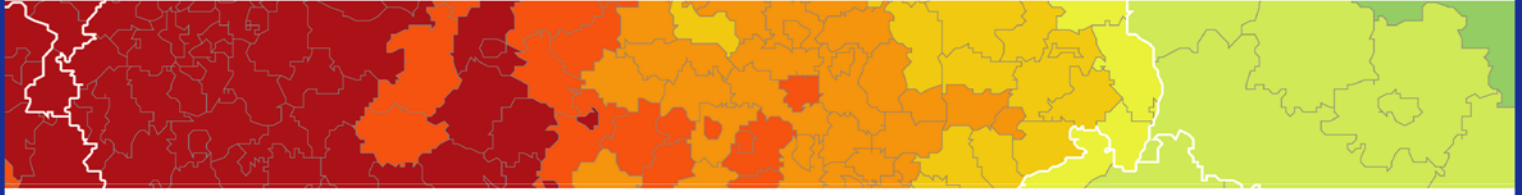


Inspire policy making by territorial evidence



Impacts of refugee flows to territorial development in Europe

Applied Research

Case study – Bucharest

Version 18/07/2019

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Authors

Cristina Vasilescu, IRS (Italy)

Advisory Group

Project Support team: Radu Necsuliu (Romania), Lodovico Gherardi (Italy) and Andor Urmos (European Commission)

ESPON EGTC

Martin Gauk (Policy Expert), Laurent Frideres (HoU E&O), Ilona Raugze (Director), Johannes Kiersch (Financial Expert)

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Abbreviations

AIDROM	Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania
AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
AJNOFM	County office of the National Employment Agency
ANFOM	National Employment Agency
ARPCPS	Romanian Association for Quality Promotion and Successful Practices
CNRED	National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas
EU	European Union
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IGI	General Inspectorate for Migration
INTERACT	Integrated services for migrants, social and multicultural dialogue
INSSE	Romanian National Institute of Statistics
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NGOs	Not-for-profit organisations
OP	Operational programme
RON	Romanian New 'Leu'
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VET	Vocational education and training

Executive summary

Romania is traditionally a country of emigration, being the sixth country in the EU for absolute emigration and the first for relative emigration. The Bucharest-Ilfov region has been a net contributor to the emigration in Romania, being the region with the second highest rate of permanent immigration between 2000 and 2017.

In the context of an increased economic development, registered after the accession to the EU, Romania has started to become a destination country for immigrants, even though immigration rates remain rather low at the moment. According to UN DESA data (2017), 370,800 immigrants were registered in Romania in 2017, representing 2 % of the overall population. Over the years, Bucharest has dominated both the internal and external fluxes of immigration due to its higher levels of economic development compared to other Romanian cities. Thus, most of the immigrants arriving in Romania live in Bucharest.

In 2017, beneficiaries of international protection (including refugees) and third-country immigrants amounted to 66,850 people (3,924 beneficiaries of international protection and 62,926 third-country immigrants), representing 0.34 % of the overall population of Romania (Cosciug et. al., 2018). Even though the percentage of this type of immigrants is still very low in Romania compared to other EU countries, it has been steadily increasing (+2.9 % compared to 2016). This is especially due to the increase in the number of beneficiaries of international protection (+35.2 % compared to 2016). The increase in the number of beneficiaries of international protection is a consequence of the increase in the number of asylum seekers over the years (+344 % between 2008 and 2017) coupled with a high recognition of the status of beneficiaries of international protection (63 % of the applications processed in 2017).

According to IGI data, in 2017, 56.11 % of the refugees and third-country immigrants lived in the following counties: Bucharest, Ilfov, Prahova, Buzău, Dâmbovița, Argeș, Vâlcea, Gorj, Brașov, Covasna, Giurgiu, Călărași, Ialomița, Teleorman, Olt and Dolj. According to IOM (2017), around half of the beneficiaries of international protection live in Bucharest. Data on the beneficiaries of the project Interact&Plus confirms the fact that most of beneficiaries of international protection (including refugees) live in Bucharest.

Case interviews point out that although most of the beneficiaries of international protection live in Bucharest, the absorption capacity of the city is far from being reached. Even though beneficiaries of international protection are more concentrated in some specific areas of Bucharest, case interviews show that one cannot talk about ghettos or neighbourhoods composed mostly of immigrants, due to their low number.

Despite the increase in numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, literature points out that Romania is mainly a transit country. This seems to be confirmed by data on the length of stay of refugees and third-country immigrants surveyed within the study Index of Immigrants' Integration in Romania: only 25.72 % of surveyed beneficiaries of international protection and

third-country immigrants have been living in Romania for more than four years, while 48.29 % have been living in Romania for less than one year.

A change in the countries of origin has been registered over time: Iraq in the 2000s; Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia during the Arab Spring; Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran in 2017. The change in the country of origin has also determined a change in the profile of asylum seekers and refugees. While single men were the dominant group during the Arab Spring immigration, families have become the major group with the increase in the immigration from Syria and Iraq. The education level has also increased with the growth in the immigration from Syria and Iraq. This is also confirmed by data on the profile of beneficiaries of the Interact&Plus project: more than 80 % of beneficiaries come from Syria and Iraq; 28 % of the beneficiaries have tertiary and post-tertiary education, while 26 % have upper secondary and post-secondary education and 33 % have primary and secondary education. Furthermore, women tend to have lower levels of education than men do.

Despite the increase in the number of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection (including refugees) in Bucharest, the municipality has no specific policy for their integration and generally for the integration of immigrants. The municipality of Bucharest has ranked last in the Intercultural City Index drafted by the Council of Europe and European Commission. It has no specific intercultural strategy, no intercultural policies in the education field, no policy to increase the diversity of residents in the neighbourhoods, no policy to encourage intercultural mixing in public services, no support to immigrants' enterprises, no specific attention to intercultural aspects in the design of public spaces, no specific welcoming policy and no actions to encourage immigrants' participation in civic life. Additionally, the municipality of Bucharest has no specific policy targeted towards asylum seekers and refugees.

Lack of specific attention to the integration process at local level triggers several barriers in the access to public services and social rights provided by the law (i.e. beneficiaries of international protection, including refugees, have the same rights as Romanian citizens, but for the right to vote). These are:

- administrative barriers in access to public services in the education, labour market, social and healthcare fields;
- legal barriers (mainly related to legislation on recognition of diplomas and education, and access to certain professions, such as doctor);
- language and cultural barriers (e.g. lack of knowledge about the functioning of the educational, labour market, social and healthcare systems and about the administrative culture of Romania);
- insufficient knowledge of public employees about the rights of beneficiaries of international protection, including refugees;
- difficult access to bank accounts, limiting their access to social benefits transferred only through banks;
- insufficient income support;

- limited access to social housing and insufficient public support for paying the rent;
- Romanian citizens' reluctance to rent houses to beneficiaries of international protection and, more in general, third-country immigrants;
- lack of cultural mediators in public institutions and, especially in schools;
- discrimination during interaction with public authorities, in particular with public transport companies and schools.

Lack of specific support at local level might be explained partially by the fact that immigration policies have been defined and implemented at national level by the Ministry of International Affairs – Integration General Department (IGI), with a limited active involvement of local actors in their definition. Immigration policies have been set in the framework of international commitments assumed by Romania once with its attachment to the EU and through interaction with international organisations (e.g. IOM and UNHCR) in this field and to some extent through the interaction with civil society organisations.

The integration programme led by IGI is the main integration programme for refugees, while only reception services are available to asylum seekers. The integration programme, targeted to beneficiaries of international protection (including refugees) enrolled in the programme, gives access to language and orientation classes and to direct financial assistance following a social investigation carried out by an integration counsellor.

Integration support provided by the programme is complemented by integration services provided by NGOs within the AMIF 2014-2020 programme, coordinated by IGI. One integration project is funded in the five territorial units (regions) identified by IGI (based on number and the location of asylum seekers centres). In Region 1 (including the municipality of Bucharest), the INTERACT project, led by IOM, was funded between May 2016 and June 2017, followed by the INTERACT Plus project between July 2017 and July 2019. Between 2016 and 2019 the project received EUR 1,973,521.82, including a 2 % co-funding of project partners.

The project led by IOM is a regional one and is delivered as follows:

- In Bucharest – through the Regional Integration Centre (RIC), together with the Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania (AIDRom); Schottener Social Services Foundation; National Association of Exporters and Importers in Romania (ANEIR) – involved only in the first phase of the project (2016-2017);
- In Craiova – through the Regional Integration Centre (RIC);
- In Braşov - Romanian Association for Quality Promotion and Good Practices (Information Centre for Foreigners);
- In Piteşti - Solidaritatea Umană Nova Association (Information Centre for Foreigners)¹.

¹ <http://oim.ro/en/what-we-do/programs/583-interact-integrated-services-for-migrants-social-and-multicultural-dialogue>

The project aims to support beneficiaries of international protection, including refugees, and third-country immigrants in the social, educational and labour market inclusion in Romania.

The project implemented adopts a one-stop-shop and a person-based approach to the integration services delivered.

In the municipality of Bucharest, while IOM focuses on coordinating the project and cultural integration, AIDROM and the Schottener Foundation deliver integration services. AIDROM focuses on adults (people over 26 years old), while Schottener Foundation on youth (people less than 26 years old).

The project activities consist of: information and guidance; financial assistance (e.g. social tickets, reimbursement of expenses); medical assistance; facilitating access to education, social care, healthcare, labour market and other public services; educational support for children of project beneficiaries; legal counselling; Romanian language and orientation classes; cultural and leisure activities; translation of documents; cultural mediation and communication, and dissemination of the project.

Beneficiaries have access to free services upon a social investigation carried out by the project staff. Access to services is unlimited throughout the project lifetime, except for language courses (as they are organised in specific modules based on the level of language). Services have been continued even between the closing of an AMIF call and the opening of another (e.g. the closing of INTERACT and the start of INTERACT Plus).

The project includes a quantitative monitoring system. However, no specific evaluation is in place, which limits the understanding of its results and impacts. In the three years of implementation, the project has exceeded its targets. Between May 2016 and February 2019, the project provided information, counselling and individual support to 4,238 beneficiaries of international protection and third-country nationals, of which 54 % were beneficiaries of international protection (including refugees). Almost all (89 %) of the assisted beneficiaries of international protection lived in Bucharest. The project provided individual support (language classes, individual counselling, social and cultural integration) to 2,681 beneficiaries of international protection, of which 2,247 people lived in Bucharest.

The project has contributed to the social inclusion of beneficiaries, by increasing their access to social rights, providing them with financial assistance, contributing to the increase in their network of social relations, and improving their knowledge of Romanian language and Romanian culture. Through the support to access education and after-school activities, the project has contributed to preventing dropout of beneficiaries' children and their poor school performance. The results of the project in the labour market integration are limited, in particular due to administrative and legal barriers, and beneficiaries' tendency to accept illegal work in order to increase their income (as the financial assistance provided by IGI and the project are conditioned by the income level and net wages are lower than their financial needs).

No data are available on the project impacts, as no *ex post* evaluation is implemented by the project or requested by IGI.

Lack of data is a relevant issue in the assessment of territorial impacts of refugees. As pointed out by the study Index of Immigrants' Integration in Romania (Cosciug et al., 2018), very limited data are available on refugees benefiting from social services, unemployment benefit, education and healthcare services at national level. However, case interviews and the available data at national level reveal that territorial impacts of refugees on the social, educational and healthcare public system are extremely limited due to the low number of refugees. Case interviews point out that this also holds true for Bucharest.

The case study shows that refugees' equal access to rights and public services does not mean equality in using them; several legal, administrative, cultural and linguistic barriers hinder their access. In addition, the lack or weak involvement of local actors contributes to worsening the above-mentioned barriers. This reveals that specific measures (e.g. administrative procedures in the field of education, health and labour market, cultural orientation, intercultural strategies) should be taken to ensure refugees' access to them. Also, these measures should be decided through the involvement of public and private actors at all territorial levels. International organisations can also play a relevant role in shaping social and labour market inclusion of refugees. They can contribute to the increase in capacities and awareness of public bodies and their employees about the needs of refugees, and measures that can be adopted to respond to them.

The case study also points out that the integration of refugees is a long-term process that has to tackle the multifaceted and interlinked issues they face in this process. Therefore, the integration support provided should be flexible, person-based, sustainable over time, and should integrate different types of services (e.g. language training, cultural orientation, employment services, educational and vocational training services, administrative and legal support services, free time services, direct financial assistance, social housing). In providing direct financial assistance, particular attention should be paid to supporting refugees in becoming autonomous to avoid the risk of long-term financial dependency. The case study reveals that the adoption of a one-stop shop approach and the case manager contribute to easing refugees' participation in integration pathways.

The case study reveals that no dispersal policy is in place for refugees, as they have the right to free movement. Furthermore, such a policy is not deemed necessary by case interviewees, considering the low number of refugees in Romania. However, a dispersal policy is in place for asylum seekers. Territorial distribution of asylum seekers is based on the number of places available in the six regional centres for asylum seekers and refugees.

1 Profile of the area

This section provides an overview of the socio-economic context, the inflows and the characteristics of the immigrants, the asylum seekers and the refugees in Bucharest and, more in general, in Romania. It also discusses the challenges, the opportunities and the impacts of asylum seeker and refugee inflows. Additionally, it describes the policy framework dealing with asylum seekers and refugees in Romania and in Bucharest.

1.1 Socio-economic context

Bucharest is the capital city of Romania as well as the cultural, economic and financial centre.

With a population of 1,826,830 inhabitants in 2017, it is the largest city in Romania. However, in the period 2000-2017, the population of Bucharest decreased by 3 %, in line with

Figure 1: Map of Romania and Bucharest



the national trend (-2 % in the same period). This is due in particular to the crude rate of net migration: -8.3 in 2016 compared to 3.4 in 2005. As will be discussed in the next section, the increase in the negative net migration rate has been strongly influenced by internal migration in the context of the economic development of regional areas such as Timisoara, Cluj and Iasi.

While the crude rate of net migration has increased, the crude rate of the natural change of the population has slightly decreased in the same period, from -1.8 in 2005 to -1.2 in 2016.

Despite the decrease in the population Bucharest continues to be an attractive destination, especially due to its economic growth. According to the World Bank (2017), Romania is the fastest growing economy in the EU and Bucharest city and the Bucharest-Ilfov region have been its main economic engines. GDP per inhabitant of Bucharest is more than twice the national one. Furthermore, in the period 2005-2015 (last data available) it increased by 120 %. In 2015, the GDP per inhabitant amounted to EUR 43,800 compared to EUR 16,300 at national level and EUR 29,000 at EU level.

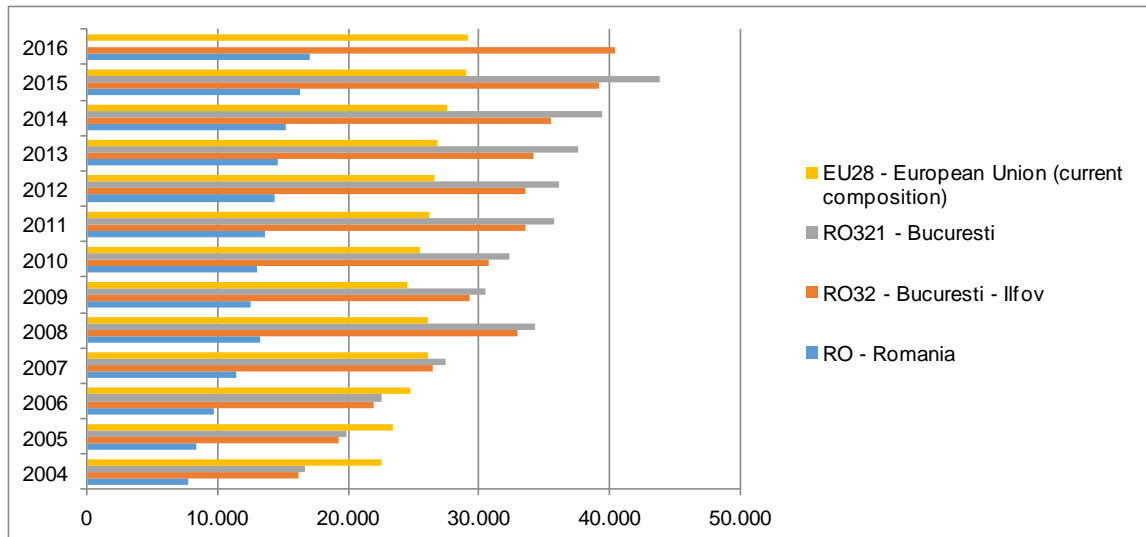


Figure 2: GDP per capita at EU, national, regional and local level between 2004 and 2016
Source: Eurostat, 2019

The economy of Bucharest is mainly focused on industry and services, in particular in the IT field. It hosts several multinational companies, such as Microsoft, IBM, HP, Oracle, WiPRO, attracted by the highly skilled labour force and the lower operating costs than in other EU cities².

Despite an increase in the knowledge economy sectors over time, investments in research and development in the Bucharest-Ilfov region remain low and below the EU average.

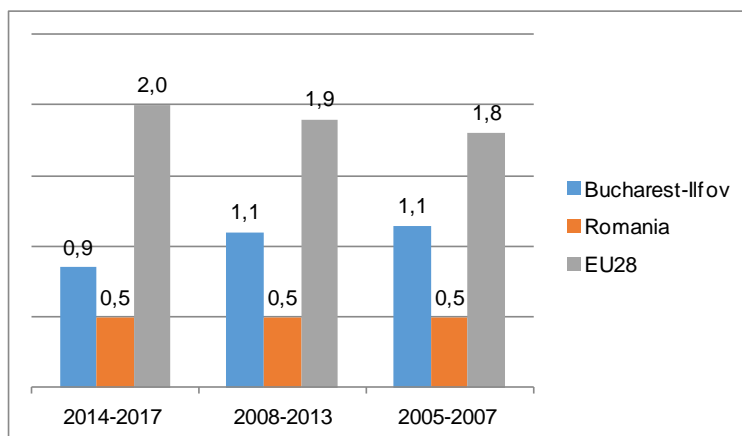


Figure 3: Total intramural R&D expenditure (percentage of GDP) in the Bucharest-Ilfov region, Romania and the EU between 2005 and 2017 (average)
Source: Eurostat, 2019

In terms of employment, Bucharest city and the Bucharest-Ilfov region have higher employment rates than the national and EU levels. At regional level, the employment level in the last three years amounted to 67.1 % compared to 62 % at national level and 66.2 % at EU level. Female employment is also higher in the Bucharest-Ilfov region than at national and EU levels.

² Council of Europe (2015) Bucharest: Results of the Intercultural Cities Index

Table 1: Employment and unemployment level at EU, national and regional levels between 2005 and 2017

	Total employment rate	Female employment rate
2014-2017 average		
Bucharest-Ilfov	67.1	61.1
Romania	62.0	53.9
EU28	66.2	60.9
2008-2013 average		
Bucharest-Ilfov	63.7	57.3
Romania	59.6	52.5
EU28	64.4	58.5
2005-2007 average		
Bucharest-Ilfov	61.5	55.4
Romania	58.4	52.4
EU28	64.2	57.1

Source: Eurostat, 2019

At city level, the employment rate surpasses both the regional and the national one. In 2017, the employment rate of the labour force³ in Bucharest reached 96.3 % compared to 67.3 % at national level and 88.6 % at regional level. It is worth noting that in the period 2000-2017, the employment rate of the labour force in Bucharest increased by 65 % compared to 4 % at national level. Furthermore, in 2017 the employment rate of the female labour force amounted to 95.5 % compared to 64.3 % at national level (+83 % between 2000 and 2017 compared to 1 % at national level)⁴. Despite a slight increase over time, self-employment in the Bucharest-Ilfov region is lower than at national and EU levels.

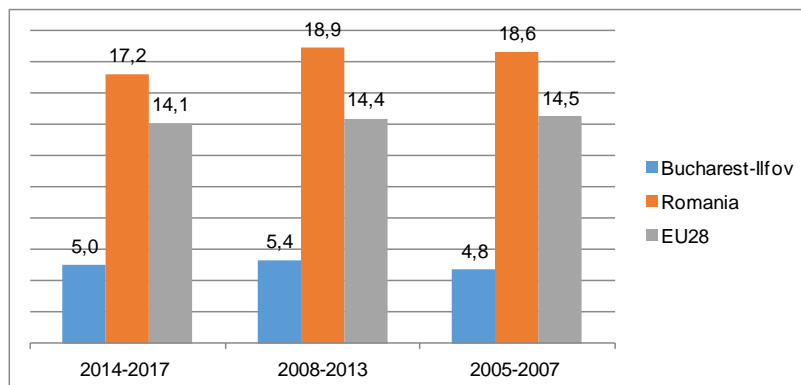


Figure 4: Self-employment in Bucharest-Ilfov region, Romania and EU between 2005 and 2017 (average)

Source: Eurostat, 2019

³ Employment rate of labour resources (excluding military staff) represents the ratio, expressed as percentage, between the civil employment population and the labour resources.

⁴ INSSE Tempo online, <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>, consulted on 31 January 2019.

Unemployment rates are lower at both regional and city level than at national and EU levels. It is worth noting that in Bucharest, female unemployment rate decreased by 47 % between 2005 and 2017, being below the level of the male rate in 2017: 1.5 % for women and 1.6 % for men⁵.

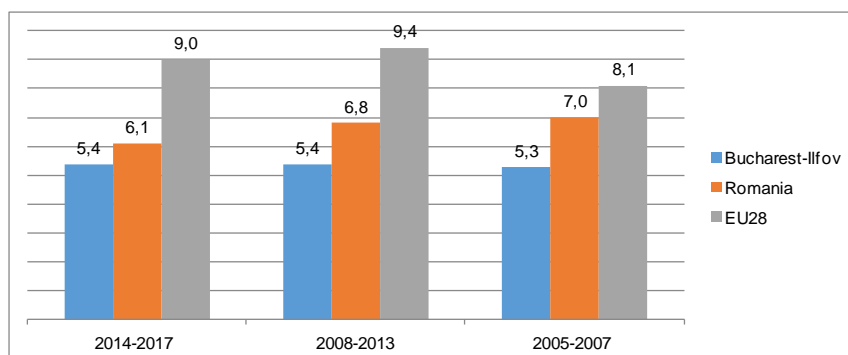


Figure 5: Unemployment level in Bucharest-Ilfov, Romania and EU between 2005 and 2017 (average)
Source: Eurostat, 2019

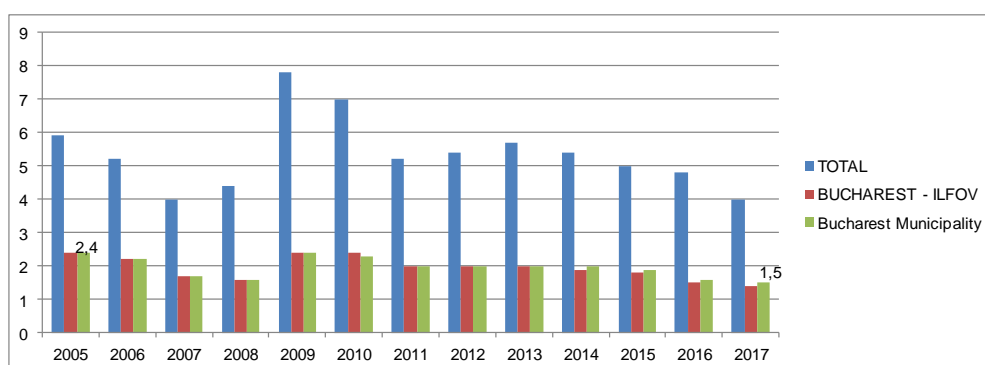


Figure 6: Unemployment level in the municipality of Bucharest between 2005 and 2017
Source: INSSE, 2019

The rate of young people neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET) rate has increased over time in Bucharest-Ilfov region: from 9.7 % on average between 2005 and 2007 to 12.3 % on average between 2014 and 2017. Despite the increase, it remained below the national level (16.9 % on average between 2014 and 2017).

With regard to education, Bucharest is the largest Romanian academic centre, with 34 public and private universities⁶. It has a well-trained human labour force. Between 2005 and 2017, in the Bucharest-Ilfov region the average of people aged 30-34 with tertiary education increased by 15 percentage points compared to a 2.7 percentage point increase at national level. The 2014-2017 average of people aged 30-34 with tertiary education amounted to 48.9 % in the Bucharest-Ilfov region compared to 25.6 % at national level and 38.9 % at EU level.

⁵ INSSE Tempo online, <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table> , consulted on 31 January 2019

⁶ Council of Europe (2015) Bucharest: Results of the Intercultural Cities Index.

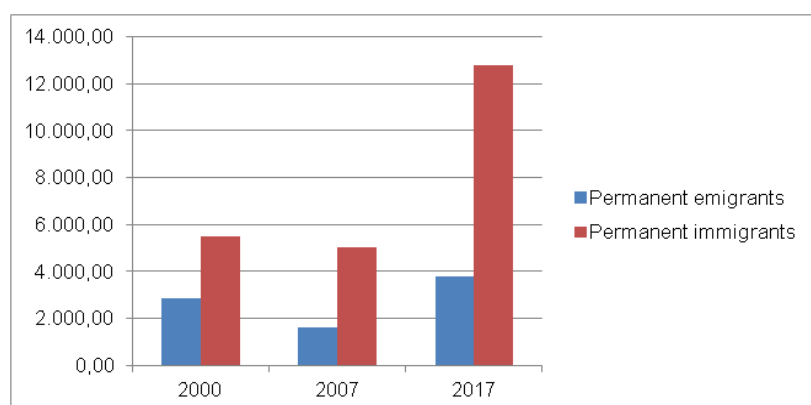
The decrease in population, along with the ageing of the potential work force⁷, the low appreciation of a part of the potential workforce (NEET) and the increase in the crude rate of net migration represent a serious problem for labour supply. The shortage in skills has increased competition between businesses for skilled resources and consequently wages (+79.4 % between 2008 and 2017)⁸. This, coupled with low levels of productivity, poses a serious threat to the competitiveness and economic growth of Bucharest.

1.2 Current stock and flows of asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants in the area of analysis

Romania is mainly a country of emigration. According to Canetta et al. (2014), Romanians are the largest single national group (20 %) from all working ages of EU-28/EFTA movers across the EU 28. Between 2007 and 2017 the emigration rate of active labour market participants has increased by 144 % (Vasilescu, 2018). According to Canetta et al. (2014), Romania is the EU country with the highest rate of emigration of qualified people. As revealed by the World Bank (2017), Romania occupies the sixth place in the EU in terms of absolute emigration and the first for relative emigration (Vasilescu, 2017).

The Bucharest-Ilfov region has been a net contributor to emigration over the years, being the second highest region by permanent emigration rates: 18 % of the permanent emigrants in Romania in 2017 were from the Bucharest-Ilfov region; a 39 % increase in emigration at regional level between 2000 and 2017⁹.

The emigration level registered in the municipality of Bucharest is in line with the regional trend. In 2017, 16 % of the Romanian emigrants were from Bucharest; increase of 32 % in the emigration rate between 2000 and 2017¹⁰.



⁷ According to Eurostat statistics (2019), the old-age dependency rate amounted to 23 % in 2017, i.e. +13 % compared to 2014.

⁸ INSSE, consulted 31 January 2019

⁹ Author's elaboration on INSSE data, <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>, consulted on 30 January 2019; emigration rates include Romanian people that transferred their residence to a foreign country.

¹⁰ Author's elaboration on INSSE data, <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>, consulted on 30 January 2019.

Figure 7: Permanent emigration and immigration in Bucharest, 2000-2017
 Source: INSSE, 2019

Migration data reveal that the Bucharest-Ilfov region and the municipality of Bucharest have been an attractive immigration destination in Romania. In 2017, 27 % of the permanent immigrants in Romania were from Bucharest-Ilfov and 25 % from the municipality of Bucharest; a 139 % increase in immigration at regional level between 2000 and 2017 and a 134 % increase at local level¹¹.

While the municipality of Bucharest has dominated the migration flows for a long period, in the years of the economic growth regional centres (e.g. Cluj-Napoca and Iasi) have become more prominent and immigration influence areas seem to be more balanced¹². This is also revealed by data on the crude migration rate. While up to 2008 the crude migration rate of Bucharest has been positive, since 2009 it has decreased steadily, reaching -8.3 in 2016.

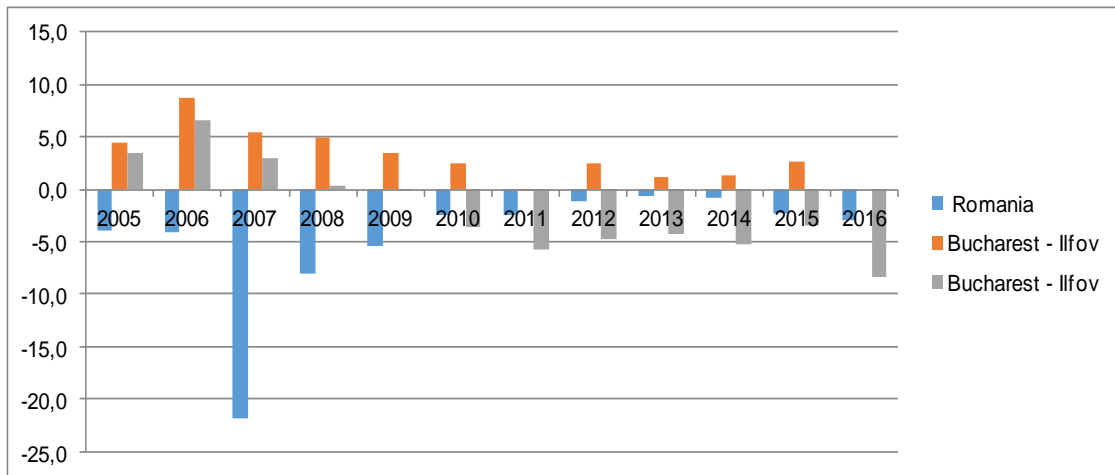


Figure 8: Crude migration rate in Romania, Bucharest-Ilfov region and municipality of Bucharest between 2005 and 2016
 Source: Eurostat, 2018

No data are available on the number of immigrants (including refugees) leaving Bucharest or on the length of their stay in the city. However, national data can be used as a proxy, considering that most of the immigrants (including refugees) live in Bucharest. The Index of Immigrants' Integration in Romania shows that 48.29 % of beneficiaries of international protection (including refugees) and third-country immigrants have been living in Romania for

¹¹ Author's elaboration on INSSE data, <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>, consulted on 30 January 2018; according to INSSE, immigrants are citizens (with Romanian citizenship, with foreign citizenship or without citizenship) that transfer their residence in Romania.

¹² World Bank (2017) Magnet cities. Migration and Commuting in Romania, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/327451497949480572/Magnet-cities-migration-and-commuting-in-Romania>.

less than one year, while 25.98 % have been living in Romania for one to four years and 25.72 % for more than four years¹³.

Even though no data are available on the countries of origins of immigrants in the municipality of Bucharest, national data can be used as a proxy.

According to the General Inspectorate for Migration (IGI) a distinction has to be made between the origin countries of legal and illegal immigrants. Legal immigrants come mostly from countries with which Romania has developed commercial relations along the years, such as Turkey, China and Moldavia. Illegal immigration has two main sources: on the one hand, immigrants from countries with a high level of legal migrants (Turkey, China and Moldavia) and on the other hand immigrants from countries affected by social, economic and political crises. Romania faced the following legal immigration flows:

- Until 2004, most of the immigrants came from China, Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Jordan and Syria. Most of them were men that came to Romania for studies or business. It is worth recalling that during communism Romania experienced immigration from Arab countries for studies.
- Between 2005 and 2006, Romania experienced an increase in the number of immigrants and a diversification of the reasons for their stay in Romania (family reunification, studies, businesses, work). In this period, Romania registered an increase in Turkish and Chinese immigrants. While during the first wave, businessmen moved to Romania, during the second wave workers also migrated to Romania.
- In the period 2007-2010, Romania experienced a continuous increase in immigration due to economic development. In this period, immigration from Moldavia and Asian countries continued to grow. For instance, migration from the Republic of Moldavia has increased by 61 % since 2011¹⁴, following the adoption of the governmental resolution 36/2009 establishing a right to Romanian citizenship for foreign citizens that have lost theirs from causes independent of their will (Vasilescu, 2017).

Illegal immigrants have changed over time:

- During the 1990s, most of the illegal immigrants came from Bangladesh and Pakistan that used the route Russian Federation – Moldavia or Ukraine – Romania – Hungary to reach the western European countries.
- At the beginning of the 2000s, most of the illegal immigrants came from Iraq, due to the conflict in the country. They used the following route to reach western European countries: Turkey – Bulgaria – Romania – Hungary.
- A special situation was registered in 2011 in the context of the Arab Spring and social movements from Africa. In this year and in the following years, most of the illegal immigrants came from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Syria. Most of them used to apply for international protection in Romania in order to be able to move towards western European states.

¹³ Cosciug et al. (2018) Indexul Integrării Imigranților în România – IIR.

¹⁴ Romanian National Statistics Institute, <http://statistici.insse.ro>, 2015 data.

- In the last years, most of the illegal immigrants in Romania have come from traditional immigration countries, such as Turkey, China and Moldavia. However, an increasing number of illegal immigrants from Afghanistan, Tunisia and Syria have been registered lately.

Asylum seekers are part of both the legal and illegal immigration flows. Over time, their number has increased considerably: + 344 % in the period 2008-2017. In fact, in 2017 Romania registered the highest number of asylum applications in the last nine years: 4,820 asylum requests. Most of them were men (67.7 %) from the following countries: Iraq (2,742 requests), Syria (945 requests), Afghanistan (257 requests), Pakistan (247 requests) and Iran (207 requests).

According to case interviews, the change in the country of origin of asylum seekers¹⁵ has also determined an increase in the number of children and families. In 2017, children were 20.6 % of the overall asylum seekers, while unaccompanied minors amounted to 5.5 %.

Case interviews reveal that changes in the country of origin have also determined an increase in the education level of asylum seekers. While during the Arab Spring most of the asylum seekers had a very low level of education, with the inflows from Iraq their level of education has increased considerably.

Territorial distribution of asylum seekers is influenced by the number of available places in the six regional centres for asylum seekers and refugees, as well as by the availability of translators and integration officers. Bucharest hosts one of the largest centres for asylum seekers (470 places available). In 2016, Bucharest-Ilfov was the second region in Romania by number of asylum requests (302). According to an IOM study (2017), it is estimated that around half of the asylum seekers live in Bucharest¹⁶. This is the only form of dispersal policy available in Romania. However, no data are available on the profile of asylum seekers at the local level.

In 2017, 2,079 asylum requests were processed of which 1,309 were approved (63 %). However, when looking at the approval rate of requests presented, it amounts to 27 %. Refugee status was granted to 849 people. In the period 2012-2017, a 506 % increase in the people receiving international protection was registered. For refugees, the number of people receiving the status increased by 511 % in the same period.

No data are available regarding the territorial distribution of refugees. However, case interviews underline that most refugees live in big cities (e.g. Bucharest, Timisoara, Cluj), where there are more employment opportunities and larger migrant communities that can support them. Data

¹⁵ In 2010 and 2013 most of the asylum seekers came from Afghanistan, Moldavia, Algeria, Pakistan and Morocco, while in 2015 from Syria and 2017 from Iraq.

¹⁶IOM (2017) Active inclusion of disadvantaged migrants, <https://bluehub.jrc.ec.europa.eu/catalogues/info/dataset/pj00154>.

on the distribution of legal third-country nationals, including refugees, show that 33 % of them live in the district of Bucharest¹⁷.

Despite the increase in the number of asylum seekers and refugees, several authors (including Vasile and Androniceanu, 2018; Nica, 2018; Stratulat Rugina, 2018; Pro Democratia, 2016; Alexe and Păunescu, 2011; ORI, 2010; Chiriac et al. 2006) and case interviews underline that Romania continues to be a transit country towards western Europe, due to its unattractive image as a poor emigration country.

1.3 Challenges, opportunities and impacts

The limited data on asylum seekers and refugees collected by public authorities at all levels represents one of the main challenges in unveiling the social, economic, cultural impacts of flows and in designing evidence-based policies in this area. This has been pointed out by several studies (Lazarescu et al. 2016; IOM, 2017; Alexe and Păunescu, 2011) and case interviews. Most of the research in the migration field focuses on emigration issues, considering the magnitude of the phenomena in Romania. Available studies on asylum seekers and refugees focus mostly on the national level.

Asylum seekers and refugees face several challenges in the labour market, and social, educational and cultural integration in Romania. In addition, case interviews show that among refugees, those who returned to Romania face additional challenges, since most of them have no new access to the integration programme supporting refugees' integration in Romania (see Section 2). Indeed, refugees can access the support offered by the integration programme only once and most of the returned refugees had already completed the programme before leaving Romania. This implies that projects provided by NGOs are the only support which they can access.

Labour market

Romanian legislation provides the same rights for refugees as for Romanian citizens, and offers asylum seekers access to the labour market after three months from their asylum request if a decision has not been taken in this period. Despite this, several challenges arise in this area at national level.

- Counselling and support services for the integration on the labour market are limited. Even though beneficiaries of international protection enrolled in the integration programme should receive specific counselling services provided by the county offices of the National Employment Agency (AJNOFM), these are limited to the posting of jobs. Furthermore, the IGI/AJNOFM labour market mediation plan addressed to refugees and asylum seekers (Law 76/2000) is not implemented in practice. Refugees and asylum seekers are not

¹⁷ Witec S., Berbec S. (2018), Raport Privind Programele De Integrare Socială Şi Limba Română Pentru Cetăţenii Străini Aflaţi Pe Teritoriul României.

included in the vulnerable groups targeted by employment support policies implemented by the National Employment Agency.

- Language barriers coupled with the fact that most of the work contracts are drafted only in Romanian is another issue. Also, vocational education and training (VET) courses are held in Romanian, limiting refugees' access to them.
- There is limited access to jobs due to the lack of certifications and diplomas attesting the competences of asylum seekers and refugees. Even though the Ministry of Education and IGI have drafted a specific procedure for the recognition of refugees and asylum seekers' competences, its effectiveness is questioned by case interviews and studies
- Refugees and asylum seekers have a lack of knowledge on labour rights and the Romanian legislation.
- Refugees and asylum seekers are vulnerable on the labour market as employers often take advantage of the limited capacity of asylum seekers and refugees to denounce labour abuses.
- There is limited access to childcare facilities that represents an obstacle for female asylum seekers and refugees' integration in the labour market.
- Bank credit for potential refugee/asylum seeker entrepreneurs is difficult to access.
- Entrepreneurship for refugees/asylum seekers has limited support and is coupled with a restrictive legislation in this field.
- Restrictive legislation is also present in the practise of medical professions, despite a shortage of labour force in this field.
- Outreach measures targeted at asylum seekers and refugees implemented by the local employment offices is lacking.
- There is a distrust of refugees and asylum seekers within public authorities in charge of labour market integration.
- Public service staff involved in labour market integration have a discretionary approach to the application of laws.
- Public service staff have a limited knowledge of the rights of asylum seekers and refugees.
- Sustainability of support provided to refugees and asylum seekers is limited. In the absence of public consolidated labour market support services, NGOs offer several support services. However, they intervene mainly through projects that are dependent on public/EU funding and have a limited duration¹⁸.

As pointed out by Lazarescu et al. (2016) and Berbec and Ionescu G. (2017), a low number of refugees and asylum seekers and in general third-country nationals are enrolled with the district

¹⁸ Lazarescu et al. (2016) Impactul Imigrației asupra Pieței Muncii din România; Berbec S., Ionescu G. (2017) Access to labour market (Section) in the Study report *The Integration of Refugees in Romania, Belgium, Germany, Spain and Sweden*; Alexe I. and Păunescu B. (2011), Studiu asupra Fenomenului Imigrației în România. Integrarea Străinilor în Societatea Românească; AIDA (2017) Country Report: Romania; case interviews.

offices of the National Employment Agency. There were 70 beneficiaries of international protection between 2014 and 2016, of which only 10 people obtained a job in this period; there were 110 third-country nationals between 2007 and 2015. According to Lazarescu et al. (2016), this shows that beneficiaries of international protection as well as other legal third-country nationals do not apply to the services of the National Employment Agency to look for a job, due to a lack of trust in its capacity to support them. Most of the beneficiaries of international protection prefer to turn to informal contacts or NGOs. This is also confirmed by the Index for the Integration of Immigrants in Romania (Cosciug et al., 2018). According to the study, 78 % of the refugees have never worked in Romania. At the same time, the study shows that in 2016 unemployed beneficiaries of international protection amounted to 0.24 % of the overall third-country unemployed migrants registered with the employment offices.

According to Berbec and Ionescu (2017), beneficiaries of international protection in Romania are dissatisfied with their labour market situation due to 'low opportunities to find a good paid job, with the appropriate professional knowledge level; lack of comprehensive information regarding the rights, the procedures to be followed to identify jobs, performing as independent professionals, or opening a business'¹⁹.

When it comes to impacts of flows on the labour market, Lazarescu et al. (2016) and Alexe and Păunescu (2011) consider that it could have a positive impact in filling in the labour market shortage. However, at the moment the impact is insignificant due to the low number of refugees, asylum seekers and more generally, third-country nationals integrated on the labour market. No secondary data on impacts of refugees and asylum seekers flows at local level were encountered during research.

The insignificant impact on the labour market of refugees and beneficiaries of international protection in general is also confirmed by case study interviews carried out with project actors involved in the Interact&Plus project (see Section 2).

Educational and cultural integration

Lack of knowledge of the Romanian language is one of the main barriers to the labour market and the social integration of asylum seekers and refugees. Even though refugees have access to free language courses provided within the integration programme, several challenges are pointed out in the literature and by case interviews.

- Courses provided for refugees are organised upon request and if there is the possibility to create a group. This limits the access of potential beneficiaries that live in small communities.
- Classes are not organised by age groups and level of literacy, which limits their effectiveness for all beneficiaries.

¹⁹ Berbec S., Ionescu G. (2017) Access to labour market (chapter) in the Study report *The Integration of Refugees in Romania, Belgium, Germany, Spain and Sweden*, p. 6

- The schedules are rigid: language courses are provided during work time and adults often cannot attend them; furthermore, language classes provided by schools are organised only during the school year.
- Classes are mixed (women and men), which represents an obstacle to attending language courses for women from Arab countries.
- Some beneficiaries have very low levels of literacy, which makes the learning process quite difficult. While they have access to the Second Chance programme, courses are taught only in Romanian.
- There is a limited number of teachers specialised in working with migrants.
- The Romanian language classes provided are of low quality.
- Training materials are not adapted to the needs of refugees.
- Training materials are only available upon payment.
- There is a lack of cultural mediators.
- Some of the beneficiaries are disinterested in learning Romanian as they intend to leave Romania²⁰.

Even though refugees have access to vocational training under the same conditions as Romanian citizens, access is difficult due to the lack of recognised diplomas/certificates and documents requested for enrolling in classes. Furthermore, as mentioned previously the procedures for obtaining the recognition of national diplomas and certificates is long and complex.

Over the years, several projects have been funded by AMIF for the language and vocational training of refugees. However, their sustainability is rather fragile due to dependency on public/EU funding.

Specific attention should be paid to the access to education by refugee children. Case study interviews point out that they face particular difficulties in enrolling in public schools. An initial barrier consists of the delays registered by the specific Commission in the approval of supplementary places for the enrolment of refugee children. This determines delays in children's enrolment in the public school and commencing their education. According to case interviews, often children begin school after the beginning of the school year. An additional barrier refers to the fact that children cannot be enrolled in schools throughout the entire year but only before the start of the school year. Thus, if a refugee child arrives after the start of the school year, they cannot attend the school until the next school year. The same also applies for kindergartens. According to case interviews, another barrier refers to the fact that the assessment of the qualifications of refugee children without diplomas is carried out in Romanian and not in the language of the person concerned. In addition, the assessment checks skills

²⁰ Berbec S., Ionescu G. (2017) Access to labour market (chapter) in the Study report *The Integration of Refugees in Romania, Belgium, Germany, Spain and Sweden*; AIDA (2017) Country Report: Romania; Cosciug et al. (2018) Indexul Integrării Imigranților în România – IIR; case interviews.

required by the Romanian curricula, which might not correspond to those acquired in the country of origin. Furthermore, interviewees point out that teachers do not have the necessary skills for creating an inclusive learning environment. Consequently, according to interviewees, refugee children are not supported adequately in the learning process and are left behind. This makes children feel discriminated against, which determines families to move them to private schools. In fact, interviews with the project actors of the Interact&Plus project (see Section 2) show that in 2018 none of the 28 refugee children who were enrolled in public schools in Bucharest within the project attends them anymore. According to interviewees, all of them are now attending private Arab schools in Bucharest.

According to case interviews, there are no relevant impacts on the training and education system in Romania due to the low number of refugees and asylum seekers. During the research, no secondary data are available on impacts at a local level.

Interviews with actors of the Interact&Plus project for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection and third-country immigrants also implemented in Bucharest (see Section 2) confirm national data on barriers and impacts.

Social integration

Asylum seekers are entitled to accommodation (in regional centres), to income support (accommodation allowance, monthly living allowance, child allowance) and to some limited healthcare services (primary and emergency care, care for contagious diseases, etc.). Refugees have access to social housing, accommodation in regional centres or a reimbursement of the rent, income support (allowance granted under the integration programme, social benefits, child allowance, etc.) and healthcare services under the same conditions as Romanian citizens. Despite the fact that the law grants access to various forms of social protection, asylum seekers and refugees face several challenges when accessing them in practice.

- Shortage of social houses especially in big cities such as Bucharest;
- Reluctance in renting houses to refugees and generally to third-country nationals;
- High rents especially in big cities such as Bucharest;
- Low availability of places in regional centres especially in big cities, such as Bucharest or Timisoara;
- Lack of structures adapted to the needs of vulnerable people, and in particular for people with physical disabilities;
- Limited access to healthcare services in regional centres;
- Limited access to female doctors in regional centres;
- Refugees and asylum seekers' lack of knowledge of the functioning of the Romanian healthcare system;
- Limited knowledge of the staff of the National Health Insurance House of the healthcare rights of asylum seekers and refugees;
- High level of informal payments for having access to quality healthcare services;
- Residence in other localities than the one where the social benefit/service is requested, which limits their access to the respective service/benefit;

- Birth certificates or other documents (e.g. proofs that a child belongs to the respective family) requested for accessing social services/benefits that generally asylum seekers and refugees do not have;
- High level of bureaucracy and limited knowledge of public administration staff about the rights of asylum seekers and refugees;
- Limited access to bank accounts that blocks the receipt of social transfers;
- Language and cultural barriers (forms are in Romanian and public administration staff have limited knowledge of foreign languages);
- Insufficient income support, according to beneficiaries;
- Lack of a legal representative that constitutes an obstacle to social benefits for unaccompanied minors²¹.

As pointed out by case interviews, the impact on social services is rather limited due to the low numbers of refugees and asylum seekers benefiting from them, despite a continuous increase between 2007 and 2015: 222 refugees benefited from reimbursable/non-reimbursable support in 2015 (+ 270 %)²².

This is also confirmed by data included in the Index on Immigrants' Integration in Romania (Cosciug et al., 2018). According to the index, only 13 % of the surveyed beneficiaries of international protection (including refugees) and third-country immigrants receive public benefits for the payment of the rent, while 5 % receive support from NGOs, 18 % receive no kind of support from anyone and 36 % are supported by their families. In addition, 76.5 % of the surveyed beneficiaries of international protection and third-country immigrants declare that they did not benefit from healthcare services in the last 12 months, while 17.5 % declared they did²³.

Based on the research conducted, there are no secondary data on local impacts of refugees and asylum seekers on social services.

Interviews with actors of the Interact&Plus project for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection and third-country immigrants also implemented in Bucharest (see Section 2) confirm national data on barriers and impacts.

Public opinion on asylum seekers and refugees

While in 2011, 68 % of the people questioned agreed with the support offered by Romanian authorities to asylum seekers and refugees, in 2015, 54 % of the surveyed people declared that

²¹<http://intervio.ro/2018/04/20/gabriela-leu-unhcr-romania-romania-is-seen-as-a-transit-country-also-because-refugees-dont-know-much-about-romania-as-a-destination-place-however-many-of-those-who-stayed-came-to/>; http://arps.ro/documente/studiu_privind_fenomenu_imigratiei.pdf; Lazarescu et al. (2016) Impactul Imigrației asupra Pieței Muncii din România; Cosciug et. all (2018) Indexul Integrării Imigranților în România – IIIR; case interviews .

²² Lazarescu et al. (2016) Impactul Imigrației asupra Pieței Muncii din România.

²³ Cosciug et. all (2018) Indexul Integrării Imigranților în România – IIIR.

they did not agree with the presence of refugees in Romania²⁴. People expressed concerns about refugees' presence in Romania due to the 'fear of the outbreak of violence or social warfare', due to refugees' 'cultural differences and habits' and a 'possible economic instability'²⁵. Despite people's concerns, only minor and localised protests have been registered in Romania. According to Gabriela Leu (UNHCR), after an initial deterioration of public opinion, now the 'public narrative on refugees is rather neutral, with positive and negative accents, depending on the media'²⁶. This is also confirmed by case study interviews.

Even though there are no mass protests against refugees, the Index of Immigrants' Integration in Romania (Cosciug et al., 2018) shows that refugees and beneficiaries of international protection and third-country immigrants experience discrimination in their interactions with public authorities, or with Romanian citizens in general. As shown in the figure **Error! Reference source not found.**, public transport companies and schools are the contexts where beneficiaries of international protection, including refugees, and third-country immigrants experience discrimination most often²⁷.

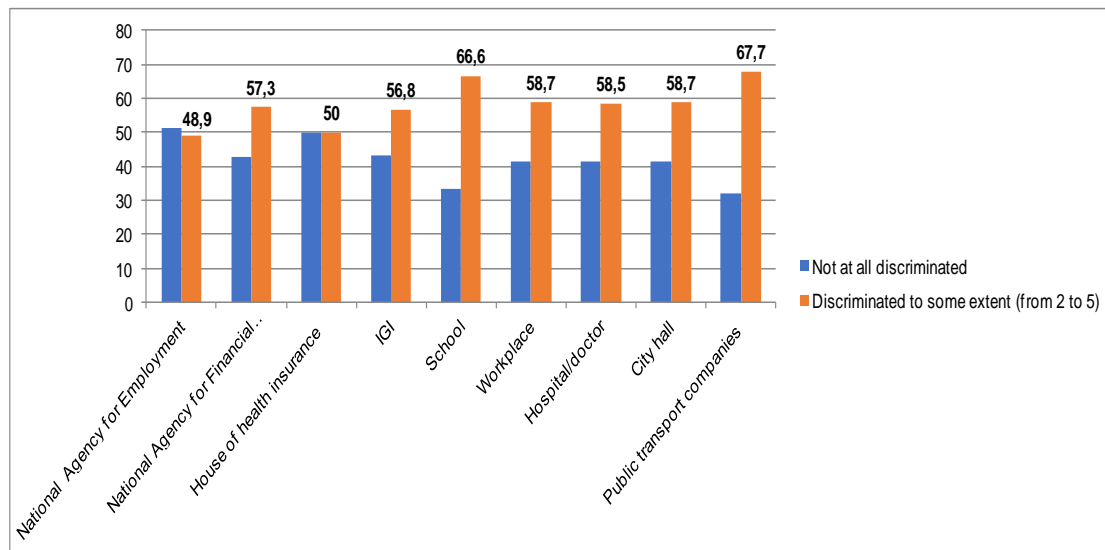


Figure 9: Contexts where surveyed beneficiaries of international protection and third-country immigrants have experienced discrimination

Source: Author's elaboration on data included in the Index of Immigrants' Integration in Romania (IIR), Cosciug et al. (2018)

No secondary data on impacts at local level have been encountered.

²⁴ Alexe I. and Păunescu B. (2011), Studiu asupra Fenomenului Imigrației în România. Integrarea Străinilor în Societatea Românească; Asociația Pro Democratia (2016) Raport Privind Percepția Românilor Despre Criza Refugiaților.

²⁵ Vasile O. and Androniceanu A. (2018), An Overview of the Romanian Asylum Policies.

²⁶ <http://intervio.ro/2018/04/20/gabriela-leu-unhcr-romania-romania-is-seen-as-a-transit-country-also-because-refugees-dont-know-much-about-romania-as-a-destination-place-however-many-of-those-who-stayed-came-to/>

²⁷ Cosciug et al. (2018) Indexul Integrării Imigranților în România – IIR

Interviews with actors of the Interact&Plus project for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection and third-country immigrants also implemented in Bucharest (see Section 2) confirm national data on barriers and impacts.

Dispersal policies

Case interviews reveal that a dispersal policy of refugees is not deemed a challenge or an opportunity in Romania, considering their low number. On the contrary, case interviews point out that their low number makes their needs almost invisible for public authorities. In addition, according to interviewees a dispersal policy would be contrary to the Romanian legislation that recognises refugees' right to free movement.

1.4 Institutional and policy framework dealing with asylum seekers and refugees

Asylum seekers and refugees' systems of reception and integration are quite recent in Romania and derived from the need to respond to the various international commitments undertaken by Romania after 1989. As pointed out by some authors (e.g. Lazarescu et al., 2016), the regulatory and institutional framework in this field has been designed based on international models and not on the Romanian experience and institutional framework.

Several laws adopted over time set the regulatory framework in the asylum seekers and refugees' field: i) Act No. 122 of 4 May 2006 on Asylum in Romania and the Government Decree No. 1251 of 13 September 2006 regarding the Methodological Norms for Applying Act 122/2006, updated in 2016; ii) Government Emergency Ordinance No. 194 of 12 December 2002 regarding the regime for foreigners in Romania, updated in 2016; iii) Government Ordinance No. 44 of 29 January 2004 regarding the social integration of foreigners granted international protection or the right to stay in Romania as well as the citizens of the European Union and European Economic Area states, updated in 2016; iv) Ordinance No. 441 of 4 April 2008 including the attributions of the authorities responsible for implementing the data in the Eurodac system and for establishing the practical methodology of cooperation in the application of European regulations; v) Regulation of Centres for Foreigners Taken into Public Custody of 30 July 2014; vi) Regulation of Internal Order in the Regional Centres of Accommodation and Procedures for Asylum Seekers of 25 August 2016.

The laws grant several rights to asylum seekers and refugees. Asylum seekers have the right: 'to stay in Romania until the expiry of a 15-day period from the completion of the asylum procedure, if the request is rejected and protection is not granted; to be assisted by a lawyer and/or an interpreter at any stage of the asylum procedure; to contact and to be assisted by an official of the UNHCR/non-governmental organisations in any phase of the asylum procedure; to participate in cultural adaptation activities; to be accommodated in the reception centres and to benefit from practical material support conditions; rent support; to receive primary or emergency medical treatment in case of life-threatening or chronic diseases free of charge; to

receive access to the labour market in the terms stipulated by the law for Romanian citizens, after the expiry of a three-month period from the date of application for asylum, if the asylum request has not been answered during the administrative phase of the procedure and the delay cannot be imputed; to education for minors, in order to access pre-primary school, pre-school and compulsory school under the same conditions as Romanian minor citizens, unless an expulsion measure against them or their parents is enforced²⁸.

A dispersal policy is foreseen for asylum seekers. It consists of the territorial (re)distribution of asylum seekers based on the number of available places in the centres. Furthermore, it also foresees that asylum seekers can be relocated from one centre to another in case of unavailability of places in the centre. Asylum seekers have the right to change the place of residence only upon the approval of the request by IGI.

A major change has been registered in the access to the labour market for asylum seekers. Before 2016, asylum seekers had to wait one year for the access to the labour market but currently access is granted after three months on condition that no decision has been taken during this period.

Refugees have access to the labour market, healthcare, education, housing, social assistance and welfare services, and free movement under the same conditions as Romanian citizens. They also have the right to family reunification. Furthermore, refugees have access to citizenship earlier compared to other third-country nationals and people granted subsidiary protection: refugees have to live in Romania legally for four years before applying for citizenship compared to eight years for all other third-country citizens present in Romania.

The main integration policy refers to the integration programme targeting people that have been granted international protection (refugee status or subsidiary protection). The integration programme has been operational since 2004 and is managed by the IGI with the collaboration of international organisations (e.g. IOM) and several NGOs (e.g. AIDROM; Association of Jesuit Refugee Services in Romania, ICAR Foundation, Save the Children Romania).

Those enrolled in the programme have access to free Romanian language courses, cultural orientation courses, mediation services, support for the integration on the labour market (professional counselling, evaluation of competences, etc.), financial support for covering rental costs, material assistance equal to the value allocated to asylum seekers granted for a period of two months, income assistance in case of unavailability of necessary financial resources, free legal assistance, free social counselling and psychological services. In the period 2014 to 2017, participation in the integration programme increased by 477 %²⁹.

²⁸ Vasile O., Androniceanu A. (2018). An Overview of the Romanian Asylum Policies.

²⁹ Vasile O., Androniceanu A. (2018) An Overview of the Romanian Asylum Policies.

The major change in the integration programme is that it has been implemented through the regional centres since their creation.

As pointed out in the previous section, the major challenges regarding the integration programme consist of:

- Access to courses offered within the programmes is available only upon the creation of a group which limits the opportunity to take free courses for refugees living in small communities. Courses are not organised by age and literacy level, and the quality can also be an issue.
- Access to housing is difficult due to a shortage of social housing and difficulties in finding housing at an affordable rent.
- Access to vocational training programmes and the labour market is limited due to the lack of knowledge of the Romanian language and lack of diplomas and certificates demonstrating the person's competences.

In addition to the integration programme several projects, financed by EU funds (AMIF, the Refugee programme), have been implemented by NGOs.

For asylum seekers, there is no specific national programme. However, several projects have been implemented by NGOs active in regional centres for refugees. In the period 2008-2013, 3,800 asylum seekers received social assistance and 2,700 received legal assistance³⁰.

Over the years, the Inspectorate General for Migration has taken several measures to improve the infrastructure conditions and services offered in the regional centres, and to diffuse knowledge on the rights of asylum seekers especially in the healthcare area.

Despite these challenges, according to the MIPLEX index Romania provides better integration conditions than the other states in the region³¹.

According to the secondary data available³², the municipality of Bucharest has no specific integration policy for asylum seekers and refugees or for foreign people in general. According to the Intercultural City Index³³, drafted by the Council of Europe and the European

³⁰ Vasile O., Androniceanu A. (2018) An Overview of the Romanian Asylum Policies.

³¹ Berbec S., Ionescu G. (2017) Access to labour market (chapter) in the Study report *The Integration of Refugees in Romania, Belgium, Germany, Spain and Sweden*.

³² Council of Europe (2015) Bucharest: Results of the Intercultural Cities Index; Prefecture of the Municipality of Bucharest (2016 and 2017) Yearly Report on the social and economic situation of Bucharest; Municipality of Bucharest (2017) Activity report of the Social Assistance General Direction of the Municipality of Bucharest, including also the Direction for the Integration of foreign people and diversity.

³³ The Index includes indicators on commitment; education system; neighbourhoods; public services; business and labour market; cultural and civil life policies; public spaces; mediation and conflict resolution; language; media; international outlook; intelligence/competence; welcoming and governance. Some of these indicators – education system, neighbourhoods, public services, business and labour market, cultural and civil life policies, and public spaces are grouped in a composite indicator called 'urban policies through the intercultural lens' or simply 'intercultural lens'.

Commission, Bucharest has ranked last among the cities considered by the Index. The report points out that the municipality of Bucharest has no intercultural strategy, no intercultural policies in the educational field except for projects implemented by the schools, no policy to increase the diversity of residents in the neighbourhoods, no policy to encourage intercultural mixing and competences in public services and private enterprises and to support business from ethnic minorities to move beyond ethnic economies, limited public debates and campaigns on diversity and living together, no specific attention to interculturalism in designing and animating public spaces, no Romanian language classes for foreign people, no specific welcoming policy and no actions to encourage foreigners' participation in civic life.³⁴

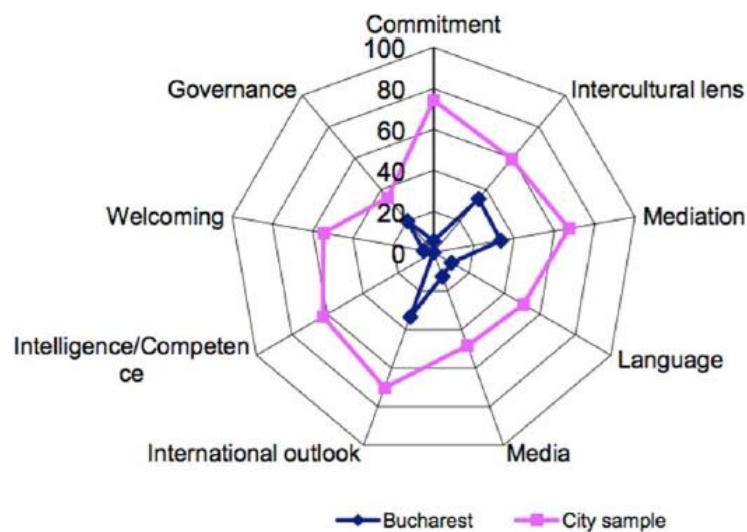


Figure 10: Intercultural index of Bucharest
Source: Council of Europe and European Commission, 2015

The lack of specific integration policies of the Municipality of Bucharest is also triggered by the fact that immigration policy, including asylum seekers and refugees, has been centralised. Despite the decentralisation of certain measures targeted at asylum seekers and refugees after the creation of regional centres in 2012, strategic policy decisions in this area continue to be taken at national level by IGI. Moreover, the regional centres, through which integration programmes and services are delivered, are under the coordination of IGI. As underlined in the literature, the main governance challenge of asylum seeker and refugee policies resides in the involvement of local authorities and citizens in the decision-making processes in order to increase the social and institutional legitimacy of these strategies and their sustainability and effectiveness over time³⁵.

³⁴ Council of Europe (2015) Bucharest: Results of the Intercultural Cities Index.

³⁵ Vasile O., Androniceanu A. (2018) An Overview of the Romanian Asylum Policies; Alexe I. and Păunescu B (2011), Studiu asupra Fenomenului Imigrației în România. Integrarea Străinilor în Societatea Românească; IOM (2017) Supporting active inclusion of disadvantaged migrants.

IGI is, in fact, the main actor of the asylum seeker and refugee integration policies. In designing and implementing measures targeted at refugees and asylum seekers, IGI collaborates with the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice, the district offices of the National Agency for Employment, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the National Council for the Recognition and Validation of Degrees, the District Agency for Social Protection and Children's rights, the National Authority for People with Disabilities, the local School Inspectorates and local authorities. According to IGI, coordination meetings are organised quarterly or whenever they are needed. However, studies point out that in practice the effectiveness of the institutional collaboration is quite limited³⁶.

According to the literature and case interviews, there is a good level of cooperation between IGI and international organisations (IOM, UNCHR) and NGOs active in this field³⁷. The active role of both NGOs and international organisations in providing targeted services and improving policies addressed to refugees and asylum seekers is acknowledged in the literature and case interviews³⁸.

At the local level, it is worth mentioning that in 2016 the Municipality of Bucharest created the General Directorate 'Integration of Foreign Citizens and Diversity'. The Directorate has been created following the involvement of the Municipality of Bucharest in a project of the Council of Europe regarding intercultural cities and is made up of two services.

- Service for the local integration of foreign people in charge of: facilitating access of immigrants to local public services; ensuring the flow of information between local public structures and central institutions coordinating policies in this area; implementing measures for the local integration of migrants; increasing awareness of the population on issues related to the integration of foreign people; cooperating with other organisations in the management of crisis situations
- Service for multicultural dialogue and diversity in charge of: implementing a chart of local diversity and ensuring that cultural diversity is reflected in the activity of the municipality; providing language courses and relevant information to immigrants; collaborating with immigrant communities, mass media and NGOs in the design and implementation of cultural diversity initiatives at local level; awareness-raising on issues related to cultural diversity and living together³⁹.

³⁶ Lazarescu et al. (2016) Impactul Imigrației asupra Pieței Muncii din România.

³⁷ Lazarescu et al. (2016) Impactul Imigrației asupra Pieței Muncii din România; case interviews.

³⁸ Lazarescu et al. (2016) Impactul Imigrației asupra Pieței Muncii din România; Berbec S., and Ionescu G. (2017) Access to labour market (chapter) in the Study report *The Integration of Refugees in Romania, Belgium, Germany, Spain and Sweden*; IOM (2017) Supporting active inclusion of disadvantaged migrants; case interviews.

³⁹ IOM (2017) Supporting active inclusion of disadvantaged migrants.

Since its creation, the directorate has been involved in strengthening the collaboration with the public organisations active in this field mentioned previously, as well as with NGOs and international organisations.

According to the 2016 and 2017 activity reports of the directorate, it has provided 84 counselling services to the migrant population and participated in several events and projects organised by NGOs and international organisations.

2 Analysis of selected policies/challenges: Integrated services for migrants, social and multicultural dialogue (INTERACT and INTERACT Plus)

This section of the case study focuses on the specific project INTERACT that provides integrated services for migrants, and a social and multicultural dialogue. The section also focuses on the outcomes, results and impacts achieved during the implementation of the project.

2.1 Topic and motivation

The project INTERACT, implemented in the framework of the 2014-2020 AMIF in Romania, focuses on the social, educational and labour market integration of beneficiaries of international protection and third-country nationals in Region 1, Romania (Bucharest, Ilfov, Argeş, Braşov, Buzău, Călăraşi, Covasna, Dâmboviţa, Dolf, Ialomiţa, Gorj, Giurgiu, Olt, Prahova, Teleorman, Vâlcea) through the adoption of a one-stop-shop approach.

For the purpose of this research, the case study will focus only on project activities in the Bucharest area.

The INTERACT project was implemented between 2016 and 2017. INTERACT Plus (2017-ongoing) continues the activities implemented under the INTERACT project. The case will refer to both projects as one project (i.e. INTERACT&PLUS), as no major changes have been undertaken in the passage from INTERACT to INTERACT PLUS.

While the project INTERACT&PLUS focuses on both third-country nationals and refugees, the case will focus only on beneficiaries of international protection (including refugees), as the integration process of third-country nationals does not fall within the objectives of the ESPON MIGRARE study. However, it is worth noting that beneficiaries of international protection and third-country nationals have access to the same type of services provided by the project.

The two main reasons for the project selection are: on the one hand, the adoption of a one-stop-shop approach to the services delivered and on the other hand, the collaboration between international organisations (IOM), national organisations (IGI – Ministry of Internal Affairs) and civil society organisations (AIDRom – the Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania, Schottener Foundation, Global Help Association, ARPCPS Braşov – Romanian Association for Quality Promotion and Successful Practices). An additional reason for the project selection is connected to the analysis of services and collaborations existing at local level in a capital city (Bucharest) that does not face a high pressure of refugee and asylum seeker flows, as confirmed by both literature and case interviews (see Section 1.2).

2.2 Objectives and logic of intervention

The project stems from the need to support third-country nationals and refugees in their social, educational and labour market integration process. In particular, the project aims to support refugees to face the challenges of the educational, social and labour market integration process

in Romania (e.g. limited accessibility to language courses, low quality of language classes, limited accessibility in enrolment to education especially for children, lack of support services for refugees' children in schools; limited access to social rights and benefits and healthcare services; limited access to VET and job opportunities)⁴⁰.

As mentioned by one case study actor, even though beneficiaries of international protection have the same rights as Romanian citizens, they would not have access to them without a specific support. According to case interviews, this holds true especially for new beneficiaries of international protection and to a lesser extent for those that have been living in Romania for a very long period.

Thus, the project aims to support refugees in their socio-economic and cultural integration through an integrated one-stop-shop approach to providing information and services in the field of education, welfare and the labour market.

In addition, the project also aims to strengthen active cooperation and involvement of authorities, the private sector and other entities with competencies and attributions in the field of integration.

The project plans to do this through the provision of the following services:

- Material assistance (voucher reimbursement of rent expenses, reimbursement of housing expenses (e.g. electricity bill), acquisition of school materials);
- Medical assistance (screening programmes, psychological counselling and support, reimbursement of medical expenses, support for enrolment to family doctors, accompaniment to hospitals, provision of information on the functioning of Romanian healthcare system, health insurance coverage, etc.);
- Educational assistance (support to school enrolment for children of refugees, support to the recognition of academic or professional qualifications, follow-up of children enrolled to schools through participation in school meetings together with parents and discussions with teachers about the educational situation of children enrolled in schools, after-school initiatives, etc.);
- Support to comply with the social assistance system (counselling on social assistance benefits, administrative accompaniment to obtaining access to social benefits for children, youth and adults, etc.);
- Labour market support (guidance on the Romanian labour market, competencies assessment, support with drafting CVs, support with signing up with the local employment agency, support with finding a job through job intermediation, etc.);
- Socio-cultural activities (cultural events organised on the occasion of the original or host country national holidays, sports events, trips in Romania, visits to the museum, cultural orientation sessions, information sessions on refugees' rights and duties in Romania, etc.);

⁴⁰ Interviews with stakeholders conducted in February and March 2019.

- Romanian language courses;
- Legal counselling;
- Legalised translation of documents requested for compliance with the education, social, healthcare and labour market systems;
- Communication and dissemination activities targeted in particular to authorities in the field.

As mentioned above, these services are provided through a one-stop-shop approach. This means that services are provided in an integrated manner and in the same place through a case manager.

As specified previously, target groups are refugees and third-country nationals legally resident in Romania.

The expected outcomes of the INTERACT&PLUS project are: 3,000 beneficiaries of international protection and third-country nationals informed and counselled (in both projects and in all counties where the project is implemented), creation of a network of intercultural mediators and volunteers (limited to INTERACT).

For the period 2016-2019, the project funding amounts to EUR 1,973,521.82 (9,385,675.08 RON), which includes the 2 % co-financing provided by project partners. The funding is provided by the 2014-2020 AMIF OP.

2.3 The actors

Actors involved in the project design and implementation are mainly bureaucratic actors and NGOs active at national and local level, as noted in the infographic below.

The project partners are the main actors of the project, especially in the project design phase. The project partnership is made of the Romanian branch of IOM (lead partner), AIDROM (partner), the Schottener Foundation (partner), the Global Help Association (manager of the Regional Integration Centre and partner for Romanian southern counties targeted by the project), ARPCPS (partner for the central counties targeted by the project) and the Association of Importers and Exporters (limited to the INTERACT project).










Roles	Actors
Setting Legal Framework 	IOM, IGI, General Directory for Social Assistance – Ministry of Labour, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Health
Political Responsible 	IGI, General Directory for Social Assistance – Ministry of Labour, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Health
Technical Responsible 	IGI, General Directory for Social Assistance – Ministry of Labour, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Health
Financing 	IOM, AIDRom, Schottener Found., IGI, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Health
Programming in the Intervention 	IOM, AIDRom, Schottener Found., Global Help, ARPCPS
Coordinator in the implementation 	IOM, AIDRom, Schottener Found
Policy implementer 	IOM, AIDRom, Schottener Found., IGI, ANOFM, CNRED, General Directory for Social Assistance – Ministry of Labour, General Direction of Social Protection and Child Protection Bucharest, Health Insurance Agency Bucharest, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Health
Monitoring and data 	IOM, AIDRom, Schottener Found., IGI, General Directory for Social Assistance – Ministry of Labour,
Resources mobilization 	IOM, AIDRom, Schottener Found., IGI, Agency for Social Payments and Controls of the Municipality of Bucarest, ANOFM, CNRED, General Directory for Social Assistance – Ministry of Labour, General Direction of Social Protection and Child Protection Bucharest, Health Insurance Agency Bucharest, Ministry of National Education, Companies, Association of Importers and Exporters

Figure 11: Actors and roles⁴¹

⁴¹ The biggest characters represent central actors while the smallest ones have a secondary role in that role/function. Sections 'Financing, Programming the intervention, Coordinator in the implementation,

2.3.1 Programming phase: actors, roles and relationship

The figure **Error! Reference source not found.** presents the network of actors in the programming phase.

Type of actor (Colour)	Central or secondary actor based on betweenness (Dimension)	Territorial (Shape)
● Bureaucrats	○ Central actor	▣ International
● Politicians	○ Secondary actor	◇ National
● Experts	In each graph all the actors involved in the programming or implementation phase of the project/policy are represented, even if isolated (usually top left) in one of the phases	○ Regional
● Special Interest		△ Local
● Diffused interest		

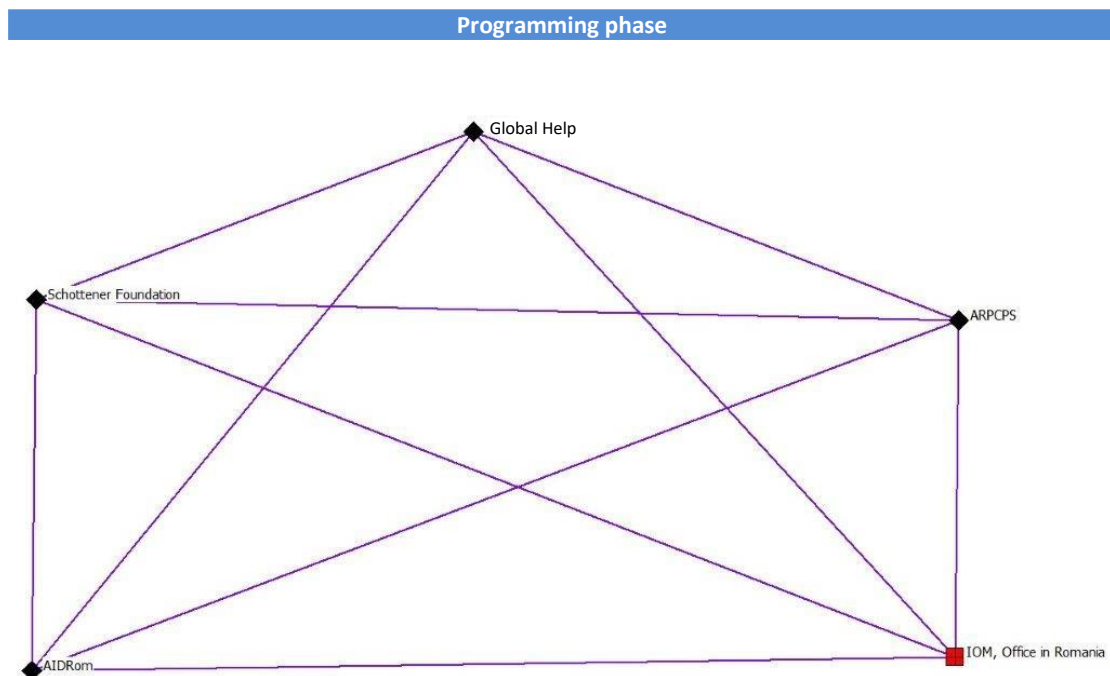


Figure 12: Network of actors in the programming phase⁴²

As shown in the figure **Error! Reference source not found.**, in the programming phase the complexity of the network of actors is quite limited, being made up of only the project partners: IOM, AIDROM, the Schottener Foundation, Global Help and ARPCPS). IGI intervened

Policy implementer' refer directly to the Interact and Interact Plus projects and not to the overall national integration policy. On the contrary, sections 'Legal framework, Political responsibility, Technical responsibility' refer to the overall national integration policy within which the project is implemented. In addition sections 'Coordinator of the implementation and Policy implementer' refer to the actors from the Bucharest area (project area selected for the case study analysis).

⁴² Figure 12 refers to the actors involved in the programming of the project Interact and Interact Plus.

indirectly, its role comprising the design of the AMIF call for projects in whose framework the project is implemented.

The network of actors in this phase is characterised by the lack of a core actor, as the project design occurred through the involvement of all project partners (IOM, AIDROM and the Schottener Foundation).

2.3.2 Implementation phase: actors, roles and relationship

The analysis of the actors involved in the implementation phase focuses only on the role and relationships involved in the intervention in the Municipality of Bucharest, the area selected for the case study. Furthermore, it refers to the Interact and Interact Plus projects (limited to the area of the Municipality of Bucharest) and not to the overall integration policy.

The figure **Error! Reference source not found.** presents the network of actors in the implementation phase.

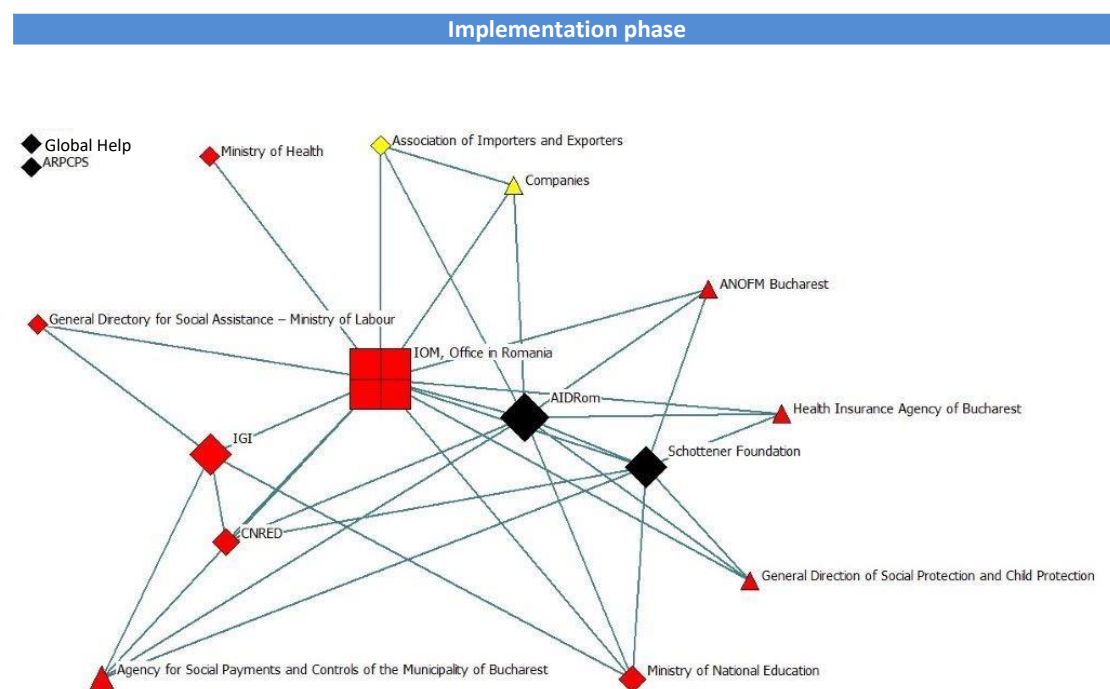


Figure 13: Network of actors in the implementation phase⁴³

Different from the programming phase, in the implementation of the project the network is much more complex involving other actors at national and local level. While in the programming phase, the main actors are international organisations (IOM) and NGOs; in the implementation national and local public institutions and economic actors (i.e. companies) intervene as well. In addition, while there is no core actor in the programming phase IOM is the core actor in the

⁴³ The figure refers to the actors involved in the implementation of the Interact and Interact Plus project in Bucharest area (area selected for the case study).

implementation phase, taking the lead of the project. Also AIDRom, the Schottener Foundation, IGI and CNRED play a central role in the implementation phase.

The paragraphs below explain the roles of the various actors.

All public bodies were involved only in the implementation phase. However, their involvement was not continuous, but related to specific issues to be dealt with (e.g. problems in the recognition of academic qualifications – CNRED, problems related to language courses – Ministry of Education) or to interactions for the obtaining of specific benefits (e.g. social benefits provided by the Agency for Social Payments and Controls of the Municipality of Bucharest; enrolment in the employment offices; enrolment in schools). But for IGI, these actors intervene mainly through the mobilisation of resources, in particular legal and knowledge.

Interactions with public institutions occur in particular through the personal contacts of project partners. No mixed working groups or formal agreements were created at the level of the project. However, the project has included several meetings for increasing the awareness of public institutions on the needs of beneficiaries of international protection and of third-country nationals, and for disseminating the project findings. In addition, cooperation with public institutions relevant for the integration process of refugees (e.g. IGI, CNRED, Ministry of Labour through its agencies, Agency for Social Payments and Controls) also draws on collaboration with them within other projects (e.g. REACT_RO⁴⁴ – definition of language training manuals jointly with the Ministry of Education) or on awareness-raising activities targeted to public institutions undertaken within other projects (e.g. the STARRT project⁴⁵).

According to case study interviews, collaboration with public institutions and their active involvement in dealing with issues raised by the integration process of refugees varies from institution to institution. It depends also on the personal/institutional contacts that each partner has with the respective institution. Interviewees consider that collaboration is smooth with the Ministry of Education, the National Centre for the Equivalence and Recognition of Diplomas, the General Direction of Social Protection and Child Protection, the General Directory for Social Assistance, and IGI. Case interviews point out that these institutions have mobilised significant legal and knowledge resources for solving barriers in the access of refugees and, in general, of beneficiaries of international protection and third-country nationals to education and social services and benefits. According to them, the awareness-raising activities of UNHCR and IOM over the years have contributed to making the public administration staff in these institutions

⁴⁴http://www.romaniaeacasa.ro/react_ro-resurse-educationale-pentru-orientarea-in-societate/ ;
<http://www.oim.ro/ro/ce-facem/programe/665-react-ro-resurse-educationale-pentru-invatarea-limbii-romane-si-acomodarea-culturala-a-beneficiarilor-de-protectie-internationala-bpi-si-resortisantilor-tarilor-terte-rtt-in-romania-etapa-ii>

⁴⁵<http://www.oim.ro/ro/ce-facem/programe/555-sarrt-servicii-de-transfer-si-asistenta-pentru-refugiati-relocati-din-turcia>

more aware of refugees' problems in accessing public services and the fact that they cannot follow the same procedures as Romanian citizens.

On the contrary, case study interviewees underline that collaboration with other institutions with a relevant role in the integration process of refugees (e.g. Health Insurance Agency, ANOFM, School inspectorate of the Municipality of Bucharest), is more difficult and mostly driven by the pressure of project partners. According to case interviews, these actors have a very limited role in supporting the project implementation.

Regarding the project partners, IOM (Romanian branch) is in charge of the project coordination and monitoring, coordination of the network of volunteers and social mediators, cultural orientation activities, and awareness-raising and dissemination activities. The Schottener Foundation is involved in providing language courses and integrated support to children and youth, while AIDROM is involved in provided integrated support to adults (people aged over 26 years).

The National Association of Importers and Exporters in Romania was involved only in the first phase of the project (INTERACT) and its role was limited to supporting the labour market integration process.

In addition to the above-mentioned actors, the project also relies on a network of volunteers created in the first phase of the project (INTERACT) and coordinated by IOM. Volunteers are particularly involved in supporting the delivery of cultural orientation activities, the organisation of events, after-school services, and in supporting beneficiaries in their interaction with public institutions (e.g. accompaniment to the public offices of public institutions). There are around 20 volunteers involved in the overall project. They were selected through a public tender and based on their motivation to work with refugees. In some cases, ex beneficiaries of the project volunteer to support the project implementation.

In addition, a network of cultural mediators, created within the INTERACT project and coordinated by IOM, supports the project delivery through translations and cultural mediation. There are 10-15 cultural mediators involved in the project.

All actors agree that both volunteers and cultural mediators play a relevant role in the project implementation. In particular, the support of volunteers is considered crucial for the implementation of all activities foreseen by the project.

The partnership and the collaboration among project partners are deemed effective. According to interviewed actors, the effectiveness of the collaboration was facilitated by the existence of previous collaborations between partners, the complementary competences and skills, the definition of coordination tools (e.g. weekly meetings) and the continuous communication among partners. This was helped by the fact that the offices of partner teams involved in the project are located in the same building.

2.4 Implementation

The project originates in the work carried out by the Romanian office of IOM in the field of migration. IOM Romania was established in 1992 with the aim to respond to the information and counselling needs of the Romanian citizens regarding emigration formalities. Over the years, besides providing guidance to Romanian citizens on emigration formalities, IOM Romania has been implementing various national and international cooperation programmes in the field of counter-trafficking in human beings, migration facility, refugee assistance, voluntary return, migrants' integration, migrants' health and consular support activities. In particular, it is worth mentioning the 2008 trilateral agreement between the Romanian Government, IOM Romania and UNHCR for the temporary relocation in Romania of persons in need of international protection. IOM Romania collaborates with UNHCR and the Romanian Government in the management of the emergency transit centre in Timișoara.

In addition to relocation initiatives, IOM has been implementing several projects focused on strengthening the assisted voluntary return and reintegration of asylum seekers and illegal migrants (e.g. 2012-2015 AVRR⁴⁶) and on the integration of legal third-country migrants. IOM started to implement the first projects for the integration of third-country nationals in 2009, initially jointly with Global Help (one of the project partners for the southern area of Romania covered by the project) and afterwards also with AIDROM and the Schottener Foundation. The projects have been continuing over the years. While initially the projects focused mainly on providing guidance and information to third-country nationals, over the years other activities have been added (e.g. facilitating access to employment, education, healthcare and social systems, cultural activities), based on the needs of beneficiaries and the evolution of the Romanian funding programmes. According to case study interviews, the constant dialogue between IGI and international actors (IOM, UNHCR) and civil society organisations has contributed to the integration of the investment priorities initially foreseen (e.g. information and counselling) with additional ones, based on the needs of beneficiaries (e.g. material assistance). This has allowed IOM to extend the support provided to third-country nationals beyond information and counselling.

Between 2012 and 2015, IOM implemented a major project for facilitating the social, economic and cultural integration of third-country nationals legally residing in Romania: National Coordination for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in Romania. The project integrated information and counselling with the provision of specific services, direct assistance and awareness-raising among local authorities on the integration needs of third-country nationals. Within the project, 15 migration centres were created at national level, including one in Bucharest, with the role to provide integrated services for supporting the social and labour market inclusion process of beneficiaries of international protection and third-country nationals.

⁴⁶ <http://oim.ro/en/what-we-do/programs/581-assisted-voluntary-return-and-reintegration-avrr-program>

Integration projects were initially targeted to third-country immigrants, irrespective of whether they were refugees or not. Since 2014, IGI has been paying particular attention to the integration process of refugees, also in the context of increasing flows of asylum seekers. Thus, the 2014-2020 AMIF funding programme pays particular attention to the integration process of both beneficiaries of international protection and third-country immigrants. The 2014-2020 Romanian AMIF programme foresees the implementation of projects for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection in five development regions and six representative cities/towns in Romania: Region 1 (Bucharest, Ilfov, Prahova, Buzău, Dâmbovița, Argeș, Vâlcea, Gorj, Covasna, Giurgiu, Călărași, Ialomița, Teleorman and Olt); Region 2 (Galati, Vrancea, Bacau, Vaslui, Tulcea, Constanța); Region 3 (Suceava, Botoșani, Neamț, Iași); Region 4 (Maramureș, Satu Mare, Sălaj, Cluj, Bistrița Năsăud, Mureș, Harghita, Sibiu and Alba); Region 5 (Timis, Arad, Bihor, Hunedoara, Mehedinți and Caraș Severin).

In this context, IOM has specifically targeted the assistance provided previously to third-country nationals also to beneficiaries of international protection, including refugees.

The Interact&Plus project draws on the 2009-2015 projects in the field of integration of third-country migrants and on the previous experience of IOM and project partners in supporting asylum seekers. The project is implemented in the whole of Region 1. However, as previously mentioned, for the purpose of this research the case study focuses on the activities in the Bucharest area.

The project was designed by IOM together with the project partners based on the above-mentioned experience and the requests of the call for proposals⁴⁷ published by IGI.

The first phase of the project started in May 2016 and ended in May 2017 (Interact project), while the second phase started in July 2017 and will end in July 2019 (Interact Plus project). The formal closing of the project is imposed by the formal requests of the call for proposals. However, as confirmed by case interviews, in practice it has continued without interruption and changes in the partnership, type of beneficiaries and type of services provided since 2016.

There are two features of the project that distinguish it from the initial projects in this area (e.g. 2009-2010 projects for third-country nationals): the adoption of a one-stop-shop and a person-based approach to the integration support provided to beneficiaries of international protection and third-country nationals.

The one-stop-shop approach consists of the provision of integrated services (Romanian language, cultural and educational activities, support to access education, healthcare, labour market and social public systems, and direct material assistance) in one location, the Migration Centre of Bucharest. This was created within a previous project, and is located in an easy-to-reach area of Bucharest. There is a case manager (i.e. one person in charge of managing each

⁴⁷ See call for proposals FAMI 17.01 available at: <http://igi.mai.gov.ro/selec%C8%9Bii/selec%C8%9Bii-%C3%AEncheiate>

case). The person-based approach refers to the provision of an offer of flexible services among which refugees can choose, together with the counsellor, those most appropriate to their needs.

According to case study interviews, the adoption of this approach was necessary for providing an adequate answer to beneficiaries' multiple and interrelated needs. From previous projects, partners learnt that, in particular, beneficiaries of international protection needed material assistance, support with interacting with the Romanian public administrations and flexible language courses. Case interviews point out that beneficiaries of international protection started to participate in integration projects, especially when direct financial assistance had been available. In addition, previous projects and good practices in migrants' integration showed that the provision of services in one location and the identification of a case manager proved helpful. It engaged beneficiaries in an integration path and kept them committed throughout the path. Furthermore, as supported by case interviewees, the provision of services in one location came almost naturally, as a migration centre had been already created in previous projects. The extension of the type of services funded by AMIF in Romania also provided an opportunity to extend the support offered in previous projects of project partners.

As mentioned in previous sections, the INTERACT&Plus project provides the following types of services: material assistance (reimbursement of expenses for electricity, gas, etc.; social tickets for food, clothes, school materials, etc.); cultural orientation; language courses; after-school services; support to access education, social, healthcare, and labour market public and private services; healthcare services; support to labour-market integration. In addition, beneficiaries who participate regularly in the project activities receive a financial incentive, amounting to around EUR 37.

All services are provided free of charge, following a social investigation by the case manager. Services, financial assistance and medical assistance are available free of charge in particular to vulnerable groups (e.g. people without any/with low income). The duration of the access to services provided within the individual integration plan depends on the social and economic situation of each beneficiary. As long as the social and economic situation of beneficiaries remains precarious, they have free access to all services provided by the project throughout the entire project duration. The Romanian language course is the only service provided by the project that has a time limit, due to the fact that it is organised in modules for each language level (A-C levels).

Interviewees point out that beneficiaries in need continue to receive support even after the formal closing of the project (e.g. after the closing of INTERACT). Interviewed actors underline that beneficiaries are usually assisted for a longer period, as the integration process takes time. According to case interviews, many of the beneficiaries involved in INTERACT are also assisted within the INTERACT Plus project.

As recalled in previous sections, the Schottener Foundation is in charge of providing integration services for youth, while AIDROM covers those for adults. In both cases, services are provided

by specialised staff (e.g. social assistants, psychologists), with the support of volunteers and cultural mediators, and are coordinated by the case manager.

2.5 Outcomes, impacts, and results of the specific policy

The INTERACT&Plus project surpassed the project's targets. Between May 2016 and February 2019 the project provided information, counselling and individual assistance to 4,238 beneficiaries (beneficiaries of international protection and third-country nationals). In the same period, beneficiaries of international protection represented 54 % of the overall project beneficiaries. Beneficiaries of international protection assisted in Bucharest constituted 89 % of the overall beneficiaries of international protection involved in the project between 2016 and 2019. This is due to the high concentration of beneficiaries of international protection in Bucharest compared to the other towns involved in the project.

Most of the beneficiaries of international protection come from Syria. The table below details the main top five countries of origin of project beneficiaries in the period 2016-2019.

Table 2: Top five countries of origin of project beneficiaries

	May 2016-May 2017	July 2017-June 2018	July 2018- February 2019
Afghanistan	36	32	44
No country specified	26	23	-
Iraq	157	124	88
Syria	425	398	421
Eritrea	47		
Somalia		12	23
Myanmar			30

Source: IOM project statistics

A little over half of the beneficiaries were male (59 %) (41 % women).

As to the level of studies of project beneficiaries of international protection (excluding minors), 43 % have no or a lower level of education (i.e. primary and lower secondary), 26 % have a medium level of education (upper secondary and post-secondary) and 28 % have a higher level of education (tertiary, post-tertiary).

As noted in the figure **Error! Reference source not found.**, males generally have a higher level of education than women.

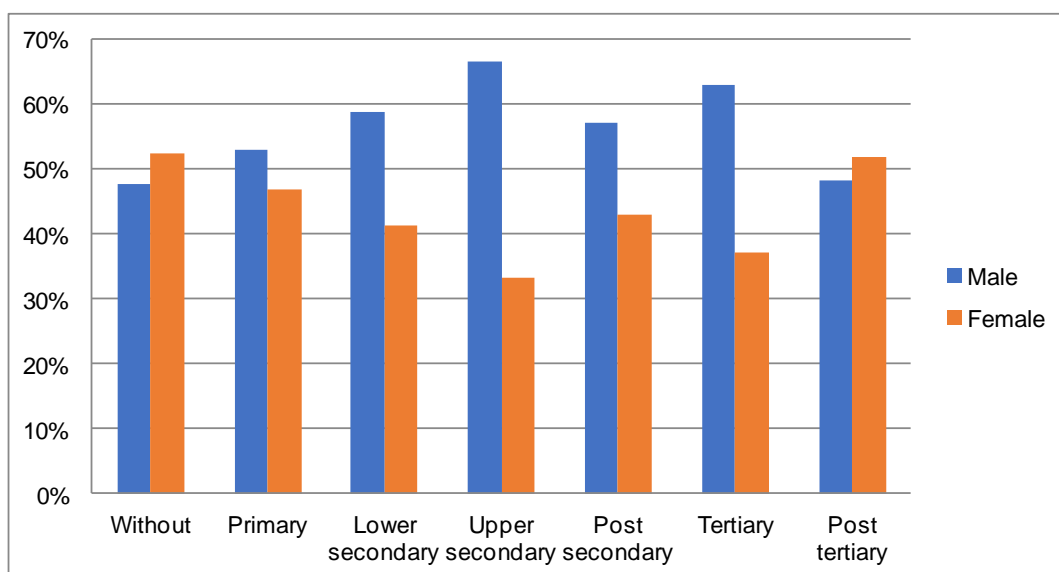


Figure 14: Level of education by gender of beneficiaries of international protection (excluding minors) involved in the project between 2016 and 2019
Source: IOM project statistics

In the period 2016-2019, 63 % of the overall beneficiaries of international protection involved in the project received individual support. Most of the individual assistance (84 % of the overall beneficiaries of international protection supported) was provided in Bucharest. Most of the beneficiaries were involved in social and cultural activities (38 %), counselling sessions (41 %) and language courses (21 %).

In the period July 2017-February 2019, the total value of vouchers provided by the project amounted to EUR 37,525 (RON 178,280).

The analysis of the results and impacts of the project is limited by the lack of an evaluation system. The only evaluation activity refers to the assessment of beneficiaries' satisfaction of the project activities and, in particular, of language courses. However, at the moment no data are available. No *ex post* evaluation or impact evaluation is foreseen by the project and requested by IGI (coordinator of the AMIF funding programme).

Case interviews reveal that the project has contributed to the integration process of beneficiaries of international protection through the improvement of their language skills and their knowledge of the Romanian society in general, the increase in their social network and their increased access to their social rights. Furthermore, the project has allowed beneficiaries to have a contact person that could guide them through the Romanian public system and Romanian society to better understand their rights and to have better access to them.

Interviewees maintain that support to access education and educational activities have contributed to preventing dropout as well as bad school performance in children of beneficiaries of international protection enrolled in public schools.

According to interviewees, while financial assistance for social needs has contributed to reducing the risk of poverty of beneficiaries of international protection, it does not have a long-term impact as the amounts are not very high and it is limited to the project duration.

Interviewees point out that limited results have been obtained in the labour market integration of beneficiaries of international protection, in particular due to several challenges faced by the project, as detailed below.

The main challenges faced by the project in the delivery of the project activities consist of the following.

- There are administrative barriers in access to public services (e.g. education, social benefits, healthcare, social housing, labour market, vocational training).
- As explained previously, administrative barriers stem from the fact that beneficiaries of international protection lack several documents required for access to specific services. This is coupled with the fact that there are no specific procedures for this category of people. According to case interviews, such procedures have not been developed, as the law foresees that beneficiaries of international protection have the same rights and access to public services as Romanian citizens. However, in practice this has resulted in inequality in access for beneficiaries of international protection. In some areas (e.g. access to social benefits – child allowances) these barriers have been overcome through the direct interaction with the respective institutions (in particular, with top-level management) and a continuous increase in the awareness by public service staff about the problems faced by beneficiaries of international protection. On the contrary, in other areas it continues to remain a problem (e.g. access to education and vocational training, access to labour market, access to healthcare, access to social housing⁴⁸), despite several interactions with institutions in these fields and the intervention of IGI. In order to support beneficiaries, the project provides direct services in some of these areas that partially compensate for the lack of access to public services: e.g. healthcare services (screening programmes, payment of the health insurance), labour market support (skills assessment, support to finding a job).
- There is a lack of working groups/committees made up of all actors involved in the integration process. These are needed to discuss and jointly find solutions to the problems faced by beneficiaries of international protection in the access to public services. This has resulted in an increased use of informal contacts to deal with project beneficiaries' problems. However, according to case interviews, this approach does not ensure sustainability of the dialogue between the actors involved in the integration process and the development of integrated policies and procedures in this field.
- Interruption of funding between the closing of a call and the opening of another represents another challenge as it puts enormous financial pressure on project partners. Indeed,

⁴⁸ See previous chapters for further details on the type of barriers.

project partners have to sustain the costs of the interventions from their own budget. This is particularly challenging for NGOs, in particular for the small ones that do not have access to other funds.

- A system exists that pushes beneficiaries into illegal work and makes it difficult for project staff to regularise their labour situation. There are several associated causes that encourage illegal work.
 - Beneficiaries may have a low level of education, coupled with the request for at least primary level education even for low-quality jobs (e.g. cleaners, cooks, drivers), foreseen by the Romanian labour market system. According to case interviews, the low levels of education are a problem especially for women as they generally have much lower levels of education than men.
 - There is limited/lack of recognition of qualifications for entry to the labour market.
 - The legal framework makes the employment of non-EU workers unattractive, due to the fact that their wage were to be equal to the medium national wage⁴⁹, while Romanian citizens were to receive at least the minimum national wage. However, in the context of an increased shortage of skills, the law was changed in 2018. According to the new legal framework⁵⁰, both Romanian and foreign workers should receive at least the minimum national wage.
 - Low wage levels, in particular due to access to low-quality jobs, coupled with a high level of taxes make illegal work more attractive than the legal options. According to case interviews, beneficiaries generally do not understand the advantages of having an employment contract as long as their financial needs remain higher than the income provided by a regular employment contract. Furthermore, since access to financial assistance provided within the integration project is not conditional upon the active search for a job, beneficiaries know that while working illegally they can also continue to receive the financial support offered by the integration programme.

⁴⁹ Emergency Order 194/2002 regarding the legal framework of foreigners in Romania ('Ordonanța de urgență nr. 194/2002 privind regimul străinilor în România') available at: <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/geytinjtge/ordonanta-de-urgenta-nr-194-2002-privind-regimul-strainilor-in-romania?d=2019-04-19>; Governmental Order 25/2014 regarding the employment of foreigners and posted workers and the change and integration of the legal framework on foreigners in Romania ('Ordonanța nr. 25/2014 privind încadrarea în muncă și detașarea străinilor pe teritoriul României și pentru modificarea și completarea unor acte normative privind regimul străinilor în România') available at: <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/gqydimjwgu/ordonanta-nr-25-2014-privind-incadrarea-in-munca-si-detasarea-strainilor-pe-teritoriul-romaniei-si-pentru-modificarea-si-completarea-unor-acte-normative-privind-regimul-strainilor-in-romania>

⁵⁰ Law 247/2018 for the change and integration of the legal framework regarding foreigners in Romania ('Legea nr. 247/2018 pentru modificarea și completarea unor acte normative privind regimul străinilor în România') available at: <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/gmydqobqgeza/legea-nr-247-2018-pentru-modificarea-si-completarea-unor-acte-normative-privind-regimul-strainilor-in-romania>

- Low quality of working conditions, coupled with low wages, make certain jobs (e.g. in the field of construction, tourism) unattractive. In this context, according to case interviews, some of the beneficiaries prefer the financial assistance provided by the integration programme and the project to these jobs.
- Indicators set at national level within the call for proposals are rigid. Case study interviews reveal that the achievement of indicators does not depend entirely on the project partners, but also on the characteristics of the population that requests the project support. For instance, according to interviews, one indicator refers to the amount of education materials that has to be provided within the project. However, the indicator can be reached only if there are numerous families among the beneficiaries. Indicators are imposed by the programme and cannot be changed. At the same time, the target group is characterised by a high volatility, which makes it difficult for the project to reach targets set. Furthermore, in some cases this also determines competition between applicants for the target group.

Case interviews also reveal some aspects that projects partners consider should be improved in the next implementation period in order to ensure effectiveness of the project.

- There needs to be an increase in the number of hours dedicated to providing social and educational assistance. Case interviews show that beneficiaries have complex needs that require an intense assistance especially in the social and educational areas. However, project resources are limited compared to the number of people assisted and the wide range of services provided. For instance, people involved in educational assistance are allocated four hours a day for the activities provided in this area (e.g. after-school, participation in school meetings, follow-up with teachers, support to school enrolment). However, case actors point out that the allocated hours are largely insufficient for responding to all beneficiaries' needs in this area. For instance, interviewees underline that children of project beneficiaries hardly ever benefit from parents' support in the learning process, due to insufficient language skills, limited skills for dealing with learning issues raised in the educational process, etc. This, coupled with the insufficient learning assistance provided by schools, risks triggering drop-out tendencies in these children. Thus, an intense educational support should be provided by the project to prevent poor school performance by children. According to interviews, intense assistance requires an increase in the resources provided in this area.
- An increase in spaces allocated to language courses to respond to the high demand for Romanian language courses is needed. Language courses are designed for 10 people. However, currently course groups are formed of 14–16 people, due to the increase in the demand. Interviewed actors maintain that this limits the quality of the courses, as the active involvement of all participants is more limited.
- Financial assistance for the constant participation of beneficiaries in cultural and language courses is needed to enhance a constant commitment throughout the integration path.
- An agreement between the project and beneficiaries should be defined that identifies the responsibilities of both beneficiaries and project staff to make beneficiaries aware of their

own role in the integration process and enhance commitment. In addition, according to interviewed actors, a set of behavioural rules should be defined and shared with the beneficiary at the beginning of the assistance.

- Stress management strategies and support should be introduced for staff members dealing with beneficiaries to prevent their burnout, due to an increase in the psychological and emotional load following interaction of staff with a high number of beneficiaries.

3 Conclusions and lessons learnt

Conclusions

Romania has been a country of emigration, in particular after the accession to the EU. According to the World Bank, in 2017 Romania was the top country in the EU for the relative number of immigrants and Bucharest-Ifov region has been a net contributor to emigration.

However, over the years, Romania has become an attractive destination for immigrants and asylum seekers. In the period 2008-2017, asylum seekers in Romania increased by 344 %. This, coupled with a high recognition rate (i.e. 63 % of the overall applications in 2017), has also triggered an increase in the number of beneficiaries of international protection (including refugees). In 2017 there were 3,924 beneficiaries of international protection in Romania (an increase of 35.2 % compared to 2016). Nevertheless, despite the increase over time, beneficiaries of international protection in 2017 represented a small part of third-country immigrants (6 %), overall immigrants (1 %) and Romanian citizens (0.02 %). In quantitative terms, beneficiaries of international protection (refugees) are an invisible part of Romanian society.

Most of the asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection live in Bucharest. Bucharest hosts the largest centre of asylum seekers and around half of the beneficiaries of international protection (refugees).

While a dispersal policy is in place for asylum seekers, no such policy is or could be put in place for refugees, as they have the right to freely move on the Romanian territory. In addition, case study interviews point out that such a policy is not relevant in the Romanian case, as the number of beneficiaries of international protection (refugees) is very low and no ghettos or neighbourhoods composed mostly of refugees are registered in Bucharest.

Despite the continuous increase in immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees in Bucharest, no specific policies are in place at local level. Bucharest ranked last in the 2015 Intercultural City Index drafted by the Council of Europe and European Commission, as no intercultural strategy is in place at local level.

This is partially due to the fact that immigration and integration policies have been a centralised policy in Romania, being led by the Ministry of International Affairs, General Department for Integration (IGI). The immigration policy in Romania has been framed based on the commitments assumed at EU level, after the accession to the EU. In addition, international organisations (IOM, UNHCR) have played a relevant role in the framing of the immigrants' integration policy through the continuous interaction with IGI. Civil society organisations have also contributed to improving policies in this area. Local institutions had a limited role in the definition of policies in this area in Romania.

While there are no specific policies for asylum seekers in Romania, beneficiaries of international protection (refugees) have access to integration support through the integration programme

and through the integration services provided by NGOs within the 2014-2020 AMIF programme. In addition, they have the same rights as Romanian citizens in access to education, social, labour market and healthcare public services.

Despite equal rights, beneficiaries of international protection face several challenges with regard to access to public services in the above-mentioned fields: administrative and legal barriers; language and cultural barriers; limited knowledge of public service staff on the rights of beneficiaries of international protection; lack of cultural mediators in public institutions; discrimination in the interaction with public authorities; limited access to bank accounts. Limited access to social, labour market and healthcare services increases their risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The INTERACT&Plus project implemented in the period May 2016-July 2019 and funded within the 2014-2020 AMIF with EUR 1,973,521.82 aims to support the social and labour market inclusion of beneficiaries of international protection and third-country immigrants. The project is led by IOM and implemented together with a network of partners (AIDROM, the Schottener Foundation, Global Help, ARPCPS), with previous experience of collaboration with IOM on immigration or other issues, and a network of volunteers and cultural mediators. The project draws on previous projects in this area (e.g. creation of a network of immigration centres, including one in Bucharest) and adopts a one-stop-shop and a person-based approach to integration services provided. It offers information and guidance, and individual support (i.e. support in access to education, social, labour market and healthcare public system, direct financial assistance, language classes, cultural orientation and mediation and leisure activities, after-school services for children benefiting from international protection). Additionally, it includes communication and dissemination activities to increase awareness of barriers faced by beneficiaries of international protection.

In the period 2016-2019 the project informed and counselled 2,291 beneficiaries of international protection, of which 89 % were located in Bucharest. In the same period, it provided individual support to 2,681 beneficiaries of international protection, of which 84 % were in Bucharest.

No evaluation system is in place for the assessment of results and impacts. However, case interviews show that the project has contributed to the social integration of beneficiaries and to preventing dropout tendencies in beneficiaries' children. Furthermore, the project has allowed beneficiaries to have a contact person that could guide them through the Romanian public system and Romanian society to better understand their rights, and to have better access to them.

Limited results have been registered in the labour market integration due to administrative and legal barriers and beneficiaries' tendency to work illegally. Indeed, low net wages coupled with the fact that financial assistance provided by the integration programme (IGI) and by the project are conditioned by the level of income favour illegal work among beneficiaries, as their financial needs could not be covered only by legal wages.

Lessons learnt

The main lessons learnt are the following.

- Despite being mainly an emigration country, Romania and, in particular Bucharest, has become a destination of asylum seekers and refugees in the last number of years. However, most of them use Romania mainly as a transit country towards western Europe that offers better living conditions. In spite of a high labour shortage, Romania (including Bucharest) does not seem able to take advantage of refugee flows to fill the labour gaps. Several administrative and legal barriers as well as lack of support to the integration on the labour market of refugees, including through entrepreneurship, and the lack of an intercultural strategy at local level (Bucharest) hinder their permanence in Romania after gaining refugee status.
- Based on case interviews and studies, impacts of refugee flows in Romania on the labour market, social, education and healthcare systems are extremely limited at the moment, on the one hand due to the low number of refugees and on the other hand due to the difficult access to public services in these areas, resulting in a low number of refugees benefiting from them. However, their quantitative assessment and evolution over time is limited by the lack of systematic and coherent data on refugees' access to social benefits and public services in the field of education, social services, healthcare and labour market as well as by the lack of *ex post* evaluation of policies in this field.
- Impacts of refugee flows on the Romanian public opinion are strongly influenced by social and traditional media and by events that occur abroad. At the moment, impacts on public opinion are limited and no mass protests have been registered in Romania. However, refugees and third-country immigrants surveyed within the study Index of Immigrants' Integration in Romania (Cosciug et al., 2018) report having experienced discrimination in particular in relation to public institutions. Schools and public transport companies are the contexts where refugees and third-country immigrants have experienced discrimination most often.
- Equal access to social rights and public services does not mean equality in the access to them. Despite the fact that Romania provides equal access to public services, case interviews show that refugees have limited access to them due to administrative and legal barriers, language and cultural barriers, refugees' insufficient knowledge of the social, education and healthcare Romanian public systems, insufficient knowledge by public administration employees of beneficiaries' rights, lack of cultural mediators and discrimination of refugees in the interaction with public institutions. Even though some steps have been taken at national level (e.g. a specific procedure for the recognition of previous qualifications, and elimination of the need to prove income in the previous year to access to social benefits), more needs to be done to eliminate all administrative and legal barriers encountered by refugees in access to public services. Specific procedures have to be developed in the education, social, labour market and healthcare fields to

ensure equality in the access to public services in these areas. In addition, particular attention should be paid to ensuring that refugees can open bank accounts.

- Refugees face multifaceted and interlinked problems that require the collaboration and coordination of various public and private actors at all levels (from the local one to the national and international ones). Multilevel governance is crucial for the development of specific policies and procedures for refugees' integration and for ensuring their sustainability over time. This can be ensured through mixed working groups, involvement of public and private actors from all levels in the monitoring committees of national policies in this area, etc.
- Involvement of local public actors is essential for understanding possible bottlenecks of national policies at local level, for building bottom-up solutions, but also for increasing their awareness of refugees' needs and rights. Civil society organisations can provide relevant insights on refugees' problems and contribute to the improvement of policies in this area and their delivery.
- International organisations (e.g. IOM, UNHCR) can bring in relevant resources (e.g. knowledge, financial, legal) in the definition and implementation of integration policies. They can provide useful guidance to public actors on possible measures in this field. In addition, they can have a relevant role in raising awareness of public actors regarding the needs of asylum seekers and refugees and the necessity to adopt specific procedures to ease their integration process.
- Capacity building and awareness-raising activities at all levels of the public administration are essential for increasing knowledge of public employees about the needs and rights of asylum seekers and refugees, and their skills on how to develop specific measures for their social and labour market integration. For instance, skills for the creation of inclusive education are essential for providing school integration of refugee children and for favouring a good school performance. Skills are also essential for the development of intercultural strategies at local level in all areas of life (e.g. intercultural planning of the urban environment, enhancing entrepreneurship for refugees). In addition, capacity-building interventions are also essential for increasing the awareness of public administration staff of the needs of refugees.
- As previously mentioned, refugees face multiple and interlinked needs. The adoption of a one-stop-shop approach allows for the provision of an integrated answer to the challenges faced by refugees. The adoption of a one-stop-shop approach coupled with the introduction of the case manager figure favours the participation of refugees in integration activities as well as their request for support.
- The adoption of a person-based approach allows for the provision of services that respond to the needs of each person. The identification of the needs of each person and the services most suitable to that person favours the integration process and the participation of refugees in the respective activities. In addition, the adoption of a person-based

approach allows case managers to better understand future plans of refugees and tailor the provided services to their expectations.

- Direct financial assistance (e.g. reimbursement of rental expenses, reimbursement of health insurance expenses, financial support for food, clothes, school materials, reimbursement of electricity expenses) is crucial for reducing the risk of poverty of refugees. However, it should be accompanied by interventions aimed at allowing refugees to become autonomous (e.g. labour search, language courses and cultural orientation sessions) so as to prevent long-time financial dependency. According to some case interviewees, financial assistance should be linked/conditioned to the constant participation in the integration activities foreseen by the integration path.
- In order to increase beneficiaries' constant participation in all the activities foreseen by the integration path, an agreement between the project and the beneficiary should be signed including the rights and duties of the beneficiary and the project staff.
- Specific measures should be adopted for the upskilling of refugees (where needed) in order to allow them to have access to better quality jobs that would also give them the opportunity for a higher income.
- Specific attention should be paid to preventing illegal work among refugees. From this point of view, specific attention should be paid to the level of income set for the access to direct financial assistance.
- Specific attention should be paid to ensuring access to social housing. Adequate accommodation remains a significant problem for refugees that invest over half of their income in paying the rent and that have access to limited financial support for sustaining rental expenses. Additionally, in the case of Bucharest, refugees also experience discrimination in renting a house due to the reluctance of house owners to rent their houses to refugees. Case interviews show that reluctance is especially due to the mistrust of house owners in the capacity of refugees to pay the rent and in their long-term permanence. Access to housing is a challenging issue particularly in Bucharest and in other large Romanian cities where there is a high rental demand.
- In the transferability of the INTERACT&Plus project, specific attention should be paid to the following aspects: adoption of a person-based and one-stop-shop approach; identification of a case manager; history of collaboration of the partnership; experience of the partnership in the integration of refugees and asylum seekers; design of specific coordination rules of the project partners; design of a monitoring and *ex post* evaluation system.
- A specific *ex post* evaluation system should be in place both at policy and project level in order to understand impacts of initiatives in this area.
- Integration of refugees is a long-term process. This means that refugees need constant support over a long period of time. The time of the integration process is not always reconcilable with that of AMIF calls funding integration services. Long-term projects should be implemented in order to favour the effectiveness of the integration measures. In

addition, the timing between the closing of one call and the opening of another should be reduced in order to ensure the sustainability of support.

- Calls for proposals should be more flexible and allow applicants to provide an array of services among which refugees could choose those most suitable to their respective situation. For instance, a consistent number of refugees not wishing to remain in Romania are not interested in attending Romanian language courses foreseen by the integration programme.
- In addition, the volatility of the target group should be considered in the definition of the output and outcome indicators of the calls. For instance, the achievement of targets regarding the provision of school materials depends on the number of refugee families in Romania at the time.
- Dispersal policies are in place for asylum seekers in order to avoid overcrowding in regional centres set up for hosting asylum seekers and vulnerable refugees. However, such policies are not deemed necessary for refugees as their number in Bucharest and, more in generally in Romania, is low. In addition, the Romanian legislation offers the right to free movement on the Romanian territory to refugees.
- Specific attention should be paid to offering support to refugees whose permanence on the territory of other EU countries was denied. These are people that usually leave Romania after obtaining refugee status, but who do not manage to obtain a stay permit in other EU countries and are returned to Romania. Following their return in Romania, they have no access to the integration programme as they have already completed it. Consequently, the only assistance to which they have access it is that provided by civil society organisations within integration projects.

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List of interviewees

Type of organisation	Organisation
International organisation	IOM
Non-profit organisation	Schottener Foundation
Association	AIDROM
NGO	Global Help Association
National authority	Ministry of Internal Affairs, Direction Asylum and Integration

List of Annexes

Annex I

Table 3: Financial impacts and their indicators - regional/local level

Impacts	Selected indicators	Last available data*	Forecast of growth or decrease in ten years**	Forecast of growth or decrease in twenty years*	Source	Regional / local***
Public revenues	Average social security contributions and taxes (payroll/business) per employed refugee ^{51,52}	Not available	Not available	Not available		Regional/National
Public revenues	Consumption tax on spending of refugees per refugee ⁵³	Not available	Not available	Not available		National
Public spending	Spending on integration and initial reception measures ⁵⁴ per refugee	18,000,000 euro (value of projects implemented within AMIF – includes projects for asylum seekers, legal migrants (e.g. refugees) and volunteer return	Not available	Not available	IGI (2018 data)	National
Public spending	Extra spending on integration in the education system (per refugee pupil)	Not available	Not available	Not available		National
Public spending	Education spending per pupil per year in country (total population ⁵⁵)	Not available	Not available	Not available		National
Public spending	Health care spending per person and year in the country (total population ⁵⁶)	Not available	Not available	Not available		National
Public spending	Housing subsidies per person and year in the country (total population ⁵⁷)	Not available	Not available	Not available		Regional

⁵¹ Here it is mainly asked whether data exist and if interviewees have views on the matter. Please leave the space blank if there is no evidence available.

⁵² Calculated by average values for the active population with a discount for immigrants from literature.

⁵³ Here it is mainly asked whether data exist and if interviewees have views on the matter. Please leave the space blank if there is no evidence available.

⁵⁴ Housing, sustenance, language course, employment integration courses other integration courses

⁵⁵ The assumption is that after some time the spending amounts will be comparable to the amounts spent on the native population.

⁵⁶ The assumption is that after some time the spending amounts will be comparable to the amounts spent on the native population.

⁵⁷ The assumption is that after some time the spending amounts will be comparable to the amounts spent on the native population.

Table 4: Economic impacts and their indicators

Impacts	Selected indicators	Last available data*	Forecast of growth or decrease in ten years**	Forecast of growth or decrease in twenty years*	Data source	Regional / local***
Employment (rate)	Number and proportion (%) of refugees finding a job (at arrival)	22.2% (year of reference unknown)	Not available	Not available	Index of Immigrants' integration in Romania (2018)	National
	Number and proportion (%) of refugees finding a job (within 5 years)	Not available	Not available	Not available		
	Number and proportion (%) of refugees finding a job (in the longer terms)	Not available	Not available	Not available		Regional
Entrepreneurship	Number and proportion (% of self-employed amongst those finding a job) of new enterprises founded by refugees ⁵⁸	Not available	Not available	Not available		National
Underemployed or not employed low skill workers	Number and proportion of long-term unemployed refugees ⁵⁹	110 (between 2007 and 2015) – not known if they are long-term	Not available	Not available	The impact of migration on the labour market from Romania (2016)	National
	Number and proportion of underemployed refugees ⁶⁰	33.75 % (*including also third-country immigrants)	Not available	Not available	Index of Immigrants' integration in Romania (2018)	National
	Number and proportion of precariously employed refugees ⁶¹	Not available	Not available	Not available		Regional

⁵⁸ Calculated on the basis of historic precedence of past immigrant flows.

⁵⁹ Calculated on the basis of historic precedence of past immigrant flows.

⁶⁰ Calculated on the basis of historic precedence of past immigrant flows.

⁶¹ Calculated on the basis of historic precedence of past immigrant flows.

Table 5: Social and political impacts and their indicators

Impacts	Selected indicators	Last available data*	Forecast of growth or decrease in ten years**	Forecast of growth or decrease in twenty years*	Data sources	Regional / local***
Demography	Impact on dependency ratio	Not available	Not available	Not available		National
Cultural diversity	No quantitative indicator	last place regarding intercultural aspects in public life	Not available	Not available	Intercultural City Index (2015)	Local (Bucharest)
Security	Impact on crime rate (of refugee/total population)	Not available	Not available	Not available		Regional
Perception	Perception rates for immigration as a problem	in 2015, 54% of the surveyed population did not agree with the presence of refugees in Romania	Not available	Not available	Report on the Perception of Romanians about the Crisis of refugees (2016)	National
Political tensions caused by migration	Relevance of immigration in political debates and elections	Not relevant	Not available	Not available	Case interviews	National and local

Annex II

Table 6: Policy classification: different types of policies for different targets at Country and local level

		Romania				
		Country-level policies targeting:		Regional or local-level policies targeting:		Assessment
Category	Types	Targets: asylum seekers	Target: refugee status holders	Targets: asylum seekers	Target: refugee status holders	
Initial reception, emergency measures and referrals	Emergency housing Emergency healthcare Basic subsistence needs Reception and recognition provisions Residence permits Family reunification Settlement restrictions Referrals Distinguishing between exceptional and ordinary reception procedures	First aid and initial reception measures are provided.	Residence permit is given for three years for refugees and for two years for those under subsidiarity protection. Both can be renewed. Refugees can apply for family reunification as long as their family members are not on the Romanian territory	-	-	2 (case interview data) – asylum seekers 3 (based on IGI data on approval rates and processing time) – refugees * Assessment based on information included in the country fiche on Romania
Relocation (sharing responsibility of receiving refugees)		Takes part in relocation scheme		-	-	1 * Assessment based on information included in the country fiche on Romania
Resettlement (humanitarian corridors)						N/A

Housing/accommodation	Housing/accommodation Housing support	Asylum seekers who don't have subsistence means have the right to reception services. If the capacities of the centre are exceeded asylum seekers receive accommodation allowance and a maintenance allowance; the amount varies during summer and winter period (Act No. 122 of 4 May 2006 on Asylum in Romania and the Government Decree No. 1251 of 13 September 2006 regarding the Methodological Norms for Applying Act 122/2006).	Refugees have the right to social housing. In case it is not available the refugees involved into integration programme have a right to rent reimbursement of 50 % for one year. Refugees enrolled in the Integration programme without/ or with limited financial means have the right to be hosted in regional asylum seekers centres. Vulnerable refugees are excluded from any payment (Act No. 122 of 4 May 2006 on Asylum in Romania and the Government Decree No. 1251 of 13 September 2006 regarding the Methodological Norms for Applying Act 122/2006). There are also NGOs working on housing project for asylum seekers and refugees.	Housing support provided by international organisations/ NGOs within specific integration projects funded by 2014-2020 AMIF	Housing support provided by international organisations/ NGOs within specific integration projects funded by 2014-2020 AMIF	2 (case interview data) – assessment regarding national policies for refugees
Healthcare	Emergency/urgent healthcare Full healthcare	Free access to primary and emergency care, psychological services, access to care in case of acute and chronic diseases as, to screening programmed for contagious diseases and in case of epidemiological risk situations; access to the national insurance system upon payment of the foreseen healthcare contributions.	Access to the health insurance and health system as well as to psychiatric and psychological services equal to Romanian citizens.	Healthcare support provided by international organisations/ NGOs within specific integration projects funded by 2014-2020 AMIF	Healthcare support provided by international organisations/ NGOs within specific integration projects funded by 2014-2020 AMIF	2 (case interview data) - assessment regarding national policies for refugees

Social Assistance and income support	Social assistance services Income support Eligibility for welfare benefits	Monthly allowance amounting to 104 euro for single adults, 123 euro for pregnant women (months 1-4) and 130 for those pregnant in months 5-9, 136 euro for women with children 0-5 years old and 150 euro for women with children 6-12 months. They are additionally entitled to child allowance.	Refugees enrolled in Integration programme and without sufficient financial means have the right to a non-reimbursable aid for maximum 12 months. Vulnerable categories of refugees (with disabilities, pregnant women, victims of human trafficking etc.) are provided with aid even without being enrolled into the programme.		Social assistance and income support provided by international organisations/ NGOs within specific integration projects funded by 2014-2020 AMIF	2 (case interview data) - assessment regarding national policies for refugees
Education and training	School enrolling and attendance Adult education Vocational education and training	Free and unconditional access to before pre-school, pre-school and compulsory education under the same conditions as Romanian citizens; access to education as observers in the first year; access to a free intensive preparatory course. Upon registration at County Employment Agency asylum seekers have access to the evaluation of their professional competences and vocational training programmes (presenting relevant diploma and certifications).	Access to free education under the same conditions as for Romanian citizens; access to preparatory courses and to enrolment as observers for one year. Access to vocational training and professional counselling programmes under the same conditions as Romanian citizens. Those enrolled in Integration programme have free access to professional counselling and training services.	Education and training support provided by international organisations/ NGOs within specific integration projects funded by 2014-2020 AMIF	Education and training support provided by international organisations/ NGOs within specific integration projects funded by 2014-2020 AMIF	2 (case interview data) - assessment regarding national policies for refugees

Labour market access/integration	Skills assessment/validation Active Labour market policy (counselling, mentoring, job search assistance, entrepreneurship promotion and social networks) Grants and preparatory courses Employment subsidies, apprenticeships, traineeships, on-the-job trainings, temporary/voluntary work Unemployment benefits	Asylum seekers can start working 3 months from lodging application under the same conditions as Romanian citizens and with access to unemployment benefit if no decision has been taken in this period. There are some sectoral limitations particularly in the medical field.	Access to the labour market under the same conditions as for Romanian citizens; sectoral limitations regarding the medical field. Those enrolled in the Integration programme have to register to the County Agency for Employment and are granted access to counselling services.	-	Labour market support provided by international organisations/ NGOs within specific integration projects funded by 2014-2020 AMIF	2 (case interview data) - assessment regarding national policies for refugees
Social and political integration	Early orientation programmes (language, practical orientation, civic education etc.,) Integration programmes such as sport, culture, diversity promotion Political participation (local level) Residence and religion rights	Language courses are organized in regional reception centres by NGOs with European funding	Free access to language classes and cultural orientation courses if they are enrolled in the Integration programme Access to citizenship after a period of 4 years of permanent residence in Romania	-	Social, leisure and cultural activities provided by international organisations/ NGOs within specific integration projects funded by 2014-2020 AMIF	2 (case interview data) - assessment regarding national policies for refugees
Rejection of asylum request		Appeal can be submitted to the Regional Court and further to Country tribunal.		-	-	1

Table 7: Actors classification: A picture of the actors involved in the asylum seekers and refugees' system at Country level

Levels	Bureaucrats*	Politicians*	Experts*	Special interest*	Diffused interest*
International	EC IOM UNHCR	-	-	-	
National	IGI Ministry of National Education National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas (CNRED) General Directory for Social Assistance – Ministry of Labour and Social Justice Ministry of Health National House of Health Insurance National Authority for Citizenship	-	-	-	Civil society organisations
Regional	-	-	-		
Local	County agency for payments and Social Inspection County agency for children's protection County School Inspectorates County Employment Agencies	-	-	Employers	Civil society organisations

Annex III

Table 8: Actors classification: The actors involved in the specific intervention under analysis*

Levels	Bureaucrats* ⁶²	Politicians*	Experts*	Special interest*	Diffused interest*
International	International Organisation for Migration (IOM – Romanian branch)	-	-	-	-
National	General inspectorate for Immigration (IGI), Ministry of Internal Affairs Ministry of Health Ministry of National Education National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas (CNRED) General Directory for Social Assistance – Ministry of Labour	-	-	Association of Importers and Exporters	The Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania (AIDRom) Schottener Foundation – Social Services, Romania Romanian Association for Quality Promotion and Successful Practices - ARPCPS Global Help Association
Regional	-	-	-	-	-
Local	Agency for Social Payments and Controls of the Municipality of Bucharest National Agency for Employment (ANOJFM) Bucharest General Direction of Social Protection and Child Protection Health Insurance Agency of Bucharest	-	-	Companies	-

*The table refers to the actors involved in the project Interact and Interact Plus and in particular in the activities implemented in Bucharest (project area selected for the case study).

⁶² *Bureaucratic actors are those actors that base the legitimacy of their intervention in the policy process on the claim that formal rules and procedures confer them a specific responsibility in the process; Political actors are those actors that base the legitimacy of their intervention on the fact of representing citizens as they enjoy citizens' consensus; experts are those actors that base the legitimacy of their intervention in the policy process on the claim of having the knowledge needed in order to solve the problem; special interest actors (grey nodes) are those actors that base the legitimacy of their intervention on the fact that they are directly affected by the policy decision, meaning that they will try to maximize the benefit/cost ratio from their specific point of view; general interests actors (pink nodes) are those actors that base the legitimacy of their intervention in the policy process on the fact that the interests they represent are general (e.g. NGOs, etc) and on the fact that they represent groups that cannot defend their interests by themselves.

Table 9: Mapping the actors and the roles

Actors (please specify the name of the actor as in the previous table)	Role in the network								
	Setting the legal framework**	Political responsible**	Technical responsible**	Financing***	Programming the intervention***	Coordinator in the implementation phase***	Policy (PROJECT) Implementer***	Monitoring and data collection***	Actors mobilizing relevant resources (legal, political, knowledge, human resources)***
International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Office in Romania	2	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	1
AIDRom – the Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania	0	0	0	2	1	2	1	2	1
Schottener Foundation – Social Services, Romania	0	0	0	2	1	2	1	2	1
General inspectorate for Immigration (IGI)	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	1
Agency for Social Payments and Controls of the Municipality of Bucharest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Romanian Association for Quality Promotion and Successful Practices – ARPCPS*	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Global Help Association*	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
ANOFM Bucharest	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
General Directory for Social Assistance – Ministry of Labour	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	1
General Direction of Social Protection and Child Protection Bucharest	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2

Actors (please specify the name of the actor as in the previous table)	Role in the network								
	Setting the legal framework**	Political responsible**	Technical responsible**	Financing***	Programming the intervention***	Coordinator in the implementation phase***	Policy (PROJECT) Implementer***	Monitoring and data collection***	Actors mobilizing relevant resources (legal, political, knowledge, human resources)***
Health Insurance Agency Bucharest	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Ministry of National Education	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	1
Ministry of Health	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0
Companies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Association of Importers and Exporters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

*Global Help and ARPCPS were not involved in the implementation of INTERACT&Plus in Bucharest, as they are in charge of the project implementation in other areas of Region 1 (i.e. the project area). Therefore, they were not considered in the mobilisation of relevant resources for the project implementation in Bucharest area.

** Sections marked with ** refer to the overall national integration policy within which the Interact and Interact Plus projects have been implemented

*** Sections marked with *** refer to the Interact and Interact Plus projects.

Table 10: Relationship matrix - PROGRAMMING PHASE*

	IOM	AIDRom	Schottener Foundation	Global Help	ARPCPS
IOM, Office in Romania					
AIDRom					
Schottener Foundation					
Global Help					
ARPCPS					

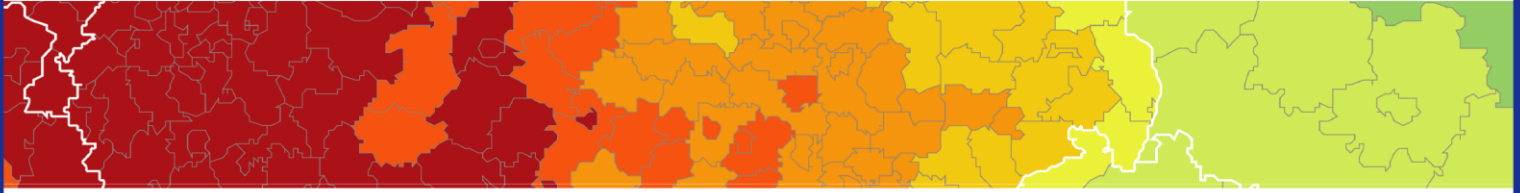
* The programming phase refers to actors involved in the Interact and Interact plus regional projects

Table 11: Relationship matrix - IMPLEMENTATION PHASE* – Bucharest activities

	IOM	AIDRom	Schottener Foundation	IGI	Agency for Social Payments and Controls of the Municipality of Bucharest	ANOFM Bucharest	CNRED	General Directory for Social Assistance – Ministry of Labour	General Direction of Social Protection and Child Protection	Health Insurance Agency of the municipality of Bucharest	Ministry of National Education	Ministry of Health	Companies	Association of Importers and Exporters
IOM, Office in Romania														
AIDRom														
Schottener Foundation														
IGI														
Agency for Social Payments and Controls of the Municipality of Bucharest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
ANOFM Bucharest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
General Directory for Social Assistance – Ministry of Labour	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		

	IOM	AIDRom	Schottener Foundation	IGI	Agency for Social Payments and Controls of the Municipality of Bucharest	ANOFM Bucharest	CNRED	General Directory for Social Assistance – Ministry of Labour	General Direction of Social Protection and Child Protection	Health Insurance Agency of the municipality of Bucharest	Ministry of National Education	Ministry of Health	Companies	Association of Importers and Exporters
General Direction of Social Protection and Child Protection	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Health Insurance Agency	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Ministry of National Education	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Ministry of Health	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Companies														
Association of Importers and Exporters														

* The implementation phase refers to the implementation of the Interact and Interact Plus projects in Bucharest (i.e. the area selected for the in-depth analysis)



ESPON 2020 – More information

ESPON EGTC

4 rue Erasme, L-1468 Luxembourg - Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Phone: +352 20 600 280

Email: info@espon.eu

www.espon.eu, [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#)

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