

POVERTY AS A MOTIVE FOR MOBILITY IN EUROPE

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INTRODUCTION “POVERTY AS A MOTIVE FOR MOBILITY IN EUROPE”

The study “Poverty as a motive for mobility in Europe”, conducted by the SINDNOVA Institute, was conceived to conform to the objectives proposed by the European Commission for 2010, the “European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion”.

The aim of the project, promoted by the European Economic and Social Committee as the Contracting Authority, is to analyze the dynamics that lead many European citizens to undertake a migratory path within the Union countries, seeking to understand the role played by the condition of poverty in the country of origin as a possible driving factor.

Considering the fact that in conditions of absolute poverty it is not possible to have the instruments necessary for emigrating, the European context nevertheless offers various socioeconomic situations and migration paths, which are undertaken by individuals in search of better wage conditions and a guarantee of rights which are not fully protected in the country of origin. There are numerous nuances and differences among national contexts. In order to offer an organic and multidimensional picture of the phenomenon of worker migration originating from poverty conditions in the countries of origin, the study takes a look at three European countries.

Italy, Poland and Romania, with their different historic and sociopolitical paths and factors, offer interesting observation points for studying the migration phenomenon.

Italy, a country with a long migration tradition, is a point of arrival for many foreign communities who choose to enter the Italian labour market. It is a country of immigration in which, in addition to the presence of foreigners, there is a geographic mobility among its own inhabitants, following an in&out migratory process indicative of a socioeconomic context that is often fragmentary. In this scenario, the analysis of the labour market and the access of immigrant workers highlights the specific vocations occupied by the foreign workers, outlining the varied segmentation of the market and the complementarity of the native and immigrant realities.

The employment incidence of immigrants in certain sectors, especially in the so-called “3D” (dirty, dangerous and demanding) jobs, calls for a reflection on the level of social inclusion of the foreign workers. Verifying whether or not there is a social mobility of immigrant workers leads to an analysis of the matter of vocational underutilization and its causes: from the non-recognition of

educational qualifications and poor knowledge of the Italian language, to the job placement methods and informal networks of acquaintances to which they often turn. Moreover, the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurship offers another element for discussion which confirms the difficulty for immigrant workers to grow professionally within structured contexts, while at the same time showing there is no lack of prospects in entrepreneurial activities. The remittances that immigrants send back to their countries of origin are another important matter, which is still little analyzed as far as its macroeconomic implications are concerned.

Within the framework of the active social inclusion policies implemented by the Institutions, the role of the Employment Services and vocational training courses is analyzed. These are structures that still have much to be improved, but they are driven by the need to be a sure, stable point of reference for immigrants in making their employment and training decisions. Then there are the policies adopted by the social partners and civil society, with specific reference to the degree of unionization of immigrant workers, company decisions concerning ad hoc vocational training, and social integration programmes by the third sector.

Lastly, the citizenship acquisition process opens the discussion on active participation in political life as an instrument of greater inclusion and respect of civil rights. This is a complex and multidimensional group of factors which, on the basis of statistical data, offers a more complete picture of the situation that currently exists in Italy.

The two emigration countries examined, Poland and Romania, are studied with regard to their outgoing migration phenomenon, defining the conditions of poverty in the countries and identifying the active population category that is most involved in transnational moves. These are migrations that encounter the reticence of many European countries to aid access and true integration, and the problems that have arisen due to the global economic crisis starting in 2008.

Poland and Romania, countries which have emerged from centralized socialist economies and are heading toward capitalistic market systems, deal in this way with the various phases of the migration process, coping with the pre- and post-European Union accession phases.

The repercussions that migrations abroad bring about on the internal dynamics of the labour market and the national demographic process are significant. For the two countries studied, the impact is evident in the absence of labour force in certain employment sectors, in which there are such shortages that the national governments are forced to offer incentives to workers to encourage them return to their home country. The decision to return home after an extended stay abroad is a process

that is becoming more and more frequent. At the same time, the beneficial effects of the remittances sent by the emigrant workers back home remain, together with their positive effect on the national economy.

The analysis of the three country cases consists of an initial theoretical and bibliographical analysis, and a second empirical analysis made through interviews with experts in this phenomenon¹, with reference to the viewpoints of the single national trade unions, third sector organizations, and academic world.

The sources used for the theoretical part originate from the dual need to ensure an immediately recordable statistical datum and an in-depth study of the recent bibliographical repertoire, made up of monographic texts and numerous research reports prepared by qualified organizations.

Moreover, the data provided by the respective Ministries of the Interior of the countries analyzed offer a basis for comparison of the different geographic contexts and for studying the policies implemented by the institutions at the national level.

The contribution provided by the interviews with trade union representatives, third sector operators, and university professors constitutes the necessary empirical information for an in-depth analysis and verification of the data collected during the theoretical phase of the study. The analysis of the viewpoints of the interviewees makes it possible to grasp interesting nuances, focusing on the central themes and developing other topics. The synergy between the two elements thus produces the overview of the study, considering the reference to political figures and academic experts in the phenomenon a significant added value.

Lastly, it is important to stress how the three country case reports of Italy, Poland, and Romania are faithful to the methodological choices of each author, while responding to the general themes indicated in the research project. Therefore some differences in the focus given the topics discussed, as well as in the inhomogeneous length of the reports, meet the need to offer greater freedom in the drafting of the single reports, while complying with the overall linearity of the study.

¹ Specifically, accounts were obtained from Economics Professor Schiattarella; Francesco Lauria of the CISL Labour Market Department; Anolf-CIS Chairman Oberdan Ciucci; Oliviero Forti, Immigration Sector Manager of Caritas Italiana; Dr. Ryszard Szarffenberg from the Institute of Social Policy of Warsaw University and Zbigniew Kruszynski from the Social Policy Dept. of the National Commission of NSZZ “Solidarnosc”; Mihaela Criticos, Professor at Ion Mincu, University of Architecture and Urban Planning, Bucharest.

1. HUMAN MOBILITY AND POVERTY

Maurizio Ambrosini, University of Milan

1.1 Poverty and migrations: a problematic connection

Contrary to common belief, there is no direct relationship between poverty and the inclination toward territorial mobility. Only a small number of the migrants living within EU boundaries today come from the world's poorest countries. In fact, in order to be able to move, it is necessary to have resources: a minimum of financial capital (to cover the travel expenses and the cost of setting up a new home), spendable skills and working abilities, good health and, above all, social contacts in the receiving society, which are practically indispensable for finding work, living accommodations, and the various services necessary; today, more and more, a "strong" citizenship is also necessary, one which makes it possible to cross borders without encountering too many obstacles.

In general, in order to decide to leave, it is also necessary to be able to envisage a possible future, a sizable improvement of one's living conditions, such that it offsets the costs and troubles connected with emigration. From this standpoint, up to now the entry of new countries into the European Union's political space has had negative effects, for the medium term, on the mobility trend of the citizens of the new member countries which, at least on paper, are less developed than the "old" Community countries. In all of the previous enlargement processes, what prevailed was the hope that development would arrive to the countries of residence, thanks to the EU membership. This hope, which proved well grounded, lessened the need and desire to move to seek job opportunities where development already exists. In spite of the fact that the differences in income level compared to the EU average are more accentuated in the case of some of the countries of central-eastern Europe that have joined the Union in the past decade, and the fact that national policies have sought to limit the mobility of the new European citizens, the data available indicate similar trends. Some countries of central Europe (Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia) have not seen major emigration phenomena, or they have had them mainly on seasonal bases. Even where there had initially been a great tendency to emigrate, for example from Poland to the United Kingdom and Ireland, and from Romania to Italy and Spain, things are now beginning to slow down and, in the case of Poland, the

trend is even reversing. In the European social history, the idea of filling labour gaps thanks to the free movement of workers has not encountered the success that had been hoped for.

For many low-income, or even unemployed, European citizens, territorial mobility – especially when it is a matter of leaving one's country – presents more risks than benefits. There are numerous reasons for this: lack of language skills, which affect both the possibility to find permanent and sufficiently well-paying jobs, and the sphere of social integration and day-to-day living; the well-grounded fear of leaving the social protection system guaranteed by one's own country, and ending up in a situation of uncertainty, instability, or in any case of a lack of information and knowledge on the accessible social rights; loss of the resources deriving from the social networks of reference, relatives, friends, neighbours, etc. Intra-European mobility thus tends to take on a variety of forms, which in most cases depart from the classic phenomenon of permanent migration of manual labourers. In fact, we can identify the following:

- Transfers abroad of highly skilled workers: professionals, managers of multinational companies, researchers. In recent years the mobility of healthcare personnel, in demand in various countries of the old European Union, has increased. By definition, this is not a mobility that can be associated with poverty.
- Mobility for study reasons, encouraged by European policies, for which the United Kingdom is the main destination. In this case, also, it is rare for poor young citizens to move.
- Seasonal migrations, to meet the needs of sectors such as the hotel industry, agriculture, and building, for which Germany is the most important destination. Here it is a question of manual labourers, but no process of permanent settlement takes place.
- Migrations for marriage or other elective reasons, among which is the phenomenon of the transfer to southern Europe of pensioners coming from the central and northern countries. In this case, also, while it is true that marriage may be a social mobility strategy, and in the case of the transfer of elderly people a demand for services (e.g. healthcare) may increase, this mobility is not associated with poverty.

1.2 The reasons for the entrapment of immigrants at the fringes of the receiving societies

The connection between human mobility and poverty is, however, a social problem that is very strongly felt in the receiving countries. This aspect presents a typical contradiction. The immigration was welcomed and even encouraged precisely because it was a population that was relatively poorer than the native one, and therefore willing to take on the humblest and least gratifying, the so-called 3D jobs: dirty, dangerous, demanding. The insertion of immigrants into sectors that tended to be abandoned by local workers guaranteed an employment complementarity between the new arrivals and the old residents. This placement system, experimented in the past by the countries of northern Europe during a phase when the driving economic sector was industry, is now found, in a more mobile and instable economic context, in southern European countries, with Italy and Spain in the forefront.

The contradiction consists, first of all, of the fact that immigrants, as Zolberg has pointed out, are typically “wanted but not welcome”: wanted in the labour market, because their relative poverty makes them willing to undertake the most thankless tasks which are, however, necessary for the economic system to function; not welcome at the social level, because that very poverty makes them undesirable as neighbours, fellow citizens, and patrons of the same social circles; and, it might be added, it also makes them feared as competitors in the access to dwindling welfare resources.

To the problem raised by Zolberg must be added two more considerations. First of all, the immigrants, hired at the time to meet the manual labour needs of the growing industrial companies, have been severely hit by the restructuring processes that have been taking place since the 1970s. Contrary to expectations, those who lost their jobs rarely decided to return to their own countries. They preferred to remain unemployed in the receiving societies rather than return home in defeat. Even with the current recession, the problem has reappeared in similar terms: the attempts at incentivizing repatriation, such as those promoted by the Spanish government, have met with little success.

But even the retraining and new job placement of adult immigrants have met with difficulties. These people had originally been hired for tasks of low vocational content, on the basis of mutual expectations of a short sojourn. They had not received adequate language training and had rarely received any continuing education. Moreover, from the standpoint of social networks, language

problems and housing segregation, direct and indirect discriminations led them to socialize more with their fellow countrymen who were in the same disadvantaged situation, than with autochthonous social circles capable of providing resources useful for seeking new job opportunities.

The disappearance of the previous jobs thus left them in a position of fragility and exposure to the risk of long-term unemployment. In the countries with the most long-standing immigration, immigrants everywhere have average unemployment levels that are higher than those of the native population.

In the countries with the most recent immigration, the activity and employment rates were high up to now, while unemployment was limited, also because of the statistical overrepresentation of the population in the active age bracket. The same lack of economic support measures for the unemployed contributed to giving the immigrants high job placement levels, great flexibility, and a willingness to adapt to the job demand conditions. The recession eroded these balances, hitting sectors such as the building sector, in which immigrants were particularly concentrated, and dragging part of the immigrants down toward conditions of economic poverty; but it did not produce, as mentioned, either significant repatriation phenomena or a taking over of the less desirable jobs by native workers.

For second generations, the question of the relationship with the labour market is posed in different terms. Socialized in the receiving societies, they develop expectations regarding work and consumption habits not unlike those of native workers of the same age. Their term for comparison is no longer the country left by their parents, but the society in which they live. If they hold citizenship, this gives them one more reason to cultivate expectations of equality. On the other hand, language and schooling difficulties, weakness in the family-based social networks, and amply documented discriminations in the labour market weaken their opportunities for job placement, especially in highly qualified positions. Young people of foreign origin are thus, in turn, overrepresented among the unemployed, compared to the national averages.

To this difficulty must be added another, of a social and political nature. A welfare system subjected to strain and restrictions, as is the case today in various ways in most of Europe, entails a consequence: the citizens who have voting rights tend to keep coverage and benefits for themselves,

blocking out the latest arrivals and those who do not benefit from the privilege of belonging to a recognized social group.

Thus, among other things, a vast “anxious class” has formed, more concerned with defending its own positions and identifying the enemies at the doors, than with discovering the bonds that unite them with the other individuals of the local and larger communities they belong to (Ambrosini, 2010). This explains the appearance of xenophobic political groups and programs in various European countries. Fears and social closure against those on the fringe and foreigners, demands for protection against the upsetting movement of the excess population, of the “wasted lives” of which Bauman speaks (2005), are among the most expressive symbolic aspects of our times. The growing fragility of the social structures, of the bonds connecting them and the cultural resources supporting them, translate into security demands that take aim at – in addition to foreigners and Roma – all marginal, uprooted individuals who are outside the established order of things. Driving away the persons identified as foreign and seen as a threat helps unify and solidify the disoriented and declining local communities.

An emblematic case is that of the processes of social exclusion against Roma and Sinti minorities, which tend to relegate them to the fringes of society and apply measures limiting the right to free movement even when they hold a European Union passport, or even citizenship of the countries where they reside.

While, in general, a greater protagonism of local and regional governments in immigrant integration policies is being seen in Europe today, this process – in itself positive – risks causing a negative problem of “rights localism”, rights which are more generous and demandable in some contexts, while being more selective and rigid in others. Excessive inequalities in the endowment of social benefits could also lead to the “welfare shopping” phenomena feared by some, i.e. the trend toward setting up one’s residence in local communities that are more liberal on the level of the social rights granted to new residents, resulting in a rush toward social closure.

1.3 Encouraging mobility, combating poverty: lines of proposal

In conclusion, the question of the interweaving between territorial mobility and the risk of poverty makes it necessary to produce social policies capable of fostering mobility while countering the possible marginalizing tendencies. The mobility of individuals, in particular of workers, is a trait characteristic of liberal societies, and is a part of the fundamental principles of the European Union. In the recent enlargements, many observers saw the expectation of relaunching of internal mobility, in temporary but also more permanent forms, as an alternative to the importing of outside labour.

In order to achieve the goal of a labour mobility free from poverty, three types of measures may be suggested:

- 1) The first concerns the training system, with the improvement of language skills, as the basis for a territorial mobility capable of covering medium-skilled jobs. In particular, the mobility programmes today that involve the tertiary education segment (Erasmus and other similar programmes) should envisage a strengthening of the measures aiming to encourage the movement of young people following vocational training pathways aiming for quick placement in the working world. Just as important is the mutual recognition of educational qualifications and vocational certifications, in order to foster a real mobility throughout the Union, without suffering a depreciation of the human capital.
- 2) One factor of prevention against the fall into situations of marginality is support by family networks. Even if migrants within the Union are not subject to the legal system regulating family reunifications, it is hoped that measures will be passed that aid the reunification of the families of workers who move somewhere else for periods of more than a year, also providing for suitable and non-ghettoizing living accommodations. A more specific additional proposal, which involves the civil society, could entail projects fostering the knowledge and encounter of old and new residents: for example, the identification, training, and guidance of “tutor families” which, at the local level, act as points of reference for the orientation and social integration of the newly arrived families.
- 3) This proposal leads to the third type of measures, those aiming to promote the building and movement of what is called “bridging social capital” in literature (Putnam, 2004), i.e. suitable for building bridges with the receiving society and, in particular, autochthonous

environments and social networks. While poverty has to do with the lack of social contacts, the reinforcement of the relationships among migrants, their associations and representatives of the local community is a factor that can prevent the fall into poverty and should be enhanced and strengthened.

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2. COUNTRY CASE ITALY

2.1 Scenario

As highlighted by the ISTAT (Italian National Statistics Institute) data on the relative and absolute poverty indices in Italy², analyzed on the basis of the 2009 consumption survey, the situation is dramatically stable compared to 2008. It is a stability that does not indicate a prospect of an upswing, but is confirmed by the presence of two important social “shock absorbers” such as the family supporting unemployed youth and the redundancy fund protecting workers, in particular parents with dependent children.

It is important to point out how in 2009 the incidence of relative poverty is equal to 10.8%, while that of absolute poverty is 4.7%³. The areas of the country hit the hardest are in the Mezzogiorno (southern Italy), where absolute poverty increased from 17.3% to 18.8%. In particular, the increase in poverty strikes families whose head of household is employed as a blue-collar worker, from 5.9% to 6.9%, while in families headed by a self-employed worker the incidence decreases, from 11.2% to 8.7% for relative poverty and from 4.5% to 3.0% for absolute poverty.⁴ Better values are registered in the regions of Northern Italy, in particular in Emilia Romagna, Lombardy, Veneto, and Liguria, with a poverty incidence fluctuating between 4.1% and 5%.

In figures, the relative poverty line that identifies “the expenditure value for consumption below which a family is defined as poor in relative terms and which is based on the average monthly spending per person”⁵ is equal to 983.01 euro.

The highest levels of relative poverty are connected with the failure to participate in the labour market of families with youths seeking employment, who cannot be adequately supported by parents with other dependent family members. In addition to the geographic location, the level of schooling of the persons surveyed is also a factor to consider.

The influence of the economic crisis affecting Italian citizens is also reflected significantly in the

² For greater information on the definition of poverty, see Annex I

³ ISTAT, *La povertà in Italia nel 2009* (Poverty in Italy in 2009)

⁴ *Ibidem*

⁵ *Ibidem*

condition of immigrant workers present in the country. In fact, the OECD-Censis “International Migration Outlook: SOPEMI 2009” report shows how enterprises have cut back the hiring forecasts for new immigrant workers (92,500 new hirings in 2009 compared to the 171,900 of 2008). There is an increase in cases of discrimination in the workplace, corresponding to 32.1% of the complaints filed concerning difficulties in accessing the labour market, working conditions (23.2%), and mobbing (19.6%).

Considerable difficulty in achieving adequate housing standards and an increase in evictions due to rent arrears are registered. The housing emergency is the result of high rents and concomitant economic difficulties originating from the loss of jobs. Therefore the availability of economic resources for purchasing real estate for long-term investment is compromised. At the same time, the crisis affects the money transfers immigrants send back to their countries of origin. The report estimates a decrease of 10%.

According to the data in the PER.LA Report drafted by ISMU (Foundation for Initiatives and Studies on Multiethnicity), Censis (Centre for the Study of Social Investments), and IPRS (Psychoanalytic Institute for Social Research) for the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, there are close to 5 million immigrants in Italy, growing over the past four years by almost 1.6 million, with a relative increase of +47.2%. This number includes both residents (+56.5%) and legal immigrants who are not yet registered with the Registry Office (+48.7%). Also to be added to that number are 560,000 illegal immigrants present in Italy, equal to 11.3%.⁶

The 2 million immigrant workers enter the Italian labour market, covering the part of the demand otherwise not met by Italian workers.

It is a significant figure which is undeniably entwined with the analysis of the living conditions of the immigrants in their place of arrival, taking into account the destination socioeconomic context. Going beyond the statistical datum, it is important to understand how native workers and immigrant workers enter the labour market, how they cover diversified sectors, and how much the presence of both is functional and complementary.

⁶ PER.LA Report, *Rapporto sui percorsi lavorativi degli immigrati (Report on the Work Paths of Immigrants)*, produced by ISMU, Censis, and IPRS for the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, June 2010

2. 2 In &Out migration in Italy: geographic location of Italians and non-Italians

Italy is a country of arrival for migratory flows, but at the same time is characterized by a geographic mobility of its own native citizens. This is an interesting phenomenon of IN&OUT movement which delineates the different productive segmentation of the Italian peninsula and has a considerable influence on the choices of Italian and immigrant workers. It is not only a matter of the so-called “brain drain” to other countries, but one of a complex migratory phenomenon that starts from Southern Italy and arrives up to the Centre-North, in expectation of better economic and job prospects.

As confirmed by the CNEL (National Council of Economics and Labour) “2009 Labour Market” report, the geographic presence of foreign workers is concentrated mainly in the North-East, with a percentage of 9.9%, compared to 2.7% in the Mezzogiorno. Emilia-Romagna is the first-ranking region for resident immigrant population, with 10.7%, followed by Umbria (10.4%) and Lombardy (10.1%). The reason for the greater incidence in these regions can be found in the high per capita GDP and the greater possibility for finding employment. On the other hand, in an inversely proportional manner, the same factors have a negative influence on the presence of immigrant workers in Apulia and Sardinia (2%).

The geographic location is connected with the different possibilities for access to the labour market offered by the various Italian regions. In 2009 the labour supply decreased from the previous year, with a reduction of 126,000 units. The estimate for 2008 is a labour force of 25.1 million persons compared to 24.9 million in 2009.

As for the Italian component, this downturn is contradicted by a labour force of huge dimensions, present nationwide. Even with a progressive increase in the active population, there was a reduction in the labour supply caused significantly by the “fall in the propensity for participation”⁷, that is, the decision made by many persons of active age to not enter the labour market because of limited employment possibilities owing to the economic crisis, disenchantment with the meritocratic system, and little vertical mobility. While there is a 1.5% drop in the Italian labour supply, which brought the activity rate of Italians down to 61.6% (it was 62.3% in 2008), the labour force demand is very diversified among the various Italian regions.

⁷ CNEL report, *Il Mercato del Lavoro 2009 (The 2009 Labour Market)*

In fact, in the case of the Centre-North, the labour supply in 2009 grew compared to the previous decade. The average increase is 0.3%, resulting from the 0.7% growth in the Centre and the substantial productive stability of the North. In this sense, the demographic increase, resulting from the waves of legalization of foreign immigrants, had a positive influence.

On the other hand, in the Mezzogiorno there is a reduction in the labour supply. Among the elements that negatively affected the labour supply decrease in Southern Italy is, first of all, a fall in participation.

This is a growing phenomenon which strikes the active population, of an age between 15 and 64 years, with a particular incidence among men, whose activity rate fell from 70.3% to 66.3% over the past five years. It is estimated that one out of three men in the 15-to-64 age bracket and residing in the South is inactive. To this must be added the limited level of participation of women, which dropped from 28.7% in 2004 to 26.1% in 2009.

The causal factors that lead to a reduction of the work activity often lie in this phenomenon of “discouragement” that affects much of the labour force that could be potentially employed in the Mezzogiorno. For example, there has been an emergence of the so-called “NEETs” (Not in Education, Employment, or Training): those Italian citizens who are neither employed nor involved in training activities of any kind.

As the CNEL report indicates, it is important to keep in mind that:

“The existence of these internal migratory flows from South to North has reduced the contribution of the demographic component to the southern labour supply trend. In fact, if we make the usual breakdown of the variation of the labour forces into the two components (demographic and participation), we see how over the past five-year period the former worked in the same sense in the Centre-North and South, but with very different intensities, while the evolution of participation was the opposite (favourable in the Centre-North and negative in the South).”⁸

In spite of the fact that the crisis has determined a drop in the activity rate in the Centre-North also, the Mezzogiorno estimate remains much more significant.

The internal mobility of Italian workers thus becomes a phenomenon of great significance, characterized by numerous Italian migration flows toward the northern regions. With the low

⁸ CNEL report, *Il Mercato del Lavoro 2009 (The 2009 Labour Market)*

migratory flows of non-Italians in the Mezzogiorno, except for the seasonal jobs in the agricultural sector, the limited prospects of the local labour market push many Italians to emigrate to the areas of Central-Northern Italy.

On the basis of the research done by SVIMEZ (Association for Industrial Development in Southern Italy), Bianchi and Provenzano, and indicated by the CNEL “2009 Labour Market” report, a new significant upswing in migrations is being registered among the Italian regions. The migratory flows that had waned in the 1980s regained momentum starting in the late 1990s. It is thus estimated that between 1997 and 2008 there were 700,000 transfers toward the Centre-North. Instead of the usual change of residence determining a permanent move, today there is the phenomenon of the so-called “long-range commuters”, who move temporarily to the North to make up for the jobs missing in the South and the low pay levels. The persons involved are mainly young, often with university degrees, and they go back to their hometowns frequently even though they’ve found jobs in the regions of the Centre-North. This commuting is hard to measure with statistics, but it is of great importance in the analysis of the Italian migratory phenomenon, so much so that it is estimated to involve around 173,000 persons. The young southerners who work in the North, often holding degrees, account for 6% of the employed, while the young workers of the Centre-North who make internal migrations account for about 3.5%. The economic crisis has, however, brought about a partial reversal of the trend, with an increase in the number of returns, estimated at around 40,000, among those who had lost their jobs.

As highlighted by CNEL’s 7th report, “Indici di Integrazione degli Immigrati in Italia – il potenziale di integrazione nei territori italiani. Analisi dell’occupazione e della criminalità per collettività” (Integration Indices of the Immigrants in Italy – the Immigration Potential in the Italian Territories. Analysis of Employment and Crime by Community)⁹, in calculating the integration capacity of the Italian territories, it was decided to use the index of territorial appeal (incidence on residents, density per km², stability/births, accommodation capacity/demographic balance, family reunifications), job placement (absorption of the labour market, employment income, gender wage gap, self-employment), and social integration (drop-out rates, possibility of access to the real estate market, grants of citizenship, involvement in crime, families with at least one foreign-born

⁹ CNEL report, *Indici di Integrazione degli Immigrati in Italia – il potenziale di integrazione nei territori italiani. Analisi dell’occupazione e della criminalità per collettività (Integration Indices of the Immigrants in Italy – the Immigration Potential in the Italian Territories. Analysis of Employment and Crime by Community)*, July 2010

member).

The multidimensionality of the indices considered makes it possible to analyse the different geographic location of the immigrant workers, managing to grasp not only the economic dimension, but also the social dimension of their decision. In particular, the joint use of the absolute and differential value, which highlights the different insertion potential of the immigrants from that of the Italians, makes it possible to obtain a double classification indicating the margins of improvement that each region could implement in the process of social inclusion of the immigrants. On the basis of the absolute classifications, Emilia Romagna is the region with the highest potential for integration of the immigrants at the national level. The value of reference for this region is 60.82. It is noteworthy how, in spite of the fact that it ranks first in Italy, it is in the high bracket, but does not arrive at placing in the highest positions from 80.01 to 100.00, a sign of potentials yet unexpressed in the improvement of the possibilities for integration. Emilia Romagna's strengths lie in the social integration conditions, in particular placement in schools, the naturalisation rate, and the families with at least one foreign-born member of the foreign population. The absolute classification of the provinces confirms the regional trend, with Parma in first place with a value of 60.38, Reggio Emilia with 58.65, and Modena in tenth place with 53.21.

Among the regions with the highest integration index, the next ones are Friuli Venezia Giulia (with a value of 59.29), and Lombardy and Lazio, both with 57. In fifth place is Veneto (55.04), and sixth is Trentino Alto Adige (54.48).

Tuscany places seventh, and after Lazio, it is the only representative of Central Italy in the absolute integration index classification. As for Southern Italy, Sicily ranks eighth with 49.40, Sardinia twentieth with 32.65, Apulia nineteenth with 37.36, and Abruzzo eighteenth with 38.84. The South thus stands in the low range of the classification, with little potential for absolute integration. Similarly, the southern provinces also rank at the bottom of the classification, with Oristano in last place with a value of 26.02.

It is indicative how the metropolitan dimension of the city of residence has a negative effect on social inclusion. In the low part of the classification are Naples in 89th place, Venice in 94th, Turin in 96th, and Bari in 99th. This confirms that the best integration is achieved in small territorial contexts, with more limited administrative situations. Unlike in metropolitan cities with their heavy population concentration and related problems connected with the bureaucratisation of services, less possibility for access to the structures, and more difficult processes for integration into the social

life, in the small towns the immigrants manage to achieve more satisfactory levels of integration.

Nevertheless, as said previously, in addition to the absolute value, the CNEL report also examines the differential value by region, revealing the potential for integration of the immigrant residents compared to the Italian ones. From this second classification, made on the basis of the statistical data, considerable differences emerge, which often overturn the results obtained with the absolute system.

On a scale from -1.00 to +1, with the value zero indicating substantial equality between the integration conditions of Italians and immigrants, Sicily stands in first place, with a value of just -0.06 to the non-Italians' disadvantage. The Sicilian provinces of Enna, Palermo, Catania, and Syracuse also stand among the first ten in the classification.

Among the regions in the top positions are Piedmont with -0.13 and Biella in second place among the provinces, Molise with -0.14, and Sardinia with -0.15. Next come Trentino Alto Adige (-0.17), Lazio (-0.18), and Veneto (-0.20).

On the other hand, Emilia Romagna, which ranked first in the absolute value classification, drops to twelfth place because of a differential value of -0.27, symptomatic of the different possibilities for integration between native and immigrant workers.

Therefore, *“in the classifications constructed on the basis of the differential method (i.e. considering the gap that, in every territory, separates the situation of the immigrants from that of the Italians or of the total population), it is not rare for some territorial contexts to find themselves in a position that is practically the opposite of how they rank in the absolute classifications of the same indicators and indices, so that the differential viewpoint often photographs a geography that is ‘upside-down’ compared to the absolute one.”*¹⁰

Lastly, the note highlighted by the Caritas 2009 Statistical Dossier on the use of the differential value is interesting. There is a conceptual limit inherent in evaluating the level of integration on the basis of the autochthonous parameter. The minimum requirement for integration often clashes with regional situations characterized by difficult structural contexts, in which the Italian population lives in situations of employment and social problems. The paradox thus arises from considering, as the measure for comparison for the integration of foreigners, a model of Italian

¹⁰ CNEL report, *Indici di Integrazione degli Immigrati in Italia – il potenziale di integrazione nei territori italiani. Analisi dell'occupazione e della criminalità per collettività (Integration Indices of Immigrants in Italy – the Integration Potential in the Italian Territories. Analysis of Employment and Crime by Community)*, July 2010

society that is often inadequate as far as employment possibilities and positions are concerned.

2.3 The Labour Market: the role of immigrants

As shown by the CNEL “Gli Immigrati nel Mercato del Lavoro Italiano” (Immigrants in the Italian Labour Market) report, the employment rate of the immigrant labour force is proportionally greater than that of the Italian population:

“Diverging employment rates between Italians and foreigners, to the advantage of the latter: both all together and breaking down by gender, the employment rate of the non-Italian population is higher than the Italian rate (67.1% and 81%, respectively). In particular, it is the men who exceed the average figure by 13 percentage points, confirming the high employability of foreign workers.”¹¹

There has been a drop in employment owing to the recent economic crisis, but the incidence of unemployment has affected the Italian job-seeking component more than the immigrant component. Italian employment is falling mainly among self-employed workers of small industrial and service businesses, while non-Italians cover, with a significant presence, the industry, commerce, hotel, restaurant, and family service sectors. The presence of immigrant workers in low-skilled sectors, in the so-called “3D jobs” (dirty, dangerous, and demanding), because of a greater inclination toward accepting compromises in order to meet fundamental needs, such as the renewal of the permit to stay and maintaining their living and sustenance conditions.

In his editorial, “I lavoratori immigrati al di là dei luoghi comuni” (Immigrant Workers Beyond the Clichés) in the Caritas 2009 Statistical Dossier, Maurizio Ambrosini states that the presence of immigrant workers in our country is often dictated directly by the Italian labour market needs. It is a phenomenon about which a greater intellectual honesty would be necessary.

There are obviously various endogenous factors that have a bearing on the presence of immigrant workers, but the demand arriving from companies and families is a key factor. The idea of a battle of the have-nots, with a downward competition raging between job-seeking immigrants and Italians,

¹¹ CNEL report, *Immigrati nel mercato del lavoro italiano (Immigrants in the Italian Labour Market)*, November 2008

is a prejudice that should be debunked, since the labour market absorbs Italians and immigrants in different, often complementary sectors.

As Ambrosini states:

“Up to now the data show a remarkable stability of immigrant employment, in spite of the crisis, and in spite of the job losses among Italians. This indirectly confirms that Italians and immigrants find work in different market segments, and that those which suffer the most are those in which the former work. A transfer of Italian unemployed workers to the more modest positions occupied by the immigrants is not easy to imagine, because in an affluent society it is not to be expected that fired workers will be willing to go to work on construction scaffolds, restaurant kitchens, Po Valley animal stalls, or Mediterranean farm fields.”¹²

Even the incidence of the immigrant component on the national welfare is considerably reduced by the average age of the foreign population, which is estimated to be around 31 years, compared to the 45 of Italians. Precisely in light of this datum, the weight on the social expenditure, pensions and healthcare shows a relative importance. Furthermore, the data indicate how the economic contributions from the work of immigrants in Italy in 2007 should be estimated at 134 billion euro, equal to 9.7% of the national GDP, with a social security contribution revenue of 7 billion euro and a tax revenue of 3.2 billion.

Thus immigrants fill a gap in that labour market that is not adequately covered by the native labour force. Thus we see growing unemployment rates among Italian workers, owing to structural imbalances, wrongly correlated to the higher employment levels among immigrants. In reality, as Professor Schiattarella points out¹³, the resistances of a cultural nature of the native population are often based solely on past problems, which find in immigrants an easy excuse. What is considered a downward competition must be put into context with the loss or failure of the rights shared by workers, resulting in the creation of serious solidarity problems among them. The area of competition in job hunting is that of the marginal sectors, often not very appealing for local workers. Remaining segregated in subordinate positions, a mechanism of complementarity is

¹² Ambrosini M., *I lavoratori immigrati al di là dei luoghi comuni (Immigrant Workers Beyond the Clichés)*, in Caritas/Migrantes, *Immigrazione - Dossier Statistico 2009, 19th Report*, Edizioni IDOS 2009

¹³ Interview with Roberto Schiattarella, Professor of Economic Policy at the University of Camerino, Rome, 9 July 2010

created that enables the immigrants to avoid becoming a substitutive element of the Italian labour force.

The presence of immigrant workers in specific employment sectors may be explained in various ways. Their presence is registered in the industry sectors, with specific reference to the building and manufacturing industries. Participation in the agricultural sector is equivalent between local and immigrant workers, while the foreign employment rate in domestic services to families is significant, involving 20.5% of the immigrant labour force in Italy.

The ethnically based specialization is often due to informal recruitment methods, a network of acquaintances of the groups the immigrants belong to which push them to enter certain specific sectors. These employment niches are the result of networks of acquaintances and often, while proving to be an instrument of easy access, they end up creating situations of employment segregation with few prospects for growth and vertical mobility.

The complementarity between the work sectors employing Italians and those of the immigrant workers is evident especially in the case of domestic work and homecare. Thanks to the support of foreign workers, Italian women are relieved of the burdens and constraints connected with caring for children and the elderly, and manage to acquire a greater capacity for growth in the Italian labour market.

The ethnic “ghettoization” into predefined roles is often both the cause and result of an underutilization of the immigrant workers, failing to acknowledge the educational and professional qualifications earned in their homelands. Other decisive factors are their level of knowledge of the Italian language and their migration seniority.

Once an extended stay in the country of destination has been reached, the resulting improvement of the employment activity rates can be measured. There are also better chances of vertical growth when the presence in the new country passes the 10-year mark. It is important to point this out, especially with the awareness that in some cases immigration is a temporary phenomenon, instrumental for a certain length of time and often ended with a return to the country of origin. The possibilities for a greater growth are therefore guaranteed for those who have a long-term life plan in the country of destination.

The foreign labour force is mainly employed in small production enterprises, with a maximum of 10 employees. The Caritas 2009 Statistical Dossier identifies the main reasons as the *“interest in limiting costs and seeking young professionals, the development of foreign*

*entrepreneurship in microenterprises with the involvement of other members of the same national group, the great specialization of women immigrants in domestic services”.*¹⁴

Under the current Bossi-Fini legislation, foreigners present in Italy must keep their jobs in order to obtain a permit to stay. In the case of dismissal or loss of their jobs, they have 6 months to find new legal employment, on penalty of not being able to renew their permit to stay and, as a result, being expelled.

This legislation does not help the immigrant in seeking a job suitable for his qualifications and individual expectations, but ends up being an incentive for forms of underqualified work often found through indirect means. Little-qualified jobs that nevertheless match the supply and demand dynamics of the Italian labour market.

2.4 Vertical mobility: underutilization of immigrants?

*“The study of the episodes of labour mobility indicates that, in most cases, the paths of change take place within the same professional group. This is a substantial confirmation of a person’s socioeconomic status quo and therefore, considering the placement of many of the surveyed individuals at the lowest levels of the employment stratification, the continuation in a situation that is certainly not privileged as far as professional and pay conditions are concerned. There are very few upward mobility movements and, generally speaking, these are short-range, i.e. in the direction of professional groups immediately adjacent to that of origin.”*¹⁵

The vertical mobility paths among immigrant workers are hard to achieve because of a series of concomitant factors. It is necessary to register the tendential possibility for immigrant workers to be confined to subordinate and deskilled positions. The underutilization of the human capital of the immigrant labour force is confirmed by the data. Compulsory schooling level qualifications being equal, Italians have access to little qualified positions in 30% of the cases, while foreigners are employed in low-profile tasks in 41% of the cases for men and 60% for women. When a higher education qualification such as a degree is held, the differences between the

¹⁴ Caritas-Migrantes, *Immigrazione, Dossier Statistico 2009, 19th Report*, Edizioni IDOS, 2009

¹⁵ PER.LA Report, *Rapporto sui percorsi lavorativi degli immigrati (Report on the Work Paths of Immigrants)*, produced by ISMU, Censis, and IPRS for the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, June 2010

jobs of Italians and immigrants increase further, remaining at 22% for men and 29% for women. A higher education level generally corresponds to a better investment in the human capital, the capacity to act and invest in job hunting. There are greater opportunities for taking advantage of the training and vocational offerings available through the labour market. However, the difficulties inherent in the recognition of the equivalence of educational qualifications often prevent a full development of the cultural and professional background acquired in the country of origin.

While for some immigrants it is possible to justify the lack of vertical mobility with their low schooling levels and a specific segmentation of the labour market, the same explanation cannot be considered exhaustive in the case of those immigrants characterized by “over-education” who suffer a devaluation of their educational qualifications and a consequent loss of the human capital, thus remaining in deskilled positions in the labour market.

Often the educational qualifications are not legally recognized in Italy or are subject to a bureaucratic procedure which is difficult to complete. The immigrant worker must produce a series of documents to obtain the legalization and recognition of the validity of his educational qualifications. To this must often be added tests to be taken to prove the existence of the skills stated, with such tests being organized by government administrations. As pointed out by the PER.LA report also, “*a large number of immigrants who are not aware of the procedures for recognition of their educational qualifications end up being underutilized in the labour market, in contrast with the knowledge and skills they possess.*”¹⁶

It is also interesting to note how the personal citizenship of the immigrant influences his training. The highest qualifications are held by immigrant workers coming from the countries of Eastern Europe, while African citizens do not possess significant schooling levels.

In the employment panorama of the immigrant population, we can identify various emblematic work paths. In spite of the fact that the PER.LA report stresses how “*Immigrant work mobility substantially follows the models and paths registered among the autochthonous labour forces*”¹⁷, in the case of the immigrant labour force, the causes of this lack of mobility are to be

¹⁶ PER.LA Report, *Rapporto sui percorsi lavorativi degli immigrati (Report on the Work Paths of Immigrants)*, produced by ISMU, Censis, and IPRS for the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, June 2010

¹⁷ PER.LA Report, *Rapporto sui percorsi lavorativi degli immigrati (Report on the Work Paths of Immigrants)*, produced by ISMU, Censis, and IPRS for the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, June 2010

sought in structural conditions and different starting and path possibilities.

Upwardly mobile workers, for example, are those who have had, since their arrival in the destination country, at least two jobs and who have managed, thanks to an employment promotion, to improve their status. Usually the upward movement concerns sectors close to those of the original job. The characteristics typical of this worker model are a relatively higher age, a specialization in the building and blue-collar category, and a greater presence of men than women. The average age is over 45, connected with an extended migratory seniority in the destination country.

On the other hand, when the so-called downwardly mobile workers change jobs, they see their work situation worsen, ending up in positions that are more deskilled than those they held previously. This is a numerous group, made up of very young people who work mainly in the service sector. One of the main reasons for this downgrading of the work position is ascribable to the lack of employment specialization achieved through specific training courses.

Then there are the intergroup horizontal mobile workers, who remain in the same work position in spite of a change of jobs.¹⁸ Generally speaking, the most widespread phenomena of immigrant worker mobility take place at this level, with changes within the same professional group: building, commerce, services, and hotel tourism. These intersectoral movements make up 69.9% of the total, as confirmed by the PER.LA report. The characteristics of this group are the young age of the workers, the low schooling level, the frequent recourse to family and ethnic networks for job hunting, and little aptitude for contacting places specialized in job placement, such as the Employment Centres.

Therefore the workers end up remaining in low-income situations of professional underqualification. What is more, the phenomenon of clandestine employment often involves immigrant workers once they lose their regular job, and is another downgrading element in the recognition of professional qualifications.

Among the factors which have a positive effect on the social integration of migrants and on the prospects for greater social mobility and employment growth, we find the knowledge of the Italian language, an indispensable element for better access to services and a full social life.

¹⁸ PER.LA Report, *Rapporto sui percorsi lavorativi degli immigrati (Report on the Work Paths of Immigrants)*, produced by ISMU, Censis, and IPRS for the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, June 2010

Knowledge of the Italian language is a *conditio sine qua non* without which immigrants in Italy find any chance of upward vertical mobility precluded. Language skills are an important element for access to the labour market in qualified conditions and a subsequent profitable professional path. However, it is necessary to avoid underrating how foreigners present in Italy, even if they do not have an adequate knowledge of Italian, often show considerable linguistic skills. This is a wealth that is part of their cultural background, often undervalued by the Italian labour market.

2.4 The entrepreneurial decision of immigrant workers

The entrepreneurial decision of immigrants – to open their own commercial, services, building, or handicrafts activity – determines the possibility to leave subordinate and undervalued jobs in the world of work. Even if masons and merchants registered as self-employed workers are often formally counted among the immigrant entrepreneurs, for simple technical reasons connected with social security contributions and taxes, the entrepreneurial phenomenon has taken on considerable significance.

Probably the key for exiting a situation of lack of social mobility can be found in the capacity of immigrants to go into business for themselves, to set up private activities capable of guaranteeing a career advancement and a social promotion which otherwise would be precluded.

As seen in the Caritas 2009 Statistical Dossier, foreign entrepreneurship has managed to avoid suffering the downturn caused by the economic crisis, and in the first five months of 2009, there has been an increase of 13.5% over the first half of the previous year.

The liveliness of this management experience is confirmed by the number of business owners: 187,466 units in May 2009.

It is interesting to analyze the origin of the business owners, in order to have an overall picture of the areas concerned. The top rankers in the ownership of companies are Moroccans, who hold 16.4% of the enterprises, equal to 30,665 companies, Romanians with 15%, equivalent to 28,089 companies, Chinese citizens with 13.6% and 25,493 companies, and Albanians with 10.8% and 20,184 companies.¹⁹

¹⁹ Caritas-Migrantes, *Immigrazione, Dossier Statistico 2009, 19th Report*, Edizioni IDOS, 2009

The specific sectors in which the enterprises are concentrated are the building sector, with 39.4% of the total businesses run by immigrant workers, and the commerce and repairs sector, with 34.1%.

The share of enterprises remains solid also thanks to the presence of companies in the textile, services, and transport sectors. Small enterprises make up 50.9% of the total enterprises run by immigrants, equal to 94,103 businesses, and are mostly in the building sector.

The alternation of new enterprises according to replacement mechanism is indicative of the average life of a company run by an immigrant owner. It is estimated that the companies run by workers from Romania, Poland, and Bulgaria reach 3.2 years of activity, whereas those of the Ukrainian, Moldavian, and Russian entrepreneurs stand at about 3.5. The specialization in the building sector, in which workers from the Balkans and Eastern Europe are the leaders, is an important boost for the setting up of one's own business, thanks to the benefits offered by the moderate initial investments and a widespread subcontracting system.

Geographically speaking, the companies are located in the areas of the North-East, according to the Italian production structure scheme, with figures that estimate the presence of “69,646 entrepreneurs in the North-West, equal to 37% of the total; 48,705 in the North-East, equal to 26%; and 46,876 in the Centre, equal to 25%”.²⁰ In particular, the Italian regions of the North and Centre, where the highest presence of entrepreneurs of foreign citizenship is found, are Lombardy, which by itself has around 25% of the total enterprises, Emilia Romagna, Veneto, Piedmont, Tuscany, and Lazio. On the other hand, the presence in the other Italian regions is inversely proportional: for example, Sicily and Campania with 3% and Umbria, Basilicata and Molise with a paltry 0.5%.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note how, comparing the number of business owners with the number of resident persons of working age, the classification of the regions changes substantially. While Lombardy drops to seventh place with 7.2% of the business owners, we find Sardinia in first place with 12%, followed by Tuscany with 10.4%, Piedmont with 9.1%, Calabria with 8.9%, Emilia Romagna with 8.1%, and Sicily with 7.3%.

The ethnic specialization of the enterprises is often the reflection of both the specific expertise of the foreign workers who bring their cultural and professional backgrounds from their country, and the structural limitations of the Italian labour market. The “breakdown of the community by integration sectors” is, however, a sign of the capacity of immigrant workers to create economic

²⁰ Caritas-Migrantes, *Immigrazione, Dossier Statistico 2009, 19th Report*, Edizioni IDOS, 2009

growth even in their destination country, investing in sectors of specialization that are most competitive on the market. Moreover, the transnational enterprises denote another potential, coming from knowing how to anticipate the needs and demands between two countries, matching national and foreign requests and demands.

The “phone center” phenomenon, for example, clearly summarizes an entrepreneurial choice which is widespread and easy to carry out. This international telephony business enables people who have immigrated to Italy to keep in touch with their friends and relatives, and makes for an easily accessible entrepreneurial project, considering the low initial costs for opening the business and purchasing the technical instruments. These are businesses which do not offer a specifically ethnic product, but have a largely foreign customer target. These shops, which also offer Internet services and videoconference systems, stand out for the presence of immigrant users totalling 80-90% of all the customers. The phone centers, which started opening in the year 2000 following the liberalization of the telecommunications market, provide goods and services in which the highly fiduciary nature of the service is recognized.

Lastly, with regard to immigrant women who become entrepreneurs, they are still a minority in the Italian labour market panorama, reaching 17% with respect to the male entrepreneurs. This is, in any case, a phenomenon that is gradually growing, considering the fact that in the analysis of the enterprises established after 2007, the presence of women rises to the level of one out of every five entrepreneurs.

2.5 The role of remittances: outgoing poverty, incoming wealth

In spite of the fact that the economic crisis has led to a decrease in the remittances by immigrant workers to their countries of origin, these financial resources constitute a significant incentive for the improvement of the living and development conditions of their countries.

The money coming from the foreign workers has a direct impact on the investments in the healthcare and education fields. It is a true long-term investment in the development of the human capital of the workers’ countries. Moreover, the return of the specific know-how acquired by the workers abroad is a useful instrument for improving knowledge and technology, necessary for future investments in commercial activities.

The recourse to the official methods for sending money abroad is a variable that is often influenced by the migrant's status in his destination country, by the services offered by the chosen bank, with their costs and crediting times, and by the trust the migrant places in such bank instruments.

Among these are the banks, post offices, and money transfer operators (MTOs), with specific reference to the two most influential operators on the market, MoneyGram and Western Union. These intermediaries offer the foreign worker a guarantee of a yield on the capital and a greater security in sending the transfers, as well as protection against any illegal circuits. The costs for sending the transfers are nevertheless a crucial element, considering the high percentages of the commissions for the bank transactions, the lack of transparency of the market, and the difficulty in comparing the prices of the services. For this reason, the recourse to MTOs is very frequent, thanks to a streamlined, easy-to-use procedure, requiring a simple ID document. The new rules of the "security package" have, however, introduced the necessity to present the permit to stay also, thus worsening the service access procedures.

The statistical data indicating the extent of the economic flows of remittances underestimate the phenomenon, as they do not consider the informal channels for sending money. In fact, in addition to the official methods connected with the bank circuit, there are also ways through the network of fellow countrymen and -women, often motivated by the geographic proximity with the country of origin.

The remittances made through official financial transfer channels end up having a direct effect on the balance of payments of the country of origin, while the large share of funds sent through relatives, friends, or private couriers are difficult to calculate.

Therefore, the main difficulties encountered by an immigrant worker when turning to the official channel are the difficult bureaucratic procedures, made even tougher by a poor knowledge of the language of the destination country. Also, the low schooling level and bank relations existing between the countries involved often add to the demotivation.

The macroeconomic incidence of the remittances for the receiving countries is an element of great value, among the main items of the balance of payments of numerous countries exporting labour.²¹

²¹ A.A.V.V., *I temi dell'integrazione degli immigrati in Italia (Immigrant Integration Themes in Italy)*, *Oltre le Frontiere Magazine*, ANOLF-CISL

As confirmed by the IDOS Study and Research Centre,
*“If emigration is a loss in terms of human capital, the remittances may be considered a sort of compensation. In fact, they are a support to development, providing an aid not only to the families, but also to stabilization and socioeconomic growth. In addition, the lack of any link with the economic cycle of the country makes the remittances valuable capital flows, insensitive to economic crises both within the system and due to external elements.”*²²

In addition to an immediately recordable economic datum, the sending of remittances also denotes a strong relational value. Maintaining this bond with his homeland, the immigrant is often able to confirm his role within his original community, offering a positive image of his stay abroad thanks to the guarantee of economic support. Furthermore, the sending of funds to be invested in his country of origin makes it possible to leave open the prospect of his return, once the initial economic precariousness has been overcome.

However, Caritas emphasizes another element for reflection:

*“The sizable and continual sending of remittances is not, however, free of risks. In fact, it may create and feed an “emigration culture”, leading to the belief that migration is the most concrete answer to a family’s needs and the danger that the remittances create a dependency in the receivers.”*²³

This is a mechanism with implications and aspects to be studied. Furthermore, as stressed by Professor Schiattarella, greater attention should be paid to the reduction of the income growth in Italy caused by the flow of outgoing capitals.²⁴

2.6 Active institutional policies for the social inclusion of immigrants

The public employment services (SPI: *servizi pubblici per l’impiego*) play the role for job placement and active labour policies at the local level. As established by Legislative Decree 469/97, *“The regions are assigned the functions and duties having to do with active labour policies, in*

²² IDOS Study and Research Centre, *Gli albanesi in Italia, Conseguenze economiche e sociali dell’immigrazione (The Albanians in Italy. Economic and Social Consequences of Immigration)*, Edizioni IDOS, 2008

²³ Caritas-Migrantes, *Immigrazione, Dossier Statistico 2009, 19th Report*, Edizioni IDOS, 2009

²⁴ Interview with Roberto Schiattarella, Professor of Economic Policy at the University of Camerino, 9 July 2010

*particular: a) planning and coordination of initiatives aiming to increase employment and spur the matching of labour supply and demand, with reference also to female employment [...]*²⁵

The instruments used for effectively putting these policies into action are the Employment Centres and the Vocational Training Centres. Law no. 59/1997 (Bassanini Act), with its subsequent amending Law no. 127/1997, the Biagi Act, and Legislative Decree no. 469/1997 on the “Assignment to regions and local authorities of functions and duties concerning the labour market, according to Article 1 of Law no. 59 of 15 March 1997”, form the legislation of reference for the organization of the Employment Services.

Thanks to these instruments, it was possible to overcome the public monopoly in the matching of supply and demand and decentralize the management of the services at the local level.

Furthermore, Law no. 68/1999, with the introduction of the concept of targeted placement, and Decree Law no. 181/200 and subsequent amending Decree Law no. 297/2002, with the definition of the state of unemployment, are a further element for the reorganization of the functions of the SPIs. To these must be added the amendment of Title V of the Italian Constitution, which introduced the autonomy of the regional governments in employment services matters.²⁶

The Employment Centres are in charge of the promotion of employment, through a series of specific services such as support in the recognition of training qualifications, personal interviews for analyzing skills, and verification of the vocational orientations. The role of the Employment Centres is also a fundamental element in the certification of the status of unemployment, for subsequent vocational offers, and for receiving any benefits and aid envisaged by the national legislation.

As stressed in the PER.LA report:

“The Employment Services correspond to the ‘flexicurity’ model, meant as the combination of a social protection system and a proactive management of the labour market, in the belief that passive policies alone do not make it possible to solve unemployment, but that preventive and precise actions are necessary, with the aim of reducing the time spent out of the labour market and

²⁵ Legislative Decree no. 469 of 23 December 1997, “Assignment to regions and local authorities of functions and duties concerning the labour market, according to Article 1 of Law no. 59 of 15 March 1997”

²⁶ PER.LA Report, *Rapporto sui percorsi lavorativi degli immigrati (Report on the Work Paths of Immigrants)*, produced by ISMU, Censis, and IPRS for the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, June 2010

leading to a rapid reinsertion."²⁷

Nevertheless, among the reasons that do not encourage immigrant workers to turn to the Employment Centres more frequently, in addition to their poor knowledge of the services offered, there is also the time factor. The deadline of 6 months of the permit to stay leads them to opt for more immediate and decisive solutions, skipping job placement offices and vocational training courses in which to invest for an enhancement of their skills. The vocational requalification paths entail long periods of time, and a foreigner hardly has the time necessary to follow them.

This is a channel which, in spite of its institutional nature, is not often used by immigrant workers. The CNEL 2008 report, "Immigrati nel mercato del lavoro" (Immigrants in the Labour Market), describes how only one fourth of the unemployed immigrants turn to the Employment Services, preferring instead more informal and easily accessed paths such as the familiar and friendly network of their fellow countrymen.²⁸

An uncontrolled matching of supply and demand often leads to phenomena of illegal and undeclared work, a confinement to jobs of an ethnic specialization, and situations of extreme exploitation, as well as the risk of involvement in organized crime. The lack of professional mobility prospects thus becomes a process that is difficult to reverse.

In addition to the Employment Services for immigrants already present on Italian soil, the Institutions have arranged other policies in favour of the social inclusion and employment integration of immigrants. On the basis of Article 23 of the Consolidation Act on immigration, quotas are established for foreign workers to be trained vocationally through educational courses in their countries of origin, after registration on specific lists prepared by the Ministry of Labour.

These are workers who must take training courses, including the Italian language, with a final test for attainment of level A2, workplace health and safety notions, and civic education, in accordance with the provisions of the Ministry of Labour decree of 22 March 2006 on the "Holding of educational and training programmes to be carried out".

²⁷ PER.LA Report, *Rapporto sui percorsi lavorativi degli immigrati (Report on the Work Paths of Immigrants)*, produced by ISMU, Censis, and IPRS for the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, June 2010

²⁸ CNEL report, *Gli immigrati nel Mercato del Lavoro italiano (Immigrants in the Italian Labour Market)*, November 2008

In spite of the fact that the Employment Centres are not successful in catering for the needs of immigrant workers as they should, they remain in any case a necessary territorial structure to which the workers turn for more information and for fulfilling bureaucratic obligations. The Employment Centres are used more by those with a high schooling level and significant migration seniority. In fact, in these cases, the immigrant workers show greater participation and interest in interacting with these instruments.

As it has been pointed out, the recourse to informal methods, such as recommendations and word-of-mouth within an immigrant's own network of fellow countrymen, is one of the channels most used by the immigrant population.

It is estimated that approximately 90% of all foreign unemployed workers use this instrument to obtain information on possible jobs, just as Italians do. It is therefore no surprise that the chosen jobs end up being concentrated in certain sectoral ethnic niches. It is a phenomenon that goes hand in hand with deskilled and poorly paid jobs, often with little possibility for vertical growth. These are followed by want ads in specialized newspapers for 62% of the cases and self-presentation to employers for 48%. A third of the unemployed workers also contact temporary employment agencies.

The recourse to these labour force recruitment methods means that the immigrants turn only sporadically to the Employment Centres officially in charge of matching supply and demand and vocational guidance. On the other hand, the Employment Services themselves should improve their capacity to create partnerships with the various local realities so as to catalyze the various needs of the users. The territorial network of services should act in synergy to offer adequate answers to immigrant workers, in particular the requests for stabilization by workers subject to high job mobility. Intervention and dialogue with employers and working to reduce the 10-year time period necessary for completing the stabilization path are two significant elements from which to start.

The other institutional instrument of active labour policies is the vocational training services for immigrant workers. In this case, also there is little knowledge of the services offered, often due to the fact that the jobs held by immigrants rank in medium to low specialization brackets. It is necessary, in any case, to note how there has been a slight increase in the training offering to foreigners. In particular, enterprises and entrepreneurial associations have shown greater incentive compared to the past toward the route of ad hoc vocational training. The training of foreign workers

can make up for lacks of specific professions and meet the market's needs and demands. For example, the need for investing in the training of immigrant workers employed in the sector of domestic work and home care is stressed. Caregivers and domestics could improve their services if they took specific training courses, necessary for acquiring greater healthcare and psychological assistance skills.

Enterprises declare the necessity of offering specific vocational training paths to newly hired immigrant workers, according to a post-entry training criterion, so as to invest profitably in the incoming human capital lacking a certain level of previous skills. A very widespread practice is tutoring.

Lastly, the specific demand that the institutional channels of active labour policies are unable to anticipate and handle is often taken care of by a series of private intermediaries such as the Church, trade unions, and third-sector associations.

2.7 Policies implemented by the social partners and civil society

The policies implemented by the social partners and civil society to stimulate participation in the labour market aim to be an “integrative service complementary to that provided by the government and institutions”.²⁹

Nevertheless, in the specific case of the third sector, it cannot be denied that a sort of replacement of the institutional channel often occurs, in consideration of the easy access to the Counselling Centres and the fiduciary bond between organization and immigrant.

The growing percentage of immigrant workers signed up with Italian trade unions is indicative of the desire for greater work and social protection, in particular in situations of job insecurity. Data indicate that the number of registrations is close to one million, with significant increases each year. In 2008 alone, there was a 26% increase in representation over the previous year.

The CISL has the largest number of foreign members, with 332,561 workers, followed by the CGIL with 297,591 and UIL with 190,078. The UGL, thanks to a structure created expressly to meet the demands for protection arriving from immigrants, also counts 103,357 memberships. The breakdown on the basis of category federations shows a sizable presence in the building and agro-

²⁹ Interview with Oliviero Forti, Immigration Manager – Caritas Italiana, 21 July 2010

food sectors. Also significant is the growing trend in members in the domestic help and caregiver sector, which became a separate category in 2003. The yearly job legalizations, established by the “security package”, have contributed to a definite increase in the number of immigrant workers employed in domestic and family care jobs.³⁰

The trade unions aim to foster the social inclusion of immigrant workers, maintaining the need for greater integration throughout Italy, equal contractual treatment, and social security. Undeclared work is an element of great underqualification of workers, which often impacts precisely those foreigners who find themselves in difficult sociocultural contexts. The role of the union is therefore fundamental in the policies for fighting these market distortions. The need to promote processes of legality through “emersion (legalization) contracts” has mainly concerned the textile sector, and it is to be hoped that it will be extended to other production sectors also.³¹ There is also a commitment to legalize the seasonal work of immigrants, avoiding the formation of further areas of clandestine employment.

The trade unions are working to streamline the bureaucratic processes for obtaining permits to stay and family reunification, in order to permit a real integration of the immigrant worker. The long-term goal pursued unanimously by all the unions is the recognition of administrative voting rights for immigrants and a reduction of the time necessary for acquiring the right to citizenship.

According to the results of the 6th Report of the IRES (Italian Institute for Economic and Social Research) on “Immigration and the Trade Union”, the unions are asked for a constant commitment in the promotion of an adequate language training for immigrant workers, so as to permit them to have access to vocational training courses and fully understand the rules governing employment and health and safety measures. Thus at the union level there is a focus on the need for structured paths for learning the Italian language, at the time of job placement.

Nevertheless, as revealed by the IRES, the number of company agreements comprising such training policies for immigrant workers is still very low, about 10% of the total agreements. The percentage decreases further where there is company or second-level bargaining. The verification of a real implementation of these training and language paths negotiated for immigrants is the responsibility of the “RSUs” (unitary union representative bodies). These must deal with the different company situations and adapt their approach to the specific ethnic makeup of the labour

³⁰ Caritas-Migrantes, *Immigrazione, Dossier Statistico 2009, 19th Report*, Edizioni IDOS, 2009

³¹ Interview with Francesco Lauria, CISL Labour Market Department, 20 July 2010

force employed and its incidence at the company level. It thus happens that the RSUs arrive at negotiations sanctioned by informal agreements between the union representatives and the company, for reasons of speed.

As the IRES report states:

*“The importance of training for the immigrant worker seems directly proportional to the difficulty of obtaining and managing it. The RSUs interviewed expressed great difficulties in inserting the topic of training, in particular, the insertion of the Italian language modules, in the company bargaining. The common opinion is that it would be necessary to have a strong structured action at the national collective bargaining level in order to be able to make such training become more widespread and effective and, above all, to be able to monitor its actual implementation by the enterprises.”*³²

With regard to the policies implemented by employers, the companies are organizing, in ever-growing numbers, ad hoc vocational training paths for the insertion of foreigners into their production situations.

In February 2010, ConfCommercio confirmed the importance of vocational training for immigrant workers at the conference “Formare per non discriminare” (Training, to Avoid Discrimination”). The Italian General Confederation of Commerce, Tourism, Services, Professions, and SMEs believes that a process of legalization of the numerous immigrants present illegally on Italian soil must be combined with a parallel guidance and training path. This is, in fact, the only way to achieve a real integration and prevent the placement of foreigners in jobs from continuing to arouse discriminatory attitudes. Another aim of the ad hoc vocational training paths is to raise the qualitative level of the contribution made by foreign workers.³³

The CNA (National Confederation of Handicraft and Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises) also promotes vocational training paths. In particular, February 2010 saw the launch of the KNE (Foreign Knowledge Network) project, aiming to train 335 immigrants in various employment sectors. This is a project financed by the Ministry of the Interior and the Chamber of Commerce of Rome through the “European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals”, for citizens coming from countries that are not members of the European Union and who are interested in

³² IRES report, *Immigrazione e Sindacato (Immigration and the Trade Union)*, 2010

³³ www.confcommercio.it

training courses for entering production sectors not adequately filled by the Italian labour market. The young people between 18 and 40 years of age, legally present in Italy for no more than 5 years, are thus encouraged to learn the Italian language and then take a 240-hour vocational training course, with traineeships in the company to guarantee a true integration.³⁴

The third sector, also, features a number of actions aiming for the proactive insertion of immigrant workers in the Italian socioeconomic context. Caritas Italiana and the Community of Sant'Egidio are two of the many organizations of Italian civil society that provide primary assistance centres for foreigners entering Italy. The significant organization of these bodies and their multifunctional nature, together with a nationwide activity, make them interesting points of reference for numerous immigrants.

The requests immigrants make to the Counselling Centres are many, and vary from the initial reception and accommodation needs to legal, employment, and healthcare matters. In addition to requests for food and basic necessities, among the most significant services are Italian language courses aiming to provide the notions necessary for a better social and work integration of the foreign nationals. As for employment placement policies, these associations aid, at the informal level, the matching of supply and demand, thanks to the trust placed in the organization of reference. The Counselling Centres offer the information useful for handling the bureaucratic matters for job placement, such as registration with the national employment office. Nevertheless, the formalization of the employment relationship takes place independently of the third-sector associations. There are also the “*Patronati*”, agencies for advice and social assistance to workers, which offer an important point of reference as providers of information, assistance, and guidance services for foreign nationals living in Italy.

An interesting example of synergy between social partners and the third sector is the awareness-raising campaign called “Non aver paura, apriti agli altri” (Don't be afraid, open up to others³⁵), conducted in 2009 by trade unions (CGIL, CISL, UIL, UGL) and non-profit associations (including ACLI [Italian Christian Workers' Associations], Amnesty International, Caritas Italiana, Community of Sant'Egidio, and Save the Children). In the awareness that active policies must be accompanied by a substantial raising of the awareness of public opinion on the subject of the social inclusion of foreigners present in Italy, the project aims to create the cultural substratum necessary

³⁴ www.cna.it

³⁵ www.nonaverpaura.org

for eliminating phenomena of racism and for the full achievement of targeted actions.

Referring to the principles of equality of the Italian Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the letter of commitment signed by the participants states the necessity to curb the phenomenon of social exclusion. It stresses the importance of avoiding the use of discriminatory statements in order to avoid generating unjustified alarm, especially through the use of the mass media and printed press. The idea emerges that the rights of immigrant workers must be defended in exactly the same way as those of Italian citizens, with the awareness that *“the welfare and dignity of everyone [...] are closely tied to those of our neighbour, whoever that may be.”*³⁶

2.8 Citizenship : active participation as an element of greater social inclusion?

The recognition of citizenship and the related acquisition of rights and duties is an important starting point for greater social and work inclusion of immigrants. There is, in fact, a *“biunivocal relationship between economic and material poverty and the absence of participation in public life. Not having contacts or ties with the representative network and missing opportunities for influencing the political context are, in fact, both forms of exclusion that may trigger actual poverty phenomena.”*³⁷

As pointed out by Oliviero Forti, the Immigration Manager for Caritas Italiana, the necessity to emerge from a condition of “existential precariousness” is often the reason for the application for citizenship rights. At the same time, it is necessary to not underestimate how citizenship acquisitions also often depend on the desire to cut through bureaucratic sluggishness and do not correspond to a real intention of becoming an Italian citizen.³⁸

In Italy in 2008, 39,484 requests for citizenship were recognized out of a total of 56,985 applications presented, equal to 69.2%. Among these, the majority of the acquisitions came about through marriage (24,950), and the rest by residence (14,534).

³⁶ www.nonaverpaura.org

³⁷ Caritas Italiana, *La migrazione: un viaggio verso la povertà? Studio Caritas Europa sulla povertà e l'esclusione sociale degli immigrati (Migration: A Journey to Poverty? Caritas Europa Study on the Poverty and Social Exclusion of Immigrants)*, Rome, June 2006

³⁸ Interview with Oliviero Forti, Immigration Manager of Caritas-Italiana, 21 July 2010

Among the countries of origin of the new Italian citizens, we find different nationalities based on gender. The women come mainly from Romania, Ukraine, Albania, Brazil, Morocco, Russian Federation, Cuba, and Poland, while the men come from Argentina, Venezuela, Morocco, Albania, Brazil, Switzerland, Egypt, and Tunisia.

The topic of citizenship raises a lively debate in Italy, between more severe stances and others more inclined to change the current legislation, specifically with regard to Law no. 91 of 5 February 1992.

The current rules set by Law 94/09, the “security package”, sanction very rigid criteria for obtaining citizenship. In the case of marriage between foreign nationals and Italian citizens it becomes imperative for the foreign spouse to have a permit to stay and a legal residence for at least two years on Italian soil, or for three years in the case of residence abroad. Only where there are children born of Italian spouses are the periods halved. Also, it is obligatory to pay 200 euro to formalize the situation connected with the marriage, completed with the related bureaucratic documentation.

Members of Parliament Andrea Sarubbi (PD) and Fabio Granata (PDL) presented a bipartisan bill in July 2009³⁹ for the acquisition of the right to citizenship for first- and second-generation immigrants. The aim is to reduce the time necessary for obtaining Italian citizenship, from the 10 years of the current legislation to 5, and assert the transition from the status of “ius sanguinis” to “ius soli” for the children of foreigners who have lived legally on Italian soil for at least 5 years.

Unlike the current Law no. 91 of 5 February 1992, which in regulating the acquisition of citizenship “identifies a merely quantitative path through several passive conditions”⁴⁰, the new bill stresses the active and qualitative dimension of the recognition of citizenship, in contrast with an approach based exclusively on “granting” it at a certain point in time.

In order to sanction the real value of obtaining citizenship, foreigners present in Italy are required to possess a specific level of knowledge of the language, social integration, and a real verification of their residence. Moreover, they must swear to comply with the Italian Constitution and its fundamental values, thus determining another element of verification and awareness.

³⁹ Sarubbi-Granata Bill, *Modifiche alla legge 5 febbraio 1992, n. 91, recante nuove norme sulla cittadinanza* (Amendments to Law no. 91 of 5 February 1992, on new regulations for citizenship), presented on 30 July 2009

⁴⁰ Sarubbi-Granata Bill, *Modifiche alla legge 5 febbraio 1992, n. 91, recante nuove norme sulla cittadinanza* (Amendments to Law no.91 of 5 February 1992, on new regulations for citizenship), presented on 30 July 2009

Under the bill, second-generation immigrants should be able to acquire “*ius soli*” citizenship, i.e. birthright citizenship, having been born within the country’s borders.

The two Members of Parliament stress the need to avoid making any misrepresentation of the acquisition of “citizenship” and the “security” problem. They are, in fact, two elements which are not antithetical, but if properly dealt with, they can be complementary.

A plan for a permanent life in the country, sanctioned by the acquisition of citizenship, also corresponds to a greater social and work integration and less propensity for delinquency. The Sarubbi-Granata bill states:

*“It is believed that it is possible, in this way, to respect and harmonize the needs, different but closely related, for security and integration in the governance of immigration processes.”*⁴¹

ANOLF-CISL is promoting a campaign for recognition of the citizenship of second-generation immigrants. As stressed by Oberdan Ciucci, the Association’s Chairman, it is important for the actual citizenship acquisition path to be accompanied with an in-depth knowledge of the Italian language and culture. The recognition of the rights and duties sanctioned by the Italian Constitution allows foreign-born individuals to rightfully have full access to the labour market, offering the possibility to hold new jobs that had previously been precluded to them because of a lack of social integration.⁴²

As a trade union, CISL supports the importance of the recognition of the rights of immigrants, as well as their duties. It maintains that *“the integration and cohesion processes must not annul legality, but must assert the recognition of fundamental human rights, among these, first of all, the recognition of Italian citizenship for all those who are born on Italian soil.”*⁴³

The ACLI, Italian Christian Workers’ Associations, also promote the topic of citizenship. The stance, heard in the Chamber of Deputies by the Constitutional Affairs Commission within the framework of the reform of Law no. 91 of 1992⁴⁴, envisages the attribution of Italian citizenship “at the time of birth”, in the awareness of the importance of the *ius soli*, defined by the ACLI as “*ius*

⁴¹ Sarubbi-Granata Bill, *Modifiche alla legge 5 febbraio 1992, n. 91, recante nuove norme sulla cittadinanza (Amendments to Law no. 91 of 5 February 1992, on new regulations for citizenship)*, presented on 30 July 2009

⁴² Interview with Oberdan Ciucci, ANOLF-CISL Chairman, 19 July 2010

⁴³ www.cisl.it

⁴⁴ The text presented to the Commission is based on the stances shared also by other organizations of the Catholic area (Caritas, Comunità di Sant’Egidio, Fondazione Migrantes, Centro Astalli, Associazione Papa Giovanni XXIII).

domicilii". In addition to granting citizenship to the children born in Italy of immigrant workers residing in the country legally, the ACLI also ask, for children not born on Italian soil but residing there for many years, that a faster citizenship attribution procedure be applied, before the child reaches 18 years of age.⁴⁵

Even the Constitutional bill presented in Parliament on 16 October 2003 by the Alleanza Nazionale Party stresses the importance of the political participation of the immigrant workers present in our country. The proposal, strongly championed by then Deputy Prime Minister Gianfranco Fini, establishes that non-EC citizens who have been living permanently and legally in Italy for at least six years, who have sufficient income for supporting themselves and their family, and who have never been committed for trial for crimes for which arrest is obligatory or optional, may vote and be candidates in administrative elections, in conformity with the rules already in place for EC citizens.

The many limits present in Italy with regard to administrative election voting by foreign citizens residing on Italian soil are expressed by the Constitution itself, which denies the extension of voting rights to anyone who is not a native citizen. At the same time, the accumulation of xenophobic and restrictive political decisions being made by part of the country and its political class is undeniable.

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⁴⁵ www.acli.it

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3.COUNTRY CASE POLAND

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3.1 Introduction

Labour migration is a phenomenon constantly present among the Poles. As the data shows, throughout the entire period of transformation about one million Poles were working abroad. The last noted wave of migration – in connection to opening of EU Member States labour markets – though attracting attention of the media and stimulating the public debate, is more a continuation of a tradition rather than a *novum* in the life choices of Poles. Recent years have also brought other important questions about openness of Poland towards migration and the presence of foreigners among Polish workers. Labour migration are obviously connected to the issues of the labour markets: on one hand it has been shown that such factors as unemployment or low remuneration play a key role in understanding the mechanisms and conditions of migration. On the other hand – the demand for workers in many developed countries is often the crucial motivation for accepting the presence of foreigners in the host country.

Transformation from the socialist centrally planned economy into capitalist system revealed a significant surplus of labour. In a very short period, this has led to increase of unemployment and serious imbalance of labour markets basically in all former communist countries⁴⁶. Areas of poverty have become visible as well. Partially, they have always been there but were masked by centrally steered system of redistribution of social benefits. They were revealed in part due to transformation as the result of chaotic actions of the state (e.g. putting into the liquidation great state-owned farms, located on the areas without any other employment capacities).

The topic of workers' mobility among the EU states is usually connected to the idea of free movement of labour between the new and old Member States. Serious disproportion in economic development and level of wages have caused fears in some of the UE-15 states about the possible effects of the enlargement for local workers. Therefore in May 2004 only three countries decided to

⁴⁶ Garson, Redor, Lamaitre 1997, and Kaczmarczyk and Sokolski 2002.

open their labour markets – the UK, Ireland and Sweden. All the other countries have implemented so-called transition periods allowing them to control the inflow of workers and use of exceptional solutions. Gradually, more and more labour markets opened and presently only Austria and Germany maintain restrictions.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the relations between poverty and migration – to which extent the poverty may be the reason for migration or an obstacle making mobility impossible. There is no space in this paper for detailed description of Polish labour market, however some aspects crucial for further deliberations must be emphasised briefly.

Quite often some “sickness” of Polish labour market is pointed at. The basic disease of Polish labour market is low rate of professional activity and employment and relatively high unemployment rate even in the periods of dynamic economic growth. Further negative aspects include unemployment of youths, high percentage of low-skilled unemployed and gender as an important factor of the position on the labour market.

Polish labour market is usually defined as structurally inadequate. Among the most important factors responsible for this situation are:

- low level of human capital, especially aged above 45;
- territorial mismatch of demand and supply of labour, which is visible in regional differentiation of labour market and even more aggravated by low internal mobility;
- mismatch of supply and demand in education, aggravated by lack of long term education policy responding to the needs of the market;
- limited capacity for job creation;
- low internal mobility of workforce;
- unsatisfactory level of employment services;
- lack of database of vacancies;
- weak institutional backup of the labour market;
- ineffective methods of labour market policy;

- relatively high activity in the informal sector⁴⁷.

The paper consists of three parts:

- the scale of poverty in Poland,
- migration of Poles,
- brief conclusions.

3.2 Conditions of poverty in Poland

In recent years, the data collected for the EU Statistics on Income and Living Condition by all the EU Member States is the basis for systematic analysis of scope and social diversity of poverty in the EU. According to the methodology agreed and adopted by Eurostat, persons living in households with income below 60% of the average national income are considered impoverished⁴⁸. It is a relative approach to measuring poverty therefore, as the level of poverty is bound with the living standard in specific countries. Recent estimations of Eurostat based on EU-SILC 2008 (data on income of households collected in 2007) show that every sixth citizen of the EU lived in poverty (17% on the average, from 9% in Czech Republic, 11% in Slovakia and Holland, to 23% in Romania and 26% in Latvia). In Poland the index was equal to European average – 17%. At the same time, however, Poland is among the countries of lowest poverty threshold – for a single person household it was 9.4 thousand PLN a year, and considering differences in prices within the EU – 3.9 Purchasing Power Standard. The lowest poverty threshold was noted in Romania – 1.9, and Bulgaria – below 2.8 PPS, similar threshold to Poland was noted in Slovakia – 4.4 PPS. For comparison purpose – the PPS index in the UK was 11.6.

20% of children lived in relative poverty in the EU. In Poland this index was 22%. The rate of relative poverty threat in households of 2 adults and at least 3 children reached 27% in the EU (24%

⁴⁷ Poland 2006, Report on economy, Ministry of Economy 2006; J. Litwinski, U. Sztanderska Analysis of situation on selected local labour markets and methodology of research of local labour markets in Poland, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2007; E. Krynska, Dilemmas of Polish labour market, Warsaw 2001

⁴⁸ Based on EU- SILC 2008 the value of median of income in Poland was estimated at 15.720 PLN per year per an adult person which means that half of Polish population had income below this threshold..

in EU-15 and 31% in new Member States), in Poland 34%. As for single parent households, the EU index was 35%, in Poland – 30%.

3.3 Main characteristics of Polish poverty

In the macro scale of the entire Polish society, people living in poverty are mostly inhabitants of villages and small towns, poor regions or areas of high structural unemployment.

In the micro scale the poverty of persons and families is connected to:

- young age,
- low skills and education,
- structure of family: poverty is a problem mostly among families with many children,
- whether the head of the family has a job: poverty is accompanied by unemployment and income originates mostly from so-called non-earned means (social insurance benefits, social aid); the type of work is a factor as well – low paid, low skilled job is also often a reason of poverty,
- disfunctionalities such as disability, long term illness, addictions.

All the research and analyses conducted over the last decade show that lowest poverty rate is noted in big cities, and most of impoverished people live in villages and small towns. In 2007 the extreme poverty line in cities was 4.1% and more than twice as much in rural areas – 10.5%. Among city dwellers some 10.4% lived at a level requiring social aid, while same conditions applied to 21.9% of village inhabitants⁴⁹.

Poverty in rural areas is a result of both closures of large state-owned farms and unemployment caused by it as well as low productivity of small farms, which produce mostly for their own needs. In recent years improvement of living standards of farmers was visible thanks to European agriculture programmes and opening of the EU labour markets. However, in 2007 still over 10% of

⁴⁹ Head Statistical Office, The scope of poverty, materials for press conference held 28 May 2008 www.stat.gov.pl

farmers' households exist below the minimum standard⁵⁰. The situation of village dwellers without a farm is even worse – 19.2% of this group live in extreme poverty.

Some research show increasing ease to overcome poverty, especially in reference to short-term moderate poverty. However, the problem of long term, deep poverty – the one which is the most difficult to counteract – remains an important problem regardless of the improvement of economic situation of the society as a whole. The difficult problem of homelessness – extreme, deep and persistent poverty – is a testimony to this.

Polish research and discussion on poverty as a long term situation also includes the problem of “inheriting” poverty – an inter-generation transfer of poverty, unemployment and other detrimental conditions. A difficult start into adulthood of youngsters originating from such poor families is one of the aspects of this problem. They can not count on their parents in the process of becoming independent and enter adulthood with a burden of necessity to help their poor parents and siblings.

Other research also reveal the process of feminisation of poverty inheritance. This means that daughters of poor families are more prone to living in poverty than sons. Some of them become single mothers, without professional skills, jobless, with no independent future, they remain at the mercy of social aid, charities and family. Sons of poor families are more mobile, and more likely to take a simple job requiring physical strength without skills⁵¹.

All the studies reveal the exceptionally important role of education and aspirations in the process of effective breaking away from the circle of poverty, unemployment and poor perspectives⁵².

Territorial diversification is yet another feature of Polish poverty. So-called “new poverty” stemming from transformation of the economy has risen in regions impoverished even before the transformation, traditionally pauperised south-eastern and eastern regions as well as some parts of central Poland. However, especially high unemployment emerged in north-eastern parts of Poland where many state-owned farms collapsed leaving their workers jobless and without perspectives for better future regardless of generally positive changes at the national level.

⁵⁰ The basis for calculating the extreme poverty line is established by the Institute of Labour and Social Affairs through so-called minimum of existence, or biologic minimum. It is a model of fulfilling consumption and existence needs on a very low level, and only the needs that cannot be postponed are taken into account.

⁵¹ E. Tarkowska, Faces of Polish poverty, Institute of Social Analysis and Dialogue, 2009

⁵² E. Tarkowska (ed.) Poverty and social marginalisation of youths 2007.

Also, apart from regional diversification on the national scale there has been observed concentrating poverty in micro scale of big cities, where some districts are left behind in poverty while new ones, closed enclaves of the rich, are emerging.

3.4 The scope of poverty in Poland

In 2009, the Institute of Labour and Social Affairs adopted the level of existence minimum for a single person household at the level of 413 PLN. For the same household the subjective poverty line was 1544 PLN. As this example shows, the subjective aspirations are over 3.5 times higher than the norms defined by experts.

In March 2009 in Poland, 3.3% of households were below the poverty line according to the objective measurement, and 51.4% according to subjective measurement. 11.1% of households with unemployed persons lived below the objective poverty line, and 68.5% if measured according to the subjective method. Single parent families and families with many children constituted the most of the poverty affected households.

The size of city is also a factor in terms of poverty. The smaller the city the more households find themselves below the poverty line. Among the households in villages 5.2% lived in poverty by the objective standards, and 72.1% when subjective standards were applied.

When the situation gets worse, the households rather reduce their spending (86% of the households) or ask their relatives for assistance (39%) or take loans (36%). Only about 16% of the households decide to look for another job. 12% of the households received social aid of any form in 2009, which is less than in 2007 – 14%. Most of the time it was financial aid (75% of the cases), or aid in kind (48%) or as service (25%).

3.5 Migration of Polish workers within the freedom of movement of labour

Gradual opening of EU-15 labour markets for citizens of the new Member States caused both increase of migration outflow from Poland and change of its character. In 2002 labour migration included 0.9% of the population and was mostly of long term character. Since 2004 more short term and frequent migration has been noted, and included 2.9% of the population⁵³. Despite such dynamic increase the migration from Poland did not reach the level feared in some of the EU-15 states. One might say the flow was stabilised or even limited. Most of the Member States noted decreased number of new migrant workers as well as decrease of migrant group as a whole, mostly due to reduced job offers typically offered to migrants.

The economic crisis significantly decreased the interest of Poles in migrating. According to Social Diagnosis research of 2007 some 13.5% of the working population considered migrating, and in 2009 the rate dropped to 7.6%.

At the same time the preferred directions changed. In 2007, 40% of answers pointed at the UK as the most desired host country, however the crisis significantly reduced the interest in going to the UK or Ireland. In 2009, the most preferred direction was Germany, also the Netherlands became more attractive (4.5% of the respondents in 2007 to 10.9% in 2009) as well as Norway (3.7% to 7.5% respectively).

The economic crisis has also negatively influenced the image of migrants in the host countries like the UK. Xenophobia has been rising as the situation was more difficult, and the media covering the topic of Poles employed in the UK emphasised the budgetary burdens caused by migrants, as well as spending on social benefits, health care and baby boom among the migrant workers⁵⁴.

The geographic structure of economic migration from Poland is quite diversified. Some data gathered by several host countries is worth quoting.

According to the Austrian Employment Office (AMS), 11.7 thousand Poles were employed in February 2010 – but we have to bear in mind that Austrian labour market is still closed for free

⁵³ K. Maruszewska, Income aspect of Polish migration during economic and social transition period, <http://mikro.univ.szczecin.pl/bp/pdf/63/11.pdf>

⁵⁴ Migration Bulletin 24, Centre for Migration Research, Warsaw University, 2009.

movement of labour and this official figure reflects only workers employed based on work permits, which poses no problem for research.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance of Cyprus stated that some 3.5 thousand Poles were employed in 2009 which constitutes about 7.5% of all EU and EEA workers. Poles usually took jobs in trade and hotel sector. Polish Embassy in Nicosia said that some 2 thousand Poles work in informal sector with no social or health insurance.

Visible inflow of Polish workforce was noted in Denmark. Most of Poles – both skilled and unskilled, found employment in construction, agriculture and gardening. Since the financial crisis broke out in 2008, due to difficulties in almost all sectors visible decline of foreign workers was noted, especially in construction and refurbishing. According to data of the Danish Labour Market Agency in 2008 there were some 20 thousand Poles employed in Denmark (67% of all workers from NMS), in 2009 this number halved to some 11 thousand workers (58% respectively).

The number of migrant workers in Finland by the end of 2009 was some 5 thousand, the crisis stopped mass recruitment, and presently only skilled welders, machine operators and assemblers are still in high demand. Ageing society of Finland will require some 20 thousand medical staff to be employed within next few years, however due to language barrier the interest among Polish nurses is minimal. Polish seasonal workers may also find jobs in forestry.

Polish Embassy in Dublin estimates that about 200 thousand Poles live in Ireland presently. Due to the crisis mass redundancies take place in various sectors of the economy, and employers usually tend to lay off workers employed most recently – often migrant workers from the NMS. Therefore, in statistical terms the migrant workers are the largest group receiving unemployment benefits and are faced with the dilemma of surviving the crisis in Ireland or returning to their countries of origin.

In the Netherlands, the number of registered migrants from Poland slightly exceeded 13 thousand in 2009, however the group of Polish temporary workers is estimated at the level of 50-60 thousand and increases in the summer season when agricultural work is more available. Most of workers employed in Temporary Work Agencies remain in Holland for less than 4 months, they usually return for another short term contract. Only some 3% of Poles have been employed in Holland for more than a year. It is worth noticing that the group of Poles coming to the Netherlands from the UK or Germany is increasing.

Transition periods implemented by German government will expire on 30 April 2011. In January 2009 Germany liberalised the access to labour market for high school graduates from the NMS. Work permit is available without testing local labour market whether a local candidate (citizen of EU-15) is available for the vacancy. 22.5 thousand work permits were granted to Polish citizens in 2009, 12% increase in comparison to 2008. In June 2009 about 95 thousand Poles were covered by obligatory social insurance in Germany.

One must remember that Polish citizens are very active on German labour market by opening individual businesses on the spot. According to Craft Association in Berlin German registry had 31 thousand records of companies run by the citizens of the NMS, including 26.5 thousand Polish ones.

Norway remains an attractive destination of migration from Poland. Highly developed social scheme and robust system of professional adaptation facilities, broad range of training courses reduce negative aspects of migration. Increase of numbers of Polish highly skilled employees migrating to Norway with intention to settle down is visible. The data of the Central Statistical Office (SSB) say that some 44.5 thousand Poles have already settled down in Norway. At the same time the number of Poles working in Norway illegally is about 50 thousand, fluctuating from season to season and mostly present in agriculture and construction.

Switzerland is one of the 5 countries in the world which note highest increase of incoming foreigners, which presently constitute 21% of the population. The inflow of well educated Poles into Switzerland, scientists and high management, is a relatively new phenomenon and it fits well into the local deficit of own high level specialists.

In March 2010, the number of legal permits of residence in Sweden connected to labour was 21 thousand, of which 12.5 thousand was held by Poles employed there and 880 for Poles running their business in Sweden.

The economic crisis and more restrictive migration regulations visibly reduced the number of Poles looking for a job in the UK. According to the Workers Registration Scheme in 2006 some 162 thousand Poles were registered, and in following years the number was decreasing: 150 thousand in 2007, 103 thousand in 2008 and 54 thousand in 2009.

According to a paper devoted to migration into the UK from the NMS the migrants are usually young, often without professional experience, and are usually paid less than other migrant workers groups or the locals. They often seek places to stay outside big cities and are quite dispersed all around the country. They are usually well regarded by their employers as flexible, of high professional ethics but also with limited command of English language in comparison to other groups of migrants⁵⁵.

According to the data of Italian statistical agency ISTAT Poles constitute 8.8% of all non-native EU citizens living in Italy, and most of them are women usually working as home care for the elderly or in trade and catering. Men are usually employed in agriculture.

3.6 Migrating home

Returning home from abroad is a topic quite often picked up recently, especially in the context of the economic crisis. Presently mostly qualitative data is being acquired and processed, e.g. the paper of Krystyna Iglicka “Poles returning home in the time of crisis – the loop trap of migration”. Some 200 migrants were questioned through questionnaires about their experience of returning from abroad.

The analysis of behaviour of Polish migrants in the UK allows for a conclusion that most of them prefer to stay abroad and wait through the crisis. This situation is influenced by the fact that it is a global recession and migrants have already spent quite a long time abroad and made interpersonal bounds there. The factors influencing decision to return home are:

- no vacancies in the host country,
- freedom of movement to and from the host country and country of origin,
- low transport cost
- limited access to social benefits abroad,
- limited command of local native language,
- relatively short period of residence abroad,

⁵⁵ Madeleine Sumption, Will Somerville, The UK’s New Europeans: Progress and Challenges five years after Accession.

- access to work mainly through interpersonal network within own ethnic group.

Becoming redundant was the reason to return home for some 15% of the respondents, while 76% had planned returning home earlier. This shows that the migration of Poles is much of a circular character. No signs of increasing wave of returns were noted in this report, and no other papers and reports, such as Social Diagnosis 2009 or Polish Head Statistical Office communiqué on destinations and volume of migration confirmed the expected trend.

The Social Diagnosis 2009 emphasise the circular character of migration of Poles and their planned intention to return once an opportunity reveals itself. Therefore many of the migrants who returned to Poland plan to go abroad again – the crisis may have slowed down, or reduced the number of Poles leaving home, but did not cause mass returns.

3.7 Financial transfers

In reference to Poland, the most complex attempt to evaluate the scale of financial transfers and their meaning for the migrants, their families, local and national economy was conducted among Polish seasonal migrants to Germany⁵⁶.

Due to the specific character of such mobility, the behaviour within that group are relatively homogenous: seasonal migration to Germany has purely economic character, over 90% of the workers declared earning more money as their only motive. Seasonal migrants are usually very focused on their goal, they leave for short periods, usually 2 months, and are very intensive in term of work. Any spending abroad is limited to minimum, total of spending abroad does not exceed 15% of the money earned. The amount of remittances from seasonal work in the beginning of 21st century may only be estimated at the level of 1.3-1.6 billion PLN (some 300-400 million euro), which is about 5.4% of the total FDI in Poland in 2001 (5.7 billion USD in 2001). The remittances equalled to 0.86% of Polish exports or 0.62% of imports into Poland. These estimations showed that Poland was not dependant of foreign remittances of migrant workers and it has no important meaning for the national economy; not surprisingly, as Polish economy is relatively large and only small part of population is professionally mobile.

⁵⁶ Kaczmarczyk P., Lukowski W., (ed.) Polish workers on EU market, 2004

The situation slightly changed after May 2004. According to the Polish National Bank, the amount of financial transfers after the enlargement reached 1 billion euro every quarter of a year. The 3rd quarter of 2006 brought 1.6 billion euro of remittances from abroad. The analysis of the effects of these transfers for households on the micro scale is still required. Though it is certain that they substantially supported home budgets. About 90% of households declared spending the transferred money on consumption⁵⁷.

The structure of expenditures show that in the case of Polish migrants, and possibly others too, the impact of private remittances on local and regional economy has no direct effects in investment, but rather indirectly through consumption.

More research was conducted on allocation of the money earned by seasonal workers in Germany. There were three basic models of behaviour:

- persons of relatively disadvantageous material situation, often jobless, took the opportunity of work abroad as financing home budgets. That model included mostly people between 30 – 40 years old, with lower education, rather from poorer households;
- young people trying to become independent thanks to income from working abroad. Many of them devote their earnings e.g. to buying a car, but also 30% claim to set the income aside and save it for the future;
- relatively well-to-do, they rather use the income for financing housing (40%), investment (5%) or education of themselves (7%) or their children (14%). This shows growing understanding of the importance of education, but of increasing education cost in Poland as well. Polish labour market must really exert serious pressure on workers, especially aged 30-40, who have to increase their skills and qualifications in order to remain competitive on the labour market. Therefore, income from seasonal work facilitates adjustment to the dynamic situation of employment.

⁵⁷ Giza A., The socio-economic impact of migration, in Frejka T. Sokolski M., Sword K. (ed.) In-depth Studies on Migration in Central and Eastern Europe: the case of Poland, United Nations 1998

Agnieszka Fihel conducted research on relations between seasonal migration and unemployment⁵⁸. According to her findings seasonal migration may increase the risk of unemployment and long term inactivity on Polish labour market. Decisive majority of the unemployed leaving for seasonal work for the first time – 76% – had not found any employment before they left for the second time. Seasonal work is often physically demanding and not giving any new skills or experience. The research showed that seasonal migrants become unemployed more often than the rest of population. The situation of long term unemployed becomes “frozen”: they have no constant work in Poland so they only work seasonally, but this demotivates them to seek employment in Poland or open their own business. This is visible in the BAEL outcomes: on the entire labour market 28% find employment within a year. However, among the unemployed taking seasonal work only 10% find a regular job.

3.8 The level of poverty and external mobility – conclusions

There are regions of real poverty leading to social marginalisation in Poland. This refers mainly to rural areas, which is exceptional in comparison to the Western Europe. The rural poverty touches mostly small farms producing only for their own needs or small settlements left after closures of huge state-owned farms. Along with the economic transformation and gradual income stratification isolated zones of poverty emerge in big cities. The threat of poverty touches mostly young people and families with many children. Due to limited social transfers, both in terms of timing and amount, becoming unemployed is an additional factor pushing into the poverty spiral.

The geography of poverty in Poland along with the areas of structural unemployment show that mobility should be considered as a possible factor of improving the situation of the poor. Internal mobility, as a paradox, is difficult due to lack of systemic state policy on house building or transport, therefore it is impossible to effectively connect the areas of economic growth with areas with the labour force potential. In many cases migration abroad is simply easier, making external migration dominate over the internal one. Is it desirable in terms of counteracting poverty?

⁵⁸ A. Fihel, Economic activity of seasonal migrants on Polish labour market (in) Kaczmarek, P., Łukowski W., (ed.) Polish workers on EU market, Warsaw 2004

One might answer positively to that question. Outflow of labour force abroad should reduce unemployment and open new job opportunities to those who remain poor due to unemployment. On the other hand, remittances of the migrant workers may improve the situation of their families in their countries.

In reality the situation is quite complex. The research reveals following portrait of a Polish migrant worker⁵⁹:

- young, male;
- originating from less urbanised areas;
- moving to both big cities and peripheral regions;
- without children;
- relatively well educated though working below qualifications;
- transferring part of incomes to home country.

As it may be noticed, these are not the persons directly affected by poverty but rather aiming at improving own life situation with no perspectives to do so in local work environment. It seems that the outflow of such potential employees may destabilise the situation of local labour markets rather than improving it. Those who migrated can not be simply replaced with those who stayed with low employability. Therefore, along with decrease of unemployment rate, the employment rate may decrease what relates to limitation of absorption capacities of local labour markets. It is also worrying that the newest foreign migrations are the domain of young people and the gravity point of labour force outflow is shifting to peripheral zones and small cities. Given that last research shows declining attractiveness of small and medium cities as a place for potential internal migration, there is a considerable threat of their depopulation.

The export of labour may be beneficial for the country of origin only if the skills and qualifications of the migrants improve. The situation where most of Polish workers abroad take jobs of complimentary character, low skilled and unwanted by local workforce, may cause the brain waste. Persons of specific qualifications are not considered attractive on the labour market after a long period of not using and developing them. As some research shows⁶⁰, fewer and fewer Polish

⁵⁹ Ministry of Economy, report, The impact of economic migration on Polish economy, Warszawa 2007.

⁶⁰ Migration abroad 2007-09. Labour Market and Education Observatory, Krakow 2010.

employers consider working abroad as an added value of a potential employee. This is so-called trap of break in the CV due to work abroad outside of acquired qualifications. Such persons are threatened by double marginalisation: losing their job abroad and returning home with no perspectives for better employment forces them to migrate abroad again. Such a temporary presence in the country of circular migrants with decreasing skills and incapability of long term employment may diminish stability of local labour markets. It is also worth noticing that the unemployed returning to their home lands from the EU countries have the right to social benefits acquired in the host countries, usually higher than Polish wages, for a limited period of time. This also does not influence positively their motives to look for a job on a local market during their stay in their home country.

Similarly, the role of remittances must be evaluated with caution. Undoubtedly, they can periodically reduce the scale of poverty of the lowest income households. They do not, however, allow for sustainable departure from the poverty zone through increase of education or acquiring new skills. It is also worth to notice the possibility of negative consequences: in areas of increased partial migration (e.g. Opolskie voivodeship) permanent inflow of financial transfers reduces professional activity of migrants' families expecting remittances to solve all the problems (so-called moral-hazard problem).

Organisations of the social partners in Poland are reserved about the problem of external mobility of workers. Trade unions before the enlargement demanded full freedom of labour movement within the EU after 2004, but this demand was based on non-discrimination principle. Presently, activities towards Polish migrant workers abroad are limited to co-operation with trade unions of the host countries in securing proper employment standards, and there is no encouragement for economic migration. According to the trade unions, reduction of the poverty zone in Poland is the task of increased financial transfers for households in need. Trade unions demand increase of the poverty threshold granting right to social benefits. Consequent increase of the minimum wage towards the goal of 50% of the average wage is another attempt to eliminate the phenomenon of the working poor.

A preliminary analysis of the conditions of Polish economic migration within the free movement of labour shows that external mobility of the workers can not be perceived as a proper instrument of systemic resolving the issue of poverty. Stimulation of internal mobility accompanied by vocational

training and life long education, adapted to flexible needs of local labour markets may serve the purpose much more effectively.

To end with, it seems that co-ordinated support for life long learning is the key question for Polish social partners. Neither trade unions nor the employers' organisations have influence on expenditure of the Labour Fund. The Social Diagnosis 2009 shows that only 12% of Poles aged over 25 participated in any qualifications and skills improvement in the period of 2005-2009. It is also worth mentioning that the mechanisms existing in Polish law focused on financing from the Labour Fund the education of workers at the risk of unemployment (45+ of age or in dismissal period) are basically ineffective. Unless systemic changes are made in long life learning and the social partners are involved in it, no raise of social capital in Poland may be expected in the way that their free migration within the EU benefits their homeland, too.

Based also on interviews with dr. Ryszard Szarffenberg from the Institute of Social Policy of Warsaw University and Zbigniew Kruszynski from the Social Policy Dept. of the National Commission of NSZZ "Solidarnosc".

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4. COUNTRY CASE ROMANIA

4.1. Scenario

Romanian society has undergone numerous changes in recent years, strongly influenced by the economic reforms that impacted the labour market. The drop in population growth and growing incidence of the migratory phenomenon, both temporary and permanent, have determined a constant reduction of the working age population.

In fact, an analysis of the population structure by age bracket highlights the existence of a gradual ageing, with a strong concentration of persons over 35 years of age.

The inclination of numerous Romanian citizens to emigrate is not a recent phenomenon connected with the country's accession to the European Union, but has its origin in a decades-long tradition. The transition from a planned economy to a market economy brought about a further incentive to worker mobility, and the slow transition affected the employment and wage level, leading many Romanian workers to look beyond their national borders.

In fact, it can be seen how in the period preceding 2007, Romania ended much of the long-term mass migratory phenomena, entering a new phase in recent years which marks the consolidation of a temporary, circular migration model. In the 1990s, there was a sizable move of working-age men coming from the country's rural zones, seeking jobs in the building sector. Starting in the late 1990s, the evolution in the migration model spurred a growing presence of young women coming from the rural areas and women from 30 to 59 years of age, residing in urban areas, entering the domestic and homecare sectors.

When, starting in 2002, Romanian citizens became able to benefit from entrance into the Schengen system, free from the need for visas for short stays, the migratory phenomenon underwent another increase. The main destination countries became Spain and Italy, Mediterranean countries that still rank first in the number of incoming Romanian workers.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development asserts that, "According to the statistics available, the number of Romanian citizens in EU member states is estimated to be

between 2.5 and 2.7 million”⁶¹.

At the same time, EurActive points out that, “The migration of workers from Bulgaria and Romania is a marginal phenomenon, according to new figures just published by Eurostat. Mediterranean countries, and notably Spain, are the exception.”⁶²

Nevertheless, the National Confederation of Free Trade Union Fraternity of Romania CNSLR Fratia stresses the need to also look at the data that are not easy to measure. Taking into account the persons not officially registered, the number of Romanian migrants is allegedly higher than this 2.5 million mark.⁶³

In spite of a decrease in migrations, the phenomenon has thus remained sizable. In fact, to the data concerning the official emigration must also be added the figures on those individuals who are not registered and remain largely illegal and underground.

The migrations after 2004, following the end of the EU membership negotiations, proved to be limited compared to the past. With the access restrictions put in place by some countries, there was an increase in illegal work and a change of direction towards other European countries.

The bilateral agreements entered into starting in 2005 contributed to temporary and circular migration phenomena, with an increase of about 20% over the previous year.

Circular migration meets the needs of middle-class young people to move around the European Union for limited periods, thanks to the aids offered by ITC instruments, an extensive network of fellow countrymen in the destination country, and ease in travelling by air thanks to low-cost flights. The enlargement treaties of 2007 further challenged the unconditional opening to the new member countries, specifically Romania and Bulgaria. Therefore new restrictive measures were enacted and many countries that had appeared favourable in 2004 changed their policies, in particular Ireland and Great Britain.

As reported by *The International Migration Outlook: SOPEMI 2010*, on the basis of the data processed by the National Labour Agency and the Labour Inspectorate, around 61,400 persons emigrated from Romania in 2008, thanks to temporary work contracts mediated when they were

⁶¹ OECD, *International Migration Outlook: SOPEMI 2010*

⁶² EurActiv, *No Bulgarian and Romanian mass migration, figures say*, EurActive.com, 12 November 2007

⁶³ Eironline, European Industrial Relations Observatory on-line, *Growing concern over labour shortage due to migration*, Eurofound, 2007

still in their own country. These are contracts some of which were concluded thanks to private employment agencies, or through the European job placement instrument called EURES. Most of the total moves took place in any case through informal channels.⁶⁴

4.2. Conditions of poverty in Romania

According to the data provided by the Romanian National Statistics Institute⁶⁵ in 2007, 18.5% of all Romanian citizens are in conditions of poverty: 18.3% of the men and 18.8% of the women, respectively. The incidence of the phenomenon changes according to the geographic location, striking the rural areas the most, with peaks of 29.6% compared to the 9.6% in the urban contexts. Around 70% of the persons exposed to the risk of poverty reside, in fact, in the peripheral and rural areas.

With regard to the households, the poverty rate is spread homogeneously over the various types. Singles record a percentage of 27.9%, standing at a level that surpasses the national poverty rate by 9.4%. Single-parent households reach 31%, families with 3 or more children 40%, and persons over 65 years of age living alone hit 33.4%.

The poverty rate of children 0-15 years of age is 24.7%, with another high poverty rate – 20.4% – registered among young people in the 16-24 age bracket.

The strong penalization of these age brackets denotes a great vulnerability, the result of disadvantaged socio-cultural contexts, to which must be added a sizeable economic deficit.

The regional differences between poverty levels are evident if we compare the data of the different areas of the country. In north-eastern Romania the poverty rate in 2007 was 26.2%, while the urban area of Bucharest registered a meagre 4.6%. Just as intensively, the regions of the south-east and south-west show very high poverty levels: 24.2% and 23%, respectively.

According to the Eurostat data for 2008, around 76% of all Romanians were not able to afford the cost of a vacation outside of their country. On the other hand, in Europe the average was 37%. Moreover, in 49% of the cases, Romanian workers could not afford their own car, and 19% of the people surveyed could not eat properly and choose a daily diet with a sufficient protein intake. In the latter case, the European average was 9%.

⁶⁴ OECD, International Migration Outlook: SOPEMI 2010

⁶⁵ INSTITUTUL NATIONAL DE STATISTICA www.insse.ro

Among the neediest population groups, those most concerned by the poverty phenomenon, that of the Romani people is indicated the most. In fact, on the basis of the statistics, it emerges how this is one of the most affected minorities, with an absolute poverty rate five times higher than the national value.

In spite of the fact that the figures describe a problem that is still far from short-term solutions, it is necessary in any case to emphasize the drop in the poverty rate from 2003, a period when the level of the Romani community was around 76.8%. The 2007 statistics confirm the reduction of the phenomenon to 48.5%.

As has been pointed out, Romania, together with Bulgaria (51%), Hungary (37%), and Lithuania (35%), is one of the countries most exposed to material privations.

Thanks to the institutional socioeconomic policies implemented between 2000 and 2007, considerable improvements have been registered in the economic growth and in the living conditions of the native Romanian population.

At the institutional level, the fight against poverty is a heavily debated question, with regard to which there has been some opening up at the government level.

In 2008 the Romanian Ministry of the Interior stressed how the migration of the labour force had had a positive trend over the years, considering the percentage of persons that had chosen to seek work outside of Romania. Nevertheless, this process has produced a deficit in the labour force such that countermeasures have become necessary to encourage workers to return to their country to check the phenomenon of growing poverty.

In particular, in the *Strategic National report regarding social protection and social inclusion*, it is stated that:

“One of the main elements of the social policy to be developed over the next years continues to be the consolidation of efforts in the fight against poverty and social exclusion and in the promotion of inclusion for vulnerable persons by means of active inclusion measures. The reduction of poverty is the main element of the policy which Romania sets for the next cycle of programmes and in this sense it will focus its efforts and resources in increasing the degree of employment of vulnerable groups by implementing measures to invest in the development of personal skills, in

promoting equal opportunities and in developing an adequate social protection system.”⁶⁶

4.3. Characteristics of Romanian migration

The trade union CNSLR Fratia estimates that out of the total Romanian migrants, over 45% completed secondary school education, 35% have received a university diploma, and only 20% have not finished their schooling. The main push toward migration comes from the inadequate wage level in Romania, while for other migrants the pursuit of better living conditions in the destination countries is a fundamental element.

On the basis of the data collected, CNSLR Fratia estimates that the monthly salary of a professional nurse in Romania is between 110 and 360 euro, while for the same profession the salary is 1,320-1,770 euro in Italy, 1,300-2,300 in Germany, and 800-3,500 in Switzerland. The wage level in other countries is able to attract Romanian citizens with university degrees, such as teachers or specialists, who often choose to do even seasonal work in the agricultural sector, so long as they earn more money.⁶⁷

The implications determined by a migratory phenomenon of these dimensions are manifold. First of all, worthy of note is the potential of the remittances sent by workers working in other countries. The remittances the Romanian worker sends to his country of origin have a positive influence on the national economy. It is estimated that in 2009 the value of the remittances amounted to 2.8 billion euro. To this economic value must be added the background of expertise and know-how acquired in other countries, of fundamental importance for investing in new professional activities once workers return to their country.

At the same time, the considerable absence of a category of workers of active age entails serious deficits in the labour force in the Romanian market. For example, in 2006 the building market estimated an absence of over 300,000 workers, equal to around 50% of the demand.⁶⁸ Similarly, for the healthcare sector, the estimates indicate an emigration of around 2,500 persons to Italy, 1,200 to

⁶⁶ Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection - Romania, *Strategic National report regarding social protection and social inclusion*, 2008

⁶⁷ Interview with Mihaela Criticos, Professor at Ion Mincu, University of Architecture and Urban Planning of Bucharest, 6 August 2010

⁶⁸ Caritas Italiana, *Romania, immigrazione e lavoro in Italia – Statistiche, problemi e prospettive (Romania, immigration and work in Italy – Statistics, problems, and prospects)*, Edizioni IDOS, Rome, 2008

Hungary, and 600 to the United Kingdom.

The so-called “brain drain”, widespread among researchers and scientists, is often spurred by study grants offered by European universities, especially in the ITC sector, and meets the need of many specialists and university professors to obtain better wages and greater prospects for growth.

Lastly, the fragmentation of households and the reduction of the active population bracket in Romania determine a new makeup of the demographic panorama, with a significant presence of persons over 65 years of age in the rural areas.

These are implications that have an impact on the medium and long term, changing both the country’s demographic makeup and the labour market.

The European Citizen Action Service published a report titled, “*Who’s Afraid of the EU’s Latest Enlargement? Report on The Impact of Bulgaria and Romania joining the Union on Free Movement of People*”, which seeks to debunk the widespread prejudices in Europe immediately after Romania’s entrance into the Community system. After 2007, only a few European countries chose to grant Romanian and Bulgarian workers free access to their markets. In fact, in most cases it was restrictions and significant backtracking that prevailed in countries that had first seemed favourably disposed, such as Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Among the causes of this reversal in trend, the Report identifies the impact of the mass media, which emphasized the number of arrivals compared to the forecasts, without considering the numerous government studies that stressed, instead, the positive influence of the phenomenon. The response of the British government for handling public opinion thus went in the direction of restrictive and limiting policies.

The ECAS points out how the migration of the labour force has contributed to growth and tax revenue rates higher than the costs incurred for social assistance, thus playing a role that is complementary to the contribution coming from the local labour force. The role of the remittances has acquired considerable importance for the long-term benefits to the country of origin.

The European organization also believes that, to stimulate the free mobility of workers in Europe, it is necessary to end the transitory measures and create specific information and support services in the countries of origin in order to help the immigrant workers in their social and job integration even before they leave. This way, according to the report, “80% of problems [could] be solved

before departure.”⁶⁹

4.4. Romanian migration flows in Spain and Italy

Spain and Italy are the preferred destinations for the migration flows coming from Romania. The reasons for this choice are varied, and include geographic proximity, better pay possibilities, language comprehension, and the particular segmentation of the labour market.

Among the immigrants coming from Eastern Europe, Romanians constitute the most numerous community in Spain. According to the data from the Permanent Immigration Observatory, in September 2007 Romanians accounted for 13.5% of the total foreign residents registered in Spain, reaching a total of 505,670, second in percentage only to Moroccan immigrants. The most sizable flows were registered in concomitance with the process of “normalization of foreign workers” approved in 2005 by the Spanish government, and during the period of the opening of the frontiers to Romania after its accession in 2007. The process of legalization of the immigrants entailed the possibility for 100,177 Romanian citizens to stabilize their situation thanks to a temporary residence permit and an employment permit.

The geographic location of Romanian immigrants in Spain has changed down through the years. While during the first phase of the migration Madrid and the Mediterranean seacoast were the main places of arrival and residence of the Romanian workers, over the years their presence has scattered throughout the entire territory, in particular in the Autonomous Communities of Aragón, Castilla-La Mancha, País Valenciano, and la Roja, and in the provinces of Saragozza, Guadalajara, and Toledo⁷⁰. The strong presence in these areas can be attributed to a significant labour supply and a network of friends and relatives already present on the territory, capable of facilitating the social integration of the new arrivals. Thus there are specific territorial concentrations, such as, for example, the presence in the area of Castellón of Romanian citizens coming from Targoviste, in the region of Dambovita.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Traser Julianna, Venables Tony, *Who's Afraid of the EU's Latest Enlargement? Report on the Impact of Bulgaria and Romania joining the Union on Free Movement of People*, ECAS (European Citizen Action Service), Brussels 2008

⁷⁰ Among the other immigration zones are Huesca, Teruel, Burgos, Albacete, Cuenca, Ciudad Real, and Castellón de la Plana.

⁷¹ Baillo Ruiz Valeriano, *La Spagna e i flussi migratori romeni*, in *Romania, immigrazione e lavoro in Italia (Spain and the Romanian migration flows, in Romania, immigration and work in Italy)*, Caritas Italiana, 2008

The main employment segments occupied by the immigrant worker are the building, agriculture, tourism, and transport sectors for men, and domestic and homecare work for women. These are workers who mainly work in the manual labour sector, even though they often possess specific educational qualifications and titles. According to the official Spanish Social Security statistics, Romanian citizens seeking employment total only 2.7%, a figure that bears witness to the existence of an informal market comprising many undeclared workers. In particular, the persons who arrive illegally and who thus may not sign up with the Public Employment Service are forced to turn to the network of fellow countrymen, finding work through informal placement methods.

On the other hand, around 640,000 Romanian citizens have moved to Italy⁷², with a slight prevalence of women (53%) over men (47%), even if there is a higher employment rate for men, equal to 56%.

The employment rate is high, in line with the averages registered for immigrant workers in Italy, signifying a different segmentation of the labour market which places foreign and Italian workers in different employment categories, which are often complementary. As for the job placement of women, although they do not arrive at the men's figures, they stand out for being the immigrant female component with the highest employment levels in Italy, especially in the homecare sector. The geographic location in Italy shows the Romanian workers concentrated particularly in the Northern regions, in over 60% of the cases, in a lower percentage in the Centre, where the average fluctuates between 25 and 35%, and in a small percentage in the Southern (Mezzogiorno) regions. The different opportunities offered by the Italian regions are also clearly reflected in the places of residence chosen. These are persons who have lived in Italy for many years – often a decade – which goes to show that the Romanian migration phenomenon is not strictly related to the country's accession into the EU, but is instead a long-standing tradition. In addition to manual labour in the building sector and seasonal work in the agriculture sector, the highest worker presence is found in small-to-medium-sized enterprises.

The level of schooling of immigrant Romanian citizens is higher than that of other immigrant communities. These education levels are, however, often accompanied by an underutilization of the human capital of the immigrant worker, employed in unskilled positions or jobs with low levels of

⁷² ISTAT, Italian National Statistics Institute, www.istat.it

expertise.

As already explained, among the main reasons leading Romanians to move to Spain and Italy is the economic reason. The difference between Spanish and Italian wages and Romanian ones continues to be very great. Then there is the specific demand from the Spanish and Italian labour market for low-cost Romanian labour. The great labour supply at both the formal and informal levels is a significant incentive for the increase in flows between Romania and Mediterranean countries. Moreover, unlike countries like Germany and Austria with their restrictions, Spain has been able to receive and handle the migration flow thanks to its policies. The elimination starting in 2002 of the visa for stays of no more than three months and the bilateral agreements between Romania and Spain for hiring workers have served as incentives.

To all this must be added the presence of a significant network of fellow countrymen already present in the country, capable of providing first assistance and access to an informal market, tolerated in Spain and Italy even though it is illegal. The pursuit of a better protection of rights, the flight from widespread corruption and deficiencies in the most basic services, and a similarity of the languages and ease in learning the new one complete the list of reasons leading to moves to Spain and Italy.

Romania's accession to the European Union allowed this country also to become a place of attraction for migration flows. Even though the labour market offers less appeal and economic prospects than other Community countries, and the unemployment rate reached 8.3% in February 2010⁷³, in recent years Romania has improved its reception capacities and not only those of transit toward the more developed countries.

Turkey, the Moldavian Republic, and China are the main countries with immigrants present in Romania. The presence of these immigrant workers also meets the need to fill the labour force gap produced by the migration flows of the native workers. In particular, the analysis of the building sector led trade unions, entrepreneurs, and government representatives to study policies to make up for this absence of 200,000-300,000 workers through the entry of the labour force from other countries and the return of the emigrant workers. The workers from the Moldavian Republic are, moreover, privileged in their integration in Romania due to their knowledge of the language and the

⁷³ "Romania's unemployment rate rose by 0.2 per cent in February to 8.3 per cent, the highest rate since 2003 [...] The number of unemployed people at the end of February stood at 762,375", BalkansInsight.com, *Romania Unemployment Rises in February*, 8 March 2008

possibility to reacquire Romanian citizenship.

4.5. Migrating home

The process of voluntary return to the homeland, at the end of a migratory stay in EU countries, is an important element in the Romanian social, economic, and demographic scenario. This is a path that fulfils the rules of migration processes and which considers the return home as the natural consequence of a period, often a decade, spent abroad. The return to Romania makes it possible to reap the benefits of the capital earned and consolidate specific skills and know-how acquired during the migration period. Romania's former Prime Minister Tariceanu stated on a number of occasions his intention to implement policies to encourage this "return migration".⁷⁴ The lack of labour force, reduced by the migration processes, has a direct impact on the development of certain employment sectors. This is a subject matter that has also involved President Basescu, accused by the opposition in 2010 of wanting to encourage the migration phenomenon, with serious repercussions for the country's structure. The President's rebuttal was immediate, stressing the positive role played by Italy and Spain in offering social protection and welfare systems capable of receiving the Romanian workers, but denying any incentive for further migrations.⁷⁵

In determining the time necessary for the return migration, it is important to note several fundamental variables. The capacity to accumulate the economic resources necessary for a comfortable life in one's own country and the social and work integration level in the destination country have, in fact, an impact on both the inclination to return and the time.

Speaking of policies for encouraging the return home, the need to sign more agreements among the countries involved is often stressed. For example, by creating a programme for supporting voluntary return, Spain enabled the return home of 3,666 emigrants starting in 2004, thanks to the decision to shoulder the travel expenses and introduce useful microcredit mechanisms.

⁷⁴ Eironline, European Industrial Relations Observatory on-line, *Growing concern over labour shortage due to migration*, Eurofound, 2007

⁷⁵ "President Trian Basescu said in an interview broadcast Wednesday that the country could not have afforded to pay benefits for the estimated 2 million Romanians working abroad. Many Romanians work in Italy and Spain in the agricultural and construction business, or looking after the elderly in relatively low-paying jobs, often ones that locals refuse to do. Basescu said that social protection in Spain and Italy is much better than in Romania [...] "So to these people that stay abroad, we have to thank them for what they are doing for Romania", Msnbc.com, Romanian president sparks migration controversy, June 2010

A policy of cooperation by the governments concerned, a creation of greater work opportunities in Romania, and profitable stimuli for Romanian enterprises may be other incentives offered to return home.

4.6. Position of Romanian social partners

In May 2006, the Romanian trade unions “National Trade Union Confederation Cartel Alfa”, “National Trade Union Bloc, BNS”, and “Confederation of Democratic Trade Unions in Romania, CSDR”, expressed their perplexity over the government’s silence on the policy measures to be implemented to fight the country’s widespread poverty level.

In particular, the Romanian trade unions pointed out the need for a concerted action against *“Miserly wages, huge discrepancy between pensions and current prices, constantly growing public utilities costs, more often than not without any economic justification, but which each time, without fail, bring about a chain reaction of increased prices of the bare essentials, the loss of thousands of jobs, a healthcare system on the verge of collapse, all of which have turned the life of ordinary citizens in Romania into an absolute nightmare.”*⁷⁶

The demands made by the trade unions centred on various aspects of particular importance:

- Increase of the wage levels, in particular an increase of the minimum wage from 372 RON (approximately 105 euro) to 637 RON (180 euro).
- Improvement of the basic essential public utilities such as gas, electricity, heating, water, and fuel, avoiding price increases and hoping for a greater market transparency.
- Employment policy incentive capable of fostering an increase in jobs, and a better matching between education level and wages.
- Industrial policies capable of penalizing unfair competition, in particular in the textile and ITC sectors, modernizing the agriculture sector, and encouraging greater investments in scientific and technological research.

⁷⁶ Eironline, European Industrial Relations Observatory on-line, *Trade unions organise major protest against poor living standards*, Eurofound, September 2006

- Intervention in industrial relations for the purpose of creating a regulatory framework in keeping with EU directives on labour matters; changes to the regulations on collective agreements and labour disputes, and improvements of the regulatory framework concerning social dialogue.
- Substantial pension increase, with particular attention to the resources necessary for a fair access to free or subsidized healthcare.⁷⁷

With regard to the employers' viewpoint, Eurofound registered a widespread concern caused by the deficit in the labour force due to employment outside the country. One of the most important employers' organizations in the textile sector, Patronatul Societatilor din Constructii, PSC, states that the lack of labour involves 50% of the sector, with a discrepancy of around 300,000 workers. Considering the fact that the low pay is the main disincentive to remaining in the country, the need to offer wages comparable to those of the other EU countries is of top priority. Another employers' association of the building sector, Asociatia Româna uno Antreprenorilor de Constructii, ARACO, trusts in the European enterprises with facilities in Romania to bring in flows of workers from the neighbouring countries interested in making up for the lack of local workers.⁷⁸

The Romanian migration process has aroused significant debate within European governments, due to the repercussions the migration to the destination countries might have on the internal labour market dynamics and the socioeconomic and demographic trends in the countries both of destination and of origin. The Romanian government has taken a stance and chosen in recent years to check the migration phenomenon by implementing a series of restrictive measures to discourage departures. In order to be effective, it has decided to require that the migrant have medical insurance, a return ticket, and the availability of huge amounts of money for the period to be spent abroad, in addition to the possibility of not granting the issue of passports to those who have already been out of the country for extended periods.

⁷⁷ Eironline, European Industrial Relations Observatory on-line, *Trade unions organise major protest against poor living standards*, Eurofound, September 2006

⁷⁸ Eironline, European Industrial Relations Observatory on-line, *Growing concern over labour shortage due to migration*, Eurofound, November 2007

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5. CONCLUSIONS, *Marco Cilento SindNova*

5.1. Poverty and mobility in the post-crisis EU

In a recent speech on poverty⁷⁹, ETUC Secretary John Monks focused on several factors that link the dynamics of the globalized economy to the difficulty in fighting poverty in the westernized world, in particular in the European Union.

Among the dynamics of the globalized world, he asks that the mobility of goods, people, and capitals continue to be kept under observation. The reason is that the advancement of world trade has caused a great acceleration of commerce supported by the elimination of trade barriers, requested by the international trade institutions, namely the WTO. Far from drawing on the “anti-globalization” stances, he expresses the need to identify and fight the social distortions that a free market generates in the absence of similarly international and democratic instruments for the redistribution of wealth.

He identifies two paradigmatic events that accelerated mobility in the global market, starting in the 1990s: the conversion of the Eastern European countries to the market economy and the rise of the Chinese economy in the global market.

And in fact, globalization has been a driving force of wealth. It is well known that the season of free trade, at the turn of the new millennium, has entailed a great growth of the world GDP and permitted numerous underdeveloped countries to come out of a state of extreme destitution (especially in Southeast Asia and Latin America).

At the same time there has been a process of concentration of wealth without precedent: that is, the distortions of the market have moved the wealth produced towards capital, to the detriment of wages and social spending. The inequality in the distribution of income grew in almost all the industrialized countries (OECD 2008) starting in the mid-1980s, and continuing up until the financial collapse of 2008. At that time, 10% of the world’s richest held approximately 10 times the income available for the poorest 10% of the world’s population. But this, too, is an aggregate

⁷⁹ Speech at the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion conference organized by the EU Commission and the Spanish EU Presidency and held in Madrid on 21 January 2010.

calculation. There are virtuous countries where the income difference between the richest and the poorest class is lower, while in others, growth (or development) has made inequality even worse.

Countries like the U.S., Mexico, and Turkey have been able to benefit from the global markets, and yet they have produced inequality. Europe, while maintaining greater redistribution capacities than the U.S., has not succeeded in preventing, in the past twenty years, the well-to-do classes from benefiting further compared to the poorer classes.

Europe is also plagued by a substantial social immobility. Grouping the population into three income brackets (wealthy, middle class, and poor), it can be seen that not only does the distribution of the population among the three classes remain unchanged in quantitative terms, but the transition from one class to another is very limited.

What was already a concern on the eve of the 2008 crisis was the wearing down of the living conditions of the poorest classes of the population. The wealthiest class saw its resources grow, while the middle class registered a constant income.

It is a well-known dynamics: the shift of wealth mainly concerns the demand for low-cost labour. The enterprises that can afford it exploit the new areas opened by the borderless markets to relocate production. Looking at Europe, these strategies push wages downward in the attempt made by governments and trade unions to keep production and jobs on their own territory. It also generates a social split: in those sectors most exposed to global competition, Europe generates low-cost jobs that often become the exclusive area of immigrant work.

It has been said that globalization, in its imbalances, has permitted large swaths of populations of developing countries to have access to some form of wealth. As Ambrosini emphasizes in his article in this report, extreme poverty is a hindrance to immigration. So it must not come as a surprise that globalization, with its economic and social asymmetries, has in any case enabled large segments of the populations of developing countries to make up for their economic and vocational deficiencies, making it possible to cultivate a migration plan. Precisely the transition from poverty to neediness, from the state of total abandon to access to basic vocational skills, has created the conditions for new migration flows from developing countries to more developed ones.

As demonstrated by the cases of Romania and Poland, the decision to emigrate may come from the hope of definitively escaping poverty. And the European Union offers prospects of a better life. Moreover, Europe is hungry for labour, as proved by the data from international organizations.

In 2007, the active population in the European Union amounted to 235 million persons. According to Eurostat, in 2060, if the trend remains unchanged, it will total 125 million. If the migration flows remain the same, the active population in the European Union will total 185 million. This means that in 50 years the European labour market will have to “invent” 50 million workers.

The deficiencies in the labour supply may be compensated through the extension of the working life (also connected to longer life expectancies), through the access to jobs by categories which at the present time are excluded, especially women, and, lastly, through immigration. The survival of the European production and social model is also tied to the contribution from immigrants. The proper management of job mobility is a basis for the sustainability of the European economic and social model.

Today, while the world crisis is making its effects felt on employment⁸⁰, many countries tend to toughen their stances on immigrants’ access to jobs and, with the lack of resources for creating protective social networks, limit their access to social security.

The ETUC has often denounced the danger of the vulnerability of immigrants, in the current economic situation, both as workers and as “unemployed”. The risk is that a class of new poor will be created, one that could escape social control in just a few years, and legality in the long term.

Furthermore, the management of the contingency generated by the crisis, while dramatic and urgent, cannot take place without taking into account the major social and economic challenges that still remain after the crisis (aging of the population, environmental dynamics, technological development, etc.).

It is not a matter of managing just the migration flows from and to the European Union. It is necessary to handle the migration dynamics within the European Union itself. The workers who move around today in Europe number around 40 million (Eurostat figures), of whom 18 million are in intra-Community mobility for work purposes (net of seasonal and posted workers)⁸¹.

The mobility phenomenon causes the European social dimension to be in continuous expansion. Suffice it to consider the necessity for coordination and integration of the social security systems. Eurostat projections tell us that the effects of the labour flows cannot be interpreted solely by comparing the national stocks. Instead, the greatest effects can be seen in the territorial

⁸⁰ In particular, in Europe and the euro area.

⁸¹ Communication of the European Commission on “The impact of free movement of workers in the context of EU enlargement”, COM 2008(765) final.

concentrations. Mobile workers will tend to modify the labour markets of certain regional areas and give us a territory that is increasingly fragmented as far as the availability of labour (both in terms of its quantity and quality) is concerned.

Therefore it is in the regional areas that phenomena of social exclusion and poverty conditions can arise. The government of the territory will have to guarantee that mobility and poverty do not intertwine in a perverse relationship but, on the contrary, it must activate local institutional, economic, social, and civil society actors to guarantee the integration of the foreign nationals into its social fabric. Moreover, it is in this direction that the European Integration Forum promoted by the European Commission and the Economic and Social Committee moves. While no final document has been produced, the discussion proposes, with a continuity of views among the participating parties, the idea that integration is the only way to protect the foreign worker from marginalization and poverty, and that integration is necessarily the aim of territorial policies. The European Union has an important role to play to support these policies, providing resources, promoting the multiplication of best practices, and creating rules of transparency and equality in the management of labour mobility.

The European action against poverty is intense and complex. With regard to the specific topic of this article, it is necessary to remember how the priorities of the topic of poverty intersect with those of the good management of labour mobility.

At the Community level, a distinction is made between the EU worker who exercises free movement and the migrant worker coming from a third country and joining the labour market of a Member State. The migration flows within the Union were mainly the result of the proactive strength of the Community institutions which, starting from the 1960s, have created a series of rules and policies that have progressively rendered the position of the Community workers more equal to that of national workers. And with increasing frequency, European citizens have recognized that the Community is indeed their natural space for mobility, thus benefiting from two major sets of rights:

- the Community provisions protecting labour as something instrumental to achieving an internal market with its related freedoms
- the social provisions that give content to the status of European citizen, for which the endowment of citizens' rights develops in the necessity of making fundamental rights applicable, and thus without a relationship of subordination with the market rules.

Although there are still some barriers of a legal, social, and cultural nature, that of the free movement of workers remains in any case a success story for the European Community, because it has expanded the living and working opportunities of European citizens. Based on the principle according to which the law of the State where the work is performed is applicable, it has been possible to free the national social systems from a competitive race on the internal market.

For this reason, the free movement of labour has united entrepreneurial and union forces in the Community project. For decades the united Europe has been fertile ground for economic and social progress, and mobility has played a role in this.

Today, labour mobility is enriched with a new area in which the labour flows are connected with enterprise mobility and the achievement of an internal market for services⁸². The free movement of services triggers a business-driven labour mobility: a type of mobility that does not follow a life plan of the person, but a business plan that involves the enterprise and its employees. The legal institution frequently used by enterprises for carrying on their business in other Member States is the transnational posting of workers.

The fundamental characteristic of the transnational posting of workers is that it undermines the *lex loci laboris* principle, consigning (at least part of) the labour protection provisions, which also determine the cost, to the law of the country of origin (specifically to the law of the country in which the posting enterprise is established).

This is a short-term, circular mobility which certainly meets both the citizen-worker's and the citizen-entrepreneur's needs. But at the same time it is a mobility that creates competition between the workers' protection systems, with immediate social dumping effects. While the free movement of services and labour grasps opportunities (potentially positive for enterprises and their workers), on the other hand an abuse of the posting instrument can fuel situations of under-protection of labour. The European trade union has been denouncing for some time the illegal employment conditions of foreign labour, in particular in the building, services, and agriculture sectors. The abuses connected with the freedom to provide services proceed hand-in-hand with the acknowledged inadequacy of the public institutions to monitor the phenomenon and intervene to remove distortions, or even the repeated violations of the law, in the use of mobile labour in

⁸² Directive 2006/123/EC on the freedom to supply services in the internal market.

transnational or temporary posting, or of those workers engaged in a short, circular, and business-driven mobility.

The social impact is strong. The short, business-driven mobility prevents the construction of solidarity in the workplace and triggers mechanisms of downward competition in working conditions. These are phenomena which, if not managed, may worsen labour relations, threaten social cohesion, and give rise to conflicts that are often negative for the very sustainability of the free movement of services and enterprises.

The Community regulations do not yet seem able to respond to these phenomena of abuse of the free movement of services and labour, and this might affect the relationship European trade unionism has traditionally had with European integration.

Observing these phenomena, the European trade union feels that the social chapter of the united Europe is being threatened. It fears that a free-market drift may wear down that work culture that has made Europe a point of reference of the social economy. Wage competition should not entail competition over the cost of labour and, as in the past, it should not be subordinate to the rules of free movement. While the purchasing power of wages remains a controversial element (the European trade union denounces a constant erosion of the purchasing power of wages in Europe, and has long been criticising the wage moderation requested by the European Central Bank), it is a fact that in Europe 8% of the population lives on the brink of poverty, even if they have an employment income (with peaks of around 15% in Greece, Romania, Poland, and Portugal).

However, it is necessary to resist the temptation to believe that the law provisions can be sufficient to remove poverty or strengthen the social Europe, in particular with regard to mobility. This is for two reasons. The first is that the law is not always capable of responding promptly to economic and social changes. Secondly, the pursuit of the regulatory solution has the effect of making the institutions shoulder the entire responsibility for managing the phenomena. Instead, the trade union and its counterparts should assume the responsibility, which belongs to them, of dynamically and promptly protecting the weak players in the free market game. It is a matter of finding solutions that open the way to new solidarity paths.⁸³

Labour mobility has been a subject of debate in the European trade union since the start of the European Community project.

⁸³ Marco Cilento, *Introduction to I Percorsi della Solidarietà (The Solidarity Paths)*, in *I percorsi della Solidarietà (The Solidarity Paths)*, Quaderno Sindnova 24, Edizioni Lavoro, Rome, 2009.

The social partners, at all levels, must be able to exercise their role of self-regulation and accompaniment in the evolution of labour, its organization, and its mobility, in subsidiary support to the Community and national institutions. Collective bargaining in Europe must be able to express itself to its full potential, also in the forms of interregional and transnational negotiation, in order to give a tangible expression to the values of solidarity and bring out the collective interests at stake. Social dialogue – with all its bargaining, participation, and concertation instruments – must be enabled to offer the best contribution for the social sustainability of the services market, striking a balance with the principles of horizontal subsidiarity and in full harmony with the political, social, and economic project of the European Union.

Social dialogue, according to its nature and consistently developing its historic origin, can do a great deal towards preventing the labour mobility associated with the mobility of services from being, or simply from being perceived as, a threat to quality, well-paid work for all European workers. It is necessary to make sure that in the mobility game, there are no winners or losers among the workers.

As for immigration, it is necessary to combine the economic analysis with that of social sustainability. The European Commission's Third Annual Report on Migration and Integration gives 18.5 million as the number of third-country nationals residing on European soil, that is, 3.8% of the EU-27 population. Immigration remains the main factor of growth of the European population in most of the Member States. The migration flows stand at between 1.5 and 2 million persons each year.

To these must be added the illegals, estimated at between 4.5 and 8 million on Community soil. Undeclared work is considered prevalent in the building, agriculture, cleaning, and hotel sectors (COM 2007/0094).

In the midst of the economic crisis that has hit the economies of the whole world, Europe strives to find a proper protection for those millions of persons who risk being cut out of the labour market. The risk of exclusion is greater for low- and unskilled workers, young people, and immigrants.

Several studies promoted by the European Union and the OECD show a greater incidence of the unemployment rate among immigrants or their further segregation into unskilled job categories. Immigrants often do not have access to the protective networks available to EU workers, and for this reason they tend to protect themselves by accepting jobs below their professional capacities.

These processes entail high risks of social exclusion, which may easily push immigrants toward the threshold of poverty or, worse still, underground.

On their part, in a less alarmist view employers do not acknowledge a necessary connection between immigrant work and low labour cost. The ILO Regional Tripartite Meeting on Challenges to Labour Migration Policy (Bangkok, 30 June – 2 July 2003) concluded that, if appropriately managed, the transnational movement of labour can fuel the regional economic dynamism. In particular, it was stated that emigration enables the labour market to react to economic fluctuations and alleviate the excess supply⁸⁴. In the receiving countries, the arrival of immigrants makes it possible to keep wages low, strengthening the economic growth without fuelling inflation. What is not analyzed is the effect of these theories on the resistance of the job and social protection systems in the host countries. And this, instead, remains a fundamental point of a policy aimed at fighting poverty which, in order to be effective, should pay as much attention to the “starting” conditions as to the “arrival” conditions of the person who migrates for work reasons. As explained in the various sections of this report, the concept of poverty is peculiar to each country; a condition of under-protection in the destination country may project the migrant worker into a situation of poverty that does not exist in his country of origin.

Under-protection does not arise only from unskilled or poorly paid employment conditions, but also from the “ghettoization” deriving from the limitation of the social spaces offered to those who are guests in a country or region. In fact, a partial or totally absent access to the labour market, to social protection and social security, and to political and social rights in general creates the conditions for marginalization and/or absence of life prospects which may lead to poverty.

Active policies and rights thus go hand-in-hand. The European Commission has worked in recent years toward fostering legal migration channels and fighting illegal immigration⁸⁵.

But the ETUC does not just mention the distortions that the integration of the markets may have on mobile labour. In the above-mentioned speech on poverty General Secretary John Monks also brings into play the tax question, which appears connected with the distribution of income and

⁸⁴ http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/2004/104B09_537_engl.pdf

⁸⁵ There are numerous programmes and policies promoted by the European Commission, starting from the action programme of 1995 which was followed by two directives (approved) focusing on sanctioning the employers of illegally staying third-country nationals and on standardizing the rules for returning illegally staying third-country nationals.

Also, in 2009 the directive determining the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment was adopted, while a framework directive on a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State, and a directive on seasonal migrants are currently being proposed.

access to social services. The denunciation concerns the accumulation of huge capitals in corporations, particularly financial corporations. The mobility of capital makes the tax systems of the countries compete among themselves to attract and keep it within their boundaries.

In addition to fuelling the sense of injustice among citizens (and in particular among workers), tax dumping puts governments in a corner (by a few finance entities) and reduces the social spending capacity of the countries.

It is in this context that the European Union risks losing its battle against poverty. The analyses conducted on the eve of the economic crisis made the first critical observations on the fight against poverty being waged by the European Union. In the decade preceding the financial storm that hit the world economy, the poverty rate in the European Union had not decreased⁸⁶.

The social security networks of the member countries had major defects. For example, already in the pre-crisis period, the unemployed between 25 and 49 years of age did not receive subsidies and financial aid to cope with the lack of work income. The situation, as is generally the case in the Community area, differed significantly among the different member States. In countries such as Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Finland, the unemployed in this age bracket with no access to social protection measures was 10%, whereas in other countries such as, for example, the United Kingdom, the non-coverage rate was as high as 70%. The other countries stood between 30% and 60%.

Other examples can be cited. The aggregate European figure on the access to social protection measures shows a clear picture of a widespread social under-protection that is reason for concern not only because of the absolute number of persons and European citizens at a risk of social exclusion, but also because of the national differences that may thwart the Community goal of a harmonious development of interdependent economies. The inequalities remain an unsolved problem that Europe will have to tackle with an eye to eliminating them. In the United States, the 2009 Recovery and Reinvestment Act earmarked 217 billion dollars out of 787 billion for social

⁸⁶ The Eurostat data for the year 2008 published in January 2010 show that 17% of the EU-27 population is at risk of poverty. The figure has been stable for years. The situation in the various Member States may be very different. In Latvia, Romania, Greece, Spain, and Lithuania, 20% or more of the population lives below the poverty income level. The situation of young people (up to 17 years of age) and the elderly (over 65) is dramatic, with the poverty rates in Romania at 33% and 26%, respectively, in Bulgaria at 26% and 34%, and in Italy at 25% and 21%, with trends that are either stable or on the rise. Another 17% of the European population has an income higher than the poverty level only thanks to social transfers.

security measures (unemployment benefits, domestic income, and social protection). Europe cannot boast similar measures in either quantity or territorial homogeneity and consistency.

The Member States can count on various resources in their spending capacity, resources that must also be used to cope with various urgent situations. In the past two-year period, the resources used to stabilize the financial markets have started competing with social spending, with very different outcomes in the various Member States. There is also the need to reconvert the structure of European production, which suffers from a structural deficiency in terms of competition. How homogeneous will the post-crisis united Europe be?

What is more, the need to cope with the present situation cannot (or at least should not) leave government leaders indifferent to the generational problem. Today's spending capacity of the public budgets cannot be unloaded onto the future generations. If the measures adopted lose their long-term breadth, the future generations will be bound to be poorer and have fewer opportunities during their lifetimes. It is not possible, for example, to overlook the fact that pension expenditure is cannibalizing the tax revenue feeding the countries' budgets. The incidence of the pension expenditure on GDP is 14% in Italy, 12% in Austria and France, and more than 10% in Portugal, Poland, Germany, and Greece. Only five countries of the Union rank below the OECD average of 7% (United Kingdom, Ireland, Slovakia, Holland, and Denmark). The main competitors of Europe rank well below the OECD average. This is an example of a disparity in the spending strategies of the countries competing for the world market. In some countries, public spending, financed by tax revenue, rewards the current generations to the detriment of the future ones. It is calculated that without corrections to the structure of public spending in the least virtuous countries, over the next thirty years the demographic evolution will cost ten times more than the current economic crisis. This, too, is a serious threat to the sustainability of the European social model.

The global financial crises that struck during the twentieth century teach us that in the emergency situation stopgap measures are adopted that have the effect of increasing inequalities and concentrating wealth in the richest classes of the population. This lesson serves as a warning in a Europe which, during the periods of economic growth, was unable to produce adequate policies for fighting poverty. And today it finds itself trapped in the grip of a necessity to increase social spending and a poor capacity for taxation of large capitals.

Furthermore, we saw in the first part of this report that the difficulty in moving up the social class ladder generates processes of concentration of wealth in the hands of the richest, pushing the less well-off classes toward the threshold of poverty.

The pressure on public spending has the effect of driving the less well-off classes away from those services and resources that can determine their success in the work or entrepreneurial field. If, because of the deterioration of the public and free education offer, the access to the education, training, and vocational specialization services is limited to the “few” who can afford them, the government and managerial positions will remain within the dominant availability of the wealthier classes, with an evident impoverishment of the managerial class and the quality of democracy itself, in addition to condemning those who are poor to remain poor.

What is more, this condition of social constraint, in particular in the differences that characterize strongly independent economies, may generate migration phenomena which, due to a fundamental flaw, will not be able to express positive economic and social values (enhancement of professionalism, knowledge sharing, integration among the European peoples, etc.).

The movement of the labour force, whether caused by immigration or free movement, may be a reaction to a lack of confidence in the future rather than the reasoned carrying out of a life or professional plan.

Labour mobility plays a role as a social shock-absorber, it is true, but a labour mobility that is an escape from neediness and that is not inspired by virtuous management will bring lesser economic benefits: where the virtuous management mainly entails the enhancement of professional skills, effective matching of labour supply and demand, and a series of measures that determine a correct integration policy.

It is this challenge that awaits Europe: a composite challenge that the Union must deal with in all its facets. Brilliant government leaders will be those who know how to reduce the complexity of the migration phenomena and see that mobility triggers virtuous processes for the growth of those whose journey, whether long or short, whether with their family or their employer, may be a serious hope for growth, and not an impracticable journey on the edge of poverty.

ANNEX I

DEFINITION OF POVERTY⁸⁷

The economic approach is the predominant one in the various definitions of poverty.

The European Union defines the condition of poverty as a lack of a “*standard of living considered acceptable in the society in which they live*”, with specific reference to the minimum income threshold. If this is lower than 60% of the national average, it is considered a condition of poverty. On the basis of this index, the threshold varies greatly depending on the average per capita income, and has a direct effect on the proportion of persons prone to poverty.

However, as ISTAT points out, if the income can “measure the spending capacity of a family independently of the consumption choices made and the individual consumption inclination”, at the same time it “represents only an approximation of the family’s means, since these may depend also on the financial resources accumulated in the past and on the possibility to borrow on the resources that will be received in the future.”⁸⁸ Moreover, the standard of living is strongly influenced by the specific family phase in course during a certain period and by the age of its members.

In elaborating the absolute poverty index⁸⁹, ISTAT chose to refer to a minimum basket of goods and services. This value is based on the identification of the so-called “essential goods”, which vary from country to country. While for a developing country it is necessary to speak of deficiencies in the means of sustenance and basic necessities, the matter changes in other socioeconomic contexts where the emphasis is placed on goods and services.

In the definition of the essential needs at the individual and family level, ISTAT identifies three macro components: food, housing, and residual spending. This way, an adequate diet, a home in

⁸⁷ Among the Western countries, Italy was one of the first to present official estimates on the national poverty. The first Commission for studying poverty was set up in 1985 at the Department of Social Affairs of the Prime Minister’s Office. Since 1999, ISTAT, the Italian National Statistics Institute, has presented a report on the poverty level in Italy each year.

⁸⁸ ISTAT, *La misura della povertà assoluta (The Measurement of Absolute Poverty)*, 2009

⁸⁹ “The estimate of the incidence of absolute poverty is calculated on the basis of a poverty threshold that corresponds to the minimum monthly expenditure necessary for acquiring the basket of goods and services which, in the Italian context and for a certain family, are considered essential for having a minimally acceptable standard of living”, ISTAT, *La misura della povertà assoluta (The Measurement of Absolute Poverty)*, 2009

keeping with the family's needs, and access to education, healthcare, geographic mobility and information are considered basic aspects in the definition of the poverty threshold.

In elaborating the index, ISTAT then defines the economic value of these essential needs, using information on the consumer prices and the spending for consumables. Taking into account the territorial differences and the fluctuation of the supply, the "accessible minimum price" that a single family can afford in purchasing each good is calculated. On the other hand, the residual spending is an element that is difficult to assess, because it is strongly influenced by the choices and attitudes of the single families. It is also a parameter that is less sensitive to the effects of the economy of scale, unlike the expenses for the home and the purchase of durable goods.

As shown by ISTAT:

*"The absolute poverty threshold corresponds to the monetary value of the total basket obtained by direct sum of the monetary values of the various components. Therefore, by construction, the absolute poverty threshold varies by family type (size and family member ages), geographic distribution, and size of the municipality of residence."*⁹⁰

The absolute poverty index thus varies with time. Even though the identification of the three macro areas and needs remains constant, it is their very nature, quality, and quantity that change over the years.

On the other hand, with regard to relative poverty, the percentage of poor families and persons is estimated out of the total number of resident families and persons. Calculating a conventional "poverty line", the value of consumer spending, below which a family is defined as poor in relative terms, is identified.

The predominantly economic approach in defining poverty has often been the subject of debate. Its lack of exhaustiveness has been criticized and the presence of other multidimensional factors has been quoted as a further element to be considered.

In this vein, in 1990 the United Nations produced the so-called Human Development Index, (HDI), to fill the gaps implicit in the academic definitions. Through the joint study promoted by Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya K. Sen, political philosopher Martha Nussbaum, and

⁹⁰ ISTAT, *La misura della povertà assoluta (The Measurement of Absolute Poverty)*, 2009

development economist Sudhir Anand, a new poverty index was created for the purpose of assessing, in addition to the per capita income, health, education, environment, and mortality rate. In analyzing the phenomenon, Amartya Sen chose to relegate the income component to secondary status, defining poverty as the deprivation of “fundamental capabilities”. While not denying the incidence of income in determining the poverty threshold, the repercussions on the freedom of personal fulfilment are, for Sen, the central point from which to start the evaluations on the topic. This way, in addition to the food, housing, healthcare, and scholastic index, it is fundamental to consider the level of participation in political life. The exercise of one’s fundamental rights thus determines the qualitative variable of life, which goes well beyond mere subsistence. Social inclusion determines the possibility to relate to one’s context, reducing the possibilities for marginalization and disaffection.

Caritas Italiana offers other points for consideration, corroborating the multidimensional ways of describing the phenomenon.

Caritas defines poverty as:

“Multidimensional and multifactorial phenomenon [...] based not only on income [...] but on primary needs, fundamental human rights, and intangible aspects such as vulnerability, risk, inequality, marginalization, discrimination, social exclusion, powerlessness, and the restriction of opportunities and choices.”⁹¹

The presence of a dimension of “existential precariousness” has as much impact as the lack of economic stability, and often the synergy of elements determining this condition makes the phenomenon difficult to solve. With regard to the immigrant population, it is an analysis which, in spite of the importance of the statistical data, must also take into account the single individual habits, adapting the poverty criterion to the personal experiences and the starting context.

In fact, Caritas states:

“In spite of the fact that at the origin of any migratory path there is a common aspiration to affluence, each perceives his personal situation in a subjective manner. For those who come from a developing country, for example, the idea of a house with drinking water and heating may represent

⁹¹ Caritas Europa, *Report on Poverty in Europe*, Brussels, 2001

such a level of improvement in living standards that the possibility that the rooms in the home are very small might be considered unimportant. The perception of poverty is thus relative and standards of living considered below average in the receiving country might be considered more than satisfactory by someone who is used to great hardships and sacrifices every day.”⁹²

These considerations must not constitute an alibi for not looking at the improvement of the living conditions of immigrant workers, but represent an interesting viewpoint for understanding the complexity of the mobility-poverty phenomenon. In fact, it emerges how a univocal definition of poverty does not fully grasp the individual perception of the immigrant. In addition to the prospects for social integration in the destination country, it is important to consider the starting conditions also.

For example, with regard to the housing condition, a 50m² flat in an area on a city’s outskirts may be an important goal for a foreign worker coming from a very poor socioeconomic situation.⁹³

A synergy between economic indicators and “qualitative” parameters may thus frame the phenomenon more exhaustively and be an important point in the acquisition of fundamental rights of each individual, both Italian and immigrant. Speaking of decent work, a fundamental right for full socioeconomic integration, the case of the so-called “working poor” is an example of conditions of economic difficulty even when there is employment stability.⁹⁴ Because of jobs that do not guarantee a decent income, we are seeing new forms of poverty that are difficult to manage. Social inclusion and the quality of living are two central elements that draw a clear line of demarcation between a parameter of poverty based solely on the income index, and a more all-encompassing definition achieved using multidimensional indices.

⁹² Caritas Italiana, *La migrazione: un viaggio verso la povertà? Studio Caritas Europa sulla povertà e l’esclusione sociale degli immigrati (Migration: A Journey to Poverty? Caritas Europa Study on the Poverty and Social Exclusion of Immigrants)*, Rome, June 2006

⁹³ Interview with Oliviero Forti, Immigration Manager of Caritas Italiana, 21 July 2010

⁹⁴ Interview with Roberto Schiattarella, Professor of Economic Policy at the University of Camerino, 9 July 2010