

MIGRATION AS IT IS

An Overview of Migration
in the Republic of Moldova



IOM International Organization for Migration

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INTRODUCTION

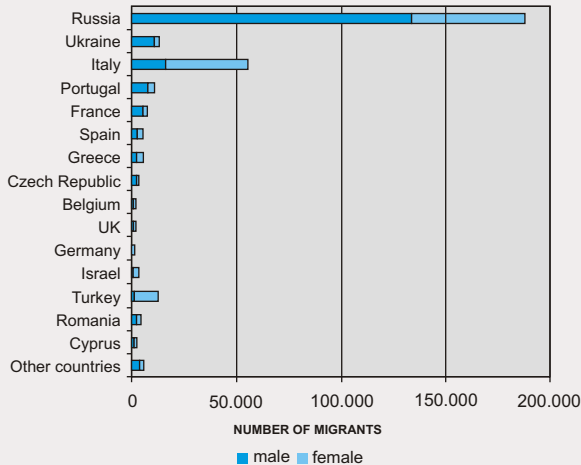
Labour migration profoundly affects the economic and social development of Moldova. As of mid-2006, approximately one quarter of the economically active population was occupied abroad. The number of migrants, as well as remittances, has grown steadily since 1999 with no indication yet that this trend might be reversed.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), commissioned a detailed survey of Moldovan households with a focus on why people migrate and how this decision affects their lives. The survey was conducted by CBS-AXA throughout Moldova during July and August 2006. The information in this brochure comes from this research (hereinafter referred to as “CBS-AXA survey”) and from other relevant sources, including the data from the National Bank of Moldova (NBM), the Labour Force Survey (LFS), and the 2004 population census. This brochure gives a comprehensive picture of migration and remittances, countries of destination, and employment abroad.

COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION

Since the late 1990s, labour migration from Moldova has been directed toward two broad regions: CIS countries, predominantly Russia, and Western Europe, particularly Italy. The socioeconomic characteristics of the migrants drawn to each of these two regions differ markedly. From the 2006 CBS-AXA survey, information about destination countries is

Destination countries of Moldovan migrants (2006 CBS-AXA Survey)



available for approximately 320,000 (from a total of 350,000) current or recent migrants who are still members of a household in Moldova. Fully 59 percent of these Moldovan labour migrants, or approximately 190,000 individuals, were in Russia at the time of this survey, with Italy a distant second at 17 percent (corresponding to 55,000 individuals). Other important destinations include Ukraine in the CIS bloc and Portugal, France, Spain, and Greece in Western Europe. There is also sizeable migration to Israel, Turkey, and Romania. Male and female migrants tend to choose different destinations. This pattern can be explained by the characteristics of the jobs performed by the migrants in their respective destinations.

DESTINATION CITIES

Within their destination countries, Moldovan migrants are concentrated in a small number of major cities. With roughly 150,000 migrants, or more than half of those for whom information is available, Moscow stands out as the prime destination. Rome ranks second, being home to some 13,000 Moldovan migrants. Hosting several thousands migrants each, other important cities are St Petersburg, Istanbul, Odessa, Lisbon, Milan, Padua, Paris, and Tyumen. Together, these ten cities account for almost three

quarters of all migrants from Moldova. Thus, the majority of Moldovan migrants are concentrated in a small number of areas.

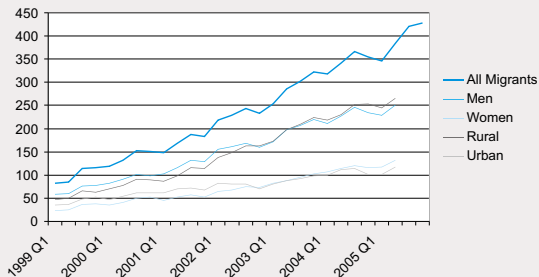
Destination cities for Moldovan migrants (2006 CBS-AXA Survey)

Destination city	Number of migrants	share of all migrants (%)
Moscow	145 388	51,69
Rome	12 815	4,56
St. Petersburg	9 084	3,23
Istanbul	8 597	3,06
Odessa	7 650	2,72
Lisbon	6 294	2,24
Milan	5 801	2,06
Padua	4 849	1,72
Paris	4 222	1,5
Tyumen	3 893	1,38

MIGRANTS ABROAD

Extrapolations of the total number of migrants and the composition of the migrant workforce are compared to existing data analysis from the LFS and the 2004 population census. According to the LFS, the number of migrants grew from fewer than 100,000 in 1999 to more than 400,000 by the end of 2005. Both the total number of migrants and major groups (men,

Moldova 1999-2005: migrants abroad
(LFS estimates)



women, rural, urban) have grown in an almost linear fashion, with no obvious sign yet that the annual increase is slowing down.

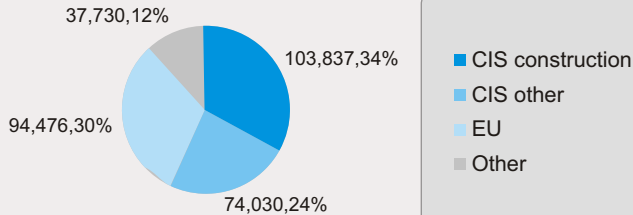
Moldova: Migrants - 2006 CBS-AXA
Survey extrapolated (thousands)

	Currently abroad	Plus: was abroad recently	Plus: plans to go abroad
Chisinau	23	34	73
Other urban areas	60	85	162
Rural areas	169	222	317
Total	252	340	551
<i>Total (2004)</i>	214	293	389

MIGRANT GROUPS

In order to derive a more nuanced picture of the patterns of migration, we divide migrants into four groups based on destination country and employment sector: workers in the construction industry in CIS countries, who account for a full one third of all Moldovan migrants; other migrants in CIS countries (about one quarter of all migrants); migrants in the EU (one third of all migrants); and all others, accounting for 12 percent of Moldovan migrants.

Migrant groups (2006 CBS-AXA Survey)



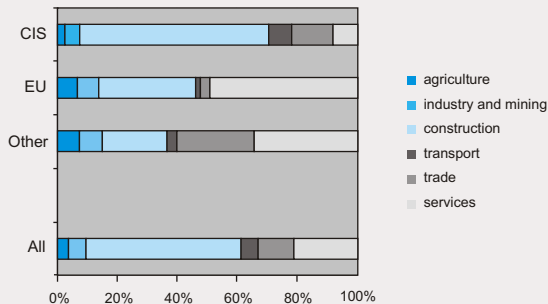
While each of these four groups is relatively homogeneous, they differ considerably from one another in their socioeconomic characteristics and migration and remittance experiences.

EMPLOYMENT SECTORS IN HOST COUNTRIES

Overall, roughly one half of all migrants are employed in the construction industry and about one fifth in the service industry. Other sectors - agriculture, industry and mining, transport, and trade - only play a minor role. The shares of the employment sectors correlate closely with gender biases in the distribution of migrants across destinations. As a closer

inspection of the underlying data reveals, primarily "male" destinations such as Russia or Portugal feature large shares of migrants working in the construction industry, while predominantly "female" destinations such as Italy or Turkey have many migrants in the service sector. In general, it appears that the jobs performed by Moldovan migrants require mostly low to medium skills. Furthermore, migrants are frequently employed in sectors that differ from their previous employment in Moldova. Hence, few migrants (with the possible exception of some construction workers) are likely to acquire relevant professional skills through their work abroad.

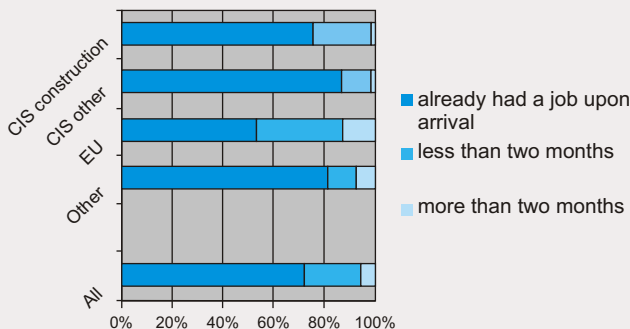
Employment sectors in destination countries
(2006 CBS-AXA Survey)



AVERAGE TIME NEEDED TO FIND A JOB ABROAD

Moldovan migrants tend to have little difficulty finding a job abroad. The vast majority already had a job upon arrival; most others found one within two months. Only *EU* migrants face more difficulties, with almost half arriving without a job and about 13 percent still unemployed two months after arrival.

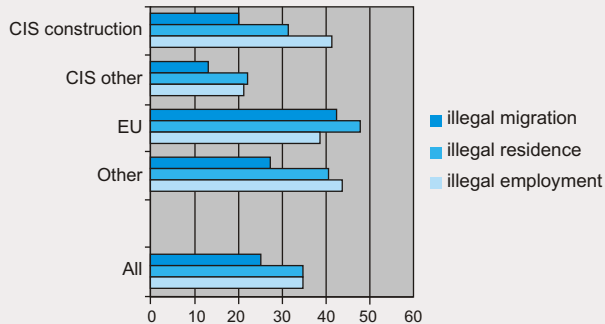
Average time needed to find a job abroad
(2006 CBS-AXA Survey)



ILLEGAL MIGRATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND RESIDENCE

For many Moldovans, the migration process includes various illegal aspects, such as illegal border crossings or employment or residence abroad without proper permits. Surprisingly perhaps, households tended to answer the corresponding questions in the CBS-AXA survey quite openly and many respondents readily stated that a migrant household member was involved in technically illegal activities during the migration process.

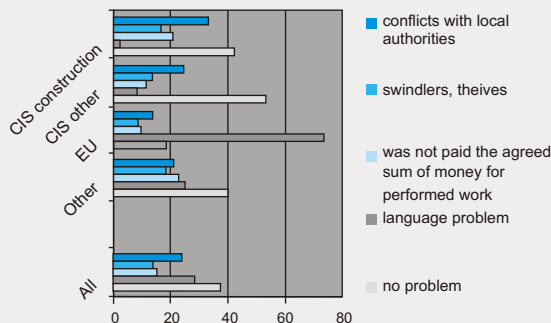
Illegal migration, employment, and residence
(2006 CBS-AXA Survey)



PROBLEMS CONFRONTED ABROAD

Their lack of legal status makes many migrants prone to run-ins with the authorities as well as various forms of exploitation. Especially the *CIS construction* group, but also *CIS other* and *other* migrants appear to be confronted frequently with serious difficulties, such as conflicts with the authorities, or becoming a victim of swindlers or thieves. In the focus groups conducted as part of the CBS-AXA survey, some migrants, particularly in Russia, mentioned arbitrary treatment by local police as well as disrespectful or even violent behaviour by some elements of the local population. Labour exploitation, in the form of being paid less than agreed for work performed, was also an important issue. It is remarkable that although *EU* migrants have the highest shares of illegal

Problems confronted abroad (2006 CBS-AXA Survey)

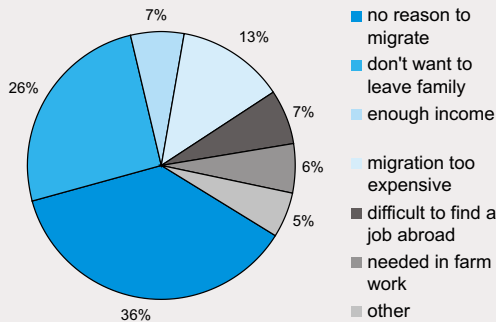


travel, employment, and residence, the main problems there were related to knowledge of local languages rather than exploitation or harassment related to illegality.

WHY DO PEOPLE STAY IN MOLDOVA?

The CBS-AXA survey asked Moldovans, who are not planning to emigrate in the near future, about their reasons for staying in the homeland. The respondents were 20 to 55 years old. The chart below illustrates the results of the survey:

Why do people stay in Moldova? 2006 CBS-AXA Survey

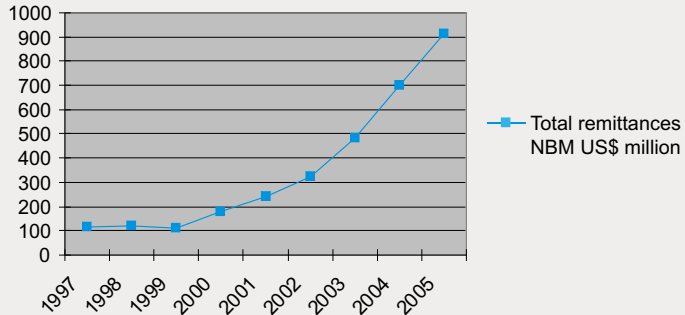


TOTAL REMITTANCES¹

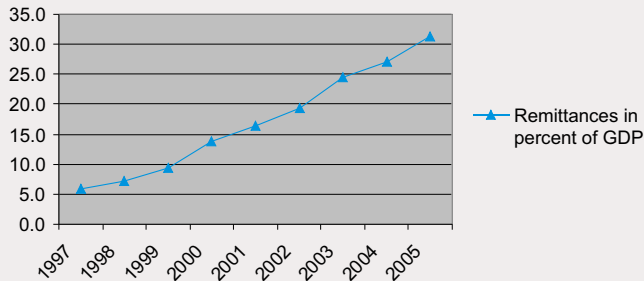
According to the balance of payments compiled by the National Bank of Moldova, total remittances have increased from around US\$ 100 million annually in the late 1990s to just under US\$ 1 billion in 2005, equivalent to about one third of Moldova's gross domestic product (GDP). The estimate for 2005 might even be conservative because the recorded errors and omissions in the balance of payments point to a "hidden" net inflow of up to another US\$ 200 million.

¹For further information on remittances in Moldova, please see IOM's brochure *Remittances in the Republic of Moldova: Patterns, Trends, and Effects*.

Total remittances (NBM; US\$ million)



Moldova: Migrant remittances, 1997-2005
(percent of GDP)



SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Most migrants come from rural areas and are male. Compared to 2004, the 2006 survey showed an increase in both female and university-educated migrants. Less-educated, unemployed, and poor individuals and heads of household (fathers, mothers) tend to leave for Russia and Ukraine to work mostly in the construction sector. Better-educated and richer individuals and those who have less responsibility in their households tend to leave for the EU. These trends highlight the dichotomy of motivations for migration: largely needs-driven migration to CIS countries vis-à-vis the opportunity-driven migration to the EU. Likewise, other patterns of migration vary significantly across the four migrant groups. CIS countries mainly host seasonal migrants who often work on construction sites. The continental climate and the resulting fluctuations in demand for low-skilled workers make seasonal migration an attractive option. Moreover, costs and risks of illegality are comparatively low. By contrast, due to the risks and costs involved in frequent illegal travel, most Moldovan migrants in the EU leave the homeland for longer periods of time; a significant number even intend to settle abroad.

Costs of migration (US\$; 2006 CBS-AXA Survey)

	CIS construction	CIS other	EU	Other	All
US\$ spent on first departure (2006)	74	132	3584	889	654
US\$ spent on first departure (2000)	171	170	2051	285	540

Socio-economic characteristics (2006 CBS-AXA Survey)

	Age	Female %	Univ. education %	Rural %	Poor %	Head %	Unemp-loyed before migra-tion %
CIS construction	35	18	9	77	25	52	32
CIS other	35	42	17	63	22	39	22
EU	36	58	28	55	13	30	21
Other	34	69	22	52	22	29	18
All	35	42	18	65	20	40	25
All 2004	36	35	16	68	(35)	N/a	N/a

