

LOCAL STATUS QUO ANALYSIS

YOUMIG - *Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration*

Activity 3.2: Local status quo analysis of youth migration with involvement of stakeholders

YOUMIG
Transnational Youth Migration in Sfântu Gheorghe: processes, effects and policy challenges

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Executive Summary

The Local Status Quo Analysis provides an overview of the trends in youth migration and of the related social phenomena, respectively. The study is based on policy-oriented research. The first aim is to synthesize the findings of the YOUMIG research activities concerning youth migration. In this respect we want to characterize and typify the municipalities according to the migratory trends they experience. The second aim is to understand the effects of youth migration, and to identify the policy challenges related to it. Through our applied research we also wanted to provide a brief look into the responses given by local authorities to challenges related to the in- and out-migration of young people. A related goal was to identify the management and capacity gaps in the institutional mechanisms of the local authorities to deal with youth migration and related phenomena.

The present case study is based on both qualitative and quantitative methods. Interviews were conducted with institutional actors about the local discourses concerning migration, the way local stakeholders think about the relationship between migration and development, and the kind of local policies that exist in handling the problem of migration. Semi-structured narrative-biographic interviews with young migrants (aged 15-37) were completed. A focus group was organized about the experiences of young people with migration, paying special attention to the administrative aspects of the migration process (i.e. their contacts with the local (and other levels of) administration, the problems they encountered, their opinions about the policies employed by the relevant authorities etc.). The goal was to obtain information this way that can be useful for local decision-makers, policy-makers, stakeholders. Migration forums were also used to identify the challenges connected to the transnational migration of young people. The quantitative research was based on a secondary analysis of existing statistical sources. One should emphasize that quantitative data provide a kind of framework for the qualitative analysis, which constituted the major focus of the investigation and are the primary sources of the present report.

Sfântu Gheorghe is a small town placed in one of the smallest and poorest counties in the central part of Romania. It can be characterized by a weak economic situation (low level of wages, of added values, the local economy is dominated by the processing industry which does not need labourers with a high level of education etc.). One of the most important strengths of the town is its calm atmosphere and the cultural events which can serve as attractions for young people, families, and returning migrants.

Although the origins of the present demographic situation are embedded in the political and economic processes of the socialist era, has left a mark on later developments as well, the case study focuses only on the changes that happened after 1989. Major changes occurred both on a national level and on a local level: the number of inhabitants decreased mainly because of emigration.

The most difficult part of elaborating the present chapter was that it is almost impossible to find reliable data on the local level. One of the problems is that the Statistical Institute collects data from the local public administration, but publishes only aggregated data on the national, regional and NUTS3 level. Another problem is the reliability of data, especially those regarding migration. For instance less than 10% of emigrants registered by Eurostat appear in Romanian statistics, but information about the basic demographic characteristics of the population is also hard to find and to trust. The population of the town decreased by more than 5,000 inhabitants between the last two censuses in 2002 and 2011. Further changes may be found in the target group as the proportion of youth aged 15-19 decreased by 52.2% in ten years, and the proportion of those between 20-24 years by 34.9%. Given the dominant role of emigration, all projection scenarios assume a serious decrease in the population until 2035.

Regarding the emigration of youth, most institutional actors enumerated many more disadvantages than advantages from the point of view of the town. They do not believe that more than a few of them will return. Some of them consider the lack of Romanian language competence as one of the push factors for youth, because young people, it seems, do not feel prepared enough for the Romanian labour market. The interviewed youth experienced also the advantages of spending some time abroad, and most of them think their experiences are useful from the perspective of the town, too. They perceive the improvement of their foreign language skills, meeting new people and cultures, accumulating financial capital, work and studying experiences, learning new habits and ideas – the “social remittances” (ELEZAJ et al. 2012, cited by FASSMANN et al. 2018: 38), too – as positive aspects of emigration. One of the items listed as social remittances may be a more open behaviour toward diversity in the long term, as contacts with ‘otherness’ can help in the deconstruction of prejudices.

Concerning the development of their native country, the young migrants had similar opinions. Almost all of them said they could see their native country developing, but only two of them thought that their native country could catch up with their receiving country. The others were either pessimistic about the future of their native country or they could not or did not want to judge the situation of their native country. The interviewees named many aspects of development in their native country including the strength of the IT sector, increasing salaries, the presence of electronic services, public security, and the cityscape of their native towns. The corrupt political system, the bureaucratic system, and the attitude of citizens were mentioned as factors hindering the development of the native country.

The migrant interviewees faced different types of problems after returning to Romania. The problems enumerated by them can be classified into seven types: communication problems with the authorities, bureaucratic processes, attitudes of authorities, problems regarding naturalization, poor infrastructure, problems of the labour market and challenges regarding mentality. They suggested policy measures, too. The existing local policies were analysed and pilot projects from other countries’ best practices were recommended which aim to reintegrate the young migrants in the local economy, while others try to help them in their reintegration in the local community/society.

Project Description

YOUMIG - Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration

<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/youmig/>

This Local Status Quo Analysis on Transnational Youth Migration was prepared in the framework of the **“YOUMIG - Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration”** project, in a series of seven similar analyses prepared in Burgas (Bulgaria), Graz (Austria), Kanjiža (Serbia), Maribor (Slovenia), the Rača district of Bratislava (Slovakia), Sfântu Gheorghe (Romania) and Szeged (Hungary). These analyses provide an overview of the main trends and challenges of youth migration, based on a common methodology. The aim of the papers is to enable YOUMIG project partners to better understand the local processes linked to youth migration, and respond better to its challenges.

YOUMIG Partners in the Danube region. Cartography: University of Vienna

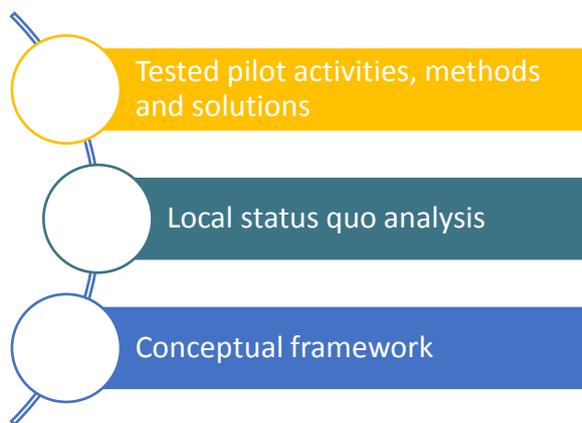


YOUMIG is a strategic project of the European Union’s Danube Transnational Programme, in which 19 partners from 8 countries work together. The objective of the project is to support local governments in tackling the challenges and exploiting the developmental potential of youth migration, leading to a better-governed and more competitive Danube region. The project aims at improving institutional capacities to measure and manage the immigration, emigration and return migration of young people

(aged 15-34). Statistical offices and academic organizations teamed up with local governments for creating local developmental strategies based on improved impact indicators of youth migration, administrative capacity building and pilot activities.

YOUMIG's work is structured in six work packages (WPs). Besides management (WP1) and communication (WP2) issues, thematic work is distributed as follows:

In WP3, a Conceptual Framework provides the theoretical background of the project. In addition, all partners contribute to the better understanding of youth migration and its developmental impacts on the municipality level by elaborating local status quo analyses. This Local Status Quo Analysis is also a part of WP3.



In WP4, a comprehensive evaluation of the locally available statistical data and indicators related to youth migration is carried out. Shortfalls of measuring local challenges are identified and new or improved indicators of youth migration are elaborated and tested.

In WP5, the project improves local administrative capacities to manage the migration-related processes identified by the Local Status Quo Analyses by jointly testing and introducing good practices as pilot activities, and institutional solutions based on a one-stop-shop approach.

In WP6, the project concludes by providing transnationally tested tools for all governance levels contributing to better strategies, policies and services related to the issue of youth migration.

The project runs between 1 January 2017 and 30 June 2019. The Local Status Quo Analysis was finalized in December 2017.

YOUMIG PROJECT at a glance

Full name: YOUMIG - Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration

A project of the

Danube Transnational Programme

Start date: 01-01-2017

End date: 30-06-2019

Budget: 2,718,853 EUR (of which: ERDF Contribution: 2,055,179 EUR, IPA Contribution: 255,846 EUR)

Call number: Call 1

Priority: 4. (Well-governed Danube region)

Specific objective: 4.1. (Improve institutional capacities to tackle major societal challenges)

Project partners:

Lead partner: Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HU)

Work package leaders: University of Vienna (AT), Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (DE), Maribor Development Agency (SI), INFOSTAT - Institute of Informatics and Statistics (SK)

ERDF partners: Municipality of Szeged (HU), City of Graz (AT), Institute for Economic Research (SI), Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities (RO), Municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe (RO), National Statistical Institute of the Republic of Bulgaria (BG), Burgas Municipality (BG), Municipality of the City district of Bratislava- Rača (SK)

ERDF partners: Municipality of Szeged (HU), City of Graz (AT), Institute for Economic Research (SI), Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities (RO), Municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe (RO), National Statistical Institute of the Republic of Bulgaria (BG), Burgas Municipality (BG), Municipality of the City district of Bratislava- Rača (SK)

IPA partners: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (RS), Institute of Social Sciences (RS), Municipality of Kanjiža (RS)

Associated Strategic Partners: Statistics Austria (AT), City of Karlsruhe (DE), Federal Institute for Population Research (DE)

Other YOUMIG Local Status Quo Analyses are available at the project's website:

<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/youmig>

YOUMIG news: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/youmig/news> and

<http://www.facebook.com/youmigproject>

1. Introduction

The Local Status Quo Analysis provides an overview of the trends in youth migration and of the related social phenomena, respectively. The study is based on policy-oriented research. The first aim is to synthesize the findings of the YOUMIG research activities concerning youth migration. In this respect we want to characterize and typify the municipalities according to the migratory trends they experience. The second aim is to understand the effects of youth migration, and to identify the policy challenges related to it. Through our applied research we also wanted to provide a brief look into the responses given by local authorities to challenges related to in- and out-migration of young people. A related goal was to identify the management and capacity gaps in the institutional mechanisms of the local authorities to deal with youth migration and related phenomena.

The level of the analysis is the municipality and each of the Local Status Quo Analyses can be perceived as a detailed case study using multiple methods of data collection and analysis. These case studies reveal that local administrative units are in quite a different position within the system of international migration and thus reflect different socio-economic interdependencies. Some of our municipalities receive; some of them send migrants, while others are both targets and starting points of transnational migratory flows. In the municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe emigration is the most important migratory trend, immigration prevails only to a limited extent, and newcomers are mainly internal migrants: Romanian citizens from the rural surroundings. Among emigrants one can identify short term migrants – this type is distinctive of Roma migrants, too; long term migrants, most of them aiming to earn a living through their labour migration; while a smaller group studies and works abroad at the same time. There are also return migrants, but it is hard to estimate their proportions. Some of our municipalities are important regional centres, while others are small or medium-sized towns with an economically peripheral position. Our municipality is Sfântu Gheorghe, a small town placed in one of the smallest and poorest counties in the central part of Romania. It has around 56,006 inhabitants according to the census of 2011, and the town can be characterized by a weak economic situation (low level of wages, of added values, local economy is dominated by the processing industry which does not need labourers with a high level of education etc.). One of the most important strengths of the town is its calm atmosphere and the cultural events which can serve as attractions for young people, families, and returning migrants. In spite of these significant differences, both the data collection and analysis was based on commonly used concepts, uniform methodologies and previously agreed processes. The main focus of the investigation was on emigration, immigration and return migration. In some municipalities we also included commuting; however, internal migration (even if important in some cases) was not in our focus. The conceptual and theoretical framework of the analysis was provided by the University of Vienna team, while the methodological tool was provided by the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities. By using these tools the comparison of the results will be possible in a further phase. Nevertheless, at the level of the present case study we also tried to reveal the specificities of our municipality.

The research activities were closely connected to other work packages and activities. The results of the present analysis enable local municipalities to elaborate evidence-based strategies to deal with the impact of youth migration. This will be of key importance during the implementation of WP5 where a pilot project concerning the management of the effects of youth migration will be launched in each YOUMIG municipality. One important finding of our case study was that in the municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe the majority of the recommended pilot projects aim to reintegrate young migrants into the local economy, while others try to help them in their reintegration into the local community/society. A **consultancy service** offered to the returnees – through a website and an employee who assists personally the target group in a way that is tailored to their needs – would help ease currently experienced administrative challenges, like the naturalization of certificates, recognition of time spent

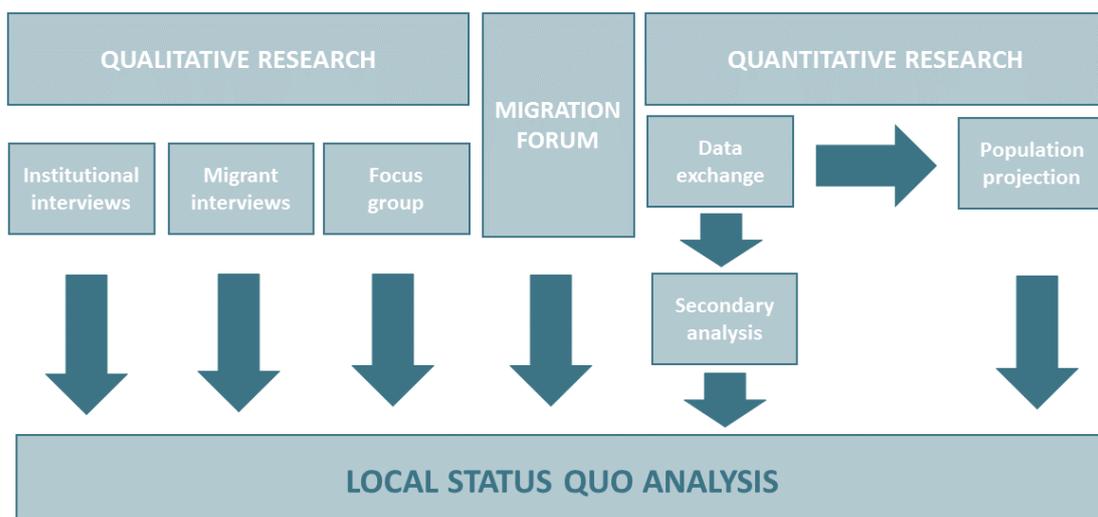
in work abroad, tax, health-care issues etc. A **database** which helps **to link together demand and supply on the labour market** would be useful and measures of reintegration through **personalized trainings – mentoring and tutoring activities – and psychological support of adaptation** could contribute to attracting back skilled workers. A **facilitation of entrepreneurship** in order to invest their incomes not only in real estate at home, but also in **setting up businesses, investing in local economy, or saving financial capital** would be worthwhile regarding both returned migrants and emigrants. Thematic events could have a positive effect on the **local identity** of the leavers and on the availability of **cultural, economic and other programmes at the local level**. The strategy-building activities of WP6 will also be based on the exploratory activities synthesized in this report.

The report is organized in eight chapters. First, we present in brief the methodology of the investigation. The second part is a general presentation of the municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe with a special focus on local development. The third chapter is a description of the migratory processes and related phenomena from a quantitative perspective, relying on available statistical and survey data. The timespan of this analysis is the 1990-2016 period. A municipality level population projection provided by the INFOSTAT team is also included in the chapter. The fourth and fifth sections focus on the results of our qualitative investigation based on interviews with institutional actors and young migrants, respectively, and on focus groups and migration forums. We present the characteristics of youth migration, with some typical migrant biographies based on these sources. The sixth part presents the major policy challenges the local authorities have to face and their policies concerning the effects of youth migration. The last section contains our concluding remarks and recommendations.

2. Methods

As mentioned already, the Local Status Quo Analysis was based on research activities using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Figure 1. synthesizes the data sources and research activities which fed into the present report.

Figure 1. Methods used to collect and analyse data



Most importantly, a complex qualitative research activity was carried out by the Sfântu Gheorghe team of local experts.

- (1) First, we conducted interviews with institutional actors (e.g. leaders or employees of institutions engaged in tackling with the effects of youth migration). This phase had manifold aims. It was an explanatory research concerning the patterns and variations of the youth migration. We tried to identify the general position of our locality in the system of transnational migration and the general trends of immigration, emigration and return migration. We also wanted to reveal local discourses concerning migration, respectively the way how local stakeholders think about the relation between migration and development. Nevertheless, the main aim of this phase was to map the existing policies (measures and activities) focusing on migration and youth. On the one hand, we were interested in concrete measures, activities, projects or permanent programmes run by institutional actors. On the other hand, we wanted to know whether the interviewed stakeholders and institutional actors thought that they had the institutional capacities to alter (or affect) the migratory behaviour of young people and to deal with the (already known and possible) consequences of migration. The semi-structured interviews were carried out according to a previously elaborated guide. A total number of interviews with institutional actors was 7. We succeeded to conduct interviews with the director of the local Labour Office, the director of local department of Babes-Bolyai University, who was also a former county councilor, the mayor of the municipality, the director of Mikó Imre High School, she is a local councilor too, the director of the Community Assistance office of local public administration, the manager of Flamingo Jobs Agency and the director of Néri Szent Fülöp School (the school for Roma pupils).
- (2) In a next phase we carried out narrative-biographic interviews with young migrants. We used only partially the narrative-biographic method. The second part of the interviews can be conceived as semi-structured interview, as we put questions according to a previously elaborated guide. The narrative-biographical method (which was used in the first phase of the interview) provides a rigorous and previously fixed technique of conducting and interpreting interviews. It is important that through using this technique we do not subordinate the stories (meaning the self-representation) of migrants to our own scientific or political narratives. The interviewed young migrants had the opportunity to present their story less constrained. The semi-structured phase was used to obtain additional data concerning the migrants, respectively to test some previous hypothesis concerning them. We tried to select young migrants with “typical” life trajectory. As in general during the research, our main focus was on migration patterns in the Danube region (especially Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania). This focuses was taken into account in the selection of interviewees as well as in the questions to be put during the interviews.
- (3) Focus groups were also conducted according to a previously fixed guide. The focus group method is a par excellence qualitative research method, suitable primarily for mapping people’s attitudes, opinions, experiences, or the discourses that are in use regarding a certain topic or phenomenon. One of most important advantages of the method is its interactive nature, the fact that participants actively participate in the interactive and collective process of the construction of meanings. Our focus-group interview focused on the experiences of young people with migration, paying special attention to the administrative aspects of the migration process (i.e. their contacts with the local (and other level) administration, the problems they encountered, their opinion about the policies employed by the relevant authorities etc.). Our goal was to obtain this way information that can be useful for local decision-makers, policy-makers, stakeholders. In our focus group were present 9 young people under 40 years. Majority of them are returned migrants, the shortest period spent abroad was

one and a half year, and the longest more than ten years. There is a diversity of receiving countries. A 36 year old woman, who is a social worker and deals with Roma children at Órkó, went to the United Kingdom for one and a half year when she was 28 and she worked as a waiter and carer. A 37 year old woman spent a few months in the United States when she was a university student and between 2005 and 2008 she worked 3 years on the same continent in her profession (special education teacher) with her husband. A 33 year old man studied English – Physical education in Hungary starting from 2000 and after he finished it, he worked 6 years in the United Kingdom. He returned 3 years ago because of friends and family and he plans to spend one more year in the United Kingdom. A 30 year old man worked 4 years in Dubai between 2011 and 2015 with his wife and they returned because of their baby. A 31 year old woman worked 4 years in Austria from 2013 to 2017 as a waiter with her husband because of their loan and they returned because of their baby. Another 33 year old man went to Austria after his wife and worked at the same place until 2017, now he works in his profession in the financial department of the local public administration office. A 37 year old woman spent 6 years in Hungary with her husband, she went to prepare for applying to a university there, so she studied and worked parallel. Although she did not mention, according to her CV she spent a few months in France with a scholarship after she had finished her university studies. They returned in 2007 in order to open an exhibition centre, because they are artists and they managed to work in their profession in their home town. A 37 year old man moved to Hungary with his parents when he was 10-11. He returned in his twenties for a few years and later he went to different cities in the Netherlands with his partner for adventures for more than one year and after that period they worked in Greece for one more year at an IT company. They returned in 2015 and they are entrepreneurs, they have a sweets manufacture, a wholesaler department and a sweet-shop. A 36 year old woman went to Germany after finishing the training-college, in order to work. After two months spent with a family, the hosts convinced her to study there. She finished a four year long study, business economy at the University of Göttingen (Fachhochschule). She practiced her profession during her studies in different companies. She lived there between 2000 and 2007. She found a job in Cluj-Napoca. After a year she searched a job in Szentgyörgy to be closer to her relatives, original family. Now she has a family with two children and she works at a local textile factory in her profession.

- (4) Migration forums were also used to identify the challenges connected to the transnational migration of young people.

The quantitative research was based on secondary analysis of existing statistical sources. One should emphasize that quantitative data provide a kind of framework for the qualitative analysis, which constituted the major focus of the investigation and are the primary sources of the present report.

- (5) The collection and acquisition of statistical data took place in the framework of the so called data exchange exercise. This was based on a common template provided by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia and carried out by Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities. These data were used in the secondary analysis on a template provided by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia and carried out by Andrea Solyom.
- (6) The quantitative analysis presents the demographic and migratory trends forecasted by a population projection based on the cohort-component method provided by the INFOSTAT team. This forecast can also be useful for local level stakeholders.

3. The municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe

3.1. General presentation

According to the national census in 2011 the number of inhabitants of the town was 56.006. Based on the statistics 76.9% belong to Hungarian ethnicity, while 21.9% are Romanians, but practically 10% of the population of Sfântu Gheorghe belongs to Roma minority (the questionnaire of the census permit to respondents to choose only one ethnic category, and usually Roma people declare to belong to the majority population of the settlement). Due to the relatively high share of Roma minority one of the interest areas is Roma migration. (They speak usually Hungarian language)

The town is the capital of Covasna County, the smallest county by population in the central region of Romania.

Secondary education in Sfântu Gheorghe is offered as well in Romanian and in Hungarian language. There is one institution for youth with physical and psychical disabilities who have special educational needs, three technical lyceums (which offer professions in the following fields: mechanical engineering, electrician, informatics, textile industry, building industry, transportation, health care, trading and tourism – one of the three in Romanian language), one art lyceum and four theoretical lyceums (one of them Romanian).

Tertiary education is represented by a local department of the Babes-Bolyai University with its main location in Cluj (with two BA programs: management and business administration) and Sapientia University (with agronomist BA). But regarding BBU there is a downward trend, the administration BA program might end up closed, after they started this BA program in Hungarian-language in Cluj.

Sfantu Gheorghe is the biggest town of the region when it comes to population, still in terms of economic development other municipalities show a higher importance: Miercurea Ciuc (around 39 000 inhabitants) and Odorheiu Secuiesc (approximately 34 000 inhabitants). There are also a few smaller towns with a lower economic development level: Târgu Secuiesc (with a number of approximately 18 000 inhabitants) and Gheorgheni (number of population around 18 000).

Compared to other communities one can notice a higher density of businesses in Brasov, Miercurea Ciuc and Odorheiu Secuiesc than in Sfântu Gheorghe (40 versus 30 companies per 1000 inhabitants).

3.2. Local development

The municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe is located in the smallest county in the central region of Romania. The area shows a strong rural character and can be classified among the category of semi-peripheral counties like Bistrița-Năsăud, Sălaj, Mureș, Harghita etc. Covasna county consist of a low proportion of municipalities/settlements: there are 5 towns, 2 of them are relatively significant and 122 villages. From the 5 towns only Sfântu Gheorghe has a population above 50.000 inhabitants. The other towns have under 20.000 inhabitants, 2 of them under 10.000 (Baraolt and Întorsura Buzăului). Since the main economic branch for a long time has been the agriculture, the county structure has a rural character. In the literature there are debates about strong correlations between urbanization and level of economic development of a region or a country – with almost no exception a high level of economic development cannot be achieved without significant urbanization.

Although Sfântu Gheorghe shows a rural character, it ***is the municipality with the highest proportion of expenditures spent on cultural activities compared to total expenditures from all the municipalities from Romania.*** The average financial expenditure per inhabitant in the antecedent period is 279 lei, the second highest amount from all the municipalities (after Miercurea-Ciuc). Although these types of expenditures are secondary from the perspective of economic development, the strategic approaches of the municipality and the local initiative can make these investments worth it financially. (CLUJ MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING GROUP 2016: 48)

Proximity of a big urban centre (Brasov), which attracts resources in fields that are important for Sfântu Gheorghe (tourism, culture, knowledge-based economy) represents, in conditions of a coherent approach, a potential source of competitive advantage. Sfântu Gheorghe does not compete directly with Brasov, which is a much bigger city, but it may take advantage of being close to an important economic centre.

Sfântu Gheorghe holds a relatively good position at regional level regarding accessibility and connectivity, certain projects in process of implementation or in planning phase will further increase these two elements (for instance construction of an airport close to Brasov municipality). Its position near Brasov can function both as an advantage for Sfântu Gheorghe (it employ the labour force) and as a disadvantage: residents of Sfântu Gheorghe may choose Brasov to spend their leisure time, and also for services, shopping and consumption. In certain segments Sfântu Gheorghe cannot compete with Brasov. But improving certain services, especially the ones related to leisure time and the local tertiary education have to be taken into consideration on mid- and long term.

Main and important sectors of the economy, main employers

From the perspective of employment numbers, processing industry is the main motor of local economy being the biggest employer at local level, almost 40% of workers have a job in this domain (more than 9000 employees). Processing industry is followed by commercial activities (15.5% of employees) and transportation and depositing (with approximately 8% of workers). In the processing industry the most significant employers are in the domain of fabrication of electric and electronic equipments for cars and for car engines (8% of employees), finishing textile materials (3% of workers), processing dairy products (3% of workers) and treatment and distribution of water (2.5% of employees). The same hierarchy can be noticed regarding the turnover, processing industry generating approximately 40%, while trade is responsible for 30%. Weight of transportation and depositing is increasing, they are producing more than 11% of the local turnover. In the processing industry the most relevant businesses deal with fabrication of products from nonmetal minerals (5,8% of total), fabrication of dairy products (5% of total) and fabrication of paper, of deckled pasteboard, and of products from these mentioned materials (4.2% of total). (CLUJ MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING GROUP 2016: 132–133, 161)

From the perspective of number of businesses, the most numerous domains are food industry, wood processing, followed by metal construction industry and fabrication of clothes.

From the perspective of turnover, food industry is the main sector, followed by fabrication of products from nonmetal minerals, fabrication of paper and of products from paper, fabrication of clothes and textile materials.

Textile and clothes industry together represent the most important sector in terms of employees—almost 30% of industry workers are in these domains.

The added value is very low however, especially in the textile industry – an indicator of turnover per employee places this domain among those with the smallest scores – higher values of the indicator

were noticed in fabrication of mineral products, of papers, in food industry and in fabrication of electric equipments.

Major private actors of local economy with their number of employees according to Catalogues of Companies in Covasna county in 2014:

- Autoliv Romania – fabrication of machine parts (for BMW, Vw), 2020 employees;
- Valkes SRL – fabrication of electric and electronic equipments for cars, 1556 employees;
- Textila Oltul SA – finishing textile materials, 402 employees;
- Bertis SRL – food industry, 354 employees;
- Covalact SA – one of the main companies on the market of dairy products, 339 employees;
- Transylvanian Trousers Company SRL – fabrication of clothes, 329 employees;
- LRO SRL – textile/clothes, 227 employees;
- Arcon SRL – fabrication of products from nonmetal minerals, 168 employees;
- Valdek Impex SRL – construction, 151 employees;
- Int Transporte Popovici SRL – transportation with trucks, 150 employees;
- Dunapack Rombox – one of the main producers of deckled and micro-deckled pasteboard on Romanian market, 149 employees. (CLUJ MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING GROUP 2016: 139)

In 2012 230 foreign companies were in Sfântu Gheorghe, representing 13% of businesses. Importance of foreign investments is high due to the fact that their share of the local turnover is 35%, and they hire 28% of the labour force. (CLUJ MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING GROUP 2016: 143)

Data indicate an increased presence of foreign businesses in Sfântu Gheorghe, compared to national level. Thus at national level in 2011 businesses with foreign capital represented 5.14% in Romania, compared to 14% in Sfântu Gheorghe. From economic perspective, although representing only 14% of businesses, companies with foreign capital hire 30% of the town's workers, they generate more than one third of the turnover. Data suggest an increased efficacy of foreign businesses compared to the local ones and a larger dimension of their activities compared to businesses with autochthonous capital. (CLUJ MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING GROUP 2016: 145)

Level of economic competitiveness

Based on the analysis of economic development grade of Romanian municipalities, Sfântu Gheorghe is placed on the position number 38 from 102. Local economic development was measured by an aggregated indicator of 18 elements grouped in 5 dimensions (incomes and productivity, labour force, economic "basis", entrepreneurship, demography). (CLUJ MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING GROUP 2016: 146)

An important threat is related to the fact that **labour market is concentrated on jobs which do not need high level of education/specialization**, which keeps wages at a reduced level. (processing industry: textile, wood, food, equipments for cars etc.)

Businesses with foreign capital have a high importance in the municipality's economy – in average, **the weight of businesses with foreign capital from the totality of companies is three times higher than the national average**. The impact of foreign investments is very important for the future of local economy. (CLUJ MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING GROUP 2016: 167)

Data indicate a relatively low financial autonomy of Sfântu Gheorghe both compared to other communities and to urban average, the municipality being able to cover approximately 50% of expenditures from its own incomes, while the urban average in the last years was 60.35%. (CLUJ MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING GROUP 2016: 191)

The analysis of local competitiveness places Sfântu Gheorghe under the national average of urban communities. Trends, more than the present situation, reduce the municipality's competitiveness: the demographic diminution, the faster rhythm of ageing and the slower progress in human development lowers the general score of the town. At the same time, the limited level of local financial autonomy represents another weak point of the municipality. On the other hand, the actual demographic situation and the evolution of labour market at least in quantitative terms represent strong points of the town compared to regional competitors. But one should not forget that labour market although prospers in numeric terms, this does not provide a high level of wellbeing for the population, because the wages are under the national average.

According to strategic directions recommended by the local development strategy the town has to invest in stimulation of local entrepreneurship – this thing is important both from the perspective of development of a dynamic economic sector and from the perspective of diminution of the migration trend of young people moving to other communities. Products in this domain are diverse and they consist of business incubators, co-working places, stimulation of start-ups, development of a community centre of carriers etc. Investment in development of entrepreneurial spirit at local level is essential. Big investments are necessary and important, but small businesses based on local entrepreneurship can attract diversification of economy and at the same time they can reduce dependence from the public sector or from one single investor. (CLUJ MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING GROUP 2016: 329–330)

The effects of the EU enlargement

Since 2007, Romania became member of the European Union and could have widely profit from EU funding. Between 2008 and 2015 12 projects were implemented (some of them are still under implementation) financed through Regional Operational Program, their value is 82.4 million lei, one project with 45.6 million lei financed through Sectorial Operational Program "Increase of Economic Competitiveness", 2 projects with 6.6 million lei financed by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and approximately 2.5 million from other external sources. Data of the Regional Development Ministry indicate that Sfântu Gheorghe spent more than 700 lei per capita in total between 2009 and 2014, a little less than the average of towns which was 794 lei. (CLUJ MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING GROUP 2016: 44)

Data suggests a medium administrative capacity in attracting external financial resources compared to other towns from Romania.

As percentage from the total expenditures Sfântu Gheorghe is placed 7% above the average of towns from Romania regarding the expense of capital (on the seventh place among towns, except Bucharest), and high above the values of the towns from the region. Regarding expenditures per capita the values of the municipality exceed the average of towns at national level (approximately 200 lei/inhabitant),

being placed among the first 10 from the total of 102 (except Bucharest). (CLUJ MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING GROUP 2016: 46)

The indicators show that the local administration has a high willingness and capacity to invest, which are premises of a coherent economic development.

Impact of the financial crisis

Romania has been hit hard by the economic crisis of 2008. Data regarding local economy of the municipality starting from 2004 shows a 15% decrease in the number of registered companies, the most significant diminution being among middle size businesses (between 50 and 249 employees and also between 10 and 40). In 2009 there was a significant reduction in the number of companies and this trend also continued in 2010 and 2011. Number of wage workers decreased with 20% in the period of the crisis. (CLUJ MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING GROUP 2016: 129)

Nominally the turnover of local companies is bigger than before the crises, but really (actualized with inflation rate) the turnover of the companies is in diminution compared with 2008.

A high number of employees (almost 65%) work in domains where they were facing serious setbacks during the economic crisis period. Although one can notice a relatively positive trend in the last years, loss of competitiveness in important fields of local economy is a strategic problem, which can be seen in loss of opportunities (investments/extensions will be in other zones with increased local competitiveness), or even in decreasing number of activities, with consequences on local incomes and on population's standards of living.

It is an important strategic problem that developing sectors (competitive and with a comparative advantage), employ only 18% of labour force of the town, while percentage of employed in sectors being on the decline is higher (21.5%). (CLUJ MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING GROUP 2016: 166)

The role of the educational institutions in local development

Qualitatively, rate of high school graduation of local students is **above the national average**, though **significant discrepancies** can be observed depending on the high school.

Local authorities can improve the educational statistics through policies that try to keep educated people in the town (for instance: supporting university programs), and also attract graduates of higher education (i.e.: grants, subsidies). Two elite high schools have their alumni programs through that they follow their graduates and the municipality established a Seklerland Development Institute, which started a research about high school graduates too.

Development of university network in Sfântu Gheorghe is a welcomed step in the growth of competitiveness of the municipality. But it is necessary for the administration to develop policies proactively not only to keep young people in the community but also to attract talents and to enhance relations with emigrants which can support local development.

Opening new extension of Sapientia University could slightly enhance attractiveness of the municipality both for young people (in order to continue their studies) and for investors attracted by qualified labour force. Poor development of university supply contributes to the leaving of human and financial capital from the municipality. The supply of highly educated workforce influences the attractiveness of the town for investors.

The population's level of education is relatively low, 19.31% of local inhabitants have higher education graduation, under the national average of urban zones (22.4%).

According to the study of development strategy of the municipality, the dialogue between the business sector and educational institutions is limited, which can affect both the utility of programs of high schools and technical colleges, and the graduated students' capacity of prompt integration on labour market. (CLUJ MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING GROUP 2016: 37)

Social inequalities

The main threat is related to the relatively low level of wages, only 13% of employees earn above the national average, which increases the risk of exposure to poverty or social exclusion (in conjunction with migration phenomena).

People from economically or socially vulnerable groups (minorities) are not among the target groups of Social Services Directorate though these have special needs. Also these groups (of disadvantaged social categories) are mentioned both in the EUROPE 2020 strategy and on regional level as vulnerable.

A relatively developed NGO network exists in the town, which offers diverse social services, majority of organizations offering these services at least on municipality level. In this context cooperation between public and non-profit sector would be opportune and can become an important factor in order to achieve the proposed objectives regarding access and quality of social services.

The interviewed officials' perceptions about local development

In the interviews, local actors have been questioned about their perspectives on the local development of the town. We can divide the local officials into two groups, namely optimists and pessimists. The "optimists" insisted that the city has developed dynamically in recent years, especially due to the infrastructural investments the municipality has made. They renovated the main square and created a pleasant pedestrian zone, started the foundations of sports facilities, built a new school and a family/activity centre next to it. According to the mayor and the principal of the local elite high school a study has ranked Sfântu Gheorghe as the 5th most livable city in Romania. They probably referred to a survey conducted by a real estate agency, according to which Sfântu Gheorghe is the fifth safety urban settlement from the point of view of citizens' security. (<https://covasnamedia.ro/actualitate/sfantu-gheorghe-in-top-10-al-celor-mai-sigure-orase-din-romania>) The author considers that identifying public safety with liveability suits in the discourse of the actual town leadership, which built its campaign on the message of a user-friendly town. An interviewee also said the residents have changed for the better, they have become more integrative: when he had moved to Sfântu Gheorghe he immediately got the stigma of stranger, today, however, the community is much more open towards newcomers. Despite the difficult economic perspectives the group of the optimists is certain, that with inter-institutional collaboration and good local policies they can turn Sfântu Gheorghe into "the city of families" and a flourishing community. So, the supporters of the actual leadership use the terms of the latter's discourse.

On the other hand, the "pessimists" claimed quite the opposite. According to them there was no development in the past few years, thanks to the lack of funds and bad leadership. The absence of financial capital and economic investments in the city are burning issues, just as the low wages, few job opportunities and rise in real estate prices. They see no chance of a positive change until foreign investments come to Sfântu Gheorghe.

While the group of optimists mostly consists of those who support the actual leadership, the pessimist group was the opposite as it was learnt from the interviewees' perception about local development. These simplified perceptions seem to not take into consideration the facts of economic, infrastructural, cultural spheres. On the one hand the economic indicators show a less favourable chance of the town to "take off", while on the other hand the recent infrastructural and cultural developments place the town in a relatively attractive position compared to similar small towns, however, the mentioned factors provide only a few segments of liveability.

Advantages and disadvantages of the municipality according to the interviewed young migrants

Young people were asked during the personal interviews to compare their native town with the receiving ones and to highlight the attractive and unattractive factors of them. As it can be seen in the table 1. the push and pull factors were classified based on the interviews. The author identified five types of attractions and four types of less attractive factors.

Table 1. Push and pull factors perceived by young migrants

Pull factors		Push factors	
Attractions related to the private sphere	personal attachment to family and friends	Disadvantages concerning the labour market	poor work conditions in factories
	acquaintances, relations		people do overtime and they are not paid for it
Emotional attractions of the town	strong tie to the motherland, to the hometown and the region		financial insecurity
	sweet memories		poor economy
	the atmosphere		less job opportunities
Societal attractions	Relative ethnic and cultural homogeneity of the society		low level of wages
	the people		poor carrier opportunities
	helpful people		difficulties regarding earning a living
	the young people		Societal disadvantages
Attractions related to the municipality	the town management		hierarchical society
	the efforts of the local public administration in order to empower the young people appreciated by interviewees	formal communication between people	
	cultural events	pessimism	
	public safety	material values dominate the value preferences and lifestyle: earning as much money as possible	
Attractions regarding the image of the town	the town centre	discrimination of Roma people	
	the new main square	Unattractive factors of the municipality	
		bureaucratic system	
		poor infrastructure, conditions	
		severe rules in the municipality according to Roma people (closed dustbins, roads)	
		authority is not willing to answer the needs of Roma people	
	Disadvantages concerning the structure of the town	the lack of places where youth can spend their leisure time, where they can meet each other	
		the traffic in the afternoons	

The most frequent attractions refer to the closest personal relations: family, friends, acquaintances. Another type of pull factors are the feelings related to the hometown. The interviewees enumerated advantages regarding the people who live in Sfântu Gheorghe. Some of the interviewed young people are satisfied with the municipality, they mentioned as attractions the town management, the cultural events, the public safety and the effort of the municipality to empower the young people. Finally they spoke approvingly about the town centre and the main square.

While the young migrants did not notice any financial attraction, they enumerated plenty of them among push factors. The disadvantages related to the labour market consist of several negative aspects, such as financial insecurity, poor work conditions, only a few job and carrier opportunities, and low salaries. These type of difficulties seems to be the main driver to leave the city and to not return according to the interviewees. Societal factors appear on both sides, hierarchical society, formal communication, material value preferences, pessimism and discrimination are the negative aspects of the local society. Unattractive factors related to the municipality were formulated mainly by Roma interviewees who expect more support, development of the infrastructure in their district from the town management and less severe rules. According to their narratives they experienced discrimination from the employers, from the majority of population and from official institutions, furthermore, according to some scholars these can function as the main drivers of their migration. (BRAHAM – BRAHAM 2000) The others faced problems with the bureaucratic system. Some interviewees underlined not only positive but also negative factors about the town structure (traffic, lack of places where young people can spend their leisure time together).

The interviews suggested in any case a high emotional attachment to the town of Sfântu Gheorghe, while the labour market situation seems the major concern and trigger to emigrate. Similar tendencies regarding dissatisfactions and opportunities were confirmed by survey results provided during the Ymobility project. Higher salaries and general welfare served as main drivers on national level for first emigration of youth aged 16–35, while return migration was strongly motivated by family ties, reason which is connected to traditionalism of the society and the level of poverty. (SANDU et al. 2017)

4. Migratory and demographic processes in quantitative perspective

4.1. Population change and migratory processes at national level

Regarding economic processes after the regime change HORVÁTH and KISS distinguished four main periods. The first one took place between 1990 and 1996 and was characterized by slow privatization, economic crises, the necessity of searching for new market partners, several big employers - state owned factories – closed down, a significant part of urban workers had to turn back again to the agricultural sector etc. In the second period between 1996 and 2000 the processes started after the regime change continued, the role of industry in economy became weaker, but privatization processes speeded up and foreign investors appeared after political changes. The third period between 2000 and 2008 was the most efficient one, the country was characterized by a relatively fast economic growth, by preparation work for accession in the European Union. And the fourth era started from the financial crisis in 2008, when the economic development of the former period was interrupted drastically. The indicators of Romanian economy remained far from those of the western part of Europe. (HORVÁTH – KISS 2015)

Between 1989 and 2016 there were three censuses of population: in 1992, in 2002 and in 2011. Major changes occurred both on national level and on local level, not only regarding the number of inhabitants, but also concerning the ethnical composition of the population. Between 1992 and 2002 the population decreased by 4.9% at national level, and by 10% at local level. On national level the main cause of the reduced number of inhabitants was natural decrease, while on local level migration. The majority of emigrants were ethnic Hungarian, who moved mainly to Hungary after the borders were opened. After 2002 the trends changed, and migration became the main reason of decrease on

national level too. Between the censuses of 2002 and 2011 population of the country decreased by 7.2%, and inhabitants of the town by 9%. On national level the number of deaths exceeded the number of births, while on local level there was registered a slightly positive natural increase after the regime change too. Between the last two censuses the average age of the country's population changed from 37.8 to 40.6 years.

Table 2. shows the number of inhabitants at the moment of censuses, the population of the country decreased with more than one million between two censuses. The preliminary results of the last census are more realistic than the definitive one, probably that is why ethnical structure in the Historical analysis of the SEEMIG project calculates with the former one.

Table 2. Population change between the censuses after 1989

censuses	1992	2002	2011 preliminary results	2011 definitive results
stable population	22 810 035	21 680 974	19 042 936	20 121 641

Source: www.insse.ro, KISS 2013: 24, HORVÁTH – KISS 2013: 49

The preliminary result differs significantly from the definitive one of the census from 2011. "However, before the publication of the definitive results, the number of the population directly registered during the census was supplemented by almost 1.1 million additional persons, whose data were retrieved from the population register. We have to highlight that the preliminary results of the census were more consistent with the immigration statistics of the main receiving countries (according to which 2.7–3 million of Romanian citizens reside abroad) than the definitive results." (HORVÁTH – KISS 2013: 49) According to the data from table 2. population of Romania decreased by 16.5% between the first and the last census after the regime change.

The number of inhabitants of Romania continued to decrease since the last census too. The natural change and the net migration are both significant causes of it.

Table 3. Change of population in the last one year (thousands)

Pop at 1 January 2016	Live births	Deaths	Natural change	Net migration and statistical adjustment	Total change between 1 January 2016 and 2017	Pop at 1 January 2017
19760.3	188.4	256.5	-68.1	-53.9	-122.0	19638.3

Source: EUROSTAT

The percentage of Hungarian minority decreased from 7.1% to 6.5% between the first and the last censuses after the regime change due to emigration and natural change. The number (and the percentage) of Roma minority is totally unrealistic (their real number and percentage is much higher, quite close to those of Hungarians according to the results of SOCIOROMAP project), due to the method of censuses (only one answer is available regarding ethnicity) and to the fact that Roma people often identify themselves with the majority who they live beside. (KISS 2017)

Table 4. The change of ethnic structure of the population between the censuses after 1989

year	Total	Romanian		Hungarian		German		Roma		Other	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1992	22 810 035	20 408 542	89.5	1 624 959	7.1	119 462	0.5	401 087	1.8	255 985	1.1
2002	21 680 974	19 399 597	89.5	1 431 807	6.6	59 764	0.3	535 140	2.5	254 666	1.2
2011	19 042 936	16 869 816	88.6	1 237 746	6.5	36 884	0.2	619 007	3.3	279 483	1.5

Source: www.insse.ro, HORVÁTH – KISS 2013: 55 (preliminary results for 2011)

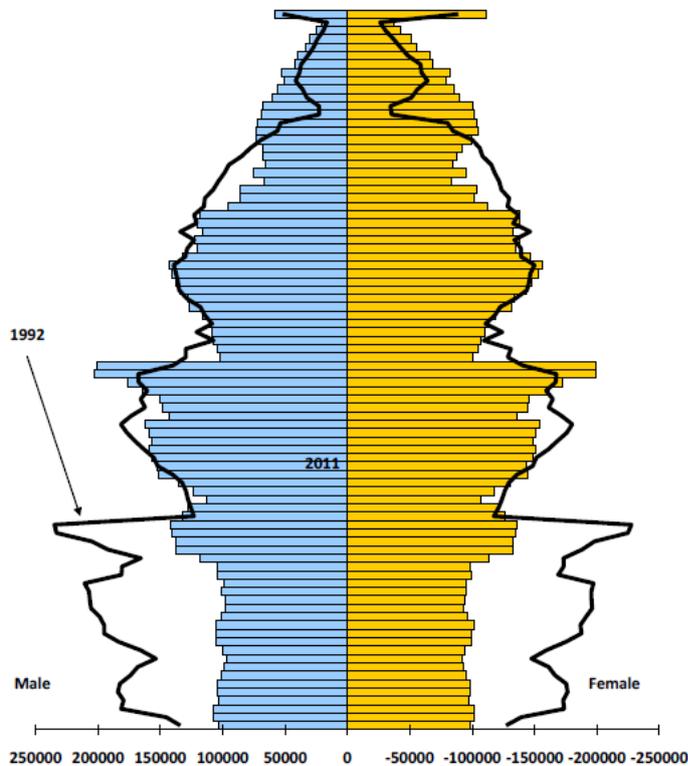
The changes in the age groups show a major decrease of the young generations and the active population parallel with the ageing process of the inhabitants. The loss of the youngest age groups appears spectacular on the age structures from the first and the last national census since the regime change (figure 2).

Table 5. Age groups in 1992 and 2011

years	1992	2011	Change
0-14	5 181 902	3 189 646	-38.4
15-64	15 117 874	13 684 251	-9.4
65+	2 507 511	3 247 744	29.5
Total	22 807 287	20 121 641	-12.9

Source: www.insse.ro, HORVÁTH – KISS 2013: 52

Figure 2. Age structure of Romanian population in 1992 and 2011



Source: Census data (NIS);

Source: www.insse.ro, HORVÁTH – KISS 2013: 53

Life expectancy at birth increased between 1991 and 2016 by 5.4 years, from 69.7 to 75.1 on national level. The gender gap is around seven years.

Table 6. Life expectancy at birth

	1990	2000	2010	2014	2015
Total	69.9	71.2	73.7	75.0	75.0
Male	66.7	67.7	70.0	71.4	71.5
Female	73.1	74.8	77.7	78.7	78.7

Source: EUROSTAT (2014 and 2015: estimate)

The problem of reliability of data appears in several demographic processes, not only concerning migration, but as it was mentioned above, in the “simple” case of population number too. Regarding the fertility rates Eurostat estimates its level after 2010 and data from European and Romanian sources differ, Eurostat uses a higher fertility rate (1.5-1.6). The total fertility rate decreased from 1.83 to 1.34 between 1991 and 2016.

Table 7. The total fertility rate in Romania between 2000 and 2010

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1.23	1.24	1.27	1.30	1.33	1.32	1.30	1.36	1.38	1.33	1.25

Source: www.inse.ro

The crude rates of population change are presented in the context of the other countries from the Danube region. Several differences and a few similarities can be noticed between them. Austria is strongly characterized by immigration but also by a slight positive natural change. Slovakia and Slovenia seem to have a slight positive trend both regarding natural change and net migration. Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Serbia are strongly marked by natural loss. In Romania emigration became also a more and more important cause of population change.

Table 8. Crude rates of population change between 2014 and 2016 (per 1000 persons)

	Total change			Natural change			Net migration and statistical adjustment		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
Romania	-3.9	-5.6	-6.2	-3.1	-3.2	-3.5	-0.8	-2.3	-2.7
Austria	8.1	13.2	9.5	0.4	0.2	0.8	7.7	13.0	8.7
Bulgaria	-6.0	-6.7	-7.3	-5.7	-6.2	-6.0	-0.3	-0.6	-1.3
Hungary	-2.2	-2.5	-3.4	-3.3	-4.0	-3.2	1.1	1.5	-0.1
Serbia	-4.5	-5.4	-5.1	-4.9	-5.4	-5.1	0.3	0.0	0.0
Slovakia	1.0	0.9	1.7	0.7	0.3	1.0	0.3	0.6	0.7
Slovenia	0.9	0.6	0.8	1.1	0.4	0.3	-0.2	0.2	0.5

Source: EUROSTAT (in case of Serbia due to the lack of data on migration, the total change is based exclusively on the natural change)

The data collected on Romanian level about international migration proved to be completely unreal, according to the experts of the field, less than 10% of external migrants are recorded by the National Institute of Statistics (HORVÁTH 2004, KISS 2013, cited by BÁLINT 2017), that is why the present study use the data from Eurostat, where one can find statistics from the period between 2008 and 2015, and the number of immigrants from 2015 is an estimated value. According to the data from the General

Inspectorate of Immigration between 2007 and 2011 the number of immigrants varied from 44 756 to 59 209, and more than 10 000 of immigrants were Moldavians. (HORVÁTH – KISS 2015: 119)

Table 9. International net migration of Romania

	Emigrants	Immigrants	Net migration
2008	302 796	138 929	-163 867
2009	246 626	135 844	-110 782
2010	197 985	149 885	-48 100
2011	195 551	147 685	-47 866
2012	170 186	167 266	-2 920
2013	161 755	153 646	-8 109
2014	172 871	136 035	-36 836
2015	194 718	132 795	-61 923

Source: Eurostat

According to the Migration Report of United Nations published in 2016 Romania reached the top 20 of countries of origin with the largest diaspora population in 2015 with 3 millions of migrants (UN 2016). Other experts estimated the number of Romanian external migrants in the last ten years between 2.5 and 3, recently almost 4 millions. (HORVÁTH – KISS 2013, BÁLINT 2017)

The reliability of data presented in International Migration Report 2015 is also doubtful at least in case of Romania, for instance because 126 900 migrants represented 1% in 2000 and 226 900 meant 1% too in 2015, while the number of population decreased in the mentioned period.

Table 10. International migrants (citizens who are living abroad) in 2000 and 2015

	Number of international migrants		International migrants as a percentage of total population		Women among international migrants (percentage)		Median age of international migrants (years)	
	2000	2015	2000	2015	2000	2015	2000	2015
Romania	126 900	226 900	1	1	52	47	63	28
Austria	996 500	1 492 400	12	17	52	52	41	42
Bulgaria	43 400	102 100	1	1	58	54	41	44
Hungary	297 000	449 600	3	5	53	51	49	41
Serbia	856 800	807 400	9	9	55	56	49	54
Slovakia	116 400	177 200	2	3	56	53	51	51
Slovenia	171 000	236 000	9	11	47	43	39	48

Source: UN 2016 (in case of Serbia estimates for 2000 referred to Serbia and Montenegro)

According to a comparison realised by the OECD and the UN the number of Romanian immigrants grew between 2000 and 2010 by 139%, while the number of highly educated migrants by 108%. The number of international students grew from 21 000 to 32 000 between 2008 and 2012. (OECD – UN-DESA 2015) Compared to the Serbian data (there is available detailed information only about that country from the neighbourhood, and if one trusts in their reality) the emigration rate of the total population and of highly skilled people is higher in Romania, every fifth migrant being highly educated, and every third low educated.

Table 11. Characteristics of migrant population 15+ in the OECD in 2010

	Total population				Women			
	Emigrant pop (thousands)	Highly educated emigrant pop	Emigration rate	Emigration rate of the highly educated	Emigrant pop (thousands)	Highly educated emigrant pop	Emigration rate	Emigration rate of the highly educated
Romania	2 643	483	12.7	20.9	1 442	272	13.3	21.9
Serbia	562	61	6.1	6.1	290	28	6.2	5.7

Source: OECD – UN-DESA 2013: 6

Table 12. Emigrant population 15+ in the OECD in 2010 by age groups

	Total population				Women			
	15-24	25-64	65+	low educated	15-24	25-64	65+	low educated
Romania	13.5	75.4	11.1	32.1	12.8	75.5	11.7	32.7

Source: OECD – UN-DESA 2015: 294

HORVÁTH and KISS distinguished six main periods after the regime change from the point of view of migratory processes. The first one took place immediately after the collapse of the old system, between 1990 and 1993 and was characterized by definitive settlements of mainly ethnic minorities and skilled urban professionals in Hungary and Germany. In the second period between 1994 and 1996 short term work migration of ethnic Hungarians in Hungary and Israel dominated. The main characteristic of the third period between 1997 and 2001 was labour migration in Italy, Spain and Hungary. In the fourth period (2002-2006) younger people continued the same way for longer term in Italy and Spain. After the accession in the European Union large Romanian communities were formed in Italy and Spain in the fifth period which ended in 2010. Since 2010 in the sixth period Roma minority latched on to migration and the main receiving countries became Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. (HORVÁTH – KISS 2015: 115)

Certain data of the next table confirm only partially the characteristics of the last period distinguished and defined by HORVÁTH and KISS, i.e. Italy and Spain play the role of the most attractive receiving countries, Germany and the United Kingdom are far from the first two according to the available data, probably in the last years their significance increased for Romanian citizens. Some of the receiving countries have a historical relation with Romania, like Germany (where the number of Romanian immigrants decreased considerable between 1990 and 2010 both because of naturalization and return (HORVÁTH – KISS 2015: 113)) and Hungary, while others are completely new destinations, like the United Kingdom.

Table 13. Romanian immigrants in the main receiving countries

	1990	2000	2010	2013
Italy	15 725	123 957	813 037	1 008 169
Spain	765	47 854	810 471	800 400
Germany	1 144 848	324 085	134 911	438 000
Hungary	139 690	133 077	189 055	232 793
The United States	101 256	140 085	171 253	188 638
Israel	151 154	139 278	182 099	105 488
The United Kingdom	4 031	21 684	53 081	103 421
Total worldwide	1 761 648	1 307 973	2 769 053	3 430 476

Source: HORVÁTH – KISS 2015: 114

Although the origins of the present demographic situation are embedded in political and economic processes of the socialism and the mentioned period put its signs on the later processes, the chapter focuses only on the changes happened after 1989. After the lapse of the powerful control on population of former regime, the aspirations regarding consumption were the main drivers of migration. “Massive deindustrialization led to re-ruralization and to a growing sector of subsistence farming. New industrial structure characterized with the predominance of low value added branches could also be considered an indicator of a less favorable economic position. These economic processes were – next to rising consumption aspirations – direct drivers of out-migration.” (HORVÁTH – KISS 2015: 126)

4.2. Population change and migratory processes at municipality level

The most difficult part of elaborating the present chapter was that it is almost impossible to find reliable data on the local level. One of the problems is that the Statistical Institute collects data from the local public administration, but publishes only aggregated data on the national, regional and NUTS3 level. Another problem is the reliability of data, especially those regarding migration. For instance less than 10% of emigrants registered by Eurostat appear in Romanian statistics, but information about the basic demographic characteristics of the population is also hard to find and to trust.

As it was mentioned in chapter 4.1 the population of the town decreased by 10% and 9% between the censuses after the regime change (1992-2002 and 2002-2011), which represents a more significant reduction than the national average. As the town can be characterized by a slightly positive natural increase (while on county and country level a negative one was registered), the main reason of the changes was emigration. Between the censuses from 2002 and 2011 the number of internal immigrants in the town was 7 885 while the internal emigrants 8 706 and the majority of emigrants were ethnic Hungarians. The emigration process has its motivations, push and pull factors, and among the former ones the weak economic situation plays a significant role (the unemployment rate above the national average, the level of wages and GDP per inhabitant under the national average etc.) The process of the ageing population affects the town too, between the censuses from 2002 and 2011 the average age of the local population grew faster than the national one, from 35.6 to 39.7 years. The mentioned demographic and economic tendencies most probably will be similar in the following period.

Life expectancy at birth changed between 1991 and 2016 by 0.9 years, slower than the national one but from a higher age, from 75.1 to 76 on local level. The total fertility rate on local level decreased from 1.62 to 1.23 between 1991 and 2016, remaining under the national average.

As it was mentioned above the total fertility rates are available on NUTS3 level at National Institute of Statistics. Covasna county can be placed among those with a relatively high TFR from the region.

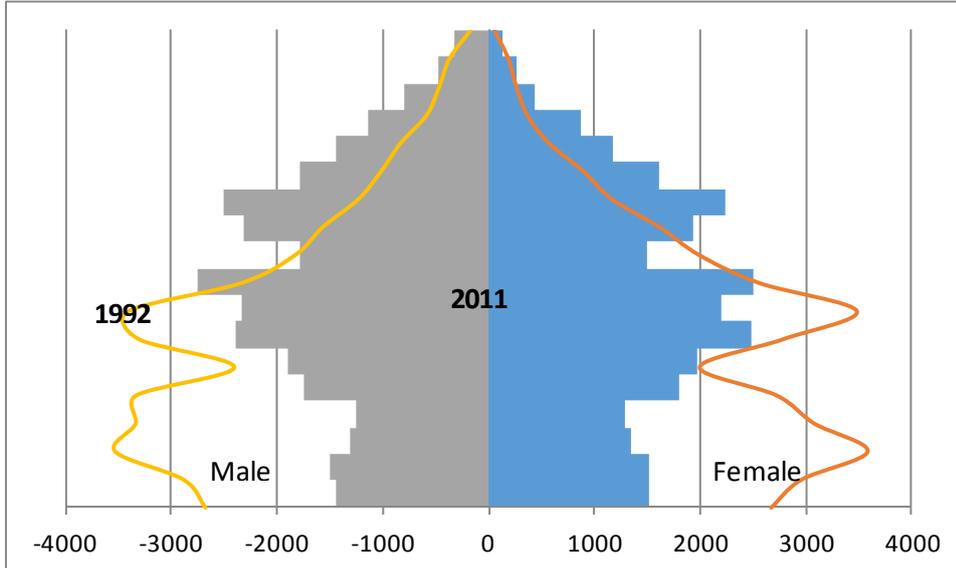
Table 14. The total fertility rates of the counties from the central region between 2000 and 2010

County	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Alba	1.13	1.18	1.20	1.25	1.31	1.27	1.23	1.25	1.32	1.22	1.23
Brasov	1.07	1.12	1.19	1.19	1.23	1.25	1.23	1.40	1.42	1.41	1.35
Covasna	1.32	1.34	1.34	1.45	1.53	1.50	1.37	1.44	1.43	1.46	1.36
Harghita	1.28	1.32	1.32	1.41	1.46	1.48	1.42	1.47	1.46	1.44	1.35
Mureş	1.32	1.35	1.38	1.43	1.46	1.43	1.43	1.54	1.51	1.45	1.41
Sibiu	1.18	1.25	1.29	1.34	1.36	1.34	1.31	1.42	1.48	1.42	1.32

Source: YOUMIG D3.2.1 Data.Exchange.Romania.xlsx

The overlap of the age structures of the town at the moment of censuses illustrates an ageing process of the population in the last decades.

Figure 3. Population pyramid of the town at the moment of the first and the last censuses after the regime change



Source: www.insse.ro

Significant changes may be found in the target group as the proportion of youth aged 15-19 decreased by 52.2% in ten years, the proportion of those between 20-24 by 34.9%.

Table 15. Population of the town by age groups at the last two censuses

Age groups	Resident population, 2002	Resident population, 2011	Change in resident population (%)
0-4 years	2 798	2 959	5.8
5-9 years	2 739	3 024	10.4
10-14 years	4 733	2 656	-43.9
15-19 years	5 308	2 538	-52.2
20-24 years	5 449	3 545	-34.9
25-29 years	5 030	3 864	-23.2
30-34 years	5 821	4 889	-16.0
35-39 years	3 720	4 546	22.2
40-44 years	4 978	5 237	5.2
45-49 years	5 759	3 282	-43.0
50-54 years	4 203	4 248	1.1
55-59 years	3 136	4 737	51.1
60-64 years	2 714	3 409	25.6
65-69 years	1 917	2 627	37.0
70-74 years	1 419	2 006	41.4
75-79 years	951	1 246	31.0
80-84 years	517	746	44.3
Above 85	351	447	27.4
Total	61 543	56 006	-9.0

Source: BARNA 2014: 5

As it is evident from table 16. the number of inhabitants of the town decreased by 5 537 between the last two censuses (the neighbouring towns – as Miercurea Ciuc and Odorhei displayed a similar trend of decrease).

Table 16. Population of the town in context of neighbouring towns at the last three censuses

Municipalities	1992	2002	2011	Decrease 1992-2002 %	Decrease 2002-2011 %	Decrease 1992-2011 %
Sfântu Gheorghe	68 359	61 543	56 006	10	9	18.1
Miercurea Ciuc	46 228	42 029	38 966	9.1	7.3	15.7
Odorheiu Secuiesc	39 959	36 948	34 257	7.5	7.3	14.3

Source: www.insse.ro

The municipality is characterized by relatively stabilized trends according to the data regarding immigration and emigration. In the first decade after the regime change a higher immigration tendency with more than 1000 internal immigrants per year was dominant, while since 2000 a number of approximately 800 immigrants are coming yearly to Sfântu Gheorghe. Internal emigration reached its peak between 1994 and 2001, and decreased after 2002.

Table 17. Internal immigration to the municipality by sex and age groups (0-14, 15-34, 35+) in 1990-2016

	Total				Male				Female			
	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total
1990	792	1829	691	3312	417	845	378	1640	375	984	313	1672
1991	347	1223	354	1924	180	549	197	926	167	674	157	998
1992	229	975	360	1564	120	420	211	751	109	555	149	813
1993	212	978	374	1564	110	405	227	742	102	573	147	822
1994	223	1087	413	1723	115	452	245	812	108	635	168	911
1995	214	919	414	1547	111	361	233	705	103	558	181	842
1996	166	827	379	1372	85	332	210	627	81	495	169	745
1997	150	734	331	1215	76	283	184	543	74	451	147	672
1998	122	731	334	1187	62	283	180	525	60	448	154	662
1999	91	588	272	951	47	224	147	418	44	364	125	533
2000	74	475	226	775	38	182	125	345	36	293	101	430
2001	184	583	280	1047	93	225	143	461	91	358	137	586
2002	154	474	235	863	79	184	114	377	75	290	121	486
2003	131	441	241	813	67	175	118	360	64	266	123	453
2004	122	409	238	769	62	161	116	339	60	248	122	430
2005	105	400	230	735	53	156	113	322	52	244	117	413
2006	105	409	215	729	54	156	112	322	51	253	103	407
2007	114	432	228	774	57	166	130	353	57	266	98	421
2008	115	402	218	735	59	156	118	333	56	246	100	402
2009	142	453	224	819	73	180	109	362	69	273	115	457
2010	142	452	231	825	73	173	121	367	69	279	110	458
2011	145	440	238	823	73	172	118	363	72	268	120	460
2012	140	406	235	781	70	156	119	345	70	250	116	436
2013	154	427	250	831	79	169	120	368	75	258	130	463
2014	147	399	246	792	75	155	120	350	72	244	126	442
2015	156	378	251	785	80	146	115	341	76	232	136	444
2016	162	375	278	815	83	150	123	356	79	225	155	459

Source: YOUMIG D3.2.1 Data.Exchange.Romania.xlsx

Table 18. Internal emigration from the municipality by sex and age groups (0-14, 15-34, 35+) in 1990-2016

	Total				Male				Female			
	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total
1990	286	561	372	1219	151	259	176	586	135	302	196	633
1991	181	411	272	864	94	184	143	421	87	227	129	443
1992	161	465	349	975	84	200	188	472	77	265	161	503
1993	159	460	325	944	83	191	171	445	76	269	154	499
1994	239	615	411	1265	123	256	214	593	116	359	197	672
1995	276	606	469	1351	143	238	241	622	133	368	228	729
1996	258	655	564	1477	132	263	301	696	126	392	263	781
1997	280	624	480	1384	143	241	256	640	137	383	224	744
1998	294	782	623	1699	150	303	329	782	144	479	294	917
1999	256	735	597	1588	132	280	317	729	124	455	280	859
2000	214	638	580	1432	111	244	325	680	103	394	255	752
2001	228	618	517	1363	115	238	270	623	113	380	247	740
2002	147	394	333	874	75	153	176	404	72	241	157	470
2003	117	370	339	826	60	147	181	388	57	223	158	438
2004	120	362	349	831	61	143	189	393	59	219	160	438
2005	120	414	373	907	60	162	198	420	60	252	175	487
2006	107	371	311	789	55	142	170	367	52	229	141	422
2007	121	410	379	910	61	158	217	436	60	252	162	474
2008	125	395	359	879	64	153	205	422	61	242	154	457
2009	153	430	325	908	79	171	174	424	74	259	151	484
2010	159	446	333	938	82	171	190	443	77	275	143	495
2011	149	388	307	844	75	151	173	399	74	237	134	445
2012	132	336	292	760	66	129	168	363	66	207	124	397
2013	126	301	247	674	64	119	133	316	62	182	114	358
2014	120	277	240	637	61	107	132	300	59	170	108	337
2015	110	221	212	543	56	86	110	252	54	135	102	291
2016	128	245	274	647	66	98	140	304	62	147	134	343

Source: YOUMIG D3.2.1 Data.Exchange.Romania.xlsx

The internal net migration was positive in the first six years after the regime change and in the last five years.

Table 19. Internal net migration of the municipality by sex and age groups (0-14, 15-34, 35+) in 1990-2016

	Total				Male				Female			
	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total
1990	506	1268	319	2093	266	586	202	1054	240	682	117	1039
1991	166	812	82	1060	86	365	54	505	80	447	28	555
1992	68	510	11	589	36	220	23	279	32	290	-12	310
1993	53	518	49	620	27	214	56	297	26	304	-7	323
1994	-16	472	2	458	-8	196	31	219	-8	276	-29	239
1995	-62	313	-55	196	-32	123	-8	83	-30	190	-47	113
1996	-92	172	-185	-105	-47	69	-91	-69	-45	103	-94	-36
1997	-130	110	-149	-169	-67	42	-72	-97	-63	68	-77	-72
1998	-172	-51	-289	-512	-88	-20	-149	-257	-84	-31	-140	-255
1999	-165	-147	-325	-637	-85	-56	-170	-311	-80	-91	-155	-326
2000	-140	-163	-354	-657	-73	-62	-200	-335	-67	-101	-154	-322
2001	-44	-35	-237	-316	-22	-13	-127	-162	-22	-22	-110	-154
2002	7	80	-98	-11	4	31	-62	-27	3	49	-36	16
2003	14	71	-98	-13	7	28	-63	-28	7	43	-35	15
2004	2	47	-111	-62	1	18	-73	-54	1	29	-38	-8
2005	-15	-14	-143	-172	-7	-6	-85	-98	-8	-8	-58	-74
2006	-2	38	-96	-60	-1	14	-58	-45	-1	24	-38	-15
2007	-7	22	-151	-136	-4	8	-87	-83	-3	14	-64	-53
2008	-10	7	-141	-144	-5	3	-87	-89	-5	4	-54	-55
2009	-11	23	-101	-89	-6	9	-65	-62	-5	14	-36	-27
2010	-17	6	-102	-113	-9	2	-69	-76	-8	4	-33	-37
2011	-4	52	-69	-21	-2	21	-55	-36	-2	31	-14	15
2012	8	70	-57	21	4	27	-49	-18	4	43	-8	39
2013	28	126	3	157	15	50	-13	52	13	76	16	105
2014	27	122	6	155	14	48	-12	50	13	74	18	105
2015	46	157	39	242	24	60	5	89	22	97	34	153
2016	34	130	4	168	17	52	-17	52	17	78	21	116

Source: own calculation based on table 17. and 18.

The population of the municipality consists predominantly of native-born people, foreigners represent only around 1% of population. The gender-based differences between the age groups show that above 35 years the percentage of women is higher than in the younger generations.

Table 20. Total number of population (stock) by sex, country of birth (Native-born, EU, Non-EU, Top5 countries of birth), age groups (0-14, 15-34, 35+) at municipal level at the last census (2011)

	Total				Male				Female			
	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total
Total	8639	14836	32531	56006	4385	7540	14880	26805	4254	7296	17651	29201
Native-born	8335	14759	32341	55435	4219	7509	14774	26502	4116	7250	17567	28933
EU	270	48	113	431	150	18	64	232	120	30	49	199
Non-EU	34	29	77	140	16	13	42	71	18	16	35	69
Hungary	179	41	89	309	100	13	46	159	79	28	43	150
Germany	8	6	5	19	6	4	4	13	2	2	1	6
Rep. of Moldova	9	15	28	52	3	6	13	21	6	9	15	31
Italy	48	0	9	57	24	0	9	33	25	0	0	25
country of birth5	0	3	11	14	0	1	5	6		2	6	8

Source: YOUMIG D3.2.1 Data.Exchange.Romania.xlsx

The doubtful reliability of the data regarding international migration is spectacular by the inconsistency in table 21 between the total number of emigrant population and the sum of emigrants by countries of destination (the latter sum being higher than the total). Based on the information of the table 21. more than half of the emigrants from Romania choose rather Hungary as destination in 2011, probably these emigrants were ethnic Hungarians.

Table 21. Total number of national emigrant population (stock) by sex, destinations (Top5 destination countries) and age groups (0-14, 15-34, 35+) at municipal level in 2011

	Total				Male				Female			
	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total
Total	194	1590	1157	2941	100	877	565	1542	94	713	592	1399
Hungary	136	848	671	1655	69	470	357	896	67	378	314	759
United Kingdom	11	316	43	370	2	128	24	154	9	188	19	216
Destination country3	43	282	270	595	22	151	103	277	21	131	167	318
DC4	8	197	108	313	5	117	64	186	3	80	44	127
DC5	3	79	11	93	0	32	6	38	3	47	5	55

Source: YOUMIG D3.2.1 Data.Exchange.Romania.xlsx

The number of foreign immigrants in the town is not significant. The municipality does not attract people outside Nationals. Based on table 23. the number of return migrants decreased slightly in the last five years. The data of tables 22-24. seem unrealistic compared to the number of emigrants from 2011 in table 21, and to the loss of more than 5 000 inhabitants in ten years between the last two censuses. If the sum of immigrants and return migrants was higher than those of emigrants, then the number of inhabitants would increase, but this is not the case.

Table 22. International immigration flows by sex, citizenship (National, Foreign) and age groups (0-14, 15-34, 35+) at municipal level in 2012-2016

	Total						Nationals						Foreign citizens					
	0-14	15-34	35+	M	F	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	M	F	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	M	F	Total
2012	69	283	230	354	229	582	68	276	215	346	214	559	1	7	15	8	15	23
2013	64	252	217	321	213	533	63	248	214	316	210	525	1	4	3	5	3	8
2014	48	251	173	268	204	472	47	246	168	262	199	461	1	5	5	6	5	11
2015	48	223	190	279	182	461	46	214	182	269	173	442	2	9	8	10	9	19
2016	60	193	209	270	193	462	58	181	199	255	184	438	2	12	10	15	9	24

Source: YOUMIG D3.2.1 Data.Exchange.Romania.xlsx

Table 23. International return migration flows of native born national citizens by sex and age groups (0-14, 15-34, 35+) at municipal level in 2012-2016

	Total				Male				Female			
	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total
2012	68	276	215	559	42	171	133	346	26	106	82	214
2013	63	248	214	525	38	149	129	316	25	99	86	210
2014	47	246	168	461	27	140	95	262	20	106	73	199
2015	46	214	182	442	28	130	111	269	18	84	71	173
2016	58	181	199	438	34	105	116	255	24	76	84	184

Source: YOUMIG D3.2.1 Data.Exchange.Romania.xlsx

Table 24. International emigration flows of native-born national citizens by sex and age groups (0-14, 15-34, 35+) at municipal level in 2012-2016

	Total				Male				Female			
	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total
2012	86	298	207	591	47	141	75	263	39	157	132	328
2013	86	296	207	589	41	129	65	235	45	167	143	355
2014	69	307	227	603	38	174	112	324	31	133	115	279
2015	71	405	203	679	39	258	92	389	33	147	111	291
2016	95	371	262	728	60	232	135	427	34	139	128	301

Source: YOUMIG D3.2.1 Data.Exchange.Romania.xlsx

As it was mentioned at the beginning of the subchapter, it is hard to draw a picture about migration at the local level, due to the lack of availability and the reliability of data. Sfântu Gheorghe, similarly to other towns from the region, lost around 10% of its population between two censuses in the last decades. International emigration was the main reason of decreased population number, which affected mainly younger generations, and the financial and labour market characteristics of the town functioned as push factors. Pilot projects would be necessary in order to attract back the young people from abroad, to handle the significant loss of the generations aged 15-24. This paper will formulate ideas about potential pilot projects in the chapter of conclusions.

Empirical antecedents of the YOUMIG project

There were numerous international projects which studied the challenges of migration, in the last decades. “However, relatively few of them brought into focus the age factor, and dealt specifically with the reasons, motors and consequences of youth migration.” (FASSMANN et al. 2018: 65) But according to the results young people are the most affected age group of the phenomenon.

In the following paragraphs, we will briefly present in chronological order some international studies which compared the migratory patterns of different societies, including Romania, followed by regional level surveys concerning youth migration. The EDUMIGROM, SEEMIG, YMOBILITY and MOVE projects can be enumerated between the international empirical antecedents of YOUMIG.

International studies focusing on youth migration

The EDUMIGROM project included 9 European countries and was realized between 2008 and 2011. The project explored “how existing educational systems, policies, practices, and experiences in markedly different welfare regimes contribute to these processes of “minoritisation”.” (SZALAI 2011: 1) The project focused on interethnic inequality related to the Roma minority and on the role of school and policy in the future of multicultural societies. Therefore it can serve as a starting point for YOUMIG to a certain extent only, it was an international comparison of ethnic differences in education of urban youth.

The SEEMIG project was implemented between 2012 and 2014 almost in the same countries and settlements (also Sfântu Gheorghe was involved) as in YOUMIG, hence the latter can be considered a follow-up project of the former one. “The main goal of SEEMIG was to better understand long term South-East European migratory and demographic processes, their effects on labour markets, national and regional economies and, based on enhanced empirical evidence, to empower public administrations. Several types of scientific outputs – new, coherent, transnational data-base, pilot surveys, population projections, historical country profiles – aimed to help local, regional and national authorities and other stakeholders to conceptualize and implement strategies concerning migration management.” (FASSMANN et al. 2018: 65) Some project results – the country report (Kiss 2013), the historical analysis (HORVÁTH – KISS 2013) and the local strategy proposal (BARNA 2014) – offer information for the reconstruction of migratory trends and policies of the former period.

The YMOBILITY project started in 2014 in 8 countries. “The key focus is on how different types of youth mobility contribute to stocks of lifelong skills and competences in different regions; it pays particular attention to the extent and nature of return migration, including the significance of ‘urban drift’ amongst returnees. The project combines a review of existing policy initiatives, in both destination and origin regions, with a number of original regional case studies that involves a range of stakeholders, especially young people.” (<http://www.ymobility.eu/project-objectives/>) According to the survey results, while in other countries better educated youth are more inclined to migrate, in Romania the reverse is widespread, because/since it is easier to find a job for a lower than a higher skilled person. Based on migration experiences of youth seven types were distinguished. Almost half of youth can be characterized as high probability potential migrants and a low share of returnees was recorded in connection with societal dissatisfaction (SANDU et al. 2017) Twenty in-depth interviews and eight follow-up interviews were realized with Romanian young (aged 18-35) migrants in the London area. One of the authors’ conclusion was that migration is “a strategy to accomplish or ‘accelerate’ rather than delay professional transitions and independent living, although these are only partially achieved”. (MOROSANU et al. 2017)

The MOVE project was launched in 2015 in six countries and was “going to provide a comprehensive analysis of youth migration in Europe by creation of an integrated quantitative database on European youth mobility (with regard to different forms, conditions and constraints of mobility) and by a number of qualitative case studies.” (FASSMANN et al. 2018: 69) Although the project has started its final six months there are no available research results on the webpage of the project. (www.move-project.eu)

According to the results of several international research projects “the ‘work-related issues’ seem to be the number one reason everywhere, followed by the categories, ‘personal ambitions’ and ‘education’ in second and third place. However, and this can be encouraging for the South European countries, the great majority of their young emigrants would like to return; 12% of them in 5 years, 13% in about 10 years and 46% ‘hope’ to go back in the future.” (FASSMANN et al. 2018: 67) Based on Romanian qualitative and quantitative research results similar reasons and problems can be confirmed.

Although Romania was not included in the Re-Turn project, which was implemented in seven European countries between 2011 and 2014, we think it is important to mention it because of its contributions. “The results proved the existence of the phenomenon called the ‘return of failure’, it is true for only about one third of the cases; most migrants return successfully. The return is not so much driven by dissatisfaction with life or economic problems, but mostly by private reasons, e.g. reuniting with family or friends. A remarkable finding is that 40% of the returnees accepted – and nearly the same share of potential would be returnees willing to accept – worse working conditions in favour of an improved social life. According to the classification scheme of the Re-Turn project, most of the returned emigrants are a mixture of the ‘conservative type’ and the ‘family and emotional return type’, while one out of ten of them can be considered an innovator (‘return of innovation’ – CERASE 1974). Nevertheless, almost half of the returnees suffer from labour market reintegration problems and 10% of them are even unemployed.” (FASSMANN et al. 2018: 68) It is hard to estimate the proportion of failed returns in Romania, but the phenomenon of problematic re-integration on the local labour market exists. “If returnees are independent or self-employed, they can expect higher wages than non-migrants, which definitely makes a temporary migration more attractive than a permanent stay in the host country.” (MARTIN – RADU 2011 cited by SMOLINER et al. 2012: 26) Although it is difficult to measure the proportion of innovators among returned migrants with qualitative methods, the survey planned for the next phase of the project is expected to provide information in this regard. However, there are only a few young people, who invest their accumulated capital not only in real estate but also in setting up their own businesses. Based on the Re-Turn project results, authors formulated four main policy implications: “1). attracting high-skilled return migration (offering reintegration assistance, offering access to special social services, giving permission to earn premium interest rates or hold convertible foreign currency accounts, encouraging migrants to seek representation in institutional structures, or establishing systems of information and cultural outreach to expatriate communities), 2). removing obstacles to return, 3). creating framework conditions that help returnees to realize their potential (origin countries should: deal with the topic of the recognition of qualifications and experience acquired abroad, install effective migration programmes, which promote brain circulation, and engage high-skilled nationals in diasporas, through virtual or temporary return), 4). formulating a regional development strategy based on a wider and better skills basis.” (SMOLINER et al. 2012: 63-64)

The authors of the Re-Turn project also elaborated a Toolkit in order to support the reintegration of returned migrants. They established/identified three main areas of intervention: re-attract (PR strategy improving image of home region, e.g., postcards or photo calendars as reminders from home), re-integrate (commuters’ day, job portal, recognition of qualifications, re-integration training courses

etc.), re-employ (supporting entrepreneurs in the employment of returnees, or supporting returnees who are planning to start their own business) and general aims (ambassador, hotline, website). (SCHMIDTCHEN 2012)

Similarly to certain similar projects, in case of YOUMIG the overall objective of the strategies should be developing the diversity of the local economy, support a flexible, family-friendly labour market, and all strategies that are suitable to improve the image and self-confidence of the region as a whole.

The local strategy of YOUMIG should aim at introducing joint strategies to promote re-migration as a source of innovative enterprise development; and developing and implementing services needed to support potential migrants in their wish to return.

Regional surveys concerning youth migration

Majority of the following regional surveys referred to ethnic Hungarian youth. Because of the ethnic composition of the city it is more relevant to start from these ones, than from similar studies representative of Romania at the national-level.

One of the authors who analyzed the Romanian youth studies after the regime change, distinguished three main periods in it: first between 1990 and 2001, the second being the richest period from the point of view of youth studies was between 2001 and 2009, and the third after 2008. (ERCSEI 2017)

In 2001, 2008 and 2013 three similar comparative surveys were conducted among Hungarian youth from Transylvania. The first one focused on youth aged 18-29 (N=1598), and the other two on 18-35 year old people (N= 1202 and N=1238).

According to the results of the survey from 2001 32% of youth planned to work abroad, men and respondents from urban settlements were overrepresented among those who aspired to migrate. 79% of them marked Hungary as their target country. The other 21% chose Germany, the United States, Canada and other countries. (BÁLINT – DEMETER 2002: 204)

Between 2008 and 2013 a significant change can be observed regarding migratory experiences and potential of youth. While in 2008 one third of respondents planned to work abroad, in 2013 43% of them considered going abroad. Younger respondents were increasingly affected by migration. 51% of those aged 18-29 planned to become a labour migrant. Concerning the receiving countries in 2008 39% of them mentioned Hungary as target place, in 2013 only 27%, while 51% of them chose Germany and Austria, and one third of them preferred the United Kingdom. "Hungary fell to the third position, followed by the United States, Italy and Spain." (BARNA – KISS 2013: 99)

In 2015 1.000 Hungarian youth aged 15-29 from Transylvania were surveyed in the study named GeneZYs 2015. Respondents were asked about their migratory experiences and their plans regarding definitive emigration. Only 13.5% of Transylvanian young people had experiences in studying abroad, and 25.4% in labour migration. Majority of them did not plan to emigrate definitively. (PAPP Z. et al. 2017: 227)

In 2016 2.000 Hungarian respondents aged 15-29 from Transylvania were surveyed in the study called Mozaik 2016. 47% of them would work in Hungary and 57% of them in other countries in Europe. 36% of them planned to become a labour migrant for a few years, 40% for a few months, 22% planned to live abroad and 19% to study in a foreign country. In a multiple response question 81% of those who planned migration would do it for a better living, 52% in order to accumulate experiences, 52% because

of the carrier, 40% in order to enhance language skills, 37% due to the lack of opportunities at home, 27% because of worse financial conditions at home. (MOZAIK 2016 RESEARCH REPORT 2017)

Young people graduated from high schools between 2004 and 2013 in Sfântu Gheorghe were surveyed in 2014 (coordinated by KISS and BARNA) about their future plans. 10% of them lived abroad at the moment of the study. 72% of them planned to stay at home (76% of Hungarians and 63% of Romanians). These results differ from those of the survey realized in SEEMIG project: three-quarters of high school students being in their last year were thinking about emigration and almost a third of them planned to search for a job abroad. (SOLYOM – BÁLINT 2014)

Finally we would like to mention a local survey realized among high school students from Covasna county in 2016. The database contains of 537 cases, 45.3% of them were studying in Sfântu Gheorghe. More than one third of the students (39.1%) belonged to theoretical high schools, 43.4% of them to technical high schools, 17.5% of them to vocational high schools (art, theology, pedagogy, sport). 21.4% of respondents studied in Romanian language. 35.6% of those who planned to work after high school graduation would do it abroad, 30.8% of the latter would choose Hungary, 29.7% Germany and 22.5% the United Kingdom. Significant differences could be observed between the ethnic groups: 41% of Hungarians and 20% of Romanians planned to work abroad. They specified similar reasons for leaving than respondents from the above mentioned surveys: better living standards and higher wage levels. (BÁLINT et al. 2016)

As one can notice from the above mentioned surveys, an increasing proportion of young people is affected by migration. A significant part of youth plans to become a labour migrant and their destination countries changed in the last one and a half decades. While at the beginning of the period they preferred Hungary as receiving country, in the last decade they would go rather to Germany and to the United Kingdom.

4.3. Presentation of the results of the population projection

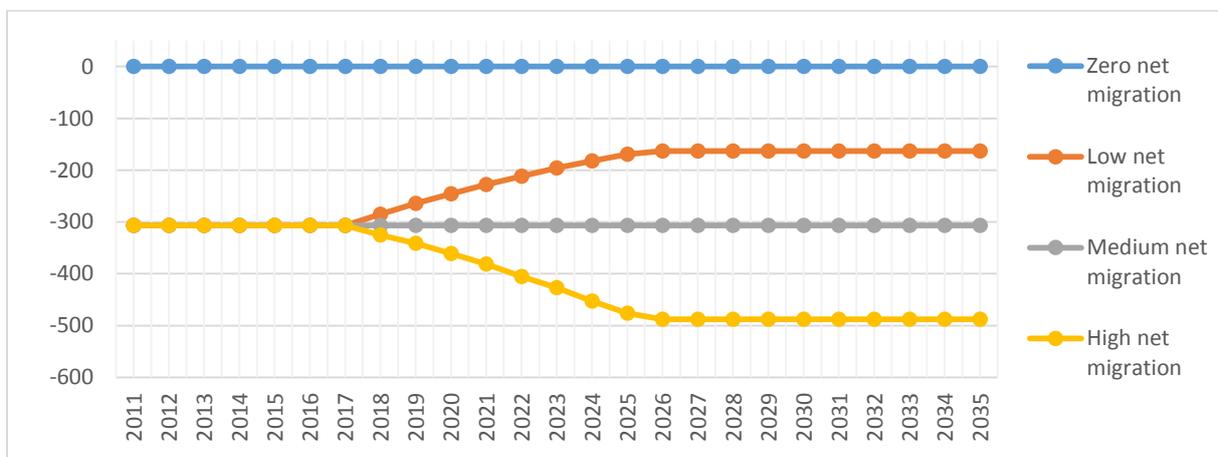
The following report briefly discusses the potential demographic scenarios of Sfântu Gheorghe. In total there are four different scenarios proposed. The scenarios are differentiated due to the expected level of net migration. Three scenarios concern three different levels of migration resulting in a negative net migration. The fourth alternative presents a theoretical scenario when the net migration is zero in Sfântu Gheorghe. This alternative works as a control scenario to capture the effect of migration on the demographic processes.

After describing the different scenarios in details, the prognosis on overall population is presented. This is followed by a comparison of females' and males' proportion in the population until 2035. Finally the age distribution is presented in specific years and as a process during the entire period.

Scenarios

There are four scenarios defined. The zero net migration scenario considers a migration surplus equal to zero. The remaining three scenarios assume different magnitudes of negative net migration. Given the current migratory trends of Sfântu Gheorghe all scenarios are characterised by emigration. All trends are based on the current trends of migration in Sfântu Gheorghe, they are differentiated from 2017 on. The low net migration scenario assumes a slight increase of migration surplus until 2026, when the yearly net migration stabilises at -163 people. The high migration scenario is based on a steady increase of net migration until 2026, when it stabilises at a yearly net migration of -488 people. The medium migration scenario assumes the current stage of migration surplus to stabilise in the long term. Figure 4. represents the four different migration trends.

Figure 4. Four scenarios of potential future migration trends in Sfântu Gheorghe



Overall population

The population of Sfântu Gheorghe in 2017 is around 56 000. Given the dominant role of emigration, all scenarios assume a serious decrease in the population until 2035. Even the zero net migration scenario turns into a slight decrease after a decade-long plateau in the 2010s. It shows that the number of deaths is higher than the number of live births, giving a negative natural increase of population. Without counting the effect of emigration, the population of Sfântu Gheorghe would be expected to be just below 55 000 people in 2035. Taking into consideration the migratory trends, the total population of Sfântu Gheorghe is expected to decrease to 48 000 (in case of low net migration), to around 45 500 (in case of medium net migration) or even around 42 000 (in case of high net migration). Figure 5. shows the potential future population scenarios.

Figure 5. Four scenarios of the potential future population of Sfântu Gheorghe

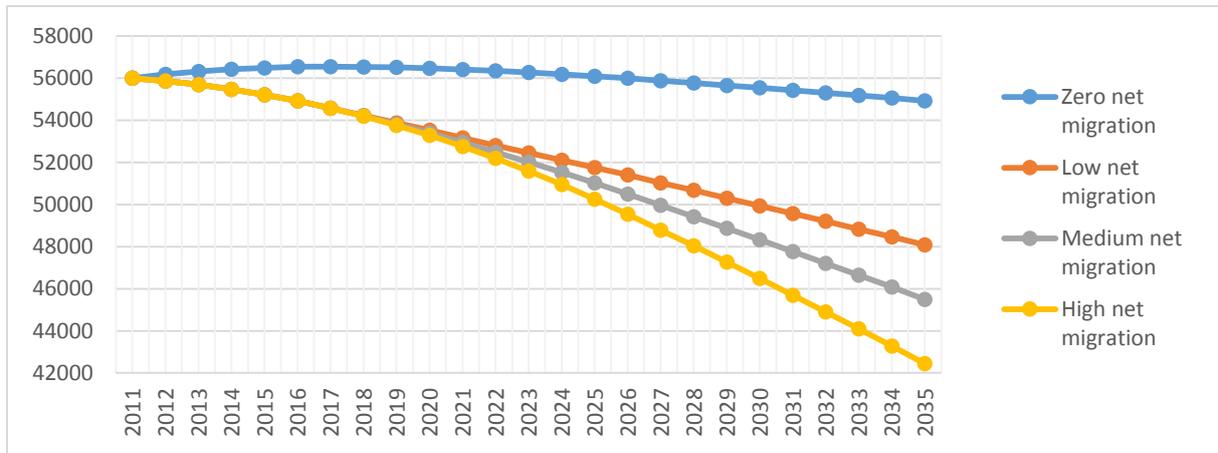
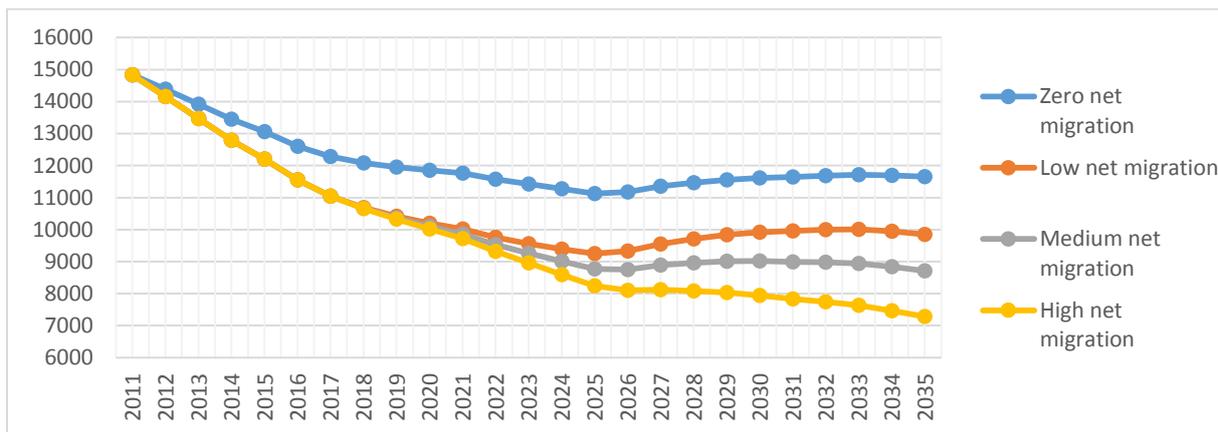


Figure 6. shows specifically the changes of the 15-34 year old age group till 2035. One can see that all scenarios expect a slight decrease until 2025 followed by a potential stabilisation.

Figure 6. Four scenarios of 15-34 year old population in Sfântu Gheorghe



Gender distribution

There is a slight change in the ratio of males and females meaning that the proportion of men decreases against the proportion of women during the period. This effect becomes stronger as the magnitude of emigration increases. Table 25. shows the ratio of man and women in the total population during the period. Possible explanation may be that men are affected more by migratory trends than women. However, as the zero net migration scenario shows, the same process exists with zero net migration as well. The overrepresentation of women in older age groups might explain this phenomenon.

Table 25. The ratio of males and females in case of the four migration scenarios

	Zero net migration	Low net migration	Medium net migration	High net migration
2017	0.913	0.910	0.910	0.910
2025	0.906	0.900	0.898	0.897
2030	0.904	0.896	0.892	0.885
2035	0.905	0.895	0.888	0.874

Age distribution

Figure 7-10. show the age distribution of the population of Sfântu Gheorghe in case of the four different scenarios. One may find the biggest differences in the age group of 30-39, followed by the age groups of 20-29 and 40-49. This shows that these, active groups are affected the most by the migratory trends. The age group of young children (0-9) shows also recognisable differences as they are very much attached to the most affected, active age groups. The age groups of 10-19 and 50-59 also show some differences, while over 60 year the differences almost disappear between the different scenarios.

Figure 11-14. (in the Annex nr. 4) show the same process represented in population pyramids. While the upper parts of the population pyramids (representing the older age groups) are rather similar in case of all scenarios, the parts representing the above mentioned age groups are fundamentally different in case of the different scenarios. However, even the theoretical, zero net migration scenario shows the picture of a rapidly aging society.

Figure 7. The change of age distribution between 2017 and 2035 in case of zero net migration

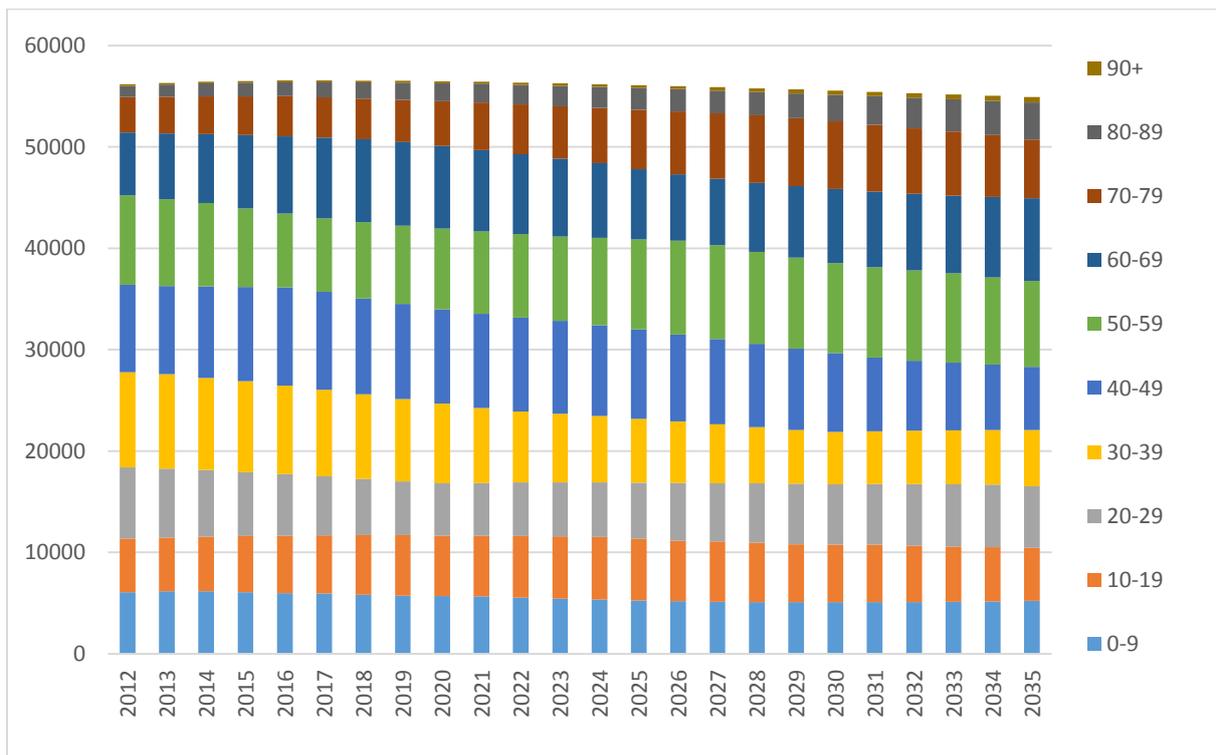


Figure 8. The change of age distribution between 2017 and 2035 in case of low net migration

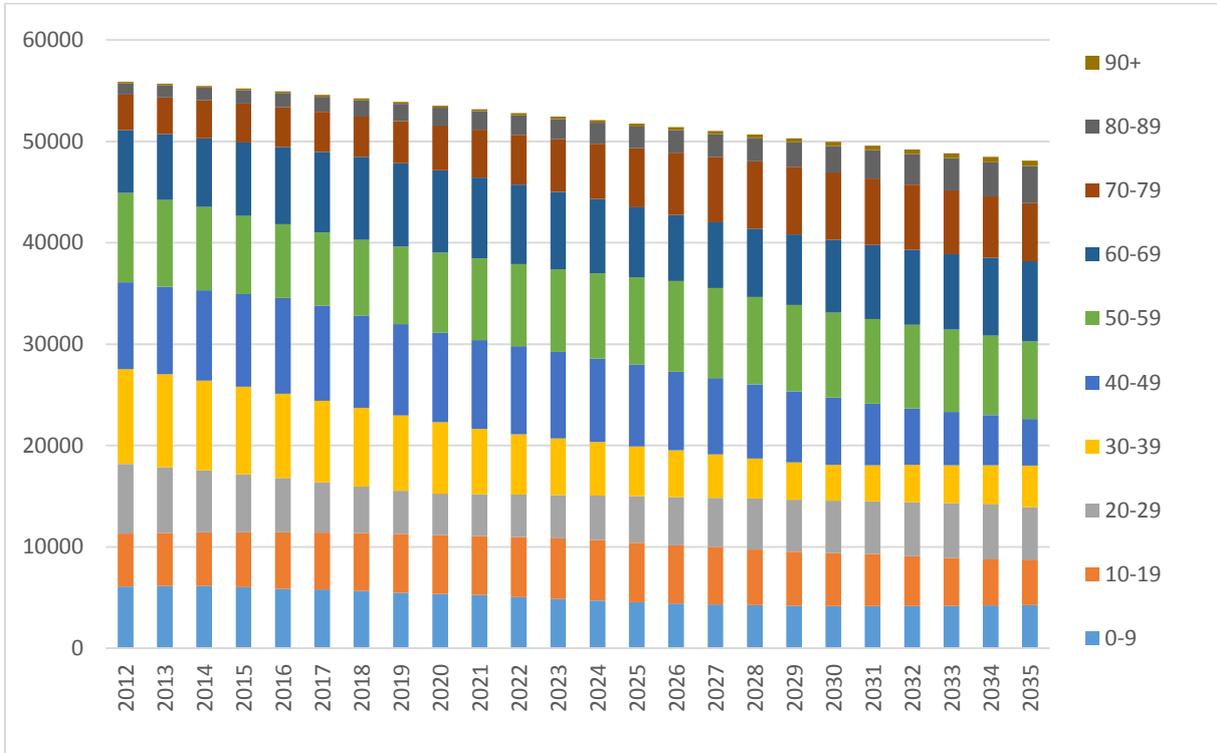


Figure 9. The change of age distribution between 2017 and 2035 in case of medium net migration

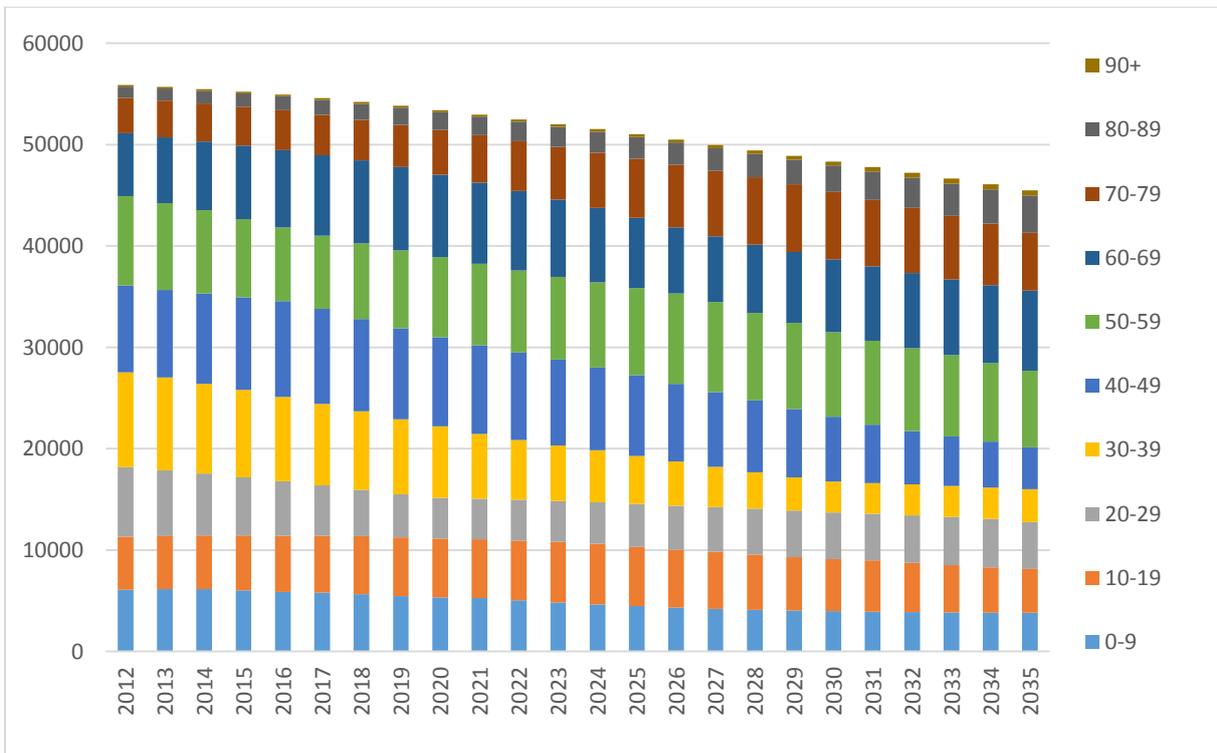
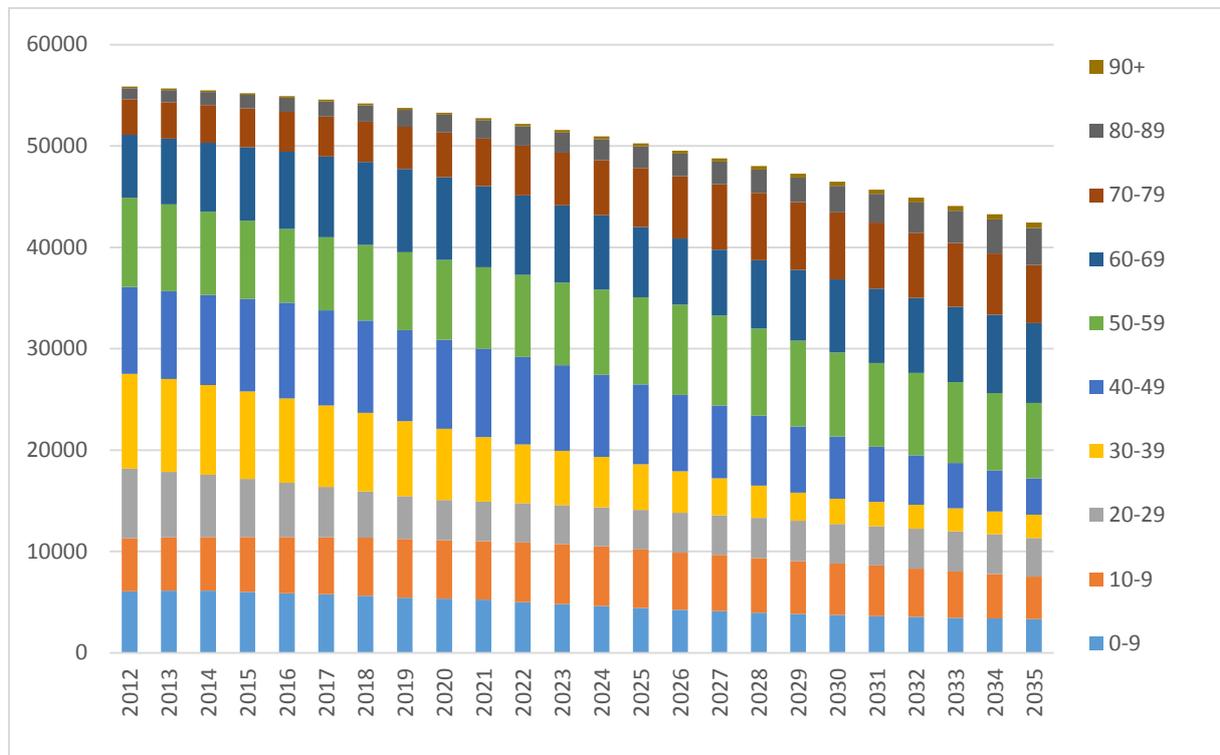


Figure 10. The change of age distribution between 2017 and 2035 in case of high net migration



5. Characteristics of youth migration in the municipality

5.1. General characteristics

In the town there is a relatively serious youth emigration, with noticeable differences in the paths of Hungarian and Romanian youth. Hungarians tend to continue their studies in Cluj-Napoca (around 5% of them in Hungary), while Romanians in Brasov – the closest big city – and the capital. Only a few of them return after finishing their schools. The differences between Hungarian and Romanian people can appear in their target countries also. The data collected from the young people involved in migration processes provide us information only about Hungarian and Roma population. The main receiving country in case of Hungarian youth seems to be the United Kingdom based on the interviews and Hungary based on statistics, while Hungary and Germany for Roma migrants. Parallel with emigration there is a local immigration process from rural areas but the number of inhabitants has been decreasing in the last few decades, approximately by 5.000 people in ten years. Return migration characterizes the municipality to a small/limited extent.

The process of international immigration does not affect this region of Romania at all, and it is not considered as a real risk for the next few years by the experts of the focus group interview. The country and the region will not attract people from other countries, because of the poor economic and infrastructural situation.

None of the institutions has reliable current data about emigration, because it is a very dynamic process, and only one part of leavers appear in registers for different reasons.

It is hard to speak about the various migration waves since 1989 on local level due to the fact that available data only focus on national trends. “Three important milestones of the migratory regime could be identified. The first one was in 1989, when the socialist state regime collapsed; the second one in 2002, when Romanians were exempted from visa requirements when travelling to EU countries; the third one in 2007, when Romania joined the EU” (Horvath – Kiss 2015: 110). The aforementioned authors identified six phases of the Romanian migration starting from 1989. Germany has been the main destination of Romanian migrants between 1990 and 2000, while in the last two decades its place has been taken by Italy and Spain. Hungarians from Romania went to Hungary in the first decade instead after the regime change and after that mainly to Germany and to the United Kingdom. Their lesser participation in the Italy and Spain migration can be partially originated from their language skills and networks. Romanian speaker population learn easily Italian and Spanish, and they built their networks which can help them with accommodation, finding a job etc., while Hungarian speakers started in a country where they did not need foreign language skills and continued to build networks in Germany and the United Kingdom where they could enhance their language skills (primary and secondary educational institutions offer mainly English and German classes).

Circular or short term migration characterizes especially the Roma migrants. Three main types of Roma migrants were identified. Usually the man, the head of the family is working abroad for short periods. The first type is called in Hungarian “gyulázás”, and it is in fact begging. The second one consists of collecting used and second hand goods, like furniture etc. in order to sell them at home, and the third one is agricultural work.

One of the local challenges is the problem of child custody while one of the parents is working abroad. The county, regional and local level policies should address this issue.

5.2. Perceived characteristics of youth migration in Sfântu Gheorghe

Seven semi-structured interviews with institutional actors have been conducted. They represented key institutions from the youth migration’s point of view: the director of the Local Labour Office, the mayor, three directors of educational institutions (one of the elite high school, another of the Roma school and the third of the local department of a university), the director of the community assistance office of the local public authority and the director of an agency which is mediating and placing labour force for abroad.

All the interviewed institutional actors mentioned and detailed different aspects of the relation between migration patterns and local development. However, there seems to be an agreement about the most basic points. First of all, even though they didn’t explicitly say the migration of youth is a problem, they obviously consider it as one. It is a problem because it results in a lack of workforce resupply which hinders local development on the long run. At the same time they also agreed that the low number of local attractive opportunities, jobs and investments also push the youth towards migrating. But not only the low number of opportunities, but also the low salaries, especially for entrants create a barrier in keeping the young people home.

Regarding the emigration of youth, most institutional actors enumerated much more disadvantages than advantages from the point of view of the town. They do not believe that more than a few of them

will return. Some of them consider the lack of Romanian language competence as one of the push factors for youth, because they do not feel prepared enough for the Romanian labour market. The interviewed young migrants experienced also the advantages of spending a period abroad, most of them think it is useful from the perspective of the town too. They perceive the improvement of their foreign language skills, meeting new people and cultures, accumulating financial capital, work and studying experiences, learning new habits and ideas as positive aspects of emigration.

According to the interviewed stakeholders the short distance to the next big city, only 30 km, could serve as an advantage for inhabitants. Contrary to the low level of incomes in Sfântu Gheorghe and the small scale of jobs, in Brasov there are much more possibilities and better salaries can be earned by those who are ready to commute daily. The mayor mentioned a case of a company which had decided to invest in Sfântu Gheorghe to establish a local office because the number of commuters increased at a considerable rate.

Many actors mentioned, that if Sfântu Gheorghe could improve in attracting more investors who could provide better payments then it would be a great help. Actually in the recent years in the regional capital, Brasov, the market competition became so strong that some enterprises chose to move to the nearby Sfântu Gheorghe instead, which resulted in a noticeable growth in the personal income taxes. Nevertheless these companies are not big enough to facilitate a significant change in the local migration patterns.

Brasov has other negative effects besides dominating in the attraction of investors who would move to the region. It also attracts the workers – many commute between there and Sfântu Gheorghe, but also many move. And instead of spending their money at home, supporting local services and enterprises they spend it in Brasov, which means that money is going to be missing from the commerce and economy of Sfântu Gheorghe. One of the interviewees said, in the past two decades the population of Sfântu Gheorghe decreased from around 70 000 residents to about 50 000, in which economic emigration had a major role.

The issue of **immigration** is basically irrelevant in Sfântu Gheorghe as there are practically no immigrants in the city. Only two isolated cases were mentioned, in which the head of the local employment agency was asked to help in finding workforce with sufficient skills to fill in leading roles in some local factories. As a result German and Pakistani employees were recruited. The institutional actors did not know of any plans which intended to place immigrants in Sfântu Gheorghe, therefore they did not detail if immigration is desirable or if it should be facilitated or stopped.

As one can notice, immigration is a much lesser issue than emigration. Nonetheless, there is a small intra-national migration. As the majority of Sfântu Gheorghe is Hungarian, and the law enforcement agencies usually just recruit ethnic Romanians, there are those who come from other regions to work for the gendarmerie, police etc.

On the other hand, **emigration** works on a totally different level. Most institutional actors agreed about two tendencies. One is that more people are leaving than before 2010. Their motivation is obvious: to get better salaries, living conditions and to be able to establish themselves. It became easier since those with Hungarian roots can apply for Hungarian citizenship which means a Schengen visa. (Romania may have become part of the European Union in 2007, but their join to the Schengen Area is still yet to come.) The other self-generating process is that as more people go, the more connections and bigger informal network those who stay have throughout Europe. That also makes it easier for them to find a job abroad. Because they would not just leave for the “big unknown” but to an old friend or family members who can help in making the first steps, finding accommodation etc. The receiving

countries mentioned most often were definitely the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria and Hungary. However, many times the interviewees just said “Western Europe” or “Northern Europe”.

The other tendency many mentioned by the institutional actors is that the age of the emigrants is decreasing. Especially among the Roma, who a couple of years ago were not even part of the migration waves but now even teenagers are going. But also the majority tends to leave the country at an earlier stage in their lives. Recently they don't even finish university in Romania, the students leave after their first or second semesters. The top 4-5% of the students leave right after graduation from high school, sometimes after they are contacted in their last year by elite universities from other countries (Hungary and England were named) and start their BSc there. Others – mostly Romanians – leave for universities in Brasov or Bucharest, while the Hungarian young people usually choose Cluj-Napoca or Târgu Mureş.

When we talked about the skills of the migrants one thing became clear: no matter the educational level, many leave from every group. The things that differ are what do they do abroad and how many of them leave. There was general agreement that mostly the skilled workers leave, then intellectuals and unskilled workers. Half of the interviewees mentioned the lack of workforce in healthcare thanks to the “brain drain” to Western European countries, because the salaries and the working conditions are just incomparable. One interviewee also mentioned that teachers leave for similar reasons – however, according to him, they don't work in their profession in the receiving countries.

There was also general agreement among institutional actors concerning the characteristics of **Roma migration**. An increasing number of them are migrating, but they leave for shorter periods, usually taking seasonal work, for instance in agriculture. Their destination country is more often Hungary (or Austria) than that of the other groups, thanks to their lack of – financial – resources and language skills, but they too go to Western Europe. Their activities also include “gyulázás” (a local slang for begging), and trading with used goods or goods that were thrown away. Some Roma would collect these, and resell them in Romania (most probably not in the frame of legal enterprises, an interviewee added). After they spend all the money they earned they would go back again to work, beg or collect goods for trading.

All the interviewees agreed that when we talk about the migration of the Roma it is more commuting than actually moving to other countries. After a few weeks or months they practically always return, and then go abroad again if they spent all the money they earned. According to some officers this is the same scheme as the unskilled workers follow in general. But quite the opposite of what the majority and the intellectuals do.

It is clear that all the interviewees consider **return migration** as desirable. All but one of them said that if emigrants returned with their foreign experience, new perspectives and broader set of skills they could definitely contribute to the development of Sfântu Gheorghe as well as Romania. In case they do not come back all the money, attention and time the community has invested in upbringing these young people would be lost, and the basis for future developmental prospects would be missing. The only winner is the individual, who by migrating can possibly achieve a higher living standard. Therefore the local officers came up with a few ideas that could help in bringing those working abroad home, in the following these ideas will be discussed.

Many mentioned that they do not have sufficient local resources to run or start up companies that may provide decent job opportunities on larger scale. So as a result they rely deeply on foreign direct investments that could offer positions with higher salaries but unfortunately, these are not coming. However the officers do hope if thanks to FDIs the young people could earn a proper living in Sfântu

Gheorghe they would be happy to come home. Besides attracting investors, an interviewee said more state support for entrants and employers may also improve the chances of young migrants coming home. He also pointed out that the synchronization of state ran databases (such as of healthcare, education, employment agencies etc.) is a must if they want to follow the lives of migrants.

Others said strengthening local patriotism is the key, though it's not clear how could this affect those who have already migrated. The same is true about the idea of improving the Romanian language education. As the majority of Sfântu Gheorghe is Hungarian during their student years they barely face situations where Romanian knowledge is needed. But when they enter the job market this soon becomes a huge disadvantage, to which they may respond with migration – either to Hungary or other countries where speaking English or German is enough.

The institutional actors guessed that 75-80% of such emigrants never move back to Sfântu Gheorghe, especially the Romanians who have lesser roots in the city. They are particularly exposed to the danger of becoming an “Ausländer (“foreigner”)” everywhere. In the destination country they will always remain “migrants”, but they will not feel home in Romania anymore either. Only two reasons to return were named: family and patriotism. However, the population of Sfântu Gheorghe has decreased with an estimated 20.000 residents in the last decades and many of them were economic emigrants. This suggests that the above mentioned are not enough if the city wants to keep or attract their youth home.

5.3. Results of the interview with young migrants

In total there were ten people participating in the interviews. Seven of them were males, three of them were females. They were all in their twenties or thirties, the youngest was 20 years old, the oldest 37 years old. Two of them were Roma, the remaining had Hungarian ethnicity. One of them had both Hungarian and Romanian parents. The interviews took place either after they had returned from the receiving country or while they had been visiting their home town for a shorter period.

All ten interview partners went abroad from Sfântu Gheorghe in the last ten years. Six of ten interviewees had returned from their migration, four were still living abroad. While of those, three were still thinking of returning to Romania at some point, one person planned to stay away because of his carrier. However, the return would depend on what circumstances they could achieve in their native country. These circumstances concerned financial possibilities (meaning the available salaries), the general quality and standards of living, and the available job opportunities. The one interviewee who declared not to return was told that he has no chance for working in his field if he returns to Romania. Those who returned were not planning to migrate again.

The interviewees could be classified whether they migrated with educational or labour purposes, some of them had a mixed profile. Five of them saw at least partially educational purposes in their migration. All but one finished their secondary schools in their native country before migrating, and they attended only higher educational institutes in the receiving countries. Two of them attended only short term courses or programmes in the receiving countries, while two of them completed or were completing entire programmes on university or college level. One of them migrated after finishing elementary school, and started already his secondary school in the receiving country, continued by studying at a university in the same country.

Four of the interviewees were studying in Hungary, two in the United Kingdom and one in Poland (considering that one may have been studying in more than one country). The educational institute played a significant role in migrating in case of only one interviewee, the others either had other, more significant purposes or did not plan to attend an educational institute before migrating. One of them wanted to become a priest and he migrated hoping for better education in the receiving country, only he can be characterized by “degree or diploma mobility” (FASSMANN et al. 2018: 81). There was only one who migrated because of poor financial circumstances and he did not have the chance to study in his native country. According to the literature “when young migrants go and study abroad the probability to find a job in a high wage region is higher.” (FASSMANN et al. 2018: 28)

Eight interviewees had experiences as being a labour migrant, three of them had combined (education and labour) orientation. Receiving countries included Austria, Germany, Hungary, Poland, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom. Three of them were working in positions requiring highly skilled employees, four of them in different roles for lowly skilled labour and one of them did not actually work while she was in the receiving country. Migrants with low skills were involved in the agriculture (picking strawberries), in the industry (working in factory or in the logistics), and in catering (working in kitchens and restaurants). While two of the interviewees who worked in these positions had higher education background (formally they were characterized by “brain waste”), two interviewees had never attended any educational institute and were able neither to read nor to write. They were in Austria and Germany and of course they were not able to speak a foreign language. Positions requiring highly skilled labour force meant mostly employment in the service sector, including retailing, selling, recruiting, training and translating. Good knowledge of languages had an important role for those who worked in positions requiring highly skilled employees. Thus, all the five types of labour migrants classified by KING et al. (2016) based on their level of skills and the job requirements can be identified among the interviewees.

Three of the interviewees worked only for a short term (varying from 1 week to 3 months) and returned after the period was over. There was only one of them who repeated this period several times, however, even in his case the last time of working abroad was more than a year ago. The other five interviewees worked, were working, or were planning to continue working for longer periods, meaning typically several years. Most of them had more than one position in their receiving country. Regarding working conditions only those experienced bad circumstances who worked in lowly skilled positions. Two of them even had no accommodation, they had to sleep outside during their period in the receiving country. Two of them did not actually complain about the circumstances but noted that it was either very stressful or something that local people would not do for sure. Interviewees who worked in positions with high skill requirements perceived good working conditions, only one of them noted the very stressful environment as a disadvantage. In general three of them had particularly bad experiences from working abroad (all in lowly skilled positions). The others either enjoyed being a labour migrant or perceived as an acceptable solution for the given period. There were only two of the interviewees who migrated with no financial need and wanted to fulfil their life goals in the first place.

Family played an important role in the decisions of many interviewees. Five of the interviewees had a relationship by the time of migration, three of them migrated together with their partners, and one of them followed the partner. Having a baby on the way was the reason for returning to their native country for two of the interviewees. Three of the interviewees consider themselves too young to have a family and one of them did not provide any sufficient information on the topic. Two of the interviewees started their current relationship during their time in the receiving countries. However, these relationships are still in an early stage compared to the others. Three of the interviewees already had children before migrating, the two of these who only spent weeks abroad left their kids at home, and the third migrated with his family together.

The level of consciousness and self-realisation varied on a wide spectrum. Some of the interviewees were only following other people in their migration (their parents or partners), while others had clear targets to fulfil. These were either financial goals or other aims regarding their life. Those who had clear plans were tending to more find a position with high skill requirements. Recommendations of family members and acquaintances had an important role in the decisions of many interviewees.

Different networks played an important role in many cases. This meant in most cases a network of family members and friends living abroad or who had experience of living abroad. In other cases student networks (university cooperation on the level of institutions or international student groups) had a crucial role. The role of these networks may be different. In some cases only information about the opportunity came through the network. In other cases the process of migration was supported by the network, but this kind of help was proved to be very important even during the staying in the receiving country.

Regarding the development of their native country, the interviewees had similar opinions. Almost all of them said they could see their native country developing, but only two of them thought that their native country could catch up with their receiving country. The others were either pessimistic about the future of their native country or they could not or did not want to judge the situation of their native country. The interviewees named many aspects of development in their native country including the IT sector, increasing salaries, electronic services, public security, and the cityscape of their native towns. The corrupt political system, the bureaucratic system, and the attitude of citizens were mentioned as factors hindering the development of the native country.

Table 26. Basic characteristics of the interviewees

	Gender	Age	Orientation	Destination	Short/long term	Family
#1	male	20	labour	England	short	No
#2	male	20	education	Hungary	long	No
#3	female	23	education	England	long	No
#4	male	37	labour	Germany	short	Yes
#5	female	33	labour	Austria	short	Yes
#6	male	28	education & labour	Hungary, England	long	No
#7	male	30	education & labour	Hungary, United Arab Emirates	long	Yes
#8	male	33	labour	England	long	Yes
#9	female	32	education & labour	Hungary, Poland, England	long	No (in relationship)
#10	male	33	labour	Austria	long	Yes

6. Typical biographies of young migrants

In the following chapter three biographies were selected and presented in details. All the three of the interviewees graduated from university. The first of them can be seen as a returned innovator. The second one was the only person from the selected three who experienced the Danube region. He can be characterized by a brain waste process for a four year long period when he followed the strategy of a target earner. The third one is a carrier seeker emigrant who plans to come back from the western part of Europe only to Hungary. First the milestones of their biographies will be presented in details, followed by a short analysis on their identities, their feelings about the emigrant communities. Later their types of migration will be identified and their narrative strategies. Finally the author seeks to draw an image about the role of gender based on the selected biographies.

The major biographical events of the migrants

The returned innovator

One of the selected interviewees told his story starting from his university studies until nowadays. He focused on his educational carrier, shortly on labour market experiences, family characteristics and his carrier in students' organisations. He mentioned his parents, but he was brought up by his mother, they were not in touch with his father. He graduated from the Mikes Kelemen High School then he continued his studies in Cluj-Napoca. He finished at the Faculty of Law a BA and an MA degree and he also finished European studies at Sapientia University but he did not defend his final thesis. The interviewee worked four years in Dubai (between 2011 and 2015), one year in selling sports equipment at Kappa mainly for sport clubs and more than two and a half years at Al Futtaim selling Seiko watches on the international market. He has been married since 2013 and his daughter was born in 2015. They returned two years ago. Since then he has been working for a local company and in half-time for a Turkish investor.

The target earner (example of brain waste)

The second selected interviewee detailed certain periods of his life, mainly his labour market carrier, family life, migratory trajectory and he spoke briefly about his educational carrier starting from his primary school. He finished the primary school in conservatoire on piano specialization. He did the 5-8th grades in Székely Mikó, and he graduated from commercial high school on accountancy specialization. The interviewee's parents divorced when he was 16. He continued his studies in Brasov at the University of Law because his grandfather was a lawyer but he gave up after the first semester and later he graduated from the economic university in Sfântu Gheorghe. He has a rich labour market trajectory but most of his jobs were part time jobs, he worked as an unskilled worker in order to finance his studies. He worked as a well driller, estate agent, courier, unskilled worker in construction industry and as floorwalker. After university graduation he worked for 7 years in the local public administration office, for the financial department. His mother became unemployed due to the crises. He spent three and a half year near Salzburg in the kitchen of a guesthouse as an unskilled worker and now works in the same local public administration office. The interviewee got married one and a half year ago, they are waiting now for their first baby. They returned in 2017 from Austria.

The carrier seeker emigrant

The third interviewee offered a very detailed story about her life. She started from her early childhood and she concentrated mainly on her migratory trajectory and labour market experiences but she also

provided plenty of information about her educational carrier. She spent two and a half years in Medgyes with her grandmother when she was a small child. She started her primary school in Mikó Imre School and after two years she changed to Váradi József School together with her sister. She graduated from the Mikes Kelemen High School and she continued her studies in Romanian language in Cluj-Napoca in the field of marketing at the University of Economics. She earned her first labour market experience at the local council of a district in Budapest through an Aisec fellowship for three months. She applied successfully for the next six months. She went to Poland in 2007 for a four month long fellowship, where she had to translate web pages and do online marketing. She was helped by her Romanian and Hungarian language skills. She learnt Polish together with Erasmus students in Krakow, she started a postgraduate training, passed her exams but did not finish her thesis. She went to different training courses, for instance psychotherapy. She was working in the field of market research for two and a half years. She became bored with her job and she moved to Warsaw to another job, and in 2011 she moved back to Krakow and worked as a freelancer for a company which organized trainings for a while. After the company encountered financial problems she had to move on, she was a private teacher for a year while barely getting by. In 2012 she worked for a few weeks in Bucharest. In 2013 she moved to London without any concrete job idea. After less than one month she was hired through a head hunter in a company as a trainer. After a while she moved to another similar company for a better wage and for more comfortable surroundings. Now she has a boyfriend who has two children, and she is moving to Budapest in order to live together with her partner.

The milestones of the biographies and the institutional constraints limiting the opportunities of the interviewees

One of the differences among the interviewees is where they start their stories. They were asked to start where they want, so the woman offered details from when she was born, the 33 year old man from the primary school and the 30 year old man from his high school period. All of them told the story of their lives until the date of the interview.

KING et al. distinguished three major transitions in the life-course of young people: “the transition from school or higher education to work, the transition from unemployment to employment and the transition from living at home to living independently”. (KING et al. 2016, cited by FASSMANN et al. 2018: 25) The author of the present study considered those events turning points which changed their anterior life. So in addition to the three main ones mentioned by KING et al., the change of schools, educational levels were thus “automatically”/per definition counted as milestones of their lives (table 27.). Two of the interviewees changed their schools twice in the first 12 years, the third one did not share information about his primary school. Spending periods outside their native town were considered also as major turning points. All of the selected interviewees spent a shorter or a longer time outside their hometown. The woman started at a very early stage of her childhood, by telling about living with her grandmother in Medgyes which probably helped her to learn Romanian language. The 33 year old man spent only half of a year at a university in Brasov, but the 30 year old man studied six years in Cluj-Napoca and the woman four years in Cluj-Napoca. The city of university studies is an important difference between their biographies. Their autonomy, their own everyday life started in that first period spent continuously far from home. The 33 year old man finished his university studies staying with his mother. The other two people spent a relatively short period (three and nine months) in Hungary in their last year of studies, so their first mobility started by learning abroad, by a “credit mobility” (FASSMANN et al. 2018: 29).

The major events related to their private lives appeared as important steps in their narratives (meeting their wife, moving/staying together, getting married, waiting for their baby, divorce of the parents). The 30 year old man met his wife during his first year of university studies and started to live together

with his girlfriend (later wife) from the second year of university, while the 33 year old man met his girlfriend (later wife) after he found his favourite job at the local public administration office and he started living together with her only after moving abroad to work. The first of them got married at the age of 26, the second at the age of 31.5. The woman did not mention her boyfriends during her university studies. She is not married, she has now a divorced boyfriend with two children and she plans to move to Budapest to stay together with him.

A very important turning point of their life was when they decided to go abroad for a while. The 30 year old man started to plan based on a two week long visit in the United Arab Emirates that if he fail the next bar exam they will try to find jobs in Dubai. The 33 year old man decided to go abroad after he felt the impact of economic crises on his own wage (also his mother became unemployed) and he did not see any other chance to pay the bank loan of his recently bought flat. He perceived the period of the crises as frustrating and disappointing, but posterior also useful – he had financial problems, and these motivated him to think about other job possibilities. He considers himself a slowly maturing person, because he decided at the age of 26 what he wants. The woman decided to go abroad when she was 16, but she started to plan to go to Poland during her period spent in Hungary where she met Polish people.

The 30 year old man worked at relatively few places, but he had good carrier opportunities inside them. The 33 year old man tried a lot of jobs as unskilled labourer but he worked at the same place for long time in his field, where he felt comfortable and he did not have too many professional aspirations. The woman tried several jobs, she learnt and worked at the same time, she spent ten years mostly on her carrier. According to her narrative she seems to be a flexible, self-confident, brave person who is open to new challenges and to move to new places (Warsaw, Bucharest etc.) for a while. She learnt Polish and English language on a high level. In her case we cannot speak about institutional constraints which were limiting her opportunities. The 30 year old man was discouraged by the bar exam, according to his narrative they would have remained in the country if he had passed the lawyer exam. Due to the fact that the 33 year old man could not pay the bank loan from his decreased wage and because he missed his girlfriend, he had to go abroad to solve his problems. He could have changed and he could have tried to find a better job at home, but in that period this was more difficult, and thus they paid back the whole credit in a few months from the money earned in Austria.

All of the interviewees are flat owners in their native country and all of them could afford to buy a flat/house due to their income cumulated abroad.

Table 27. Milestones of their lives

Returned innovator (30 year old man)	Target earner (33 year old man)	Carrier seeker emigrant (32 year old woman)
High school graduation and doing sports.	He changed school every fourth year (He finished the primary school in conservatoire on piano specialization then he did the 5-8 th grades in Székely Mikó, and he graduated from commercial high school on accountancy specialization.)	Moving to Medgyes to her grandmother for two years and a half when she was one and a half year old.

He studied six years in Cluj-Napoca. And he started to take part in students' organizations.	His parents divorced when he was 16.	She changed school twice. (She started her primary school in Mikó Imre School and after two years she moved to Váradi József School together with her sister. She graduated from the Mikes Kelemen High School.)
He met his wife in the middle of the first university year. From the beginning of the second year they lived together.	He continued his studies in Brasov at the University of Law.	She decided to go abroad when she was 16.
He spent three month in Pécs while writing his master thesis.	He gave up after the first semester, and later he graduated from the economic university in Sfântu Gheorghe. During the university he had several part time jobs.	She started her university studies in Cluj-Napoca.
He failed his first bar exam in 2010.	He worked for 7 years in the local public administration office, for the financial department. He met his wife in this period.	In 2006 she spent 9 months in Hungary during her university studies where she earned her first labour market experience at the local council of a district in Budapest. There she met Polish students and she started to plan moving to Poland.
They visited his girlfriend's sibling in Abu Dhabi and they started to think about going abroad.	At the age of 26 he decided what he wanted from life.	She moved to Krakow in 2007, where she studied and worked for three years.
He failed his bar exam for the second time and they decided to move to the United Arab Emirates.	He had to borrow a big amount of money, a bank loan to buy a house.	She moved for one year to Warsaw to work.
He worked four years in Dubai, one year in selling sports equipment at Kappa mainly for sport clubs and more than two and a half years at Al Futtain selling Seiko watches on the international market.	His mother became unemployed due to the crises, while his wage decreased.	She moved back to Krakow in 2011 and worked as a freelancer for a company which organized trainings for a while.
He has been married since 2013.	He spent half year away from his girlfriend. (She worked abroad).	After the company encountered financial problems she had to move on, she was a private teacher for a year while barely getting by.

They bought a half-finished house close to Sfântu Gheorghe, in Szentkirály in 2014.	He spent three and a half year in the kitchen of a guesthouse as an unskilled worker.	In 2012 she worked for a few weeks in Bucharest.
They returned in 2015 because their daughter was born at the end of August 2015.	He got married one and a half year ago.	In 2013 she moved to London without any concrete job idea. After less than one month she was hired through a head hunter in a company as a trainer. After a while she moved to another similar company for a better wage and for more comfortable surroundings.
When they arrived home he had a job offer in Sfântu Gheorghe, at a company of the parents of a former classmate, marketing-selling, with little law. He started working there from the beginning of September 2015.	Now he works in the same local public administration office and they are waiting for their baby.	Last year she invested in a flat in Sfântu Gheorghe but she feels it is now more than an investment.
	His father started recently to communicate with him after 18 years.	Now she has a boyfriend who has two children, and she is moving to Budapest in order to live together with her partner. She thinks that she spent the last ten years on her career so now it is time to focus rather on family and kids.

Identities in the biographic narrative

In all of the interviews mainly ethnic identities appear as important characteristics in the everyday lives of the minorities in their native country, and also as sources of cultural differences in the receiving countries. The father of the 30 year old man is Romanian but they were not in touch, so the interviewee does not consider Romanian an important aspect of his identity, he identifies himself as Hungarian. They experience their minority identity differently. The 33 year old man faced problems with Romanian language after returning and he feels frustrated because of the attitude of authorities and poor possibilities of language rights (the author will expand on this problem in subchapter 7.1). The woman worked for a short time in Bucharest and she was always open to learn new languages (i.e. Polish, English) so she did not experience problems related to ethnic identity, she felt home in Poland. The 30 year old man experienced that European people are respected in Dubai. English language can be used everywhere even though it is not an official language, so he does not consider the question from both sides as important as it appears sometimes in different discussions.

Their feelings about the emigrant (diaspora) community

During the interviews they were asked to compare their native and receiving countries and they spoke about citizens, cultures too. They were also asked to tell about their feelings about the emigrant

(diaspora) community in the receiving country and to compare their fellow countrymen with other immigrants.

The 30 year old man seems to have been integrated in a small Transylvanian community during the years spent in Dubai, the 30 year old man had an isolated life together with his wife while the 32 year old woman was an integrated person in Polish local society, a less integrated one in British society, and she identified two classes of Hungarian emigrants: the white and the blue collar workers with different chances of integration.

The 30 year old man did not feel that he was part of the Romanian or Hungarian community but he and his wife found their places in a smaller community formed by twenty people from Transylvania.

Except for the beggars the 33 year old man has not met Romanian or Transylvanian people near Salzburg. They have both negative and positive feelings toward Hungarians from Hungary. Due to their isolated life they did not meet the community frequently.

In Poland the woman had one Romanian good friend, who was not a typical Romanian, after ten years spent abroad. There were several Hungarians from North Hungary, usually well paid people. In the United Kingdom she observed two types of Romanians: those who have been working there as au pairs or waiters for a long time and those who arrived recently for the same jobs. Most people in both categories can be characterized by poor language skills and by working in low paid jobs. Among Hungarians she also delimited two main groups, one of them similar to Romanians and another one characterized by good language skills and well paid jobs. Those Romanians and Hungarians who do not speak English well, do not have chances to be part of the British society, they live in their own communities.

Types of migrants according to the narratives

The two men spent around three and a half or four years abroad with working, so they are returned migrants, while the woman is an emigrant who has been living abroad for ten years. Although the 30 year old man returned after 4 years and he has not started yet in fact (only legally) his own business, he represents a potential type of returned innovator, who will connect at a small scale his native and receiving countries' segments. The 33 year old man can be characterized by return of conservatism, despite he spent less than 5 years abroad. (CERASE 1974, cited by FASSMANN et al. 2018: 45) The typology of return migration should be revised, especially the time limits/borders of the periods spent abroad, due to the social and economic changes, accelerations, which have taken place since CERASE's approach.

The narrative strategy

Two of the three interviewees followed their self-realization, their idea and plans about carrier, while one of them went abroad as a result of a structural constraint, he reached a difficult financial situation due to the global crises. All of them were high-skilled migrants but, according to the terms used by KING et al. two interviewees can be named "carrier seekers", and one of three a "target earner" (KING et al. 2016 cited by FASSMANN et al. 2018: 30)

The 30 year old man described his migratory trajectory as an absolutely active and conscious strategy planned and implemented by himself and his wife.

The 33 year old man described his migratory trajectory as a fated strategy. He emphasized that he did not plan to work abroad. He had to try it because of their disadvantageous financial situation during

the crises. Although he perceived it as a constraint, he remembers that period as a financially successful one.

The woman is the most conscious person from all the young migrants interviewed during the research. She decided to go abroad when she was sixteen, she presents herself as a completely autonomous, active player of her narrative. Decisions regarding continuing her studies, going abroad, finding a job etc. were all taken by her.

Role of gender

It is hard to draw a gender-based delimitation in their narratives, because one woman and two men seem to be only a few empirical starting points. Two of the interviewees narrated their experiences as very conscious, active people who plan and realize their lives but one of them is a man and the other one a woman. All of them think that family and children are important for a complete life, but the woman is the person who spent the last ten years dominantly with her carrier, she is not married, she plans to have a family in the next years. Both of the men are married, the 30 year old one has a two year old daughter and the other is waiting now for their first baby. Their jobs do not differ based on gender, the 30 year old man and woman worked in their fields also in the period spent abroad, while the 33 year old man worked as an unskilled labourer. The men went abroad together with their girlfriends, while the woman alone (with her cat), but this detail can also be just a coincidence. So, based on the presented interviews the “the life courses of different individuals and genders” (ALLATT et al. 1987, KATZ and MONK 1993, cited by FASSMANN et al. 2018: 25) cannot be confirmed or denied.

7. Challenges connected to youth migration and policies aimed to deal with them

7.1. Young migrants on policy challenges

The interviewees faced different types of problems after returning to Romania. They compared their local experiences with those from the receiving countries. The problems enumerated by them can be classified in seven types. Certain problems and expectations of the interviewees seem real and logic from the citizens’ point of view, while others show an increased level of expectations of young people, demanding extra services from authorities. Some of the areas belong to the level of local authorities and can be treated through decisions taken by them, practices changed by them, investments realizable by them, while other areas refer to national level, a third category to private institutions (employers) and the last one to the long process of socialization which involves the role of family, school, peer group, media etc.

Communication problems with the authorities

Some interviewees had contradictory experiences with registry court and financial office in Sfântu Gheorghe. They were not informed about their tasks by the authorities. They complained about the poor communication of institutions with their clients. In some cases the communication was possible only through post office, and receiving a letter at the next village takes two weeks. Although the law 215/2001 of local public administrations would permit to change the present practices, according to the interviewees’ experiences authorities are far behind compared to western technologies and practices.

The difficulties of communication between two similar institutions placed next to each other can be illustrated by the experience of an interviewee, who moved to a village which is 5 km from Sfântu Gheorghe. He had to pay the taxes for his car at the cashier of the local public administration office in Sfântu Gheorghe, and the needed paper was sent to the local public administration office of the village through post office, which took 2-3 weeks. And the car owner did not have the right to bring the documents personally between the two local public administration offices. This problem refers again to the slow communication of the authorities, which seem to be not flexible to introduce new technologies and practices.

Bureaucratic processes

The interviewees always emphasized the differences between their native and receiving countries regarding the length and the content of the administrative processes.

One interviewee illustrated the differences between American and Romanian practices with a driver exam. There the candidate decides when she or he has time for the exam and it can be done in a few minutes, both the theoretical and the practical part (with one's own car). While in Romania there are severe rules about exams, people are programmed a few weeks or even months in advance, depending on the authorities schedule and the number of other candidates. In the United States the drivers do not need medical examination. Another interviewee had to obtain local driving licence in the United Arab Emirates. He was also positively surprised how fast the whole process went.

One of the interviewees mentioned the long period needed for a car matriculation in his native country unlike in Austria.

To sum up, the bureaucratic process is not as predictable as in western societies, and there are back-stairs, and it depends on the state officials' attitude too. Some of the mentioned problems do not belong to competence of local authorities, they are regulated by law on national level, but the local public administration could also function through more transparent and predictable mechanisms.

Attitudes of authorities

Some interviewees think that the financial part of a business administration is difficult in Romania. State institutions would have to trust in entrepreneurs similarly to other countries, because these characteristics mentioned in the interviews (lack of trust etc.) can be unattractive for young people.

So they perceive the lack of trust in citizens from the state institutions as an Eastern European speciality, while western societies are characterized by a trustful attitude between citizens and authorities.

Some interviewees think that the role of financial authorities would be not only to punish those who made a mistake in their bookkeeping, but also to inform the stakeholders about the legal rules which are changed relatively often.

An expressive comparison regarding the attitude of certain authorities offered by an interviewee was that representatives of consumer protection behave with entrepreneurs like they have just come out from jail. The mentioned institution functions as a deconcentrated one at local level, so the municipality do not have legal tools for influencing its attitude.

Problems regarding recognition

The woman who worked in the United States had to face that despite she worked there in her field, this period is not counted in her labour time here in Romania as experience or years spent by working, it will only be taken into account for her retirement.

Two of the interviewees faced difficulties with their certificates' recognition. One of them studied in Hungary and could hardly fill the required documents in Romanian language (the documents were available only in the state language). Another one studied in Germany, and her problem was that the translated certificate did not specify the length of her studies. She was not satisfied with the translation and after a few weeks the naturalization office sent her a complementary certification; according to that she can start her doctoral studies. She does not plan to continue her studies, she was only worried about the difference between BA and MA levels. Another woman did not naturalize her certificate because she considered the process complicated and she did not need it to find a job at home.

The question of certificates' recognition belongs to the national level, to the National Center for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas which functions as an institution of the Ministry of Education. It would be the individuals' responsibility to search for information about required documents and steps in the process of recognition and to obtain their certificates, issuing is possible also by mail or courier. So the process needs some investments from people to translate and legalize their documents but in this case they seem to have unreal expectations toward authorities, when they demand help in their interest.

Infrastructural problems

A bad practice of Romanian development mentioned by interviewees is the poor enhancement of public transport and infrastructure on local level. They highlighted the example of busses from Sfântu Gheorghe, which according to their perception are the cheapest and oldest Chinese ones, or 30–40 year old busses from abroad while in western societies they are frequently changed due to their carbon dioxide emissions.

The interviewees highlighted the old technologies in Romanian health care system, the lack of skilled staff but they also mentioned that maybe the healing process is more patient-friendly here than abroad, and the prices of services are also cheaper in Romania.

They expect the authorities to invest the taxes paid by citizens and companies transparently, to show the results of national insurances in better services.

Problems of the labour market

The interviewees told about the differences between the countries regarding the employers and business owners' mentality. The interviewees think that the socialization effects of the period before the regime change left its mark on the employers and business owners. They do not provide space for young employees, they do not teach them as mentors or tutors like in the United Arab Emirates where young people are treated as equal partners from the beginning.

An interviewee has bad experiences with his potential employees. He is searching for a pastry-cook and he has not been able to find one for weeks. According to his experience people are not interested in the tasks, the conditions, only in wages. Even though they offer a competitive wage they cannot find a skilled person. He mentioned that a restaurant owner has similar experiences with potential employees.

Some interviewees perceived the poor quality of services regarding catering industry as unattractive factors. More competent waiters, more attention paid on clients and more diverse food supplies and less income- and price-oriented restaurant owners would be needed.

Problems of mentality characteristics

Changes regarding citizens' mentality are also needed for the development of the country according to the interviewees, because, in their opinion, in this society envy and hate are essential characteristics toward each other. They enumerated several examples about mentality characteristics and differences compared to other societies. Some interviewees think that people are closed in their traditionalism, they are convinced that their identity can only be protected this way. The patterns of the former generations are too strongly present in this period in Romania.

Some interviewees think that wages and family members, relatives could serve as the main attractions for young migrants to return. They debated about the level of minimum wages, about perception and conditions of the income earned abroad. Some of them think that the differences would not be so huge between Romania and western societies if the comparison took into consideration the expenses too.

According to another experience people spend differently their income at home and abroad, they have different expectations and priorities, there they are more savings-oriented, and here they prefer better conditions.

Advices of the interviewees regarding a user-friendlier administration

Easy communication practices based on phone or email should be adapted in Romanian administrative systems. The interviewees recommended a **more predictable administrative system** based on **new technologies, skilled and motivated employees and representatives characterized by a trustful, positive attitude toward citizens, organizations, companies and simplified processes.**

An interviewee mentioned the **typing centres** from Dubai as a good practice in administration. There are paid services which help citizens to fill and print their required documents before they go to different authorities. These services are helpful especially for those who have problems with filling an official document.

Recommendation of interviewees concerning the local labour market

The interviewees recommend enhancing the **competence based labour market.**

One of the interviewees mentioned the **appreciation** as good practice **of the employers** abroad, while at home there is no tradition of appreciating the employees' performance. Some of them perceive the lack of appreciation as a historical heritage from the former system. Some interviewees recommended employers **to think and plan in longer term** and to appreciate their employees' performances both regarding wages and laudations.

Policy measures perceived necessary by young migrants

The interviewees mentioned some of their experiences from abroad as good practices which should be adapted by their native country.

Some interviewees worried about young people's en masse migration, while **others recommended them to spend at least one year abroad.** But it depends also on the surroundings. Some interviewees

experienced that if more people from here were together abroad, then they would not meet, communicate with locals or foreigners, only with each other. The interviewees think that western practices of young people who spend a period by studying or travelling abroad contribute to the different development of countries. While here there is no tradition of openness. An interviewee recommended initiating a **program which sends 18-19 year old young people abroad for one-two years** in order to help the mentality changes. “Going abroad for studying can be the beginning of an international career or the start of a longer time living abroad, and similarly it can be a strategy for envisaging an improvement of job opportunities back home.” (FASSMANN et al. 2018: 29)

An interviewee mentioned certain types of the **Erasmus + programs which offer possibilities to study abroad and job opportunities for a certain period**, while people can accumulate experiences and capital in order to set up their own businesses at home. He reflected on a national program in the United Arab Emirates which offers young people to study at European or American universities supported by the state to accumulate a few years of experience and at the end they have to return. Usually those people achieve positions at the highest management level of the biggest companies at home. The policy measures recommended by young migrants correspond to the aim of skills’ transfer approach, according to which “migration and developmental policies should aim to converge brain drain with brain circulation and implement specific programmes for return opportunities.” (FASSMANN et al. 2018: 40)

An interviewee recommended as good practice the **tax-free first months of the recently set up businesses** in the United Kingdom. Romanian system could also encourage its potential entrepreneurs with similar support.

An interviewee suggested that a **diversification of jobs** would be needed in the local labour market, because in Sfântu Gheorghe only **a few sectors dominate the local economy**. And a **qualified and flexible work force** would also be needed, which is prepared and open to changes. The level of tax rate per se is not sufficient as attraction, the local policy has only a few tools to attract economic investors, like reduced taxes for instance. According to a recently published study the level of local taxes in Sfântu Gheorghe is higher than in other towns of the region. The level of buildings’ tax in case of companies is 1.82% while it is 1.3% in Odorheiu Secuiesc, and 1.1% in Miercurea Ciuc. (GERÉB et al. 2017) However for investors, as the experiences of other towns show, in addition to the local tax allowances other factors are also important.

Some interviewees recommended an **urgent development regarding technologies used by authorities and a more positive attitude toward citizens**. They think that the financial authorities’ role is not only to punish, but also to inform the stakeholders. So **not only negative but also positive incentives have to be used**. They enumerated examples from western societies (Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom) where different authorities (consumer protection office, financial office) informed their clients at the first visit. While in Romania they experienced a negative attitude of the mentioned authorities, as they could not ask anything from them (their answer was to search on the internet), they faced lack of information about requirements, they were punished and they perceived the procedure like being treated as lawbreakers. So they suggested the development of a **user-friendly administration both regarding technologies and attitudes**.

Several interviewees mentioned their **poor Romanian language skills** as a problem after returning. An interviewee told about his bad experiences after returning because he did not speak Romanian. He had to solve administrative problems, and he could not find “application” forms for his problems, and he was not helped by authorities. He faced language difficulties in Romanian administration both regarding his language rights and the officials’ attitude.

The interviewees debated about Romanian and Hungarian driving licence exams, about language rights and their advantages and disadvantages. The interviewee who worked in the United Arab Emirates experienced that **although the Arabic is the only official language, all the administrative tasks can be done in English too**. He recommends this attitude to Romanian administration. So **Hungarian does not have to be an official language, it just has to be possible to use it**. The interviewees consider it absurd to write a petition or application to the Hungarian mayor in Romanian language.

7.2. Policy competences, institutional actors involved

Regarding the question of decentralization versus deconcentration of institutions Romania is characterized by a relatively centralized state and public administration system. The structure of institutions is impregnated with politics. Policies at national level are changed relatively often, depending on the current ministries. For instance in the field of education around 20 ministries were rethinking and introducing reforms again and again in the last 27 years. The results of reforms would have needed several years to take effect but due to the frequent changes the outcomes could not improve. The poor results of high school graduation, the Pisa survey results and other competence-based international comparisons illustrate the problem of the educational system's inefficiency.

Three levels of decision making exist in Romania. While general legal rules are taken on the national level, the budgets of local municipalities among other regional issues are decided on the NUTS3-level, namely by the counties, which distribute the sums originating from the central budget. The allocation of financial support is based on the population of municipalities and on the agreements of the different actors. The third level consists of local municipalities, which are responsible for local taxes, administration of municipality properties, public spaces, public services, financing local educational institutions (pre-school, elementary and secondary schools), local planning, social assistance of families, organizing cultural events in partnership.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs, and its General Inspectorate for Immigration deals with immigration on the national level. Romania has a national strategy of immigration for the period between 2015 and 2018, accepted by the decision of the government.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Justice is involved in emigration issues regarding the care of children whose parents are working abroad through its subordinated institution – the National Authority for Child Rights Protection and Adoption. On county level The General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection are subordinated to the county council.

There are deconcentrated institutions on county and local level like the Public Employment Service which belong to the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice. Theoretically these institutions are involved in migration issues, however, in practice they face the lack of information about the process, the cases, poor collaboration with peer internal and external institutions, citizens etc.

Although Romania is affected much more by emigration than by immigration, the projects implemented on national and regional level, financed by the European Union which deal with migration, mostly focus on immigration. They were initiated mainly by Romanian NGO-s. The major field of interest of the involved NGO-s are refugees. (ALEXE – PĂUNESCU 2011, STOICOVICI 2012) Details about these projects can be accessed on www.migrant.ro webpage.

The success of the local authorities is only partial, because of their limited possibilities, because of their lack of strategic planning and because of the poor economic and financial perspectives of the labour market. The dominant sectors on local level are processing industries which do not offer competitive incomes for well educated workers.

7.3. Policies aimed to deal with the consequences of youth migration

The main challenge concerned with youth migration is definitely trying to keep or attract back them home in Sfântu Gheorghe. There is general agreement among stakeholders that the emigration of the young people has a negative effect on the local development.

Negative consequence of youth migration include the “brain drain” phenomenon, which means the best educated intellectuals and skilled workers emigrate to work in Western countries, where they can live among better conditions and have a higher salary. As a result, lack of workforce resupply appears on the local job market. (However when it comes to specifying segments the interviewees did not go into details. The only sector mentioned - several times - was healthcare, where the lack of professional personnel has reached an extremely high level.) As a consequence, according to most of the interviewed institutional actors the investment the community has made in the younger generations is not returned. Hence the basis of the local (and even country-level) development will be missing on the long run. Also formulated by institutional actors but confirmed by some migrants, from a more individual perspective the emigrants may become “rootless”, meaning they will not have the feeling of belonging anywhere anymore – neither in their new countries, nor in Romania.

Except the recruitment of some German and Pakistani employees for leading positions in factories in Covasna county no one discussed further need for foreign labour force. Thus, there are no migrant communities in Sfântu Gheorghe. Still there is a segment of the population that relies heavily on state transfers. The Roma, thanks to the high rate of unemployment among them are largely dependent on welfare benefits. Their high unemployment rate has various complex reasons, including discrimination, low educational levels and, according to some interviewed institutional actors, their lack of will to integrate.

On municipality level

The only policy of the municipality to address especially emigrated people was the “Come Home Program”. Through running public services by itself the local public administration tries to prefer local undereducated work force as employees.

The municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe has implemented the “Come Home Program” to keep the young people in the city and attract those who have already emigrated. They offered sites and plans for houses to young couples, especially those with higher educational levels and children. The program did not stand young families in good stead, because of its severe criteria and disadvantageous conditions of it: too small lands, only a few types of house plans, high costs of building. Some interviewees were enthusiastic at the beginning, but after they learned the details and they thought through it on longer term they renounced to try its advantages. Their problem was that the lands offered by the local public administration office in concession were too small (300 square metres), the office offered also plans for three types of houses, and to build that types of houses would have costed

around 80 000 euro. And the office expected from the young people to respect severe criteria, for instance they should have finished it in three years and they would not have the right to sell the house for more than twenty years. In total 4 houses were built through this program (one being used as lodging by the local public administration office) and a fifth one is under construction. According to the interviewees' opinion, those who have 80 000 euro for building a house, probably will have some more to buy a larger land and a suitable house plan for their ideas/concept.

The municipality decided not to privatize any public services. Therefore it remains the biggest employer in Sfântu Gheorghe, providing job opportunities for many with lower education and poor background to make sure they do not become unemployed and possibly emigrants later on. The public services run by municipality can contribute to the empowerment of local, marginalized work force.

The municipality tries to deal with the consequences of youth migration by attracting external funds and participating in projects aimed to tackle the impact of migration. At the moment of the present study two ongoing projects are implemented: the YOUMIG and the RARE, the latter targeting especially the Roma people.

On national level

On the level of deconcentrated institutions national benefits are allocated in order to support integration of young people on the labour market. The employment agency offers unemployment benefit for those who have to cope with temporary unemployment, consulting services for students and entrants and salary support for employers so they may be more willing to take up new employees.

The local Labour Force Office tries to facilitate the connection between employers and employees, to collect information about demand and supply of the labour market, but it does not have efficient tools for its activity. The director highlighted the lack of information and cooperation between national and local deconcentrated institutions and also between sending and receiving countries. Due to the lack of legal rules on national level and an aligned system they cannot follow the paths of employees, the taxes paid by them, their capacities, needs, work experiences from abroad etc.

The private sector also uses external funds in order to re-attract and re-integrate young people in economy. On regional level different business organizations in partnership with a ministry and NGO-s implement projects financed by the European Union through the Human Capital Operational Program. These projects inform emigrants, offer online trainings to develop the entrepreneurial competences of Romanian citizens from diaspora and support selected participants to set up their enterprises.

There are some national and European project based financial tools which try to support young people (Start Ups, hiring recently graduated workers, commuting, moving to other settlements in order to work etc.). Though only little information reaches the target group, and they also face numerous difficulties related to the mentioned programs (support for commuting and moving means a symbolic amount of money, not a real help; employers are not motivated to hire recently graduated labourers; Start Up programs have severe criteria, there are plenty of applicants, only those with the highest points are financed, the period of evaluation of the projects is long and unpredictable). And these represent only a small part of the needed support programs.

The mentioned activities aim to deal not with the consequences but with the causes of youth migration, to prevent emigration, though the experiences of the last few years show that they faced the problem of efficiency.

8. OUTLOOK, CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Migratory trends in local society

In the municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe emigration is the most important migratory trend, immigration characterizes the situation only to a limited extent, newcomers are mainly internal migrants, Romanian citizens from the rural surroundings. Among emigrants one can identify short term migrants – this type is distinctive of Roma migrants, too; long term migrants, most of them aiming to earn a living through their labour migration; while a smaller group studies and works abroad at the same time. There are also return migrants but it is hard to estimate their proportions (according to the opinions of institutional actors 20-25% of young migrants return), the survey planned for the next phase of the project is expected to provide more information in this regard.

Although the origins of the present demographic situation are embedded in the political and economic processes of the socialist era, and the legacy of this period can still be felt in the current processes, the case study focuses only on the changes that happened after 1989. Major changes occurred both on a national level and on a local level, the number of inhabitants decreased mainly because of emigration. The most difficult part of elaborating the chapter about the migratory trends was that it is almost impossible to find reliable data on the local level. One of the problems is that the Statistical Institute collects data from the local public administration, but publishes only aggregated data on the national, regional and NUTS3 level. Another problem is the reliability of data, especially those regarding migration. For instance less than 10% of emigrants registered by Eurostat appear in Romanian statistics, but information about the basic demographic characteristics of the population is also hard to find and to trust. The population of the town decreased by more than 5,000 inhabitants between the last two censuses. Further changes may be found in the target group as the proportion of young generations aged 15-19 decreased by 52.2% in ten years, the proportion of those aged between 20-24 years by 34.9%. Given the dominant role of emigration, all projection scenarios assume a serious decrease in the population by 2035.

As one can notice also from the surveys mentioned in previous empirical research, an increasing proportion of young people are affected by migration. A significant part of youth plans to become a labour migrant and their preferred destination countries have changed in the last one and a half decades. While in the beginning of the period they preferred Hungary as a receiving country, in the last decade they would rather go to Germany and to the United Kingdom. Another difference compared to the last decades is that labour migrants nowadays are helped in the beginning by their networks abroad, so they usually do not have to find a job or accommodation etc. alone.

Migration and development

“So far there is no uniform opinion on how migration and development affect each other but it is widely recognized that there is no unidirectional impact and that the developmental consequences of emigration are context-specific.” (FASSMANN et al. 2018: 54)

Sfântu Gheorghe is a small town located in one of the smallest and poorest counties in the central part of Romania. It can be characterized by a weak economic situation (low level of wages, of added values, local economy is dominated by processing industry which does not need labourers with a high level of education etc.). One of the most important strengths of the town is its calm atmosphere and the

cultural events which can serve as relatively attractive factors for young people, families, and returning migrants.

The town has to invest in the stimulation of local entrepreneurship – this is important both from the perspective of the development of a dynamic economic sector and from the perspective of diminishing the migration trend of young people moving to other communities. Solutions in this domain are diverse and they consist of business incubators, co-working places, stimulation of start-ups, development of a community centre of carriers etc. Investment in the development of entrepreneurial spirit at local level is essential. Big investments are necessary and important, but small businesses based on local entrepreneurship can induce a diversification of the economy and at the same time reduce dependence on the public sector or one single investor.

The development of higher education in Sfântu Gheorghe is a welcomed step in the growth of competitiveness of the municipality. But it is necessary for the administration to develop policies proactively, not only to keep young people in the community, but also to attract talent and to enhance relations with diasporas which can support local development.

The opening of a new extension of Sapiientia University could enhance the attractiveness of the municipality both for young people (in order to continue their studies) and for investors attracted by qualified labour force. The supply of a highly-educated workforce influences the attractiveness of the town for investors. But the local department of Babeş-Bolyai University is expected to be closed in the next few years because of a lack of students, which can reduce the attractiveness of the municipality both for young people and investors.

The dialogue between the business sector and educational institutions should be enhanced, the programmes of high schools and technical colleges should be based more on the demands of the labour market, long-term collaborations between local companies and schools could facilitate the integration of graduated students on the labour market.

A relatively developed network of NGOs exists in the town, which offers diverse social services, with the majority of organizations offering these services at least on municipality level. In this context cooperation between the public and non-profit sector would be opportune and can become an important factor in achieving the proposed objectives regarding access and quality of social services.

Regarding the emigration of youth, most institutional actors enumerated many more disadvantages than advantages from the point of view of the town. They do not believe that more than a few of them will return. Some of the institutional actors consider the lack of Romanian language competence as one of the push factors for youth, because young people, it seems, do not feel prepared enough for the Romanian labour market. The interviewed young migrants experienced also the advantages of spending some time abroad, and most of them think their experiences are useful from the perspective of the town, too. They perceive the improvement of their foreign language skills, meeting new people and cultures, accumulating financial capital, work and studying experiences, learning new habits and ideas – the “social remittances” (ELEZAJ et al. 2012, cited by FASSMANN et al. 2018: 38), too – as positive aspects of emigration. One of the items listed as social remittances may be a more open behaviour toward diversity in the long term, as contacts with ‘otherness’ can help in the deconstruction of prejudices.

According to the cited literature, the players involved in the migration process (institutional actors, sending surroundings etc.) should revise their former image about migration, as “emigration can nowadays be perceived as a chance to relieve labour markets by offering work and income somewhere, and this can lead to poverty reduction (e.g. by target earning or remittances). Other potentials for emigration countries are the improvement of skills and the transfer of knowledge and investments. (...) A growing number of governments have been recognizing that their diaspora can contribute to the development of their home countries through remittances, financial investments, as well as through transfer of knowledge and skills.” (FASSMANN et al. 2018: 57, 60)

And the benefits of the so-called triple win situation can be reaped in the country of origin on the one hand through keeping contact with the diaspora, and on the other through encouraging return migration. By analysing the Hungarian diaspora policy after 2010 Herner Kovács concluded that “the international toolkit of diaspora politics offers a range of possibilities for homeland governments to reach and engage their diaspora. Based on the characteristic features of the diaspora, Hungarian diaspora politics managed to define its primary goals: the integration of the “diaspora individual” into the diaspora community and its organization; enhanced connection to Hungary from the side of the diaspora; strengthening the national identity of the diaspora; exploitation of the economic, professional potential of the diaspora as well as their ability to improve the image of Hungary abroad; and finding, “identifying” and reaching the members of the newest diaspora.” (HERNER KOVÁCS 2014: 67) Regarding encouraging return migration GALGÓCZI et al. formulated that concrete, diverse actions are needed in the fields of housing, child care, labour market etc. “The long-term priorities of the programmes which facilitate return migration usually are: housing support policies, especially for families with children, developing child care provisions, raising the standards of employer-employee relations, changing the tax and social benefit systems to support families, lessening bureaucratic obstacles for launching and running businesses etc. (GALGÓCZI et al. 2016, cited by FASSMANN et al. 2018: 36).

Major policy challenges

Besides attracting investors, according to the institutional interviewees’ opinions more state support for entrants and employers may also improve the chances of young migrants coming home. They also pointed out that the synchronization of state-ran databases (such as of healthcare, education, employment agencies etc.) is a must if they want to follow the lives of migrants. The mentioned needs – state support and a unified database system – generally belong to the remit of the national level, but scholarships can be allocated also by the municipality (from external, project-based funds) and cooperation and data exchange depends on the involved institutions on local level, which is possible to engage without any national initiatives.

According to some institutional interviewees strengthening local patriotism (initiated/realized by schools) is the key. For those who have already migrated, the thematic events detailed in the following part (recommended pilot projects) could serve as a step in building and strengthening the network with their hometown. Another needed step would be the improvement of the Romanian language education. As the majority of Sfântu Gheorghe is Hungarian during their student years they barely face situations where knowledge of Romanian is needed. But when they enter the job market this soon becomes a huge disadvantage, to which they may respond with migration – either to Hungary or other countries where speaking/learning English or German is enough.

The young migrant interviewees, who were thinking of returning somehow, mentioned however that they had other priorities as well, their return would depend also on what circumstances they found in

their native country. These circumstances concerned financial possibilities (meaning the available salaries), the general quality and standards of living, and the available job opportunities.

The interviewees named many aspects of development in their native country, including the strength of the IT sector, increasing salaries, the presence of electronic services, public security, and the cityscape of their native town. The corrupt political system, the bureaucratic system, and the attitude of citizens were mentioned as factors hindering the development of the native country.

The migrant interviewees faced different types of problems after returning to Romania. The problems they mentioned can be classified into seven types: **communication problems with the authorities, bureaucratic processes, attitudes of authorities, problems regarding naturalization, poor infrastructure, problems of the labour market and challenges regarding mentality.**

Regarding a user-friendlier administration the young interviewees advised that easy communication practices based on phone or email should be adopted in Romanian administrative systems. The interviewees recommended a **more predictable administrative system** based on **new technologies, skilled and motivated employees and representatives characterized by a trustful, positive attitude toward citizens, organizations, companies and simplified processes.**

Concerning the local labour market the interviewees recommend enhancing the **competence based labour market.**

Some interviewees mentioned **appreciation by employers** abroad as good practice, while at home there is no tradition of appreciating the employees' performance. Some of them perceive the lack of appreciation as a historical heritage from the former socialist system. Some interviewees recommended employers **to think and plan for longer term** and to appreciate their employees' performances both regarding wages and promotions.

Due to the fact that migration became a widespread strategy in the last decade, young people often reach their destination places helped by their networks abroad, the approach of LEE – according to which – “migrants often have a lack of knowledge about the area of destination, which results in an element of ignorance or even mystery about this area” (LEE 1966 cited by FASSMANN et al. 2018: 22) can be partially characteristic of the studied population. Some of them have a picture about their prospective conditions before arriving, but their migration “takes place despite unfavourable conditions in cities of destination as economically rational choice for individual migrants.” (HARRIS – TODARO 1970, cited by FASSMANN et al. 2018: 22)

Policy measures perceived necessary by young migrants

Some of the needs suggested by young migrants can be handled by local policies, while others would require measures belonging to national competences.

They recommended initiating a **programme which sends 18-19 year-olds abroad for one or two years** in order to facilitate a change in mentality. This idea could be helped by local scholarships offered by representatives of the public and private sectors.

Certain types of **Erasmus + programmes offer opportunities to study abroad and job opportunities for a certain period**, while people can accumulate experiences and capital in order to set up their own businesses at home, **but they are not well-known by the target groups.** The advocacy services recommended in the final part of the chapter could spread these types of information, too, as well as those concerning Start Up programs etc.

The Romanian system could encourage its potential entrepreneurs by supporting the **tax-free first months** offer for **recently-set-up businesses**. **The municipality can only reduce its own taxes for starting enterprises, which is not a sufficient condition of facilitating local economy.**

A **diversification of jobs** would be needed in the local labour market, because in Sfântu Gheorghe only **a few sectors dominate the local economy**. And a **qualified and flexible work force** would also be needed, which is prepared for and open to changes. Although the level of tax rates per se is not sufficient as an attraction, the local policy could try to attract economic investors through its own tools, like reduced taxes, for instance.

Some interviewees recommended an **urgent development regarding technologies used by authorities and a more positive attitude toward citizens**. They think that the financial authorities' role is not only to punish, but also to inform the stakeholders. So **not only negative but also positive incentives have to be used**. They enumerated examples from western societies where different authorities (consumer protection office, financial office) informed their clients at the first visit. So they suggested the development of a **user-friendly administration both regarding technologies and attitudes**.

According to the interviewees' experience **Hungarian does not have to be an official language, it just has to be possible to use it in communication with institutions**.

The interviewees' recommendations regarding **tax exceptions** and **streamlined bureaucratic procedures for investments** correspond to some of the policy measures existing in other sending countries, for instance those mentioned by JONKERS as "permanent return programmes (encouraging permanent return of highly skilled migrants to their home country by providing tax cuts, attractive research facilities or bonus payments)." (JONKERS 2008, cited by FASSMANN et al. 2018: 61)

The local strategy of YOUMIG – similarly to the RE-Turn project's, should aim at "introducing joint strategies to promote remigration as a source of innovative enterprise development; and developing and implementing services needed to support potential migrants in their wish to return." (FASSMANN et al. 2018: 68)

About present practices on local level

The local public administration initiated the so called *Come home* programme which failed because of its severe criteria and disadvantageous conditions. The decision makers should revise their concept about the mentioned programme as soon as possible, in order to achieve measurable results. The criteria have to be modified: the size of home-building plots offered should be revised based on a real estate market analysis and/or consultation of experts (according to the interviewees the target population perceives it necessary to double it at least or rather triple the size), more diversity in home designs is needed, and the rules of selling the house should be more permissive. The municipality tries to attract young people home through infrastructural and cultural investments. Economic investments, attraction of employers, diversification of local economy, more competitive labour market supply would be needed in order to offer competitive wages and jobs for young people.

The elite high schools are also partners to the municipality in its objective to attract young people home. Their main tool in the process is enhancing the local identity through extracurricular cultural programmes. In one of the elite schools the process is started in primary classes with folk dancing and continued by personal development activities implemented by form masters. They also organize excursions with Romanian students and run a multilingual school magazine, thus creating opportunities for Hungarian young people to improve their Romanian language skills, which is essential

if they want to work in Romania. They try to introduce more and more a competence-based education, to encourage talent management activities, to differentiate groups by the pupils' capabilities, and to organize workgroups where students can combine and implement their knowledge of natural sciences etc. In addition, they maintain a "folk club" to cultivate traditions and strengthen local patriotism. All the enumerated activities aim to enhance students' skills in order to become a flexible workforce and to build ties to their hometown. Despite the aforementioned endeavours, the talented students with good academic results generally do not return to Sfântu Gheorghe according to the alumni statistics of the last decades.

Most of the interviewees feel attracted not only by their families and friends but also by certain aspects of the local municipality. According to some interviewees' opinions the cultural programmes of the town can function as attractions for returning migrants. Probably mainly, but not exclusively, the more educated middle class can be targeted by cultural events, the relative wide range (compared to other small towns) of programmes offered by local festivals may attract other strata, too.

The municipality decided not to privatize any public services. Therefore it remains the biggest employer in Sfântu Gheorghe, providing job opportunities for many with lower education levels and a poor background to make sure they do not become unemployed and possibly emigrants later on.

Recommended pilot projects

Similarly to certain similar projects, in the case of YOUMIG "the overall objective of the strategies should be developing the diversity of the local economy, support a flexible, family-friendly labour market, and all strategies that are suitable to improve the image and self-confidence of the region as a whole." (FASSMANN et al. 2018: 66)

The areas of interventions identified by the authors of the Re-Turn project in their Toolkit in order to support the reintegration of returned migrants would be useful to be adopted also in the case of Sfântu Gheorghe. They established three main areas of intervention: **re-attract** (PR strategy improving the image of the home region, e.g., postcards or photo calendars as reminders from home), **re-integrate** (commuters' day, job portal, recognition of qualifications, re-integration training courses etc.), **re-employ** (supporting entrepreneurs in the employment of returnees, or supporting returnees who are planning to start their own business) and general aims (ambassador, hotline, website). (SCHMIDTCHEN 2012)

Finally, starting from the challenges and needs formulated by the stakeholders (migrants and involved institutions) and from good practices in other societies, the study recommends three pilot projects which aim to reintegrate young migrants into the local economy, and two pilots (one of them can be handled in a parallel, special project) which help them in their reintegration into the local community/society.

Reintegration in local economy

During the reintegration process returnees face administrative challenges, like in connection with the recognition of their certificates, recognition of their time spent in work abroad, tax and health-care issues etc. A **consultancy service** offered by an NGO would help their connections to the labour market. Their families and personal network usually cannot fulfil the role of proper information sources, help in administrative steps, legal advice. A department of the local public administration office would be able to assume this role with the appropriate resources. The implementation of the service could be possible through a frequently updated webpage with information about needed steps, documents available in Romanian and Hungarian languages, links to the authorities' websites where the migrants

should be referred to, and an employee who can help the target group personally with information. The sepsinet.ro webpage initiated during the SEEMIG project could be modified in order to function as an information platform. The municipality may attract the necessary financial support for the mentioned activities from local, national and EU-level administrative projects. The feasibility depends also on the continuity of activities and on informed and motivated human resources.

Another pilot project dealing with the effects of youth migration could be similar to a project which aimed to integrate migrants into the Georgian labour market. The mentioned example started from mapping the competences of returnees and the needs of potential employers. On the one hand the project offered to the returned migrants “vocational training, technical retraining and psychological support to adapt their competences to the local labour market needs, and offered them job placement and business development assistance.” (INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC RESEARCH LJUBLJANA 2017: 27) On the other hand the partners of the project “also elaborated recommendations for employers and policymakers regarding the reintegration of qualified (return) migrants into the Georgian economy.” (INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC RESEARCH LJUBLJANA 2017: 27) A **database** which helps **to link the demand and supply of the labour market** would be helpful and measures of reintegration through **personalized trainings – mentoring and tutoring activities – and psychological support of adaptation** could contribute to attracting back skilled workers. The feasibility of the project depends on the target groups and institutions. Information should reach young people, this process can face the difficulty that they are often not registered as leavers and returners. The employers should be sensitized in order to have an open, positive attitude to collaborating in the mapping and training processes. They should put efforts in forming their mentoring and tutoring systems. There is no tradition of psychological support in the country, probably civil organizations will play an important role in this part, if they receive project-based financial subsidies/allocations in this regard from local/national/international sponsors. Thus the success of the process requires collaboration and efforts from young people, local institutions and employers, and new mechanisms should be introduced, but if the involved partners understand the essence of long-term planning they will be motivated not only by project-based support. The host partner of the pilot project may be the local Labour Office.

Regarding pilot projects focusing on both returned migrants and emigrants, one should take into consideration an initiative of **facilitating entrepreneurship** among migrants in order to invest their incomes not only in real estate at home, but also in **setting up businesses, investing in the local economy, saving financial capital**. The mentioned facilitation should start by surveying the present situation, characteristics, needs, plans of the target populations. Online and offline information campaigns and training programmes would also be useful about start-ups, administrative issues, business coaching etc. The challenges of the project consist of finding and involving the host organization and its partners (NGO-s of entrepreneurs, Labour Office, incubator house, chamber of commerce, financial institutions who are able to offer financial tools like micro-credit, loans for housing, mutual investment funds, pension and child education savings schemes etc.), on reaching the target populations, on realizing the business coaching and the follow-up of new entrepreneurs, on attracting financial tools for the project, on achieving the proper indicators of success in short, middle and long term. At the moment of the study an initiative was launched by a bank in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania and with the League of Romanian Students Abroad in order to attract young people back and to support their entrepreneurial activities. The *Be an Entrepreneur at Home* programme offers trainings and professional consultancy for at least 200 people, and it will support 22 business plans with a “kick-off” capital of 40,000 euros. (<http://antreprenoracasa.ro/>)

Reintegration in local society

In a relatively populated and developed village from the neighbouring county the mayor and his civil partners initiated to organize thematic meetings once a year for high skilled people who originate from that village. Their aim is to remain in contact with their former inhabitants, to inform each other about their work, carrier, plans etc. and to mobilize them in special cases to contribute their knowledge, networks etc. to local development. Similar initiatives could have a positive effect on the **local identity** of the leavers and on the **cultural, economic etc. programmes at local level**. As the host of the initiatives an NGO or a department of the local public administration office would be able to organize events and to communicate with their migrants. The challenges of similar initiatives may be the lack of proper communication and timing of the events, the gap between the needs and willingness of the target group and the initiators, but these problems have to be treated by mapping stakeholders' expectations at the beginning.

Regarding **Roma** migrants, multiple activities would be needed, which were partially started by social NGO-s who work with vulnerable groups. Roma young people migrate usually to Hungary, Germany and Austria as seasonal labourers in agriculture. They could be helped by **basic German-language trainings, and workshops for enhancing their time- and money management skills**. Due to their negative experiences and disadvantages, **mediation services** would also be needed **in child care and those related to the labour market**. The feasibility of the pilot project does not only depend on social NGO-s, but also on whether the proper information reaches the target group, on the willingness and steadiness of Roma young people to participate. The community assistance office of the local public administration can also support the training process of developing the financial literacy of marginalized groups. There is a special programme ongoing in the town parallel with the YOUMIG project, which aims to enhance the capacities of and cooperation among actors with a stake in the labour market participation of the Roma, in order to better exploit their economic potential. The **RARE** (Changing Discourses, Changing Practices: The Roma as Human Resources) project is also an interregional one, and can address and integrate the recommendations of the YOUMIG project concerning Roma people.

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ANNEX 1: Table with interviews with institutional actors

Institution	Person
Local Labour Office	Director
Local department of Babes-Bolyai University	director, former county councillor
Local public administration office	Mayor
Mikó Imre High School	director, local councillor
Community Assistance office of local public administration	director
Flamingo Jobs Agency	manager
Néri Szent Fülöp School	director

ANNEX 2: Table with interviews with young migrants

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Position</i>
Gender	Male	7
	Female	3
Educational attainment	Primary education	2
	Secondary education	5
	Tertiary education	3
Family status	With children	4
	Without children	6
Type of migration	Returning migrant	2
	Short term migrant	4
	Commuter	0
	Emigrant	4
	Immigrant	0
Employment status	Student	2
	Employed	6
	Unemployed	2
Country of origin/destination	The United Kingdom, Austria, Germany, Hungary, Dubai, Poland	

ANNEX 3: Focus group, characteristics of participants

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Position</i>
Gender	Male	4
	Female	5
Educational attainment	Primary education	0
	Secondary education	1
	Tertiary education	8
Family status	With children	3
	Without children	6
Type of migration	Returning migrant	9
	Short term migrant	0
	Commuter	0
	Emigrant	0
	Immigrant	0
Employment status	Student	0
	Employed	8
	Unemployed	1
Country of origin/destination	The United Kingdom, Austria, Germany, Hungary, Dubai, the United States of America, Netherland, Greece	

ANNEX 4: Population pyramids according to the projections

Figure 11. Population pyramids in 2017, 2025, 2030 and 2035 in case of zero net migration

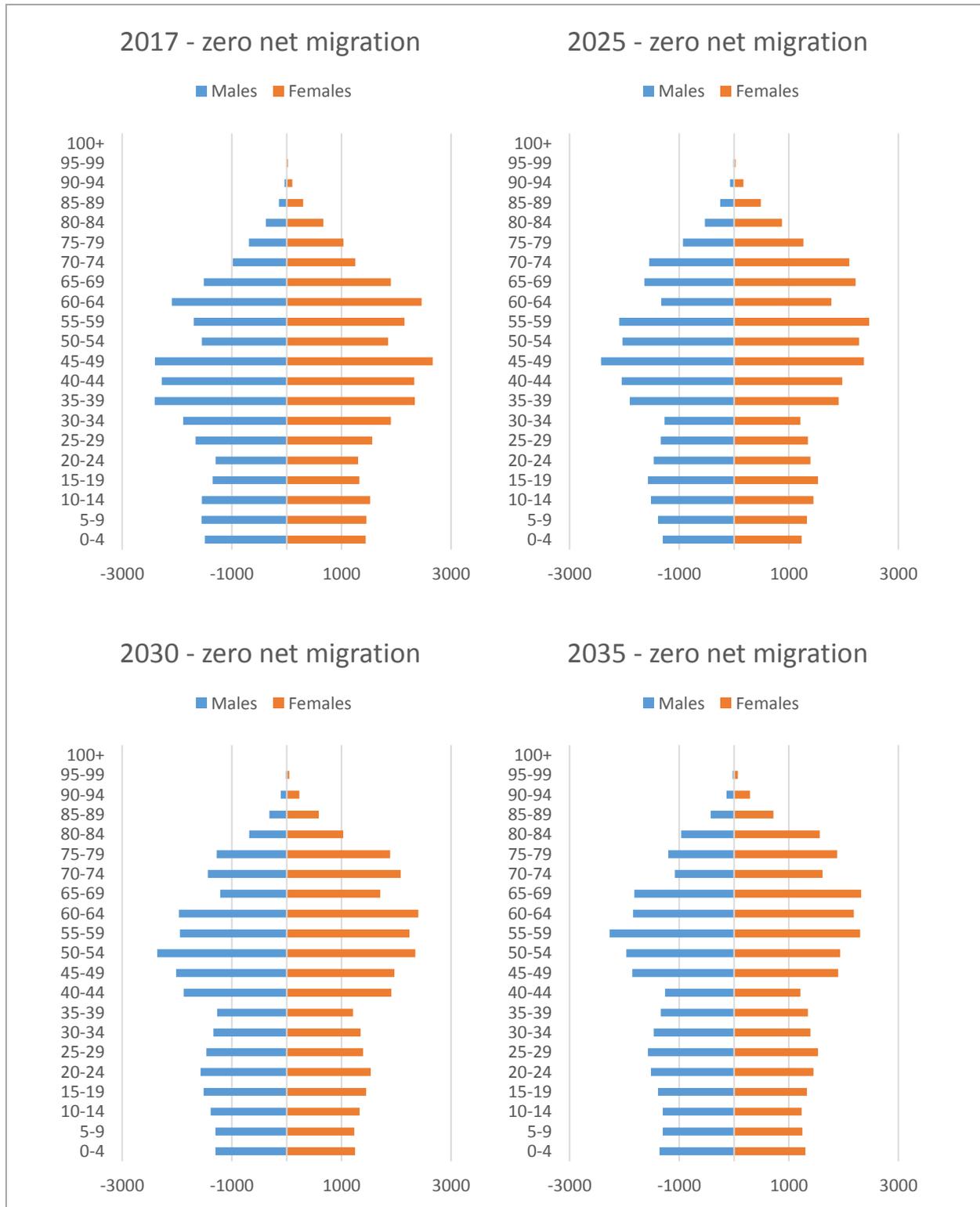


Figure 12. Population pyramids in 2017, 2025, 2030 and 2035 in case of low net migration

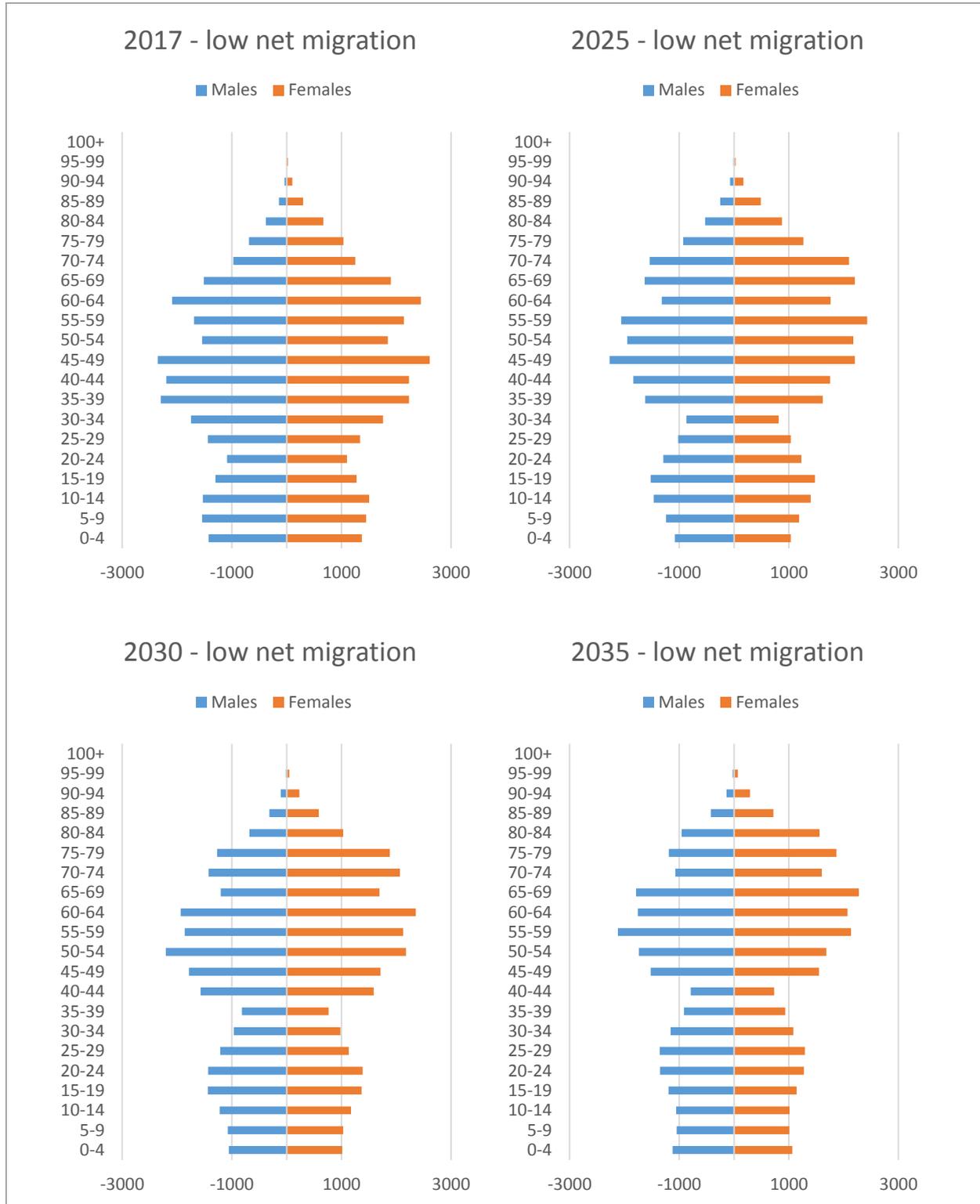


Figure 13. Population pyramids in 2017, 2025, 2030 and 2035 in case of medium net migration



Figure 14. Population pyramids in 2017, 2025, 2030 and 2035 in case of high net migration

