

# 14 Gendered migration from Moldova and Ukraine to the EU

Who cares?

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On women's day, an international soccer match Spain vs. Italy took place in a Moldovan village. Men whose wives work in Spain played against those whose wives work in Italy.

The joke above was told to a group of academic scholars during a recent visit to Moldova. Migration is indeed a widespread phenomenon in both Moldova and Ukraine, a fact reflected in the humour of these countries. During the visit it seemed that all locals were somehow on the point of leaving the country. When people met, their relatives and friends were either discussing the possibility of migrating or were about to do so. The only queue in Chisinau was the line in front of the National Archive where people obtain documents to prove their ancestry from that part of Moldova which had belonged to Romania before the Second World War and thus can claim Romanian citizenship. This in turn allows them to work in a country of the European Union. The Moldovan countryside was full of unfinished spacious houses owned by labour migrants who were working abroad to earn the money necessary for completing the building.

One of the most frequently discussed topics in everyday conversations, but also in assessments produced by experts and in the scientific literature, is female migration and its numerous and varied consequences, such as social orphanhood, divorce, the trafficking of women and children, changes in gender roles and the traditional model of the family, remittances, economic assistance to families left behind and the loss of the country's demographic potential. This chapter investigates certain aspects of female migration from Moldova and Ukraine and, more particularly, relates them to the structural organisation of care in EU countries that are the targets of this migration. The aim is to highlight how female migration, its volume and directions, is interconnected with policies of social care, especially in target countries.

To contextualise this phenomenon the chapter starts by analysing recent migration trends in Moldova and Ukraine and by outlining some of their local impacts. It will then discuss female migration in relation to the care policies of EU countries. Since Italy is one of the most popular destinations for female migrants from Moldova and Ukraine, it will be used here as an

example for countries with a familialistic care model, that is where care is mainly provided by the family but nowadays often by female migrants in the employ of the family. In concluding, this care model will be assessed as to its sustainability and stability. From an analytical point of view, welfare policies of receiving countries are here considered as a structure that enables and encourages particular forms of labour migration from the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood.

### **Labour migration from Moldova and Ukraine**

International labour migration started to flourish in Moldova during the second half of the 1990s and is today the far most predominant form of migration. It is also one of the most pressing issues facing the country. According to estimates published by the media, between 340,000 and one million Moldavans are working abroad (Moraru, Mosneaga and Rusnac 2012: 27) and the World Bank has claimed that over 700,000 people, that is almost half of the country's working population, are involved in labour migration (World Bank 2011b: 60).

The Republic of Moldova is located at the junction of the European (mainly EU) and the post-Soviet (Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)) migration systems. Among the CIS countries, Russia, and in particular Moscow and the Moscow region, appear to be the major destinations for Moldovan migrants. Within the European Union, Italy is the core destination. Thus, a majority of Moldovan labour migrants reside in Russia (58.2 per cent), followed by Italy (19 per cent), Portugal (5 per cent), Spain, Greece, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Cyprus, Romania, Turkey, Israel and Ukraine (Lucke, Mahmoud and Steinmayr 2009).

Overall, migrants tend to concentrate in big cities. Almost three quarters of them live in ten cities: Moscow, Rome, St Petersburg, Paris, Lisbon, Padua, Milan, Istanbul, Odessa and Tyumen (Lucke, Mahmoud and Pinger 2007: 26). Secondly, there exists a gender division: some countries, such as Russia, Ukraine, France, the Czech Republic and Portugal are more popular destinations for men, while women predominantly move to Italy, Turkey, Spain and Greece. Contrary to public perception, the economic crisis starting in 2008 did not result in a large-scale reversion of these trends. Monitoring conducted through the sociological survey CBS AXA in 2008–2009 indicates that Moldavians continue to dream of migration and are still willing to work abroad. In times of crisis, these aspirations thus rather seem to receive a new impulse (IOM 2009).

Ukraine is one of the largest suppliers of labour to Europe and international labour migration is a mass phenomenon there, too. Much as in Moldova, labour migration flows began during the recession of the transitional period because employment opportunities in the official domestic labour market were scarce. They increased throughout the 1990s, as wages in the registered economic sector remained low and the unemployment rate and involuntary part-time employment rose, leading to the spread of poverty and high economic inequality. When the economy started to recover in 2000, the job situation

and living standards improved. The unemployment and underemployment rates dropped significantly, the amount of unpaid salaries decreased rapidly and durable consumer goods became once more available. However, most indicators for Ukraine's social and economic development remain far below European standards, notably wage levels. There are therefore many reasons for Ukrainians to seek work abroad.

According to the State Employment Office, 85,000 Ukrainian citizens worked abroad in 2011 and almost 87,000 in 2012. Information about Ukrainian citizens officially working abroad is provided by private bureaus, agencies and various organisations that offer services related to employment outside Ukraine. Obviously, the number of workers who are placed in jobs through official channels does not reflect the real importance of labour migration from Ukraine. The monitoring currently carried out by the State Employment Office of Ukraine produces mostly data on sailors, which explains the significant share of men (93.8 per cent in 2012) in its figures for officially registered labour migrants.

In mid-2008 the Ukrainian Centre of Social Reforms (UCSR) and the State Committee of Statistics of Ukraine (SSCU) conducted the first large-scale survey on labour migration based on a household sample (UCSR and SSCU 2009). It will hereafter be referred to as the Labour Migration Survey. Four years later, a second nationwide survey, also based on a household sample, was carried out by the Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Social Research and the State Statistics Service of Ukraine but its results have not yet been published at the time of writing.

According to the Labour Migration Survey, 1.5 million Ukrainian residents were working abroad between early 2005 and 1 June 2008 and almost 1.3 million travelled abroad with the aim of finding employment between early 2007 and 1 January 2008 (UCSR and SSCU 2009). In total, labour migrants make up 5.1 per cent of Ukraine's working-age population, and those who migrated during the last 18 months of the period covered account for 4.4 per cent. Similar figures have been obtained through other methods employed during the survey, such as interviews with the heads of local councils or their deputies, asked to assess the impact of labour migration in their township or village, and with residents of rural areas (UCSR and SSCU 2009), as well as through another survey collecting demographic and health data (Ukrainian Centre for Social Reforms (UCSR), State Statistics Committee (SSC) of Ukraine, Ministry of Health (MofH) of Ukraine and Macro International Inc. 2008).

The main countries of destination for Ukrainian labour migrants are the Russian Federation (48 per cent), Italy (13 per cent), the Czech Republic (12 per cent), Poland (8 per cent), Hungary, Spain and Portugal. Almost all destinations are CIS or EU countries. The majority of labour migrants are male (two out of three in 2008). However, notable differences between the sexes can be observed for certain destination countries. Thus, whereas 61 per cent of the Ukrainian labour migrants in Italy are women, Hungary, the Czech

Republic and especially Russia mostly attract male migrants from Ukraine (the female share there is respectively 28, 30 and 19 per cent).

Another particularity are the regional variations. The ratio of labour migrants to the total working-age population ranges from practically zero, in some northern, central and southern regions, to almost 30 per cent in the Zakarpatska region, in southwestern Ukraine. Globally the ratio decreases from west to east, despite a slight increase in the Luhansk region in the southeast of the country. Lower ratios can also be observed for large multifunctional cities and their hinterland, namely the capital Kiev and the regions surrounding it.

In short, the major factors that define labour migration rates from Ukraine's regions appear to be:

- geographical proximity to Ukraine's state borders, especially with EU countries, that is areas from which it is easier and less expensive to migrate to another country;
- specific mental traits – residents of the western regions, for example, are widely known as being less paternalistic in outlook and more self-reliant when confronted with urgent problems and are therefore more likely to resort to labour migration in times of economic need;
- residence in or near a large multifunctional city that often offers more attractive employment opportunities than a foreign country;
- the overall level of a region's development – outmigration flows are stronger in little-developed regions such as that of Luhansk, which suffers not only from its marginal location but also from a consistently low level of human development.

In addition, the direction of migration flows is influenced by historical as well as mental and ethnical ties that link the inhabitants of certain Ukrainian regions to those of foreign countries (Pozniak 2009). The main destination countries for labour migrants from the Zakarpatska region are the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia and for those from the Chernivtsi region, Italy. Poland attracts numerous migrants from other western regions, while the Russian Federation is the main destination for people from central, eastern and southern Ukraine. Almost all Ukrainian labour migrants in Hungary are from the Zakarpatska region and three out of four in Poland are from five regions in western Ukraine.

Migrants in neighbouring countries (Russia, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary) usually stay there repeatedly for short periods, while migrants to southern Europe tend to remain for a longer period. Only about a third of the Ukrainians working abroad have residence and work permits, the others are undocumented migrants or partially fulfil the legal requirements. Those with an official status were most likely to work in the Czech Republic, Spain or Portugal, while the largest portion of migrants with no official status live in Poland and Italy. The majority of migrants are employed, but one out of six is self-employed or an employer, mostly in a neighbouring country, and especially

in Hungary (Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies of National Academy of Science of Ukraine (IDSS) 2010).

### **Gendered migration: the well-being of migrants and their families**

Studies from Moldova (Poalelungi 2010) offer useful information on the social and demographic profile of citizens involved in international labour migration. Most migrants are young adults: over 70 per cent of them are under 40 and almost 40 per cent are under 30 years of age; the average age is 35 years. Those aged 25 to 34 account for the largest part of migration flows (33.9 per cent) and most of them are male (63.6 per cent). Three out of four migrants (75.6 per cent) have completed their secondary education or had a professional education, but often occupy unskilled jobs abroad that are more accessible to foreigners.

Women account for up to a fourth of Moldovan labour migrants (Vaculovschi *et al.* 2010). Male labour migrants are employed in construction, the transport sector, industry and agriculture. The vast majority (51 per cent) of Moldavians work in construction. Female migrants are employed in industry and commerce, care for the elderly, sick and children, work as domestic help or provide sexual services. Most labour migrants do not work in the field for which they have been trained. This is especially the case in Western European countries. By contrast, migrants are more likely to find employment related to their training or earlier work experience in Russia, notably in the construction sector, agriculture, industry, trade, services and the transport sector.

Professionals (teachers, engineers, doctors etc.), too, are involved in international labour migration. As one survey has shown, a quarter of all migrants from Moldova are individuals with a secondary or professional education (respectively 25.5 per cent and 25.6 per cent in 2010). Their main motivation for seeking temporary or permanent residence abroad is the lack of attractive and well-paid jobs in Moldova. In addition, the majority of young Moldavians studying in Russia, Romania and Western European countries do not return home after completing their education. Thus, Moldova is also becoming a supplier of skilled labour at the expense of its own development (Moraru 2011: 66).

Studies from Ukraine provide a similar, sometimes more differentiated picture. Thus, male migrants from Ukraine are engaged mainly in construction, but as Table 14.1 shows, they predominantly do domestic work in Italy, while in Poland they are mainly employed in agriculture.

Female labour migrants from Ukraine are mainly working in the domestic sphere (as in Portugal, Spain and, especially, Italy), in trade (mainly in the Russian Federation and Hungary) and the construction sector (in Hungary, Portugal, the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation). In Poland, agriculture is the main sector where they are employed (see Table 14.2).

International labour migration has distinctive effects on Moldovan and Ukrainian society. Especially in Moldova, labour migration is so omnipresent

Table 14.1 Ukrainian male labour migrants by country of destination and type of economic activity in the host country (in %), 2007–2008

	<i>Czech Republic</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>Portugal</i>	<i>Russian Federation</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Other countries</i>	<i>All countries</i>
Agriculture	7.5	5.4	9.6	43.0	2.6	3.6	48.0	13.3	8.4
Industry	6.2	12.5	3.3	3.1	1.4	5.7	0.0	8.5	5.7
Construction	82.1	49.1	33.8	37.7	64.1	78.3	52.0	34.2	67.6
Wholesale and retail trade	0.5	33.0	0.0	8.9	2.9	3.9	0.0	9.4	4.8
Hotels and restaurants	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.8	0.0	0.9	0.9
Transport	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	12.4	4.2	0.0	13.8	3.9
Domestic work	1.0	0.0	43.8	7.3	13.3	1.2	0.0	15.8	6.4
Other	0.7	0.0	7.4	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	4.1	2.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Ukrainian Centre for Social Reforms (UCSR) and State Statistics Committee (SSCU) (2009).

Table 14.2 Ukrainian female labour migrants by country of destination and type of economic activity in the host country (in %), 2007–2008

	<i>Czech Republic</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>Portugal</i>	<i>Russian Federation</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Other countries</i>	<i>All countries</i>
Agriculture	5.5	0.0	4.0	56.9	3.7	0.5	17.1	2.9	8.5
Industry	16.3	24.8	0.4	0.0	0.0	5.6	0.0	6.1	5.1
Construction	44.9	51.1	2.9	2.7	48.8	30.2	19.9	11.6	19.8
Wholesale and retail trade	5.9	20.3	2.1	15.3	0.0	35.4	7.2	10.2	14.6
Hotels and restaurants	16.5	0.0	10.8	0.0	3.3	1.3	27.6	3.0	6.8
Transport	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	5.0	0.9
Domestic work	9.4	0.0	75.7	21.6	44.1	17.5	28.3	34.1	36.1
Other	1.3	3.8	4.1	3.5	0.0	9.0	0.0	27.1	8.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Ukrainian Centre for Social Reforms (UCSR) and State Statistics Committee (SSCU) (2009).

that it affects all parts of the country and permeates every sphere of public and private life. The impacts on rural areas and their socio-demographic situation are particularly acute as the exodus there is more intense than in urban areas. In 2010, 70.9 per cent of those who left the country came from rural areas. In many cases, few men of working-age remain in the villages, just as in times of war. In other villages, particularly in the south, there are virtually no women of working-age left, so that during weddings men often dance with each other (Moraru, Mosneaga and Rusnac 2012: 58). Labour migration also alters the patriarchal model of the family. While families materially benefit from labour migration, emotional ties suffer from the prolonged absence of a family member (Moraru, Mosneaga and Rusnac 2012). Many of the predominantly young migrants end up becoming permanent residents in their host country and will take their children with them. This process has actually started to gain momentum in the early 2000s. In 2011 alone, some 28,000 children left the country with their parents to take up permanent residence abroad.<sup>1</sup> This aggravates Moldova's demographic decline.

The main positive effect of migration are the money transfers from migrants that are conducted through both official and unofficial channels. Remittances have been increasing almost every year. Their value has reached USD1.45 billion in 2012, only slightly less than in 2008, when they amounted to USD1.66 billion (National Bank of Moldova 2013).

Remittances are mostly spent on private consumption. Only 16.8 per cent of respondents in a survey declared their intention to save money in order to start a business and only some 10 per cent of former migrants said they had done so (Moraru, Mosneaga and Rusnac 2012: 55). Remittances are invested mainly in agriculture, transport, the retail and entertainment sector as well as real estate. Some money is also spent on community development, as people remain attached to the locality where they were born or have lived before leaving. Every ninth labour migrant thus financially assists a parish, sports club or other local institutions but the geographic distribution of this assistance is very uneven and rarely of great significance.

The growing cash flows from abroad have profoundly transformed Moldovan society. In addition to reinforcing negative demographic trends (a declining birth rate and an ageing population), they have led to unsustainable levels in the country's balance of payments (many imports are financed by remittances) and an appreciation of the currency that reduces its international competitiveness. Equally important are the social consequences. Family life has been strongly affected by the increasing number of social orphans (i.e. children left behind by their migrant parents) and by changing gender roles, which also have an impact on the wider community and the whole country. At the cost of destroying social networks, migration has worked towards reducing poverty in recent years. Accordingly, migration is now being re-evaluated and questions have been raised whether the present model of socio-economic development relying on migration is sustainable. The remittance economy also has negative impacts on the migrants themselves, as many of them accept low living standards

abroad to send money back home to their relatives, saving on expenses for health care and food and endangering their personal safety, which has resulted in numerous deaths, occupational injuries and growing numbers of ill-health and, more generally, in a lower 'threshold of health' (Moraru, Mosneaga and Rusnac 2012: 60).

Another migration-related risk in both Moldova and Ukraine is that of becoming a victim of trafficking in human beings. At least 22,000 citizens of Ukraine are estimated to live in conditions of slavery abroad (Ball and Hampton 2009). The Ukrainian government has therefore launched several initiatives to combat this form of trafficking, which have met with some success in recent years. During the period 2002–2012, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has registered 3,200 criminal cases and 776 prosecution cases related to the trafficking in human beings. Despite this, Ukrainians have remained largely unaware of the risks involved. According to data from the Ukraine 2007 Health and Demography Survey (UCSR *et al.* 2008), 48 per cent of the respondents had never heard of cases of human trafficking, 51 per cent were unable to estimate their personal risk of becoming a victim and 56 per cent declared that they did not know whether the risk of trafficking had increased or decreased over the last three years. Respondents from rural areas and those with little education and low incomes were particularly ill-informed.

According to the International Organisation for Migration, more than 9,000 victims of trafficking received some form of assistance during the years 2000 to 2012; their annual number had been growing until 2007 and only stabilised in 2008. Until 2007 the overwhelming majority (more than 80 per cent) of victims were women. Since then the gender ratio has slowly reverted with 76 per cent of female victims given assistance in 2007, 64 per cent in 2010, 57 per cent in 2011 and 44 per cent in 2012. Between 2010 and 2012, 24.4 per cent were victims of sexual exploitation (mostly women) and 68.2 per cent of labour exploitation (mostly men), some of the latter being forced to become beggars.

### **Welfare, care and migration**

The majority of female migrants from Moldova and Ukraine have been heading for Southern Europe, namely Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal. In addition to the cultural proximity of countries where Latin languages are spoken, other factors, linked to the transformation of the social structure in these countries, have contributed to make them attractive for migrants from (Wider) Eastern Europe, such as increasing female employment, growing individualisation and related changes in the family structure (Bettio, Simonazzi and Villa 2006: 271; van Hooren 2011: 42–47). Labour migration can thus not only be explained by the economic and post-socialist transformations that have been taking place in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood. Obviously, there are also other push factors at work. As elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, female employment rates were high in Moldova and

Ukraine. When the demand for female labour decreased in post-Soviet times, women have often sought to utilise their gendered qualifications, notably for motherly care, by searching employment abroad. With changing family structures, older women in their fifties, for example, are no longer needed to care for their grandchildren and therefore become free to provide care abroad (Solari 2011). The subject requires, however, more research to investigate its numerous causes and effects and their interconnectedness and mutually reinforcing character.

The most interesting approach to female labour migration relates it to different welfare regimes in the receiving countries. Their classification is based on the analysis of how social services are produced by and allocated between different care providers, such as the state, the market, non-profit organisations and families. In its most classical expression, a typology is derived from notions of class stratification and decommmodification (Bonoli, George and Taylor-Goodby 2000: 8–28). Building on Esping-Andersen's classification, feminist critique and the notion of a defamilialisation of care, van Hooren (2011: 29) divides European welfare regimes into three ideal-types: a liberal, a familialistic and a social-democratic care regime. In the first, care is being provided predominantly by the market or, if the state retains responsibility for care, is being outsourced to private agencies on the basis of means and needs testing. In the second, families are required by law to take care of their dependents, which puts the family at the heart of care. Publicly provided care is subject to strict means and needs tests and only available if families are unable or fail to carry out their responsibilities, although they may receive cash benefits for organising care or, alternatively, contract out services to the third sector. Familialism can be explicit, when families receive cash benefits, or implicit, when no subsidies are available for families acting as care providers. In the third regime, services of care are a universal entitlement based on needs testing alone. Most services are thus being provided by the state, which leads to the defamilialisation of care. In practice, national models of care usually rely on a combination of the various regimes, which depends, for example, on the categories of persons that need care. Arrangements for child care may therefore differ from those made for the care of the elderly. Moreover, in recent years, the diversity of arrangements has increased even within countries, since all European countries have liberalised their economies and attempted to cut social expenditure. Nonetheless, these ideal-types offer a useful hermeneutic tool that allows a better understanding of the main features of each particular welfare system.

Closely related to this is the notion of a care culture, that is the national and regional discourses on what constitutes good care, reflected in individual preferences of how to care for children or the elderly and how people in need wish to be cared for. In some ways, care cultures appear to be connected with the predominant institutionalised care regimes at certain historical moments (see, for example, Zdravomyslova (2009)). In the present context, it is interesting that several scholars (Bettio and Plantenga 2004; Bettio,

Simonazzi and Villa 2006; van Hooren 2011) have stressed that familialistic care regimes in particular significantly depend on care being provided by migrants.

### **Migrants in familialistic care regimes**

Thus, in Mediterranean countries, such as Greece, Spain and Italy, the organisation of care is being delegated almost exclusively to the family, resulting in a system where the care culture and institutionalised care arrangements seem to mutually reinforce each other. Families who employ a migrant to look after their elderly relatives, for example, do so because it is considered a moral (and legal) duty for children to arrange care for their elderly parents and not so much because they themselves particularly favour such an arrangement. In Italy, the law obliges spouses, children, parents, siblings, as well as close in-laws (sons-in-law, daughters-in-law and parents-in-law) to provide care for a relative in need, as there exists no comprehensive system of social welfare on the state level that would guarantee to all citizens a minimum standard of care. The strong familism of this care regime is here implicit, since the state does not provide any support to the family that acts as a care provider, except in cases where the family's resources are deemed insufficient. The state only performs a subsidiary role and care provided by it is considered a last resort. As a result, there are now large variations in the quality and extent of care services offered by various commercial and third-sector organisations, such as volunteer organisations linked to the Catholic Church (van Hooren 2011: 42–43).

A nationwide survey conducted in 2001 has shown that long-term needs are predominantly met by the family and friends (83.1 per cent), followed by private care providers (9.7 per cent) or a combination of the two (2.1 per cent), and that public services (sometimes in collaboration with other providers) cater for the remaining cases (Bettio and Plantenga 2004: 78). At the same, Italy has one of the highest old-age dependency rates, that is the proportion of people aged over 65 to the working-age population, in Europe and the rate is increasing (Bettio, Simonazzi and Villa 2006: 273). Family care is thus structurally prescribed and culturally embedded in Italian society, while the public and commercial sectors have remained underdeveloped.

In some cases, families receive, however, cash benefits. With regard to care for the elderly, there are two kinds of transfer payments. The Attendance Allowance, administered by the state, is meant for elderly people with severe disabilities who are in need of constant care for everyday activities. Its allocation is not means-tested and there is no control over how the money is being spent. In 2011, the basic allowance amounted to EUR 487.39 but payments could reach up to EUR 807.35 in cases of blindness. The proportion of beneficiaries to the population aged over 65 has increased from 5 per cent in the early 1990s to 9.5 per cent in the late 2000s. In 2008, almost a quarter (24 per cent) of persons aged over 80 had received the allowance. The Local Care Allowance, granted by regional and municipal authorities, is means- and needs-tested but

can be freely spent. In 2006–2007, monthly payments ranged from EUR 300 to 500 per person, but only 0.5 per cent of the elderly received the allowance (Gagliardi et al. 2012: 95–96). It is in part these payments that allow families with limited financial resources to employ migrants for care.

Francesca Bettio and her co-authors (2006) describe the situation in Italy as a ‘migrant in the family’ care model. Together with the ever growing work burden shouldered by an ever decreasing number of native ‘natural’ carers (women in their forties or fifties), monetary transfers enhance the ‘care drain’ from Eastern and Central European countries. In the 1970s and 1980s, female migrants in Italy mostly came from former colonies; they were employed by well-off urban families and had long-term plans to stay. Today’s migratory flows from Eastern Europe, which started in the mid-1990s, are more heterogeneous. Female labour migrants are generally middle-aged, well-educated, married and have children. They usually enter the host country with a tourist visa, work in a family for three or four months, long enough to earn money for some particular project at home (e.g. construction work on the house, children’s education etc.), return home for several months and then restart working for the same family. This rotational form of temporary migration enables women to work abroad while maintaining family responsibilities at home. It also means that several women are sharing the same job abroad, a typical feature for employment in private households. The women work as live-ins, have long working hours and the relationship with their employer can be characterised as one of servant to master. Being intensively involved in the care of disabled people, migrant women have few possibilities to socialise or to find a better job in the Italian labour market, and even less to fully participate in the Italian society. There are, of course, deviations from this very common working pattern of the *badanti* (Bettio, Simonazzi and Villa 2006). Women sometimes find it impossible to return home, because they cannot finance the journey for example, and the migration then ceases to be rotational, with nefarious consequences for their own family life.

The earnings of care workers vary but on average are comparable to female wages for a manual job in the Italian industrial sector. In addition, almost all of them can go into savings when the employer provides for board and lodging. The average salary of the *badanti* has been estimated at EUR 879, that is, roughly 15 times as much as the average female worker earns in Moldova. Generally, the unregulated nature of care work tends to reduce the costs of care for the employer. In cases where the carer resides with the family, the hourly wage can be less than three euros, even though the official rate quoted by a local cooperative of carers is roughly eight or nine euros (Bettio, Simonazzi and Villa 2006: 281). There are therefore no incentives for the Italian authorities to develop local care services, as both families and the government are satisfied with the present situation, the former because they benefit from flexible, respectful and cheap care services and the latter because social expenditure by the state remains low.

It is difficult to estimate the number of immigrants employed by households, as there are many informal arrangements and no controls by the authorities. According to a survey quoted by Bettio, Simonazzi and Villa (2006: 279), migrant workers usually enter the country as tourists or students and not all of them regularise their status later on, although the possibility exists. It has been estimated that for every regularised worker there are 2.5 undocumented ones (Bettio, Simonazzi and Villa 2006). Another estimate gives the same numbers for formally and informally employed migrants (van Hooren 2011: 49–54). Gagliardi *et al.* (2012: 97) advance the number of 1.5 million individual care providers, 72 per cent of them immigrants. Finally, Lamura and Nies (2009) have estimated that some 700,000 immigrants in Italy were employed as domestic workers in 2007, accounting for 90 per cent of all domestic help. Seventy-one per cent of workers also lived with their employers and, among the remaining, 23 per cent were working during the day and 6 per cent during the night. In any case, the notable increase of migrant workers caring for elderly dependents has been the most striking change in the Italian care sector over the last two decades.

Legal factors, too have contributed to this change. Italian immigration policy, for example, can be characterised as being open towards care workers but restrictive towards other forms of migration. Among its typical features are large-scale regularisations of undocumented migrants already living in the country, thanks to which several hundred thousand people have received work and residence permits in 2002 and 2009. The Bossi–Fini Act of 2002 has introduced yearly quotas for immigrants and quotas for work permits have been set regularly since 2005. Romanians and Bulgarians are free to work as domestic workers and assistants (van Hooren 2011: 62). Already in 2002, migrants from countries with the largest share of female migrants, such as Romania, Ukraine, Ecuador, Poland and Moldova, benefitted more than others from the regularisation, a clear signal that care workers are the immigrants most in demand (Bettio, Simonazzi and Villa 2006: 280).

Extensive regularisations in particular have helped perpetuate the influx of new migrants and made care work even cheaper. While they have offered more protection to regularised care workers, by guaranteeing, for example, maternity leaves, they have made their employment more expensive, thereby creating an even stronger demand for unregulated labour and rising expectations in countries of origin. According to one estimate from the mid-2000s, more than half of the immigrants in Spain had no official status, more than one third in Portugal and nine out of ten in Greece (Bettio, Simonazzi and Villa 2006: 276). The development of the ‘migrant in the family’ care model has also been favoured by a large ‘grey economy’ that easily accommodates new immigrants, as citizens do not compete for jobs in this market which they consider unattractive. This is to say that the growing informal employment market does not result from the inflows of unauthorised migrants, but that the demand for cheap or, in other words, unregulated labour is a precondition for massive immigration

inflows (Bettio, Simonazzi and Villa 2006: 275; Solari 2011; van Hooren 2011: 62).

The combination of all these factors has resulted in a new welfare mix where care is being organised differently. Families still retain their responsibility for providing care but the role of women involved in care in particular has been profoundly altered. Female family members now act as organisers and coordinators of care work and have become official or informal employers. If paramedical aid is required for example, a trained medical nurse, usually a local, intervenes on a temporary basis or aid will be provided by a medical or nursing facility. The most time-consuming and labour-intensive work, that is long-term care, is, however, accomplished by a migrant who often lives with the family. Care services have thus led to segregation along the lines of ethnic origin and social class and increased inequality among women, while maintaining traditional familialism. As Bettio and her co-authors (2006: 282) write, ‘a complex segmentation of the market along gender and ethnic lines has thus arisen from an abundant supply of cheap labour combined with a limited supply of specialised public services’. It can be assumed that this kind of organisation of care also alters the gender contract of a society (Solari 2011; Zdravomyslova, Rotkirch and Temkina 2009).

## **Conclusion**

The ‘migrant in the family’ care model corresponds to the familialistic care culture and its structural organisation. It is perceived as flexible, personalised and inexpensive by both the families involved and the state. The main question mark concerns its sustainability. Will this arrangement of care survive a diminishing supply of cheap female labour once the economies of Eastern Europe will have further developed? The viability of the system is also called into question by its tendency to slow down and interfere with the development of local care institutions. In the long run, it may not be possible to rely on a welfare system that continuously produces inequality on the basis of gender, ethnicity, citizenship and social class (e.g. Bettio, Simonazzi and Villa 2006; van Hooren 2011). Moreover, it is questionable whether this can be reconciled with the demand for more flexible services and a more flexible labour force needed to provide good-quality care. Even in countries with a predominantly social-democratic welfare model, the public sector has been shrinking in recent years. Care services have been outsourced to the market to better cope with this demand for flexibility (Bonoli, George and Taylor-Goodby 2000).

It is striking that within the European Union the ethical sustainability of this model is usually being discussed in terms of the target countries – how their welfare systems are being negatively affected by this development, while the debate in the two Eastern European countries studied here has focused on the care deficit caused by female outmigration. Despite the remittances they receive from migrants, neither the Moldovan nor the Ukrainian society, both largely involved in international labour migration, seem capable of sustainable

development under these circumstances. Their situation should therefore be taken into account in discussions on the EU level.

International labour migration has both positive and negative effects in these countries. It relieves tensions on the national labour market, improves the economic situation of migrants' households and may even contribute to a better understanding of the values and standards promoted by the European Union. However, its nefarious consequences are equally numerous and the migrants' largely unprotected status in their host country remains an ongoing concern. Too many still become victims of abuse by employers and various intermediaries and face inhuman living and working conditions.

One of the outcomes of this strongly asymmetrical solution to the care deficit in the 'old' European countries has been the development of inequality. Some experts interviewed during field trips have expressed their hope that returning labour migrants would eventually help bring European values to Ukraine and Moldova. But in the face of the working and living conditions that female migrants from these two countries have to put up with in Italy, it could be asked which values these migrants are supposed to bring back. The organisation of care there confines migrants to private households and virtually isolates them from any form of participation in the host society. They are working long hours for minimal pay, often outside any legal framework, and are completely dependent on their employer. In this perspective, the European Union appears to have assumed the role of the head of a patriarchal family. Western Europe, and its southern part in particular, is being cared for and served by women from the EU's eastern neighbours. This conveys a particular shade of meaning to policies of the European Union designed to promote gender equality in Moldova and Ukraine.

Fiona Williams (2008, 2011), who has extensively written about the interrelations of migration and social and labour policies in contemporary Europe, is convinced that in designing future politics and policies we should be aware of the transnational economy of care and aim at global justice and the transnational political ethics of care. The migration of female care providers takes place in the context of unequal geopolitical interdependence. For the care sector this means that a 'care drain', caused by the migration of unskilled care providers, occurs simultaneously with the movement of highly trained health care professionals. Both deprive poorer countries of skills and sources for the provision of care. This requires the development of an ethical code for the recruitment of care providers, preferably on the EU level. The second aspect of the global political economy of care is the transnational dynamics of care commitments of those who have to leave behind them dependents. Transnational care takes place in many ways (remittances, phone calls and other communication through the internet, visits home etc.) and this care is as valuable as the paid one that migrant workers provide in the richer host countries. In commercial care, the movement of international capital should be acknowledged. Williams (2008: 12) also points to the transnational influence on care discourses and policies (e.g. the spread of paternity leave) and the transnational

development of social movements, NGOs and grassroots campaigns. This transnational economy of care can and should be assessed through the political ethics of care as a method and a normative framework. Williams (2008: 12) insists on the following starting points when thinking about care: interdependence of individuals rather than their autonomy, sensitivity to context, responsiveness as the ability to perceive others on their own terms, and sensitivity to the consequences of choices. In other words: what are the material and social outcomes of such actions? Transnational and ethical approaches should be taken into account when aiming at (gender) equality, stability and sustainability for all societies involved in the processes of international migration.

### Note

- 1 V. Lutenco, Counsellor of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, during a round table of the TV programme 'Fabrica', *PUBLICA TV*, 15 September 2012.