

Migration trends in Balkan Countries before and after visa liberalisation/joining European Union and economic consequences – case study North Macedonia

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Abstract

Migration is a phenomenon increasing in the Balkan Countries toward European Union countries. Recently, two of the Western Balkan Countries: North Macedonia and Albania have progressed toward joining the EU and officially opened the negotiation for finalizing this process. The study aims at analyzing and projecting the consequences of migration after North Macedonia joins the EU. In order to predict the migration trends in North Macedonia, there are analyses on the trends of migration in this country before and after visa liberalization. Furthermore, analyses done for two other countries. Moreover, in order to have a clearer overview and the forecast to be more accurate and make comparisons, the migration trend of neighboring countries that already are part of EU: Bulgaria and Romania are taken into analysis. Since North Macedonia, in the 1990s had almost the same GDP per capita with Bulgaria and Romania, it has been decided to consider the data of these two EU member states in the analysis. Additionally, these three countries are neighbors and are influenced by each other's actions. Romania and Bulgaria became full members of the EU in 2007. Therefore, it will make the analysis more accurate and significant. Data for the countries are retrieved from significant sources such as: the UN Stata, the World Bank and National Statistical Agencies of the countries in the study.

The results show that North Macedonia already has a large number of migrants. In 2010, since the visa liberalization, the migration percentage reached 25.6% of the total domestic population. Since then, the percentage is increasing quite a lot, and by the end of 2020 it reached 33.5% of the population. This shows a significant increase of 31.88% compared to 2010, in only 10 years, whereas previously for the period of 20 years, respectively from 1990 – 2010 the increase of migration was 21,77%. An increasing trend also shows the countries already joined the EU. Consequently, North Macedonia is expected to have an increasing trend after joining the EU too. The study also analyzed economic aspects and consequences on: GDP, Population and Remittances.

Key words: Migration, Visa Liberalization, European Union.

I. Introduction

According to the UN, Migration is one of the main global issues, for the leaving countries and also for the receiving countries of immigrants. The United Nations defines migrant as an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020). Almost all Balkan Countries have faced and are still facing the problem of migration of their population. In particular, the Countries from the former Yugoslavia have more significant problems with the issue of migration. Pushed by wars, political and economic reasons, people who come from the countries resulting from the dissolution of Yugoslavia have a tendency and intend to migrate outside their resident countries. With this issue North Macedonia has been fighting since the 1950's.

In the Balkan countries, the trend of migration is increasing and among the main reasons are economic and political instability. Consequently, the proposed study intends to provide an overview of the theoretical and empirical literature and methodological approach on policies and consequences of the migration in North Macedonia. It analyses different periods, mainly accompanied with political decisions that countries marked such as: war, visa liberalizations, integration in European Union. The aim of the study is to give an insight of the migration trends, policies, and its consequences in the economic and political position of North Macedonia toward the EU membership process. Given the fact that North Macedonia is candidate country for membership in the European Union and recently, on July 2022 the EU started the opening phase of the accession negotiations with North Macedonia, consequently the study analyses trends of different indicators such as: population, migration, remittances etc. and compare with Balkan countries that undergone through this process earlier than North Macedonia, Romania and Bulgaria. Consequently, the analysis can give an overview of last decades and projections after the EU integration of North Macedonia. In order to make comparison with other countries that went through this process previously, in the study are taken Romania and Bulgaria. Both countries entered the European Union in 2007. Since then, they both faced significant changes on the level of: population, migration, remittances and GDP. These countries are chosen for study, as they had almost the same GDP per capita during 1990, second, they are neighbours and are influenced by each other's actions, therefore the comparison would be more accurate compared to other countries.

I.1 Methodology

The study is focused on making analysis for North Macedonia and for comparison analysis, it includes data of three Balkan Countries: North Macedonia, Romania and Bulgaria. Secondary data are used from significant sources such as: UN Stata, The World Bank data and other data from national statistical agencies of the countries in the study and professional reports.

The period of analysis includes years: 1990 – 2020. Due to the unstable political position of the countries, any data might be missed for a certain period.

The study is divided in different parts composed of: Abstract, Methodology, Introduction, Main findings- Analysis and results, Discussion and Conclusions.

II. Literature Review

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) Migration is closely related to economic, social, demographic, political, and technological changes in both sending and destination countries. Although migrants usually target higher-income countries, the reasons for migration are diverse. For some sending countries, their people migrate for economic, political, trade, or cultural reasons. The most common reason for migration is a lack of employment in the sending country, coupled with greater labour demand and higher wages in the destination country (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020). The author (Hagen-Zanker, 2008) considers that among the reasons for migration from the country of origin are the economic, political and social environment that includes the level of poverty and high unemployment. Whereas, the reason for choosing the destination country includes the labour market demand and higher wages (Hagen-Zanker, 2008).

At a macro level, Neoclassical theory defined by Haris and Todaro's theory among the main arguments is migration paradigm (Harris & Todaro, 1970). The relation of the migration of the labour force and economy have been explained and confirmed by different theories. Therefore, the impact of migration in the economic aspect is explained through three aspects: Labour markets, The public pursuit and Economic growth. In the economic aspect, migration contributes to boost economic growth and innovation. In this regard, international migration contributes to the workforce of the receiving country, GDP growth, not confirmed for GDP per capita (OECD, 2014).

The migration motives are best explained by (Stark, 1991); (Stark & Bloom, 1985). As regards to the destination, Europe was the region with the largest number of international migrants in 2020: 87 million, followed by Northern America, Northern Africa and Western Asia, where the majority of migrants are from the middle-income countries.

In the economic aspects, migrants play an important role in the economic development of the origin country, through different ways: remittances through investments in education, infrastructure, housing, health as well as by promoting foreign investments, innovation and technology (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020).

The report from International Organization Migration (McAuliffe & Khadria, 2019), explains that the initial analysis and comparisons are numbers. Therefore, it helps us understand trends, changes in scale, and shifting demographics that relate to social and economic change. The estimation for 2019 data shows that, in the world, there were 272 million international migrants that in terms of percentage represents 3.5% of the global population.

III. Data Analysis

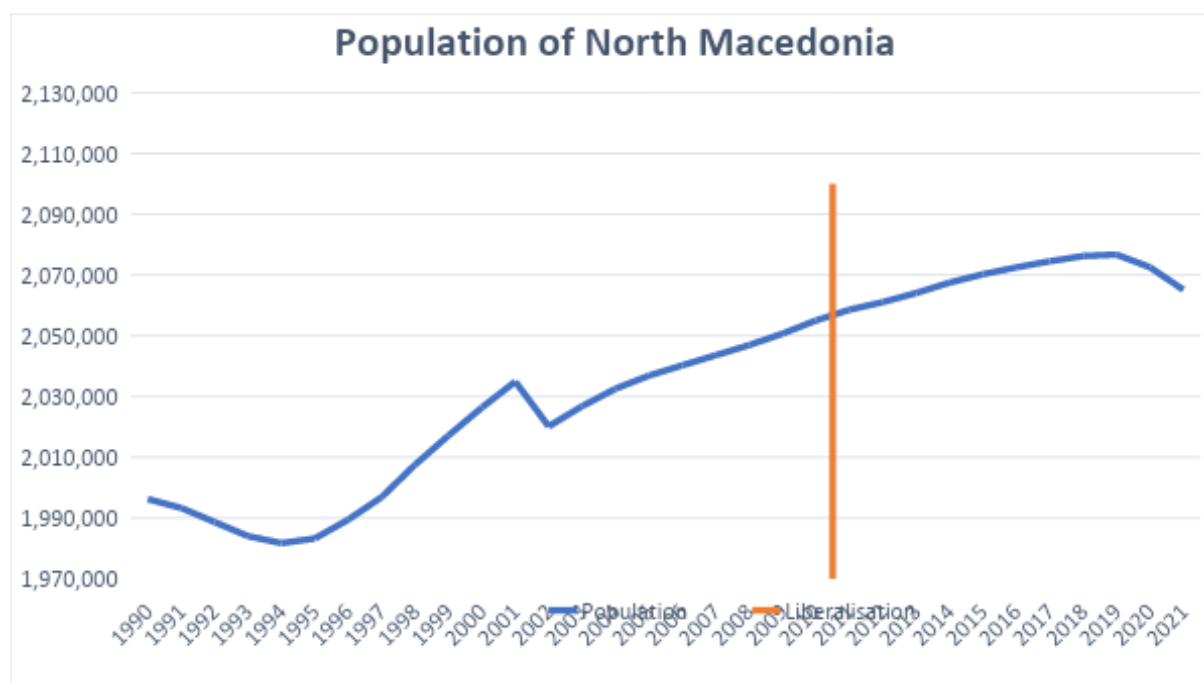
In order to analyze the status quo of the migration in the North Macedonia, there are analyzed different indicators with comparison of trend before and after visa liberalization: population growth over years, respectively the period of 1990 till 2021; total number of migrants; yearly migrants, percentage of migrants in European Union; Personal remittances, received (current US\$) and remittances as percentage of GDP;

In order to compare and project what will happen after EU integration of North Macedonia, analysis of the same indicators are done for two other Balkan countries that joined the European Union: Rumania and Bulgaria for the same period 1990- 2021.

3.1. NORTH MACEDONIA DATA

The Republic of North Macedonia (before 2019 known as Macedonia), is a country in Southeastern Europe, with an approximate population of 2 million. As the political agenda of North Macedonia is to become a member of the EU since 2005 – where the country became a candidate country, the EU provides continuous support and financial assistance through different projects (European Union External Actions, 2022).

Current progress of the country toward European Union Integration is the phase of open negotiations with EU for the country’s full membership.



Graph 1.1 Population of North Macedonia,

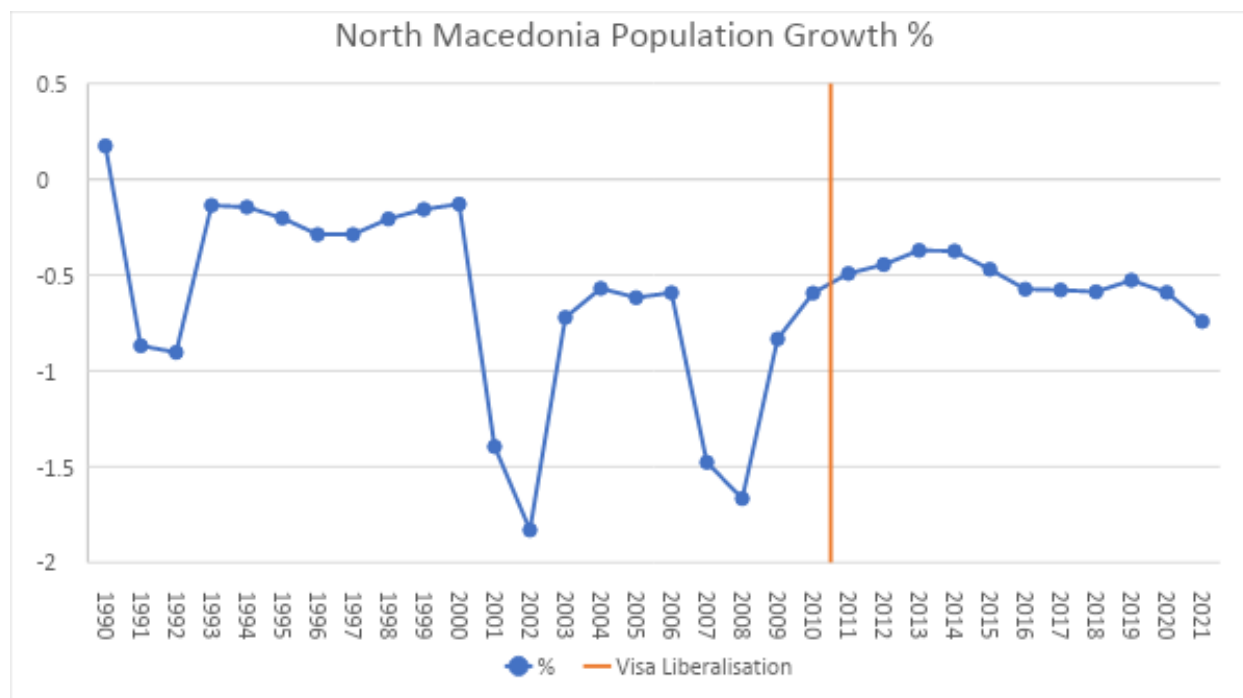
Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=MK>

North Macedonia Population	
Year	Population
1990	1,996,218
2000	2,026,350
2010	2,055,004
2020	2,072,531

2021	2,065,092
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Table 1.1 Population of North Macedonia

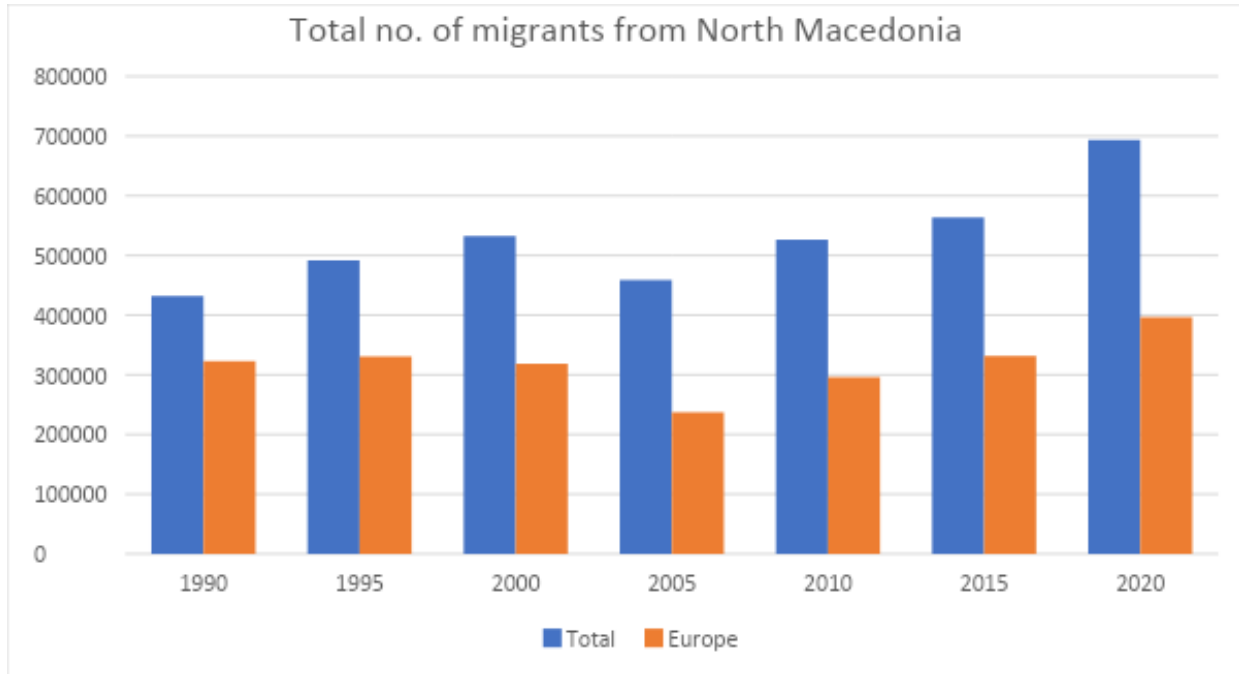
Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=MK>



Graph 2.1 Population Growth

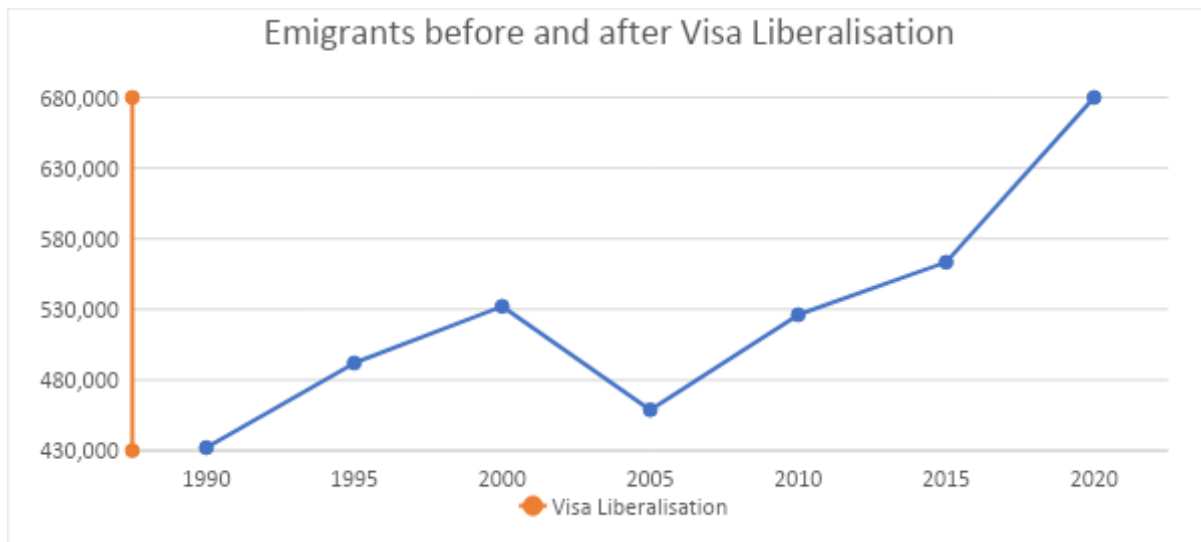
Source: Own calculations

As we can see from the graph 2.1, the population growth after the visa liberalization has slightly increased up to the year 2014. After this period, the population growth has slightly decreased compared to 2014, and from 2019 and on the rate of decrease is higher. According to the data presented, the trend of decreasing the population of North Macedonia will continue also in the upcoming years.



Graph 2.2 Number of Migrants from North Macedonia

Source: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/products/dyb/index.cshhtml>



Graph 2.3 Migration trend from North Macedonia after and before the visa liberalization

Source: own calculations

Year	Population	% of total		EU vs	
		Emigrants	Emigrants	Europe	TOTAL
1990	1 996	21,6	432	322	74,65
1995	2 180,00	4%	070	536	%
2000	1 983	24,8	491	330	67,24
2005	2 590,00	1%	992	810	%
2010	2 026	26,2	532	318	59,83
2015	3 500,00	6%	132	360	%
2020	2 036	22,5	458	236	51,63
2022	855,00	3%	822	885	%
2020	2 055	25,6	526	296	56,27
2020	004,00	0%	151	057	%
2020	2 070	27,2	563	331	58,84
2020	226,00	1%	354	478	%
2020	2 072	33,4	693	396	57,18
2020	531,00	8%	896	787	%

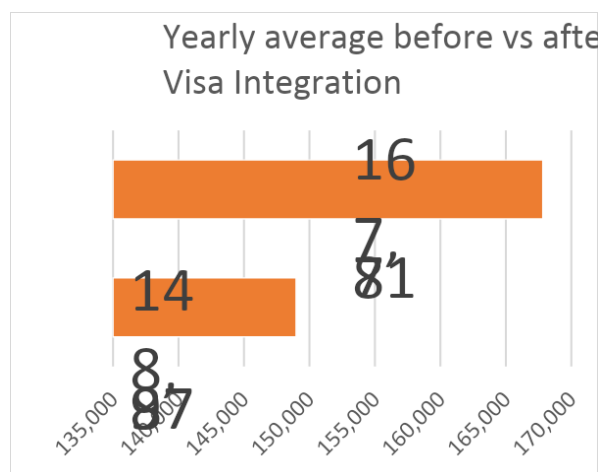


Table: 2.1 Yearly average of migrants

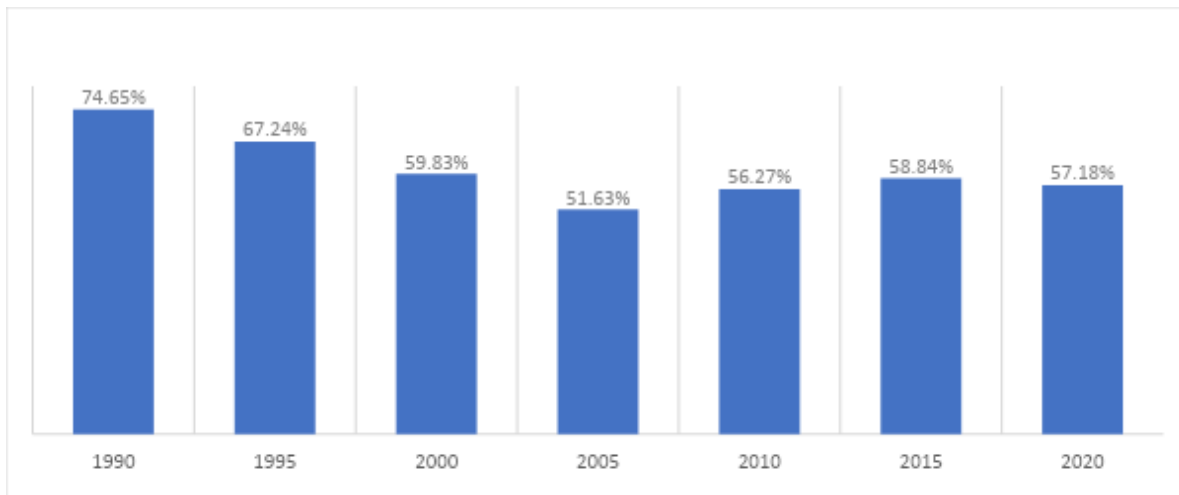
Source: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/products/dyb/index.cshtml>

The table 2.1 shows the number of population in five years periods from 1990 to 2020, and the percentage of total migrants in these periods. In 1990 the level of emigrants was 21.6%, while increasing for almost 2.8% in 1995, reaching 24.8% of total population. The level of emigrants decreased in 2005, from being 26.2 in 2000, to 22.5% in 2005. In 2010 the level started to increase and reached 25.6% and continued to increase after visa liberalization, where in the upcoming years, respectively in 2015 the level of emigrants was 27.2%, and the highest level was reached 33.4 % in 2022.

Main destination of migrants of North Macedonia was Europe. The figure below shows the percentage of the migrants from North Macedonia to European Union Countries in comparison to the total number of migrants from this country. The numbers from the starting year of study

1990 to the last year of study 2020 have significantly changed. The number of emigrants has increased from 432,070 to 693,896, or if we see in percentage, from 21,6% in 1990 to 33.4% in 2020, meaning that it was 11.6% during the whole period. Furthermore, if we look at the periods before visa liberalization of North Macedonia in 2010, the change in percentage for 20 years 1990 to 2010 was only 4%. Whereas, after visa liberalization period 2010 to 2020 the change of emigration in percentage is 7.8, which means for a shorter period the percentage was almost doubled.

The yearly average of migrants before visa liberalization was 148,987 whereas after visa liberalization 167,817. This shows a clear overview that the trend of migrants has significantly changed after visa liberalization in 2010 and is increasing further.



Graph 2.3 Percentage of Migrants in European Union Countries

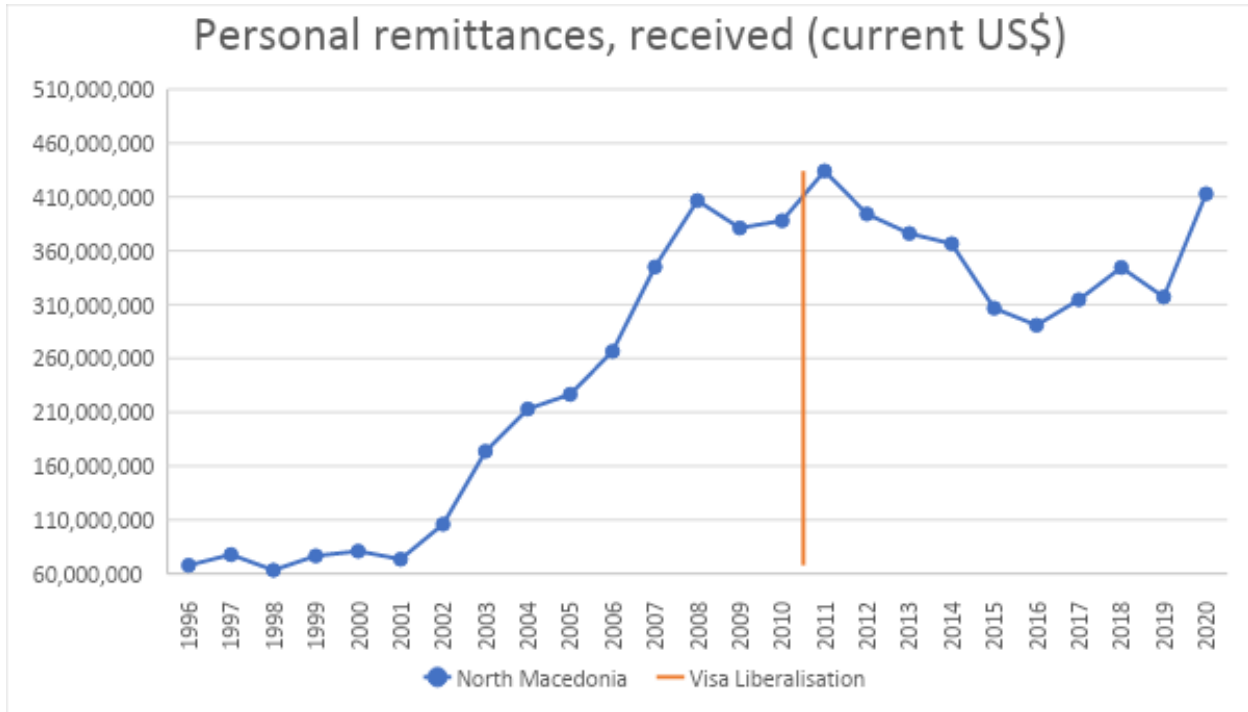
Source: own calculations

Regarding the preference of the Macedonian migrants to live and work abroad, they prefer mostly European Union Countries. From the year 1990, there is a large percentage of the migrants that choose Europe to migrate. This number reached 74% of the total migrants in 1990. The percentage decreased in the passing reporting period, where it still remained high, approximately 67% in 1995. Furthermore, from the period of 2000 – 2020 the percentage of migrants in European Union Countries remains approximately 51-58%. Thus, more than half of the migrants prefer to stay in the EU countries.

3.3. Economic Consequences of Migration

Another indicator that is related to the migration, are remittances. The data for North Macedonia are available only from the period 1996 and on. Therefore, a comparison will be made by considering the period of 1996 – 2020.

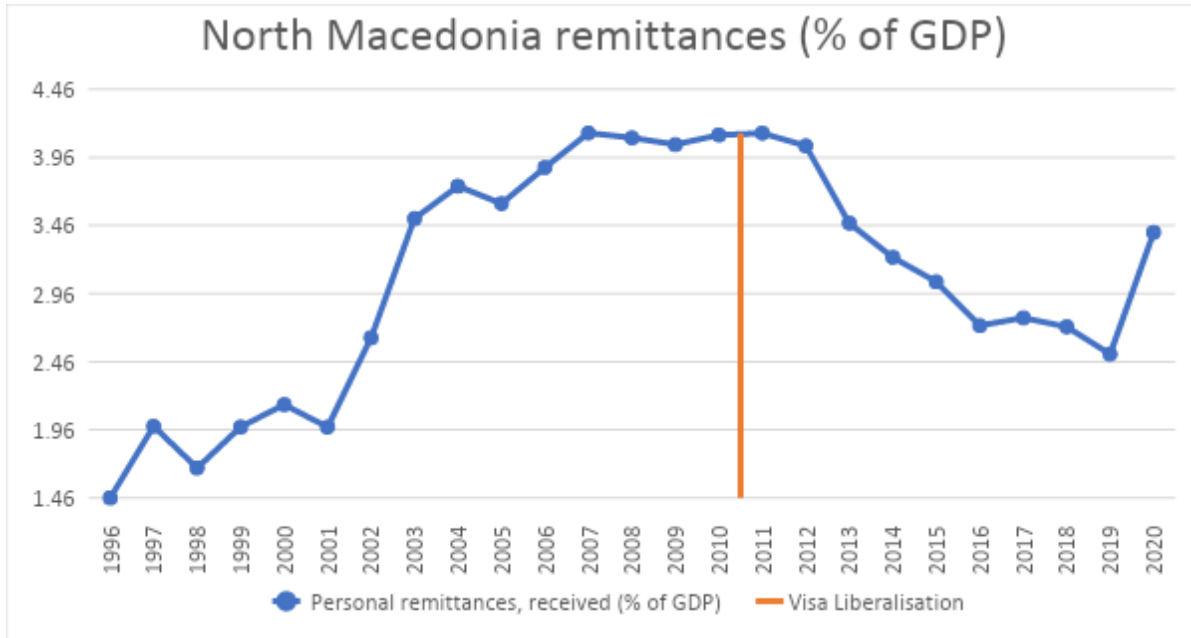
As regard to remittances received, there is no linear trend of remittances. Depending on the period, the remittances are recorded to have significant changes. This might be because of the increased number of migrants in later periods.



Graph. 3.3.1 Personal Remittances received

Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=MK>

The trend of remittances during the period 1996-2001 was quite linear; that was around 60,000,000 -80,000,000 current US\$, whereas in 2002, the remittances recorded to be higher reaching 110,000,000. From 2002 and on, the increase of remittances was significant, reaching a level of approximately 380,000,000 in 2010. A year after liberalization, remittances reached a peak of around 450,000,000. The level still remains 410,000,000 in 2020, but a bit lower than after visa liberalization. The decreased level in 2019 and 2020 might have impacted the uncertainty due to the pandemic COVID 19.

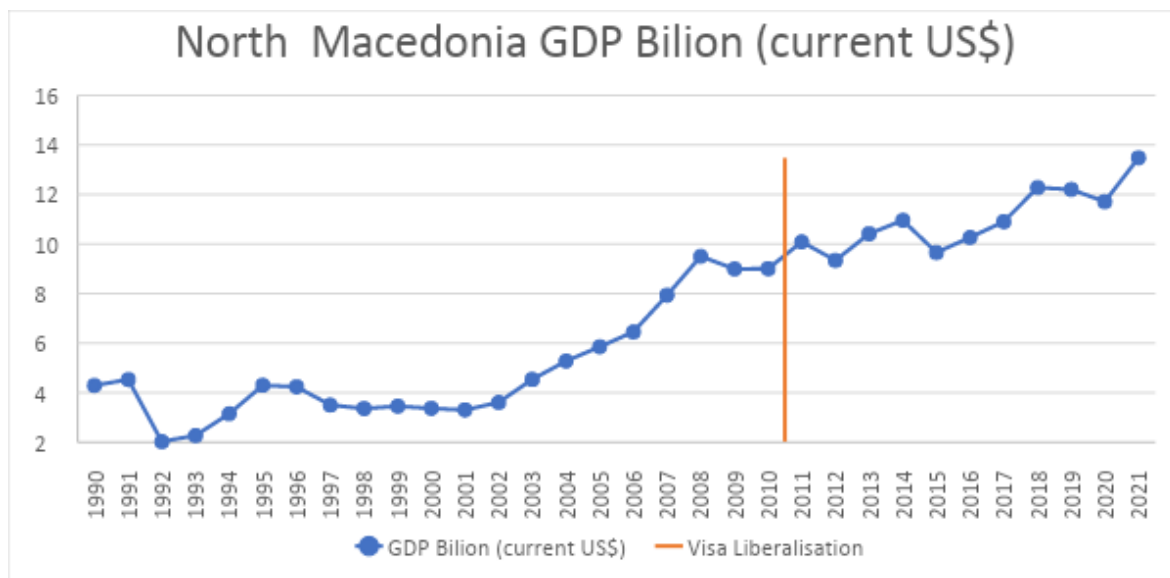


Graph. 3.3.2 Percentage of Personal Remittances (% of GDP)

Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=MK>

In terms of remittances as percentage of GDP, the graph above shows that from 2007 to 2012 the level of remittances was around 4% of the GDP of North Macedonia, whereas from 2012 the percentage decreased to the lowest level in 2019 around 2.5% and increased to around 3.5% of GDP in 2020.

Among the main economic indicators, it is considered the GDP of the country. Therefore, aiming to analyze the economic part of the migration, the study takes into analysis the GDP (current US\$) of the country for the period of thirty years, respectively 1990 – 2021.



Graph 3.3.3 GDP of North Macedonia (current US\$)

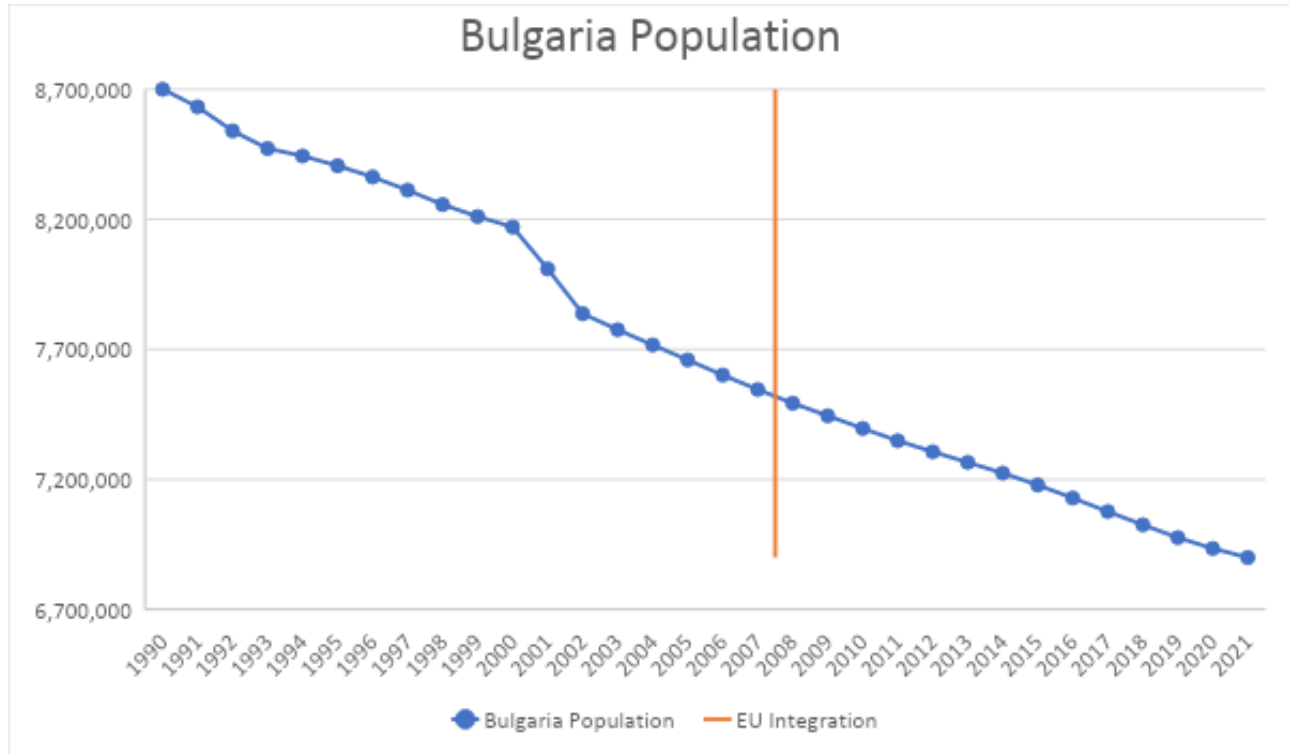
Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=MK>

The graph 3.3.3 shows the trend of GDP in Billion (current US\$) from 1990. The trend has a linear – positive approach from the year 1992. According to the World bank data, the lowest GDP in North Macedonia was recorded in 1992 2,4 Bil. and it was increased to around 9 bil. In 2010. Positive trends are recorded a year after visa liberalization, respectively in 2011, whereas, in 2012 the GDP decreased, while increasing for two other passing years 2013 and 2014. In 2015 the GDP decreased, while increasing in the upcoming years. In 2021, the GDP is recorded to be the largest in thirty years, reaching the highest level around 14 bil. As a result, GDP continued to increase after the visa liberalization too.

Consequently, based on the data provided, we see that, North Macedonia after having visa liberalization, migration trend is positive. Personal remittances have mostly decreased compared with periods of before 2007 and remittances as a percentage of GDP have decreased too, whereas the country's GDP has increased. Consequently, we can conclude that, after the visa liberalisation period, the migration has a positive relation with GDP in North Macedonia.

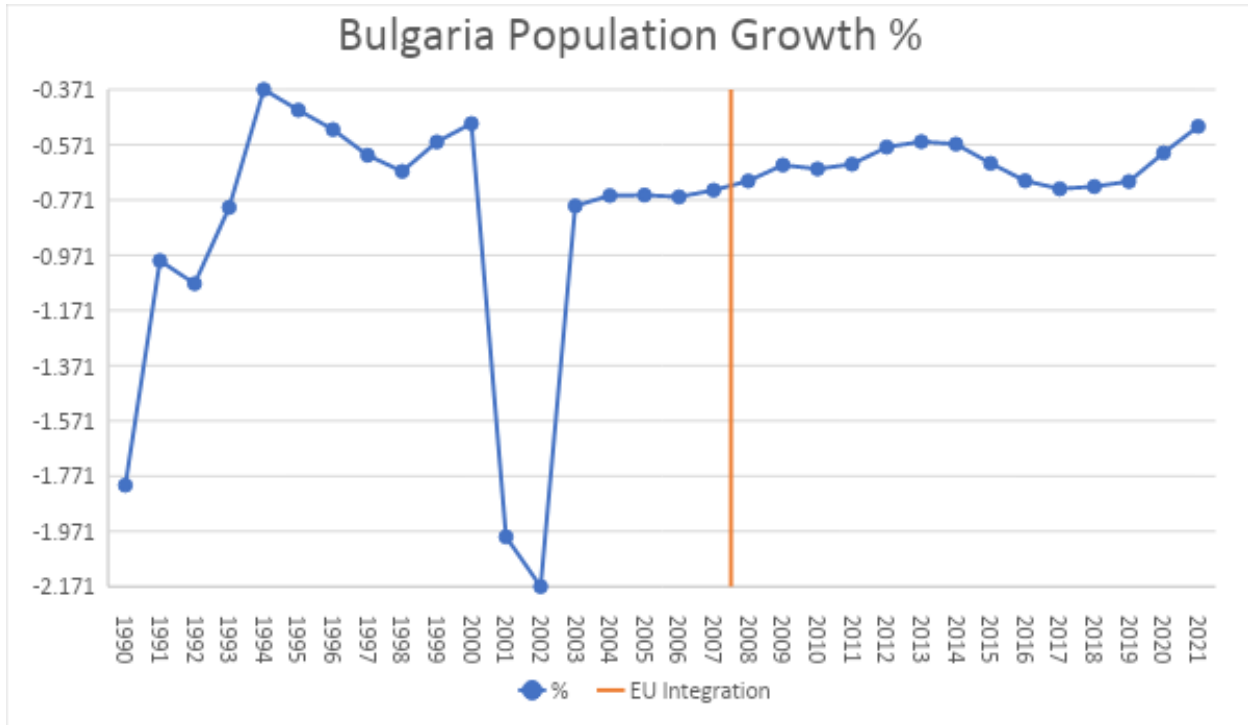
IV. BULGARIA DATA ANALYSIS

Bulgaria is a country in Southeastern Europe too, with an approximate number of population approximately 6.8 million (Eurostat, 2022). In the year of 2007, Bulgaria became a full member of the European Union. However, Bulgaria still is not part of the Schengen Area. Currently, is in the process of joining Schengen acquis at large extent (EuropeanCommission, European Commission , 2022).



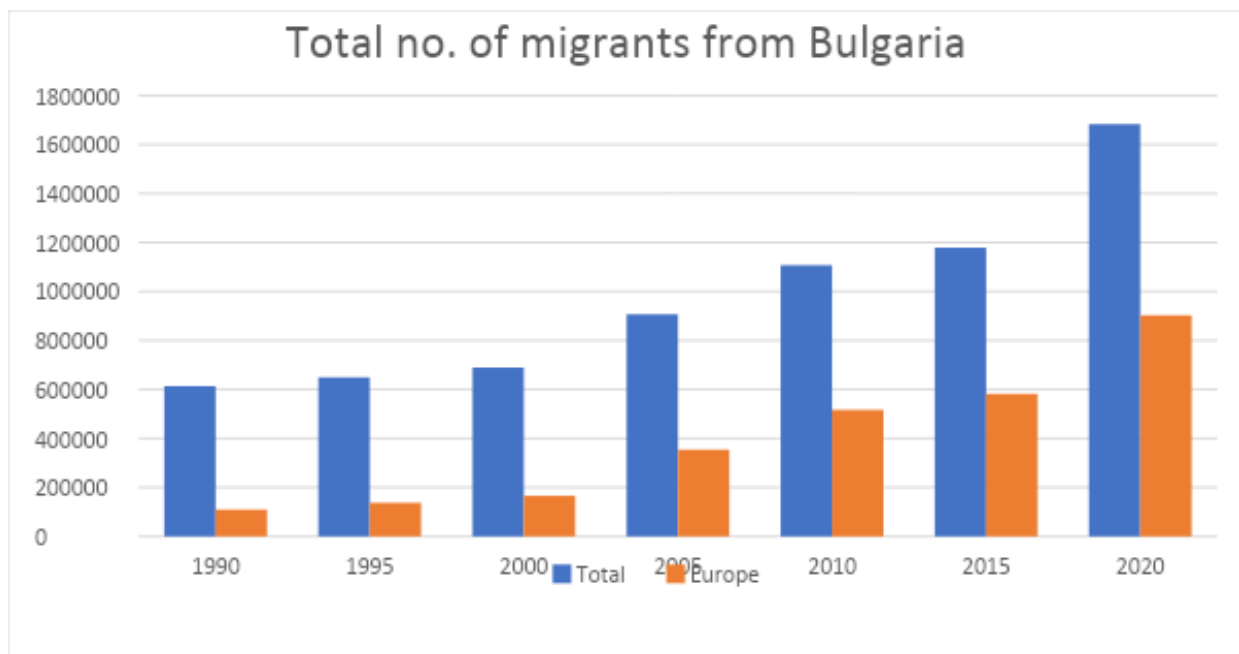
Graph 4.1.1 Population of Bulgaria,
Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=BG>

Among the challenges of Bulgaria, is the continued decrease of the number of population. From the beginning of the study period in 1990 until 2021, the trend of the total number of population growth is negative. As we can see from the graph 4.1, the population in 1990 was around 8.7 million. Whereas, when the country became a full member of the European Union in 2007, the population number was decreased to around 7.5 million, which means approximately 1.5 million less population than it used to have in the 90's. The same negative trend continues also after EU integration, and in 2021 the total population of Bulgaria is around 6.9 million.



Graph 4.1.2 Population growth of Bulgaria,
Source: Own calculation

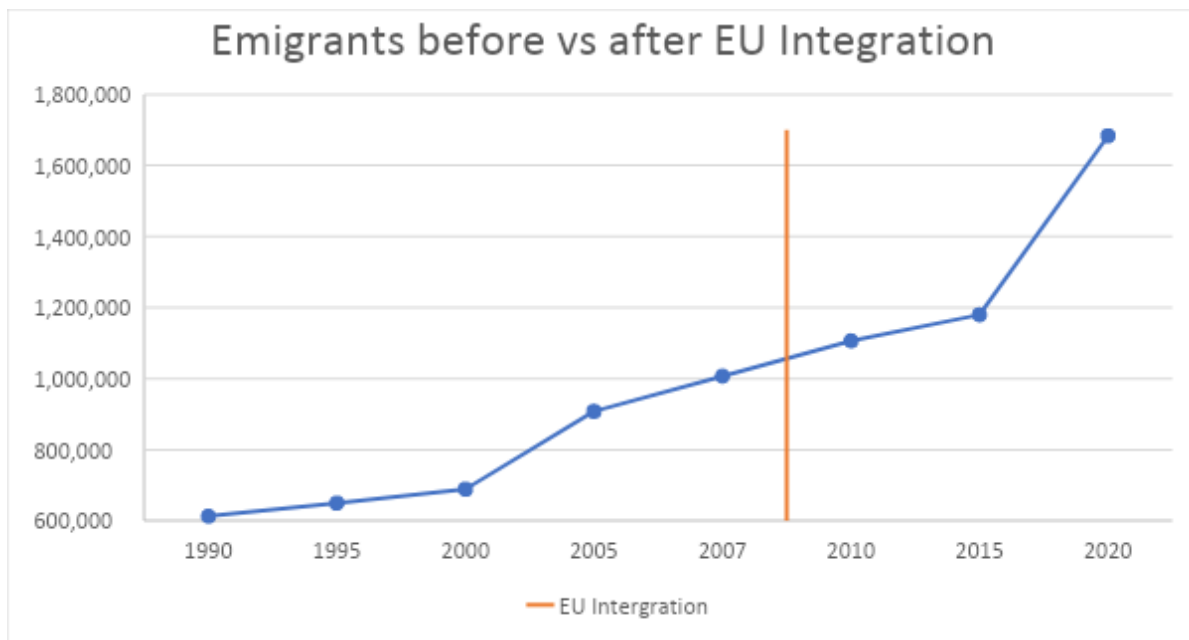
As we can see in the graph above, the population growth in Bulgaria is negative for the whole period of the analysis. It is worth mentioning that the major gap is in the years of 2001 and 2002. Slight increase is marked in the recent years from 2019, but still remains negative.



Graph 4.2.3 Number of Migrants from Bulgaria

Source: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/products/dyb/index.cshtml>

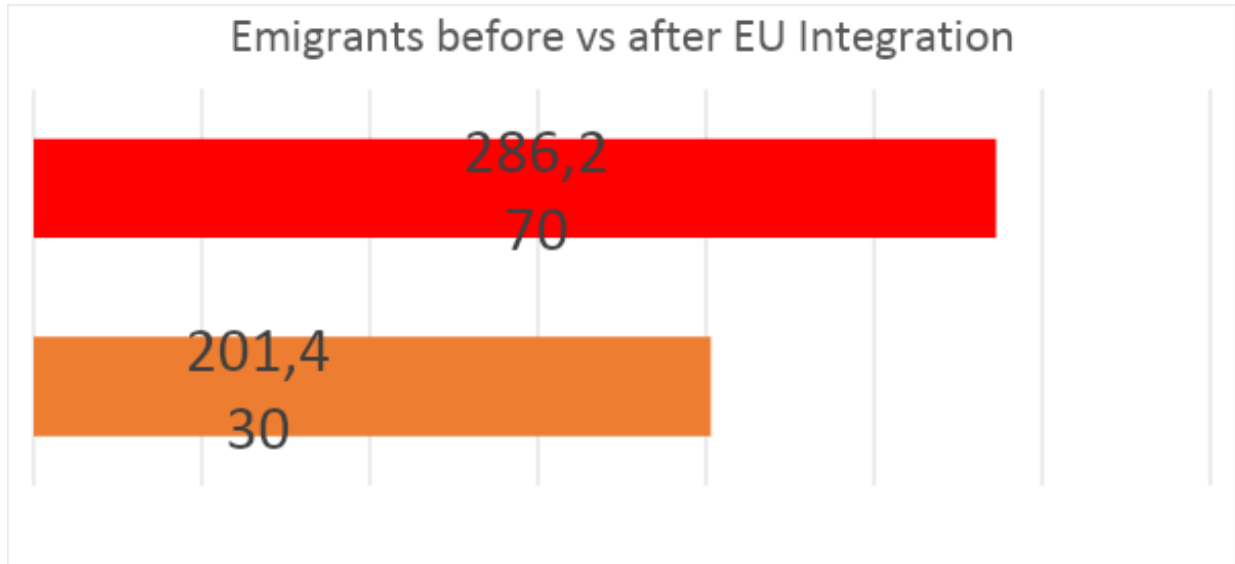
The table 4.2.3 shows the number of population in five year periods from 1990 to 2020, and the percentage total number of migrants in these periods. In 1990 the total number of migrants in Bulgaria was around 600 thousand, where for 25 years it was almost doubled. For only 5 years from 2015 to 2020, the number of migrants has increased to almost 1.7 million. As regards to the destinations, the preference to migrate in European Union countries is increased too.



Graph 4.2.4 Migration trend from Bulgaria before and after EU integration

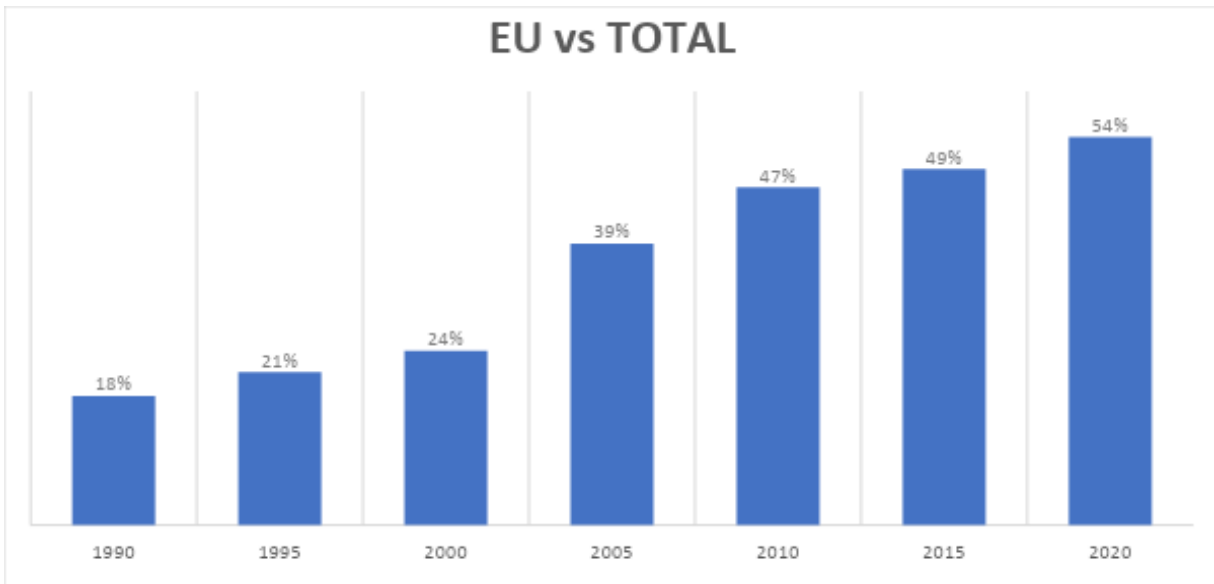
Source: own calculations

The number of migrants before the country's EU integration was around 1 million, whereas, the trend of migration continued to increase also after EU membership. In the last period, from 2015 to 2020 the total number of migrants increased from being around 1.2 million, to around 1.7 million.



Graph 4.2.5 Yearly average of migrants before and after Bulgarias' EU integration
Source: Own calculations

It is noticeable that the number of migrants has increased significantly after EU integration. Based on the calculations, the yearly average before joining the EU used to be 201,430, while after 2007 the average increased to 286,270. This is an increase of more than 40% compared to the time before EU Integration.

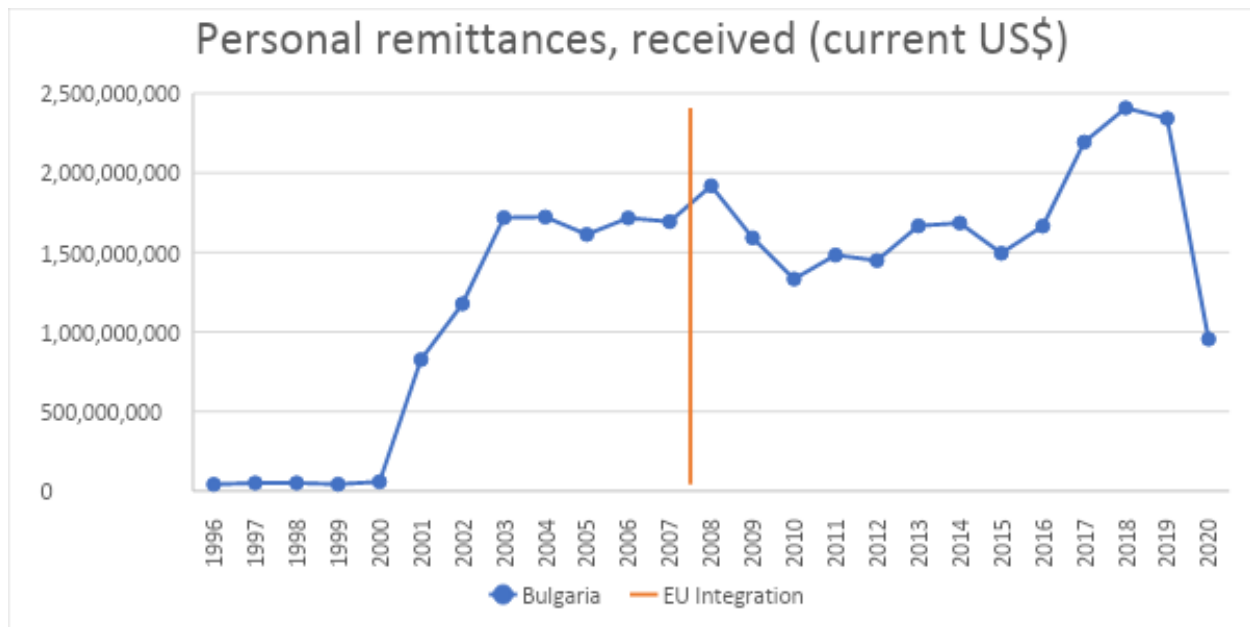


Graph 4.2.6 Percentage of Migrants in European Union
Source: Own calculation

Main destination of Bulgaria migrants was not Europe, as it was for North Macedonia migrants. The data above shows the percentage of the migrants from Bulgaria to European Union Countries in comparison to the total number of migrants from this country. The percentage at the beginning used to be quite low, only 18% in 1990, before EU integration it was 39% in 2005. In 2010 the percentage of migrants that have the European Union as a destination for migration increased to 47%. The last reported data from UN Stata in 2020, shows that more than half of migrants are migrating to EU countries, respectively 54% of total migrants choose European Countries.

4.3. Economic Consequences of Bulgaria

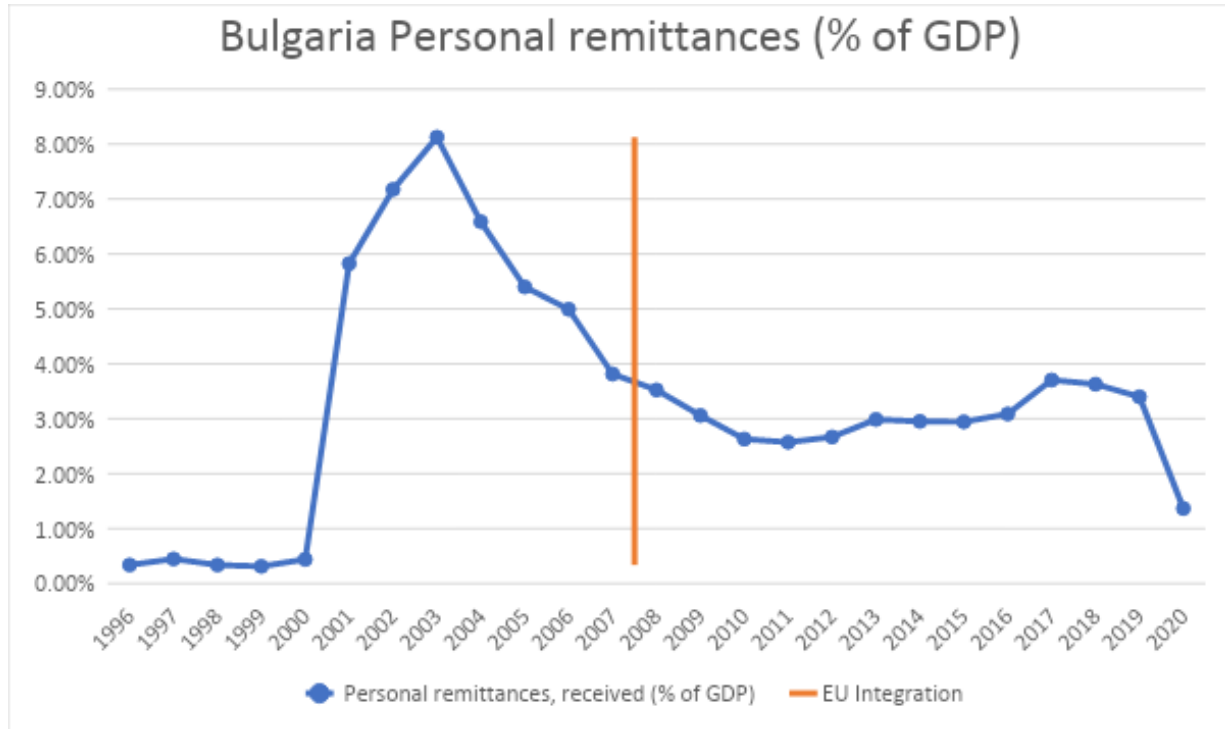
In order to make comparison with North Macedonia, the data for personal remittances received for Bulgaria are taken from the period 1996 too.



Graph. 4.3.1 Personal Remittances received

Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=BG>

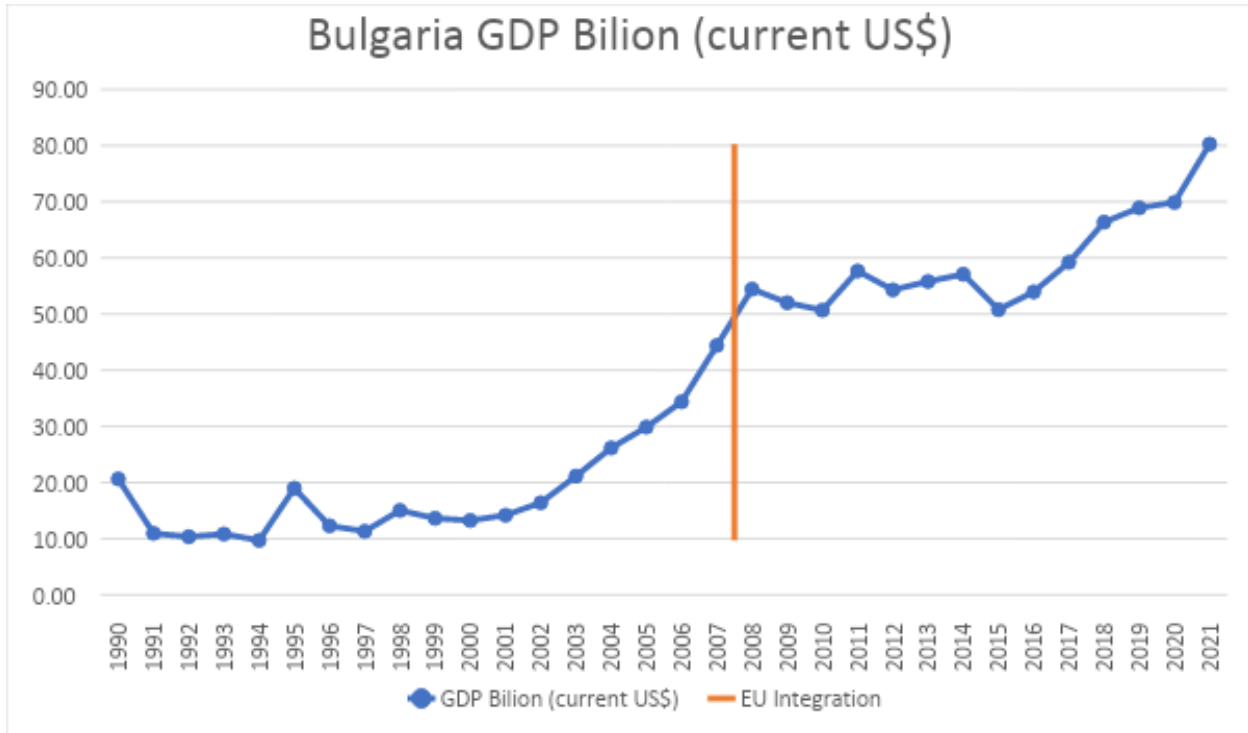
The trend of remittances during the period 1996-2001 was not linear. In the beginning of study period 1996, personal remittances were around 0.5 billion until the year of 2000. From this period, remittances increased to around 1.6 billion in the year of EU integration. A year after joining the EU, remittances increased further reaching the level of around 2 billion, whereas, in 2009 and 2010, decreased because of the global financial crisis to the level of 1.4 billion. The next period from 2016 to 2019 increased to the highest level of approximately 2.4 billion. While in 2020 it drastically decreased to around 1 billion. It has impacted the crises of pandemic COVID 19.



Graph. 4.3.2 Percentage of Personal Remittances (% of GDP)

Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=BG>

In terms of remittances as percentage of GDP, the graph above shows that from 2000 to 2003 remittances were drastically increased, from being around 0.5% to 8% in 2003. In 2004 the level of remittances as percentage of GDP was decreased to around 3% - 4% of GDP until 2019. And as analyzed in the graph above - personal remittances, in 2019- 2020 decreased to the lowest level of around 1.2%. The reason could be related to the pandemic crises too.



Graph 4.3.3 GDP of Bulgaria (current US\$)

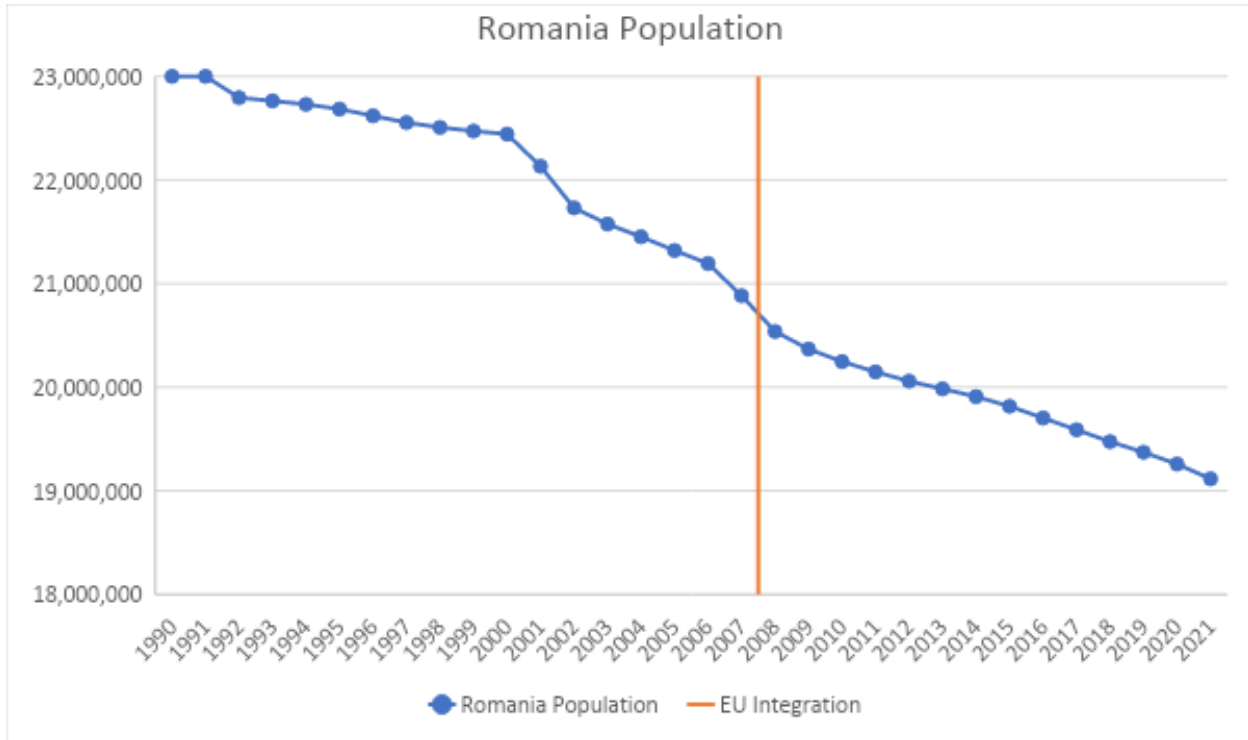
Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=BG>

The graph 4.3.3 shows the trend of GDP in Billion (current US\$) from the year 1990. From the year 1996, it had a positive trend until 2008, where most of the countries were impacted due to financial crises. The Bulgarian GDP decreased from being around 55 Billion in 2008, to 51 billion in 2010. As regards to the GDP EU integration, the GDP continued to increase after the country joined the EU. The level of 50 Billion, Bulgaria had also in 2015 and after this year, continued to increase and in 2021 it reached the highest level of around 80 billion.

Therefore, based on the data provided, we see that after joining the EU, migration trend in Bulgaria is positive. Personal remittances are mostly decreased and remittances as a percentage of GDP are decreased too, whereas the country's GDP is increased. Consequently, we can conclude that the migration has a positive relation with GDP in Bulgaria.

V. ROMANIA DATA

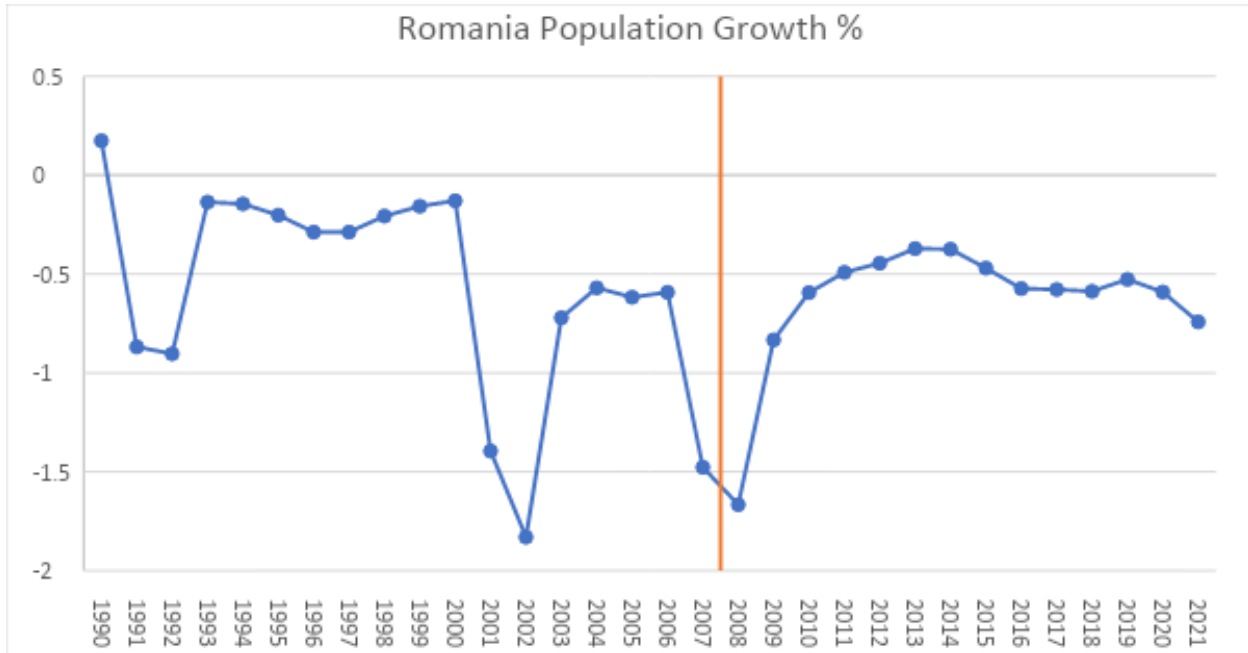
The other country taken in the study is Romania, which is also a country in Southeastern Europe, with an approximate number of population approximately 19 million (Eurostat, 2022). In the year of 2007, Romania became a full member of the European Union. Regarding the Schengen Area, as reported for Bulgaria, in the same stage is Romania, who currently, is in the process of joining Schengen acquis at large extent too (European Commission, 2022).



Graph 5.1.1 Population of Bulgaria,

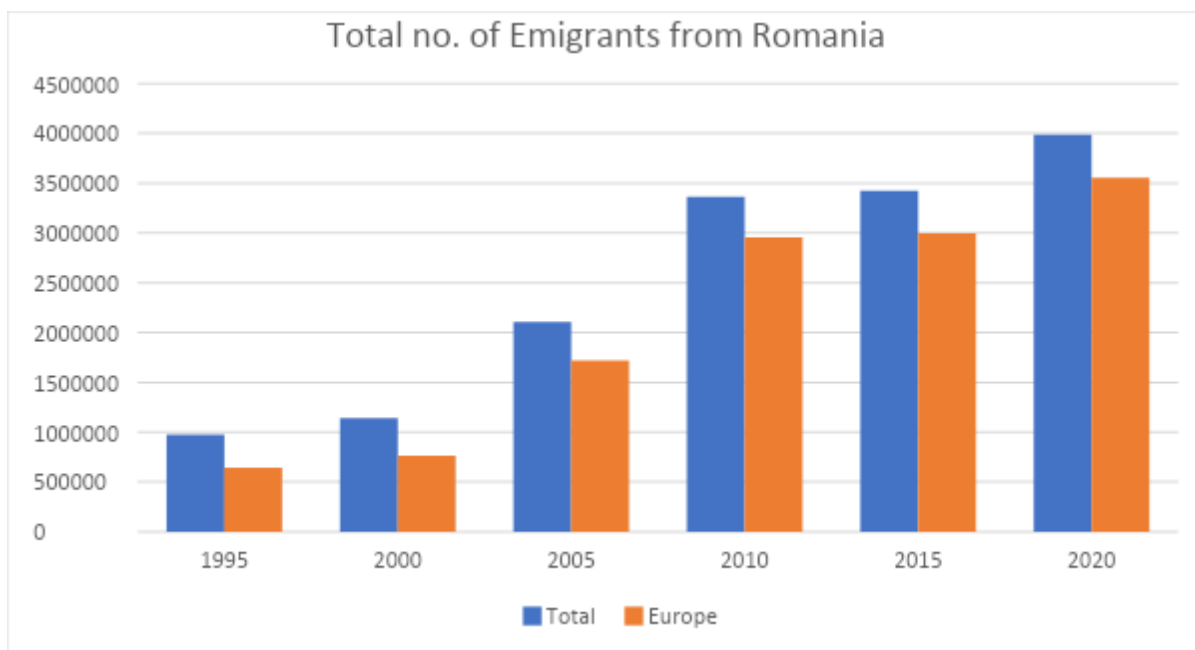
Source: The worldbank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=RO>

Romania is among the large countries, with a quite high number of population, approximately 19 million. As in the other countries in the study, among the challenges of the country is the continued decrease of the number of population. From the beginning of the study period in 1990 until 2021, the trend of the total number of population growth is negative. As we can see from the graph 5.1.1, the population in 1990 was around 24 million. Whereas, when the country became a full member of the European Union in 2007, the population number was decreased to around 21 million, which means approximately 3 million less population than it used to have in the 90's. The same negative trend continues also after EU integration, and in 2021 the total population of Romania is around 19 million.



Graph 5.1.2 Population growth of Romania,
Source: Own calculation

The graph 5.1.2 shows the population growth in Rumania is negative for the whole period of the analysis. It is worth mentioning that the major gap is in the years of 2000 and 2002. Slight increase is marked after year 2002 until 2006, but still remains negative up the last period.

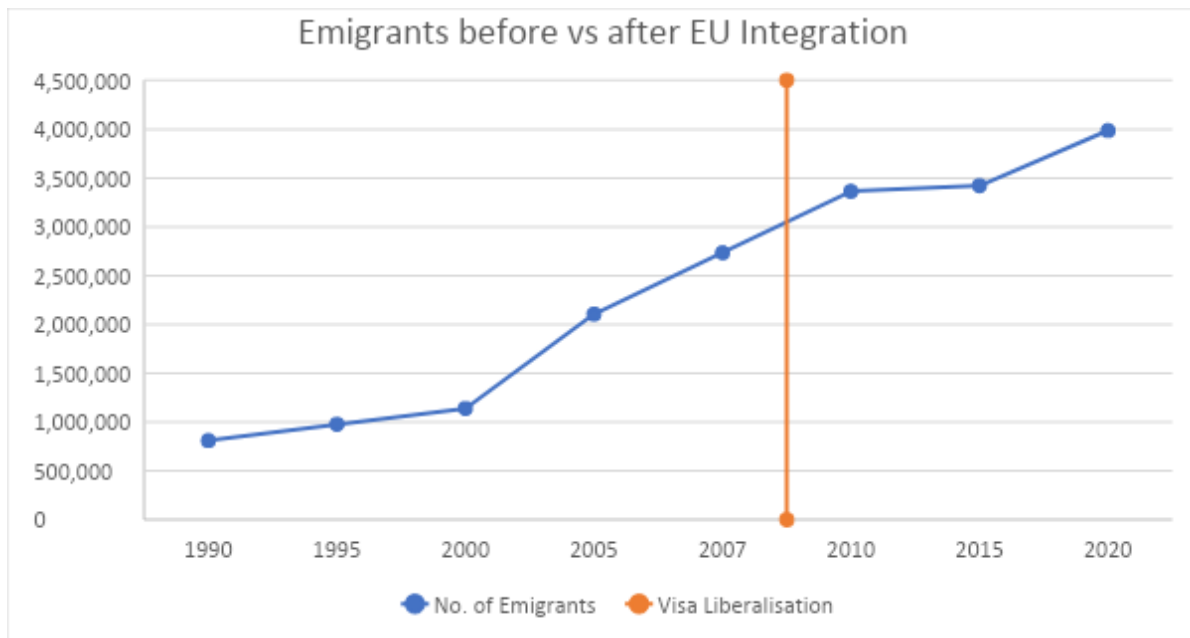


Graph 5.1.3 Number of Migrants from Romania

Source: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/products/dyb/index.cshtml>

The table 5.2.3 shows the number of migrants in five years periods from 1995 to 2020, and the total number of migrants that choose Europe. In 1995 the total number of migrants in Rumania was around 1 million, where the positive trend of migrants kept raising over years. The number was increased mostly during the period 2005 -2010, where the country become member of European Union. In 2020, it was reported that the number reached almost 4 million. This is quite high number compared to the total number of population, almost one third of total population.

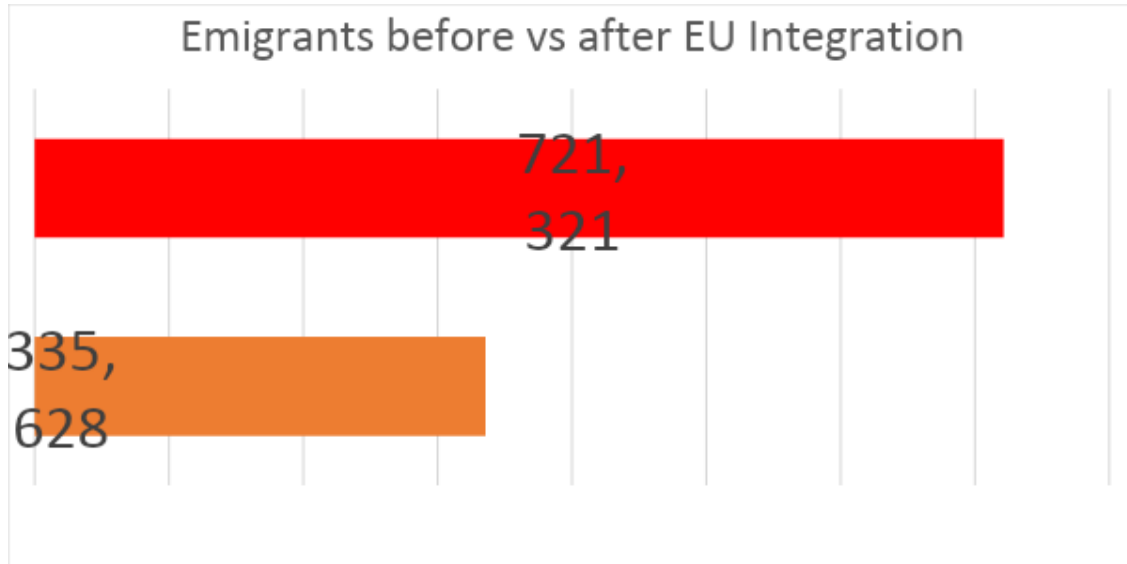
As regard to the destination of migrants, from the first period taken in the study 1995, the main destination was Europe. In the last period in 2015-2020, out of 4 million migrants, 3.5 million choose European countries to migrate.



Graph 5.1.4 Migration trend from Romania before and after EU integration

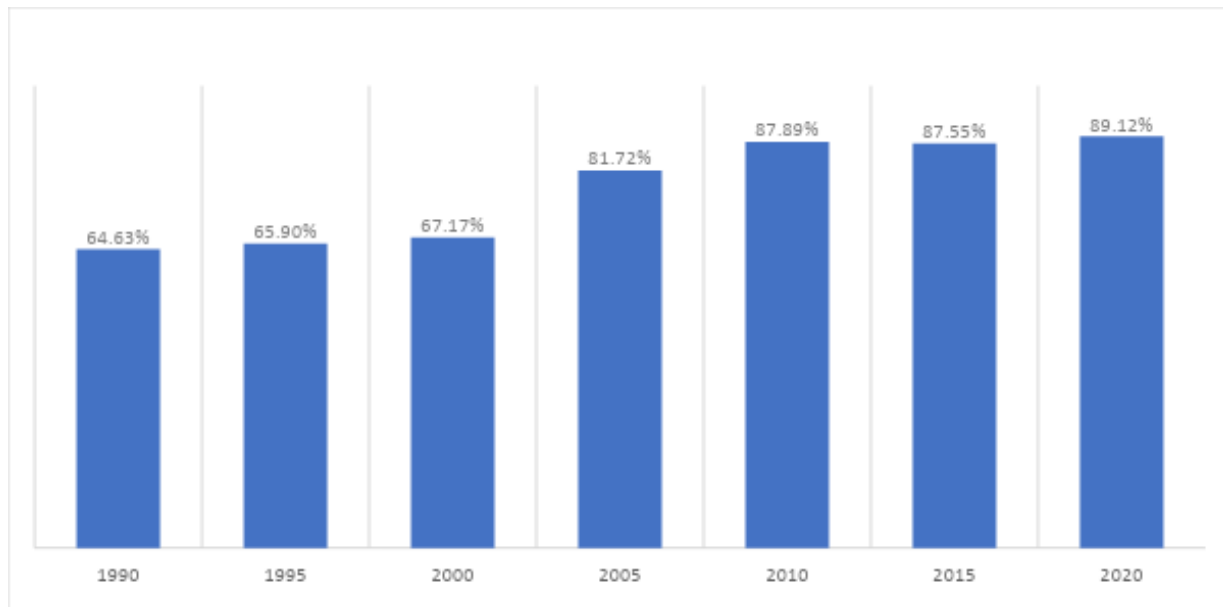
Source: own calculations

The number of migrants before the country's EU integration was around 3 million, whereas the trend of migration continued to increase also after EU membership. In the last period, from 2015 to 2020 the total number of migrants increased from being around 2.8 million, to around 4 million. Consequently, more than 1 million migrated after EU membership in 2007 to 2020.



Graph 4.2.5 Yearly average of migrants before and after Romanias' EU integration
Source: Own calculations

It is noticeable that the number of migrants has increased significantly after EU integration. Based on the calculations, the yearly average before joining the EU used to be 335,628, while after 2007 the average increased to 721,321. This is an increase of more than 50% compared to the time before EU Integration.

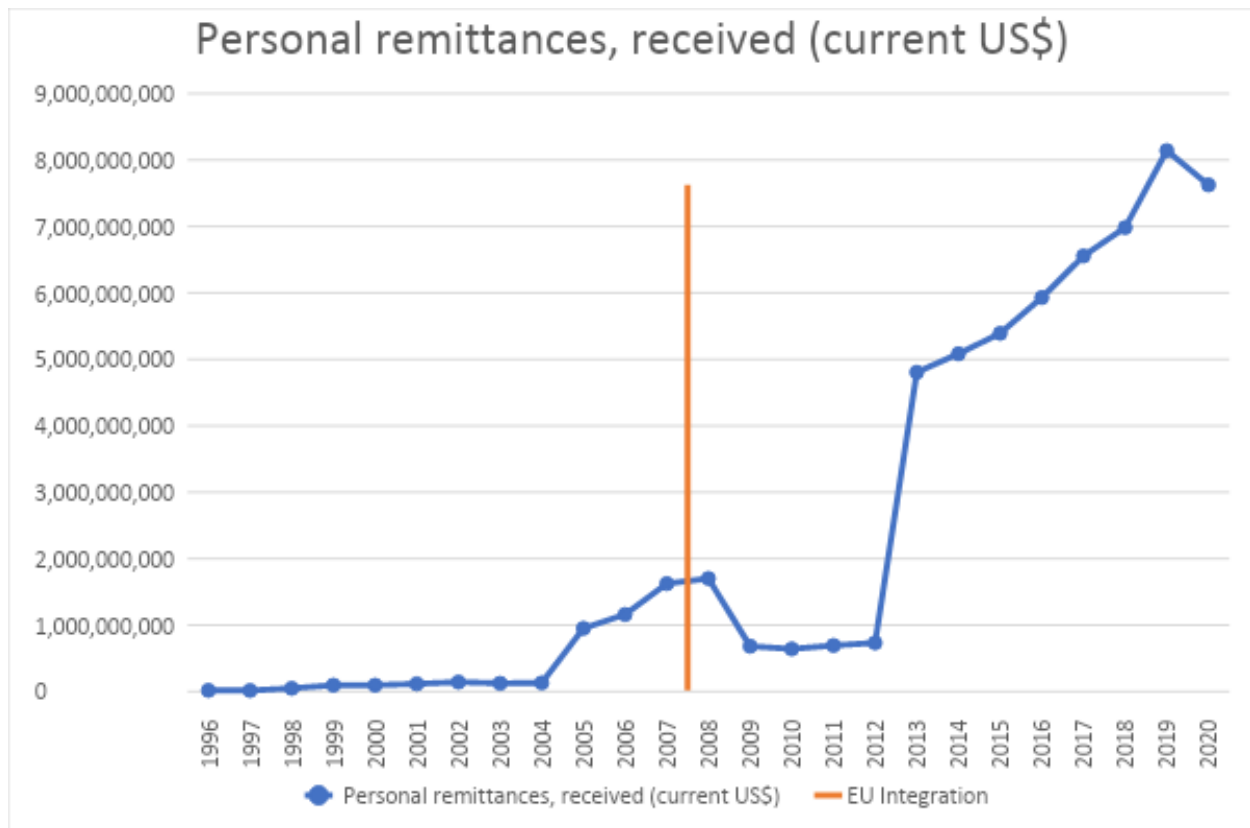


Graph 5.2.6 Percentage of Migrants in European Union
Source: Own calculation

Main destination of Rumania migrants was always Europe. The data above shows the percentage of the migrants from Romania to European Union Countries in comparison to the total number of migrants from this country. From the beginning of the period 1990, the percentage used to be quite high around 64%, and it kept increasing as the number of migrants increased, in the last period of 2020 the percentage almost reached 90%. This is the highest percentage compared to other countries in the study: North Macedonia – that also had a high percentage of migrants in Europe and Bulgaria- that had more spread of migrants in the world.

5.3. Economic Consequences of Romania

The period of data analysis for Romania is taken from 1996 – 2020, in order to make comparison with North Macedonia and Bulgaria too.

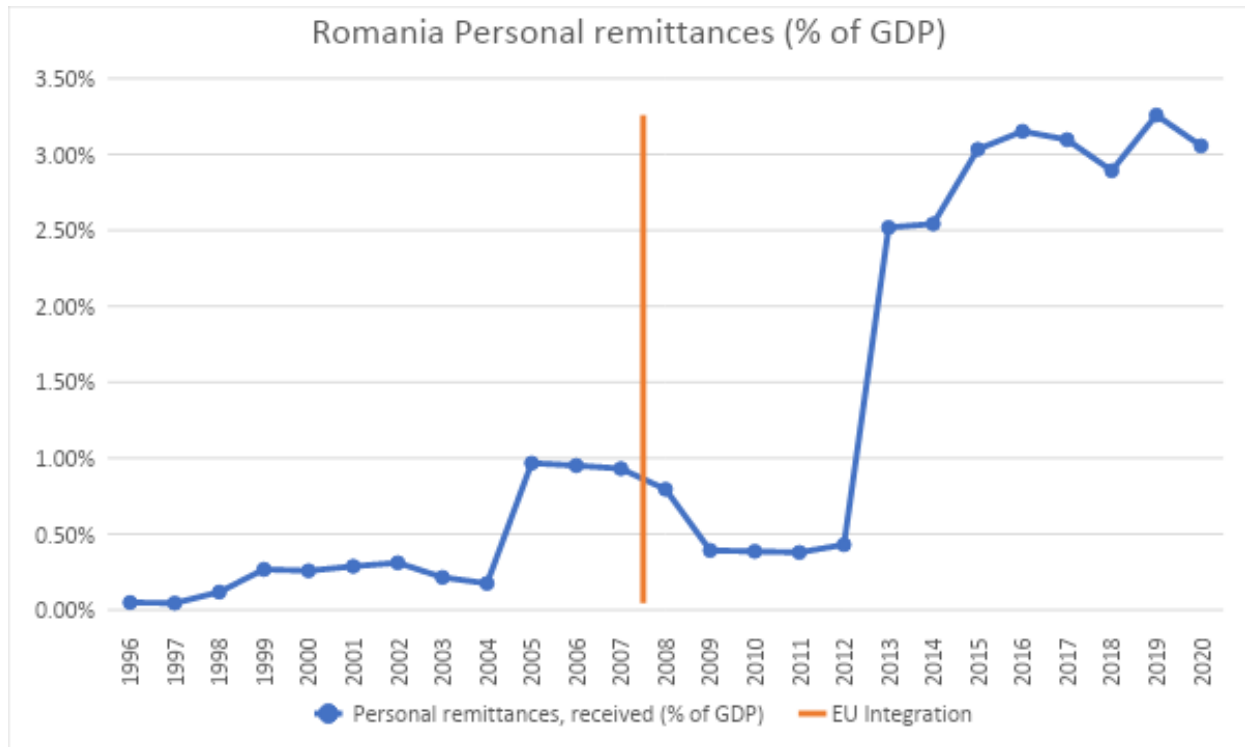


Graph. 5.3.1 Personal Remittances received

Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=RO>

The trend of remittances during the period 1996-2004 was linear and almost the same. In the year of 2005, remittances increased significantly to approximately 1 billion. The trend kept increasing and when the country became an EU member in 2007, the level of remittances were around 1.5 billion, then in 2009, due to the financial crisis, also in Romania remittances decreased below 1 billion until 2012. Drastic increases were marked in 2013, from the level of

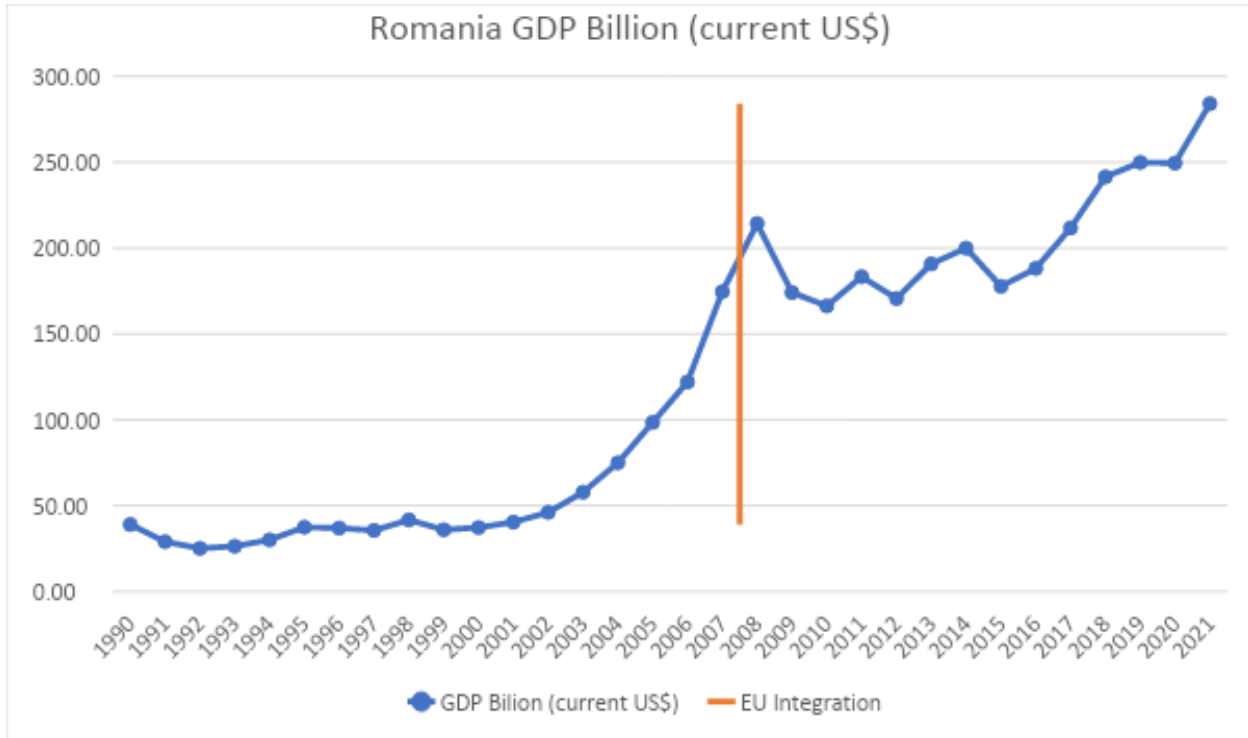
under 1 billion to almost 5 billion. In 2019, personal remittances in Romania reached the highest level of more than 8 billion, whereas in other states during the pandemic crises in 2020, remittances were slightly decreased.



Graph. 5.3.2 Percentage of Personal Remittances (% of GDP)

Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=RO>

In terms of remittances as percentage of GDP, the graph above shows that from 1996 to 2004 remittances were below the level of 0.5%, whereas in 2004 it was increased to 1% within a year, and remained at almost the same level until 2007. After 2007, it decreased to around 0.4% until 2012. The biggest change of the level of remittances was in 2012 to 2012 reaching 2.5% of the GDP. After 2014 the highest level reached in 2019 more than 3%. Again in 2020, slow decrease was reported that has been affected by pandemic COVID 19.



Description and analysis

Graph 5.3.3 GDP of Romania (current US\$)

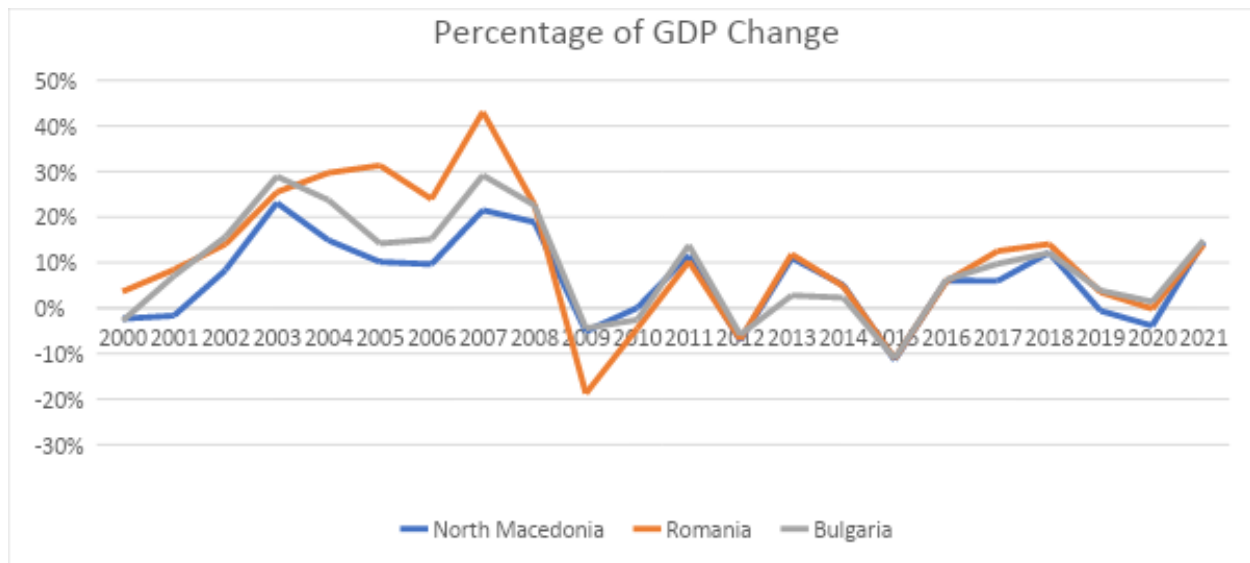
Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=RO>

The graph 5.3.3 shows the trend of GDP in Billion (current US\$) from the year 1990. From the year 2002, The GDP of Romania had a positive change by increasing above 50 billion, and had a positive trend until 2008, exceeding 200 billion for quite a short period of time. The Romanian GDP was slightly in 2009 and 2010, and from that period marked a positive trend except in 2015, and reached the highest level in 2021 to around 300 billion.

As a result, based on the data provided, we see that after joining the EU, population continues to decrease and the migration trend in Romania is positive. As regards to personal remittances, they are increased and remittances as a percentage of GDP are increased too and the country's GDP is increased. Consequently, we can conclude that the migration has a positive relation with GDP in Romania.

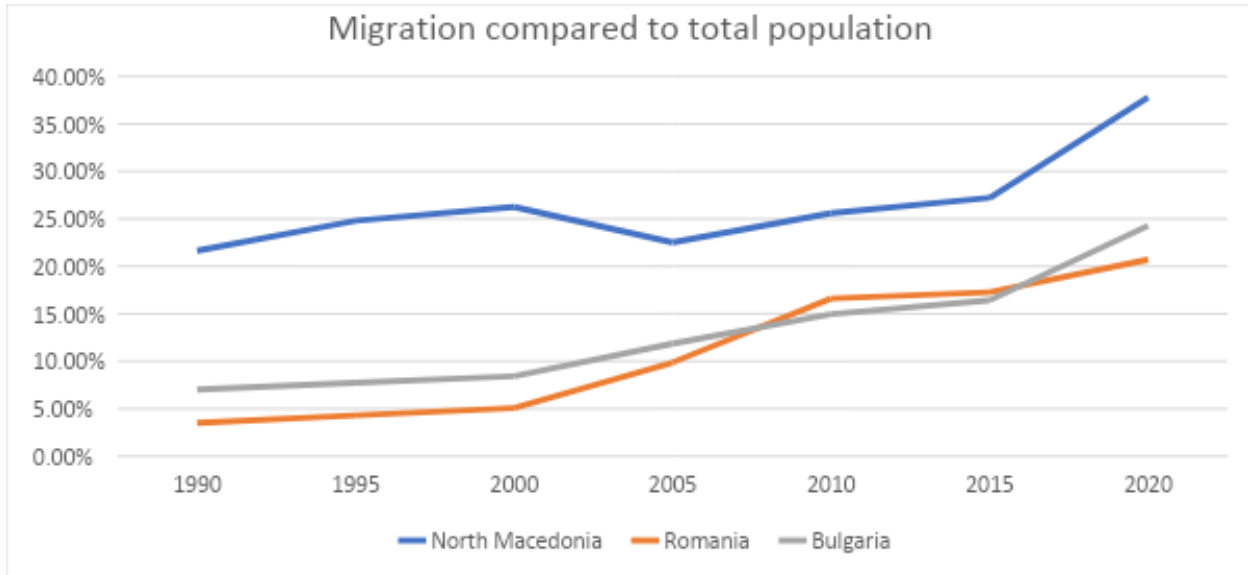
VI. Data Analysis for: North Macedonia, Bulgaria and Romania

The change in the % of GDP is reflected in all countries. Fluctuation in the period of study are marked in each country, and the change is quite deep.



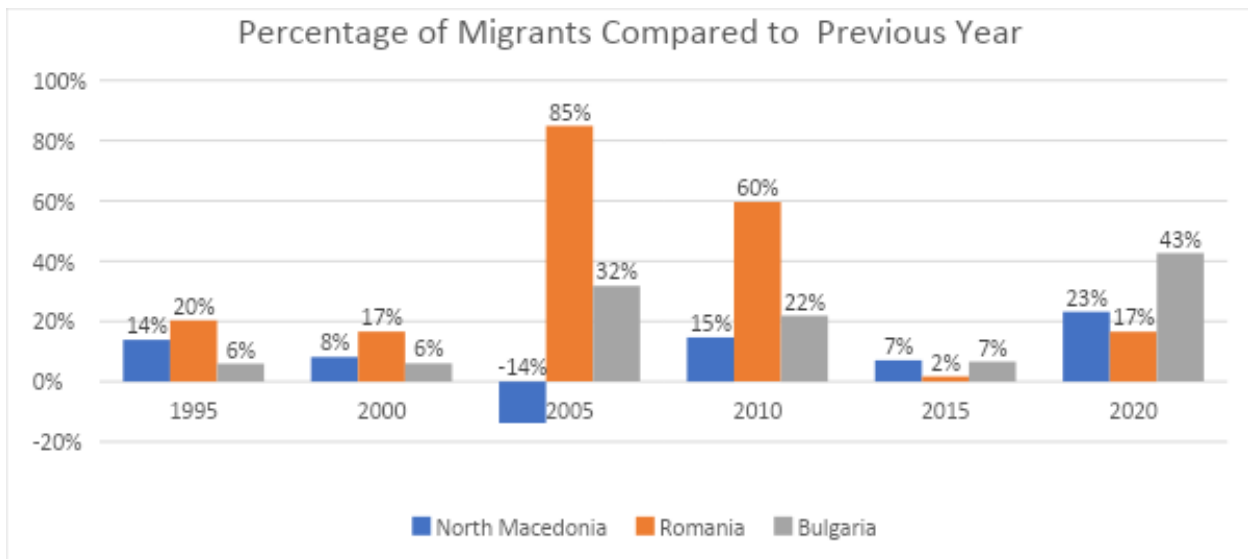
6.1.1 Percentage of GDP change in three countries

Almost all countries went through changes in Population, level of Remittances and thus it is reflected also in the GDP change of three countries in the study: North Macedonia, Bulgaria and Romania. From the year 2000 the GDP is increased up to 40% in 2007, especially Romania and Bulgaria up to 30%, the year that both countries become full member of EU. In the other hand, North Macedonia also marked an increase, with lower level up to 20%. The financial crises in 2008 -2009, have impacted all these three countries, where the GDP was declined. In 2020, the change in percentage of GDP started to increase again and reached the level of around 15% for the three countries.



6.1.2 Percentage of GDP change in three countries

The level of increase of migration in three countries is positive. In 1990, The level of migrants was almost 5% in Romania, around 7% in Bulgaria and around 22% for North Macedonia. In 2007 the level of migration compared to the population for Bulgaria and Romania was around 14%. The trend was positive, where in 2020 Bulgaria reached a level of 25% and Romania 20%. Whereas, for North Macedonia the percentage from 2000 to 2005 has slightly dropped to the same level as in 1990. After visa liberalization in 2010 the trend kept increasing and in 2020 it reached the level of around 38%. The largest percentage of migration have North Macedonia.



6.1.3 Percentage of Emigrants compared to last year

The figure above shows the change in the percentage of migrants in comparison to previous year. The major change was during the decade of 2000 to 2020, where it reached the highest level in 2005 of 85% in Romania and 32 percent in Bulgaria, while in the same period of 2005, North Macedonia marked a negative change of 14%. The drastic changes in the level of migration in this period is also because of the Visa Liberalization and membership in EU of Bulgaria and Romania.

In the last period of 2020, the percentage of the change is positive, and Bulgaria has the highest level of 43%, followed by North Macedonia 23% and Romania 17%.

VII. Conclusions

The study analyses the data for three Balkan Countries: Bulgaria, Romania and North Macedonia, in order to get any conclusion for North Macedonia for the impact of EU integration in the future migration of the country's population. There are taken in the study data for level of population, emigrants, remittances and GDP and analyzed for the period of 1990 to 2020 mostly. The three countries have some similarities in common and most of the processes have impacted similarly.

The processes of EU integration have affected Balkan countries in the phenomenon of migration, by increasing migration to EU countries as the procedures for entering to the destination country within the European Union are softened with visa liberalization and becoming even more acceptable when country become full member of the EU. There are marked changes after the countries: Bulgaria and Romania have undergone through a certain process, respectively, becoming full member of the European Union in 2007. The remittances are increased and also the GDP is increased. In North Macedonia, after the visa liberalization, number of migrants is increased and it is already high. After EU integration, as in other countries analyzed: Bulgaria and Romania, the number of migrants is increased as it becomes easier since the procedures are softened and all residents belongs to common country which is EU. Same will be with North Macedonia, and it is expected that number of migrants will be increased further after joining EU.

In the economic aspect, migration contribute to boost economic growth and innovation. In this regard, international migration contribute to workforce of the receiving country, consequently lower the working force of the origin country; GDP growth of both countries through remittances in origin country.

Therefore, for the case study in the short term GDP have been increased by the increase of migration, as the remittances are increased too. However, in the long run it will negatively affects the countries as the number of population decline and the population gets older, consequently not belonging to working force or decrease the productivity.

VIII. Scientific Contribution and future agenda

North Macedonia is expected soon to become a member of the European Union, therefore, the study will serve as good basis for future research and contribute to policy-makers, scientists and other stakeholders interested in the topic of migration and geo-politic and economic aspects of the North Macedonia and other Balkan Countries too.

The study will be intensified and further improved with significant analysis to be published in highly ranked international scientific journals.

Limitations: Data for the migrants country destination within Europe, gender, average years of migrants, average years of schooling, employment status in the country of origin and country of destination for North Macedonia citizens are not included in the study. Therefore, further analysis can be extended to by providing details on these aspects and also benefits from the countries they prefer to migrate to.

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Appendix I:
Important Dates for the EU integration process

Date	Description
September 2022	First explanatory screening meeting on Cluster 1 – Fundamentals
July 2022	Inaugural meeting of the screening process
July 2022	Intergovernmental Conference on accession negotiations with North Macedonia.
October 2020	The Commission proposes an Economic & Investment Plan to support and bring the Western Balkans closer to the EU.
July 2020	Presentation of the draft negotiating framework to the Member States.
March 2020	The European Council endorsed the decision to open accession negotiations.
March 2020	The Council decides to open accession negotiations.
January 2019	The EU is notified about the entry into force of the Prespa agreement.
January 2018	The Council sets out the path towards opening accession negotiations.
January 2018	The Commission repeats its unconditional recommendation to open accession negotiations.
January 2015	The Commission stated that it was prepared to extend its recommendation to open accession negotiations.
January 2015	Pržino agreement, facilitated by Commissioner Hahn and three Members of the European Parliament, reached between the four main political leaders.
January 2015	The Commission presented "Urgent Reform Priorities" to address the underlying rule of law issues.
January 2014	Sixth recommendation to open accession negotiations.
January 2013	Fifth recommendation to open accession negotiations.
January 2012	Fourth recommendation to open accession negotiations.
March 2012	The European Commission launches a High Level Accession Dialogue with Skopje.
October 2011	Third recommendation to open accession negotiations.
January 2010	Second recommendation to open accession negotiations.
December 2009	Citizens of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia travel visa free to the Schengen area.
January 2009	Commission recommends opening of accession negotiations.
July 2009	The Commission proposes to grant visa liberalisation to the country.
January 2008	Commission adopts Communication on the Western Balkans identifying benchmarks for the next stage in the accession process.
February 2008	Council adopts Accession Partnership for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, updating the 2006 European Partnership.

January 2008	Visa facilitation and readmission agreements enter into force.
January 2006	Council adopts European Partnership.
December 2005	Council grants candidate status to the country.
September 2005	The Commission gives favourable opinion on the application of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for membership in the European Union.
February 2005	The country replies to the EU questionnaire.
September 2004	1st meeting of Stabilisation and Association Council between EU and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
May 2004	Council asks the Commission to give opinion on application.
January 2004	Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) enters into force.
March 2004	Application for EU membership.
January 2001	Agreement on trade and trade-related matters enters into force.
April 2001	Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) is signed.

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