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**FACULTY OF ECONOMIC SCIENCES**

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**MANAGEMENT OF MIGRATION PROCESSES IN THE CONTEXT  
OF A COMPETITIVE LABOR MARKET DEVELOPMENT  
(THE CASE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA)**

**521.03 ECONOMY AND MANAGEMENT IN THE FIELD OF ACTIVITY**

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## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

**Relevance and significance of the topic under study.** In the context of globalization and international economic integration, countries with strong economies are engaged in intense competition to attract the workforce needed to address existing labor market shortages (Micinski, 2022; Lami et al., 2022). Recent demographic changes in the European region, characterized by declining birth rates and an aging population, have exacerbated labor shortages, putting pressure on human resources and the sustainability of labor markets. The international competition for labor is supported by policies designed to attract foreign workers through comprehensive benefits packages, which include social security, advanced employment opportunities, and competitive wages.

This international competition for labor poses significant challenges for less developed countries of origin, such as the Republic of Moldova, which faces a persistent labor force exodus. The Republic of Moldova entered this competition approximately three decades ago, following its independence and opening to the international community. During this period, the population structure has undergone profound changes, including rapid depopulation, a decrease in the working-age population, and demographic aging. Approximately 93% of the population decline over the past thirty years is attributed to international migration (Gagauz et al., 2021). Consequently, the decline in local labor resources due to migration further drives the labor exodus (Badarau, 2023).

In the present context, efficient migration management is crucial for ensuring labor market competitiveness in the Republic of Moldova. Currently, migration management in Moldova is characterized by reactive measures addressing emergent issues related to migration, lacking a clearly defined long-term strategic objective. At the same time, a major challenge remains the fragmented management of migration processes, with responsibilities dispersed across various public authorities. This highlights the need to strengthen and improve the mechanisms, methods, and tools that enable public institutions to implement and coordinate migration policies effectively.

In addition, the study of effective international migration management is of strategic importance, as migration continues to be a complex and dynamic process in the Republic of Moldova, exerting a significant influence on national policy directions and the dynamics of regional and international relations. In the context of EU integration negotiations, following the 2014 signing of the Association Agreement and the attainment of EU candidate status in 2022, alignment of the national legal framework with European standards has become an essential priority for the near future.

**Overview of the current state of research.** Macroeconomic conditions and widening income disparities between countries often intensify migrant flows (Urbanski, 2022). Moreover, economic differences, such as higher living standards, access to quality public services, and cultural and recreational amenities, play a significant role in migration dynamics (Thet, 2012). At the same time, labor attraction and retention policies are increasingly centered on facilitating the entry and integration of highly skilled migrants and talent (Ewers, 2023), as well as individuals with critical skills needed in essential sectors such as healthcare and technology (Ferreira, 2024; Lim, 2022).

The relationship between the emigration of Moldovan citizens and the labor market lies in the fact that migration is driven by low wages (Savelieva and Zaharov, 2021; Birca and Mamaliga, 2019), poor job quality, underutilization of human potential, and low labor productivity, resulting from an unfavorable occupational structure (Bîrcă et al., 2023). These factors discourage the population from remaining active in the domestic labor market, instead directing them toward emigration in search of better employment opportunities (Nirean and Corețchi, 2019).

Despite the critical importance of migration management in the context of contemporary migration dynamics, and its need to hold priority on the political agenda, it remains inadequately addressed in the Republic of Moldova. Currently, there is a significant gap in research offering practical recommendations for optimal strategies to manage migration flows in ways that maximize socioeconomic benefits and minimize adverse impacts. Additionally, a coherent, integrated approach is lacking, one that aligns migration processes with the development of the domestic labor market, including strategies to harness the contributions of migrants and the diaspora.

**The object of the research:** migration processes and their relationship with the labor market in the Republic of Moldova. **The subject of the research:** migration management aimed at developing a competitive labor market, considering the specific characteristics of migration processes and key socioeconomic factors.

**The aim of the research** is to enhance the efficiency of the migration management mechanism to support the development of a competitive labor market in the Republic of Moldova.

In order to achieve the proposed aim, the following **objectives** were established: To substantiate the theoretical and methodological framework for migration management in the context of developing a competitive labor market (i); To determine the trends and specific characteristics of migration processes in the Republic of Moldova (ii); To identify and analyze the socioeconomic determinants of migration (iii); To analyze the dynamics and structural characteristics of the labor market (iv); To identify international models and practices applied in migration management (v); To assess the current system of international migration management in the Republic of Moldova (vi); To develop recommendations for improving international migration management in the Republic of Moldova to enhance the competitiveness of the domestic labor market (vii).

**General hypothesis:** the management of international migration in the Republic of Moldova to strengthen a competitive labor market is shaped by the existing legal and institutional framework, as well as the integration and alignment of migration policies with labor market development strategies.

**Working Hypotheses:** The management of migration processes can be improved through the refinement of the current mechanism, including the strengthening of the existing institutional infrastructure (i); An optimized mechanism for managing migration processes will contribute to enhancing the competitiveness of the domestic labor market (ii); Monitoring performance and identifying deficiencies based on relevant indicators will facilitate prompt decision-making to address shortcomings in the functioning of the migration management mechanism (iii).

**Research methodology.** *The theoretical basis* of the research is founded on economic migration theories, including neoclassical economic theory (L.A. Saajdad, J.R. Harris, M.P. Todaro, G.J. Borjas), the new economic theory of migration (O. Stark, D.E. Bloom), labor market segmentation theory (M.J. Piore, P.D. Doering, R.T. Averitt, W.T. Dickens, K. Lang), world systems theory (M. Wallerstein), push-pull theory (E.S. Lee), network theory (D. Massey), and change theory (C. Weiss). *The methodological basis* integrates theoretical and methodological orientations such as the complex approach and systemic approach, supplemented by a range of theoretical-empirical methods, including economic and mathematical statistics, economic analysis and synthesis, SWOT analysis, forecasting, in-depth individual interviews, content analysis, and general scientific methods such as induction, deduction, comparative method, historical method, generalization, and synthesis of material. *The informational and statistical basis* comprises statistical data collected by the author from various national and international institutions related to migration and the labor market. Key sources include the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), OECD, Eurostat, as well as national statistical agencies from Italy (Immigrati.Stat), Russia (Rosstat), Germany (GENESIS-Online Database), the United States (Census.gov), Canada (Statistics Canada), and Israel (Toltz, 2020), among others. *The empirical basis* of the research consists of five studies conducted by the author: three quantitative and two qualitative studies. These studies examine trends and specific characteristics of international migration in the context of relevant

socioeconomic factors, the economic and social reintegration of returning migrants, the current development level of the labor market, demographic dividend estimation, the main challenges of the existing migration management system, and potential avenues for improvement.

**The scientific novelty and originality of the research** lies in its comprehensive and interdisciplinary analysis of international migration management in the Republic of Moldova, offering a detailed perspective on the evolution of migration processes, trends, and the development of the labor market. The research makes an innovative contribution through: developing a methodological framework for studying migration management in the context of a competitive labor market (i); defining the concepts of „migration management”, „migration governance”, „migration regulation” and „competitive labor market” (ii); determining the scale of emigration over the past three decades (1989–2022), identifying emigration waves, destination countries, and net migration (iii); identifying challenges faced by returning migrants in labor market integration and entrepreneurial initiatives (iv); conducting retrospective and prospective estimates of the demographic dividend (1990–2040), highlighting migration's impact on its scale and duration (v); developing an integrated migration management concept and its implementation mechanism, including the argument for establishing a Migration Coordination Center (vi); development, based on the Theory of Change, a set of actions for managing migration to strengthen the competitive labor market (vii); and formulating proposals to optimize migration management processes in Moldova in the context of developing a competitive labor market (viii).

**The solved scientific problem:** the scientific and practical foundation of an integrated concept for migration management and its implementation mechanism, aimed at improving international migration management and developing a competitive labor market in the Republic of Moldova.

**The theoretical significance of the research** lies in the clear and detailed delineation of the concepts of „migration management”, „migration governance”, „migration regulation” and „competitive labor market” along with the development of a theoretically grounded, integrated migration management concept and implementation mechanism. These findings enhance existing perspectives on migration management in connection with the development of a competitive labor market, offering specific relevance for emerging economies experiencing high levels of international labor mobility. The integrated conceptualization of policy measures and strategies strengthens the theoretical framework for migration and labor market management within a context of increased human resource mobility. The research provides robust theoretical and methodological foundations, stimulating further study in the field of migration and supporting integration into leading international projects.

**The practical value of the research** lies in its potential application by Moldovan authorities as a scientific and analytical foundation for the development and implementation of strategies, programs, and other policies related to migration and employment. The study is particularly valuable for its provision of an improved migration management mechanism, along with targeted actions to enhance the competitiveness of the labor market. The findings can support the professional training of specialists in economics and public administration.

**The implementation of the scientific results** was within the projects “20.80009.0807.21 Migration, Demographic Changes, and Stabilization Policies” and “15.817.06.01A A Multidisciplinary Approach to Human Capital and Population Dynamics to Enhance Population and Development Policy Performance in the Republic of Moldova”. These results formed the basis for the population projection (2019-2040) developed in 2021 and were integrated into the national monograph “The Population of the Republic of Moldova at 30 Years of Independence: Main Challenges and Necessary Policies.” The results were presented at 22 national and international scientific conferences, including: International Scientific-Practical Conference “Economic Growth in the Context of Globalization” (NIER, Chisinau: 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024); Neuchâtel Graduates! „The Migration and Mobility Studies” (Neuchâtel: 2019); 10th Anniversary International Scientific Conference–Valentevskie Lectures (M.V.Lomonosov MSU, Moscow: 2020); International Conference of Students, PhD Students, and Young Researchers

(M.V.Lomonosov MSU, Moscow: 2019, 2021); International Conference “Causes and Consequences of Depopulation” (Vienna Institute of Demography: 2021); International Scientific Symposium of PhD Students “Modern Trends in Scientific Development: Perspectives of Young Researchers” (Chisinau: 2021); Workshop “Rethinking Migration Management: European and National Experience” (ASEM, Chişinău: 2021); and the International Scientific Conference RELIK 2023 (University of Economics and Business, Prague: 2023). The scientific contributions were recognized with the “Young Scientist of the Year” Award (NIER, 2020), the Government Excellence Scholarship awarded to PhD students for academic performance (2021), the “Paul Bran” Award in Social and Economic Sciences (ASM, 2022).

**Publications at the thesis theme:** a total of 19 publications with a volume of 12.3 a.s., including 4 chapters in specialized books (3-abroad, 1-national), 5 in peer-reviewed journals, 10 in scientific conference proceedings (9-abroad, 1-national); of which 3 indexed in Scopus and Web of Science.

**The volume and structure of the thesis:** introduction, four chapters (with 16 tables and 32 figures), conclusions and recommendations, preface, acknowledgments, keywords, bibliography (212 sources), appendices (4), and a main text of 156 pages.

**Keywords:** migration management, migration management mechanism, migration processes, return migration, competitive labor market, demographic dividend, Theory of Change.

## CONTENTS OF THE THESIS

### 1. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE STUDY OF MANAGEMENT OF MIGRATION PROCESSES IN THE CONTEXT OF COMPETITIVE LABOR MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Chapter includes theoretical-explanatory and methodological framework applied to the conducted scientific approach. In the paragraph **1.1. Theoretical-explanatory framework of migration and its correlation with the labor market**, the main theories used in the doctoral research and the conceptual distinctions are analyzed. The research topic required the adoption of an interdisciplinary theoretical framework based on migration theories and interventionist theories.

*The neoclassical economic theory* (L.A. Saajdad, J.R. Harris, M.P. Todaro, G.J. Borjas) views international migration as a result of economic imbalances between countries, driven by wage disparities. These differences arise from variations in labor demand and supply, labor productivity, and the structure of labor organization. Low-income countries tend to have labor markets dominated by low-wage occupations, while high-income countries have more advanced labor market structures. This theory also assumes the existence of a migration market, where individuals actively seek the most advantageous destination country to maximize their welfare. In this market, host countries make migration offers, which individuals evaluate and compare to select the most suitable option.

*The new economic theory of migration* (O. Stark, D.E. Bloom) emerged as a response to critiques of neoclassical theory, addressing its limitations. Two significant innovations were introduced: the first shifts focus from the individual to the broader unit - the family or household - in the decision-making process regarding migration, emphasizing that migration is a strategy adopted by the family to minimize risks and improve economic conditions through income diversification. The second innovation challenges the notion that economic factors, specifically wage differentials between countries, are the primary determinants of migration.

*The theory of labor market segmentation* (M.J. Piore, P.D. Doering, R.T. Averitt, W.T. Dickens, K. Lang) views the labor market as divided into two distinct sectors: primary and secondary. The primary sector includes large, established firms that offer well-paying, prestigious, and stable positions. In contrast, the secondary sector meets the demand for fluctuating or seasonal labor and is characterized by lower-paying, less prestigious jobs. To preserve wage differentials

between these sectors, a more efficient approach is to attract migrants to the secondary sector, as they are generally more willing to accept lower wages.

*World-systems theory* argues that the causes of international migration lie in institutional and sectoral imbalances resulting from a nation's integration into the global capitalist system (Wallerstein, 1974). Adherents of this theory link large-scale migration to the structure of the global market, emphasizing the role of the capitalist system of production. The current perspective highlights how global economic imperatives continually seek new markets and cheap labor, shaping the direction of migration flows. Consequently, policies adopted by national states and multinational corporations significantly influence international labor mobility. These entities develop strategies, implement regulations, and negotiate trade agreements that either facilitate or restrict the movement of workers.

*The push-pull theory* of migration proposed by Everett S. Lee (1966) offers a comprehensive perspective on the factors driving migration. By integrating a broad range of economic, social, political, and personal factors, this theory transcends one-dimensional views of migration and emphasizes an understanding based on the interaction between individual and structural factors. The factors influencing the decision to migrate can be categorized into four dimensions: factors associated with the area of origin (1); factors associated with the area of destination (2); intervening obstacles (3); and personal factors (4). In each origin and destination area, there are factors that either attract or retain individuals in an area (+) and factors that may repel them (-). Additionally, each area has neutral factors (0) toward which individuals are generally indifferent.

*The network theory* developed by D. Massey and others (1993) reveals the factors that stimulate and sustain the expansion of migration between different countries or regions, providing an analytical framework for understanding the persistence of large waves of migrants over time in certain countries. According to the authors, social networks, composed of interpersonal relationships, connect migrants, former migrants, and potential migrants with residents in destination countries. The presence of these social networks amplifies migration by reducing living costs in the host country, increasing access to employment, and supporting new migrants in the integration process.

*The Theory of Change* (H. Chen, P. Rossi, M.Q. Patton, C. Weiss), used in this doctoral thesis, provides a rigorous methodological framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating interventions, in this case for managing migration processes to enhance the competitiveness of the domestic labor market. The major contribution of this theory lies in its ability to construct a logical structure of the change process, identifying intermediate steps -outputs and outcomes - necessary to achieve long-term impact.

The current diversity of migration theories does not provide a comprehensive explanation of the complexity of contemporary migration trends. Most of these theories were developed within a different conceptual framework, where migratory flows were primarily analyzed through the lens of domestic economic or political factors, overlooking global interdependencies and systemic economic instabilities. The current context requires an integrated and adaptive perspective, capable of capturing the complexity of interactions between global and local factors in shaping migration.

In this research I use the definitions of migration and migrant according to Rev.1 of the UN statistical recommendations: "international migrant as any person who changes their country of usual residence" (UN, 1998). The country of usual residence refers to the country where the person has a place to live and spends their daily rest period. Temporary movements for purposes such as recreation, vacation, visits, business, medical treatment, or religious pilgrimage are not considered migration, as they do not involve a change in the country of usual residence.

In paragraph 1.2. **The relationship between international migration and socioeconomic development in the scientific literature**, national and international empirical research on migration and its correlation with economic and social development is synthesized. Research on



the relationship between migration and economic benefits experienced significant growth in the early 20th century. Economist H. Jerome focused on how migration is influenced by economic changes and, conversely, how migration affects economic cycles (Jerome, 1926). According to some economists, wage differences are the primary reasons of migration, and the analysis of these differentials should be based on the hypothesis that the decision to migrate is driven by economic interest (Hicks, 1963). Potential migrants will choose the location where the expected net income is the highest (Greenwood, 1975).

The analysis of socioeconomic differences, such as income disparities, remains a relevant framework for explaining migration today. Macroeconomic conditions and the growing income disparities between countries contribute to the intensification of migration flows (Simpson, 2017). Individual migration decisions are influenced by income inequality both in origin and destination countries (Coniglio, Peragine, and Vurchio, 2023). Migration from less developed countries to economically advanced ones enables migrants to achieve higher incomes due to their greater labor productivity. This situation has a dual effect, as it influences the labor market, fiscal balance, and demographic trends in the country of origin (Koczan et al., 2021). Relative deprivation concerning income has a more significant impact on migration intentions among the poorer population than among those in the upper income quintile (El Anshasy, Shamsuddin, and Katsaiti, 2023).

The impact of socioeconomic factors is even stronger in the case of rural-urban migration. Temporary labor migration serves as a survival strategy for the poor population in rural areas. Young individuals involved in migration often express dissatisfaction with the economic opportunities, income levels, and educational facilities in their place of origin, prompting them to seek better job opportunities and higher wages in other regions (Ghafoor, Nisa, and Akbar, 2021). Economic migration brings greater benefits for destination countries (Franc, Časni, and Barišić, 2019) compared to family reunification and refugee immigration, which have lower labor market participation rates in comparison to economic migrants (Kanas and Steinmetz, 2021).

Migration cannot fully address the labor shortages faced by economically advanced countries, nor can it resolve the issues related to social funds arising from demographic aging (Marois, Potancokova, and Gonzalez-Leonardo, 2023). Migration has compensated for the workforce deficit in only 27% of countries across Europe (Ghio, Goujon, and Natale, 2022). The immigration of skilled labor can effectively tackle the challenges of demographic aging and ensure the sustainability of social funds (Zaiceva and Zimmermann, 2016). For skilled migrants, factors such as job satisfaction, opportunities for career advancement, and better working conditions are essential in addition to higher salaries (Toyin-Thomas, Ikhurionan, et al., 2023).

In origin countries, migration generates complex economic and social effects. On one hand, migration can contribute to GDP growth (Yakubovskiy et al., 2021), reduce unemployment, and increase remittances and household incomes. On the other hand, large-scale and prolonged labor migration diminishes the potential labor force, creates labor shortages, leads to population decline, and causes imbalances in demographic structure (Bossavie and Özden, 2023).

According to national studies, migration in the Republic of Moldova is driven by low wages and unfavorable conditions in the labor market (Savelieva and Zaharov, 2021; Birca and Mamaliga, 2019). These factors discourage the population from remaining in the national labor market, prompting them to emigrate in search of better job opportunities (Nirean and Corețchi, 2019). Other identified causes include poor job quality, underutilization of human potential, and low labor productivity, attributed to an unfavorable occupational structure (Bîrcă et al., 2023). As a result, migration helps individuals cope with socioeconomic crises, with remittances providing significant

economic benefits for migrants and their families (Roşca, 2023). Economic growth over the past two decades can be attributed to remittances.

In addition to the causes of migration, the significant negative impact of migration is highlighted. This includes notably high emigration rates in relation to the total population (Tabac and Gagauz, 2020). Currently, Moldova has a significant population working abroad (Bogdan, 2024). The consequences of this migration include the depopulation of the country and its regions (Gagauz et al., 2021), the acceleration of demographic aging, and a reduction in the working-age population (Stratan et al., 2024; Savelieva and Zaharov, 2023).

At the same time, within the national scientific literature and the relevant policy framework, there is a lack of clear conceptual distinction between the terms „migration management”, „migration governance”, and „migration regulation”, which are often conflated. Additionally, the concept of „competitive labor market” has yet to be defined and clarified.

**Paragraph 1.3. The methodological basis of the research on the management of migration processes in the context of developing a competitive labor market** include the research methodology. Within this methodological framework, the analysis focuses on three migration processes: emigration, immigration, and return migration, emphasizing their correlation with the labor market. Furthermore, the following concepts have been defined: **1. Migration governance** – *„a comprehensive and strategic process that encompasses the planning, organization, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs aimed at managing migration”*. This concept includes both the management and regulation of migration and involves an approach that addresses all facets of migration, from legal and administrative aspects and implementation tools (such as human and financial resources, border control, and the prevention of illegal migration) to regulatory policies and the integration of migrants, as well as international coordination. **2. Migration management** is defined as *„the development, implementation, and administration of the regulatory framework, policies, and programs in the field of migration”*. As a component of migration management, its purpose is to ensure the effective and secure administration of migration processes in accordance with national and international objectives and legislation. **3. Migration regulation** refers to *„the process of establishing the norms, laws, and policies that govern migration”*. This process is more stringent and formal than migration management, as it involves the application of the legislative framework that defines the conditions, limitations, and procedures for migration. **4. A competitive labor market** is defined as *„the economic environment in which the demand and supply of labor adjust dynamically under the influence of factors such as education level, professional qualifications of workers, and their flexibility and ability to adapt to technological and structural changes”*. It is characterized, on one hand, by sectoral modernization, digitalization, innovation, and technological advancement, and on the other hand, by the quality of the workforce (including advanced professional skills and soft skills, capacity for innovation, and continuous learning), high labor productivity, and an advanced wage system.

The research methodology is based on the integration of two recognized theoretical and methodological approaches: the complex approach and the systemic approach. The complex approach has facilitated the integration of multiple perspectives, theories, and methodologies for a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study, including the formulation of new theoretical concepts. The systemic approach has enabled the analysis of the interconnections among migration, the labor market, and migration management, highlighting the relationships between migration flows and the labor market context, as well as the gaps in the current migration management system. Based on these observations, proposals for enhancing the existing system were formulated.

A set of research methods from the fields of economics, statistics, sociology, and demography was applied in conducting the research, giving the thesis an interdisciplinary character. Specific methods from *the field of economics* were utilized, including economic and mathematical statistics, economic analysis and synthesis, and SWOT analysis. *Sociological research methods* were also employed, such as in-depth individual interviews and content analysis, along with *demographic science methods*, including demographic forecasting. Additionally, the methodological framework was strengthened by general scientific methods such as scientific induction and deduction, comparative analysis, historical methods, generalization, and the synthesis of empirical material.

*The empirical basis* includes five studies conducted by the author: three quantitative studies and two qualitative studies, as detailed in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1. Empirical basis of the doctoral thesis**

| No. | Title of the Study  | Methodological Criterion        | Research Methods   | No. of Observations   | Period of realisation | Main Results  |
|-----|---|---------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------|---|
| 1.  | Dynamics and Dimensions of International Migration in the Republic of Moldova (1989–2022)                               | Integrated Statistical Research | Statistical and Mathematical Methods                             | 60,872 statistical observations                                   | Years 2018-2021       | Dynamics, Dimensions, Characteristics of Emigrant Flows, 1989–2021; Dynamics of Absolute and Relative Net Migration, 1989–2021; Stock of Moldovan Citizens by Gender and Age Groups, 2001, 2011; Trends and Characteristics of Labor Migration, 2000–2023; Dynamics and Characteristics of Foreign Citizen Flows, 1993–2022; Dimensions and Characteristics of Foreign Citizen Stocks, 2005–2021. |
| 2.  | Economic and Social Reintegration of Return Migrants in the Republic of Moldova   | Qualitative Research            | In-depth Individual Interview<br><br>Content Analysis            | 40 interviews (25 with return migrants, 15 with national experts) | Year 2019             | Determinant for Emigration and Return; Difficulties and Challenges of the Economic and Social Reintegration Process, including in the Labor Market and Entrepreneurship; Access to Information about Economic and Social Reintegration Programs; Access to Economic Reintegration Programs; Size of Economic Investments and Priority Areas; Impact of Policies.                                  |
| 3.  | Labor Market Dynamics and Living Standards in the Current Socio-economic Context of the Republic of Moldova (1991–2021) | Integrated Statistical Research | Statistical and Mathematical Methods                             | 23,298 statistical observations                                   | Years 2022-2023       | Dynamics of Key Macroeconomic Indicators; Trends and General Characteristics of the Labor Market and Workforce; Wage and Income Levels, Including Remittances Transfers; Impact of Economic Factors on Migration Expansion; Structural Determinants of Labor Market Demand and Supply.  |
| 4.  | Demographic Dividend in the Republic of Moldova: Retrospective and Prospective Analysis (1990–2040)                     | Integrated Statistical Research | Statistical and Mathematical Methods<br><br>Demographic Forecast | 45,741 statistical observations                                   | Year 2024             | Demographic Dividend for the Population de Jure; Demographic Dividend for the Population de Facto; Demographic Dividend for the Forecasted Population; Impact of International Migration on the Quantitative Evolution of the Working-Age Population over Six Decades.  |
| 5.  | Challenges and Perspectives on International Migration Management in the Republic of Moldova                            | Qualitative Research            | SWOT Analysis<br><br>Content Analysis                            | 80 strategic documents and analytical reports                     | Year 2024             | International Practices in Migration Management; Successes and Progress in National Practice; Limitations and Gaps in the Current National System; Opportunities for Improving Migration Management in the Context of Ensuring the Competitiveness of the National Labor Market.  |

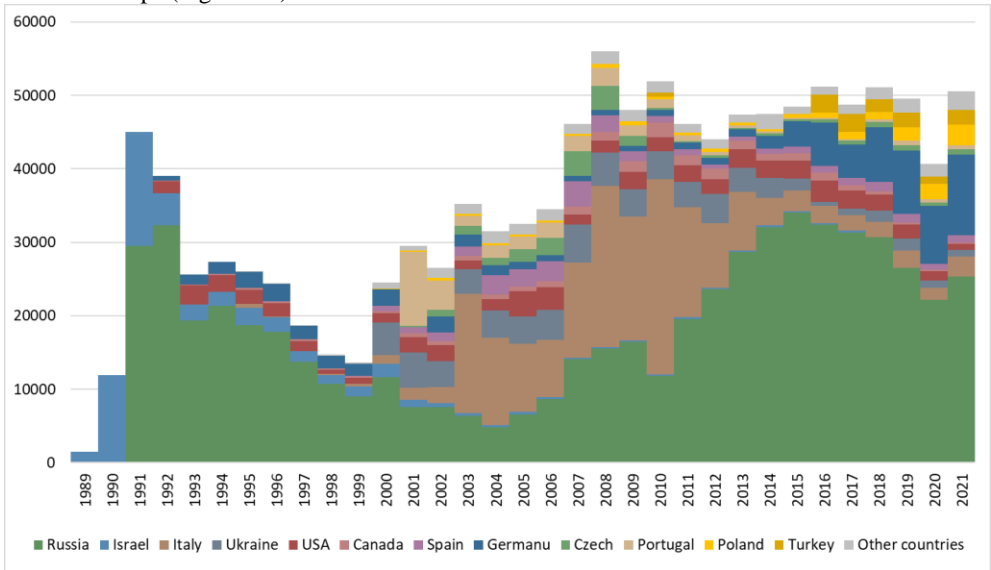
*The informational and statistical basis* consists of a statistical database compiled by the author from various relevant national and international institutions for the analysis of migration and the labor market. The main sources include the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), OECD, Eurostat, the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Immigrati.Stat), the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia (Rosstat), the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (GENESIS-Online Database), the United States Census Bureau (Census.gov), Statistics Canada, and the Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel (Toltz, 2020), among others. This was supplemented with estimated population data for the period 1990-2014 (Penina, Jdanov, and Grigoriev, 2015).

## 2. EVOLUTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Chapter includes an analysis of the trends and characteristics of migration processes, such as emigration, immigration, and return migration. In paragraph 2.1. **Trends and characteristics in the evolution of emigrant flows**, the scientific problem of estimating the dynamics and actual scale of emigration of the population from the Republic of Moldova over the last three decades,

based on destination countries as well as net migration, has been addressed. The lack of reliable national statistical data regarding migration flows, particularly during the period 1991-2014, has been solved through the indirect method of estimating emigration, specifically based on data provided by the destination countries.

The obtained results allowed for the identification of four waves of emigration. Each wave was characterized by specific socio-economic and political conditions that influenced both the direction of migration flows and the behaviors of migrants. *The first wave*, marked by ethnic migration, occurred in the late 1980s and continued until the mid-1990s. *The second wave*, characterized by the beginnings of economic migration to CIS countries and the EU, began in the mid-1990s and continued until the early 2000s. *The third wave*, which unfolded throughout the 2000s, signifies a period of intensified migration and diversification of destination countries. The fourth and final wave, which started in the early 2010s and continues to the present, represents a period of decreased emigration to the CIS region and increased emigration to European states, particularly to Western Europe (Figure 2.1).



**Figure 2.1. Annual emigrant flows (citizens of the Republic of Moldova) to main destination countries, 1989-2021, in thousands of people<sup>1</sup>**

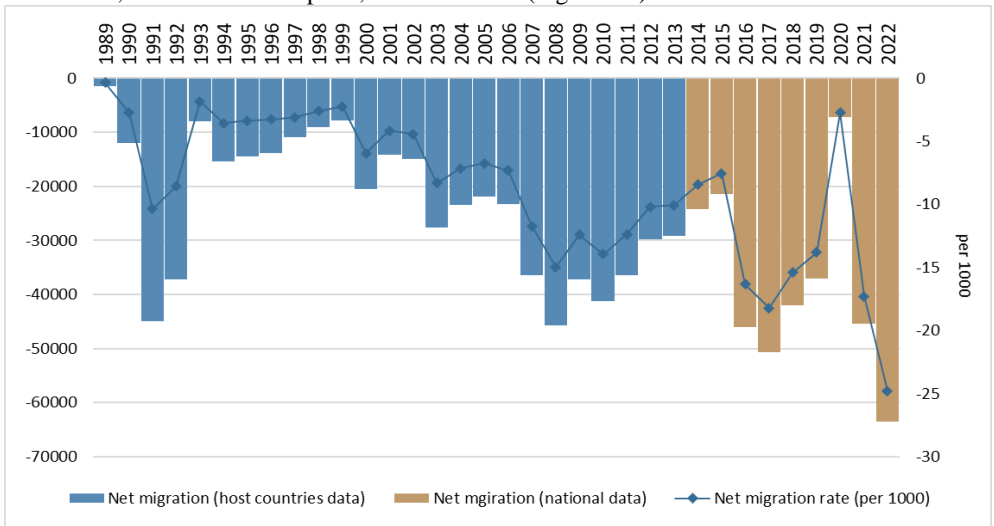
Source: Estimated by the author based on data from OECD, Eurostat, Federal State Statistics Service of Russia, National Institute of Statistics of Italy, State Statistics Service of Ukraine, U.S. Immigration Statistics, Statistics Canada, Federal Statistical Office of Germany, and Tolts (2020).

The estimation of net migration was performed using both foreign data (for the period 1989-2013) and national data (for the years 2014-2022), as the latter is more representative, calculated according to the UN definition of long-term migration (UN, 1998). Meanwhile, the data from host

<sup>1</sup> This refers to long-term emigrant flows, specifically emigrants who have left the country for a period of one year or more. In most EU countries, the USA, and Canada, official statistics focus on obtaining residence visas. The restoration of Romanian citizenship by a significant segment of the population from the Republic of Moldova leads to an underestimation of emigrant flows in the last decade. Moldovan emigrants who utilize Romanian passports are reported in the official statistics of destination countries as Romanian citizens, with the exception of cases in Germany.

countries have become increasingly distorted over the past ten years due to the rise in emigration of Moldovan citizens to European countries using Romanian passports.

According to estimates, net migration represents approximately -915 thousand individuals over the period from 1989 to 2022. The extent of emigration in the first decade was lower compared to the subsequent two decades. In 1991, net migration was -45 thousand individuals, corresponding to a net migration rate of -10 individuals per 1,000 inhabitants. Following some declines in the mid 1990s and 2000s, net migration reached a new peak in 2008, estimated at around -46 thousand emigrants or 15 individuals per 1,000 inhabitants. The next peak in emigration occurred in 2017, with approximately -50 thousand emigrants, or 18 individuals per 1,000 inhabitants. The most recent and highest peak was recorded in 2022, resulting from the compensation for the low migration levels during the pandemic, as well as the escalation of military conflict in the region. Net migration for that year was approximately -63 thousand individuals, or 25 individuals per 1,000 inhabitants (Figure 2.2).



**Figure 2.2. Dynamics of absolute and relative net migration (migration rate) from 1991 to 2022 according to various data sources <sup>2</sup>**

Source: Indicators calculated by the author: a) for the years 1991-2013 based on data on international migration provided by OECD, Eurostat, the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia, the Italian National Institute of Statistics, the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, U.S. Immigration Statistics, Statistics Canada, the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, and Tolts (2020), along with alternative population data estimated by Penina, Jdanov, and Grigoriev (2015); and b) for the years 2014-2021 based on data regarding the population with usual residence and migration according to border crossing statistics published by the National Bureau of Statistics.

The core of international migration is comprised of individuals aged 15 to 34 years. Approximately 200 thousand people in this age group left the country between 2014 and 2022 and have not returned. In relative terms, this figure represents 59% of the total net migration recorded during that period (-340 thousand individuals). Migration among children under the age of 14 accounted for about 104 thousand children, or 31% of the net migration volume.

<sup>2</sup> For estimating the indicator "net migration rate," data on emigration and immigration flows from the Republic of Moldova were available for a limited number of countries. This list includes Russia, Israel, Italy, Germany, the Czech Republic, and Spain. Unfortunately, data on the migration of Moldovan citizens to other key destinations are not available, thereby limiting our ability to obtain a comprehensive picture of net migration.

Additionally, the data indicate positive migration among the population aged 50 and older, highlighting the phenomenon of return migration among pre-retirement and retired individuals.

Labor migration has been and continues to be the most significant form of migration in the history of the Republic of Moldova. It has continued to rise as social networks in destination countries have expanded (Massey et al., 1993). Approximately 90% of migrant workers fall within the age range of 20 to 54 years, representing the economically active population of the country. About 40% of migrants have secondary vocational education (graduates of vocational schools or secondary education institutions), while between 40% and 50% of migrants have a low level of education. The proportion of migrants with higher education is relatively small, although it has increased in recent years.

**Paragraph 2.2. Return migration and socioeconomic reintegration of returning migrants,** addresses the reasons for returning, aspects of migrants' integration into the labor market, and the entrepreneurial sector. The main reasons that drive citizens to return home include: 1. *Factors associated with the home country*, such as family reasons, nostalgia for their homeland, and the desire to contribute to the country's development using the capital accumulated abroad; and 2. *Factors related to the destination country*, including financial constraints, difficult labor market integration, challenging social adaptation, and experiences of discrimination.

*The reintegration of migrants* into the labor market occurs through two methods: reemployment in previous jobs prior to emigration or securing other positions that align with the new skills acquired during their time abroad. Information about job opportunities is typically obtained through unofficial channels, such as social networks - family members, relatives, and friends who remain in the country.

*Initiation or development of entrepreneurship.* The research found that the financial capital accumulated by returning migrants is primarily directed toward consumption, with addressing housing issues being one of the main areas of investment. However, there is also a segment of citizens who emigrate to accumulate financial resources that they intend to invest in entrepreneurial projects.

Entrepreneurship support among migrants is actively promoted by the government. Through the PARE 1+1 and PARE 1+2 programs, migrants receive financial support, training, and mentoring from the state to launch their businesses. The research has shown that the vast majority of businesses initiated by migrants are concentrated in the agricultural sector, a trend influenced by the specific characteristics of the national economy. However, there has also been an increase in innovative entrepreneurship, driven by the knowledge and skills acquired abroad. Some of the interviewed migrants introduced new species of plants and animals to the domestic market, as well as advanced methods of cultivation and care. Significant progress has also been noted in food production and industry based on new technologies learned overseas.

The main barriers faced by migrants in implementing entrepreneurial projects include: insufficient or lack of raw materials, absence of appropriate equipment, and high customs duties on imported goods, all of which affect their competitive edge in business. The acquisition and importation of modern machinery necessary for increasing productivity prove to be costly, presenting an additional challenge for the small businesses of migrants. Other difficulties identified include limited access to information about investment opportunities, excessive bureaucracy, economic uncertainties, and political fluctuations. Some migrants have expressed strong reluctance to invest in an economic environment perceived as unstable and unfriendly, opting instead to redirect their financial resources toward consumption, such as purchasing real estate.

**Paragraph 2.3. Immigration and integration of citizens into the domestic labor market,** presents the evolution and characteristics of immigration in the Republic of Moldova,

highlighting a consistent increase in entries into the country starting in 2014, when the influx of foreign citizens reached 4,000 for the first time. The factors driving this growth include the simplification of requirements for obtaining residence and work permits, as well as the signing of the Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union, which facilitated the liberalization of the visa regime. Immigration rose significantly in 2022-2023, primarily from immigrants coming from Russia and Ukraine, as a result of the escalating conflict in the region.

The main reasons foreigners immigrate to the Republic of Moldova fall into categories such as labor migration, education, or family reunification. While migration for education and family reasons predominated in the early 1990s, recent years have seen an increase in labor immigration, which now surpasses the other two motives for immigration. More than one-third of immigrants hold higher education degrees, a trend that has remained stable from 2008 to 2021. The overall proportion of immigrants with professional qualifications is approximately 60-70%. The majority of the foreign population is concentrated in urban areas (73% in 2021) and falls within the working-age bracket of 15-59 years (74% in 2021).

The main reasons for immigration to the Republic of Moldova include migration for labor, education, and family reunification. In the 1990s, migration for education and family purposes was predominant. However, in recent decades, there has been a significant increase in labor immigration, which now surpasses the other two motives. More than one-third of immigrants hold higher education degrees, maintaining a steady trend from 2008 to 2021, with approximately 60-70% possessing professional qualifications. The foreign population is largely concentrated in urban areas (73% in 2021) and is predominantly composed of individuals of working age, between 15 and 59 years old (74% in 2021).

The latest survey among immigrants revealed their relationship with the labor market. The data indicated that 39% were employed, 25% were unemployed, 14% were not participating in the labor market as homemakers, 10% were retirees, and approximately 9% were enrolled in an educational institution. About 39% of employed foreigners were hired through a formal employment contract, while another 15% had an informal employment agreement prior to arriving in the country. For 28% of respondents, finding a job was facilitated through social networks, and only 6% utilized the services of the National Employment Agency (OIM, n.d.).

### **3. SOCIOECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF MIGRATION AND LABOR MARKET DEVELOPMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

The chapter examines how socioeconomic factors contribute to the expansion of migration flows, the current state of labor market development, and its structural characteristics.

**Paragraph 3.1. Contribution of economic factors to the dynamics of international migration** from the Republic of Moldova shows that multiple economic crises and disruptions throughout its history have significantly impacted the country's overall socioeconomic situation, leading to large-scale emigration as people seek better economic opportunities abroad.

The average annual GDP decline rate between 1990 and 2000 reached 9.6%, representing one of the steepest declines among post-Soviet countries. In the context of deepening crises, key macroeconomic indicators showed a downward trend, with GDP volume contracting by approximately 2.5 times across all sectors, against a 3.2-fold increase in the consumer price index (CPI). The 1998 economic crisis in the Russian Federation—Moldova's primary trading partner at the time—pushed the national economy to a near-default state, with currency losses amounting to \$220 million, over half originating from the wine industry. In 1999, real incomes dropped by 70%, and the government's suspension of wage and pension payments led to widespread impoverishment and heightened social inequality. Consumer prices escalated by 3,234 times in

2000 compared to 1991. The reforms implemented in the first decade failed to secure stable and sustainable development; instead, economic downturns resulted in a sharp deterioration in the population's standard of living.

Despite a relative increase in the national economy during the decade following independence, with GDP rising by 44% in the first five years (BNM, 2018), alongside growth in capital and fixed capital production stock, the economic situation deteriorated in the latter half of the 2000s due to worsening economic relations between the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation, driven by political factors, particularly following the signing of the EU-Moldova Action Plan in 2005. The economic decline due to external factors underscored the need to modernize the national economy, including attracting foreign investment to compensate for the shortfall in domestic financial resources for real sector development. Additionally, in 2008, Moldova experienced its deepest economic recession in a decade, prompted by the global economic crisis that began in December 2007.

The economy started to recover after the global economic and financial crisis. Although rapid national economic growth began in 2011, this progress did not lead to improvements in the population's quality of life. As the government's economic recovery policies were not targeted at social issues, living standards declined, social disparities widened, and inequalities grew within society. Inflation also increased, driven by rising prices and tariffs on public utilities such as gas, water, electricity, and heating.

Despite a relative economic recovery during these years, driven by the modernization of the economic system, the development model largely remained consumption-oriented rather than focused on strengthening the production sector. This trend intensified the decline in the employed population and fueled external migration flows as people sought employment opportunities abroad, a consequence of the unfavorable economic conditions characteristic of Moldova's transition to a market economy.

The Republic of Moldova's economic development in 2023 was hindered by a range of systemic issues. Among these were reduced investments in advanced technologies and innovations, which constrained modernization efforts and efficiency improvements. Moldovan entrepreneurs continued to face low competitiveness in both domestic and international markets, posing a significant challenge. Furthermore, the labor market suffered from both a quantitative and qualitative decline in the available workforce.

Paragraph 3.2. **Labor market developments and structural characteristics**, is divided into two sub-sections. The first, **3.2.1. Potential of the demographic dividend**, provides an estimate and analysis of Moldova's demographic window.

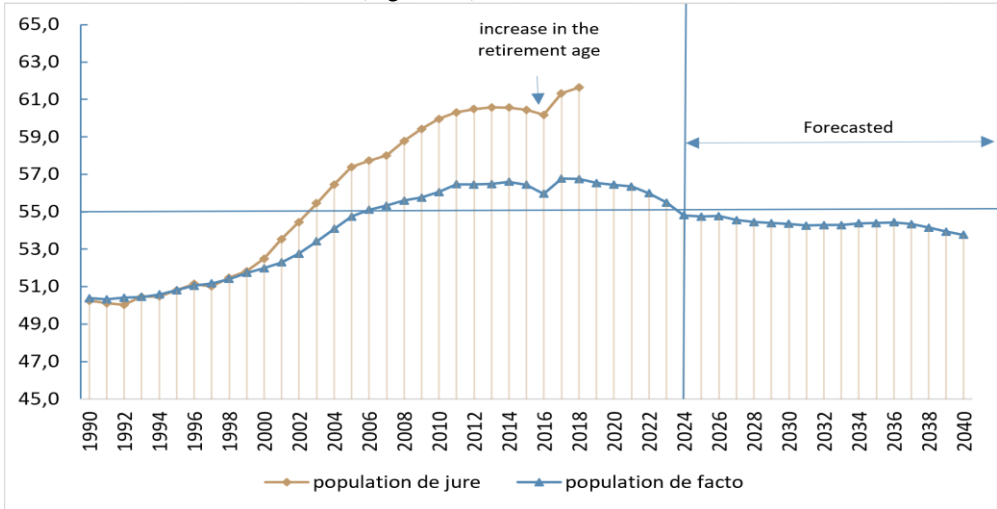
In broad terms, the *demographic dividend* represents the potential for economic growth arising from shifts in the population's age structure, particularly when the working-age population (productive population) outnumbers the non-working-age population, comprising children and the elderly (dependent population). The economic advantages of the demographic dividend are reflected in GDP growth, as a large working-age population can enhance labor productivity and fuel economic expansion.

Demographic dividend for the Republic of Moldova was calculated based on UN methodology, which defines this period as when the proportion of the population aged 0–15 falls below 30% and the proportion aged 65 and over remains under 15% (UN, 2004). This demographic window of opportunity is identified when 55% of the population is of working age. Considering the low labor market participation rates among young people aged 15–19 and those over 65, the lower age limit for the demographic dividend was set at 20, with the upper limit aligned with the retirement age, which increased over the analyzed period from 57 for women and 60 for men to 63 for both genders. Additionally, the demographic dividend was calculated for the



de jure population, which includes long-term emigrants (over 12 month), for the de facto population, which excludes them, and for the projected population under a low-growth scenario.

The results indicate that the demographic dividend for the *de jure* population began in 2002, when this group reached 55% of the total population, while for the *de facto* population, which excludes individuals absent for more than a year, it started in 2007. The impact of migration on reducing the economically active population is evident across the entire period. The demographic dividend was depleted by 2023, and projections suggest that if current emigration rates persist, this downward trend will continue (Figure 3.1).



**Figure 3.1. Demographic dividend based on *de jure*, *de facto*, and projected population (different age thresholds), 1990–2040**

Source: calculated by the author based on data from NBS, CDS, and Penina, Jdanov, and Grigoriev (2015).

Sub-section 3.2.2. **Labor market dynamics and population living standards**, presents the current state of employment, wages, income levels, and related factors.

Regarding employment, the inactive population surpasses the active workforce in the labor market. From 2019 to 2022, the inactive population proportion increased to 58–60%, while labor force participation declined to 40–42%. Most employed individuals work in the private sector, consistently accounting for about 60–62% of total employment, while the public sector represents 28–30%. Approximately 22–23% of the current labor force is engaged in informal employment, amounting to more than one-fifth of the employed population.

Employment rates are highest among individuals aged 25–54, with the 35–44 age group showing the highest rate overall. About 37–38% of the employed population has a medium level of education (secondary vocational or specialized secondary), while 35–36% has a low level of education (no formal education, primary, or high school). The share of employees with higher education is between 26% and 28%. These patterns are consistent with the profile of migrant workers, as most who seek employment abroad are from younger and middle-age groups with medium or low education levels.

Recent trends in wages reveal persistently low levels, despite annual increases in recent years. These low wage levels are also shaped by the occupational structure of the economy, with a significant portion of the workforce employed in low-productivity sectors, such as agriculture, and in the public sector, where wages are constrained by state budget limitations. As a result, the

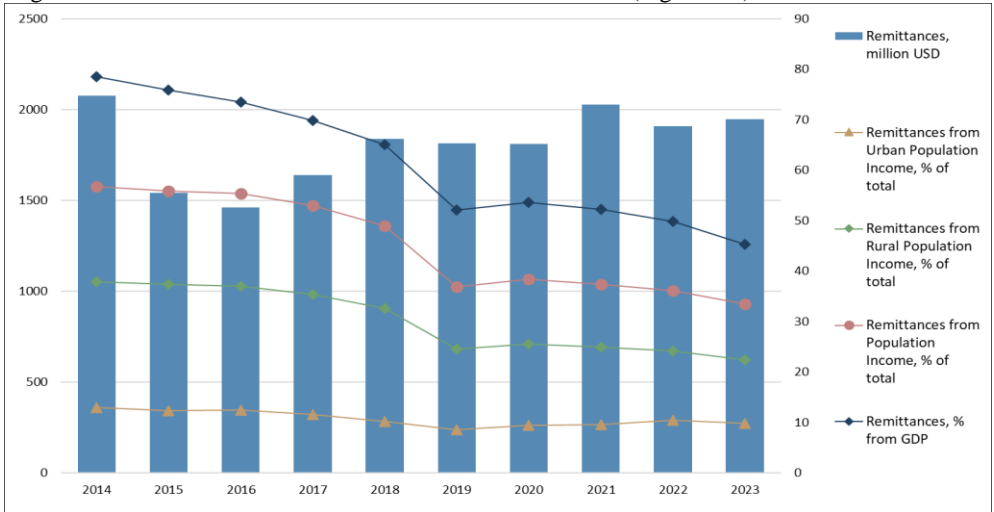
proportion of wages in household income has decreased, along with the importance of wages as a motivating factor for income generation.

According to Eurostat data, the Republic of Moldova has some of the lowest wages in Europe. In 2023, the average hourly wage in Moldova was just €4. In contrast, Luxembourg recorded the highest hourly wage (€47.2), contributing to the highest GDP per capita globally. Among the Nordic countries, Denmark and Norway have the highest hourly incomes (€42), while Sweden is at an intermediate level (€26 per hour). Average hourly wages in other countries are as follows: Germany – €31.6, Austria – €30.0, France – €28.7, Italy – €21.5, Poland – €11.9, and Hungary – €11.0. Romania and Bulgaria report the lowest levels of this indicator, at €10.4 and €9.3 per hour, respectively.

In 2023, the minimum wage in the Republic of Moldova was raised to 4,000 lei per month for an average monthly working time of 169 hours (equivalent to 23.67 lei per hour). Starting January 1, 2024, the minimum wage increased by 25%, reaching 5,000 lei per month (or 29.58 lei per hour) for the same average monthly working hours. Nevertheless, current wage levels remain insufficient to provide a decent standard of living, particularly with rising consumer price index (CPI) levels. These wage increases not only elevate budgetary expenditures but also add pressure on the business environment and private companies, which must bear the additional labor costs.

In the Republic of Moldova, the standard of living has been a major factor influencing migration decisions. The need to meet basic needs has driven large-scale migration, both in the years immediately following independence, when economic collapse had severe negative effects, and today, due to limited access to housing, food, clothing, and other essential health and well-being services. Consequently, international migration has become a strategy for many families aiming to improve their living conditions.

Remittances play a significant role in both the national economy and household welfare. In recent years, remittance inflows have totaled around USD 2 billion, though their share of GDP has declined. Comparative analysis by area of residence reveals that remittances account for a larger share of income in rural households than in urban ones (Figure 3.2).



**Figure 3.2. Transfers of remittances in 2014–2023**

Source: compiled by the author based on NBM data.

Persistent poverty and the lack of viable economic opportunities are key factors driving labor migration. Over recent decades, a substantial portion of the active population has been compelled to emigrate in search of better income opportunities. In rural areas, absolute and extreme poverty are particularly severe, adversely affecting residents' quality of life. In 2022–2023, about 31% of the population lived below the absolute poverty line, with higher rates in rural areas (40–42%). Extreme poverty impacted approximately 14% of the population in the same period, with rural levels estimated at 18–19%.

#### **4. IMPROVING THE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION MANAGEMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA FOR A COMPETITIVE LABOR MARKET DEVELOPMENT**

The chapter addresses international experience in migration management, the challenges within Moldova's current migration management system, and proposes an efficient migration management mechanism to boost the competitiveness of the national labor market.

Paragraph **4.1. Models and international practices in migration management** presents the experiences of countries including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, along with migration approaches at the European Union and global levels. Each of these applies specific models in migration management.

*The assimilation model for migration flows* (France) emphasizes the full integration of migrants into the host society, expecting that they will adopt the culture, values, and social norms of the new society while gradually letting go of the cultural characteristics from their country of origin. This model operates on the principle of "right of the soil" (*jus soli*), enabling the state to preserve cultural homogeneity and national identity, while also facilitating migrants' adaptation and integration into the new community.

*The segregation model* (Germany) maintains migrants and the local population in separate communities with minimal cultural and social interaction. Based on the principle of "right of blood" (*jus sanguinis*), it prioritizes ethnic criteria. This model arises both from deliberate government policies and from linguistic and cultural barriers. While migrants are able to work and contribute economically, their access to resources and opportunities is often restricted. Although this approach to migration may help preserve migrants' cultural identity, it can also lead to long-term social and economic tensions.

*The pluralist model* (United Kingdom) promotes the harmonious coexistence of different cultural and ethnic groups. This model recognizes and respects cultural diversity, encouraging migrants to maintain their cultural identity while actively participating in the social and economic life of the host country. Pluralist policies include support for community organizations, protection of minority rights, and programs that foster intercultural dialogue. The goal is to create an inclusive society where diversity is viewed as an asset (Sayed and Faisal, 2020).

*The adaptation model*, applied in various European countries, including Italy and Russia, involves migrants adjusting their behaviors, values, and norms to align with and integrate into the host society while preserving their ethnic and cultural identity. This adaptation process occurs on multiple levels: social, cultural, and economic.

*Hybrid models* (Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) take an interventionist approach, selecting migrants based on human capital to ensure long-term employability and maximize contributions to the host society. These countries utilize the Expression of Interest (EoI) system, a skills-based framework that operates on a points system (OECD, 2019). These models acknowledge the need to adapt migration policies to emerging opportunities and challenges, integrating economic, socio-cultural, and security strategies.

*Migration Management in the European Union.* Through its legislative and regulatory framework, the EU actively promotes and supports the legal migration of highly skilled

professionals, international students, and individuals seeking work and vocational training. In the global race to attract talent, the EU competes with destinations like the United States, Canada, and Australia. Specific directives are in place to attract and retain highly skilled workers, particularly in sectors with labor shortages.

Beyond attracting skilled migrants and talent, the EU also prioritizes combating illegal migration and enhancing security at its external borders. To this end, measures have been implemented to prevent irregular migration and strengthen border control through specific directives and close collaboration with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex).

EU policy also regulates asylum and international protection and promotes the social, economic, and cultural integration of migrants. Integration initiatives focus on providing access to education, healthcare, and the labor market, as well as encouraging active community participation. The EU supports these efforts through agreements and partnerships with origin and transit countries.

Although the EU promotes a common framework for migration management across all member states, national migration policies remain divergent, and the implementation of EU directives and regulations is fragmented and often insufficient. Member states retain control over issuing entry, residence, and work permits, with national policies frequently reflecting distinct priorities.

*Global migration management* is based on a robust regulatory framework comprising various conventions and protocols that guarantee and protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of migrants, including migrant workers. These conventions establish standards and norms to ensure the protection of human rights, lawful freedom of movement, and promote fair treatment and decent working conditions for all workers, regardless of their migration status. Implementing these instruments requires cooperation among states, international organizations, and civil society, with the shared goal of improving migration flow management and upholding migrant rights.

Particular attention should be given to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), developed under the United Nations and ratified by the Republic of Moldova in 2018. The GCM outlines 23 key objectives for addressing migration and serves as a foundational framework document, based on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. This landmark document is the first comprehensive intergovernmental agreement addressing all aspects of international migration. Moldova's commitment to the GCM reflects its dedication to fostering a responsible and coordinated approach to managing migration flows, in partnership with international organizations and other member states.

Paragraph 4.2. **The current system of international migration management** analyzes the existing policy and legislative framework in the Republic of Moldova regarding migration, the institutional structure responsible for migration management, and the instruments used to implement state policy.

The Republic of Moldova has developed and refined its own legislative, regulatory, and institutional framework for managing migration issues. This framework has not evolved in isolation but has integrated international migration regulations and collaboration with relevant international institutions.

Following the expiration of the *National Strategy on Migration and Asylum* (2011-2020) in 2020 (Government Decision no. 655/2011), the Republic of Moldova currently lacks a cohesive strategy or integrated program for managing international migration. Presently, programs and action plans are developed and implemented in a fragmented manner by various institutions.

For instance, the General Inspectorate for Migration under the Ministry of Internal Affairs **manages the immigration of foreign citizens** through the *Program for Migration Flow Management, Asylum, and Integration of Foreigners for 2022-2025* (Government Decision no. 808/2022), along with the *Law on the Status of Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova* (Law no. 200/2010) and the *Law on the Integration of Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova* (Law no. 274/2011).

**The promotion of return migration**, reintegration of returning migrants, and collaboration with the diaspora are overseen by the Bureau for Diaspora Relations (BDR) through the *National*

*Program for Stimulating Return and Facilitating the (Re)Integration of Moldovan Citizens Involved in Migration for 2023-2027* (Government Decision no. 674/2023) and the *Diaspora Strategy 2025*. The BDR also manages the *National Youth Economic Empowerment Program* and the *Diaspora Engagement Hub*, which facilitate the transfer of skills and expertise gained by Moldovan citizens abroad (human capital). Additionally, investment of remittances (economic capital) is supported through the PARE 1+2 Program, implemented by the Organization for Development of Entrepreneurship (ODE).

At present, the state manages the **emigration process of its citizens** inadequately. According to universal human rights and the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, citizens have the right to freedom of movement and are not required to notify the authorities of their intention to travel abroad. There are few bilateral labor agreements between Moldova and the preferred destination countries of Moldovan citizens, which would facilitate their legal and protected emigration. One such active agreement exists between Moldova and Israel.

The Republic of Moldova has currently established social security agreements with 17 European countries: Romania, Portugal, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Austria, Estonia, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Belgium, Lithuania, Germany, Turkey, Belarus, Greece, Italy, and Spain. Similar agreements with Latvia and Switzerland are currently under negotiation. A significant gap is the lack of a comparable agreement with France, especially given the substantial increase in emigration flows over the past decade. Additionally, agreements signed with Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus in 1993 are based on outdated principles and do not regulate the transfer of social benefits accrued during migration.

The SWOT analysis highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the current migration management and labor market system, as well as the risks and opportunities for improving its efficiency (Figure 4.1). In conclusion, it is noted that the Republic of Moldova has made significant and necessary strides in developing the policy and administrative framework for managing international migration; however, this framework remains imperfect and insufficiently coordinated.

On one hand, there are no adequate, targeted measures to manage migration flows to address labor market challenges effectively. The strategic allocation of remittance investments remains unclear, with current investments being fragmented and impacted by migrants' limited entrepreneurial skills. Other significant challenges include restricted human, institutional, and financial resources. Political and economic instability, coupled with bureaucracy, erodes diaspora confidence in investing in the Republic of Moldova. On the other hand, emigration is likely to increase due to European talent-attraction policies and the ongoing process of reacquiring Romanian citizenship, which grants Moldovans access to more advanced European markets and societies.

**Paragraph 4.3. Enhancing the migration management system in the Republic of Moldova to increase the competitiveness of the domestic labor market** presents author's concept for migration management and the mechanism for its implementation.

Given the issues identified in the current system, particularly the fragmentation of activities, insufficient institutional coordination, and the lack of an integrated and coherent approach to addressing migration challenges, an integrated national concept for migration management is proposed. This concept would coordinate all relevant dimensions - from legal and administrative regulations to economic and social policies.

The general concept is illustrated in Figure 4.2, based on a systems approach that considers all elements as components of an integrated system (Kleiner, Rybachuk, and Karpinskaya, 2022). Migration processes, as complex and multidimensional phenomena, require integrated and coordinated solutions.

### STRENGTHS

- The legislative and normative framework developed, including for foreign immigration and return migration.
- Bilateral agreements on social security established with most emigrants' destination countries.
- Facilitated employment opportunities for foreign citizens.
- Support for migrants and their families in developing entrepreneurial projects through the "PARE 1-1" and "PARE 1+2" programs.
- Maintenance of family ties, increasing capital inflows into the country.
- Enhanced innovative, financial, and social capital of return migrants.
- Participation of migrants in the socioeconomic development of the country.
- A well-developed national statistical system, providing reliable data in the field of migration.
- Cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and certain destination countries, with support from international partners (OM, ILO, UNDP, etc.).
- Implementation of the Interagency Referral Mechanism for the integration of returned migrants.
- Guide developed for the (re)integration of Moldovan citizens returning from abroad.

### WEAKNESSES

- Insufficient coordination between central and local authorities in addressing migration issues.
- Lack of bilateral agreements with countries where a significant number of Moldovan migrants reside (France, Latvia, Switzerland).
- Outdated bilateral agreements on social security with Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, signed under the old 1993 model, which do not allow for the transfer of social benefits.
- Lack of diversified programs for channeling remittances into the national economy.
- Absence of social dialogue between the Government, Employers' Associations, and Trade Unions at national and local levels to address migration issues.
- Lack of mechanisms for attracting foreign labor through NEA agencies.
- Imperfect wage system, with low salary levels compared to destination countries.
- Insufficient provision for continuous professional training.
- Education system inadequately developed for training professionally qualified specialists.
- Unjustified bureaucratic barriers to employing foreigners (difficulties in recognizing qualifications and skills, limited access to professional training).
- Limited human and financial capacities of authorities involved in migration management.
- Lack of statistical data on return migration.
- Absence of a platform for coordinated information on migration and development.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Channeling remittances into the development of strategic economic sectors to boost the national economy.
- Facilitating diaspora involvement in investment projects through diversified entrepreneurial support programs.
- Intensifying and diversifying information campaigns about investment opportunities in the Republic of Moldova.
- Efficiently utilizing skills and professional experiences acquired by Moldovan citizens abroad.
- Strengthening and expanding bilateral actions with the scientific and high-skilled diaspora, involving them at both national and local levels.
- Capitalizing on social resources within the diaspora (networks and social/professional relationships).
- Offering tax incentives to returning migrants for business initiation and development.
- Providing financial incentives for the employment of returning migrants.
- Opportunities to improve the current wage system, especially in the real sector.
- Alleviating the labor shortage by attracting foreign workers to the domestic labor market.
- Developing and strengthening bilateral relations with existing partners and expanding partnerships.

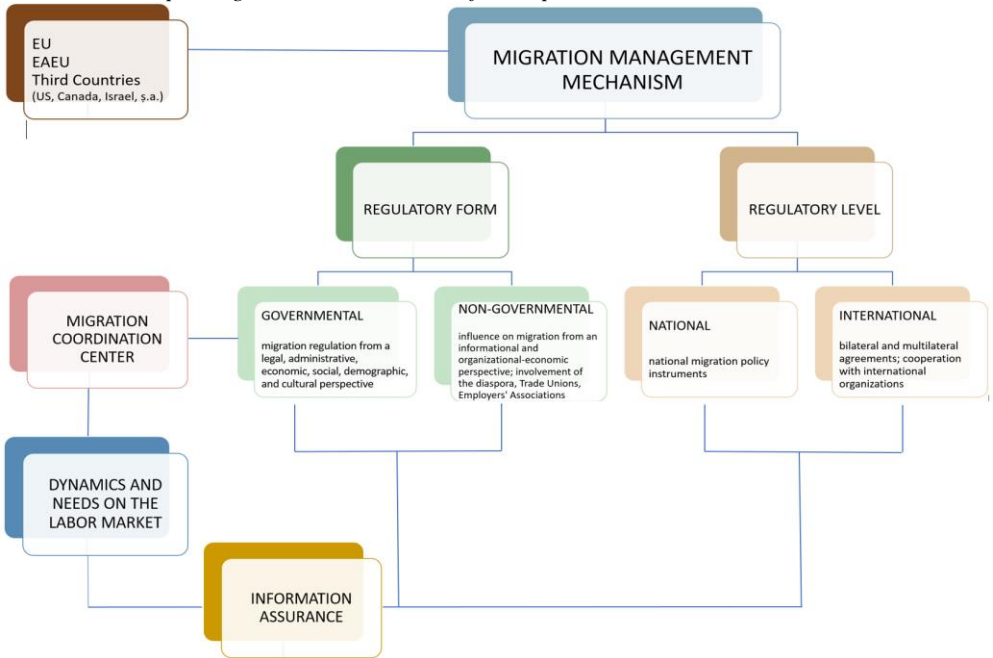
### THREATS

- Deceleration economic development in the Republic of Moldova.
- Irreversible intensification of labor migration.
- Increasing proportion of young people from rural areas with low professional qualifications and diminished employment opportunities in rural areas.
- Decline in the highly qualified and secondary-educated population.
- Increasing number of Moldovan citizens acquiring citizenship in other countries (Romania, Russia, USA, Italy, United Kingdom, etc.).
- Effective integration policies in developed European countries.
- Attractive policies and programs in developed countries that encourage immigration from lower-income countries.
- Reluctance among diaspora members to invest financial resources in Moldova's economy.
- Inflation; high tax and customs duties.
- Low public trust in state institutions and reforms implemented.
- High level of political instability; poor international political relations.
- High level of corruption.

**Figure 4.1. SWOT analysis of the current system of international migration management in the Republic of Moldova**

Source: developed by the author based on specialized literature, own research results, and the current legislative and normative framework.

The theoretical argumentation of the concept is articulated through the following expression: *"Migration management in the Republic of Moldova is a complex, multifactorial process of administration migration flows - including emigration, immigration, and return migration - within the context of globalization and scientific-technological advancement. This process is guided by relevant social, economic, and environmental considerations and relies on the use of reliable statistical data on international migration. Its primary aim is to ensure the protection of human rights and to enhance the effectiveness of partnerships with all stakeholders involved, aligning with the country's economic and social development goals and the demands of a competitive labor market".*



**Figure 4.2. General concept for international migration management in the Republic of Moldova for development a competitive labor market**

Source: developed by the author.

The migration management mechanism designed to develop the labor market within this framework comprises the following sequential steps:

- i. Evaluation of existing migration flows (outbound and inbound) and determination of the optimal quantity of foreign workers in the labor market;
- ii. Comparative analysis of existing and optimal migration flows, highlighting shortcomings and issues requiring decisions at the national and regional levels;
- iii. Development of public policies, improvement measures/actions for the system (refinement of the legal framework, institutional structure, practical implementation, control mechanisms, etc.);
- iv. Approval of expected indicators for evaluating the results based on established goals and the implementation of planned measures/actions;
- v. Development and updating of measures/actions for implementing migration policies at various levels;
- vi. Evaluation of the results obtained from the implementation of the current mechanism, including the managerial impact by public authorities at all levels;

- vii. Verification of the consistency of obtained results with established goals and objectives through a centralized coordination center at the governmental level. outcome: evaluation of labor market competitiveness;
- viii. Approval of the final decision based on the evaluation of the planned measures/actions. if the optimal migration flow is not achieved, a substantial update of policies, including implementation measures, is necessary.

The assessment of the effectiveness of the migration management system relies on Indicators provided by official statistics (NBS), administrative data, and other significant information. These indicators enable the monitoring of migratory dynamics and the evaluation of migration's impact on the labor market, contributing to the development of effective and sustainable policies. A system of nine indicators is proposed, disaggregated by demographic and socio-professional criteria, including: the number of working-age individuals who have emigrated; the number of working-age individuals returning to the country; the number of individuals aged 20–63 present in the country (demographic dividend); the unemployment rate; the number of working-age immigrants; labor demand and supply; and integrated indices: Migration Government Index and Migrant Integration Policy Index.

Recognizing the crucial role of migration in the economic development of the Republic of Moldova, a strategic integrated approach focused on the effective management of migration processes is essential. It is proposed to **establish a Migration Coordination Center** that would consolidate all aspects related to migration and facilitate efficient information exchange among institutions for the coherent implementation of state policy. This structure should **operate at a high level of authority, reporting directly to the Government** and led by a senior official, a deputy prime minister or equivalent. The Center would be tasked with implementing policy and ensuring the functionality of the integrated migration management framework through mechanisms that enhance the competitiveness of labor market.

To enhance the competitiveness of the national labor market, there is a clear need for a new paradigm of migration and labor policies in the Republic of Moldova. The theory of change has facilitated the formulation of a set of actions aimed at ultimately establishing an effective system for managing migration processes to strengthen the domestic labor market (Figure 4.3).

The objective of the TS is to optimize the current migration management system to contribute to strengthening a competitive labor market.

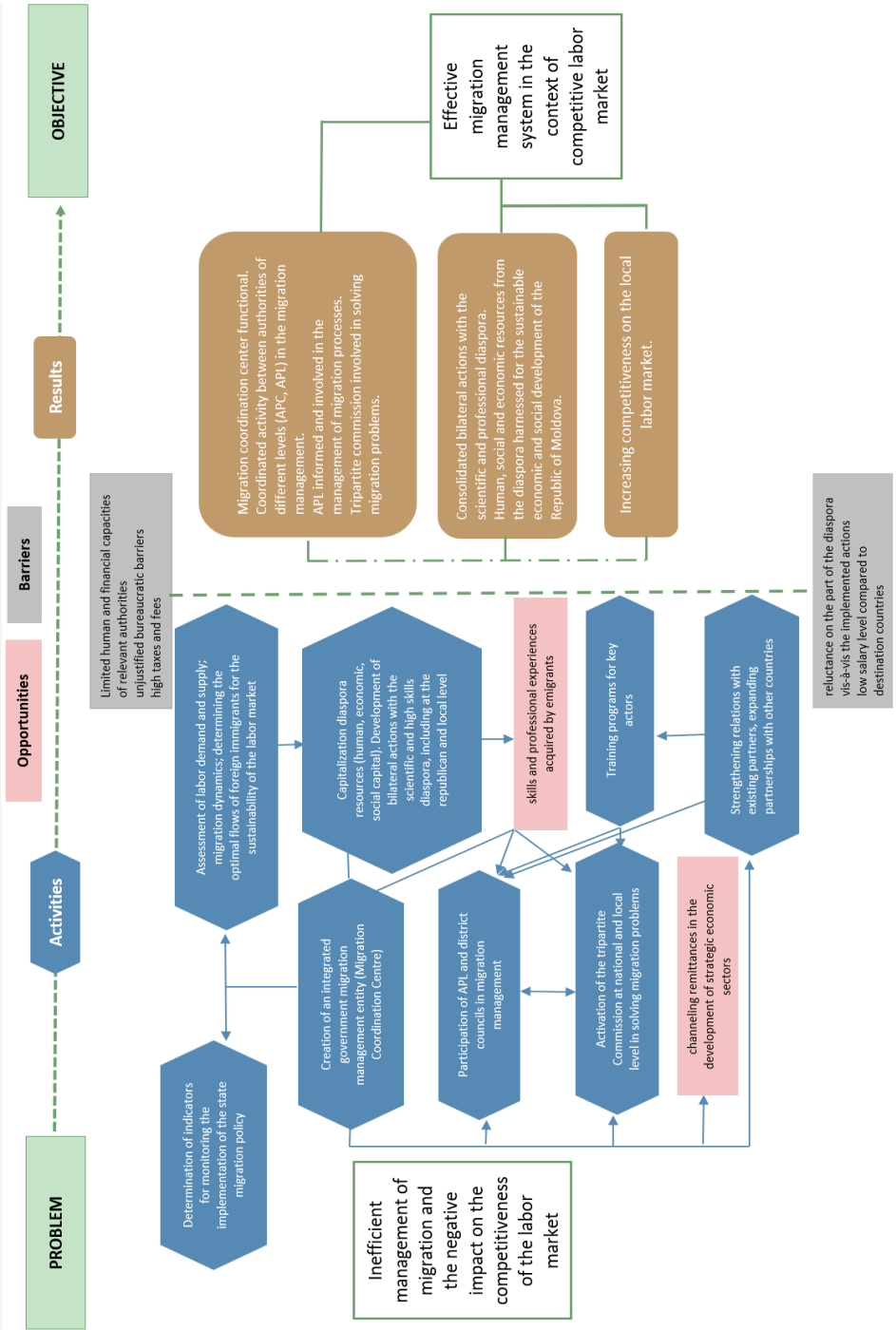
Actions to be implemented: creation of an integrated governmental center for migration management (Migration Coordination Center); involvement of local public authorities (LPA) and district councils in managing migration processes; activation of the Tripartite commission at national and local levels in addressing migration issues; strengthening relations with existing partners, as well as expanding partnerships with other partners/countries; assessing supply and demand in the labor market, as well as trends in migratory flows (inbound and outbound); establishing indicators for monitoring the implementation of the state migration policy; capitalizing on diaspora resources (human, economic, social capital) and developing bilateral actions with the scientific and professional diaspora, including at the national and local levels; training programs for all key actors.

Barriers and difficulties: limited human and financial capacities of relevant authorities; unjustified bureaucratic barriers; high taxes and fees; reluctance from the diaspora towards the implemented actions; low wage levels compared to destination countries, which may discourage migrants from returning or investing in the country.

Opportunities: skills and professional experience gained by citizens abroad; channeling remittances into the development of strategic economic sectors.

These migration management improvement measures facilitate interinstitutional coordination among authorities at all levels, progress evaluation, as well as dynamic adjustments based on the results obtained, allowing a prompt response to emerging challenges and continuous adaptation to the needs of the labor market and migrants.





**Figure 4.3. Management of migration processes in the Republic of Moldova to develop competitive labor market based on the Theory of Change**

Source: developed by the author.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The new findings have advanced knowledge and practices in migration management in the Republic of Moldova, particularly by refining mechanisms to better manage migration processes and enhance the competitiveness of the national labor market.

The aim of this research was achieved by analyzing weaknesses in the current migration management system and identifying opportunities that led to the development of a comprehensive migration management mechanism (covering emigration, immigration, and return migration) along with its sequential implementation stages. Additionally, practical recommendations were formulated to enhance the efficiency of the migration management process.

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive and interdisciplinary analysis of international migration management in the Republic of Moldova, providing a detailed perspective on the trends and characteristics of migration processes and the specific dynamics of labor market development.

The findings highlight the relevance of the objectives and confirm the hypotheses formulated at the beginning of the study. Strengthening a competitive labor market in the Republic of Moldova through effective management of international migration can be achieved by improving the existing legal and administrative framework and integrating migration policies with labor market development strategies.

### **New and original scientific results obtained within the doctoral research:**

1. The extent of emigration from the Republic of Moldova over the past three decades has been determined, highlighting the intensity of migration flows and the net migration loss during this period. It was found that the net migration loss was approximately -915,000 people between 1989 and 2022, contributing to a 20-25% reduction in the country's population. Migration flows during this period were predominantly driven by labor emigration, which led to a significant decrease in the working-age population. According to census data from the 2011 round conducted in major destination countries, the stock of emigrants aged 15-59 was estimated at around 501,000 individuals.

2. In-depth individual interviews conducted with returning migrants highlighted two major issues: the lack of adequate information about available economic opportunities in the country and the difficulties in adjusting to the relatively low standard of living in the Republic of Moldova. In the process of reintegration into the labor market, migrants benefit from the skills and professional experience acquired abroad, which have facilitated their access to advanced job opportunities. Successful labor market integration is also supported by reestablishing a work-life balance—a benefit that Moldovan citizens often lacked while abroad.

3. The financial capital accumulated by migrants abroad is primarily directed toward consumption, particularly to address housing needs. Although to a lesser extent, there is a category of Moldovan citizens who, upon return, intend to or do start a business, investing in entrepreneurial projects. Most business initiatives among returning migrants are concentrated in the agricultural sector, though other sectors of interest for investment have also been identified. The skills and experiences acquired by migrants abroad have facilitated the introduction of new products to the Moldovan market, including new species of plants and animals, as well as advanced methods of cultivation and care.

4. The research identified the challenges faced by returning migrants in implementing entrepreneurial projects. These challenges include a lack of raw materials, insufficient equipment, high customs and tax costs, and a limited understanding of strategic sectors or economic niches with investment potential, as well as of investment opportunities within the Republic of Moldova. Additionally, migrants often lack the managerial and financial skills necessary for effective business administration. Furthermore, some migrants are hesitant to invest in an economic environment perceived as unstable and unfavorable, such as that of the Republic of Moldova.

5. The research findings indicate that migration has led to significant changes in the population structure. For example, intensive emigration has considerably reduced the demographic dividend, represented by a 55% proportion of the working-age population within the total population. Firstly,

migration delayed the onset of the demographic dividend, which was first observed only in 2002 (for the de jure population) and in 2007 (for the de facto population). Secondly, due to the emigration of the working-age population, the demographic dividend never exceeded 57%, and its duration was extended to 2023 only because of the gradual increase in the retirement age to 63 for both men and women. According to demographic projections, if current emigration rates among the working-age population persist, the Republic of Moldova will no longer benefit from a demographic dividend in the future.

6. A key issue identified in the research is that approximately 60% of the working-age population comprises the inactive segment, with around 15% being individuals who are either working abroad or intending to do so. Meanwhile, the situation regarding job vacancies remains unstable, with an increase observed across various economic sectors. Significant regional disparities also exist between labor demand and supply: the majority of vacancies (about 90%) are concentrated in urban areas, while most registered unemployed individuals (around 70%) come from rural areas. This imbalance intensifies the migration of the active population from rural regions, contributing to the disintegration of the working-age population in these areas. Consequently, labor migration has become an almost irreversible phenomenon, negatively impacting the competitiveness of the national labor market.

7. In response to the research findings, it was essential to identify solutions to strengthen existing policies aimed at mitigating the negative effects of migration by preventing forced migration driven by poor labor market conditions. These solutions focus on enhancing labor market conditions and facilitating the integration of the active workforce. In particular, aligning migration management with employment policies is crucial to ensuring labor market stability and competitiveness, thereby fostering economic sustainability.

8. As a result, an integrated migration management concept was developed for the Republic of Moldova, designed to coordinate all relevant dimensions—from legal and administrative regulations to economic and social policies—with the ultimate goal of enhancing the competitiveness of the labor market.

9. To ensure the effectiveness of the migration management process, an implementation mechanism for the overall concept has been designed, comprising eight consecutive action steps and indicators for evaluating and monitoring migration policies in alignment with the objective of enhancing labor market competitiveness. The assessment of the outcomes of these actions will be conducted based on the indicators proposed by the author.

10. Additionally, considering that the current institutional structure for migration management is fragmented and subordinate to various central public authorities, which hinders collaborative coordination of activities, the establishment of a Migration Coordination Center directly under the Government of the Republic of Moldova has been proposed.

11. The necessity of involving local public authorities (LPA) in the management of migration processes has also been highlighted. This involvement should focus on implementing state policies and programs that address the needs of communities and migrants, as well as disseminating information about available economic opportunities.

12. It was also noted that a more active contribution from the tripartite commission at both national and local levels is essential for addressing issues related to migration and the labor market, by facilitating social dialogue among government representatives, trade unions, and employers' associations.

13. Based on the information provided by representatives of the central public authorities, local public authorities, and the tripartite commission, the Migration Coordination Center will play a key role in monitoring and overseeing the implementation of migration policies aligned with employment policies. It will assess labor market demand and supply, as well as trends in migration flows, to determine the optimal volume of immigrants needed.

14. Finally, we also emphasize the importance of harnessing resources from the diaspora (human, economic, and social capital) by diversifying existing programs, thereby maximizing their potential for national socioeconomic development. In this regard, it is essential to develop bilateral actions with the scientific and

professional diaspora, both at the national and local levels, to encourage the involvement of highly qualified specialists in transferring knowledge and skills to professionals in the country.

**Based on the research findings, the following *general recommendations* have been proposed:**

Strengthening the mechanisms for integrating employment policies with migration policies, as well as the associated institutional and informational infrastructure. These mechanisms include inter-institutional cooperation, the integration of employment measures into migration policies, the adaptation of employment policies to meet the needs of migrants, the establishment of an informational infrastructure, and partnerships with the non-governmental and international partners.

Migration policies should include specific measures to facilitate migrants' access to the labor market, such as the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad, vocational training programs, and counseling and career guidance services. Employment policies should be tailored to address the specific needs of immigrants and returning migrants, including through labor market integration programs and entrepreneurship development initiatives.

Additionally, it is essential to strengthen the informational infrastructure to enable the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data on international migration flows and the labor market. This involves enhancing existing databases with new disaggregated indicators that better represent the profiles of migrants and the labor market, as well as establishing monitoring and evaluation systems for migration and labor market indicators. Online platforms should be developed to facilitate information exchange among the involved institutions. Furthermore, collaboration with employers, trade unions, NGOs, and other key stakeholders should be expanded to ensure the collection of reliable and improved statistical data.

**The following *practical recommendations* have been developed for the relevant institutions:**

**To the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the relevant ministries:**

- *Development of an integrated migration management framework.* This includes creating a national integrated model that coordinates all aspects of migration, encompassing legal, economic, social, and cultural regulations.
- *Improvement of transparency and accessibility of information* through the development of online platforms and other communication tools for the clear and accessible dissemination of information regarding migrant assistance programs.

**Bureau for Relations with the Diaspora in collaboration with the relevant ministries:**

- *Development of mechanisms to facilitate the recognition of experiences and qualifications acquired by Moldovan migrants abroad.*

**National Office of Social Insurance:**

- *Negotiation and signing of bilateral agreements in the field of social security* to ensure the protection of workers' rights, including access to social security benefits. It is recommended to prioritize the initiation of social security agreements with France, Switzerland, and Latvia, as well as to review existing agreements with Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus.

**Ministry of Labor and Social Protection in collaboration with the relevant ministries:**

- *Negotiation and signing of bilateral labor agreements* to ensure the legal employment of citizens abroad, facilitate the immigration of necessary foreign labor, protect workers' rights, and ensure decent working conditions.
- *Enhancing the mechanisms for informing and promoting the importance of legal employment for all categories of migrants* to ensure their rights to social protection.
- *Development of action guidelines for local specialists* to provide assistance to immigrants and returning migrants.
  - ***Specifically for the State Labor Inspectorate:***
  - *Establishment of effective mechanisms for attracting foreign labor*, including programs aimed at recruiting both skilled and unskilled foreign workers to the national labor market, providing facilities for obtaining work visas, ensuring rapid integration into the social security system, and offering support programs for cultural and linguistic adaptation.

- *Development of measures to enhance the integration of immigrants into the labor market, including vocational training programs and mechanisms for the recognition of qualifications, among others.*
- *Continued support for the reintegration of returning migrants through effective programs for labor market reintegration. Employment agencies, in collaboration with local authorities, should provide personalized assistance to returning migrants.*
- ***Specifically for the State Labor Inspectorate:***
- *Monitoring compliance with the Labor Code and the protection of the labor rights of citizens and migrants engaged in the workforce.*
- *Establishment of a regulatory and monitoring mechanism for private agencies that mediate the placement of individuals in overseas employment, including those recruited within the territory of the Republic of Moldova, regardless of their citizenship.*

#### **General Inspectorate for Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs:**

- *Providing periodic and detailed statistical data on foreign citizens, disaggregated by demographic (gender, age) and socio-professional characteristics (education, qualification).*

#### **Ministry of Finance:**

- *Improvement of the current salary system, particularly for the real sector of the economy, with a focus on providing competitive salaries for young people to prevent emigration and encourage their retention in the national labor market.*

#### **Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalization:**

- *Development of measures to enhance opportunities for youth by diversifying and expanding entrepreneurial programs that include training and mentorship.*
- ***Specifically for the Organization for Development of Entrepreneurship:***
- *Diversification of programs designed to attract remittances into the national economy, with an emphasis on strategic sectors, utilizing appealing financial instruments and information and advisory services for migrants.*

#### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the relevant ministries:**

- *Improvement of the legal framework to streamline the procedures for obtaining work visas by eliminating the invitation requirement for citizens of countries identified as potential sources of labor that are particularly attractive to the Republic of Moldova and its economic agents.*

#### **Customs Service:**

- *Flexibility in the customs regime for returning citizens by implementing advantageous measures for the transportation of socially important products that are not produced by local economic agents, including automobiles with various specifications, children's goods, and other economic items.*

#### **Central and local public administration:**

- *Promotion of international partnerships through the exchange of best practices, the establishment of international agreements, and the acquisition of logistical, humanitarian, and financial support.*

#### **National Bureau of Statistics:**

- *Implementation of a robust statistical system for monitoring migration and the labor market, including the development of disaggregated data on return migration and the immigration of foreigners. Return migration can be estimated by segmenting immigration flows into Moldovan citizens and foreign nationals.*
- *Conducting field studies on labor migration at least once every five years, focusing on the socio-professional characteristics of migrants, their working conditions and job satisfaction in the Republic of Moldova, destination countries, and working conditions in those countries, among other factors.*

#### **Tripartite Commission (for collective bargaining):**

- *Review of migration issues, reasons for emigration, the integration of returning migrants, and the potential for utilizing foreign labor at least once a year during meetings of the Tripartite Commission.*
- *Ensuring the protection of the rights of all migrants, including their right to work, right to security, and access to social protection, among others.*

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## ADNOTARE Tabac Tatiana

### **Gestionarea proceselor migraționale în contextul dezvoltării pieței muncii competitive (cazul Republicii Moldova)**

Teză de doctor în economie *Specialitatea 521.03 Economie și management în domeniul de activitate*, Chișinău, 2024

**Structura tezei:** introducere, patru capitole (16 tabele și 32 figuri), concluzii generale și recomandări, prefață, mulțumiri, adnotări în limbile română, rusă și engleză, lista abrevierilor, cuvinte-cheie, surse bibliografice (212), anexe (4), text de bază: 156 p.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** gestionarea migrației, mecanism de gestionare a migrației, procese migraționale, migrația de revenire, piața muncii competitivă, dividend demografic, Teoria schimbării.

**Numărul publicațiilor la tema tezei:** 19 publicații cu volum de 12,3 c.a., dintre care 4 capitole în cărți de specialitate (3-străinătate, 1-țară), 5 articole în reviste recenzate (3-străinătate, 2-țară), 10 în culegerile manifestărilor științifice (9-internaționale, 1-naționale). Publicații indexate Scopus și Web of Science-3.

**Domeniul de studiu:** economie

**Scopul cercetării:** eficientizarea mecanismului de gestionare a proceselor migraționale pentru a sprijini dezvoltarea unei piețe a muncii competitive în Republica Moldova.

**Obiectivele cercetării:** Fundamentarea cadrului teoretico-metodologic privind gestionarea proceselor migraționale în contextul dezvoltării unei piețe a muncii competitive; Determinarea tendințelor și particularităților proceselor migraționale în Republica Moldova; Identificarea și analiza determinantilor socio-economici ai migrației; Analiza dinamicii și caracteristicilor structurale ale pieței muncii; Identificarea modelelor și practicilor internaționale aplicate în managementul migrației; Evaluarea sistemului actual de gestionare a migrației internaționale în Republica Moldova; Elaborarea recomandărilor de perfecționare a gestionării migrației internaționale în Republica Moldova în vederea creșterii competitivității pieței muncii autohtone.

**Noutatea și originalitatea științifică** constă în analiza cuprinzătoare și interdisciplinară a gestionării migrației internaționale în Republica Moldova, evidențiind evoluția proceselor migraționale, tendințelor și particularităților de dezvoltare a pieței muncii, în special prin: crearea unui cadru metodologic privind gestionarea proceselor migraționale în contextul dezvoltării pieței muncii competitive (i); definirea conceptelor „managementul migrației”, „gestionarea migrației”, „reglementarea migrației” și „piața muncii competitive” (ii); determinarea dimensiunii (amplarea) emigrației în ultimele trei decenii (1989-2022), cu identificarea valurilor de emigrare, țărilor de destinație și a migrației nete (iii); identificarea provocărilor întâmpinate de migrații reveniți în integrarea pe piața muncii și în inițiativele antreprenoriale (iv); estimarea retrospectivă și prospectivă a dividendului demografic (1990-2040), evidențiind impactul migrației asupra dimensiunii și duratei acestuia (v); elaborarea unui concept integrat de gestionare a migrației și a mecanismului de implementare a acestuia, inclusiv cu argumentarea necesității creării unui Centru de coordonare a migrației (vi); elaborarea, pe baza Teoriei schimbării, a unui set de acțiuni pentru eficientizarea gestionării migrației în vederea consolidării pieței muncii competitive (vii); formularea propunerilor pentru eficientizarea gestionării proceselor migraționale în Republica Moldova în contextul dezvoltării pieței muncii competitive (viii).

**Problema științifică soluționată** constă în fundamentarea științifico-practică a unui concept integrat de gestionare a migrației și a mecanismului de implementare a acestuia pentru perfecționarea gestionării migrației internaționale și dezvoltarea pieței muncii competitive în Republica Moldova.

**Semnificația teoretică:** delimitarea conceptelor „managementul migrației”, „gestionarea migrației”, „reglementarea migrației” și „piața muncii competitive”, alături de dezvoltarea unui concept integrat de gestionare a migrației, susținut de argumentarea teoretică și un mecanism de implementare. Rezultatele obținute completează perspectivele existente privind gestionarea migrației, cu aplicabilitate în economiile emergente în care mobilitatea internațională a forței de muncă este ridicată. Consolidarea teoretică a cadrului de referință privind managementul migrației și al pieței muncii, într-un context economic marcat de mobilitate crescută a resurselor umane. Rezultatele oferă suport teoretic și metodologic pentru dezvoltarea cercetărilor în domeniul migrației și integrarea în proiecte internaționale.

**Valoarea aplicativă a cercetării:** posibilitatea utilizării rezultatelor de către autoritățile din Republica Moldova ca bază științifică și analitică pentru elaborarea și implementarea strategiilor, programelor și altor politici în domeniul migrației și ocupării forței de muncă. De asemenea, lucrarea este valoroasă prin oferirea mecanismului de perfecționare a gestionării proceselor migraționale și a acțiunilor specifice elaborate în baza Teoriei schimbării, în vederea consolidării pieței muncii competitive. Rezultatele pot servi drept suport în formarea profesională a specialiștilor din domeniile economice și administrația publică, și în dezvoltarea programelor de formare continuă a specialiștilor din domeniu.

**Implementarea rezultatelor științifice** avut loc în cadrul a două proiecte instituționale și au fost validate la 22 conferințe internaționale și naționale. De asemenea, au stat la baza prognozei demografice elaborate în 2021 și au fost integrate în monografia națională „*Populația Republicii Moldova la 30 de ani de independență: provocări principale și politici necesare*”. Contribuțiile științifice au fost recunoscute prin acordarea Premiului „Tânărul savant al anului” (INCE, 2020), a Bursei de excelență a Guvernului conferită studenților doctoranzi (2021) și a Premiului în domeniul științe sociale și economice „Paul Bran” (AȘM, 2022).



## АННОТАЦИЯ

Табак Татьяна

### Управление миграционными процессами в контексте развития конкурентоспособного рынка труда (на примере Республики Молдова) Кандидатская диссертация по экономике

*Специальность 521.03 Экономика и управление в области деятельности*, Кишинев, 2024

**Структура диссертации:** введение, четыре главы (16 таблиц и 32 рисунка), выводы и рекомендации, предисловие, благодарности, аннотации на румынском, русском и английском языках, список сокращений, ключевые слова, библиография (212 источников), приложения (4), основной текст: 156 с.

**Ключевые слова:** управление миграцией, механизм управления миграцией, миграционные процессы, возвратная миграция, конкурентоспособный рынок труда, демографический дивиденд, Теория изменений.

**Количество публикаций по теме диссертации:** 19 публикаций объемом 12 п.л., включая 4 главы в специализированных книгах (3-за рубежом, 1-в стране), 5 статей в рецензируемых журналах (3-за рубежом, 2-в стране), 10 в сборниках научных мероприятий (9-международных, 1-национальных). Публикаций индексируются в Scopus и Web of Science-3.

**Область исследования:** экономика

**Цель исследования:** повышение эффективности механизма управления миграционными процессами для поддержки развития конкурентоспособного рынка труда в Республике Молдова.

**Задачи исследования:** Обоснование теоретико-методологической основы управления миграционными процессами в контексте развития конкурентоспособного рынка труда; Определение тенденций и особенностей миграционных процессов в Республике Молдова; Выявление и анализ социально-экономических детерминант миграции; Анализ динамики и структурных характеристик рынка труда; Изучение международных моделей и практик управления миграцией; Оценка существующей системы управления международной миграцией в Республике Молдова; Разработка рекомендаций по совершенствованию управления международной миграцией в Республике Молдова для повышения конкурентоспособности национального рынка труда.

**Научная новизна и оригинальность** заключаются в комплексном и междисциплинарном анализе управления международной миграцией в Республике Молдова, выявлении тенденций миграционных процессов и особенностей развития рынка труда, в частности: создании методологической основы для управления миграционными процессами в контексте развития конкурентоспособного рынка труда (i); определении понятий «управление миграцией», «руководство миграцией», «регулирование миграции» и «конкурентоспособный рынок труда» (ii); определении масштаба миграции за последние три десятилетия (1989-2022), включая выявление волн миграции, стран назначения и чистой миграции (iii); выявлении вызовов, с которыми сталкиваются возвратные мигранты при интеграции на рынке труда и в предпринимательских инициативах (iv); ретроспективной и перспективной оценке демографического дивиденда (1990-2040), с акцентом на влиянии миграции на его масштаб и продолжительность (v); разработке интегрированной концепции управления миграцией и механизма её реализации, с обоснованием необходимости создания Центра координации миграции (vi); разработке на основе Теории изменений комплекса действий для повышения эффективности управления миграцией с целью укрепления конкурентоспособного рынка труда (vii); формулировке предложений по повышению эффективности управления миграционными процессами в Республике Молдова в контексте развития конкурентоспособного рынка труда (viii).

**Решенная научная проблема** заключается в научно-практическом обосновании интегрированной концепции управления миграцией и механизма ее реализации для совершенствования управления международной миграцией и развития конкурентоспособного рынка труда в Республике Молдова.

**Теоретическая значимость работы:** определении понятий «управление миграцией», «руководство миграцией», «регулирование миграции» и «конкурентоспособный рынок труда», а также разработка интегрированной концепции управления миграцией, поддерживаемой теоретическим обоснованием и механизмом реализации. Полученные результаты дополняют существующие взгляды на управление миграцией, с применимостью в развивающихся экономиках с высокой международной мобильностью рабочей силы. Теоретическое укрепление концептуальной основы управления миграцией и рынком труда в условиях экономической среды, характеризующейся высокой мобильностью человеческих ресурсов. Результаты предоставляют теоретическую и методологическую основу для дальнейших исследований в области миграции и интеграции их в международные проекты.

**Практическая значимость исследования:** возможность использования результатов исследования органами власти Республики Молдова в качестве научной и аналитической основы для разработки и внедрения стратегий, программ и других политик в области миграции и занятости. Кроме того, работа ценна предложением механизма совершенствования управления миграционными процессами и специфических действий, разработанных на основе Теории изменений, для укрепления конкурентоспособного рынка труда. Результаты могут служить основой для профессиональной подготовки специалистов в области экономики и государственной администрации, а также для разработки программ непрерывного обучения специалистов в данной области.

**Реализация научных результатов** осуществлена в рамках двух институциональных проектов и была представлена на 22 конференциях. Результаты также послужили основой для демографического прогноза, составленного в 2021 году, и были интегрированы в национальную монографию «Население Республики Молдова спустя 30 лет независимости: основные вызовы и необходимые меры политики». Научные достижения были признаны присуждением премии «Молодой ученый года» (НИЭИ, 2020), Стипендии Правительства (2021), Премии в области социальных и экономических наук имени «Паула Брана» (АНМ, 2022).

## ANNOTATION

Tabac Tatiana

### **Management of Migration Processes in the Context of a Competitive Labor Market Development (The Case of the Republic of Moldova)**, PhD Thesis in Economics,

*Specialty 521.03 Economics and Management in the Field of Activity*, Chisinau, 2024

**Thesis structure:** introduction, four chapters (16 tables and 32 figures), conclusions and recommendations, preface, acknowledgments, annotations in Romanian, Russian, and English, list of abbreviations, keywords, bibliography (212 sources), appendices (4), main text: 156 p.

**Keywords:** migration management, migration management mechanism, migration processes, return migration, competitive labor market, demographic dividend, Theory of Change.

**The number of publications on the topic of the thesis:** 19 publications which a volume of 12,3 p.s., including 4 chapters in specialized books (3 abroad, 1 domestic), 5 articles in peer-reviewed journals (3 abroad, 2 domestic), 10 papers in conference proceedings (9 international, 1 national). Publications indexed in Scopus and Web of Science-3.

**Field of study:** economics

**Aim of the research:** to enhance the efficiency of the mechanism for managing migration processes to support the development of a competitive labor market in the Republic of Moldova.

**Research objectives:** To establish the theoretical and methodological framework for managing migration processes in the context of developing a competitive labor market; to identify the trends and characteristics of migration processes in the Republic of Moldova; to identify and analyze the socio-economic determinants of migration; to analyze the dynamics and structural characteristics of the labor market; to identify international models and practices applied in migration management; to evaluate the current system of international migration management in the Republic of Moldova; to develop recommendations for improving the management of international migration in the Republic of Moldova to enhance the competitiveness of the domestic labor market.

**Scientific novelty and originality** lie in the comprehensive and interdisciplinary analysis of international migration management in the Republic of Moldova, highlighting the evolution of migration processes, trends, and labor market development features, particularly through: creating a methodological framework for managing migration processes in the context of developing a competitive labor market (i); defining the concepts of "migration management," "migration governance," "migration regulation," and "competitive labor market" (ii); determining the scale of emigration over the past three decades (1989-2022), with an identification of migration waves, destination countries, and net migration (iii); identifying the challenges faced by return migrants in labor market integration and entrepreneurial initiatives (iv); retrospective and prospective estimation of the demographic dividend (1990-2040), highlighting the impact of migration on its size and duration (v); developing an integrated concept of migration management and its implementation mechanism, including the need to create a Migration Coordination Center (vi); developing a set of actions based on the Theory of Change to enhance migration management to strengthen the competitive labor market (vii); formulating proposals for improving the management of migration processes in the Republic of Moldova in the context of developing a competitive labor market (viii).

**The scientific problem solved:** scientific-practical justification of an integrated concept of migration management and its implementation mechanism to improve international migration management and the development of a competitive labor market in the Republic of Moldova.

**Theoretical significance:** defining the concepts of "migration management", "migration governance", "migration regulation" and "competitive labor market", alongside the development of an integrated concept of migration management supported by theoretical substantiation and an implementation mechanism. The obtained results complement existing perspectives on migration management, with applicability in emerging economies where international labor mobility is high. Theoretical consolidation of the framework regarding migration management and labor markets in an economic context marked by high mobility of human resources. The results provide theoretical and methodological support for developing research in the field of migration and integrating it into international projects.

**Practical value of the research:** the possibility of using the results by the Moldovan authorities as a scientific and analytical basis for developing and implementing strategies, programs, and other policies in the field of migration and employment. Furthermore, the work is valuable for providing a mechanism for improving migration process management and specific actions developed based on the Theory of Change to strengthen the competitive labor market. The results can serve as support in the professional training of specialists in economic fields and public administration and in the development of continuing education programs for professionals in this field.

**Implementation of scientific results** occurred within two institutional projects and was validated at 22 conferences. The results also formed the basis for the demographic forecast developed in 2021 and the national monograph "The Population of the Republic of Moldova at 30 Years of Independence: Key Challenges and Necessary Policies". Scientific contributions were recognized with the "Young Scientist of the Year" award (NIER, 2020), the Government Excellence Scholarship (2021), the "Paul Bran" award in the field of social and economic sciences (ASM, 2022). ..

**TABAC TATIANA**

**MANAGEMENT OF MIGRATION PROCESSES IN THE CONTEXT  
OF A COMPETITIVE LABOR MARKET DEVELOPMENT (THE  
CASE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA)**

**521.03 ECONOMY AND MANAGEMENT IN THE FIELD OF ACTIVITY**

Summary of doctoral thesis in economic sciences

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