

Permanent emigration from Moldova: Estimate and Implications for Diaspora Policy

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Outline

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1. Permanent vs. “temporary” migration

A key shift is occurring in the pattern of migration from Moldova: from „*temporary*“ (migrant is a member of a household in Moldova) to „*permanent*“ (migrant is member of a household abroad).

- Likely implication: Migrants’ attachment to Moldova declines, leading to lower financial remittances.
- Diaspora policy becomes important as a means to strengthen migrants’ affinity to Moldova and encourage contributions to economic and social development („social remittances“).
- Permanent emigration is difficult to gauge from available data; we use diverse sources to obtain an estimate.

Permanent/ “temporary” vs. long/ short-term migration

Permanent vs. “temporary” is not the same as long-term vs. short-term. Most “temporary” migrants (= members of a household in Moldova) stay abroad for more than one year (that is, long-term; see Annex ii).

- The permanent/ temporary distinction is very important, irrespective of the length of stay abroad: As long as a migrant’s household is in Moldova, she is likely to return here at some point.
- Return is much less certain when the whole household has moved abroad, children go to school there and enjoy education and employment opportunities, etc.

Data sources on permanent vs. „temporary“ migration

We compare information from two sources:

(i) Moldovan Labour Force Survey

- Good data on “temporary” migration are available the Moldovan Labour Force Survey (LFS).
- Especially the special migration modules in 2008 and 2012. Information is available on any absent household members, whether they are abroad, the purpose and length of stay, etc.

(ii) Destination country sources

- The best data that include permanent migrants are from destination countries.
- However, they typically relate to all migrants, including those who are still members of a household in Moldova (i.e. they overlap with MDA LFS data).

2. An estimate of permanent migration

We need to better understand permanent migration particularly because Diaspora policy seeks to address all Moldovans abroad in and involve them in Moldova's development.

- We start with “temporary” labor migrants according to the Moldovan LFS Migration Survey in 2012, defined as household members working or looking for work abroad at the time of the survey, plus household members abroad at any time during the previous 24 months.
- We compare these figures with destination country data, where migrants may be defined based either on citizenship or country of birth. These data typically include all individuals, working or not.

Moldova: migrants by destination country and pattern of migration, app. 2014 (thousands)

Across: migrant definition	Migrant members of households in MDA (2012)	Destination country residents - MDA citizenship (2014)	Destination country residents born in MDA
Across: data sources	Labour Force Survey	National sources Eurostat	World Bank 2013 Eurostat 2014
Russia	295.4	358.1	285.0
Ukraine	7.4
Uzbekistan	18.9
Other CIS and Georgia	29.4
EU(27)	95.0	229.7	331.7
Italy	60.5	149.4	164.0
Romania	2.6	11.0	79.7
Portugal	3.9	10.0	20.4
Greece	3.3	11.5	6.3
Spain	2.1	16.8	16.6
Germany	2.8	10.7	25.8
Czech Republic	2.5	5.7	6.2
Ireland	2.6	3.1	4.6
France	10.0	3.1	3.9
All other EU countries	4.7	8.5	4.1
Canada	...	12.3	6.3
Israel	10.6	...	11.1
Turkey	8.9	...	5.0
United States	5.9	36.1	42.5
All other countries	3.7	...	35.0
Total	426.9	...	733.2

Findings: permanent vs. “temporary” from Moldova (1/2)

Geographic perspective

- **Russia:** There may be up to 360,000 Moldovan migrants in Russia - subject to considerable uncertainty. Most are still members of a household in Moldova, although there is a discernable group (maybe up to one third) that is more firmly established in Russia (see also Mukomel & Cheianu-Andrei, 2013).
- **EU:** In the EU, there are more than 330,000 Moldovan-born residents, of whom less than a third are still members of a Moldovan household.
- **CIS:** In many CIS countries other than Russia, there are individuals of Moldovan/ Romanian ancestry, partly as a legacy of the Soviet Union. It is unclear to what extent they feel connected to modern-day Moldova. In
- **The rest of the world:** Up to 100,000 additional Moldovan migrants. Emigration to Canada and the US is mostly permanent, while many Moldovans work in Israel in construction and personal care as circular migrants.

Findings: permanent vs. “temporary” from Moldova (2/2)

Overall estimate

- In sum our estimate suggests around 730,000 Moldovan migrants working abroad
- **Temporary migration:** Of those, 430,000 individuals are members of Moldovan households but earn their living at least in part outside Moldova.
- **Permanent migration:** In addition, it seems plausible that around 300,000 permanent emigrants from Moldova reside abroad
- Thus an estimated 40% of total migration seems to be permanent with entire households emigrated from Moldova

Cross-checking our estimate of permanent migration: “empty” households in the LFS (1/2)

Can we find any trace of our estimated 300,000 permanent emigrants (since Moldova’s independence) in other data?

- The LFS sampling frame is reportedly based on the 2004 population census, updated with electricity billing records. When a new wave of households is surveyed, typically 11% are found empty.
- Out of these empty households, in 5% of all households there is positive evidence from neighbors, etc. that all household members have moved abroad for good. In addition, it is likely that some of the remaining “empty” households also reflect permanent emigration of all members.

Cross-checking estimates of permanent migration: “empty” households in the LFS (2/2)

- Assume that (i) 7% of households have permanently left Moldova and (ii) these households had as many members on average as LFS households with members both in Moldova and abroad.
- Then app. 304,000 individuals must have left Moldova permanently since 2004.

Conclusion: A cross check with Labour Force Survey (LFS) data confirms our earlier estimate that around 300,000 Moldovans have left the country permanently.

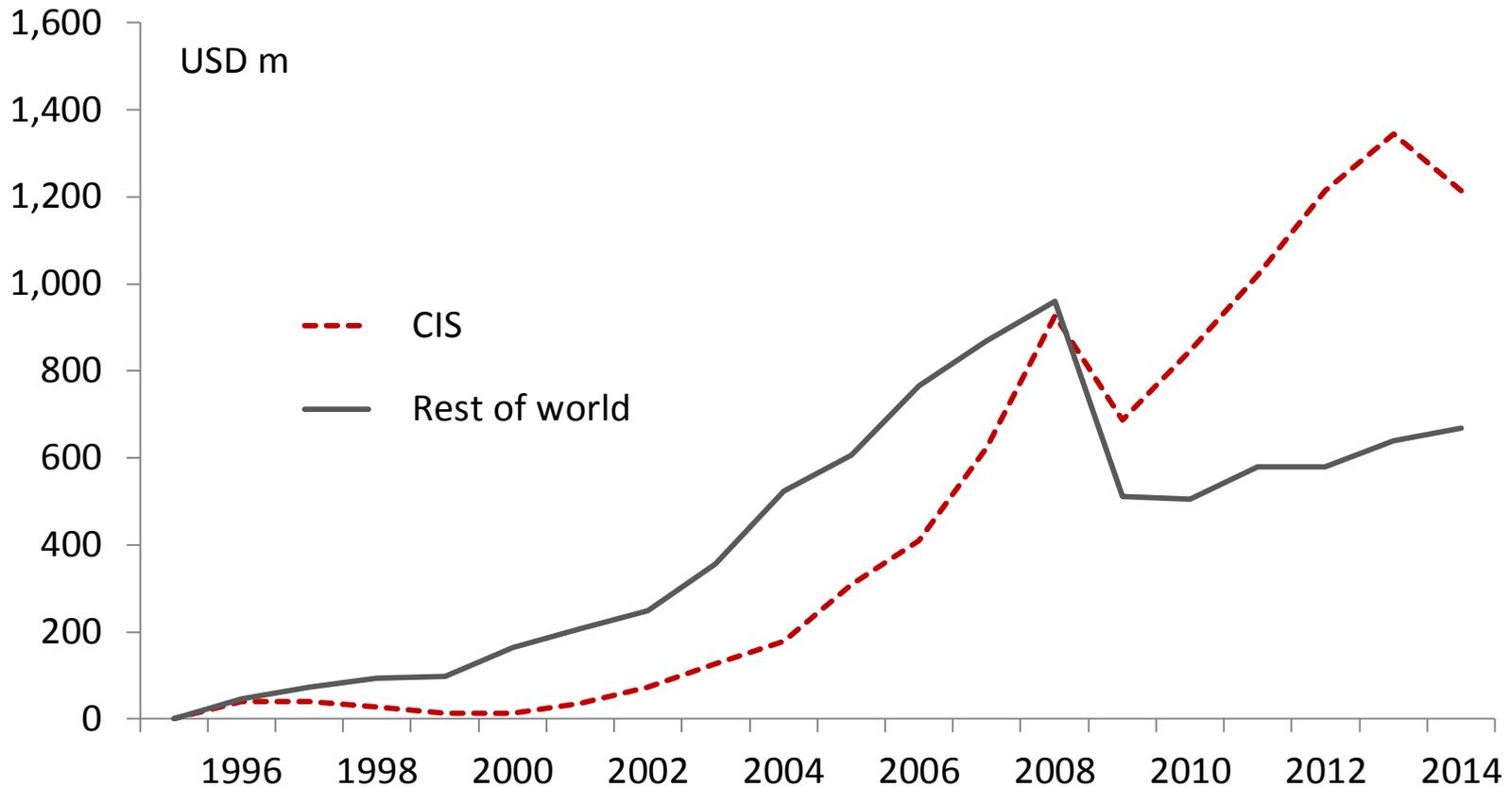
3. Future remittances and Diaspora policy

- We have found (Section 2) that many Moldovan migrants live abroad permanently, especially in Western Europe.
- Permanent migrants have no immediate family members in Moldova (by definition) and their relationships with other relatives and friends also become less intense over time.
- Although time-series data are scarce, it is highly likely that the share of permanent migrants will continue to grow as more Moldovans are joined abroad by their family members.

Thesis: As a result of increasing permanent migration, remittances to Moldova **will probably grow more slowly or even decline**, especially from Western Europe.

Remittances trends

Remittances (labour compensation plus personal transfers, credit)



Source: NBM

Financial remittances from Moldovan migrants in the CIS vs. in the rest of the World

- Caveat: The quality of balance of payments data by region (CIS vs. rest of the world – ROW) may be problematic.
- Also, we follow the standard definition of migrant remittances in the balance of payments although these flows may include some items other than migrant remittances.
- Remittances to Moldova from the rest of the world fell very sharply in 2009 and have since remained below their 2008 level – although there are more migrants outside the CIS.
- By contrast, remittances from CIS countries took a hit in 2009, but have grown since then far beyond their 2008 level.

Conclusion: Remittances trends are consistent with our hypothesis that more permanent migration, especially to Western Europe, will reduce remittances.

Implications for Diaspora policy

- In Moldova, the Bureau for Relations with the Diaspora has recently been set up to foster Diaspora involvement in Moldova's development.*
- So far the Bureau has focused on making contact and establishing trust with migrants by setting up cultural centers abroad and organizing cultural events, networking activities, and youth camps in Moldova for Diaspora children.
- This emphasis is well-advised because:
 - (i) Permanent emigrants may lose their sense of attachment to Moldova over time, while
 - (ii) Diaspora members in many high-emigration countries demonstrably facilitate international economic linkages including trade, investment, and technology transfer.

*see www.brd.gov.md

The future direction of Diaspora policy

There is a wide range of possible Diaspora activities that potentially contribute to Moldova's development and may merit public support in the future (Aikins and White, 2011). Their development impact should be evaluated rigorously because either government or donor funding would be involved.

Diaspora activities that potentially merit public support include:

- donations to community projects/ business investment in MDA;
- facilitating international trade and investment;
- technology transfer through scientific/ research cooperation;
- return to MDA combined with business investment and knowledge transfer.

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Data sources: migration

- Eurostat
 - Population on 1 January by five year age group, sex and country of birth [migr_pop3ctb]
 - Population on 1 January by five year age group, sex and citizenship [migr_pop1ctz]
- Federal Migration Service (Russia)
 - <http://www.fms.gov.ru/about/statistics/data/details/54891/>
- National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova (2013).
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- United States Census Bureau
 - Place of Birth for the Foreign-Born Population in the United States
 - http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_5YR_B05006&prodType=table
- World Bank
 - Bilateral Estimates of Migrant Stocks in 2013

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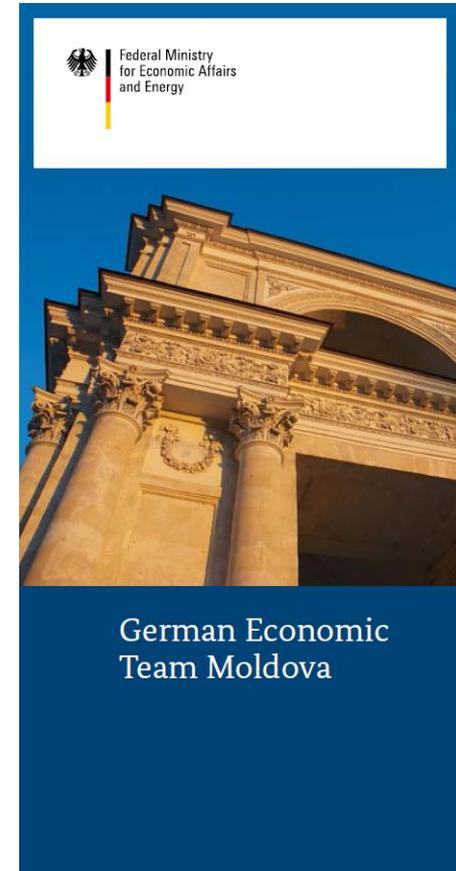
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Appendix

Content

- i. Additional ways to cross-check estimates of permanent migration
- ii. Length of stay of „temporary“ migrants (i.e. those with household members in Moldova)
- iii. Notes on destination country data

i. Additional ways to cross-check estimates of permanent migrants

There are two official statistical sources that provide additional ways to cross-check estimates of migration:

- Administrative data on border crossing = anyone who left (except through Transnistria) and did not return
 - App. 300,000 > 1 year in 2012 (Vremis et al., 2012, p.53-4)
 - Out of a total of 700,000 abroad at that point in time
- Officially registered emigrants (State Population Register)
 - App. 100,000 individuals in 2014
 - Most in Russia, UKR, US, Germany, Israel, Belarus, Canada

Both approaches have clear weaknesses and are therefore not developed further in this presentation.

New survey: de Zwager and Sintov (2015)

- De Zwager and Sintov (2015) report on a large new household survey that pays special attention to finding information from the local community about “empty” households. They distinguish between long-term and short-term migrants that can be identified as currently belonging to a household in Moldova or having once belonged to a now empty household.
- They estimate that there are just above half a million long-term and seasonal migrants in total. This figure naturally excludes permanent migrants that have no link to a household in Moldova – not even an “empty” one.
- Since our estimate is based on destination country data, it is (at least) compatible with de Zwager and Sintov (2015).

ii. Length of stay of „temporary“ migrants (i.e. those with household members in Moldova)

The 2012 Labor Migration Survey asked detailed questions about why and how long absent household members stayed abroad:

		Intended length of stay	
		up to 12 months	more than 12 months
<div style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 20px; height: 10px; display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"></div> → Long-term migrants (B+D)			
Reasons for stay	<u>Short-term</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism - Study - Treatment - Business trip 	A 11.6%	B 4.2%
	<u>Not short-term</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work - Family reunification - Settle abroad - Other 	C 24.0%	D 60.2%

iii. Notes on destination country data: Russia

- Estimates for Russia are especially uncertain: Federal Migration Service (FMS) figures include all Moldovans in Russia, irrespective of purpose or length of stay. Apparently, many individuals in this category stay much shorter than one year and for purposes other than work.
- Accordingly, our estimate (358,100) is the sum of
 - work permits issued (98,000);
 - one half of the number of “patents” for self-employed work (71,000), assuming that patents are valid for 6 months on average;
 - one half of the difference between the total number of Moldovans in Russia (547,000) and those working legally (98,000 plus 71,000), assuming that some who tell authorities they are in Russia on a private visit actually work there irregularly.

iii. Notes on destination country data: other countries

- Some sources give a much higher figure of “Moldovans” in Ukraine (e.g. the 2001 Ukrainian census and the World Bank database for 2013). These high estimates actually relate to the number of Moldovan/ Romanian speakers in Ukraine. These people live in the portion of Bessarabia that became part of Ukraine after WW2. There is no reason to expect that they would think of themselves as Moldovan migrants.
- Many Moldovans hold Romanian passport. Especially for EU countries, migrant figures are higher when migrants are defined by place of birth.
- Canada: cumulative labor permits issued to Moldovan citizens, 2001-2012