependency ratio (number of young people- under 14 - and elders - over 65 - per 100 people of working age) will go from 55 in 2010 to 100 in 2055.

Therefore, the strategy is based on three general objectives: *extension of working life, promotion of active social participation and dignity for the elderly and obtaining a higher degree of independence and security for people with long term care needs*. These general objectives are based on two key cross-cutting objectives, namely: *physical aging and occurrence of chronic diseases delay and health system preparation in order to serve the elderly population*. In its turn, the Strategic Plan will be complemented by operational action plans for the period 2015-2018 or 2018-2020.

Emigration of Romanians has also contributed to the profound socio-economic transformation due to demographic change, taking into account that in the last decade the population currently aged between 25 and 30 years has reduced by about 20 percent. Beyond that, the aging of population is determined by three separate phenomena, namely: increasing life expectancy, low fertility rates and emigration, which are shown for Romania in Graphic 4 and Graphic 5. In Romania, the average lifespan has increased significantly in the last 60 years, life expectancy at birth increased by about 14 years for women and 10 years for men, shows the strategic document.

The data provided by the authorities and the World Bank and presented by the strategy show a gradual decline in the number of people with employment contract for the age range of 50-54 years, 20 percent of women and 17 percent of men being already early retired in this age range, despite the 2001 reforms that tightened eligibility requirements for obtaining such a pension. For the period 55-59 years have a ratio of 2.5 retired women for every employed woman. Similarly, between the ages of 60 and 64 years, with up to five years before retirement age of retirement for men, there is already a ratio of 4.5 retired men for every employed man (The national strategy for promoting active aging and protection of the elderly for the period 2015-2020 p. 3-12).

4. Social responsibilities of the welfare state towards vulnerable elderly people

In order to determine the classification of a person in the elderly category, we can use two criteria: *the biological and the chronological one*, the last being the most commonly used. Therefore, according to legislative provisions concerning the retirement age, after reaching that threshold, a person can be considered elderly (ROS 2012, p. 76). The United Nations recommends 65 as the age limit at which a person is considered elderly.

Given that elderly people have a number of general features generated by the socio-professional evolution, the peculiarities of anatomic and physiological evolution specific to the phenomenon of aging that causes differential treatment

depending on the particular needs, they receive social assistance measures, supplementary to social security benefits.

The notion of "welfare" is a compound word and refers to a person's state and the material and social conditions of that state. The specialized literature differentiates three types of welfare: social welfare, which broadly refers to collective providing or receiving the well-being; economic welfare, which describes in particular those forms of welfare provided through market mechanisms or formal economy; state welfare, which refers to ensuring social welfare through the state (Pierson, 1991, 1998, quoted by Preda 2002).

A definition of the welfare state is given by Wilensky (1975) which states: "The essence of welfare state is the governmental guarantee of some minimum standards regarding income, food, health, education and housing, provided that to every citizens as social rights ". Mainly, the name "welfare state" is related to the name of the economist J.M. Keynes, and the Lord W.H.Bereridge. Later, the French authors have completed the list of synonyms for the "welfare state" with "providence state". The German authors are reluctant in using the concept of "welfare state" and appreciate this model as "social state". In the United States the Republican interpretation dominates, the concept of workfare conditioning the social benefits of work.

The welfare western states proposes three main dimensions of social protection: *reducing poverty* and thus, the social polarization, *protection against the risks which are impossible to ensure on labor markets* (health risks and the risks of longevity) and *rewarding long-term participation on labor markets*. The western social systems differ as regards to the structure and volume of social expenses, but also the targeted groups for income transfers. Experts identify four distinct groups of countries, carrying out social practices in ways quite similar (Ferrera 1998 Bertola et al., 2001):

- *Nordic countries* (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands), which perform relatively high social spending and define eligibility principles related to the nature of citizenship. These countries have legislated relatively high public charges and use a wide variety of tools and active social policies;
- *Continental countries* (France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg) use, in particular, social insurance systems (the *Bismarck* model), financed by contributions of the employees;
- *Mediterranean countries* (Spain, Greece, Italy, Portugal) uses a model based on social insurance, where benefits are segmented according to the status of the insured;
- *Anglo-Saxon countries* (UK and Ireland), social transfers go mainly to those employed. This type of model (*Beveridge*) supposes a relatively developed social network (National Council for the Elderly People 2015).

According to Mircea Radu, the European social model is based *on the recognition of the fact that security and social justice can contribute both to*

economic efficiency and social progress (Radu 2006). An interesting approach is proposed by Anthony Giddens in his work *"Europe in the Global Times"*, focusing "on social justice and protection in EU member countries, it aims to modernize the European social model by improving the collective capacity to act and to provide new opportunities to all people" with the declared intention to promote "decent work as a global objective at all levels", to increase the adaptability of workers and "to apply measures on labor market inclusion" (Giddens, 2007: 96).

Elena Zamfir performed a critical study on the Romanian social assistance system, which "is facing a deep crisis worldwide" (Zamfir 2012, p. 128). In the author's opinion the situation is even more serious in Romania since it is deeply affected by an economic and moral crisis, promotion of an exacerbated individualism and also obsolescence of the values of community spirit (Zamfir 2012, p. 128). Zamfir considers that we are witnessing an attack on the welfare state as a synthetic expression of the antisocial philosophy through options of the governments regarding policies of social assistance centered on a "downward" scaling of social assistance through: discrediting of vital sectors, abolition of public institutions by chronic under-financing, disguised privatization of essential public social services.

One possible solution to improving the quality of life of elderly people and in general the social protection is provided by Daniel Arpinte by explaining the positive role that microcredit can play in social inclusion. The European Commission defines the microcredit as a repayable loan with a maximum value of up to 25 000 euros for microenterprises (companies with up to 9 employees, inclusive), unemployed or inactive people who want to start a business on their own and don't have access to a bank loan on the open market. Microcredit sector can support *the social reintegration of vulnerable groups* (Arpinte 2015 pp. 155-166). Romania's advantage is that it has specific legislation in the field of microcredit, as does France.

Another interesting opinion regarding the quality of life for elderly people in Romania belongs to Ioan Marginean, who believes that there should be a single *public pension system, with contributions from employers and insured people and to have an expanded occupational (not special) pension system with contributions from the employee* (Marginean 2015, pp. 131-139).

Regarding the situation in Romania, the National Council for the Elderly (NCOE) has conducted a survey in November of 2014 which examined the way of granting social services for elders in local communities. The analysis was based on interpretation of responses from 48 questionnaires in 17 counties, answers that referred questions regarding the number of employees in the professional categories, the number of beneficiaries (elderly people) on categories of services, involving volunteers in activities, problems encountered and proposals made by public and private providers. The share of non-governmental organizations which were involved in this research is greater than that of public institutions. From the

responses received, it appears that the main problems that providers of social services and social care are facing in the community for the elderly are: cumbersome approvals in case of emergencies; insufficient funds; insufficient staff; uncertainty of external financing; no cars; large number of beneficiaries; lack of materials; without volunteers; old, inadequate buildings. From this research a number of proposals have emerged, from NGOs and public institutions: developing public-private partnership; participation in debates; staff development; diversification of services; improving relations with the family; implementing a monitoring system for home care; staff qualifications for occupational therapy activities; filling / unlocking vacancies; rehabilitation of buildings in which activities take place; organizing experience exchanges; increasing wages for social services professions.

Discussion

We may say that migration phenomenon is influenced primarily by economic evolution, and this is the reason we need *clear rules on labor mobility, fair treatment of labor migration in European market, a coherent and effective economic policy of the EU and - especially now in a period of expansion of economic crisis - a common European migration policy*. Free and equal membership to a community is linked to the right to freedom of mobility within it, so that any loyalty to the idea of an international community brings with it a commitment to freedom of movement for its members.

Onora O'Neill takes into consideration the implications of inequality and domination globally, and concludes that since they do not justify a borderless world, they do not force us to think that there could be a better set of institutions: "A better set of correct institutions might be built through thorough thinking, towards who and towards what (towards the movement of people, goods, information, money) should the border be permeable (O'Neill 2000, p. 200). The porosity is infinitely variable and adjustable, different filters can be institutionalized". This underlines the need to manage migration involving complex institutions from European and international level, based on human rights concerns.

Arash Abizadeh argues that these institutions must also be democratic, entailing "forming cosmopolitan institutions, who are competent, either to set an entry policy or legitimately, to delegate power regarding entry policy" which would lead to "jointly controlled permeable (not closed) borders ". (Abizadeh 2008, p 37-65).

In a society in constant transformation, where the demographic structure and social issues are changing rapidly, public policy regarding the provision of social services must adapt to new requirements and meet the needs of people in difficulty. The recommendations of the World Assembly of Elderly People propose a series of measures aiming to: develop care services provided at the

residence of the person, promote access to health services, to improve preventive situation of dependency, diversify the benefits for prevention or combating the risk of marginalization or social exclusion, increase the quality of life of elderly people.

The growth of social services quality and their diversification in order to meet new needs must be a central objective of government policy on social protection. If the State acts as regulator, establishing the policies adopted by the production and delivery frame of social services, the organizations of civil society and private ones have the possibility use a number of tools that can enhance the quality of these services. In this context, social protection and care services for the elderly people should be a priority for decision makers and for state institutions that establish and regulate social policy and its implementation.

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Annex 1

Graphic no. 1. Romania GDP



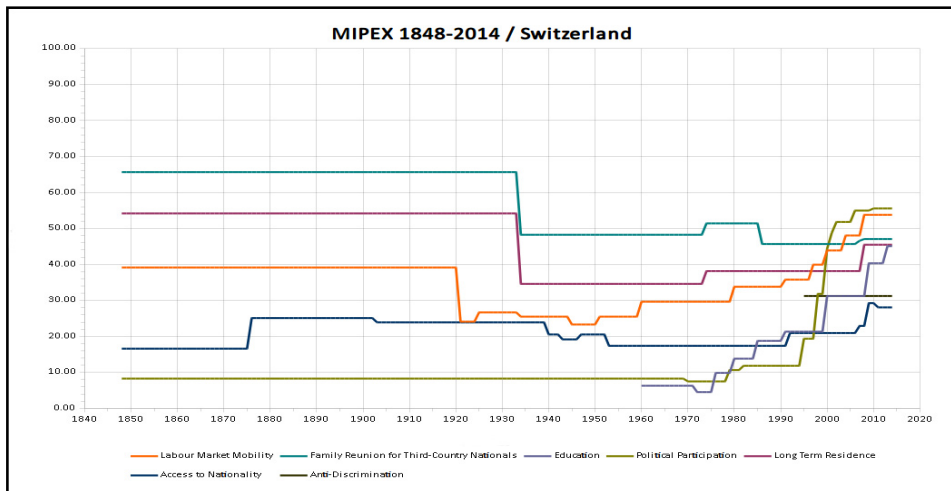
Source: World Bank, 2015

Table no. 1 Unemployment rate (%)

Country	1999	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Romania	11.5	9.1	8.3	7.2	6.3	5.9	6.1	4.1	4.4	7.8	8.2	5.1	5.6	7.3

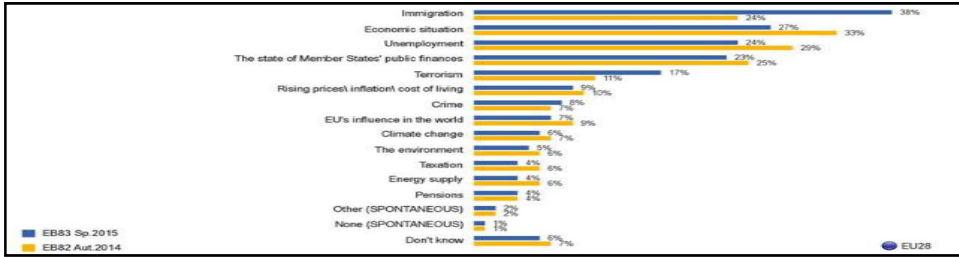
Source: Index Mundi, 2015

Graphic no. 2. Swiss immigration and integration policies during the period 1848 – 2014



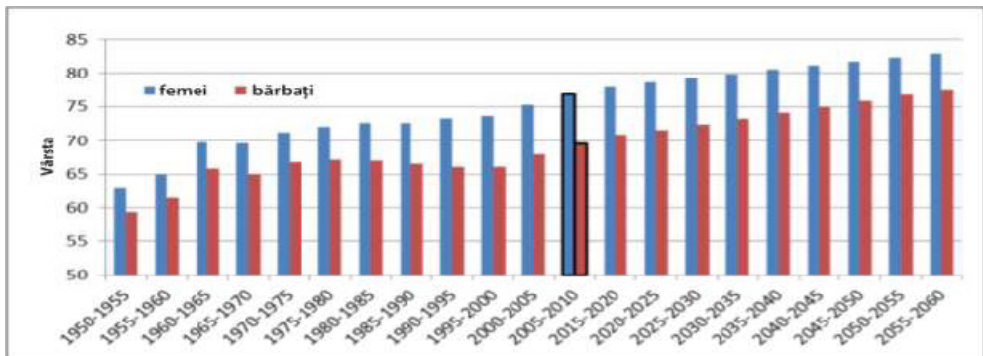
Source: Ruedin, D., Alberti, C. and D'Amato, G. (2015), Swiss Political Science Review

Graphic no. 3. Immigration - the major challenge for EU



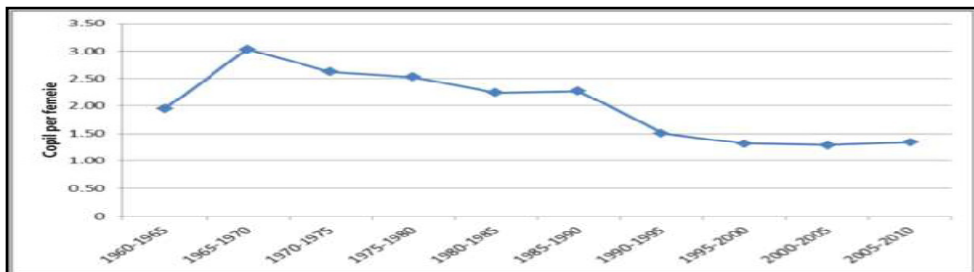
Source: Euro barometer Survey, spring of 2015

Graphic 4. Evolution of life expectancies in Romania



Sursa: UN Statistics on Population, 2015

Graphic no 5. The evolution of the total fertility rate in Romania



Sursa: Sursa: UN Statistics on Population, 2015