

## Summary and conclusions

### Romanian migrants: their situation shortly after migration to the Netherlands

#### Romanians in the Netherlands

With a very low average per capita income, Romania is one of the poorest countries in the European Union (EU). Official figures show that youth unemployment, in particular, is very high, standing at almost 25% in 2013 (Eurostat 2013). The economic picture in Romania is thus anything but rosy, a key reason why Romanians wishing to migrate look to countries within the EU where there is more chance of finding work and earning a better income.

Romania has a population of just under 20 million, and in this respect is comparable to the Netherlands. One major difference compared with the Netherlands today is that Romania is a true emigration country, with several million Romanians living in other countries. Most Romanian migrants in recent years have moved to Southern Europe, with more than a million living in Italy and over 700,000 in Spain. Other countries with a large Romanian migrant population are Germany and the United Kingdom. In comparison with these countries, the number of Romanians living in the Netherlands is very modest. Nonetheless, Romanians have attracted a good deal of attention in the media and from politicians. There are few groups about which the Dutch public hold more negative views than Romanians (and Bulgarians: Dagevos & Gijsberts 2013).

In popular parlance, Bulgarians and Romanians are often regarded as virtually the same as each other, but how true is this? Relatively little is known about the life situation of Romanian migrants who moved to the Netherlands after the expansion of the EU (with the exception of Engbersen et al. 2011; Korf et al. 2011). This report seeks to change this by homing in on migrants from Romania who have been in the Netherlands for only a short time. In 2013, the Netherlands Institute for Social Research | SCP published the report 'New in the Netherlands' (*Nieuw in Nederland*), which described the situation of recently migrated Poles and Bulgarians (Gijsberts & Lubbers 2013). Where possible, we compare the situation of recently migrated Romanians with that of Bulgarians and Poles in that publication. We address four main questions in this report: 1) What is the composition of the group of recently migrated Romanians? 2) What is their socio-economic position in the Netherlands? 3) What is their sociocultural position? 4) What are the prospects of this migrant group remaining in the Netherlands? The answers to these questions are set out below.

#### Survey of registered Romanians shortly after migration

In order to answer these questions, a survey was conducted among recently migrated Romanians. For this purpose, a random sample was drawn by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) from all first-generation Romanian migrants who were entered in the Dutch population register for the first time between 1 January 2013 and 1 October 2014 and who were aged between 18 and 65 years. The sample only included municipalities where at least

25 Romanian migrants were registered. A total of 26 municipalities were sampled. The selected Romanian migrants were approached in the autumn of 2014 and interviewed face-to-face by a Romanian interviewer in the Romanian language. The study thus focuses exclusively on registered migrants from Romania, who in many cases have been in the Netherlands for only a very short time.

The study design and the questionnaire used were as far as possible identical to the study of recently migrated Poles and Bulgarians in 2010 and 2011, thus making comparisons possible. It should however be borne in mind that the Romanian migrants moved to the Netherlands in a different period and were interviewed at a different time from the Polish and Bulgarian migrants. Differences between Romanians on the one hand and Poles and Bulgarians on the other may therefore be due not only to differences of origin but also to differences between the research periods. One key difference is for example that the study of Bulgarians took place at a time when work permits were still a requirement. This rule remained in force until 1 January 2014. By contrast, some of the Romanians in our study migrated to the Netherlands whilst the work permit requirement was in force, and some after it had ended. This does make it possible to examine whether there are any differences between Romanians who arrived in the Netherlands before and after 1 January 2014. In total, 356 interviews were fully completed. Based on the total number of addresses visited, the response rate was low, at 25%. In 50% of cases it was found that the envisaged respondent had since left the Netherlands (therefore forming part of the false non-response). If these addresses are left out of consideration, the response rate is 51%. That is comparable with the response rates in the study of recently migrated Poles and Bulgarians.

### How many Romanians are there in the Netherlands?

Like Bulgarians, Romanians have had the right to settle freely in the EU since the country's accession on 1 January 2007. However, the Netherlands imposed a condition requiring these migrants to hold a work permit in order to be able to work in the Netherlands. As stated earlier, this condition remained in force until 1 January 2014. The idea was that the work permit requirement would prevent a flood of migrants. Although the number of Romanians in the Netherlands is still relatively small compared with other EU Member States, there has been a clear increase since 2007.

Following its accession to the EU, migration to the Netherlands from Romania has risen steadily from a few hundred per year in the years prior to 2007 to around 5,000 per year in 2014 – comparable with the volume of immigrants from Bulgaria. The immigration of Romanians increased after 1 January 2014, while it stayed on the same level among Bulgarians. It is worth noting that five times as many Polish immigrants come to the Netherlands each year than Romanians. Migration from Poland is higher on an annualised basis than that of the four biggest non-Western migrant groups in the Netherlands (Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans) combined.

By no means all Romanians who migrate to the Netherlands remain; the migration balance is relatively low. Notably, Romanian emigration from the Netherlands has continued to increase, including after 1 January 2014, while among Bulgarians it is falling. In the earlier

report on Bulgarians and Poles we saw that more Bulgarians appear to be settling in the Netherlands.

It is difficult to state precisely how many Romanians are living in the Netherlands, on the one hand because there is a great deal of inward and outward movement and the size and composition of the group is therefore constantly changing, and on the other because by no means everyone is entered in the Dutch population register. Migrants who intend to remain for less than four months (e.g. seasonal workers) are not required to register, and not everyone who stays longer than that does so. CBS (2015) recently calculated that roughly half of all Romanian employees in the Netherlands are entered in the population register. If we consider only those who are entered in the population register, there were 21,000 registered Romanians living in the Netherlands on 1 January 2015. It is thus a relatively small group; on the same date, there were almost 138,000 registered Poles.

### Characteristics of Romanians who migrate to the Netherlands

The majority of recent migrants from Romania in our study are labour migrants; one in five moved are study migrants, and roughly the same proportion are family migrants. Romanian labour migrants are slightly more often men than women; family migrants are more often women, while both sexes are equally represented among study migrants. Some 80% of all migrants from Romania are aged under 35. The majority already knew people in the Netherlands before migrating. This matches findings in the migration literature, which reports that people often migrate to countries where they already know people (chain migration).

The majority of recently registered migrants in the Netherlands are ethnic Romanian; a small percentage (6%) originate from the Hungarian minority. In our study we encountered virtually no Romanian Roma; it is likely that they are not often entered in the population register. Most of the Romanian migrants (nearly a third: 29%) come from Bucharest. Other regions from which relatively large numbers of Romanians originate are Bacau (12%), Constanta (8%), Galati (5%) and Cluj (6%). Only a small proportion (12%) have children living with them in the Netherlands; 9% of Romanian migrants say their children live in Romania. The percentage of Romanians living in the Netherlands with a family is thus relatively small.

### Recently migrated Romanians have a high education level

The Romanians who have recently migrated to the Netherlands are a very highly qualified group. Engbersen et al. (2011) also observed this in their study of Romanians some years ago. No fewer than 55% of non-school-age Romanians have a university qualification or equivalent, and 26% have a senior secondary education qualification. One in five have a low education level (no higher than junior secondary level). They are thus better educated than the Polish group – themselves well educated – who are much more often found in the middle category. As with the Polish migrants in the Netherlands, women in the Romanian group are better educated than the men.

Romanians who have migrated to the Netherlands are notably better educated than the population in Romania. In contrast to what we found for the Bulgarians, therefore – namely that a selection of low-educated Bulgarians migrate to the Netherlands – among Romanians it is a selection of highly educated people who move to the Netherlands. Moreover, one in five recent Romanian migrants are study migrants, studying full-time in the Dutch higher education system (a comparable proportion to the share of students among Bulgarian migrants). Although comparison with other countries is difficult owing to a lack of systematic data collection, the picture of Romanian migrants as often highly educated also appears to hold for other European countries (Andren & Roman 2014).

### Housing situation in the Netherlands

Romanian migrants are dispersed throughout the Netherlands, but primarily live in the major cities, with the biggest number living in Amsterdam. The majority live in an apartment or house. Just over 10% of the Romanians in our live in a hostel, bed-and-breakfast or holiday park. Almost half of the Romanians share their home with non-family members, especially those living in hostels and holiday parks. Just under one in five say they live alone, and just over a quarter share their home with relatives. Not surprisingly, students and labour migrants more often share their home with non-family members, while family migrants more often share their home with family members (and in most cases with no one else). The majority of Romanian migrants have moved into a home owned by a private landlord; in this study we found only a very small proportion who rent a home via their employer or an employment agency.

Reports appear in the Dutch media regularly about the poor housing situation of Romanian migrants. The interviewers also sometimes reported very simple accommodation; this was often hostels or holiday parks, or homes with several people living at one address. However, this picture is almost absent from the perceptions of the respondents. Only 4% are explicitly dissatisfied with their housing situation; 11% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; and a large majority say they are satisfied or very satisfied. It may be that most of them are comparing their housing situation primarily with their possible worse housing situation before migration. The housing situation of Romanian migrants who are not entered in the population register because they come to the Netherlands for temporary work could well be worse.

### Romanians speak good English

Not many Romanians have a good command of the Dutch language, and this applies especially for men. This is not surprising, since at the time of the study the migrants had spent an average of only a year in the Netherlands. Yet they make little effort to learn Dutch. Moreover, their command of Dutch is worse than among Poles and Bulgarians who were surveyed some years ago when they too had only recently arrived in the Netherlands. It is also striking that the large group of study migrants and highly educated Romanians do not have an appreciably better command of Dutch than their lower-educated counterparts. It may be that their good command of English – something which applies not only for the

students, but also for many low-educated Romanian migrants – removes the incentive to invest in learning Dutch. It may be that a command of English is sufficient for employers to be able to communicate with Romanian employees.

### Majority have a good position on the Dutch labour market

The picture presented by the Romanian migrants we studied is not that of the stereotypical labourer in the agricultural and horticultural sector. A substantial proportion of Romanian migrants are employed in the ICT sector or for example carrying out research at Dutch universities. Naturally, there are also some registered Romanian migrants working at the bottom end of the labour market, but this group is much smaller than among Poles and Bulgarians, the majority of whom were found to be working in the production, agriculture/horticulture, construction or cleaning sectors. It is also found that only a small proportion are unemployed. Romanian men in the Netherlands have paid work more often than women.

Despite the good labour market position, especially of highly educated Romanians, as with other migrant groups we see that the occupational status of the jobs that migrants held in Romania was higher on average than that of their jobs in the Netherlands. The higher income they receive compensates for this decline in occupational status. A majority of Romanians work full time, often for more than 40 hours per week. Many of them work in temporary jobs and almost a third of recent Romanian migrants regularly work in the evenings or at weekends. A small proportion are in jobs involving hazardous or physically strenuous work.

### Little difference between Romanians who migrated before and after 1 January 2014

The differences between Romanians who migrated to the Netherlands before 1 January 2014 (when a work permit was still required) and those who came after that date are small. One of the more characteristic differences is that migrants who came to the Netherlands before 1 January 2014 are more often self-employed. This is in line with the fact that they did not require a work permit. The proportion of self-employed people who migrated to the Netherlands before 1 January 2014 (11%) is comparable with the proportion of self-employed Bulgarians in the period 2010/2011 (13%).

### Orientation towards the Netherlands and Romania

Romanian migrants are in regular contact with Dutch natives. The majority (57%) report that they have daily contact, in many cases probably via their work. There is also a group (around 20%) who have no contact with Dutch natives. A similar percentage report that they never or rarely have contact with members of their own ethnic group; that is connected to the small size of the Romanian group in the Netherlands.

Romanians are not (yet) deeply embedded in Dutch associational life and show relatively little interest in politics either in the Netherlands or in Romania. One in three (still) have a house in Romania and almost half send money there. Low-educated Romanians, in particular, stand out in this regard: three-quarters of them send money to Romania.

Given the high average education level, the large group of students and their good command of English, we expect the Romanian group in the Netherlands to maintain frequent contacts with other migrant groups and to make more frequent use of English-language media. It may be that the large group of students in the Romanian migrant group, but also the highly skilled knowledge workers, do not so much shift their attention from Romania to the Netherlands, but rather tend to have an international orientation.

### Religion and moral views

Virtually all Romanian migrants see themselves as members of a church, mostly Eastern Orthodox (80%); a small group say they are Roman Catholic (10%). Church attendance is low, however; that was also the case before their migration, but has fallen even further since. Despite this, half of recent Romanian migrants to the Netherlands regard themselves as fairly to very religious. The proportion is even higher among low-educated Romanians. Opinions on divorce and homosexuality can be described as progressive.

### Experiences in the Netherlands

The majority of recent Romanian migrants are satisfied with their lives in the Netherlands. They are particularly satisfied with their earnings and regard their life situation as substantially better than when they lived in Romania. Half say they feel at home in the Netherlands, while a slightly smaller proportion say they sometimes do and sometimes do not feel at home. A minority of 16% do not feel at home in the Netherlands.

They are also predominantly satisfied with the way they have been received in the Netherlands: a large majority feel that the Netherlands is a hospitable country for Romanians. We know from earlier research that the perceptions of the Dutch public about Romanians (and Bulgarians) are not positive, and the sense of satisfaction is consequently not universal. One in five Romanian migrants feel that their own group is often subject to discrimination in the Netherlands, and 44% think this is sometimes the case. The percentage who have themselves experienced discrimination in the short time they have been in the Netherlands is 8%.

If we look at the remaining group, it is notable that family migrants take the most positive view of their lives in the Netherlands. The Romanian study migrants also stand out in a positive sense. They often already feel at home, are satisfied with their lives in the Netherlands and less often believe that they themselves or their ethnic group are subject to discrimination.

### Minority of Romanians see their future in the Netherlands

Roughly a third of the entire group think they will continue to live in the Netherlands. If we compare this with migrants from Poland and Bulgaria, we find that the Romanian group occupy a middle position in this regard. Roughly the same length of time after their migration, just under half of Poles thought they would remain in the Netherlands, compared with a quarter of the Bulgarian group. There are few differences within the Romanian group as regards their intention to remain; by contrast, among Bulgarian migrants we

found that those with a low education level more often planned to stay in the Netherlands. Despite their relatively high satisfaction with life in the Netherlands, settlement patterns appear to be relatively weak among Romanians. One indication for this is the low share of Romanians with a family in the Netherlands; only 12% have children in their household. This figure is much higher among recent migrants from Poland and Bulgaria. Emigration from the Netherlands is also relatively common among Romanians: 50% of our sample were found to have left the Netherlands again.

### Conclusion: registered Romanian migrants are doing well in the Netherlands

Findings from earlier research (Korf et al. 2011) suggest that Romanian migrants in the Netherlands are divided into a highly educated group who mainly live in the major cities and work at ICT companies or universities, and a group of low-educated seasonal workers who generally live in rural areas (often in the south of the country) and are employed in the construction, industrial or agriculture/horticulture sectors. To what extent is this picture reflected in our own survey data?

Although we also find both groups in the survey data, our conclusion is that recent (registered) Romanian migrants are generally doing well in the Netherlands. The group at the top – very well educated, studying or working in senior or academic jobs – form a clear numerical majority. Over half the non-school-age recent migrants from Romania have a higher education/university qualification, and to these can be added the group of study migrants who are currently in Dutch higher education.

The share of highly educated Romanians is thus much larger than in the Bulgarian or Polish groups. The Bulgarian group also contains a substantial number of study migrants, but the rest of this group are generally low-educated and work at the lower end of the labour market. We would describe their position as relatively vulnerable. Recent Polish migrants to the Netherlands are substantially better educated than their Bulgarian counterparts, but predominantly to intermediate level. They are much less likely than registered Romanians to be working in high-level occupations, so that the average occupational status of Polish migrants is substantially lower.

One explanation as to why Bulgarians who migrate to the Netherlands are mainly low-educated may lie in the pull effect from the Turkish community in the Netherlands; this also plays a role in Germany, for example. Turkish Bulgarians are often employed by Turkish-origin employers in the Netherlands in jobs at the bottom end of the labour market.

Highly educated recent Romanian migrants to the Netherlands recently who took part in our study match the profile of high-skilled ‘knowledge migrants’: they speak excellent English and came to the Netherlands to work in high-status jobs for international companies, or to study or work at Dutch universities.

People with a lower education level make up a substantially smaller proportion of the registered Romanian migrants in our study, with one in five having a maximum of an intermediate qualification and a quarter working in lower-status jobs in sectors such as

construction or agriculture/horticulture or in the production sector. These groups generally appear to stay in the Netherlands for a short period – for seasonal labour – perhaps explaining why they not crop up often in our survey: half our sample were found to have already left the Netherlands again. In reality, however, this more vulnerable group could be larger than our estimate suggests, for example because their employers or landlords refused to take part in the survey. If that were the case, however, it begs the question of why we did not encounter this phenomenon among the Polish and Bulgarian migrants in the earlier study. Our non-response analyses also provide no indication that our study population was a selective group of registered Romanians.

It is not unlikely that the picture for unregistered Romanian migrants is less positive. Nonetheless, the study by Engbersen et al. (2011) – which surveyed both registered and unregistered Romanians – also revealed a strikingly high education level. Our study focused only on Romanians who were entered in the Dutch population register who, according to recent calculations by Statistics Netherlands (CBS), account for roughly half of employees from Romania. The proportion who are not registered as employees and not entered in the population register is not known. More research is needed to investigate differences in the life situation of registered and unregistered migrants from Central and Eastern Europe. Other research suggests that the problems may be more pressing for unregistered migrants (see e.g. Korf et al. 2011), but little research has thus far been carried out on this group. Problems have been signalled particularly in the Roma group. Their life situation in the Netherlands is very poor and they are frequently involved in criminal behaviour, sometimes in the form of roving gangs. These Roma originate from a variety of countries (e.g. Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary). There are also signs that Romanians living in large Dutch cities face problems with housing and poverty (see e.g. Booij et al. 2014). The experiences of the Romanian interviewees in this study also suggest that there are problems with housing. A study published last year by De Boom et al. (2014) found that criminality among Romanians is mainly concentrated among unregistered migrants. This is in all probability cross-border criminality, in what has also been termed ‘mobile banditism’ (Siegel 2013).

We consistently compared low-educated and highly educated Romanians on all the aspects investigated in this study. We recap the findings here. In terms of housing situation, well-educated Romanians are rather more often satisfied than their low-educated counterparts, though a majority of the latter group are also satisfied. There are no differences by education level in command of the Dutch language, though highly educated Romanians have a better command of English and relatively more often make an effort to learn Dutch. On the labour market, highly educated Romanians are slightly more often in work (and logically have a higher occupational status and concomitant greater satisfaction with their income), but here again the difference is not great. Low-educated Romanians do less often have permanent employment contracts and more often work irregular and longer hours. Low-educated Romanians are more frequently self-employed.