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ALTER-GLOBALISM AND  
DEVELOPMENT IN MIGRATION  
CONDITIONS.  
THE CASE OF AN EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRY

Review  
Article

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**Abstract**

*Globalisation is a process that brings advantages and disadvantages to all states, regardless of their stage of development. The relative deprivation, especially the financial one, of the developing countries is a reason of frustration, which motivates the emigration decision; hence our orientation to alter-globalism. In this paper, I intend to highlight by means of analysis, synthesis, deduction, induction, and statistic data, the causes and types of migration in Romania's case, one of the main European countries where the immigrants originate from. We will see how globalisation manifests itself in a twofold manner in the economy and the society of a developing country, just like migration. We will show why a poor country is avoided by immigrants and deserted, as a result of immigration, by its own population, while, just like the developed states, it is likely to face the same demographic, economic and social problems, considering that the process of demographic transition is already manifested.*

## INTRODUCTION

The last decades have been defined by globalisation. We can notice, more and more clearly, how everything is affected by uniformization: economy, culture, information, technology, mentalities, violence and crime. In its dynamism, globalisation has a positive and a negative manifestation. The phenomenon can be analysed from different angles, sustained or contradicted according to interests and circumstances. It is increasingly difficult to make clear dichotomies between “being pro” and “being against” globalization. The balance described by globalization in the variety of its dimensions, from the cultural to the economic one, has a meaning, but we should provide it with a different form compared to the one it has had (Kolodko G., 2015). Economic globalization provided the controversial image of some net benefits for the entities that conduct it – the developed countries –, and of much too low benefits compared to the negative effects and associated costs for the developing states that do not administer correctly the process; that is why the latter are exposed to a minimal materialization of the expectations of increasing prosperity. The conviction that the industrialization of the economic south according to the model of the north under the circumstances of globalization (UNCTAD, 2016) is disconfirmed by reality, while theory remains valid for a low incidence.

The lacks existing in some countries and regions, materialized in a standard of living below the level of dignity, together with the conflictual situations correlated with the possibility to circulate freely emphasised the migration phenomenon. Crossing the borders seems, in a globalized world, a simple action of one individual, while it is actually one of the biggest damages of the current period (Castels S., 2008).

The pathology of migration is complex, and the phenomenon itself has a twofold impact according to the determining causes, being difficult to control, for lack of properly conceived and applied policies. When the migration fluxes get so big as to become difficult to control, and the main reason for the decision to migrate is to take refuge in peaceful regions, with a completely different culture compared to the regions of origin, acceptance of migration seems to be rather a form of humanity combined with social and economic concern. This is how this phenomenon appeared in 2016, when Europe was hit by a wave of refugees; on the other hand, our goal here is not to analyse the problem of refugees, but that of the Romanian immigrants.

Globalization diversified widely the types of mobility, it provided the hope for a better life, but it

also brought forth the obvious concern of the governments as regards the possibilities to offer to foreigners the life they want without affecting in any way the lives of the locals. If for the foreign population migration means safety, for the locals it means economic and social uncertainty. Globalization is a phenomenon easy to understand under the normative aspect. In reality, the challenges of globalization are actually accepted from a significant distance in relation to the place where it takes place (seen from outside). We accept the fact that the world gets globalized as long as we are not required to give up sovereignty, we accept the idea of multiculturalism as long as nobody asks us to speak other people’s language or embrace traditions and customs that are totally different from ours, we accept that there are several religions in the world, but we are strongly anchored in what defines us and, similarly, we are open to new horizons as long as nobody and nothing forces us to change our own mentality.

The alter-globalism places us in front of new challenges and choices. Migration, for instance, with acceptable limits and kept under control, can be considered from all angles, without reaching dark conclusions. When the limits are escalated and the migrants have different customs, cultures, religions and mentalities, and above all low inclination to work, the importance of the migration issue escalates, calling into question the economic and social security of the local population.

The effects of globalization are dual, as this is a process of inclusion and exclusion at once. The multinational investments and companies coming from developed countries modify the economic-social structure of the developing states; it is not rare that the latter find themselves in the situation of renouncing their own economic activities, workplaces, of devaluing qualifications on their own markets.

The transformations of globalization are manifested in all sectors, at all levels. Between globalization and technological process there is a process of mutual dependence and influence. Globalization induces progress and progress induces globalization. They both have positive and negative, as well as direct, indirect and induced effects, which are impossible to deem as beneficial for the economy and the society but, on the whole, they have as an outcome the increasing prosperity at the cost of affecting the environment. In the world, people live better now than they did in the past, but the future is uncertain. Humanity faces the effects of globalization such as pollution, global warming, possible food crises, crises of potable water, of oil, social crises or crises of different other natures. The dystopic scenarios impose a reassessment of the process and of its consequences. The alter-globalization discriminates

between the positive and the negative effects of progress. The diminution of the negative consequences that affect life, economy and welfare involve a spiritual approach of the economic and social phenomena that could change mentalities, attitudes and behaviours. Globalization is impelled by technological progress, which affected the environment to such an extent that we often ask ourselves how close the collapse of civilisation is and how guilty we are of a dark future of humanity, as we are now living the paradox of involution in evolution.

In agriculture, for instance, the green revolution of the 1980s gave way to the introduction of new crops, with higher yields, which needed high investments in fertilizers, insecticides, mechanization (Castels S., 2008) and genetic research. The result materialized in the increase of productivity, in the concentration of production and of land property in the hands of some rich farmers (while in the case of less developed states these farmers are mainly foreigners), but also in the increasing pollution of soil, in the diminishing fertility, in the necessity to use strong chemical products in order to sustain repeated cycles of production. Globalization created the conditions for social alienation, and manipulation, even if it offers educational perspectives everywhere in the world. From a Machiavellian perspective, globalization brings forth the prosperity of some by means of the impoverishment of the others, based on emphasised inequities, under the promises of welfare equally shared between countries and people.

### **ALTER-GLOBALIZATION AND MIGRATION**

Why is it necessary to analyse the migration phenomenon in relation with globalization and development? because, according to Robert Barro, human capital plays an important role in many endogenous models of economic growth (Barro J.R., 1991). The quality of human capital is the one that defines the quality of society and, implicitly, of the actions undertaken in the economic sphere. Growth proves to be directly proportional with the population's education degree, while the formal and informal education degree defines the quality of the human capital and imposes the rhythm of development. Migrants could generate demographic shocks, as it affects the population's structure (Boubtane E., Dumont J.Ch., 2013). As long as the immigrants are added to the human capital with a high degree of education, the outcomes for the economy of the hosting country range from null to positive results. Conversely, migration becomes a process that the hosting country and population will not adhere to when it attracts violence, robbery, uncertainty, the need for

authority support, i.e. social and economic risks. Migration is a force as long as 3% of the world population leaves their countries of origin (Kerr P.S., Kerr W., 2011). The globalization of markets is abolishing now the workplaces of the middle class (Wallerstein I. et al., 2015), and by way of compensation it improves transportation and communication infrastructure, allowing people to look for job prospects far away from their homes.

The migration phenomenon is adhered to when it takes the form of brain drain. The hosting countries gain from this type of migration when the flux is directed from the less developed to the more developed countries. The phenomenon has a double negative effect on the prosperity of the home country: the number of tax payers diminishes, so an important source of income is lost from the state budget, and the incomes invested in the training of the human capital are not recovered (Domingues dos Santos M., Postel-Vinay F., 2001). Assuming that the immigrants send to their countries part of the incomes (literature supports, with statistic evidence too, this aspect, but the remittances decrease as the immigrants consolidate their professional, family and legal situation in the hosting country), the losses of qualified human capital affect in a negative manner productivity, the income per capita, the quality of the society, and it impedes the perpetuation of spiritual-moral values and principles. In the case of the brain-drain phenomenon, the negative impact is diminished if, by means of certain circumstances, part of the people who left the country come back (the decision to leave had been made without a correct analysis of the situation, or this was for a limited period of time – for instance with a view to undertake some professional training). The decision to immigrate mainly depends on a complex of factors, among which the economic ones are the most important (OECD, 1989), all of them converging with relative deprivation. Migration is considered a selective process because only people with sufficient financial possibilities, able to cover the mobility costs and to support outer opportunities, can do it (Castels S., 2008). Stephen Castels thinks that immigrants are a symbol of globalization and they are guilty of the changes occurring in the world; these changes, on the one hand, influence migration and modify its direction and forms, and on the other hand it is an intrinsic part of the social transformation, being an important force in the remodelling of the communities and of societies (Castels S., 2008).

## ROMANIA – AN IMMIGRANT SOURCE COUNTRY

Globalisation opens the frontiers and allows for an almost free movement of the population. Globalisation again, in the dualism of its manifestation, polarised in the developed countries the workplaces, increasing the number of the poorly paid jobs and of the well-paid jobs, at the top (Stiglitz J., 2013). As being poorly paid in a developed country equates being decently paid in a poor country, the population of the latter category deem migration as a form of financial and social safety.

The highest percentage of immigrants leave the country of origin looking for better living conditions. Romania, a central European country peripheral from the economic standpoint, became the main European market that sends immigrants. After the change of regime, over two decades and a half about 100,000 Romanians have emigrated annually (about 2.3 million in the period 1990-2014). The year 2007, the year of Romania's adherence to the European Union represented a climax of the migration phenomenon, as Romanians were allowed to circulate freely in the EU territory. The elimination of visas made travelling easier, especially towards countries such as Spain and Italy, the main reason being the linguistic similarities and the relatively small distances.

In the period 1990-2007, Romanians were mainly emigrating towards Israeli, Turkey, Italy, Hungary, Germany, USA and Canada. Afterwards, the targeted countries were the developed countries of the EU. According to the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS), 46% of the Romanians emigrated to Italy, 34% to Spain, 7% to Germany, 4% to Great Britain, 3% to Hungary, and 6% to other destinations (Table no. 1).

Comparing domestic annual incomes and GDP per capita with those of the countries the emigrants prefer, Romania registers lower levels. A German or an English citizen has average incomes about five times bigger than those of a Romanian. Regardless of the level of unemployment rate or of economic growth, Romanians choose their destination according to potential incomes. Romania records rates of positive, but unsustainable economic growth, based on consumption and imports, and not on durable factors. The Romanians' appetite for luxury products (the paradox of poverty), the low purchasing power of the population with average and small incomes, and the fact that the budget mainly goes to basic needs, resulted in the fact that the main factor of growth be consumption stimulated by easy and cheap credit in certain periods, easy and expensive credit in other periods. The labour market is not really researched by the

immigrants. The possibility to obtain higher incomes, the existence of social networks (persons they know who already live in other states, enjoying a certain financial stability), knowledge of a foreign level at least at a conversational level are much more important factors when it comes to choosing the destination country, compared to the rate of unemployment or of the economic growth (Table no. 2).

The destination countries of the Romanian emigrants are very developed countries from the standpoint of their HDI value, part of the first group of human development. according to UNDP data, in 2014 Romania was part of the second category of human development, with an HDI 0.123 smaller than that of Germany. The difference of development derives from that of the life expectancy at birth (a Romanian has a life expectancy at birth about 8.5 times smaller than an Italian) and from that of the gross domestic product per capita (GDP/capita is about 2.4 times smaller than in Germany, 2.2 smaller than in Great Britain, and about 1.3 times smaller than in Hungary). Even if the wealth of a country does not depend on economic growth only, the latter is a condition of development. When a country records positive rates of growth that are not reflected in the improvement of life conditions for most of the citizens, then we do not speak of social progress, but only of quantitative inflation of national economy. As far as the average number of school years is concerned, considering strictly our comparison, the indicator is not relevant. Although a Romanian goes to school 2.3 years less than a German and 1.2 years more than a Spaniard, the differences are too small to state that this sub-index would have a major importance in human development. as far as schooling is concerned, this is not the number of years of formal education that influence development, but the quality of the educational act, which is difficult to catch in a statistic indicator. Eventually, development is a qualitative-quantitative process, while economic growth is mainly a quantitative one and an economy can grow and not develop.

Romanian emigrants are, in their great majority, persons fit for work from the age category 25-64, rather women than men. On the territory of the hosting country, the main occupations of the Romanian immigrants are in civil engineering (men), in domestic activities (women) and in agriculture (both genders). Romania has the most numerous diaspora in EU, representing 17% of the population living home. The Romanian immigrants are partially integrated as a result of the gradual social inclusion, considering that full integration takes place only after three-four generations (Giordano C., 2010).

According to UN, Romania is considered the second immigrant source country, after Syria, and it

cannot be found among the destinations of the foreign emigrants. In 2015, 3.4 million Romanians lived in other countries. When the main cause of immigration is economic deprivation (including the Syrian refugees wishing to get to the developed European states, although the status of refugee supposes travelling small distances in order to avoid conflictual situations and returning to the place of origin after dramatic situations are solved) a poor country such as Romania has no attractiveness, but it becomes a door to Europe for the citizens of the neighbouring non-EU countries. The citizens of the Republic of Moldavia, another country where there exists a worrying migration phenomenon, make impressive queues and long waiting lists in order to become Romanian citizens, and then emigrate to other European destinations.

In Romania, where meritocracy is an increasingly abstract concept, the educated young people are attracted by the idea of emigration, to accede to opportunities that the economy and the society of their home country do not offer them now, while the future seems rather dark. Creative thinking, innovation, human performance, high productivity are the basic elements assuring the future development of human society (Butnaru G.I., 2015). Since high school, some of the young people strategically direct their interest towards the developed European countries. When they either opt for continuing their studies in institutions from other countries, or they choose to go to prestige universities in Romania, the choice of the specializing field is made according to the demands on the western European labour markets. The lack of perspectives and the oligarchic expansion sustain emigration. As a society acquires, over time, the character of oligarchy, the inequities get deeper, the perspectives of wealth decrease, and implicitly those of personal development, so that the motivation for leaving the country increases. Poor governing and chronicity of the authorities' ignorance in relation to people, together with the degradation of human quality (in Romania there is a contradiction between the number of years of formal education and the knowledge acquired by the graduates as a consequence of the introduction of "mass" higher education), demolishes the society's force. Impassibility and migration are preferred in the detriment of reaction. When society modifies its structure to such an extent that it annihilates its own power, it becomes unable to build a stable and decent future. Romanians think foreign investors are the saviours of economy, the ones who could fix domestic shortcomings, create workplaces, build, produce, decide, dictate (even governmental policies). Under these circumstances, hope is represented by the foreigners who could do what Romanians are not willing to, especially against the backdrop of a diminution of nationalist feelings; this is an unfortunate solution, for at least

two reasons. First of all, Romanians have a low inclination to risk and to taking responsibilities for the consequences of their decisions. Secondly, emigration offers a comfortable status due to its advantages – among others, workplaces that are sometimes under the education level, but better paid compared to the wages in the country of origin, workplaces that the local population would not accept (Authority of the House of Lords, 2008), prices aligned for consumer products, hence approximately similar purchasing power, life in a civilised society, access to a high-standard health system, etc. Relative qualifications and the lack of support from authorities are accompanied by poverty and describe, in broad terms, the exogenous and endogenous causes of the migration phenomenon. When an economy decides to develop by implosion and not by explosion, it condemns its society to anarchy. As not all people accept to live in uncertain conditions, they resort to the American – or the European – dream, and even if the great majority of the immigrants reach their target (finding a workplace), some of them become a weight for the budget of the host country, just like they were for the budget of the home country.

Hein de Haas justly thinks that the main cause of migration is not poverty and destitution, but improvement of life – one of the myths of migration (De Haas H., 2005). Romanian emigrants confirm and infirm this myth. In Table 1 we showed that in Romania, average incomes per capita are \$ 9,500 per year, equating about EURO 8,500. Actually, a Romanian intellectual gains an average income of \$ 5,800 or EURO 5,000 per year. In the case of other socio-professional categories, annual incomes are even lower. The differences come from the fact that a small category benefit from much bigger incomes than the majority, inequities being quite significant. Even if a person leaves their country to gain more or to join close relatives or friends who already live abroad, the target is the same – improving the standard of life. Most of the Romanian emigrants flee poverty and a low quality of life. We admit that, as Joel Kurtzman states, money induce a kind of group hypnosis (Kurtzman J., 2006), so a mimetic behaviour. It is enough that a few persons in a community improve their life conditions, and the others will follow their example. Romania should focus on its sustainable economic growth as, according to Kuznets' theory, this decreases the (immoral and unjustified) inequities, regardless of the country's policies or characteristics, to be then stabilised at an acceptable level (Piketty Th., 2015). In Romania's case, migration is not fundamentally bad. The migration theories underline the negative effects of the phenomenon for the home countries, conclusions that are correct or partially correct for Romania. The brain-drain phenomenon is generally considered an economic and social loss. The

highest percentage of Romanian emigrants do not fit the brain-drain category, but they are persons with a minimal or average education level, or persons who reached an age deemed as difficult with a view to finding a workplace or to start professional reconversion in unemployment situations. Romania exports grey matter, but also social-professional categories. Highly qualified persons usually leave the country by legal means, knowing the job they go to, according to their formal and informal education and training. Unfortunately for its image, Romania has become famous as a result of the co-habiting population's emigration – the Romani ethnic population, who has no formal education, a problematic inclination to work and moral attitude, for whom a few hundred Euros do not represent a sufficient motivation to come back to the country of origin, because of the members of this community get this money through subversive methods. Romania was accused of discrimination towards the Romani minority. When the situation is not really known, it seems correct. In reality, the shortcomings created by the members of the Romani community are significant (violent persons, with low inclination to work, refusing to attend schools, with low degree of acculturation, refusing to comply with social rules and only obey their own rules, refusing to pay taxes and unable to justify their fortunes, consuming budget incomes such as guaranteed minimum incomes, etc.), and the money invested in their social integration did not really prove effective (they are extremely traditionalist, fond of their rules and customs). By the emigration of a number of community members as big as possible, in certain regions where the phenomenon was more significant, the economic and social safety rose. The rate of birth in the Romani community is higher than in the Romanian community. As a result of the investments made with a view to integrating the Romani population and as the Romani society increases from a demographic standpoint, multiculturalism develops, in the sense of the annihilation of the Romanian culture and the extension of the Romani one, together with the borrowing of the Romani conduct patterns by the Romanians with low education levels. Instead of being assimilated, they succeed in assimilating. The emigration of persons of ethnic members looking for new opportunities relax the economic and social tension. The Romanian Gypsies' behaviour stood out. The situation of identifying Romanians with the Romani people was reached, and this prejudiced the country's and the population's image.

Romania loses from a demographic perspective, by emigration, on the social level, some of the most qualified and educated persons (not all of them, of course) and some of the less qualified and educated people (again, not all of them), plus a considerable

number of persons included in-between these two limits. The immigrating waves from Romania towards other destinations are not now problematic ones, but in the long run there is a probability that, against the backdrop of a decreasing birth rate and as population grows older, the migration phenomenon could become a less safe one, especially considering that the chances to reduce inequities in order to become a mature country from the demographic standpoint and attractive for the young people from other states are very low. In Romania, demographic transition is manifest, like in the developed countries, with the risk that Romanians settled in other states, once they get retired, might return to their country of origin, causing thus a numeric rise of the persons in the category of age over 65 asking for support from the state (while enjoying, after all probabilities, financial advantages from the countries where they lived in their active period as well), amplifying thus the efforts of the increasingly fewer active persons. Authorities should not remain impassive, even if the risks of demographic transition are not major ones now. Necessary measures seem to be, among others, those pertaining to the redistribution of incomes on meritocratic criteria, tax measures, structural measures (the stimulation of entrepreneurship for the emigrant Romanians, by credit facilities, by ensuring outlets, subventions, free consultancy, campaign meant to promote consumption of local products among the local population, etc.), reduction of corruption levels (Romania has, according to the assessments of Transparency International, the 58th position in a hierarchy of 168 world states from the standpoint of the corruption degree, with a score of 46), the correct reformation of the educational system by eliminating the regressive one in favour of the progressive one (re-consideration of the mass higher education, which bring on the market a big number of pseudo-specialists, which devalue qualifications so that the really good specialists eventually look for further specialization training or develop frustrations), stopping the brain-drain flux by salary motivation, but also by sanctioning those who leave the country before paying off the investments made by the state when it funded the non-compulsory years of study (reimburse the sums paid for the higher education years of study to the state budget). It is worrying what an effect of family division emigration has, especially considering the traumas that children suffer as a result of their parents' departures. Second degree relatives or material wealth do not replace paternal feeling, so that the measures to stop the migration phenomenon become indispensable if enforced with morality, empathy and vision. As Adam Smith wrote in *The Wealth of Nations*, nothing is more important from the state in order to run the society, from the lowest level of poverty to the highest

degree of wealth, than peace, low taxes and supportable administration of justice. The idea is not that people should be equal, but that they should be treated equally (Hayek F., 2014). A big problem in Romania is doubtful morality, especially at a governmental level. Migration is also the result of the lack of trust in the authorities, because, as Mill stated, it is not fair to deceive somebody's trust, to violate a commitment, either explicit or implicit, to fail meeting the expectations that one's own conduct engendered consciously and voluntarily (Mill J.S., 2014), so that a different attitude is needed from the political decision-makers.

### CONCLUSIONS

Context and the players involved can make us decide whether globalization is a good or a bad process. It also depends quite significantly on the perspective from which we look at things. For this reason, the alter-globalist perspective might seem more correct. Migration is a much debated and analysed concept, with pros and cons. For a country like Romania, migration seems not to fit the economic and social framework, considering that statistically it looks good. We referred the types of emigration and its causes in the situation of a peripheral European EU-member country.

Poverty stands, above all, at the basis of the Romanians' decision to emigrate. It seems a paradox for a country that, over the last twenty-six years, have recorded periods of economic growth, one of the conditions for development, though not the only one. When growth is based on consumption, especially on that imported goods or products made in Romania by foreign companies for the local population and for exportation, economic deprivation is justified. The foreign investors use cheap labour force and resources, they have no interest in increasing salaries and in rendering the local population aware of the possibilities to cooperate and to act for their own interest. We do not blame the foreign economic agents for the unfavourable economic and social situation. They search, as expected, for opportunities to raise their own profit. The one to blame is the Romanian society and the wrong choice made at the governmental level, which decrease the population's wealth. We can notice here the advantage of globalisation: the inertial economic evolution. In the conditions of globalisation, progress is somehow forced from outside. Romania is one of the countries that develop themselves extrinsically. As miracles are only hypothetical, Romania will remain a country whose development continues to be exogenous. It will always be poor compared to other states. Presently, Romania exports, by emigration, persons

from all socio-professional categories, with varied educational levels, fit to work; but statistics demonstrate a diminishing demographic tendency and a decreasing birth rate. If we add all the problematic apparatus characterising the Romanian economy and society, the consequences will be more tragic than in the case of the developed countries already dealing with demographic problems, which can hope to solve them with the help of the immigrants in case they manage to administrate correctly the process, by adequate policies and the proper attitude. Romania will not reach the same results, because it lacks the resources.

We analysed, in an argument-based approach, the Romanian migration scene in the context of alter-globalisation, without claiming we have covered all phenomena, in all their complexity. The end of 2016 represents a step towards a new beginning. As the tone is set by the USA, it would not be unlikely to witness from now on major changes, following the fact that we are now reaching the limits of a system that does not manage any more to provide what people look for, i.e. social and economic safety at a global level. If in the USA there will emerge anti-globalist and anti-migration tendencies, Europe will erupt under the same social discontent with economic implications.

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ANNEXES

**Table no. 1: Destinations preferred by the Romanian immigrants (2015)**

	PIB/capita (\$)	Economic growth (%)	Unemployment (% of the total labour force)	Average incomes per capita (\$)
<b>Italy</b>	35896.5	0.8	12.5	32790
<b>Spain</b>	34526.5	3.2	24.7	28520
<b>Germany</b>	47268.4	1.7	5.0	45790
<b>UK</b>	41324.6	2.3	6.3	43340
<b>Hungary</b>	25581.5	2.9	7.8	12990
<b>Romania</b>	21403.1	3.7	7.0	9500

Source: data.worldbank.org

**Table no. 2: Human development of destination countries for the Romanian emigrants (2014)**

Country	HDI Rank	HDI (Human Development Index)	Life expectancy at birth (years)	Mean years of schooling	Gross national income (GNI) per capita (dollars)
<b>Germany</b>	6	0.916	80.9	13.1	43919
<b>United Kingdom</b>	14	0.907	80.7	13.1	39267
<b>Spain</b>	26	0.876	82.6	9.6	32045
<b>Italy</b>	27	0.873	83.1	10.1	33030
<b>Hungary</b>	44	0.828	75.2	11.6	22916
<b>Romania</b>	52	0.793	74.7	10.8	18108

Source: UNDP, 2015, *Human Development Report 2015*, New York: UNDP