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THE POSITION AND INTEGRATION OF ROMANIAN MIGRANTS IN THE NETHERLANDS

MASTER THESIS



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The position and integration of Romanian migrants in the Netherlands

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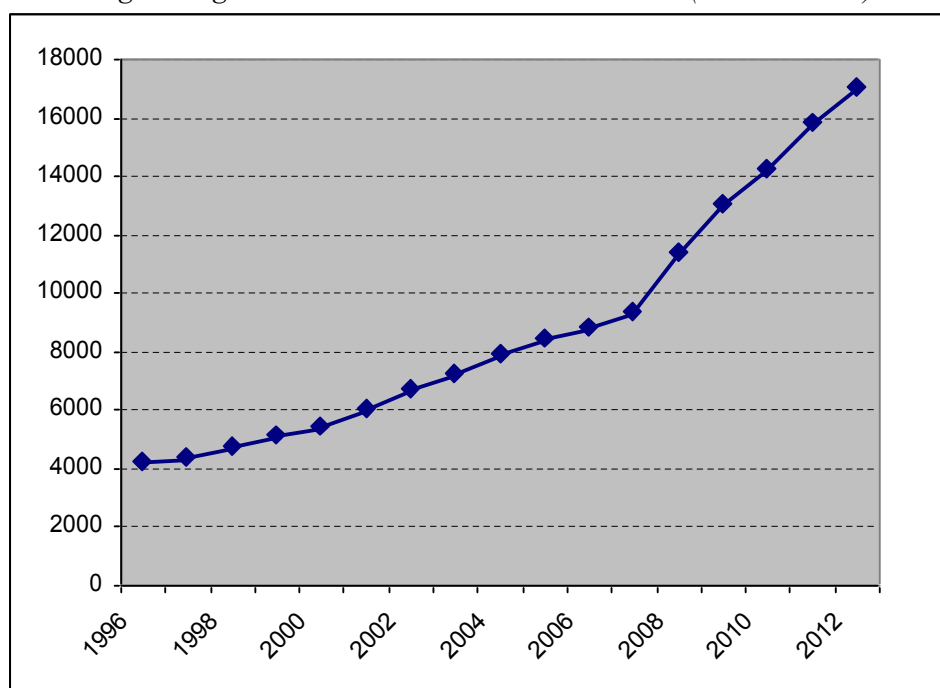
Chapter 1 Introduction: Setting the stage

An article published in November 2011 in the NRC Dutch newspaper, talked about the current conditions of the Romanian and Bulgarian workers in the Netherlands. The main issues raised in the article referred to the Netherlands not being ready for a new flow of East European workers especially from the newest members of the EU – Romania and Bulgaria. In April 2011, the Netherlands introduced more restrictions for Bulgarians and Romanians similar for foreigners from outside the EU, granting them work permits only in exceptional cases (Popkostadinova, 2012). However, although Minister Kamp (Social Affairs) decided to keep this condition until 2014, there still seems to be a continuous flow of workers from these two countries and the main problem raised is that most of them work illegally (without contract) in the Netherlands. The statistics show that there is a large number of Romanian and Bulgarian workers in the Netherlands and most of these semi and low-skilled workers can be found in the catering industry, cleaning, household and construction work and (NRC, 2011).

The NRC article also cited Dr. Tesseltje de Lange from the University of Amsterdam, who argued that illegal work leads to exploitation because it is easier to take advantage of these workers than other East European workers like the Polish. Employers in the Netherlands can easily get workers from other European countries whose citizens have free access to the labour market. If the employers can prove that they cannot get work from these countries, only then can they ask for the services of Romanians and Bulgarians (ibid.). In the light of all that has been said, it seems rather paradoxical that the Minister of Social Affairs wants to get rid of the exploitation but at the same time takes the decision to restrict the number of working permits for Romanians and Bulgarians. Minister Kemp may also have been inhibited in setting out more progressive policies on EU labour flows by the PVV website. In February 2012, Geert Wilders, the populist Freedom Party (PVV) leader, launched a website inviting people to file complaints about Polish, Romanian and Bulgarian immigrants in the Netherlands. The website invites (Dutch) visitors to report their case when they lost their jobs to “a Pole, Bulgarian, Romanian, or other central or east-European”, or whether they noticed any of those immigrants being involved in any crimes, drug/alcohol abuse or prostitution (Popkostadinova, 2012). Starting from the reality that the free movement of workers is a fundamental right on the European Union, this website is a clear act of discrimination against the nationalities mentioned above.

On 1 January 2010 over 14,000 Romanians were registered in the Netherlands, according to official figures of Statistics Netherlands (CBS), three times as much as in 1996. Taking into account what Romanians themselves report about registered citizens and seasonal fluctuations, the conservative estimate shows that between 23,000 and 30,000 Romanians (FORUM, 2011) are living and working in the Netherlands. This means that there are between 9,000 and 16,000 unregistered Romanians - temporary or not - in the Netherlands (FORUM, 2011).

Fig. 1: Registered Romanians in the Netherlands (1996 – 2012)*



Source: CBS, 2012 (*data from 2012 is only until July)

A recent report on East-European migration to the Netherlands (2011 – 2012) highlights the main reasons why Romanian migrants chose the Netherlands. Therefore the majority of the respondents said that their presence in the Dutch society is due to the high salaries (54,4%), the availability of work places (32,5%), labour conditions (24,6%). Other reasons stated were the presence of friends and other acquaintances (19,3%), Dutch culture (16,7%) and family reunion (15,8%) (Tweede Kamer, 2011).

These aspects triggered my decision to look more into the aspects of Romanian migrants in the Netherlands, their current working conditions and their position on the Dutch labour market, as well as their level of integration within the Dutch society. With this paper I will also try to contribute to raising the awareness of the conditions of the Romanian workers

in the Netherlands, and also to a better overview on the extent to which the migrants are aware of their rights in a totally different culture and society before coming to the Netherlands.

Chapter 2 Theoretical framework

The reasons that motivate people to migrate are various, complex and they operate in different ways on the individual, family or social-economic levels. The fast development of information, technology or cheap transportation facilitated the increase of labour mobility, as well as the creation of transnational communities (IOM, 2008). Most people move to find better employment opportunities, better working conditions, higher wages. These together with access to better health services, education or better quality of life are the main factors influencing the decision to work abroad.

Menz and Caviedes (2010) developed four new emerging theories on the politics of labour migration in Europe: first, they argue that labour migration policies in Europe are mostly driven by sector-specific considerations. This means that the system of political economy that prevails in the destination country, strongly shapes the type of labour migrants employers will be interested in (p.5): for example, if there is a shortage in construction/agricultural workers, there will only be a labor demand for such categories of labour migrants. Secondly, labour migration policies are nowadays influenced by globalization and Europeanization; since EU integration has always followed a market logic, new initiatives to develop EU migration law also include labour migration (p.6). Thirdly, today's labour force recruiting has been taken over by private actors and agencies, also a considerable degree of 'privatization of migrant control' (Menz and Caviedes, 2010: 8) took place, and these agencies operate for the national governments. The last characteristic of labour migration in Europe is the large impact of globalization: the advances in technology have shortened the distances and this facilitated the transmission of information about work opportunities throughout the world (p. 10).

Other general characteristics of labour migration in Europe refer to the segmentation of labour markets: on the one hand migrants are most found in the private sector (insecurity), while natives in the state sector (security); on the other hand there is a highly-skilled versus low-skilled division of segments of the labour market (Laczko *et. al.*, 2002). It is also said that one third of the world's migrant workers live in Europe and that most migrants tend to move from one developing country to another rather than from a developing country to a developed one (IOM, 2008). Moreover, the demand for migrant labour has a tendency to increase in the developed world, among the reasons being the ageing of populations and attracting students and highly-skilled migrants (IOM, 2010). Henceforward,

effective management of labour migration may lead to economic growth, poverty reduction or human development in poorer origin countries (ibid.).

IOM defines labour migration as “a cross-border movement for purposes of employment in a foreign country”, or largely, “movement of persons from one State to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment. Labour migration is addressed by most States in their migration laws. In addition, some States take an active role in regulating outward labour migration and seeking opportunities for their nationals abroad” (IOM, 2011). The process of labour migration requires inter-State cooperation. Therefore, I will further on analyze what are the current Romanian – Dutch labour market programs, migration laws and cooperation agreements. Surely the success of the migratory experience depends largely on the migrant’s capacity to face the challenges of the new situation, but it is also influenced by the approaches taken in the management of labour migration by both sending and receiving countries (IOM, 2008).

2.1. Theories of migration

I chose to discuss these theories in order to outline the framework for discussing the Romanian – Netherlands labour migration. Migration theories are largely focused on the labour market in general, therefore I will select only those that apply in terms of their value and relevance to my research study.

The first of them is the *Neo-classical economic theory* which states that the major causes of migration were economic. On a macro level, this theory explains international migration by the geographical differences in the supply and demand for labour and this causes movement from the low-wage to high-wage regions, as well as from the labour-surplus to labour-scarce regions. In this context we can talk about the movement from Romania, as a low-wage region, to the Netherlands, which is a high-wage region. This is clearly shown in table 1 below:

Table 1: GDP per capita in Netherlands and Romania (Euro per inhabitant)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
The Netherlands	31.500	33.100	34.900	36.200	34.600	35.400
Romania	3.700	4.500	5.800	6.500	5.500	5.800

Source: Eurostat, 2012

Several authors argue that this type of migration flows is expected to help equalize the internal deficits in the labour market on a global level, as well as remove the causes for migration (de Haas, 2008; Ailenei *et al.*, 2007). At a micro-level, the neo-classical theory views the migrant as an individual, rational actor, who decides to move on the basis of financial benefits. Migrants are expected to go where they can get higher wages and this highly depends on the individual's skills and characteristics of the labour market of the specific region (de Haas, 2008). This is also the case of Romanian migrants as the main driving forces for emigration among the workers are: better opportunities for investment in human resources and qualifications; better mobility in creating quality jobs and developing skills; difference in income and remuneration – it is well known that there is a major difference in per capita income in Romania in comparison with the Western countries; improving skills and managerial capabilities – especially among the young and the relatively young people (students, postgraduate and post-doctorate students) (Zaman & Sandu, 2005:3). Although much criticism was brought to this theory, a positive characteristic is that the theory brings forward the economical reasoning of the migrant. It takes into account the costs of the journey to the country of destination, the cost of 'survival' in the first few months until finding work, the difficulties of adapting to the new way of living, a new labour market, or of learning a new language, as well as the psychological cost of adapting to a new culture, of breaking old relations (family, friends) and starting new ones (Ailenei *et al.*, 2007).

The Dutch labour market also contains elements of a *dual labour market*. The theory implies the existence of a dual labour market with a primary sector whose main characteristics are: stable jobs, good working conditions and environment, high benefits and the possibility of promotion, and a secondary sector whose characteristics include: low-skilled and unstable jobs, dangerous or heavy working conditions and low chances of promoting (*ibid.*). As a general rule, the native workers in a certain country keep away from the secondary sector jobs due to insecurity, low wages as well as low prestige that come together with these types of jobs. In this labour market context, employers seek "low-wage migrant workers to maintain labour as a variable factor of production" (McKay *et al.*, 2011: 32) and to fill in the empty spaces on the secondary sector job market.

Generally in the Netherlands, migrants occupy positions in the labour market different from the positions of the native workers (Laczko *et. al.*, 2002). The Dutch government itself has recognized the issue of race discrimination in the labour market, especially in recruitment and selection procedures. Although candidates' qualifications and

motivations are equal, employers base their choice on their own preferences regarding ethnic origin (UN Human Rights Council, The Netherlands, 2012). The same source states that working conditions for many immigrants from Romania are poor and that they are considered a vulnerable group in the labour market (ibid).

Some criticism brought to this theory comments that it only explains international migration from a “pull” point of view and it excludes the “push” factors, therefore it doesn’t fully describe reality (Ailenei et al., 2007 citing Arango: 28) and migrant flows are seen as mainly demand determined (McKay et al., 2011).

2.2. Theorizing integration of migrants

*“The integration of immigrants is primarily a process:
if this process succeeds, the society is said to be integrated.”*

(Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006:2)

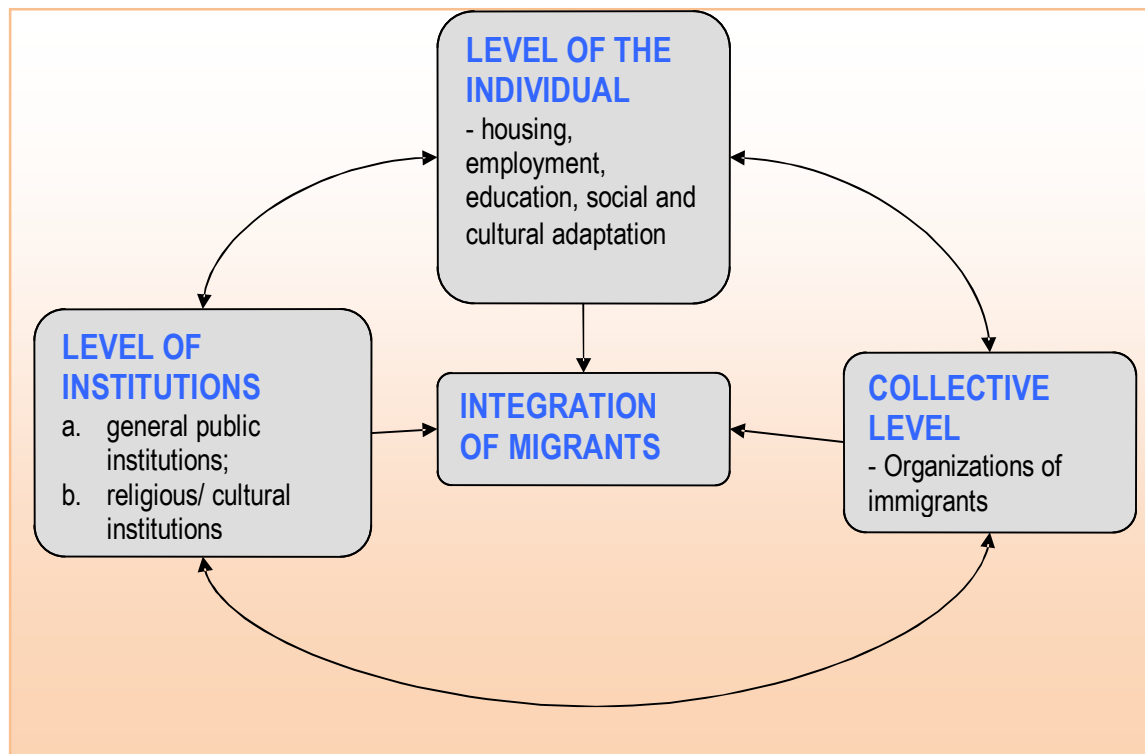
The above motto represents the idea behind the reason why I chose to also discuss the integration of Romanian migrants in the Dutch society. To me, this translates as: if the immigrants within a society are well integrated, this proves there is a stability of relations between the different functions and institutions of that society. A society is integrated if the state, the legal system, the markets, the finance or the stakeholders within the society are said to function well (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006). The aim of this research is not to see how ‘integrated’ the Dutch society is, but to try to observe to what extent has the process of integration of Romanian migrants succeeded so far. In order to analyze this, a background theory on the concept of integration of migrants needs to be discussed, especially as this is the basis on which I developed and conducted the integration – related part of my interviews.

Several definitions of ‘integration of migrants’ have been developed. IOM’s most recent definition (2012) is: “the process of mutual adaptation between host society and migrant”. In IOM’s vision this requires a mutual sense of respect for the sets of values that migrants have in relationship to their host communities, also it requires protection of migrants’ human rights, equal opportunities and labour-market issues, national security, public health, education or citizenship issues (ibid.)

In Penninx’s (2003) view integration is “the process by which immigrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and as groups” (p. 1). He argues that his definition is deliberately open because each society differs from country to country and because in the

process of integration several actors of different levels are involved: the first one is the ‘level of the individual migrant’ – this refers to housing, employment, education or cultural adaptation to the new society; the second is the ‘collective level’ which translates into the organizations of immigrants, and the third actor involved in the process is the ‘level of institutions’ which can be either the general public institutions of societies/cities of the receiving country, or the religious and cultural institutions (ibid.). Penninx also states that the results of the mechanism working on each of these levels are ‘interrelated’ (p.1), which means they influence each other, e.g. the individual’s social adaptation or education may have an impact on the organization’s activities, or the organization may impact the public institution’s policies regarding migrants (see fig. 2).

Fig. 2: The process of integration of migrants according to R. Penninx, 2003



Source: Author’s own design after R. Penninx, 2003

Very detailed and complex principles (see Box 1) as well as a definition of immigrant integration are given by the European Union: “Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States” (Bijl and Verweij, 2012: 13). All these definitions imply ‘mutual acceptance/ adaptation/ accommodation’, therefore there is expected awareness of the other’s cultural differences and values from both the side of the immigrants as well as from the side of the receiving society.

On the basis of this, the present paper also aims to give an insight on the extent to which both sides – the Romanian migrants and the Dutch society – have achieved this awareness.

Box 1: Common Basic Principles for immigrant integration policy

- Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union.
- Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants and to the contribution they make to society.
- Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration.
- Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration.
- The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and must be safeguarded, unless practices conflict with other inviolable European rights or with national law.

(Council of the European Union, 14615/04, 2004)

2.3. Conceptual framework

The two main key concepts that this paper is dealing with are ‘migration’ and ‘integration’ of the Romanian migrants in the Netherlands. Migration is used as the incentive which triggered the starting point of this research: the reasons for the movement of Romanian migrants to the Netherlands and its’ outcomes. It is used to show the general characteristics of this particular group of migrants, their history and also sets the background for further discussing the main issues raised by this movement, the general debates over the legislation for the new EU member states, the general knowledge on this topic, as well as the link to the integration of these migrants in the Dutch society.

Integration is viewed in this paper as the final step of a migrant’s journey. It is the follow-up of the entire process of migration. In my opinion, integration can’t be achieved as long as there is no desire to integrate in the respective society. The desire to integrate comes after the migrant already decided to remain in the host country. Therefore, a few steps need to be taken from the decision to migrate up to the integration of a migrant. The two concepts of ‘migration’ and ‘integration’ do not overlap, but ‘migration’ is seen as the first step of a migrant’s journey and ‘integration’ is seen as the last step. Once integration is achieved, the person is said to have accepted the conditions of the new society and no longer feels the desire/ the need to migrate further.

2.4. Research objective and research questions

The main issue raised in the paper is that of the working conditions and integration of Romanian labour migrants in the Netherlands, as the new EU citizens. Being denied the freedom of access to the Dutch labour market in favour of other nationalities (all other EU citizens), creates a difference of status among people who are legally the same and it brings out the ethical aspect of Netherlands willing to sacrifice a fundamental EU right (freedom of access to work) in order to protect the national labour market (Pijpers, 2007). The objective of the research is to critically engage with migratory aspect of Romanian workers in the Netherlands in the context of applying the principle of free movement of labour for new EU Member States citizens, as well as to contribute to the present knowledge there is on the subject of Romanian migrants in the Netherlands, their expectations prior to their arrival, their integration in the Dutch society after their arrival.

In order to achieve this objective I will try to answer the following research question:

What is the current position of Romanian migrants in the Netherlands in terms of integration and labour market?

Three sub-questions derive, with the help of which I can easily approach the main research question. The sub-questions are meant to be taken separately, each of them raising a different aspect of the thesis. The answers to all of them will build up to show the current position of Romanian migrants in the Netherlands in what concerns integration and labour market:

- a. What is the present context of the Romanian – Dutch labour market?*
- b. What are the existing legal conditions regarding Romanian labour migrants in the EU and in the Netherlands?*
- c. How integrated are the Romanian migrants in the Dutch society?*

Each of these sub-questions are developed and answered in chapters 4 (question a), 5 (question b) and 6 (question c). The first sub-question is meant to introduce the reader into the societal-context debate of the Romanian – Dutch labour market: general history of Romanian migration, the main features of Romanian migration to the Netherlands throughout history, as well as future concerns caused by the migrant stock projections in the coming years. The aim of the second sub-question is to set the legal stage on the subject of this

research, for the reader to be able to compare it with the realities of the lives of these workers on the Dutch labour market. The final sub-question deals with the integration of the migrants and it is related to the conceptual framework subchapter: its aim is to show to what extent are the migrants integrated in the Dutch society.

2.5. Societal relevance

The main societal problem that triggered this project is the fact that although part of EU, Romanians still need a work permit in the Netherlands, which is very hard to obtain and time-consuming. At a short glance at the conditions of work in the Netherlands one sees 2 sections: ‘the EU countries’ and ‘citizens of Romania and Bulgaria’. From the point of view of Romanians themselves this difference and restriction on the labour market is considered discriminatory. Work permits in migrants’ opinion only lead to marginalization of Romanian community and this results in conflicts: personal, social or political conflicts. Therefore this project aims to take into consideration and analyze both points of view of the actors that take part in this societal debate: the Romanian migrants and the Dutch society.

By analyzing the integration in the Netherlands as well as historical statistical data and future predictions of Romanian migration, one can get a better insight on why this work permit law is considered discriminatory and also it can be a starting point in stating that by lifting the restrictions, no major changes in the Dutch labour market will occur. By clearly identifying the problems leading to the current situation, solutions and recommendations will be formulated in the final chapter of this paper.

This research should contribute to broadening the mutual awareness of both actors involved. The general image of Romanian migrants in the Netherlands is “not very positive” (FORUM, 2011: 1) so this project could improve this image. Another purpose is to improve the quality of information the migrants have about the labour market legislation (also in the EU) and about the society in the Netherlands as in my opinion, lack of information about their (human) rights is a general characteristic of Romanian migrants.

In developing the solutions and recommendations a third party who will benefit from this project is IOM, as this could be relevant to further policy studies on Eastern European Countries migration in general as well as in the Netherlands and also for developing migration management strategies and other projects.

2.6. Scientific relevance

Although already an EU member state for five years, emigration research in Romania in this new context is still developing and lacking data. Researchers are able to find more statistical data on Romanian migration from the national statistics of the receiving countries than from the National Institute of Statistics in Bucharest (INSSE). Although the present analysis is a small part of the general knowledge on Romanian emigration, it gives a good and complete insight of the characteristics of Romanian migration in the Netherlands in the past two decades (from the fall of communism onwards).

Apart from being a descriptive study, this research also aims to present to what extent the migrants are integrated in the Dutch society and how ready is this society in accepting these migrants. This is done mostly through analyzing the labour market and is triggered from the EU principle that “employment is a key part of the integration process” (Council of EU, 2004; also see Box 1). A number of interviews with migrants themselves will contribute to this as well. Another missing aspect of Romanian emigration is the conflict-sensitive approach. Certain personal, social conflicts can be analyzed by talking to people themselves. By clearly defining what these conflicts are, one can see how important they are and to what extent they influence the process of integration.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Following what I've discussed in the last chapter, in which I have set up my theoretical and conceptual framework, the scientific and societal relevance, I will now present my choices in terms of ways to do this research. Some of the choices that I have made concerned whether to go for a quantitative sample that would be representative, or rather to focus on an in-depth analysis. What I have tried to do is mix the two: a mix-method approach. For this, apart from consulting a range of literature sources, I decided to also interview Romanian migrants, as well as running an online survey among the forums of Romanians living in the Netherlands. The answers that I received on the online survey together with the descriptions and the words of my interviewees will be analyzed in the last two chapters of this paper and these provide detailed personal statements about their working, social, personal - integration experiences in the Netherlands. These results will be relevant for my second sub-question, and I will compare those with the findings and ideas presented in the first sub-question.

I did not choose a case-study or only an in-depth analysis, because I believe that the Romanian population in the Netherlands is much too diverse. The type of migrants that live and work in the Netherlands have different backgrounds and so, only by talking to a very small number of people (2 or 3) would not have given me a clear image of the situation and would not have answered my research question. I will proceed by presenting each of the methods used in the following sub-chapters.

3.1. Literature review

An in-depth understanding and thorough knowledge of the history of Romanian migration in the Netherlands, of the current trends, Netherlands' policies regarding migration and work permits and also of the existing migration programs in both countries, requires further reading of the academic literature on these topics. I consulted relevant literature in the Universities of Nijmegen and the University of Bucharest and my own personal collection of relevant books. The information I focused on was that of migration legislation in Romania and the Netherlands, migration in the European Union, history of Romanian citizens migrating to the Netherlands. I found very useful the recent newspaper (mass-media) articles on recent events that have to do with my topic in both countries. The electronic sources also provided a great amount of information and very recent data, news, new policies and statistics.

In writing this paper I combine quantitative and qualitative research methods, as I do not believe only one of those methods can be used for such research. Although Philip's work (1998) refers to quantitative approaches as positivist and qualitative as postmodern, I believe that only by using a mix of these two methods can help to accomplish the best results and description of the events in such a research. Furthermore I like to believe that my approach in running this research will be a critical and therefore a realistic one. My main concerns will be those of investigating the mechanisms that made the Romanian labour migrants employment conditions to be vulnerable in the first place; also of identifying how this phenomenon is taking place and how extensive it is (Kitchkin and Tate, 2000) – what are the dimensions of this vulnerability. Also my research deals with social, political and cultural aspects, the differences between the two (Dutch and Romanian) societies in aspects of labour migration, managing migration and legislation in the context of the European Union. This makes this research highly influenced by the social theory approach in human geography (Peet, 1998).

The first and the second sub-questions can be answered by qualitative analysis of the current legislation, policies and statistics of the Romanian – Dutch labour market. For these questions I consulted and reviewed a large variety of literature in English, Romanian and also Dutch. Most of these are European integration reports from 2009 until present, latest press articles regarding the latest events on the Romanian labour migration issue in the Netherlands – the articles reviewed were in Romanian and English only, the legislation concerning work permit application procedure in the Netherlands, the exemptions from the rule of requiring a work permit ('selective migration'). This legislation can be found on Dutch job websites, on migrant integration agencies and labour union websites, as well as on the Romanian Ministry of foreign affairs websites and their publications.

For these research sub-questions I also consulted a few IOM publications and reports on migration and labour like the latest "World Migration Report 2010", country migration profiles, the UN periodic reviews concerning discrimination in the labour market, the European Integration Consortium publications from 2007 until present, as well as OECD's publications concerning the labour market integration policies and immigrant profiles from 2008. Since I am not a Dutch language speaker, it was difficult for me to review the latest Dutch press releases, as well as publications, but I managed to get applicable data like: numbers, tables and graphics from Dutch reports and official documents like that of the up-to-date migration report of the Tweede Kamer in 2011.

There has been very little research on this same topic and it mostly deals with general migration from the two new member states: Romania and Bulgaria. Most papers written analyze these two countries together in discussing the impact of the latest EU enlargement on the economy of the older Member States. These are mostly short articles or researches done by Dutch universities like Erasmus University of Rotterdam or the University of Amsterdam.

3.2. Interviews

For the second question, relevant field study is required and with that, quantitative research is necessary. The previously mentioned desk research (Verschuren & Doorrewaard, 2010) was combined with field research, and I obtained relevant information and contact details from my internship organization – IOM in The Hague. The internship organization helped me get in touch with relevant contacts for my interviews like: NGOs that handle East-European migrants, the Romanian Consulate in The Hague and even actual Romanian migrants living in the Netherlands. Also I obtained some relevant information like figures and statistics from UWV - Institute for Employee Benefits Schemes, Eurostat website, as well as OECD and IOM statistics. Another meeting I had was with the Romanian Consulate in The Hague, Mr. Mihai Sîrbu. The intended purpose of this meeting was to obtain relevant statistical information on the existing Romanian migration in the Netherlands. I also wanted to find out how involved the Consulate and the Embassy are in the lives of the migrants, or how often do they have contacts with the migrants and what are the main encounters about: any discrimination complaints or labour-related issues.

The quantitative research methods I included are: statistics on the Romanian citizens working in the Netherlands over the past few years until present, statistics on migration in the Netherlands, or surveys on the migrants' perception of current working conditions/environment in the Netherlands. In order to accomplish my objective and to answer the research question I also chose to interview Romanian migrants in different cities.

The persons I interviewed were currently employed in the Netherlands and were only first-generation migrants (born in Romania). They have been living in the Netherlands for as long as ten months up until 22 years. Since my research also includes undocumented migrants, whether they had a work permit or not, was not a selection criteria. Also in my interviews I included all categories of migrants: low-skilled, high-skilled (knowledge migrants – 'kennismigranten'), temporary or permanently employed.

Since I have the language advantage, it was very easy for me to run the interviews myself and I was able to find my interview subjects through my own personal acquaintances, social networks, the forums mentioned above or recommendations from the migrants I had previously interviewed (*snow-balling*). My target of people to interview prior to starting the field research was initially higher: 50 people (25 men and 25 women) with different ages and variations of how long they have been living in the Netherlands. After some negative experiences with people who did not want to answer my questions, and with the purpose of making a quality research, I lowered this number to 25. To me, this sample of 25 is a sufficient number to get a realistic image on the topic I was interested in and enough to draw relevant conclusions. Even finding this number of people willing to talk to me about their work experiences and their lives in the Netherlands proved harder than expected. The reasons for that were either because they couldn't find the time or they were suspicious about my actual intentions. Just one example of a response that I received on my online survey, when asked whether they are willing to talk to me in person, was that I am obviously part of a political party, considering the upcoming Parliament elections, so they refused to speak to me.

The interviews were done through a period of six months, from May until October 2012. The discussions lasted between 25 minutes and one hour, they were mostly done in face-to-face conversations. For the interviews I prepared 20 questions, these being open and closed. The closed ones were used to find out background information about my respondents (age, level of studies, whether they speak Dutch or not, whether they hold a work permit or not etc.), while the open ones were used to find out relevant information about their working and living experiences in the Netherlands, their main reasons for coming to the Netherlands, or asking after their current social and personal lives (see Appendix 1 for interview questions as translated into English). These questions were the main guidelines of the results I wanted to achieve, but I always asked more questions in order to get a better picture of each respondent's case. They were all different people with different backgrounds, each with his/her own story and most of them enjoyed the conversation and so I took the opportunity to find out as much as I could about their experiences.

The locations where I took the interviews were the cities and areas of The Hague, Arnhem, Amsterdam, Haarlem or Nijmegen. I have decided upon these locations based on the general statistics that show the presence of a large number of Romanian labour migrants in these areas.

3.3. Survey

For the online survey I received a total number of 91 answers during a period of six months, from May until the end of October 2012. The survey had 18 questions/ sections and the type of questions used for both the survey and for the interviews, were both open and closed. The closed questions were used to provide general information about the migrants (e.g. number of years of stay/work in the Netherlands, marital status, rating their experience of working in the Netherlands according to a fixed scale of numbers etc.), while the open questions allow the migrants to express their opinions of their social lives in the Netherlands, or to describe the nature of their job (see Appendix 2 for survey questions in English). In the presentation of the survey I introduced myself, I presented the scope of this research and also I assured my respondents that their answers are strictly confidential, anonymous and only to be used for research purposes.

For the online survey, only one respondent was of 20 years of age, 73 of them were ages between 21 and 40, 17 respondents were aged between 41 and 60 and there were no respondents over 60 years old. For the interview, 9 respondents were aged between 20 and 30, 4 of them were between 31 and 40 years old, 3 of them were between 41 and 50 years old, and only one respondent was 52 years old. Regarding the level of studies, 19 respondents (20%) of the survey said they graduated from secondary school or high school and 72 (80%) said they finished their Bachelor or Master/Phd studies, while for the interviews 2 of them said they graduated from high-school, while the other 15 said they finished Bachelor or post-graduate studies (see also Table 3). This sample is far from being representative for the total of the Romanian migrants and therefore I am not making the portrait of the Romanian migrant out of this data. This rather shows that quite a large percent of the Romanian migrants in the Netherlands are highly educated.

Table 2: The age of the respondents

Years of age	AGE	
	Survey	Interview
0-20	1	0
21-30	28	9
31-40	44	4
41-50	15	3
51 and over	3	1

Source: Collected by Valeria Ionescu, 2012

Table 3: Level of studies of the respondents

Level of studies	Survey	Interview
Low-studies (Secondary school or high school)	19	2
High-studies (Tertiary aducation)	72	15

Source: Collected by Valeria Ionescu, 2012

As to every online survey there are many good things, as well as downsizes. I will start by presenting the advantages of such a survey: it is a very good way of gathering data from people who have limited time – as the survey was posted for six months on the same forums, people had the opportunity to fill it in whenever they found available time. It is a practical way of approaching people, in the sense that random people can fill it in, people you would not normally come across, those who generally prefer to live outside the spotlight – the ‘hidden population’. While my interviewees were generally younger (21 to 40 years old), with the help of the survey I could also get information from an older group of respondents (over 40 years old, see table 2) and other labour migrants who otherwise, would not have felt comfortable in a personal conversation.

As for downsizes, I was unable to ‘control’ who filled it in, whether some respondents answered more than one time, or whether for some questions they actually answered the truth (e.g. the level of education, or if they actually do hold a work permit). This also implied the respondents were computer literate and so this particular sample of 91 does not include the group with no access to computers. Following this criteria, my online survey is of course not 100 per cent representative of the entire Romanian migrants in the Netherlands. However, I decided to stop gathering the data at the moment I considered that my sample covers all categories of migrants in terms of: age, length of stay in the Netherlands – arrival after and before 2007, work domains, or length of working in the Netherlands.

3.4. Reflections on the research experience

As previously stated, the interviews were carried out in the Romanian language. I chose not to use a recorder, as I thought this would not help in gaining the trust of my respondents. Instead, I printed all my questions and I took notes while I was talking to my respondents.

The most difficult part of the field research was making the actual appointments for the interviews. At first I searched for a Romanian church in the Netherlands. This is because Romanians are quite religious people and I knew that the best place to meet them and make contacts would be an orthodox church. There are two such churches in the Netherlands, one in Rotterdam and one in Arnhem. At the time I was still living in my student house in Nijmegen, therefore the closest one was the church in Arnhem. I went there two times on Sunday mornings and after the service I started asking people whether they would like to take part in my interviews. Some of them were suspicious about me and said they can't help, while others were glad to help me. None of them agreed to answer directly, and all of them asked me to contact them at another time to set a date. These people didn't live only in Arnhem, but they were coming from different cities: Nijmegen, Amersfoort or Eindhoven, as this was the closest Romanian Parish in the area. At this time it sometimes became a chasing game between me and them because once I contacted them back, they kept on postponing the meeting for a later date, they said they rarely have some free time and some even did not answer my calls. It took as long as three weeks to actually meet after the church encounter.

Another way of meeting Romanian migrants was through colleagues from my internship who recommended places for me to go and meet other people. This way, I met three women, one who worked in an Italian restaurant, one who worked in a hotel and another one working in production services in The Hague. These respondents recommended me to other acquaintances of theirs, I wrote down their phone numbers and so, through this 'snowballing', I reached a number of 17 people I talked to at the end of October 2012.

I met these people in various places: one man asked me to interview him the second time I went to the church in Arnhem, I talked to one woman in the restaurant she worked at in The Hague, other people asked me to come where they lived in Amsterdam or Nijmegen and so we had very nice conversations in different coffee places and another woman invited me to her house in The Hague. With some respondents it was very hard to find common free time and a meeting place and so we decided that a Skype or a phone call

interview would be the best option. Therefore I had Skype interviews with 5 of my respondents and one interview through a normal phone call.

Once we sat down and started the interviews they were very open and glad to answer all my questions. The conversations I had with all of them were very pleasant, they were not in a hurry and sometimes we spent even more than one hour talking. Once they trusted me and realised I was only there to do a research, they were very talkative, they fully presented their experiences and even had advices for my future. Some were very interested and curious about my research and asked me to send them the final paper once it is finished.

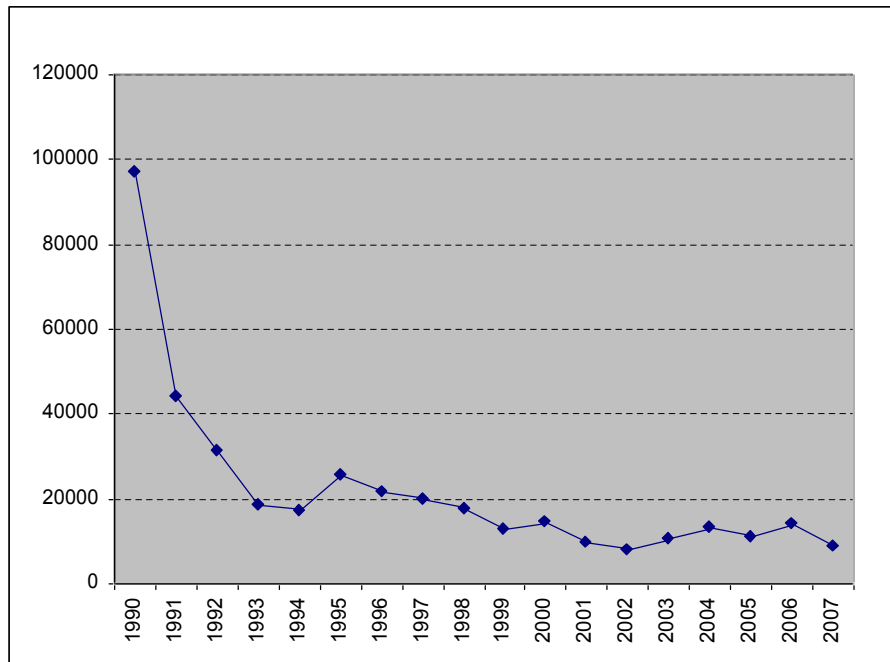
Chapter 4 A history and overview (characteristics) of Romanian migration in the Netherlands

4.1. A history of migration in Romania

Migration has been largely debated in Romania, since the fall of communism in 1989. In the period between 1980 and 1990 the so-called “forced migrants” (Zaman & Sandu, 2005: 6) were an important group of migrants. The main reason for leaving was to escape persecution by the communist regime, conflicts and other related factors endangering their lives or freedom. This type of migration decreased as a result of Romania’s transition to democracy. After 1989, the year when the democratic regime was established, another phenomena of ‘voluntary migration’ rose. These were the citizens who emigrated abroad for better career opportunities, study, family reunification or other personal goals. The voluntary emigrants were and are even nowadays simply searching for a better job, willing to give up their education, skill and training (brain waste) and accepting lower level skills (fruits and vegetables picking, nursing, gardening, restaurant, meat and poultry processing, hotel cleaning, children and elderly nursing etc.) (Zaman & Sandu, 2005:7).

Since 1990, an estimated 10 – 15 per cent of the whole population left the country (Chindea et. al, 2008). The most important part of the history of emigration in Romania happened without a doubt after 1990 when Romanians were once again entitled to hold a passport. In communist Romania, any form of emigration or foreign travel was highly restricted, the citizens of Eastern European countries being easily acknowledged as refugees by the Western receiving countries (Iara, 2007). After the 1989 Revolution, with the open borders, a massive emigration took place, only in 1990 a number of 96,929 people left the country (Chindea, 2008). In the years that followed the number of citizens leaving the country started to decline, there was a small peak of 25,000 in 1995, but it diminished to almost 9,000 people in 2007 (Iara, 2007) (see Figure 3). These numbers refer strictly to the number of Romanian citizens who settled their permanent residence abroad according to INSSE – National Statistical Institute of Romania. Unfortunately the Institute’s statistics do not reflect the exact number of emigrants

Fig. 3: Emigration of Romanian citizens, 1997 - 2007



Source: INSSE (National Institute of Statistics, Bucharest)

Several stages in Romanian emigration have occurred after 1990. Migration in Romania is generally economically motivated and most authors (Chindea et al, 2008, Traser, 2008 and Ailenei et al, 2009) distinguish between three stages of labour migration:

- The first stage, between 1990 and 1995, was characterized by a work emigration rate of 3% and the main destination countries were Israel, Turkey, Italy, Hungary and Germany;
- The second stage, between 1996 and 2001, characterized by a work emigration rate of 7% and the main countries of destination changed to Spain, United States and Canada;
- The third stage, between 2001 and 2006, characterized by the lifting of the Schengen visa (in 2002) and this increased the work emigration rate to 28%. The main destination countries were Spain, Italy, Germany and Hungary.

The greatest success of Romania's foreign policy in 2001 was the abolition of visa requirements for its citizens to the Schengen Agreement countries. A direct consequence of this was a sudden boom in the number of Romanian citizens seeking work abroad (Gheorghiu, 2000). This could mean the beginning of what Hein de Haas is naming "the migration hump". He explains that this migration hump is part of the process of economic development and that it reflects a past and present migratory pattern in which countries witness a highly accelerated

emigration in early-phases of development (de Haas, 2006). This particular concept will not be the main focus of my research, but of course I will attempt to find out what is the percentage of the intention of returning to Romania of the labour migrants in the Netherlands.

Table 4: Emigration stocks from Romania to some E.U. countries in 2007

Country of destination	Emigrant stock
Austria	48041
France	27414
Germany	122398
Greece	23025
Hungary	155148
Italy	125160
Netherlands	9374
Spain	130000
Sweden	12798
UK	8482
Total	653237

Source: World Bank and CBS, 2012

4.1.1. Emigration after entering the EU (2007)

Given the context of being one of the newest members of the EU, a growing number of people from Romania are migrating in different parts of the world in search for better opportunities. According to a survey conducted by Krieger (2004), the main motivations for moving to a different country were the bad economic conditions. The financial reasons were invoked by 54% of Romanians, and together with the insufficient income, or the lack of appropriate jobs, they constituted the main motives for Romanian international mobility (Iara, 2007).

The labour migration, particularly the semi and low-skilled migrants represent an important component of Romanian immigrants in the Netherlands. In order to try to study the emigration of labour workers in Romania, there will be difficulties encountered by precarious statistical information, confidentiality, relevant methodologies and research work in this field. The dimension of migration and characteristics of Romanian emigrants, the factors that contribute to migration, the circumstances in which these movements occur after the collapse of the communist regime, have certain particular features related to the new democratic

political system in the country, as well as to the economic and social situation in the country, making way to an age-old phenomenon (Zaman & Sandu, 2005: 1).

On 1st January 2007, Romania entered the EU and with that its citizens started to enjoy the right to free labour mobility in the European Union. In my opinion this coincides with another phase in the history of Romanian migration, since there was another peak in the flow of migrants that have left the country in 2007. In spite of this, at the time this paper is written, several EU member states still make use of their right to apply transitional restrictions to labour mobility from Romania (as well as Bulgaria). These transitional arrangements have been agreed in the 2005 'Accession Treaty of Bulgaria and Romania' that allows member states to temporarily restrict the right of workers from Bulgaria and Romania under EU law on free movement to work in another member state. "Their aim is to gradually introduce free movement for workers step-by-step over a seven-year period. There are three phases (2+3+3 years) during which different, increasingly strict conditions apply as to the conditions under which member states can restrict labour market access. The transitional arrangements are to be phased out completely by December 31, 2013" (ActMedia, 2011) says a Romanian news agency. During this seven year period a Member State is allowed at any time to grant free access for Bulgarian and Romanian workers to its labour market and at the same time, it is allowed to restore the regime of work permits in case the country experiences disturbances on its own labour market or in a certain field of occupation (Traser, 2008). This was the case of Spain who in 2011, after 2 years of free access to the labour market for Romanian workers, decided to restore the work permit regime. This was mostly attributed to the unemployment rate of 21% at the time (La Razon, 2011). The transitional arrangements do not affect the fundamental right of EU citizens to move and reside freely within the EU. The ten EU Member States that still maintain restrictions on the labour market for Romanians at this time are: Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Austria and United Kingdom. Ireland lifted the restrictions on 1st July 2012.

Irrespective of the restrictions imposed, the two main destination countries have been Italy (41%) and Spain (38%), followed by Germany (5%). Indeed Romanians already represent more than 80% of the total of EU-2 (Romania and Bulgaria) nationals residing in another Member State (European Commission report, 2011). The most recent census from November 2011 shows that there is currently a total of 19 million people living in Romania, 1 million less than the estimates of the same year and over 900.000 Romanian citizens living abroad (Andrei, 2012, Gandul.info). According to estimates, more than 2.5 million

Romanians are working abroad (Traser, 2008) and in 2007 only they sent around 7 million euros back home (Capital, 2008). These remittances are of great importance for the national economy, however if these workers were active in their home country, it is said that national economy would have much more to gain. According to recent surveys of Manpower, Romania is a country where employers have difficulty finding the right people to fill-in jobs in construction, textiles and catering or the hotel sector. 73% of the employers interviewed reported such difficulties (Iara, 2007).

Zaman and Sandu (2007) have made a profile of the Romanian emigrant. On the gender structure according to them, while before 1989 male emigration prevailed, over the last two decades we face a feminization of emigration flows from Romania. Apparently women prove to have a greater flexibility to move and to be more adaptable in the new destination country. Also, this can be explained by the high number of unemployed women and by the type of jobs that can be found on the labour markets of traditional destination countries – agriculture and housekeeping (Ailenei et. al., 2009). The age of the migrant is usually between 26 and 40 years old. This category seems to be more inclined to go abroad, start a new life and has a strong potential to learn and get integrated in the new social context. Between 1980 – 2000 the majority of emigrants were of Romanian nationality (51%), followed by Germans (32,3%) and Hungarians (12,3%) (Zaman & Sandu, 2007:9). The Germans and the Hungarians are the biggest ethnic groups – after a long coexistence with the Romanians, these groups wished to migrate to their countries of origin especially after World War II and the fall of Communism. In the year 2007 most of the emigrants were Romanians (90.9%) followed by Hungarians (6,5%) and Germans (1,4%) (p. 13).

Ever since 2007, Romania is also facing an exodus of its medical staff. Unlike other types of workers, doctors and nurses from this new member country have no restrictions on the labour markets of the other old member states. This is mostly due to the great difference in the salaries between Romanian hospitals – €500 a month and the French, German or Scandinavian hospitals – between € 3000 and € 7000 per month (Pop, 2010 Euobserver.com). The same source states that around 5,000 medical staff, out of the 41,000 employed in the public health system left the country between 2007 and 2010 and other 2,000 were expected to leave (ibid.) in search for better working conditions and higher wages. On a national level this loss of medical staff is enormous and it is a highly debated subject in Romania as it has the lowest number of physicians per inhabitants in Europe, around 30% below the EU average (ibid.)

The main driving forces for emigration among the Romanian workers are: better opportunities for investment in human resources and qualifications; better mobility in creating quality jobs and developing skills; difference in income and remuneration – it is well known that there is a major difference in per capita income in Romania in comparison with the developed countries; improving skills and managerial capabilities – especially among the young and the relatively young people (students, postgraduate and post-doctorate students) (Zaman & Sandu, 2005:3).

An article from 2012 by J.W. Ambrosini concerning the selection of migrants and returnees from Romania made a categorization of the destination countries based on the type of selection of Romanian migrants. The article states that countries such as United States, Canada or Australia are characterized by a ‘positive selection’, since they include mostly young people who migrate for educational purposes; the second category is that of countries such as Germany, Austria or France, where migrants arrived throughout the 1990s, characterized by a ‘neutral average selection’ and the third category is that of countries like Spain, Italy or Greece, characterized by a ‘negative selection’ and where most migrants are less-skilled and who often have an informal or illegal status (Ambrosini et. al, 2012). Based on the findings of my interviews, it will be interesting to see where Netherlands fits into this categorization.

There are three dimensions of the general public attitudes towards the migration of Romanians. First, the international migration of Romanians is seen as a source of social problems - like the children that are left home alone (parents gone abroad to find better jobs), leaving home causes a high divorce rate, it also causes disruptions in the structure of the population and it causes brain-drain. Secondly, it is seen as positive due to the remittances which contributed substantially to the national GDP in the past few years, as well as because it maintains unemployment at a stable level and it brings less pressure upon the social protection and social welfare systems. Thirdly, from the host countries’ point of view, it is seen as a problem because of the integration of migrants process (Ulrich et. al, 2011).

4.1.2. Migrant stock projections until 2020

It is very useful to analyze what would be the outcome of introducing free movement of workers from Romania in the Netherlands starting from 2014. It is useful for future migration policies, as well as for both countries to know what to expect in terms of emigration /immigration figures, in order to plan ahead their future actions. There have been a

few studies made in this regard, but all studies put Romania and Bulgaria together and they are referred to as ‘NMS-2’ (the two new Member States). I will discuss this NMS-2 typification and its’ development into a separate set of migration policies for the Romanian case, in the final chapter of this paper.

To start with, a study conducted by the European Integration Consortium in 2009 made a few estimates in case the free movement of workers from NMS-2 was introduced since 2008. The macroeconomic simulations reflected some effects upon the GDP, GDP per capita, the income of the natives, the unemployment and the wages of the EU-15 countries (see Table 5). The simulations reflect that for most of the countries the GDP and the GDP per capita tends to rise and in countries where it tends to decline, the percentage is always below 0,2. Regarding the income of the natives, the overall image is that the free movement of workers from NMS-2 does not affect their incomes. Regarding the unemployment – while overall this is not affected, if we take a separate look at some countries, there are certain tendencies for the unemployment to rise - in Austria, Germany, Denmark, Italy, but also to decline – in Belgium, France or Spain. When talking about wages of the EU-15 countries (this includes both natives and migrants), the general tendency is for it to decline by 0,01 per cent. However some countries are not affected – in the case of Finland, France, Sweden, United Kingdom, Netherlands, while for others the wages would rise (Belgium and Spain).

Table 5: Short-run effects in the scenario of the free movement of workers from Bulgaria and Romania, 2008 - 2014

EU-15 countries	Change of labour force	GDP	GDP per capita	Income per native	Unemployment	Wages
Austria	0,41	0,28	-0,12	0,11	0,03	-0,02
Belgium	-0,08	-0,03	0,02	0	-0,02	0,01
Germany	0,22	0,09	-0,06	-0,01	0,06	-0,06
Denmark	0,03	0,02	0	0	0,01	-0,01
Finland	0,01	0,01	-0,01	0	0	0
France	-0,04	-0,02	0,02	0	-0,01	0
Spain	-0,59	-0,12	0,21	0,1	-0,16	0,12
Italy	0,17	0,06	-0,05	0	0,03	-0,04
The Netherlands	0	0	0	0	0	0
U.K.	0,02	0,01	0	0	0	0
EU 15*	0,03	0,03	0	0,01	0	-0,01

(*without Portugal)

Source: Adapted after Brückner et. al., European Integration Consortium, Final Report, 2009

If we take a look at the case of Netherlands, the general image is that, providing it allowed free movement of workers from Romania and Bulgaria from 2008, none of the economic factors above would have been affected. Therefore one of the main conclusions that can be drawn is that the current restrictions for Romanians on the Dutch labour market are not economically founded. Moreover, the conclusion of the report of the European Integration Consortium, was that in a scenario where free movement of workers from NMS-2 is included since 2008, the enlarged EU is a ‘winner’: “the joint GDP rises by 0,03 per cent and the income of the natives rises by 0,03 per cent” (Brückner et. al., 2009: 79).

*Table 6: Projections of the Romanian migrant stocks and the net growth
in the EU-15 (2012 – 2020)*

	Forecast under restriction conditions		Forecast under free movement of workers	
	Migration stocks	Net growth	Migration stocks	Net growth
2012	2,352,038	148,545	2,436,809	158,729
2013	2,465,124	143,087	2,587,071	150,262
2014	2,632,962	137,838	2,729,246	142,176
2015	2,765,753	132,791	2,863,703	134,456
2016	2,893,689	127,937	2,990,789	127,087
2017	3,016,957	123,268	3,110,842	120,053
2018	3,135,735	118,778	3,224,181	113,340
2019	3,250,194	114,459	3,331,115	106,934
2020	3,360,499	110,305	3,431,938	100,823

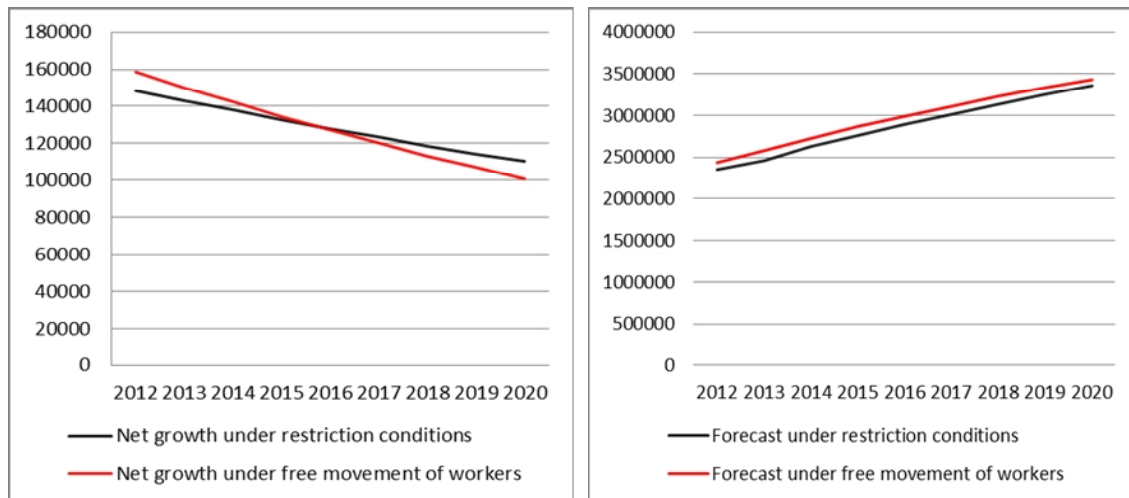
Source: Data from Brückner et al., 2009: 50-51

The same study conducted by the European Commission (2009), presented a few results on the forecasts they made on the number of migrants from the NMS-10 (the countries that entered the EU in 2004 plus Romania and Bulgaria) that would settle in the EU-15 by 2020. They calculated two different scenarios: one in which the current restrictions on the labour market remain, and the second one in which the rules of the free movement of workers are introduced in the entire EU – this last scenario assumed that the free movement of workers would have been introduced since 2007. We will further focus on the results that show us the forecast for the Romanian migrants and in table 6 only this particular data was extracted, starting with 2012 (the year when the present paper is written). As a general conclusion on the NMS-2 countries migrant stock is that this “could increase from about 1.8 million persons in

2007 to 3.9 million in 2020 under the present immigration restrictions, while it could increase to 4.0 million when the free movement is introduced” (Brückner et. al., 2009: 50).

Focusing on the Romanian migration stocks, the results of the scenarios mentioned above predict that the stock would increase from 2.3 million in 2012 to 3.3 million in 2020 in case the current restrictions are maintained, and from 2.4 million in 2012 to 3.4 million in 2020 in case the free movement of workers are introduced. Basically, in both cases the difference between 2020 and 2012 is the same: around 1 million more Romanian migrants will settle in the EU-15 until 2020. The difference between the two scenarios when discussing the total number of migrants is of less than 80,000 migrants. This leads to two conclusions: the first that even if the restrictions are maintained, the Romanian migrants will still leave their country in more or less the same numbers as they have since 2008; the second is that in case the free movement of workers is introduced, this will not generate a greater number (or an exodus) of Romanian migrants leaving the country, than in the case of keeping the restrictions (see figure 4 for a better understanding of the data in table 6).

Fig. 4: Projections of the Romanian migrant stocks and the net growth in the EU-15 (2012 – 2020)



Source: Author’s own graphic after data from Brückner et. al., 2009: 50-51

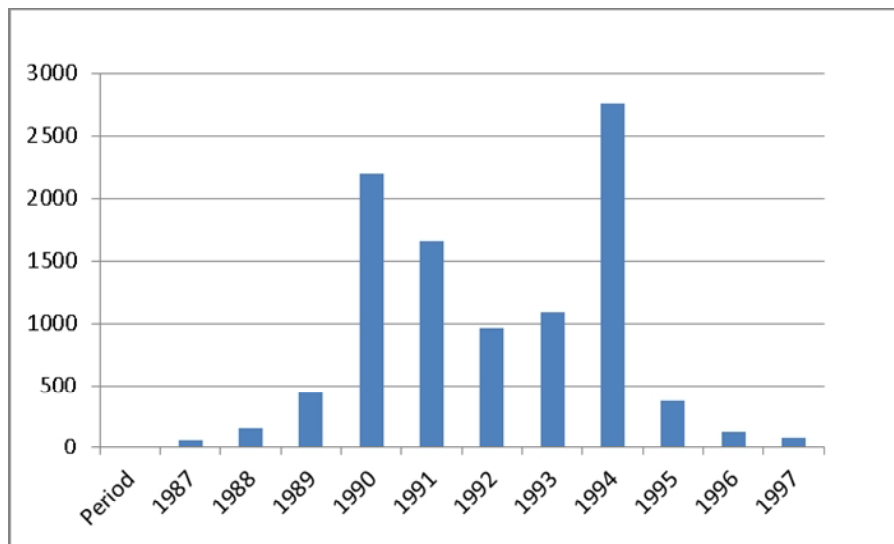
When discussing the net growth of the migration stocks the general tendency in both scenarios is for it to decline. But while under the restriction conditions, the net growth declines by around 5,000 people per year, under the free movement conditions it declines by around 8,000 people per year. Therefore there is a tendency for the net growth of Romanian migrants to decline more in case the free movement of workers is introduced, reaching a

projected number of 100,000 people per year in 2020. This can be explained by the fact that the general living and working conditions in Romania may improve, or resemble the conditions in the rest of the EU countries by 2020, and less people will feel the need to migrate.

4.2. Overview of current Romanian migration in the Netherlands

Netherlands was known as a welcoming country for asylum seekers around the period of the fall of communism. Specifically in Eastern European countries under the communist regime rumours travelled fast among the people who wanted to flee their country in search for better and more stable conditions of living. This group of Romanian asylum seekers before or immediately after the fall of communism in 1989 is a very important group in the Netherlands. There were more than 2000 Romanians who requested asylum in the Netherlands in 1990 and more than 2700 in 1994, due to political persecutions, making a total of more than 10,500 asylum requests and a lot of these people still live here since then (see figure 5 - the data from CBS refers to asylum seekers who submitted more than one request; the numbers include both first and subsequent requests).

Fig. 5: Number of asylum requests of Romanian citizens in the Netherlands (1987 – 1997)



Source: CBS, 2012

Apart from the statistics of Forum and the CBS data (see fig. 1) Mihai Sîrbu, the Romanian head of Consular Section in The Hague, also had several statistics and numbers to tell me. He talked about the latest estimates of Romanians in the Netherlands – not only

labour migrants, but people who have residency in the Netherlands: the first estimation is from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs – between 38.000 and 41.000, this being used to explain the reason for prolonging the restrictions on the labour market. The second estimation he talked about was from the Romanian transport company called ‘Atlassib’ which makes weekly routes from Netherlands to Romania – based on the regular transport of persons they have each year, they estimate that about 50.000 Romanians live in the Netherlands. The third estimative number given by him was based on a study made by the University of Amsterdam of 30.000 migrants. These numbers were given as the Consulate itself does not have official data of Romanians registered at the Embassy. Once arrived in the Netherlands it is not mandatory, neither a common practice to register with the Embassy.

The big difference in number between these estimates and the official numbers of the residence permits issued to Romanians – 8550 from 2005 until 2011 (CBS, 2012), is explained by the fact that many immigrants do not register at the local municipalities. This does not mean that they live here illegally as the legislation says that as a EU citizen you are allowed to not register for any stay that is shorter than 4 months. The way these estimations were made, also explained by the Consul, is by the local police: whenever the police encounter a non-Dutch citizen, that person is asked for a proof of residence in the Netherlands. This way there was a relation made between the registered and not-registered Romanian migrants. The same explanation is given by Joanne Van der Leun and Maria Ilies (2008:29) in a European Commission report about undocumented migration in the Netherlands. The most recent CBS data (2011) shows that the Romanian migrants ranked on number 14 in a top of nationalities living in the Netherlands, while they rank quite low, on number 31, in a top of countries of origin (see tables 7 and 8).

The economic crisis seriously affected the labour migration to the Netherlands – a consequence of that is the decrease in the number of issued work permits in recent years: in 2005 a number of 46,382 permits were issued, compared to only 11,972 permits in 2011 (Odé, 2012: 7). Work permits are only granted in case there are no job-seekers among the native Dutch or EU labour force available. According to Regioplan’s report on the Netherlands (2012) most labour migrants are employed in food processing (1,338), seasonal horticultural activities (1,143), information technology (929), research (724) and hotel and catering industry (418). Some economic sectors with significant shortages include trade, construction and business activities. In these sectors and in horticulture (seasonal labourers) the Dutch labour market was lately dominated by workers from Romania and Bulgaria (Odé, 2012: 8).

Tables 7 and 8: Migrants in the Netherlands by nationality and country of origin in 2011

Rank	Nationality	Number
1	Turkish	88028
2	German	71351
3	Moroccan	61896
4	Polish	52473
5	British	41373
6	Belgian	27184
7	Italian	21867
8	Chinese	21371
9	Spanish	19233
10	French	17797
11	Portuguese	15740
12	American	14846
13	Bulgarian	14110
14	Romanian	8289

Rank	Country of Origin	Number
1	Turkey	392923
2	Indonesia	377618
3	Germany	376606
4	Morocco	362954
5	Suriname	346797
6	Belgium	114022
7	Poland	100775
8	United Kingdom	80011
9	China	59097
10	Iraq	53336
31	Romania	16987

Source: data from CBS, 2012 and author's own calculations for rankings

In 2010 there were almost 2800 issued work permits to Romanians (UWV, 2012 and Tweede Kamer, 2012). When Romania entered the EU in 2007, most work permits were issued for jobs in horticulture (75% in 2007), followed by jobs in shipping crew (8,4%), agriculture (2,2%), or jobs in production, landscaping and gardening (3,9% altogether). In 2011, not only has the number of issued work permits reduced to less than half of the number in 2007, but also the domains in which those were issued, changed: horticulture was still first place with 65%, followed by jobs in vessel crew (8,6%), research and scientific studies (6,4%), jobs in elderly care and baby-sitting (4,1%), construction design and landscaping (3,9%) and IT (1,4%) (author's own calculations from UWV, 2012; also see table 9). As previously stated in 2011, due to the heavy restrictions, the number of work permits issued to Romanians dropped to less than half (see figure 6 and also table 10). The restrictions became very strict from June 2011. In April 2011 the Dutch farmers threatened to sue the Minister of Social Affairs, Henk Kemp, if he would block granting permits for Romanians. This is largely due to the positive perception of the Romanian workers abroad, which includes the Dutch farmers: "they rank first on the list of most hard working employees, they are seen by employers as being well prepared, competent and willing to work extra hours for modest salaries" (Traser, 2008:12). The growers, largely orchard owners and strawberry farmers, relied on around 2,000 Romanian seasonal workers for their harvest. The minister's decision was influenced by the high level of unemployment and he said that the farmers should employ local workers instead (Dutchnews.nl, 2011).

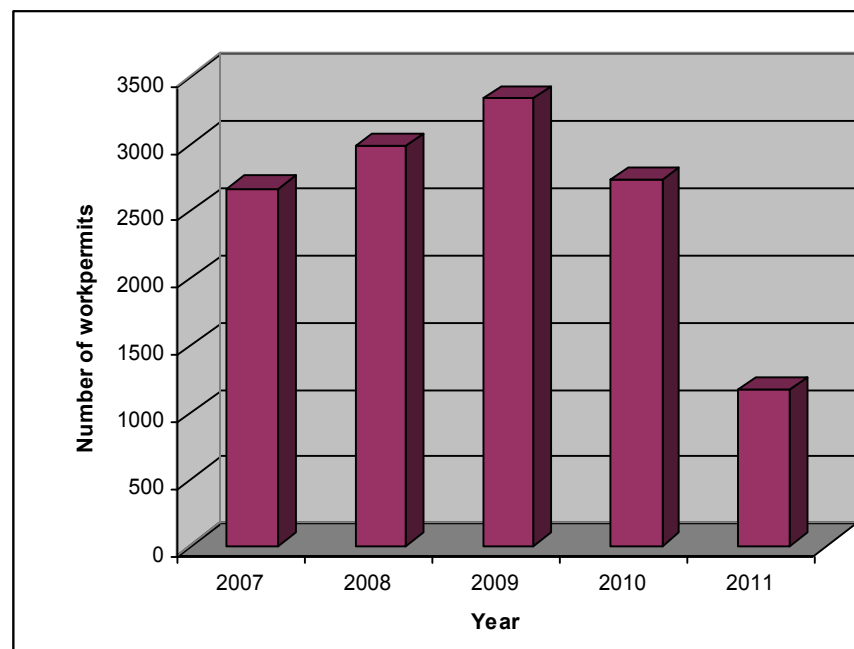
Table 9: Issued work permits to Romanians by domain (2007 – 2011)

Types of work	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011*
Horticulture	1983	2141	2507	2175	765
Vessel crew	224	153	88	110	100
Agriculture	59	34	7	--	--
Production	25	19	18	26	8
Research	45	23	67	26	19
Landscaping	51	55	60	62	18
Scientific studies	32	55	39	45	55
Gardening	28	--	6	15	--
Construction	48	93	281	14	12
Elderly care/baby-sitting	7	9	26	44	48
Media (Actors, Directors)	27	38	33	8	22
IT	19	--	41	27	16
Cleaning/Housekeeping	3	--	7	14	12
Slaughtering	17	82	13	--	--
Secretarial Work	4	8	15	24	8
Other	87	234	119	84	63
TOTAL	2659	2974	3327	2722	1161

Source: UWV, 2012 (*data is until August 2011)

When asked about the complaints they get about exploitation or discrimination cases at the Romanian Embassy/ Consulate in The Hague, the Consul stated that this reporting almost never happens. The only way they find out about such cases is through Dutch NGOs like: *Fairwork*, *Migrada* or *ComenSha*. Many migrants don't say anything about their problems to the Embassy either because of their illegal status (work or residence), they are not actually aware of being exploited, or they just accept this situation. As Sonja Driessen (the president of *Migrada*) told me in a discussion I had with her, "a person has a work permit for one employer only, so rather than to lose the current job and risk not being hired again, they accept their situation and keep quiet about their problems" (March, 2012). These people contact NGOs like *Migrada*. They neither complain to the Dutch authorities, a reason for this being that the procedure to register a complaint together with getting it solved by the authorities takes a lot of time.

*Fig. 6: Number of work permits issued to Romanians in the Netherlands, 2007 – 2011**



Source: UWV, June 2012 *(data from 2011 is until August)

Table 10: Issued work permits in the Netherlands after nationality 2008 - 2011

Nationality	2008	2009	2010	2011
Romanian	2992	3286	2734	1154
Chinese	2596	2281	2380	1958
Indian	1640	967	1343	975
Bulgarian	1080	922	866	-
American	968	828	742	493
Other	6308	5404	5519	-
Total	15584	13688	13584	11972

Source: Tweede Kamer, 2011 – 2012 and Regioplan, 2012

The Embassy encounters a lot of cases of people who have been promised a place to work and accommodation but upon their arrival they find nothing of what was promised. And so without any money or a place to stay, they ask for help to the Embassy. There are no programmes or campaigns to inform the Romanian migrants of the social/ professional life in the Netherlands, prior or after their departure. In my opinion this is unfortunate and it calls for development of such programmes. All the information can be found on the Embassy's website. There are very few those who call to ask about any information and those who do, are the ones less exposed to exploitation – mostly highly-skilled migrants.

A more 'easy' way of finding work in the Netherlands for Romanian migrants is that of opening their own businesses. If they want to become entrepreneurs, they are exempt

from applying for a work permit. In fact recently, Romanians were one of the fastest growing groups of foreign entrepreneurs in the Netherlands. Their number has increased by 17% in 2010 (second place after Russia): there were 600 newly open businesses by Romanians in 2009 and 700 in 2010 (Startersprofiel 2010 Rapport, 2011) (see table 11). There is also a high proportion of women among Romanian new entrepreneurs, as the female ratio is almost 2 to 1. The main sector in which they start new businesses is the service industry and the average age of these women is very low: 60% are younger than 30 years old (ibid.)

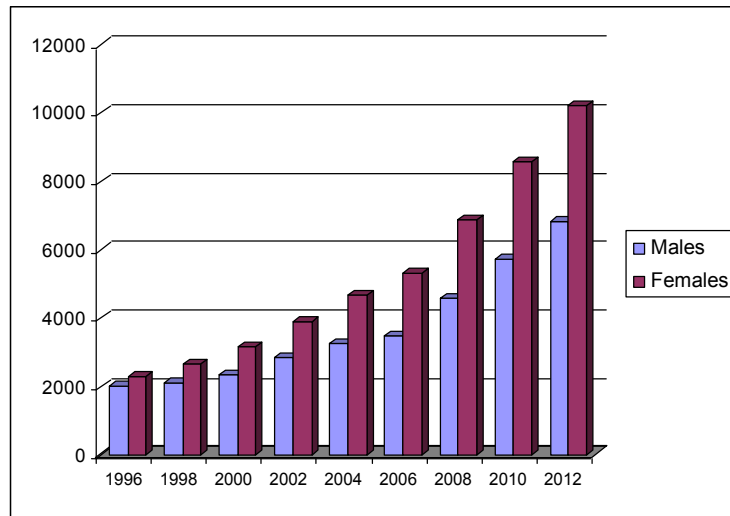
Table 11: New foreign businesses open in the Netherlands

Country of origin	2009	2010	2009 - 2010 %
Turkey	2200	2100	-5%
Surinam	1600	1800	13%
Bulgaria	1600	1200	-25%
Germany	1100	1100	0%
Romania	600	700	17%
Russia	500	600	20%

Source: Startersprofiel 2010 Rapport, Kamer van Koophandel Nederland, 2011

Some characteristics of Romanian migration to the Netherlands: regarding the gender structure, just like the overall migration from Romania, there is a feminization of migration with a substantial difference between the number of males and females registered, especially in the last few years. According to the data from CBS (2012) the number of females almost doubled in the first six months of 2012 (see figure 7).

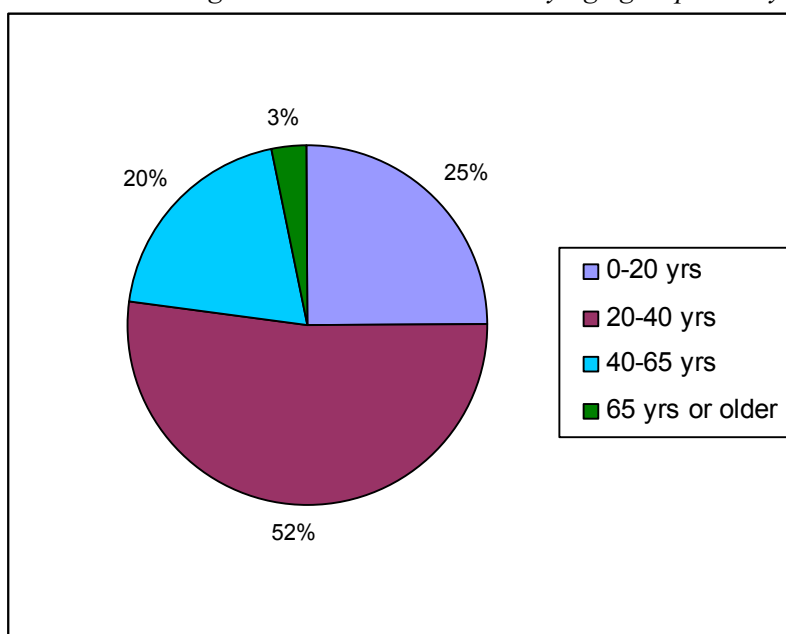
Fig. 7: Romanian migration in the Netherlands by gender (1996 – 2012)*



Source: CBS, 2012 *(data in 2012 is until July)

Regarding the age structure, according to the CBS data, over 52% of the migrants that were registered in the Netherlands in July 2012 were of ages between 20 and 40 years old, followed by the group of under 20 years old (25%). Moreover according to FORUM (2011), the largest group of Romanian migrants is aged between 25 and 35 years old and the number of both first and second generation Romanian children is growing rapidly (p.2). This shows a young generation of migrants.

Fig. 8: Romanian migration in the Netherlands by age groups – July 2012



Source: CBS, 2012

4.3. The Dutch context – what happened to ‘multicultural society’?

Before we discuss the legislation and the context of the Dutch – Romanian labour market, it would be good to have a clear image of the aspects of social and economic life of the Netherlands. Why is Netherlands an immigration country and why do more and more migrants from Central and Eastern European countries choose to start a new life in the Netherlands?

The Netherlands has long had a reputation of being a role model of multicultural society and tolerance. Following the World War II the Netherlands received guest workers through labour recruiting programmes. In the mid-1950's, due to development in industry, the country faced a labour shortage. Thereafter, these vacancies were fulfilled by foreign workers from Italy (1960), Spain (1961), Portugal (1963), Turkey, Greece, Morocco and Yugoslavia (van Selin, 2005 and Akgündüz, 2008) through different labour recruitment agreements.

Although these programmes were aimed to temporarily fill in the vacancies, most of these migrants settled in permanently. Therefore after 1975 the major migration inflows were for family reunification.

Another relevant number, when discussing the Dutch tolerance, is given by Van Selm (2005) on the asylum seekers that arrived in the Netherlands in 1985 - more than 4500 people and the peak was reached in 1998 when over 45,000 people requested asylum. Arrivals for asylum have dropped to 10,000 in 2004. At that time in the Netherlands tolerance was a key and much used word when discussing immigrants, the presence of asylum seekers and refugees in the country. Various dress codes, religions, and forms of behaviour, for example, were either tolerated or ignored, as it was considered a threat to the functioning of the Dutch society and politics. The country was therefore said to be 'multicultural' (van Selm, 2005). This concept of multicultural society was highly appreciated and regarded as a successful model of integration of people with different origin. Therefore multiculturalism was the preferred policy approach in 1990s and notions of integration, mutual acceptance, non-discrimination were highly used in those times. This meant that the entire population was supposed to be fully involved in society and willing to accept differences (ibid.). Some of the most important features of the integration policy at that time included radio and television productions in minority languages, setting up different religious schools, lessons for immigrant students in their own mother-tongue, or granting local voting rights to foreigners (Michalowski, 2005).

The 2002 elections in Netherlands are generally considered a turning point in the multicultural and immigration debates. The political party (LPF – Lijst Pim Fortuyn) of the Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn, a declared critic of multiculturalism, won a high and unexpected percentage of the votes. This revealed a certain disagreement and confusion with tolerance and multiculturalism ideas among the population. Pym Fortuyn stated in an interview: "I just say, the Netherlands is a small country...we are already overcrowded, there's no more room and we must shut the borders" (Van Selm, 2005: 2). After this episode the migration and integration policies were redefined (van der Leun and Ilies, 2008). Fortuyn's party was reluctant to new immigration and promoted the integration of existing immigrants more efficiently. He was assassinated a few days before the 2002 elections. Fortuyn's views and criticism of the Dutch multiculturalism were followed by the production of the movie 'Submission' about the abuse of Muslim women. This movie was produced by the Dutch politician of Somali origin Ayan Hirsi Ali together with director Theo Van Gogh. The movie was very controversial and in November 2004 Theo van Gogh was also murdered

by a young Dutch-Moroccan (van der Leun and Ilies, 2008). This series of events caused an outrage in the Dutch society and it brought into discussion the issue of immigration and integration, especially of the Muslims in the Netherlands. In the period that followed these murders (and not only that, but there were several incidents of destroying mosques or Islamic schools) the society appeared to have singled out the Moroccan community as problematic (van Selm, 2005), also new laws and immigration/integration policies have been formulated. The conditions of obtaining a visa, residence permit or citizenship became much stricter: testing on the Dutch culture and language, as well as measures to insure the immigrants learn Dutch in the home country before receiving a visa.

The Netherlands Nationality Act (Rijkswet op het Nederlanderschap, RWN) came into effect on 1st April 2003. Since then, a non-Dutch person must pass the ‘naturalization test’ (also known as ‘the integration exam’) in order to obtain the Dutch citizenship. This exam consists in assessing their knowledge of the Dutch language, culture and society (IND, 2010). This is due to the general idea that people who want to live and reside in the Netherlands for a long period of time should be active in the society, learn Dutch and be aware of the Dutch values. Since this act came into effect the annual number of ‘naturalizations’ dropped. In 2008 a total of 28,229 people acquired Dutch nationality, this number being considerably lower than the 30,653 number of people in 2007 (EMN, 2010: 15). Also, the number of naturalizations of adults was 44% lower in 2008 than in 2001 (EMN, 2010:16). The average number of naturalizations since 2003 is 21,000 people per year (CBS, 2010). The Moroccans (26%) and the Turks (16%) are traditionally the largest groups who obtain Dutch nationality every year. From the EU, Polish migrants are the largest group who obtained Dutch nationality in 2008 (EMN, 2010).

In February 2012, the right-wing Dutch Freedom Party (PVV) launched a special website through which they invite Dutch citizens to denounce any nuisance caused by citizens coming from Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. The ‘invitation’ sounded like this: “Have you lost your job to a Pole, Bulgarian, Romanian or any other Eastern European? We want to know. We are waiting for your story” (R. Heukels, HotNews.ro, 2012). According to the representatives of the website, this initiative was aimed at fighting against black-market, but instead it led to opposing reactions from Dutch political class, various diplomatic missions and the European Commission: it only seemed to discriminate against citizens from the new member states.

Fig. 9: Home page of PVV's website



Source: Vrritti.com, accessed 20/06/2012

PVV announced that the website registered around 22.000 reactions in the first 48 hours from its launch (ibid.). What PVV omitted to explain is that most of these reactions condemned this initiative. The Romanian Embassy in The Hague, together with other nine diplomatic missions in the Netherlands (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) sent an 'Open letter to the Dutch society and its political leaders'. The letter expresses the concern of the ten chiefs of missions for the launching of this website and it points out that such initiatives do not promote any type of open dialogue and they encourage, especially at the level of the Dutch society, the negative perception and discrimination of certain nationalities of European citizens, which breaks one of the fundamental rights of the European Union: "(...) any discrimination on grounds of nationality is strictly prohibited" (Charter of fundamental rights of the European Union, 2010:396). They also pointed out that free movement of workers does not only contribute to the growth of the Dutch economy, but also that the citizens of these 10 countries are not taking the jobs of the Dutch nationals (C. Ionel, HotNews.ro, February 2012).

Somehow "multiculturalism" seems to have disappeared from the integration agenda of the Dutch political parties. Lately the way Netherlands is dealing with integration is by making it harder for the immigrants to obtain work and residence permits. The new context of immigration, "the supposed failures of multiculturalism and renewed interest in national identity" (Schinkel and Van Houdt, 210: 697) formed the premises for the recent change in

the concept of integration and citizenship. The Netherlands can be seen as a forerunner: it was the first state within continental Europe which implemented neo-liberal policies regarding citizenship and it was the first state to radically break with multiculturalism. Schinkel and Van Houdt (2010) make a distinction between ‘formal and moral citizenship’. Formal citizenship refers to the citizen rights and duties’, or the juridical status, whereas moral citizenship refers to the ‘moral resources’, or to the question ‘what makes a good citizen?’. Instead of opposing these two concepts the authors make a distinction to show that throughout the history the emphasis in the Netherlands changed from a formal citizenship to moral citizenship, because in the 80’s, it was enough to have basic language skills and the focus was on minority groups. In the present, immigrants have to take tests on Dutch norms and values in their country of origin, and when entering the Netherlands. Therefore citizenship changed from “a right to be different to a duty to be similar i.e. assimilated (p.704).

According to the same authors there are two developments in the Netherlands: the rise of ‘neo-liberalism’, where the emphasis is on the individual responsibility of the citizen to become active, and ‘cultural assimilation’, where the individual has to adopt the Dutch norms and values. The latter also refers to a nationalist form of assimilation, whereby liberal values of freedom and individual responsibility are assumed to be learned by the migrants/ethnic minorities (Schinkel and Van Houdt, 2010). In these authors’ discourse, there is a distinction being made between Western and non-Western cultures, it is an ethnical selection in the process of the tests needed to be passed for becoming a Dutch citizen (ibid.)

It is perhaps these conditions, these norms that set the distance between the migrant communities and the Dutch society. Upon arrival the migrants only intend a better economic opportunity, better jobs and higher wages and together with that, the possibility of a social life, and integration in society; their aim could also be that of achieving a functional integration into the city without any form of integration in the national culture (Favell, 2008) – a process that in some countries could be a lot easier. But in the light of all the conditions needed for becoming an active, good and integrated citizen, the Dutch have a different idea of integration. It is a sort of clash between cultures. The Dutch society see it as an individual failure to integrate, whereas for the migrants - being abroad, the investment of time and money in language courses, or testing their Dutch cultural knowledge - is viewed as secondary in priority, the first being that of earning and saving money. There is also the reason that for them, migration is perceived as something temporary and uncertain, therefore many avoid investing too much (Kazlowska, 2006). From the Dutch perspective integration means getting in line with the national norms, adopting certain behaviour precisely for not

being excluded, and Favell (2008) has the right words for it: “getting in synch with the rhythm of the nation (p. 138).

4.4. Summary

Romania is presently an emigration country. After the fall of communism in 1989, a massive emigration took place as a result of the opening of borders and the establishment of the democratic regime. Only in 1990 almost 100,000 people fled the country, but this number diminished to fewer than 10,000 in 2007. The traditional countries of destination are: Spain, Italy, Germany, Canada and USA. After Romania became an EU member state in 2007, the country faced another migration peak and this because of the new right of free labour mobility in the EU. The main reasons for migrating among Romanians are the bad economic conditions, the insufficient income, or the lack of appropriate jobs. Therefore entering the European Union was seen as a great success on the social and economic stage of the country.

The Netherlands is currently one of the 11 EU member states that still restricts the free access of Romanians and Bulgarians (the two newest member states, often referred to as ‘EU-2’) on the Dutch labour market, by making use of the ‘Accession Treaty of Romania and Bulgaria’ act. In spite of this, the current estimated and unofficial number of Romanians in the Netherlands is between 30,000 and 50,000, while the official number is 16,000 based on the Romanians that are registered in the Dutch municipalities. The main domains in which they work are agriculture, construction and service industry.

The Netherlands has long had a reputation for being a tolerant country and open to guest workers. This was mostly due to the 1950s – 1960s labour workers programmes, used to fill in the gaps in the labour shortage at that time. Although this programme was aimed at temporary migrants, they proved to stay in the country on a long-term basis and the immigrants’ number raised significantly in the decades that followed, highly due to family reunification. While in the 1990’s tolerance and multiculturalism were key terms, things changed after the turn of the century: Dutch politicians began to criticize the idea of multiculturalism and it all culminated with the assassinations of Pim Fortuyn (2002) and Theo Van Gogh (2004), two controversial personalities known for their anti-foreign views, and also Muslim and Islam mosques and schools got destroyed. After these murders the issue of integration is one of the highest priorities of the Dutch political agenda and there is a tendency of keeping newcomers out (van Selm, 2005). This has a large impact also on the migrants from the new EU-2 countries – the general atmosphere, in van Selm’s view, is “increasingly unwelcoming” (van Selm, 2005: 8).

Chapter 5 Labour migration legislation in the Dutch – Romanian labour market context

While on my field research I was asking Romanians whether they work or not in the Netherlands in the scope of finding subjects for my interviews. I met a woman, let us call her Dana, who told me: *I don't work, we are not allowed to work here, don't you know that?*. She was feeling out of place, rarely left the house and felt financially dependent on her husband. I later found out she was married to an Italian national, staying home to raise her children and hoped that one day she will be allowed to work and get her social life back.

I used this example in order to illustrate that there are Romanian migrants who are not informed of their rights and of the employment legislation which applies to them in the Netherlands. There are surely a few exceptions from the work permit requirement for Romanians, but it is also very true that these exemptions often require a high level of bureaucracy and many are simply discouraged by the amount of time and even costs it takes to get employed as a Romanian in the Netherlands. With this in mind, I consider it necessary to include a chapter dedicated to these exceptions, as well as to the conditions and rights of working in the Netherlands for the new EU member states.

5.1. Dutch employment institutions, labour legislation and the competence of the EU

As previously stated, in the past years the Dutch government adopted a reluctant position towards immigration and especially foreign workers on its labour market. It adopted more and more restrictive regulations which are meant to protect the Dutch labour market and at the same time, it moves toward a selective entry policy. This means that immigration of talented and highly skilled migrants is officially encouraged, the Netherlands welcomes migrants who meet economic needs, but remains restrictive to others (Regioplan, 2012).

Starting with 1995, labour migration in the Netherlands has been mainly governed by the “Act of the Employment of Aliens” (*Wet Arbeid Vreemdelingen* or WAV). This act consists of restrictive legislation and has the main purpose of regulating the Dutch labour market by giving priority to employees legally residing in the Netherlands (Aggus, 2010). The main ministries responsible for the immigration and labour migration processes are: the Ministry of Justice – where the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND) is the main

actor responsible for issuing of visas and residence permits for any category of migrants in the Netherlands; the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) is directly responsible for enforcing employment law, employment rights or the WAV.

Citizens of the European Union do not need a work permit to work in the Netherlands. However, the two newest member states – Romania and Bulgaria - are an exception from this, and therefore the laws of the new EU citizens apply for these two countries. A work permit (in Dutch: *tewerkstellingsvergunning*, or TWV) is a document that allows an employer to hire a foreign national to work. Employers are required to obtain work permits before they hire individuals from outside the EU or the Netherlands. The rules that apply to the issue of work permits are presented in the WAV. This act requires employers to first recruit in the Netherlands and other European Union countries: the employers needs to prove that no qualified Dutch or EU nationals are available to fill the vacancy, after advertising for at least five weeks prior to filling the application for a work permit. This is called the ‘labour market test’ and it also implies the employer to conduct extensive recruitment activities. Applicants for work permits must be the ages of 18 – 45. The maximum length of a work permit is three years. People who have had a work permit for three consecutive years, and haven’t moved their residence outside the Netherlands during these years, become exempt from the work permit requirement. Once a person is allowed to work in the Netherlands, then the spouse/partner usually is allowed to work as well (Expatlaw.nl, 2008).

As with any rule, there are also some exceptions. Three of these exemptions are of main interest to this research, meaning that there are a few categories of Romanian migrants who can be exempt from the requirement of a work permit, and those categories are:

- Romanians (and Bulgarians) who have had a Dutch residence permit for the purpose of work for twelve consecutive months (following the transitional rules after EU accession) and,
 - Romanians who are considered ‘highly-skilled migrants’ (in Dutch *kennismigranten*);
 - Romanians who open their own businesses, or self-employers.

The last two conditions are valid for any other foreign national. In an effort to stimulate the ‘knowledge economy’, the Dutch government abolished some bureaucratic barriers for those migrants who possess a university degree and find a Dutch job contract for an indefinite period and would earn a gross annual income of 51,239 euros (for migrants over

30 years of age) or 37,575 euros (if under 30) (Regioplan, 2012:19). This ‘Knowledge Migrant Scheme’ (in Dutch *Kennismigrantenregeling*) was introduced in 2004.

There are also some exceptions from this scheme with regards to the income criteria: first, in 2008 the ‘Admission Scheme for Highly Educated Foreign Nationals’ introduced the ‘job search year’ for third - country students who attain a master or a doctoral degree in the Netherlands and find a job as a knowledge migrant within one year after finishing their studies; these students should earn a gross annual income of at least 26,931 euros (ibid.). Second, for third country nationals employed in scientific research, guest lecturers or foreign doctors studying in the Netherlands to become a specialist, no income criteria applies (Regioplan, 2012: 19 and Euraxess the Netherlands, 2009).

To further emphasize the highly selective entry policy on the Dutch labour market, it is also worth mentioning the ‘30% ruling’. This rule is a tax advantage for foreign employees working in the Netherlands. Once a number of conditions are met, the employer is allowed to pay a tax free allowance of (roughly) 30% of the salary of the employee. The 30% allowance will be included in the salary in such a way that the costs for the employer will not be higher, and the employee has a higher net salary. Basically this rule is considered a compensation for the expenses that a foreign employee has by working outside his or her home country (Expatica.com, 20 June, 2012). Therefore, with the purpose to further encourage and attract highly-skilled migrants, the Dutch government introduced this unique in the world tax-rule, trying to make a more welcoming environment for the expats.

In order to open a new business as a migrant in the Netherlands, the admission policy requires that the activities of the migrant should be innovative and beneficial to the Dutch economy. There are three points a migrant should think about before wanting to open a new business: first, they need to have personal experience in the field of their new business idea; second, a business plan must be provided, showing that they will be able to earn sufficient financial means for their own support, and third, the business plan must show the benefits that this activity will bring to the Dutch economy (IOM, 2008 and Regioplan, 2012).

As regards the EU’s competence (Neframi, 2011) concerning migration in relation to the Member States, this does not affect the state’s decisions in connection with the number of immigrants admitted in order to seek work. This is because the economic immigration of a Member State affects the state’s objectives in connection to employment and labour market and therefore each state should manage/limit the volumes of admission of third-country nationals by themselves – this also includes the admission from the new EU countries. The EU has however competence in defining the rights of third country nationals already residing

legally in the respective Member State, as well as in defining the conditions that govern the freedom of movement and of residence of these persons. This covers access to employment and social security for migrant workers (ibid.).

A United Nations report (March, 2012) on the implementation of international human rights discussed several concerns and recommendations on this subject in the Netherlands. The main focus was on the ethnic minority groups and migrant workers. Some of the concerns reported were that the rates of unemployment in ethnic minority groups were significantly higher than the average; that ethnic minorities were underrepresented in high positions in public or private sectors; that, although previously (2009) ILO requested the Netherlands to increase the efforts to fight discrimination against ethnic minority groups and to stimulate their participation in the labour market, the employment data continued to show a negative trend in the employment of persons belonging to ethnic minorities (UN – Human Rights Council, 2012). The Council also expressed concern related to the long wait of migrant workers to receive the full public pension which they consider discriminatory (p. 11), as well as to the latest racist and xenophobic political speeches of certain extremist political parties towards ethnic minorities (p. 8). Having these in mind, several recommendations were formulated: that the Netherlands should implement policies and programmes to improve the situation of migrants in accessing employment, housing, health and education; that it should take all necessary measures to combat racism and xenophobia, to prevent and suppress any manifestations of intolerance and discrimination, as well as to “encourage a positive climate of political dialogue, including at times of local and national election campaigns” (UN – Human Rights Council, 2012: 8). An EU study of the laws for legal immigration in the 27 Member States (2008) stated that the IND (Immigration and Naturalization Service), which is the only institution responsible for the implementation of the admission procedure to the Netherlands and the Dutch labour market, has a “migrant unfriendly attitude” and it “aims at keeping migrants out” (p. 365). According to the study (2008), many gaps in the Dutch immigration system are not the result of the law, but mainly of the way IND’s civil servants interpret and apply the law (ibid.).

A recent report of the Tweede Kamer (the ‘Second Chamber’ of the Dutch Parliament) called ‘Lessons from recent labour migration’ focuses on the labour migrants coming from Romania and Bulgaria. Starting from the premise that labour migration is a logical consequence of the free movement of workers and services, several recommendations and conclusions were drawn from this report. First, it is very hard to assess how many labour migrants from Central and eastern European Countries live presently in the Netherlands, this

is due to the fact that many migrants don't register at the municipalities upon arrival. According to the report this is because registration at the municipalities is laborious and a lot of documents are required. However, having a better insight of the number of labour migrants, would be helpful in implementing effective migration policies (Tweede Kamer, 2011).

Secondly, the main factors that draw labour migrants to the Netherlands are the availability of work and the level of after-tax earnings. Also seasonal work is a very important factor, as many labour migrants are recruited by employment agencies, who are offering travel-housing-work packages for a period of around 6 months (ibid.). The recruitment agencies are a very important actor concerning Romanian labour migrants since they need a work permit in the Netherlands. A lot of the seasonal jobs that Romanians find in the Netherlands are through this type of labour recruitment agencies who have a certain number of work permits that can be issued - mostly in fruit and vegetable picking. Another concern in the report is that there were "5000 – 6000 *mala fide* employment agencies in the Netherlands, with more than 100,000 people on their books. These firms frequently underpay migrant workers, and sometimes exploit them ruthlessly" (Tweede Kamer, 2011: 7). Some forms of exploitation - and also the most common forms of labour exploitation - this phrase refers to are: oppressive contracts, false employment, imposed long-hours of work, attracting migrants to the Netherlands under false pretences, as well as bad living accommodations offered by the agency.

As a result of this, the report formulated a few recommendations such as: reducing the number of mala fide agencies to zero by the end of 2013, or strengthening the position of certified agencies. As part of this plan, in March 2012, the minister of Social Affairs - Henk Kamp, created a center for labour migrants to be able to complain about these mala fide agencies. The Dutch Embassy in Romania announced the existence of this center, which may be contacted by any person who works in the Netherlands, regardless of their nationality.

5.2. Institutional and policy framework for integration

In the Netherlands, integration policies mainly focus on the social and economic position of the non-Western immigrants. There are two acts which debate the general integration policy measures concerning integration of migrants in the Netherlands: the Integration Act (Wi) and the Civic Integration Abroad Act (Wib) (Regioplan, 2012).

However these 2 acts do not apply to European Nationals, and neither to Romanians. In spite of this, there have been several concerns about the integration of migrants from the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEE). Although the influx of workers from

these countries has decreased in the last few years, there is no large return migration, therefore the number of migrant workers from these countries that live in the Netherlands has increased. Regioplan in their report states that according to a research conducted in Den Haag, the most problematic group are the Bulgarians. This is mainly because they have a weak position in the labour market, they are mostly unemployed and they are considered less-educated than the Polish or the Romanian workers (p. 23). Future government plans include recommendations on how to better facilitate the integration of European labour migrants. Some of the current integration programmes for the labour migrants from CEE include: offering e-learning and self-study materials in the migrants' languages; stimulation policies by the Dutch employer; organization of informational meetings in neighbourhoods where many CEE migrants live (Rotterdam), or organizing language learning programmes for migrants.

Concerning the integration of migrants, the EU's competence does not affect the competence of the Member States in connection with the migrants residing legally in their territories (Neframi, 2011). Although integration is one of the Union's objectives, this does not mean that it has any legislative powers upon the Member State's integration policies. Therefore the EU institutions are not able to adopt acts relating to the conditions of integration of third-country nationals. However, the Union can "support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States, without thereby superseding their competence in these areas" (Article 2(5) TFEU in Neframi, 2011: 17).

According to an IOM – EU study (2008) the Dutch law does not distinguish between the concepts of 'integration conditions' and 'integration measures' (ibid.). This statement once again enforces the ideas presented in chapter 5.1. that the IND has a restrictive attitude towards migrants, as well as in chapter 4.3. where I conclude that nowadays migrants have a duty to integrate (which implies conditions) as opposed to having the right to be integrated (which implies measures/help coming from the hosting society).

Making a comparison with today's situation, in 1994 the legislation permitted an easy naturalization process and was putting emphasis on anti-discrimination, consensus and tolerance, as well as incorporating ethnic groups into all relevant areas of policy. The Netherlands was taken as an example of good practice in the area of multicultural and tolerant coexistence of people (Michalowski, 2005). However by 2002 the Dutch integration policies adopted a more assimilationist approach, with obligatory integration programmes for new immigrants, which included language classes and social studies. The concept of 'integration' was seen as similar to cultural assimilation, therefore new immigration policies were

developed and these “would be best described by the word “inhospitable” (Doomernik in Michalowski, 2005: 3).

5.3. Media reports on the current situation of Romanian migrants in the Netherlands

Since April 2011 when the Dutch government decided to give work permits to Romanians only in ‘exceptional cases’, there was also a request from the government for the employers to take on only unemployed people of Dutch nationality in agriculture or horticulture. Employers and farmers threatened to sue Minister Henk Kemp for this decision, since they were happy to employ Romanians and Bulgarians. Romanians “were no longer welcome in the eyes of Dutch politicians” (Observator European, 4 October 2011), but also the farmers were not welcoming the idea of employing Dutch workers as they “complain about back problems, their work morale is low, and do not work hard like the Eastern Europeans” (EurActiv, 13 April 2011).

Most concerns in the Dutch media related to the fear of Romanians and Bulgarians being exploited, mostly because of the severe conditions of obtaining a work permit. The Dutch Trade Union federation feared that mainly workers in construction, agriculture, horticulture or cleaning might be the most exposed to exploitation. The same union federation expressed its’ opposition to making work permits harder to get and said that labour market situation can be better controlled if all employees had a proper contract and work-permits (Grunell, 21 March 2012, EIRO Online). The same source makes a reference to another research by the University of Rotterdam on 200 Romanian and Bulgarian migrants. One of their main conclusions was that these workers had no information about their residence/working status or about their rights or obligations (ibid.).

A research by the Erasmus University of Rotterdam showed that the Dutch economy benefits from the arrival of workers from CEE countries – especially by the employment of cheap labour force (Van der Most, 2012). A series of interviews that were run on 15 Romanian seasonal workers in Breda and Zundert in 2009 and 2010, show that they were more than satisfied with their living conditions. The same research showed that the majority of these migrants earn as little as 8 euros per hour, and sometimes even lower, which is less than the minimum wage in the Netherlands (EUKN, 23 March 2011). However, another study run by the same university through the sociologist Erik Snel (from 2010 onwards) on the topic of Central and Eastern Europe migrants, shows that the Romanian migrants are generally highly-educated – they work at universities and at international

organizations, they have work permits and have generally a better position than the Poles or the Bulgarians (Van der Most, 2012).

Another debate discusses the Netherlands' latest decisions and their impact upon the Dutch investments in Romania. The Netherlands is the biggest investor with an amount of 15,9 million dollars (in 2011) and companies like Heineken, Unilever, ING, or KLG (Kuijken Logistic Group) are a major presence in Romania (Het Financieele Dagblad, 1 November 2011, p. 4). However, after the latest 'Dutch-Finnish blockade' concerning Romania's entering the Schengen area, the prime-minister Mark Rutte realized that the Dutch are no longer welcome just anywhere like they were welcomed ten years ago and moreover, this costs them new opportunities and money (ibid.). Lately the popularity of Romania's interest in the Dutch investments dropped and the Dutch companies can feel it – they now rarely win the auctions in Bucharest, says Dirk van Harten (Trouw, 17 October 2011).

The political relationship between Romania and Netherlands has become colder by the day since the appearance of the PVV website, as well as the Netherlands' refusal of Romania to enter the Schengen community. The Romanian press articles debated mainly on the Netherlands' abuse upon the rights of another member state regarding both the refusal to enter Schengen as well as the refusal to allow free movement of Romanian workers on the Dutch labour market. The Romanian Ministry of Social Affairs stated that the free movement of workers should not cause any disruptions on the labour market, but moreover, it contributes to the economic development of the member states that opened their labour market (Ziare.com, 13 April 2011).



Figure 10, source: Ziuaveche.ro, 19/09/2011

The Romanian press also remarked the awakening of nationalism and protectionism in the Netherlands in the last few years, as well as the fact that nowadays the “parties’ interests are put up against the founding principles of the EU” (Observator European, 4 April 2011) making a reference to the political views of the ‘anti-immigration’ PVV party. One of the arguments used by the Netherlands to justify their opposition against Romania joining the Schengen space is the lack of social norms for the gipsies in Romania. One of the Romanian press reactions to this argument was the following:

“If Romanian gipsies have no problem to walk the streets of Amsterdam, if they live in their nomadic style in caravans in Italy and France is also because the Bucharest authorities were inoculated for twenty years with the idea of sacred respect towards ethnic minorities. According to the statistics we are a country where national minorities had and still have their own political parties and Romanian officials never dared to put a minority in a ghetto or to restrain or forbid their right of free movement in Europe. It was one of the first lessons of democracy taught to Romanians from the time when they were asked to respect political criteria for joining the European Union” (Observator European, 4 April 2011).

The labour minister of Romania, Sulfina Barbu, declared that keeping restrictions on Romanian workers is economically unjustifiable: “I believe the best argument for lifting the restrictions on Romanian workers is the November 11 report by the European Commission that underscores that the restrictions in place are waivers for the free movement of workers” (ActMedia.eu, 1 December 2011). The respective report presents the conclusions of a model-based study: between 2004 – 2009 the mobility from Romania and Bulgaria boosted the GDP of the EU by 0,2 per cent in the short-term and by 0.3 per cent in the long-term. Moreover, for the EU-15 countries, the impact is stronger: 0.4 per cent increase of the GDP in the long-term and there was no significant impact on the unemployment or the salaries within the countries that set restrictions on Romanian workers (ibid.)

5.4. Summary

While most Romanian migrants believe they have no right to work in the Netherlands, a closer look at the EU and Dutch legislation concerning the labour market and labour migration shows a different situation. Since June 2011 the conditions to get a job in the

Netherlands have become much more severe than before, especially for the low-skilled migrants, while the talented and highly-skilled migrants are encouraged in various ways to enter the labour market.

For the non-EU low-skilled migrants (here, the Netherlands also includes citizens from Romania and Bulgaria), it is very hard to get employed, mostly because of the difficulty of obtaining a work permit. In the Netherlands it is not the migrants themselves that can apply for a work permit, but the employer has to do it. They must first go through the 'labour market test' before they can actually obtain the work permit for the person he wants to employ. Not only does this take a lot of time, but also once a migrant is allowed to work for an employer, that work permit will only be valid for that particular employer. In case of quitting the job, or getting fired, he or she will need to go through the same process again.

Regarding the EU's competence in migration policy matters in relation to the Member States, it is limited when discussing the volume of migrants admitted to seek work. In other words, the EU has no power over the Netherlands' work permit conditions of issue. The EU does, however, have power over the rights of the migrants already residing or working in the Netherlands. Several European Union, United Nations and the European Parliament reports on the migration policy implementation and evaluation in the Netherlands, showed that ethnic minority groups are still discriminated in the labour market. Moreover, these reports suggested that there are concerning xenophobic and intolerant attitudes in the political environment, which highly influence the actions of the civil servants towards migrants. In what concerns the Romanian migrants, several conclusions were drawn from these reports: first, that their present number in the Netherlands is very hard to assess due to the laborious process of registration at the municipalities; however this would help very much in developing effective migration policies; second, that most low-skilled migrants are doing seasonal work and are recruited through employment agencies, but they often find themselves in labour exploitation situations.

When it comes to integration of migrants, the Netherlands mainly focuses on non-Western immigrants. In the past decade the Dutch integration policies adopted a more assimilationist approach, meaning the migrant having a duty to integrate, as well as the obligation to follow integration programmes. The number of migrant workers from Romania and from the CEE countries has increased lately in the Netherlands, and so the government is planning to further facilitate the integration of these migrants. Some of the integration programs planned mostly include learning the Dutch language or organizing informational meetings for the new migrants close to where they live.

The concerns presented in the European Commission and the Dutch Parliament reports are also reflected in the Dutch media: while the employers are very satisfied with employing Romanian workers, there is a general fear of these workers to become exploited, mostly because of the difficulty of obtaining a work permit. Other concerns are related to the poor conditions of living of the seasonal workers, as well as the fact that these workers are not aware of their human and labour rights. Since the Netherlands opposed the decision for Romania to enter the Schengen area, the Romanian press mostly analyses the consequences of this action and it's less concerned about the current situation of the migrant workers in the Netherlands. However there are also debates about the refusal of the Netherlands to allow free movement of workers from Romania and that this generally contributes to the economic development of a state and it does not cause any disruptions in the labour market.

In the next chapter I will present my empirical data and findings based on my field research – interviews with Romanian migrants in the Netherlands – and an online survey.

Chapter 6 Conditions of work and integration of Romanian migrants in the Netherlands

This chapter is based on the findings and conclusions of the online survey I ran on different forums of Romanians living in the Netherlands (*Romanians.nl*, *Benelux.ro*, *Romanians in The Hague* and *Romanians in the Netherlands* Facebook groups), as well as based on the 17 interviews I did with different Romanian migrants in different locations.

In the following subchapters I will present the results of my online survey and the interviews, by analysing them separately (results of the survey and results of the interview), because while the responses of the survey offer a more quantitative view, the interviews are more in-depth and require a more descriptive analysis. The analysis is also divided into two sections, one in which I discuss only the results regarding the working conditions of the migrants and a second one in which I present the results regarding the integration of the migrants in the Netherlands.

6.1. Working environment of migrants

Out of the 17 respondents of my interview 9 were women and 8 were men. I did not see a tendency for women to be more willing to talk to me, but I was more often refused by men, whereas I was never refused by women to have this discussion. When talking about marital status, 7 of my respondents were married, out of which only one woman was married to a Dutch national and the other 6 were married to Romanian nationals. They all declared that they reside legally in the Netherlands and that they have a work permit or the right to work.

When asked about what was the main reason of their coming to the Netherlands, 8 respondents stated that work was the main reason they chose the Netherlands, 3 of them came for study purposes, 3 of them came for family reasons or because they had their partner already living in the Netherlands and the other 3 that I interviewed came before or immediately after the Romanian revolution in 1989 as political-asylum seekers or refugees. Two of them managed to obtain a tourist visa after the revolution and asked for asylum in the Netherlands, while the third remained here ‘by accident’, as he was initially on his way to Canada as political refugee. The results of the online survey show that 39% (36 respondents) of the Romanian migrants originally came in the Netherlands to find work, 38% (35 respondents) of them came for family reunification, 15% (14 respondents) said they came for

study purposes and 6 respondents said they came because they heard Netherlands was simply a country where there is a high standard of living.

When asked how long they had been living and working in the Netherlands, 13 of the respondents (76%) said they have been living and working for less than five years, that is since 2007 when Romania joined the EU, and only 4 for more than ten years. The domains in which these migrants are working are: marketing (2), hotel and restaurant (3), research (3), finance (2), shipping (1), engineering (2), IT (3) and consultancy (1).

Table 12: The time of living and working in the Netherlands of my respondents

Period	Survey		Interview	
	Living in NL	Working in NL	Living in NL	Working in NL
less than 5 years (since 2007)	53	67	13	13
5 to 10 years	24	15	0	0
more than 10 years	14	9	4	4

Source: Collected by Valeria Ionescu, 2012

In comparison to the results of the interviews, where all the respondents were legally residing and working, 2 of the respondents of the survey declared they have been living in the Netherlands for more than two years without having a legal residence or a work permit. Also, only 12 respondents (13%) said they are working illegally or without a work permit in the following domains: transport (1 person), agriculture (2), housekeeping/cleaning (6), restaurants (1), construction (1) and production (1). See also table 13 below for an overview of the work domains of the survey respondents.

Out of the total of the interviews, 12 respondents (70%) said that they are currently happy or very happy with their work experience so far and the same respondents said that their work experience has either reached the expectations they had prior to their coming to the Netherlands, or it is better than they expected. The other 5 respondents said that they are generally neutral or not so happy with their work experience and that it is generally worse than they expected. Among the reasons I was given for this was first, that ‘there is a difference between being a simple tourist, when nobody expects you to speak the Dutch language, and actually living and working in the Netherlands. At this point people expect you to learn the language very fast and the attitude of the locals changes from being kind to being unkind’ (woman, 37); secondly, that ‘the Romanian higher education is more theoretical and generally covers a wide range of subjects within the speciality you’re studying, while in the

Netherlands you are expected to be well prepared (both theory and practice) only for one specific subject and from here derives a series of misunderstandings and clashes of level of skills' (man, 29).

Table 13: Work domains of the respondents of the online survey

Field of work	Number
Services (transport/restaurants)	18
IT	15
Research/University	11
Cleaning/Housekeeping	10
Shipping	6
Finance	6
Construction	5
Engineering	4
Agriculture	3
Oli & Gas	3
Other (Business, consultancy, judicial sector)	10
Total	91

Source: Collected by Valeria Ionescu, 2012

The results of the interview match the ones of the survey in the sense that there was almost the same percentage of people – 73% - who answered that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their work experience in the Netherlands (67), and the percentage of the ones who answered that they are neutral or not satisfied with their jobs was quite small – 27%. There are also similarities in respect to the expectations they had prior to starting work in the Netherlands: 78% of the respondents of the survey stated their experience reached their expectations, or that it is better than expected, while only 22% said that their working conditions are worse than they expected. Moreover, one of the questions of the survey focused on whether they feel their qualifications match the work they are doing in the Netherlands: 56 of the respondents stated that indeed, they are doing a job they were qualified for, while 35 of them said that their job is below their level of qualifications, which is also the most common reason why they are currently disappointed (working conditions worse than expected) with their current situation in the Netherlands.

When discussing whether they feel in any way exploited and discriminated at their work places, 6 respondents of the 17 interviewed answered that they do feel discriminated and 8 said that they have a general feeling of being exploited. Most complaints about exploitation were related to the feeling they were less paid than their Dutch colleagues,

although they were doing the same type of job, or that they were given more tasks in comparison to their colleagues. Some of the examples of discrimination they gave me are presented as follows:

- 'I have a feeling that my work is not as well appreciated as that of my Dutch colleagues' (man working in IT)
- 'even if you have high-skills and good knowledge, they are not going to give you a high position or power of decision in any situation' (man working in IT)
- 'not so much at work, but there is a certain distance that they adopt when you tell them you are Romanian – on the street, or at the supermarket' (woman working in shipping)
- 'I feel discriminated in the sense that I feel controlled, my boss is always checking to see if I am doing my job, which he does also with other employees of other nationalities than Dutch' (woman working in a restaurant)
- 'I feel discriminated in relation to my work colleagues, not my boss – I feel there is a competition between them and me, 'them' being only of Dutch nationality' (woman working in marketing).
- 'The general impression about Romanians is that we don't know anything; we are treated as if we are not well-prepared' (man working in consultancy).

It is remarkable that 6 respondents answered that they feel discriminated at work and 8 out of 17 respondents said that they feel exploited and yet they generally feel satisfied or happy with their work places. To many this might seem a paradox, but these people are pleased that they are making money. Although they are surrounded by the feeling of inferiority, of discrimination, they know very well that they do not have the luxury of choice and so, they declare themselves happy. The fact that they do not have the liberty of choice is highly linked to the work permits restrictions, as well as them being aware they might find discrimination wherever they go. And so, the Romanian migrants prefer to remain at their present work places and simply tolerate the situation, hoping that it will improve in time.

In this respect, the survey revealed that there is quite a small percentage of the Romanian migrants who feel discriminated or exploited at their work places in the Netherlands: 26% of the respondents said that they feel discriminated, while 17,5% feel exploited.

Another concern of Romanian migrants in general is the current economic situation back at home; a high percentage left because they were not satisfied with their jobs/income. Most of them would return if the economic situation and labour market improved and

they would be able to get employed and with satisfactory incomes. So I was curious to find out to what extent this applies to my respondents and what do they think are the chances to get employed in a satisfactory job in less than three months upon returning back home. In order to get a better overview of their answers, I developed a scale - 1 to 5 – and assigned a certain answer to each number, 1 being very low chances up until 5 being very high chances. The respondents of the interviews were mostly very confident in the skills that they achieved in the Netherlands and so 11 of them (65%) answered that they have quite high or very high chances of getting a good job upon returning, 4 of them answered that they don't know and only 2 of them said they have low or very low chances to get a job. In comparison to this, the results of the online survey show a different picture: although the scale is in favour of those who think they have high chances of obtaining a good job back in Romania – 41 respondents (45%), the number of those who say they have low or very low chances is quite close – 33 respondents (36%), while only 17 of them don't know.

Most of the respondents who answered '4' or '5' are migrants who work in high-skills domains like IT, finance, or shipping, which are developing constantly and are requested in Romania as well. On the other hand, some of the reasons why they believe they won't be able to get a job soon after returning are related to their age – most of the respondents who answered '1' and '2' were older than 40 years old, they have been living in the Netherlands for a long time (more than 7-10 years), therefore they believe they lost contact with the demands/ requirements, or the skills needed on the Romanian labour market.

6.2. Integration of migrants

Moving to another country means making quite major changes in one's life, especially because the further away from home it is, the more different the culture and in society is. It makes sense to get to know the other country's traditions, culture, to get very well acquainted with the legislation, economic (taxes, standard of living, wages) situation in the society you are about to move in. This sub-chapter is aiming to answer the last sub-question and to discuss to what extent are the Romanian migrants integrated in the Dutch society.

In this era of technology it has become very easy to get informed – there are diaspora websites/forums, social networks, websites of Embassies, consulates - all of these can be contacted prior to leaving your home country. So how well informed were my respondents of the life, society or working conditions in the Netherlands prior to their departure? The answers were divided in almost half and half: 44 respondents of the survey

said they consider they were very well informed before coming to live and work in the Dutch society, while 47 of them said they were not sufficiently informed. So where from and how did they receive their information?

Most of the respondents said that they asked for information and advice from friends or family that were already residing in the Netherlands. According to them, the number of friends and family one has in a certain country is very important in making the decision to migrate. On the second place of the sources of gathering information is the internet and online forums – only one woman told me she actually consulted the Romanian embassy's website before leaving for the Netherlands. Two respondents said that they did not read anything about the Netherlands and this was because their destination country was initially a different one:

- 'Before the Romanian revolution, people were talking that you can easily leave to Canada from the Netherlands. They were known as a protectionist country, they were welcoming political asylum-seekers and were helping them. So I was on my way to Canada, but in the end I just remained here' (man, 49);
- 'Netherlands was not my first option, I wanted to go Ireland, I ended up here out of curiosity' (man, 29).

Knowing the Dutch language is an important element of being better integrated, therefore when asked whether they speak the language 10 respondents of the interview stated that they speak Dutch quite well, one of them said is currently learning it, while the other 6 said they don't know the language. Only one of those 6 said that he wishes he learned Dutch because it is very useful and it helps in social relationships.

An important factor of integration is also the social/personal lives of migrants. I asked them about their lives outside work, their opinions on the cultural differences between Romanians and Dutch nationals, whether they think they are integrated and happy with their social lives. 10 respondents said they are very happy with their social life – mostly due to the various and numerous ways you can spend your free time (many museums, cinemas, touristic sites, opportunities to spend a day out of your own city) – while the other 7 said they are not happy or that it could be improved. The main reasons for this were all related to the cultural differences between the two countries: that all cities look almost empty in the evenings, that it is very hard to get used to shops closing so early, that it is hard to make friends with Dutch nationals and that they are generally not very open to something more than a strictly work-related relationship. The Dutch are seen, in the eyes of my respondents, as generally 'cold'

people, with whom it takes a long time to get well acquainted with and even more time to make friends with. They were also described as ‘straight-forward’, ‘individualistic’, or ‘reserved’ people. Even the respondents who stated they are happy with their personal lives, described that it mostly revolves around other Romanians and that they very rarely meet with Dutch nationals for example for dinner, coffee, or any other such opportunities beyond the fixities of their work place. They all said that their lives were much more active back at home, they were going out more, or that they attended more parties. This was described as a true ‘cultural shock’ by one of my respondents and the same person stated that ‘life is actually very hard for Romanians in the Netherlands’.

Photo 1: Scheveningen Beach, Den Haag



Source: Author's own collection, 2012

The responses of the online survey regarding the description of the social life in the Netherlands are both positive and negative. The positive comments described life in the Netherlands as being ‘complex and diverse’, with many things to do and to see, with great schools where children are very well integrated no matter the nationality, with less stress in general or without the worries of having no money that they had back in Romania. A lot of the ‘negative’ comments described the social life as being ‘non-existent’. Three respondents

explained that this is because most of the time is spent working and there is no time left for socializing. Others explained that their life is very ‘complicated’, that there is a lot of stress due to the high taxes and the bureaucracy in the Netherlands. Most respondents again referred to having very few Dutch friends, and that the image you have in Romania about the Dutch society being very open and welcoming to foreigners is very wrong. Again I came over answers which mentioned that the only social contacts they have are Romanians or other Eastern Europeans: Moldavians, Russians or Polish nationals. Others explained that it is very hard to make friends of Dutch nationalities because of the language problem and that once you can speak the language, everything becomes much easier.

One of the current debates and concerns in social studies on Romania is the fact that the population in Romania is shrinking every year and that this is highly caused by the phenomenon of non-return migration. Finally, I was curious to find out to what extent is this valid for the Romanian diaspora in the Netherlands. I asked all my respondents of their intention to return to Romania and continue with their lives there. 7 of my respondents answered that they don’t intend to return, 3 of them answered that they will return in less than five years, other 3 answered that they will return sometimes after more than ten years and the other 4 told me they don’t know and that they will let time decide. I was surprised by the ‘I don’t know answer’. This was only possible in the interviews because we had an open conversation, they were not restricted by the multiple options like in the online survey. I felt I had to take it into consideration since they really convinced me they had no clear idea of their future plans. The ones who answered a definite ‘no’ were either very happy with their lives in the Netherlands, or have been living in the Netherlands for a very long time and felt like they wouldn’t fit in back home anymore. Another surprise was the answer of the 3 respondents who answered that they will return home in more than ten years. They all said they see themselves in Romania when they approach their retirement age and that they wouldn’t like to spend their retirement years anywhere else.

In comparison to the results of my interviews, which don’t provide a clear picture concerning the intention of returning home of the Romanian migrants (41% answered ‘no’, 35% answered ‘yes’, while the others were not decided), the results of my online survey provide a different image: 60 respondents answered ‘no’, 12 of them answered they will return in less than 5 years and 19 said they will return in more than 5 years. Therefore 66% out of the total of 91 respondents do not have the intention to ever return back to Romania.

In an attempt to find out how the image and the situation of Romanian migrants in the Netherlands can be improved, my final request for all my interviewees was for them to

give three recommendations/advice for other Romanians who are planning to come to live and work in the Netherlands. This part is very representative for the last sub-question because it shows the level of understanding how easy or how hard it is for a Romanian to adapt in the Dutch society. The answers were different, creative and in my opinion, very useful for newcomers (answers can be found in the Appendix 3):

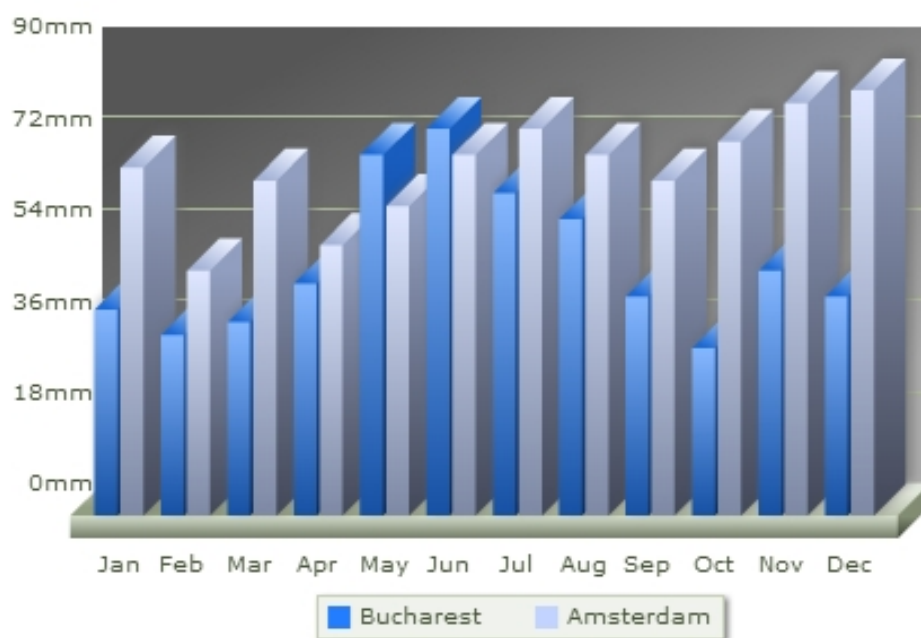
Most answers were related to the necessity of the new migrants to *get very well informed* before leaving Romania about the working conditions, the social system, or their rights in the Netherlands. They realised that very often people leave Romania not knowing very much about the Netherlands and only upon arrival they start getting informed out of necessity. This is seen as a mistake because very often these people find themselves in the impossibility of getting jobs, they see that the taxes, the bureaucracy are much higher than they expected and more important, they are not aware of their rights as EU citizens. So this is the most important message they want to send: get very well informed as there are so many ways to do it nowadays, communication has never been easier.

It is very clear to me that the Netherlands is seen as a country with a *professional working environment*, mostly recommended for migrants who are university graduates, especially IT experts. By being part of this category of migrants it is 'easier' to get a job, or to adapt to the local life. This is highly linked to the fact that this type of migrant does not need a work permit. Many respondents mentioned again that newcomers should be prepared for a '*discriminatory working environment*' because this is quite common. Another respondent brought into discussion the '*inferiority feeling of Romanians*' at their work places and how they should only adopt an equal attitude. This is a very important factor in the process of integration of migrants: they seem to not know that as EU members, Romanians have the same rights as their Dutch colleagues at their work places. Many respondents also mentioned that *learning the Dutch language* is very important: the sooner you learn it, the better. Speaking English is of course mandatory for everyone, but it is a known fact that speaking the local language has many benefits: it brings the migrants closer to the natives in terms of culture and it brings down social barriers.

Another recurring answer was that of the *difficulty to adapt in terms of climate and culture*. It is easier for a Romanian to adapt to the Dutch temperatures - the average lowest temperature and the highest average temperature in Amsterdam for example, are both within the limits of the ones in Bucharest – but the humidity and low number of sunny days per year are highly problematic and highly unwelcoming for Romanians (see figure 11). Statistics say that in the Netherlands there are on average 217 days of rain per year, while

there are only 140 days of rain in Romania (Climatemps.com). Therefore climate is definitely to be taken into account when discussing integration.

Figure 11: Average precipitation comparison between Bucharest and Amsterdam



Source: www.weather.com, Climate comparison

The cultural differences between the two nations came up many times during my interviews, as something to consider when making the decision to leave home and start a new life in the Netherlands. It has been described by several respondents as a ‘cultural shock’. There are surely many differences and an entire article could be written about this topic, but I would like to give only a few examples of why culture can be an obstacle in the way of successful integration in this case: first, it goes without saying that the Latin and the Germanic characteristics of each nation have a great influence on the behaviour of their people. Latin people are known to be very communicative, used to crowded cities, loud, agitated or easily irritated, while Germanic people are known for their discipline, assertiveness, discretion, or maybe too organised for a Latin spirit. Secondly, in Romania almost 87% of the citizens are Orthodox (2011 Romanian National Census), therefore the people are very religious, while in the Netherlands the two main religions are Catholic and Protestant and almost half of the population call themselves ‘non-religious’. Another major difference is that while the Netherlands has been a monarchy for almost 200 years, Romania is a former communist country. It’s been mentioned by my respondents that the Dutch are very straightforward and

are taught to speak out their minds from a young age as they have been living in a free and democratic country for generations. This can be shocking for a Romanian because there are still some reminiscences from the communism time in the sense that people are still reticent to speaking their minds and – it is implanted in the general way of thinking especially of the population of over 40 years old.

To sum up, although the comments are generally different from each other, there are a few common ones as well: first, it is very clear that learning the Dutch language immediately upon arrival is an advantage. Second, being very well informed of the social system, the taxes, the costs of living, or the paperwork needed to be done is very important. And third, according to the respondents, Netherlands is not for everybody: it demands great adaptability in terms of culture and of the different obstacles Romanians may encounter on their way to integration.

Chapter 7 Conclusions and recommendations

The main concern that triggered this entire paper was the general fear in all social studies related to Romanian emigration: every year the population is shrinking by thousands of people and this number was highly worrying. By further ‘digging’ into it, more questions come into mind: is this really the right number? Where are they going and why? Do they actually find what they are looking for? A great solution to find out a small fragment of the answers to these questions is by actually asking these migrants themselves, and in a place they have already settled. The Netherlands is far from being a traditional immigration country for Romanians, and yet, there are more Romanian migrants here than in other parts of Europe. The traditional immigration countries have been (as for any other country), the ones whose languages are easier to learn - USA, Canada, France, the ones whose climates are more than welcoming and closer to their own – Spain, Italy, or the ones which are close and from where you can always move back and forth - Hungary, Germany. I chose the Netherlands because the other countries are being constantly analysed and talked about, while this country is rarely mentioned in social studies; because it is special in its’ own way: it is neither very close, its’ language is not easy to learn, and its climate is far from being welcoming to a Romanian. And yet, this small country lately attracts thousands of Romanians every year.

7.1. Abstract of the paper

The first thing I tried to do is to introduce the reader into the current societal events that led to writing this thesis: although members of the European Union for more than 5 years, Romanians still need work permits to work in the Netherlands, they are seen as a threat to the job market and at the same time they are subject to exploitation and discrimination on the Dutch labour market. Following this, I introduced the two main concepts that I worked with throughout the thesis: *migration* – *integration* and how they are linked to each other. These two concepts do not overlap, but one follows the other in the sense that migration is the first step of a migrant’s journey, while integration in the host society is the last step. In the last subchapters of the second chapter I presented the research questions as well as the societal and scientific relevance of this paper, while the methodology is presented in chapter 3. For this I divided the third chapter into four parts, each discussing the different sources that I used for documenting the thesis – literature, interviews, survey and the field research experiences.

In chapter 4 I presented the history of Romanian migration in the Netherlands. First it was important for the reader to understand and get familiar with the general characteristics of Romanian migration after the end of the Communism era, because during this period Romanians were forbidden to own passports and therefore to leave the country. Due to this, a massive emigration took place after the 1989 Revolution. After almost 20 years of democracy, Romania entered the European Union in 2007 and so I considered it necessary to present the general migration trends in the last five years (2007 – 2012), as well as to discuss the transitional restrictions that have been applied to Romanians since 2007 by the other member states. Following the introduction of free movement of Romanian workers within the EU, a general fear was formed: first from Romania's side because many people could emigrate in the hope of finding better jobs and a higher standard of living, as well as a fear from the older member states, the Netherlands included, who were expecting massive immigration. In relation to this, chapter 4 also presents the migrant stock projections of the two new member states (Romania and Bulgaria) in the EU-15, as estimated by a European Integration Consortium study.

It is absolutely necessary to present the recent history of migration policies and the political scene events in the Netherlands in order to see how this affects the current social debates related to Romanian migrants in the Netherlands. Therefore, the last part of chapter 4 describes the Dutch social and political scene for the reader to have a better picture and to understand the integration conditions and the environment a Romanian migrant is facing after the arrival in the Netherlands.

Chapter 5 focuses on the legal aspects of labour migration in the Netherlands and the specific conditions that apply to Romanians on the Dutch labour market. The first subchapter deals with the labour migration legislation, while the second subchapter talks about the integration policies and the legal acts that govern the integration of migrants in the Netherlands. In an attempt to see whether the legislation is truly enforced and whether it matches the reality, I presented several recent press articles, media reports and academic articles which debated the current situation and conditions of Romanian migrants in the Netherlands. I considered that the best way for me to make a first impression and to create a first opinion on the current situation, from both actors' point of view, is through these articles.

Chapter 6 is the empirical chapter of this paper. In this final part I present and analyse the findings of my field research which consists of 91 answers of an online survey addressed only to Romanian migrants in the Netherlands, as well as the answers of 17 interviews which I conducted in several Dutch cities. This chapter is divided into two parts: in the first part I analyse my results related to the working conditions and environment and in the second part I discuss the personal experiences of migrants concerning their integration in the Dutch society. For the first part I analysed the comments of the migrants related to their work experiences – their relationship with their employers and co-workers, their expectations prior and during their working period, or whether they felt in any way exploited or discriminated at their work places. For the second part I made a description of the answers of the questions regarding their social lives (beyond the fixities of their work places) in the Netherlands, whether they felt they were sufficiently informed before their arrival, their relationships with Dutch nationals, any future intentions of returning back to Romania as well as their recommendations for those who decide to leave Romania and come and live in the Netherlands. This last part has allowed me to come up with a set of recommendations for policy makers concerning immigrant policy development, which I will present in the next pages.

After making a summary of the entire paper, there are several insights and findings that I would like to share with the reader. As I believe they contribute to the scientific knowledge of Romanian migrants in the Netherlands, the first two main findings of this paper are addressed both to the Academia readers and the migration policy makers. First I would like to add several points to what is already known about Romanian migrants in the Netherlands, in the hope of improving the general image of the Romanian migrant. The Dutch press articles and the latest events in the Dutch politics, portray an image of the Romanian migrant that is generally not well educated, only works in agriculture, housekeeping, or different services (restaurants, hotels) and came in the Netherlands with the main purpose of taking the job of a Dutch national. This, together with the general image of Romania's economy, social and political scene, triggered the decision of the Dutch government to not allow free movement of work of the Romanian migrants. I was eager to find out to what extent this background affects the lives of Romanian migrants in the Netherlands and also how close to reality is the image of these migrants portrayed in the Dutch media.

During my research I made contact with a total of 108 Romanians who live and work in the Netherlands and their history, background, thoughts and opinions are all the basis

of my following conclusions: the Romanian migrants in the Netherlands are relatively young, aged between 21 and 40 years old and highly educated. They generally reside and work legally in the Netherlands and there two main reasons for which they decided to move here – the first one is because of the opportunity to find better work and the second is to reunite with their families or with their partner who has been living here from before. Most of them moved and started working here after 2007, the year the borders opened for Romanians and they could freely travel and take up residency within the EU. There is also an important number who has been living in the Netherlands for more than 10 – 15 years and these are the ones who decided to leave their home country following the rough conditions and the political persecutions before and after the Romanian revolution in 1989. They started an entire new life in the Netherlands, have children who are born here, they are highly integrated in the Dutch society and rarely have contact with Romania. The Romanian migrants are usually employed in service industry (hotels, restaurants, housekeeping), but also in IT, universities, shipping or finance. They are usually satisfied or happy with their working experience and most of them say that this has reached the expectations they had prior to departing from their home country, or that it is even better than they expected. Although happy and satisfied, almost all of them face different degrees of discrimination at their work places and sometimes they feel exploited. But they don't seem to mind and they are just trying to adapt and move forward. They don't believe that this is a big issue and moreover they don't complain to authorities as they don't consider it would solve anything.

The decision to move to the Netherlands is mostly based on information from friends who were already residing here as well as different information presented on the internet and online forums of Romanians living in the Netherlands. The opinions of their friends and families are very important, they highly rely on the networks of people they know, they keep close contact with their co-nationals even after arrival. The tendency is for them to form groups of friends only among other Romanians and they keep close contact with their friends and family back at home. There is a high percentage of Romanians who, once already residing here, learn the Dutch language as they consider it is generally very useful at work and in society in general, and almost all of them speak English. They are generally satisfied with their personal life and find it complex, less stressful than back at home and full of challenges. At the same time they find it very hard to adapt to the new culture, as they believe it is very different and it takes a lot of time to get used to. Finally, one of the most important findings is that indeed, most the Romanian migrants currently living in the Netherlands are generally not planning to return back to their home country.

After making a portrait of the Romanian migrant based on the results of my research, a second purpose of this paper was to make the reader understand the link between the concepts of *migration* and *integration*, particularly in the context of the EU. For Romania and Bulgaria there is a current general typification as the ‘NMS-2’. The two countries have a special situation and hold a special place in the labour migration legislation in the EU. They still have certain restrictions and certain rules apply only to them. Migration happens the same for all citizens of the EU, they all enjoy freedom of movement throughout the Union, however integration is different for the citizens of the two new member states. Proper integration of a migrant in the host society requires the fulfilment of several conditions among which are: the security of a work place, adapting to the local culture and traditions, maintain social contacts with the natives, or learning the local language. Due to the restrictions that apply to them, the migrants from both Romania and Bulgaria are aware of the negative image they bare in the eyes of the older member states and this stands in the way of proper integration. This can be noticed in the general feeling of discrimination and inferiority, whether it is at the work place or on the streets, about which I have discussed in the previous chapters of this paper.

7.2. Recommendations

A third purpose of this paper would be to understand what are the prospects of the Romanian migrants in the Netherlands, as well as to acknowledge that there is still a great need for further developing of labour migration and integration policies. Therefore this last part, which includes also my recommendations, is specifically addressed to policy makers like IOM and other related organizations.

To start with, there are two types of Romanian migrants present in the Netherlands: the ones who work as highly-skilled migrants in domains such as IT, researchers, finance, business or consultancy, but also people who work as low-skilled migrants in mostly agriculture, housekeeping or elderly care. Their future in the Netherlands differs: while the high-skilled migrants are very likely to remain and build a future in the Netherlands, the low-skilled workers have temporary jobs and will return to Romania in the near future. It is generally known, but also according to the migrants themselves, for the first category of migrants the working environment and conditions are highly welcoming – the Dutch government welcomes and even encourages employment of high-skilled foreigners (see the ‘Knowledge migrant scheme’ and the ‘30% ruling’ mentioned in chapter 5.1). And so the focus of the future labour migration and migrant integration policies should be on the

low-skilled migrants as they are more prone to having low incomes, inappropriate housing, job insecurity, or prone to exploitation.

The biggest problems I found regarding the working conditions of these migrants, are first, that they feel discriminated or exploited at their work places, secondly that they don't consider it necessary to complain about it and they are not aware of their rights as EU citizens and third, that they don't take the time to better inform themselves about working conditions in the Netherlands. The Dutch government could offer more services to help migrants in this sense. The outcome of this research is that there is a need for more labour migration and integration policies, not necessarily in quantitative, but in qualitative terms. Some of the measures/programmes to be taken into consideration could be: pre-departure information about the Dutch society, trainings and information on the skills needed in the society, information on the rights of migrants, advice on where to go, who to address in case of exploitation, or violation of rights, advice on the recruitment agencies. These are needed especially because since the free movement of workers from Romania will be introduced after 2014 and more migrants are expected according to the projections. This can be done through embassies, different migration offices: IOM Bucharest, SISEC (an office for studying migration and mobility in Timisoara), Soros Foundation in Romania – who promotes anti-discrimination and integration in societies.

There should also be more control over the recruitment agencies. There are both Romanian and Dutch recruiting agencies; while there has been some effort from the Dutch government to put an end to the mala fide agencies in the Netherlands, efforts should also be made from the Romanian side in order to protect its own citizens against bad practices in employing migrants abroad.

Another problem which derives from the research is the continuous flow and the large numbers of emigration of Romanians. Romania's state intervention regarding emigration at the present time seems to stagnate. Although the phenomenon of emigration is intensifying, it doesn't bring with it any solutions from the responsible authorities. The interventions are usually little, useless, the authorities seem to passively assist this phenomenon. I thereby present a few solutions, future intervention ideas for the emigration phenomenon in Romania (adapted from D. Sandu in Ulrich et. al., 2011):

- New ideas should be brought from the good practices of other states, where the emigration policies succeeded;
- There should be a better research on the subject (now it is limited), as a better acknowledgement of a problem brings with it new ideas; better research on the migrants

themselves, their opinions, social experiences and integration in their host countries (in-depth interviews);

- Better statistics, more exact numbers of the migrants and of remittances;
- Development of policies to attract diaspora back to Romania;
- Making efforts to improve the political relationships as well as communication between source and receiving countries;
- Making efforts to promote circular migration;
- Defining very well Romania's emigration objectives, as well as correlate emigration with development;
- Involve actively relevant institutions: NGOs should develop programmes that promote return and circular migration.

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Appendix 1 – Interview questions translated in English

Interview (Field)

Introduction: present myself and the kind of research I am doing in collaboration with IOM. Assure the subject all the information is strictly for research purpose and no names will be used. The interview will last on average 30 minutes.

Age:

1. What is your level of education?

- a. Secondary school or lower
- b. High-school
- c. Bachelor degree
- d. Post – graduate

2. Marital Status: a. married; b. single

3. For how long have you been living in the Netherlands?

For how long have you been working in the Netherlands?

4. Do you have a residence permit or a proof of legal stay in the Netherlands?

Yes No

5. Do you have a work permit? Yes No

6. What was your main reason for coming to the Netherlands?

- a. Work
- b. Family reunification/ Presence of partner
- c. Study
- d. Other:

7. What is the domain you currently work in?

- a. Construction
- b. Agriculture
- c. Housekeeping
- d. Service industry
- e. Other:

8. How do you experience your work here?

1	2	3	4	5
Very good	Good	Neutral	Bad	Very bad

9. Does your experience match your previous expectations related to working in the Netherlands?

Yes

No, it's worse

No, it's better

10. Do you feel in any way discriminated at your job?

Yes (in what way, could you describe?)

No

11. Do you feel in any way exploited at your job?

Yes (in what way, could you describe?)

No

12. Do you intend to return to Romania?

Yes

No

If yes, when?

1 yr or less

1-5 yrs

5 – 10 yrs

**13. On a scale from 1 -5 do you think you could get a job in your work domain upon returning? (1 = very low chance; 5 = very high chance)
Why?**

14. What was your view on the Netherlands before you came? Can you tell me a few words about what exactly attracted you to come here?

15. Do you feel you were sufficiently informed about the life/ work conditions in the Netherlands, before your arrival? (IOM)

Yes

No

Where did you get your information from? (e.g. Dutch Embassy in Ro, brochures, employment agencies, family/friends etc)

16. Do you currently speak Dutch?

17. I would also like to ask you how do you feel on a personal level, are you satisfied with your personal/social life in the Netherlands?

Yes

No

18. If not, could you explain why, what are you missing? How would you describe your social life in the Netherlands?

19. Name three things you would recommend to Romanians who are planning to move and work in the Netherlands

Thank you!

Appendix 3 – The answers of the respondents regarding the three recommendations they would give to other Romanians who are planning to live and work in the Netherlands. Answers are translated into English.

Interview 1	'They should inform themselves very well about the working conditions, their rights and the taxes practiced in the Netherlands'
Interview 2	'The first thing you need to do is to buy a bicycle, then try to ignore the weather and visit as much as possible'
Interview 3	'They should be prepared for a professional, serious, but also relaxed working environment; at the same time be prepared for a somewhat discriminatory environment and maybe for much more bureaucracy than in Romania'
Interview 4	'I would advise them to choose wisely the country they want to go to; if it's an IT domain, then Netherlands is the best country, if not, I don't recommend it; also, they must not come here with high expectations'
Interview 5	'Learn the language; be very well informed about the social system in the Netherlands and think twice before they actually leave Romania because it is very hard to adapt'
Interview 6	'Be very well informed of the papers, costs they will encounter on their way; find friends that can help because it is very hard; know English very well so that they can manage at least in the beginning'
Interview 7	'Learn Dutch, be sure they know what they want and don't be disappointed if in the beginning it will be very hard to find a job'
Interview 8	'Do your homework very well before coming here, there are always surprises; there are so many information websites and so much information on the internet – IND, recruitment agencies, forums - there is no excuse; also I recommend to come here only after they have finished a university in Romania, everything is easier this way'
Interview 9	'As a general rule they should speak Dutch in one, maximum two years after moving here; if there is anyone they know (friends, family) in the Netherlands, ask for advice; also the Romanian/Orthodox churches are a very good way of meeting people in the beginning'
Interview 10	'I honestly would recommend for them to stay home; it is very hard to find a job here; there is no way you can trick the system as it is a very good system that really works'
Interview 11	'They should speak English in the beginning but definitely to start learning Dutch; forget about the way of living in Romania, they need to adapt to the Dutch norms; they should be very informed and ask for their rights when coming here'
Interview 12	'If they want to integrate, they need to learn the language; they need to be honest people as the Dutch are honest and they appreciate professionalism and sincerity; also they have to follow their own way'

Interview 13	'Be aware that things are not what they seem. Netherlands, like every country has it's plusses and minuses; have high expectations and you will be disappointed; the culture is very different and they need to be ready to adapt'
Interview 14	'They should inform themselves about the people here, the culture; anything that is written in the CV should be also proven with a certificate, otherwise they won't take it into consideration; they need to think very well whether this is really the country they want to come to: the climate and the bureaucracy are highly unwelcoming'
Interview 15	'They should immediately buy a bicycle; I would also warn them about the food – it is not good; also the Dutch are very straight-forward people – don't take it personally, it is just the way they are'
Interview 16	'They should never think they are any lower than their Dutch colleagues – adopt an equal attitude; they should just be relaxed, don't try to impress; they should never refuse an invitation to go out and always experiment new things'
Interview 17	'They need to be very careful of the decisions they make – the financial offer they get should really be a good one; think twice before leaving Romania – not everything is welcoming like the image we see on TV; if possible always leave with friends/a partner – things are much easier this way'

