



WHAT ROLE DID ROMANIA PLAY IN THE CURRENT REFUGEE CRISIS? IS ROMANIA A COUNTRY FOR REFUGEES?

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Introduction

- Romania is one of the few countries in Europe which has a Parliament Group with representatives from the main ethnic minorities present, most of them with historical significance for the development of the state. The migrant communities that settled in Romania after the fall of communism, for example the Afghan community does not fulfill the law requirements to have a pro-bono Parliamentary seat for minorities. Also, Romania is one of the European countries who do not offer political rights for non-citizens, even at the local level.
- For example, a migrant or a refugee in Romania does not have the right to vote or to be elected in a public seat.
- While the number of BIPs remains low and fewer than **40,000 applied for asylum** since the beginning of the 90s – **integration has not been high on the political agenda** during the past years.
- **Romania** is otherwise perceived more as a “**transit**” rather than a **destination country** by both BIPs as well as authorities themselves, and focus on adapted policies in this respect has always been very low.
- If we look at the historical and demographical landscape of Romania, we can state that our country has never been a great colonial/expansionist country or a target for Extra-European Communities. Current refugee crisis opened up some new opportunities for the Romanian majority to get acquaintance with extra-European communities.
- Under the relocation scheme Romania has to take in 6351 refugees.

Methodology



Methodology

- Process tracing
- Qualitative document, media content and discourse analysis
- Quantitative analysis of polls and surveys related to the attitude of citizens towards refugees



Objective

- To evaluate the role played by Romania in the current refugee stalemate
- To assess the possibility of integrating third country nationals



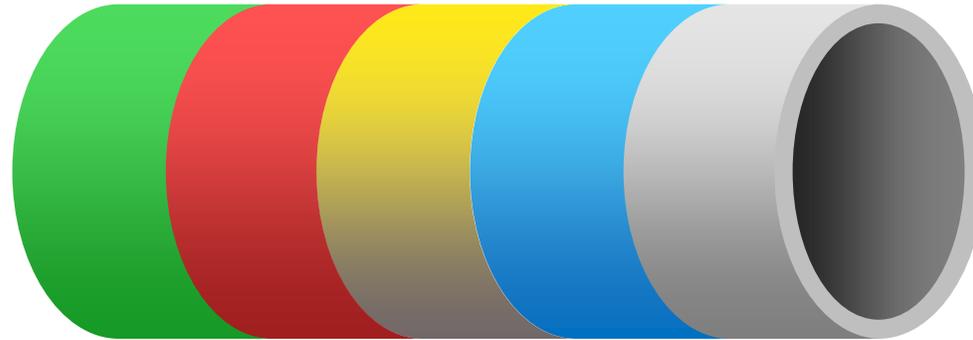
Challenges

1.

- **Romania a destination or transit country**

2.

- **Romania a country of emigrants vs. immigrants**
- **Mandatory relocation mechanism**



Successful ?



3.

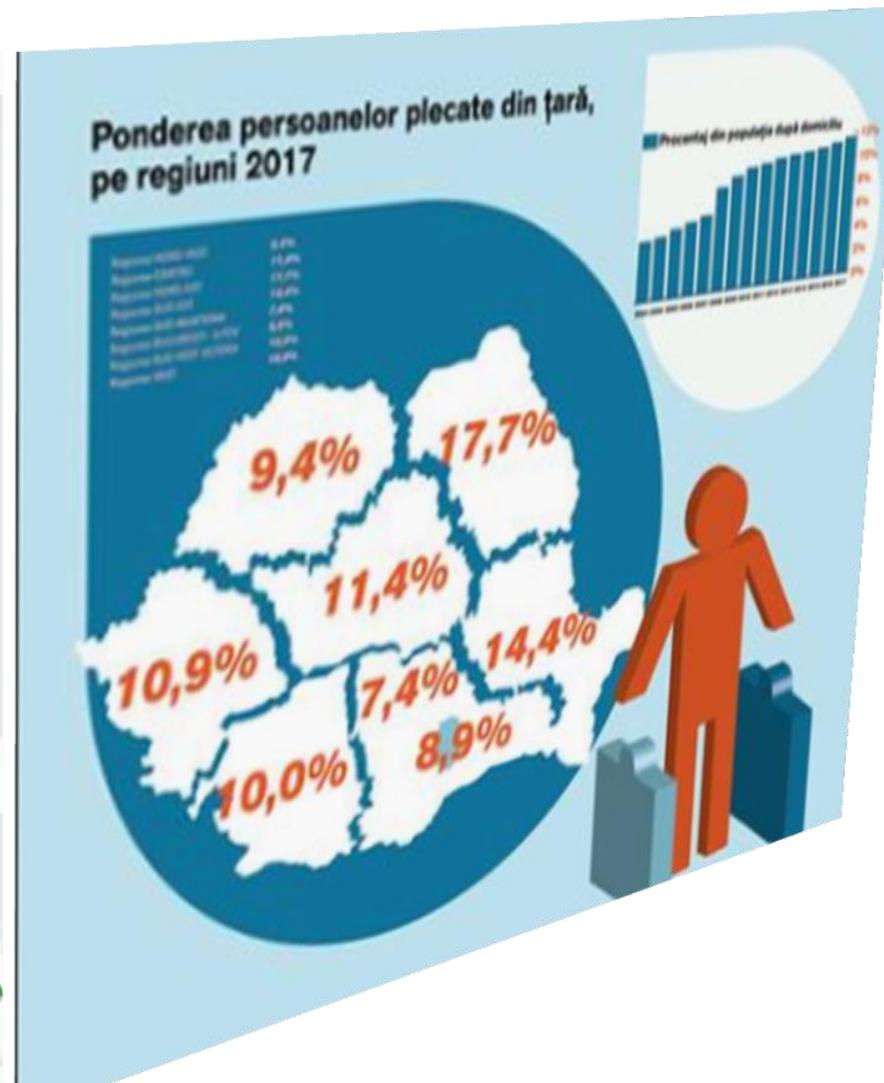
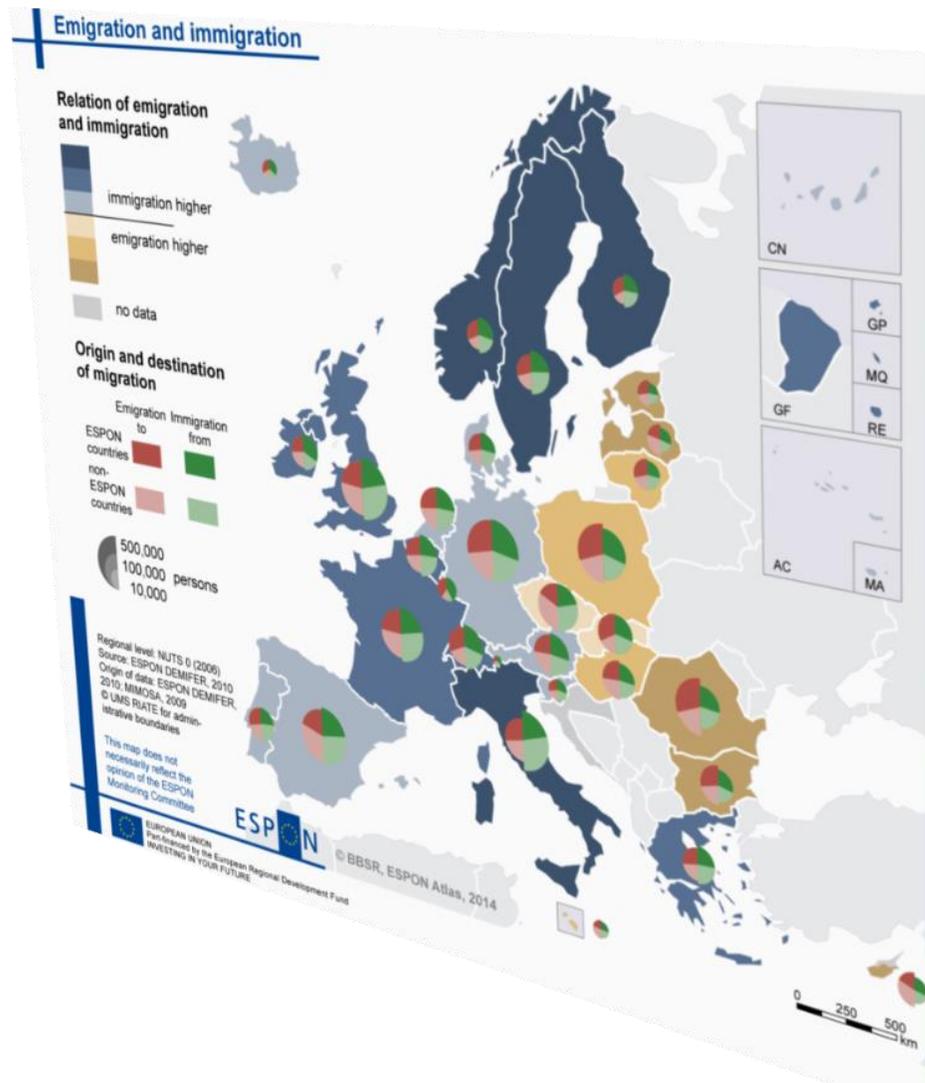
- **Administrative, financial and logistical problems.**
- **Need of investments and governmental initiatives and proper agenda**

4.

- **Mentality, culture, stereotypes, willingness, education, media, leadership, access to information**
 - **The role of the civil society, NGOs etc.**
- **Attitudes towards refugees, nationalism, aversion, hatred, xenophobia/xenophilia**
 - **The social construction of the 'other'**

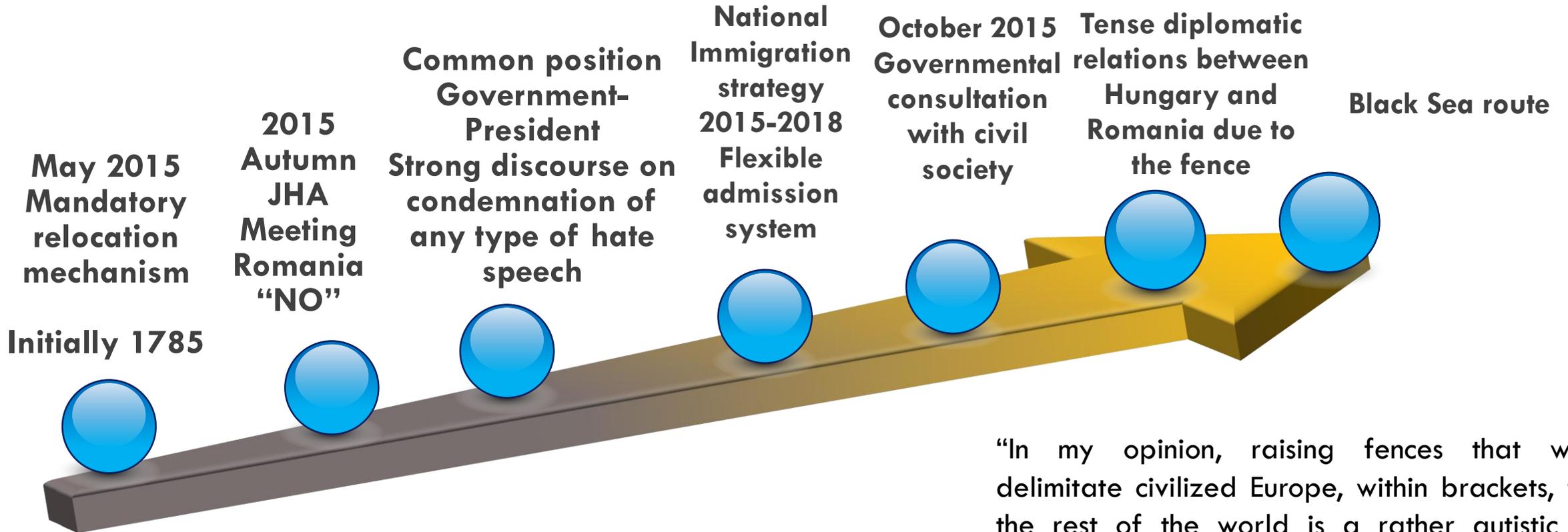
Romania a country of emigrants

The Romanian exodus



1 IN 5
5 MILLION
ITALY
SPAIN
GERMANY
UK
USA

Situation management and modus operandi



Romania's solidarity with the EU, yet a conditional solidarity

Johannis: the impossibility of integration of refugees: "Romania doesn't have the capacity to integrate these refugees into society"

"In my opinion, raising fences that would delimitate civilized Europe, within brackets, from the rest of the world is a rather autistic and unacceptable gesture outside the European spirit"
Bogdan Aurescu

Attitudes towards refugees in Romania

Polls

Gândul
www.gandul.info

Gândul/ 2015

- 11.346 persons who participated, 73.65 % declared that they do not agree for Romania to receive refugees

Digi 24/ 2015

- Do you agree with refugees and migrants living in Romania? According to the poll results, 51% of the respondents declared that they do not agree / do not partially agree

The Romanian National Institute for Statistics (INS) 2015/2016

- 56.3 % of the respondents (approximately 30.000 persons) do not agree for Romania to receive refugees (2015)
- 84.6% of the respondents declared that they do “not want migrants and refugees in Romania” (2016)

INS

Attitudes towards refugees in Romania

Polls

The Bucharest City Hall study 2016

- “If you agree with refugees living in Bucharest?” Out of all respondents, 66.1% declared that do not agree with refugees coming to Romania and settling in their residential areas



PRO Democratia –NGO/ 2016 Survey

- 45% agree with the fact that Romania hosts refugees and 55% do not agree with this fact
- 45% of the subjects believe that the so called “refugee crisis” is linked to a new kind of social warfare
- 65% of the subjects would want their children to study in the same class with a refugee
- 65% of the subjects do not agree with the EU deciding that Romania should receive more refugees

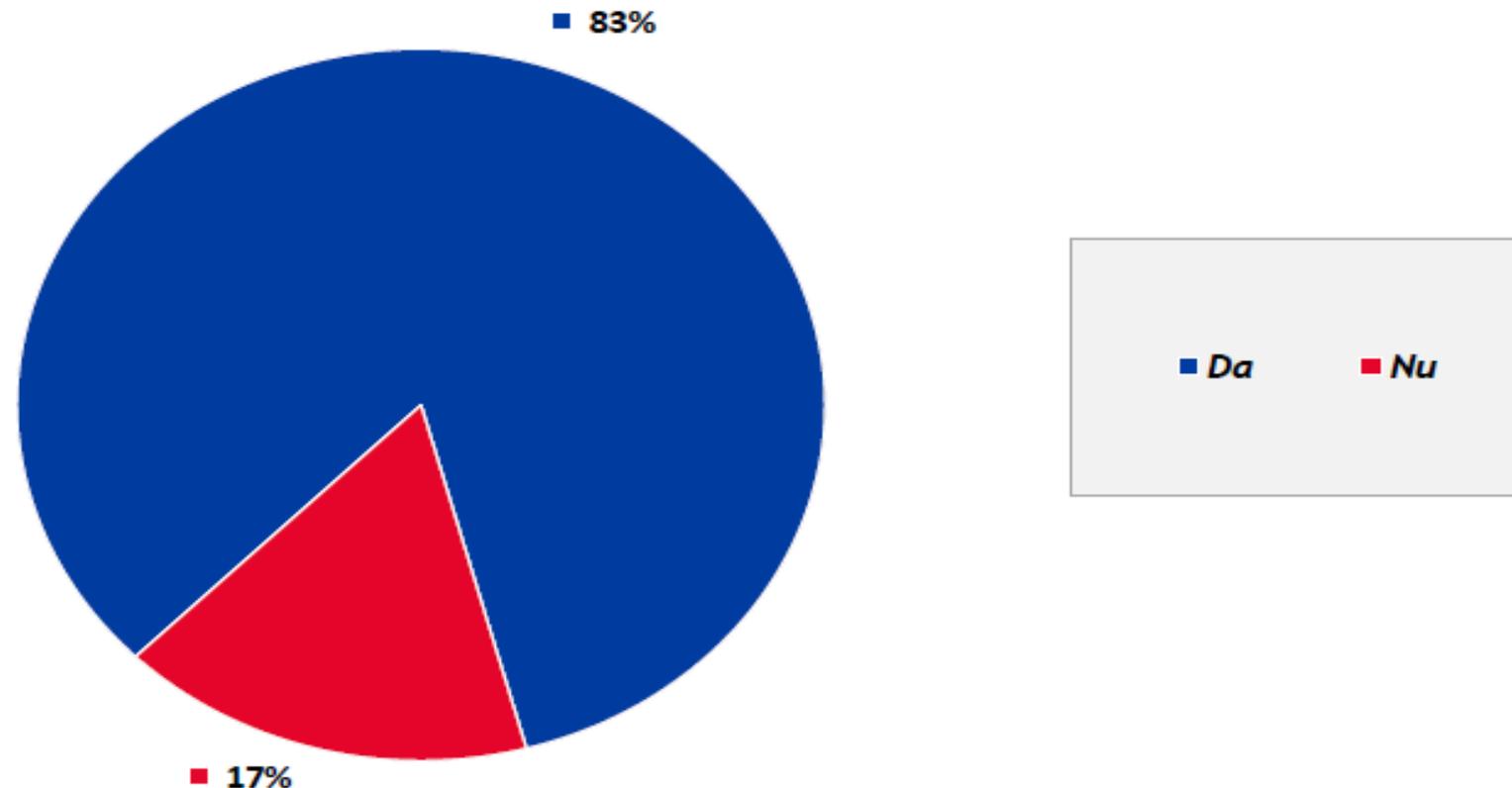
Dual approach towards refugees and migration

Petition vs. National Strategy on Migration

- In May 2017, 486 Romanian citizens addressed and signed an online petition for the President stating that they do not want “refugee terrorists” to be resettled in Romania. Most persons who signed the petition were residence from the city of Iasi (186).
- In addition with the studies and polls mentioned, the governmental institution have developed migration strategies and predictions based on the past experience and current trends.
- ***The motto of the National Strategy on Migration for 2015 - 2018 is that “migration is a process that needs to be properly managed, not a problem that needs solving”.***

Public perceptions concerning the refugee crisis in Europe/ Survey of the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy-28-31 August 2015 (method CATI)

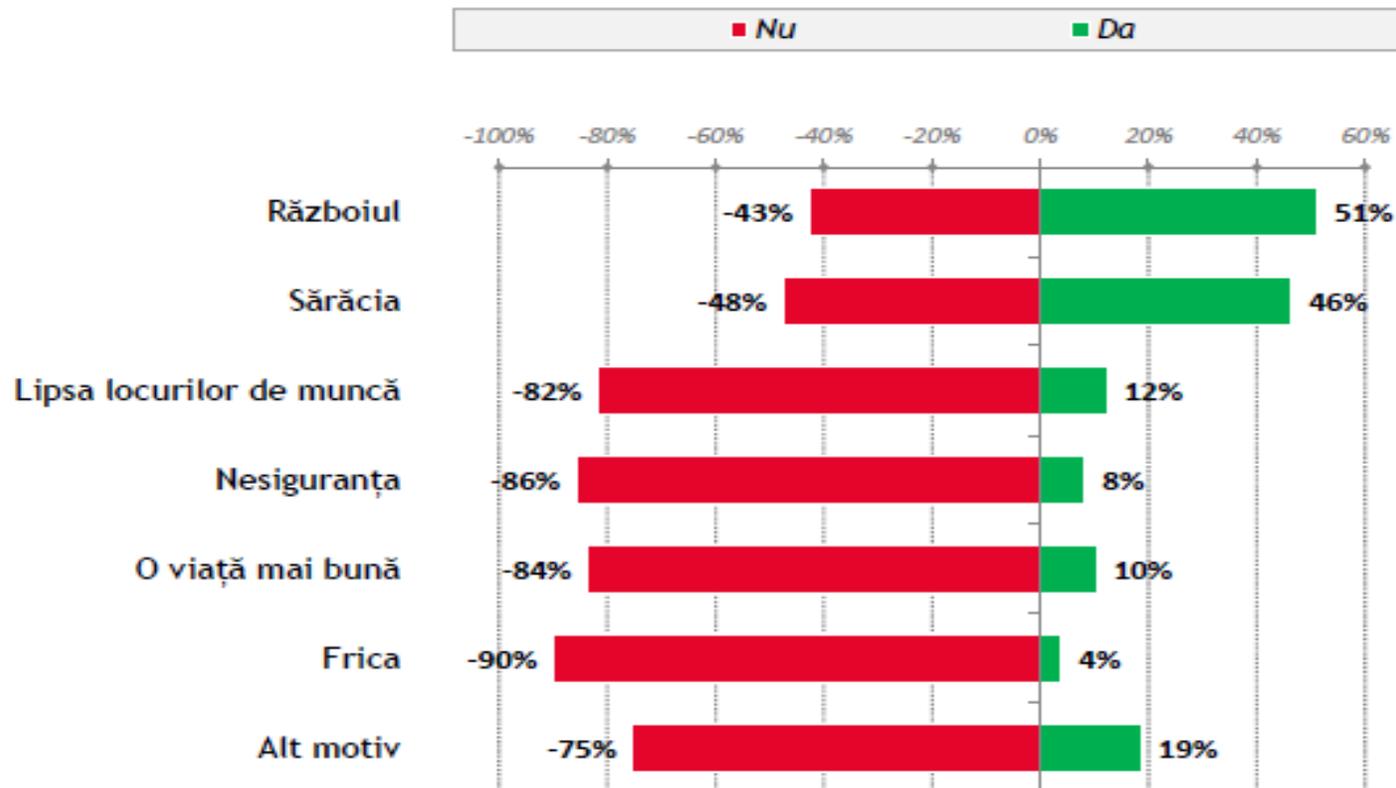
Ați auzit de despre criza imigranților de la granițele Uniunii Europene?



Public perceptions concerning the refugee crisis in Europe/ Survey of the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy-28-31 August 2015 (method CATI)

Care credeți că sunt principalele motive ale plecării imigranților din țara de origine? (RĂSPUNS SPONTAN)

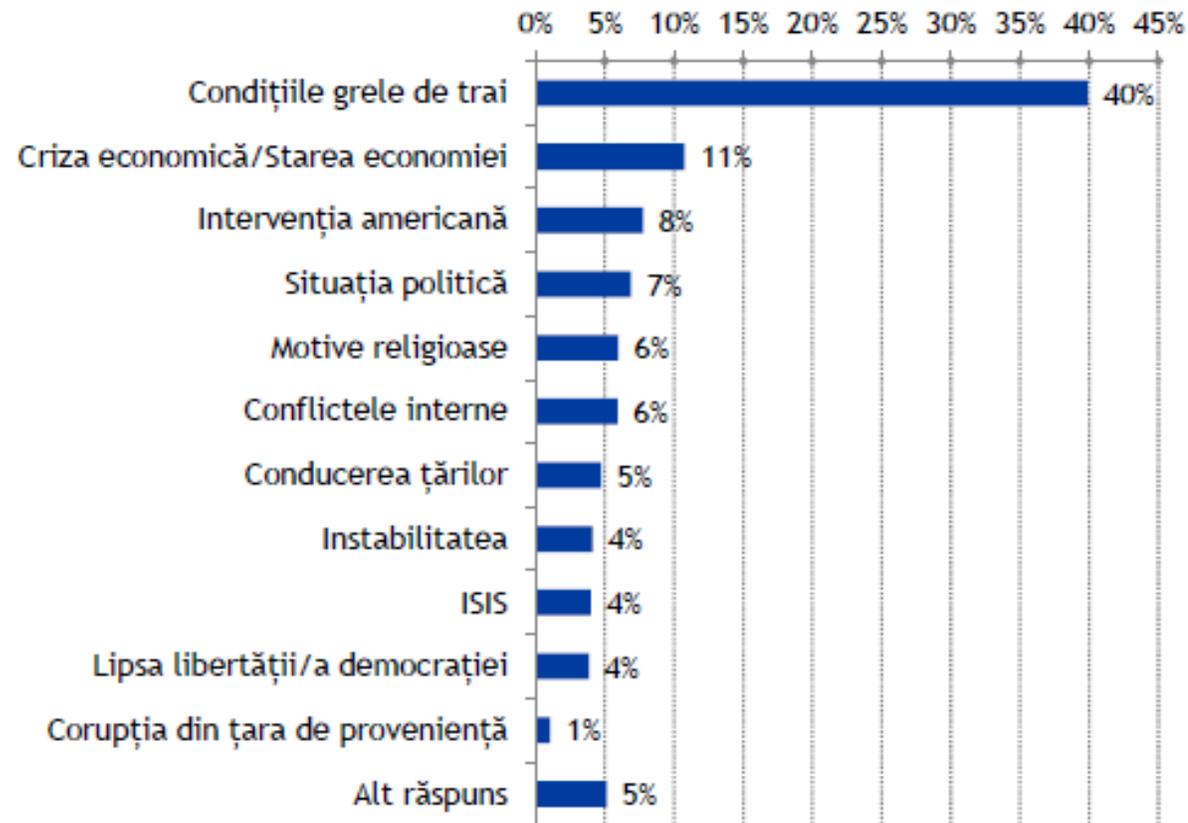
Întrebare filtrată - respondenți care au auzit de criza imigranților din Europa - 83%



Public perceptions concerning the refugee crisis in Europe/ Survey of the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy-28-31 August 2015 (method CATI)

Care credeți că sunt principalele motive ale plecării imigranților din țara de origine?
ALTELE

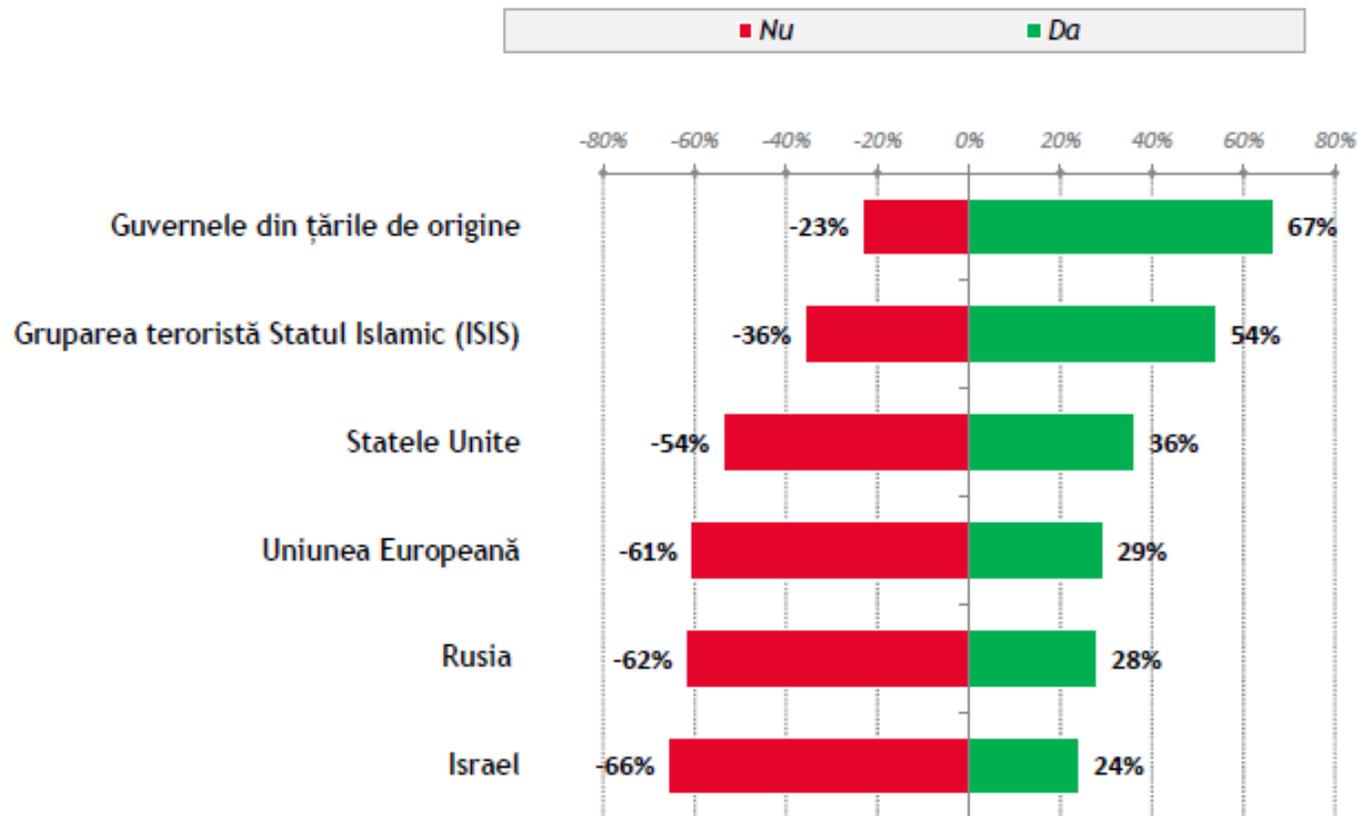
Întrebare filtrată - respondenți care au auzit de criza imigranților din Europa - 83% și care au menționat un alt motiv - 19%



Public perceptions concerning the refugee crisis in Europe/ Survey of the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy-28-31 August 2015 (method CATI)

Cine credeți că sunt principalii responsabili pentru actuala criză a imigranților? (RĂSPUNS SPONTAN)

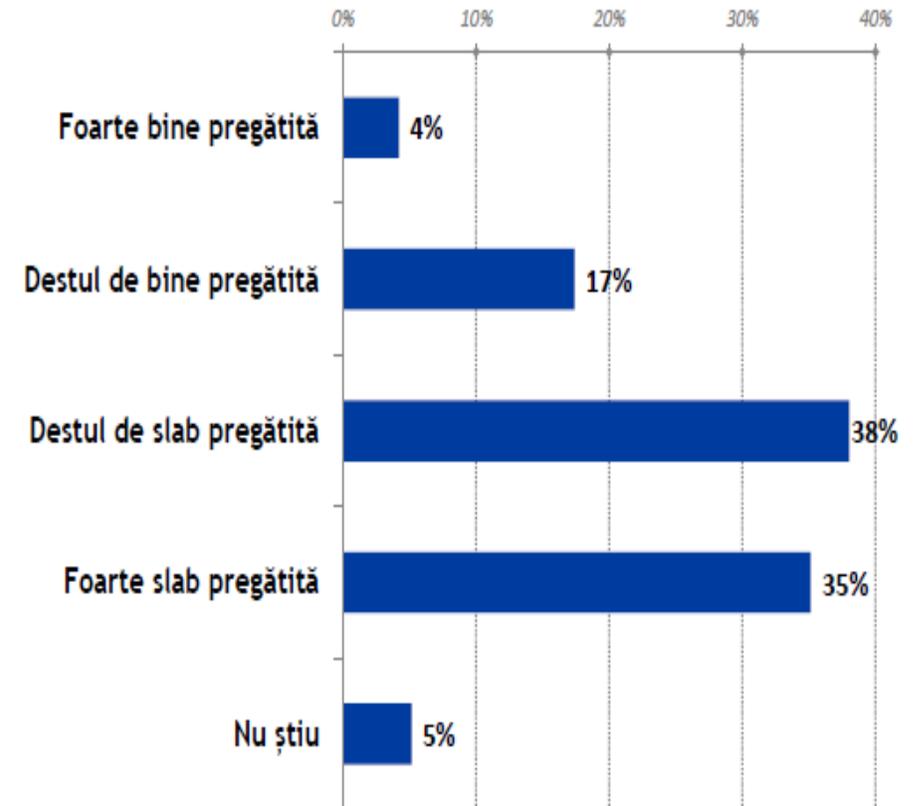
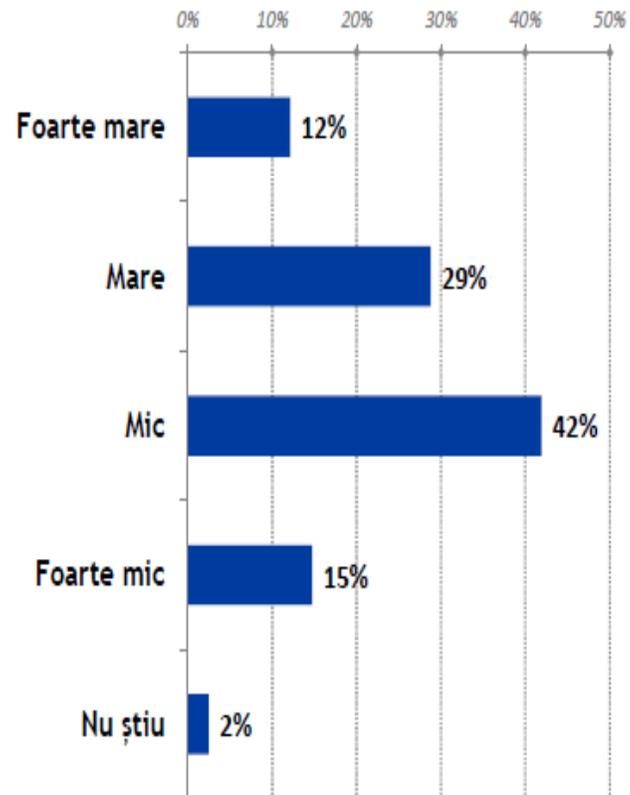
Întrebare filtrată - respondenți care au auzit de criza imigranților din Europa - 83%



Public perceptions concerning the refugee crisis in Europe/ Survey of the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy-28-31 August 2015 (method CATI)

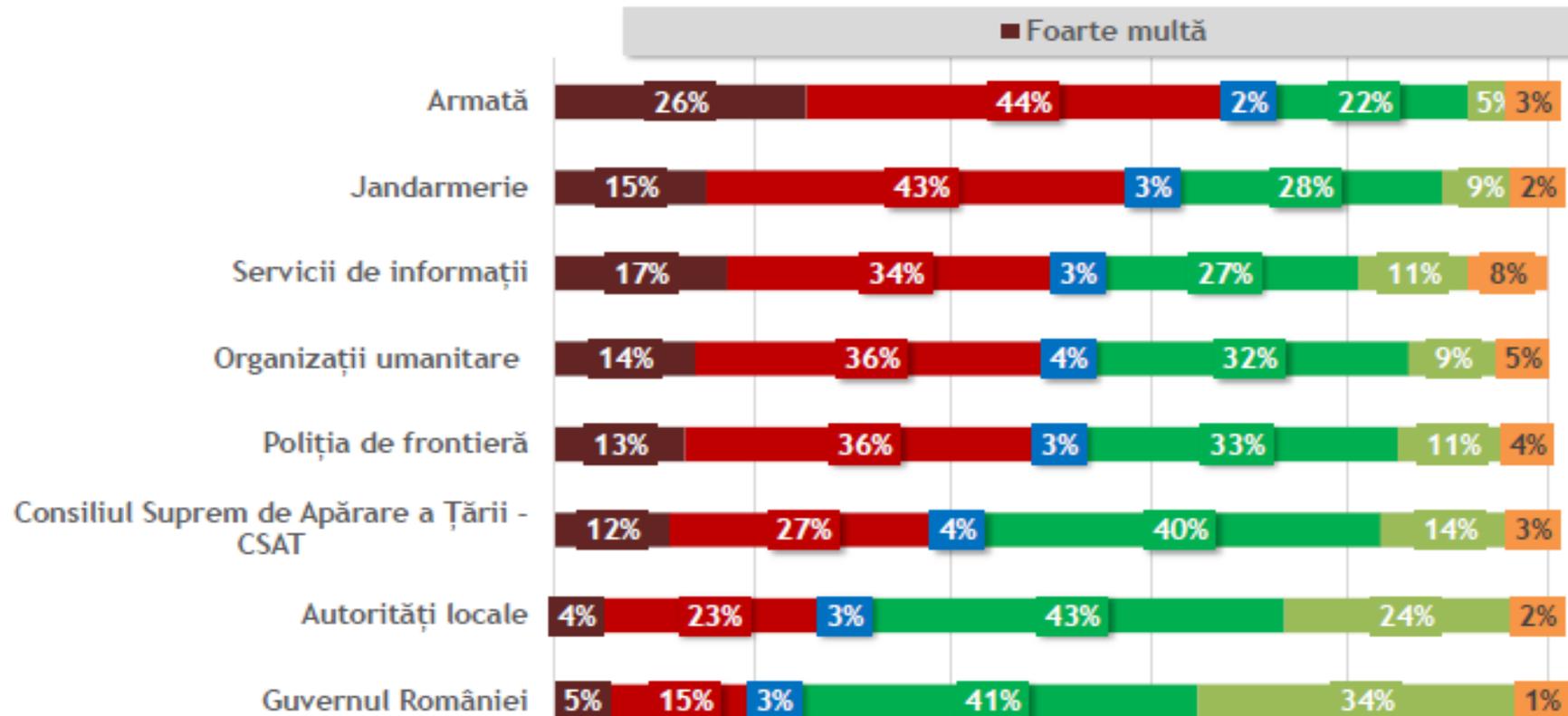
În opinia dumneavoastră, cât de mare este riscul ca România să fie expusă unei invazii a imigranților din zonele de conflict din Orientul Mijlociu și din Africa?

Cât de bine pregătită credeți că este România pentru a face față unei crize a imigranților din zonele de conflict din Orientul Mijlociu și din Africa?



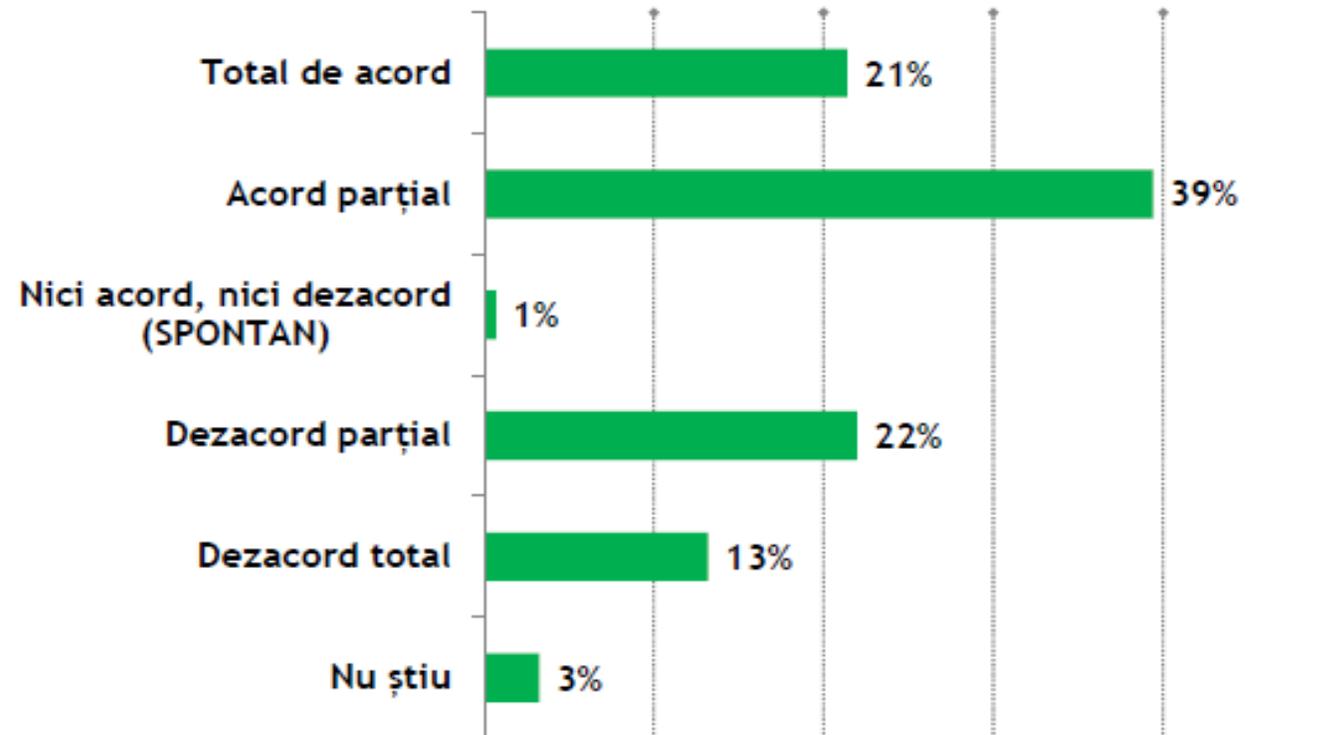
Public perceptions concerning the refugee crisis in Europe/ Survey of the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy-28-31 August 2015 (method CATI)

Dacă vă gândiți la gestionarea unei crize a imigranților, dumneavoastră câtă încredere aveți în...?



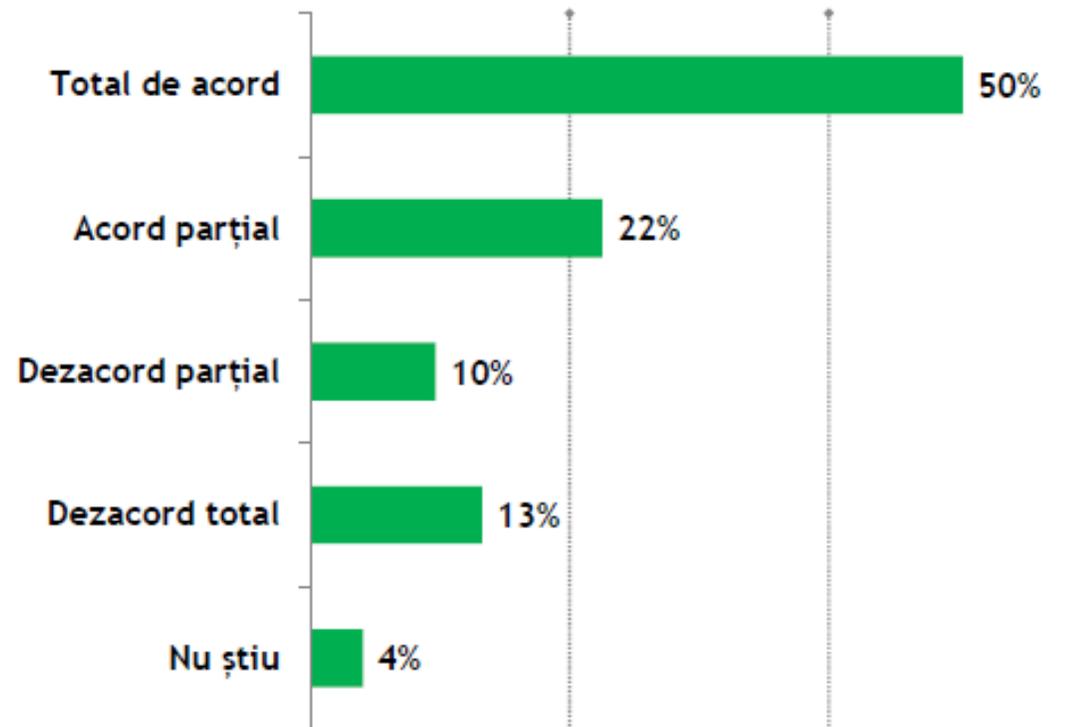
Public perceptions concerning the refugee crisis in Europe/ Survey of the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy-28-31 August 2015 (method CATI)

Sunteți mai degrabă de acord sau mai degrabă împotriva următoarelor afirmații?
Uniunea Europeană este pregătită pentru a face față crizei imigranților



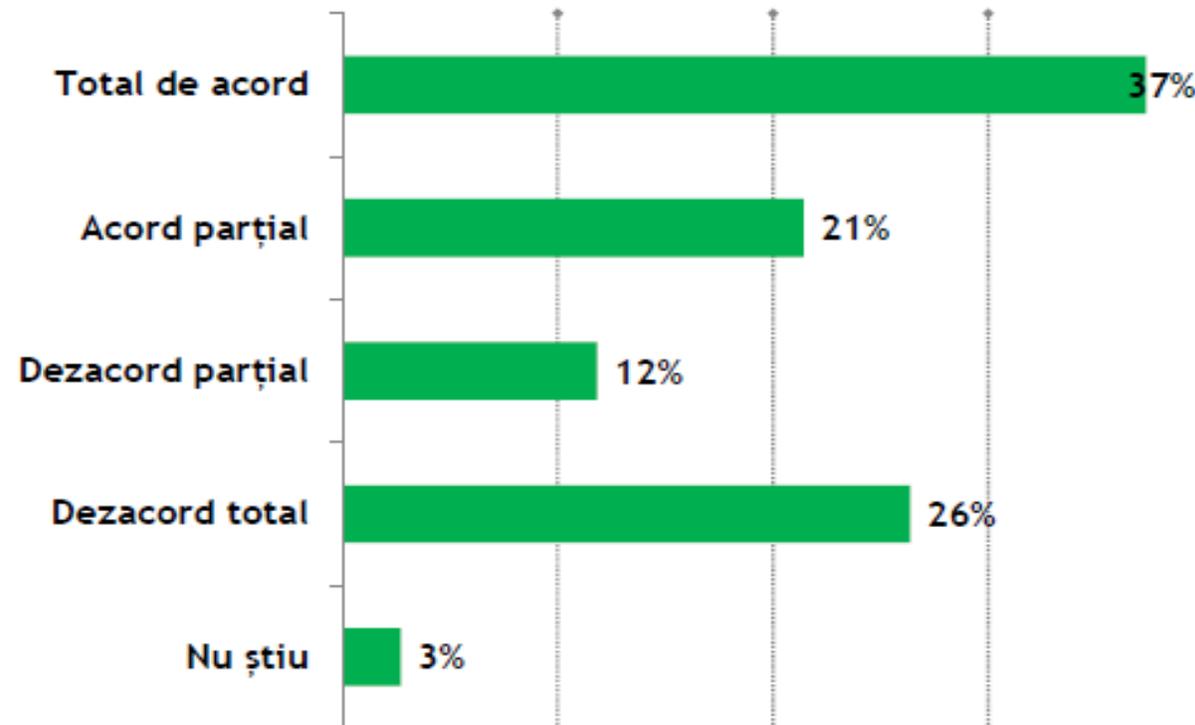
Public perceptions concerning the refugee crisis in Europe/ Survey of the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy-28-31 August 2015 (method CATI)

Sunteți mai degrabă de acord sau mai degrabă împotriva următoarelor afirmații?
Riscul unui atac terorist din partea Statului Islamic crește odată cu venirea imigranților



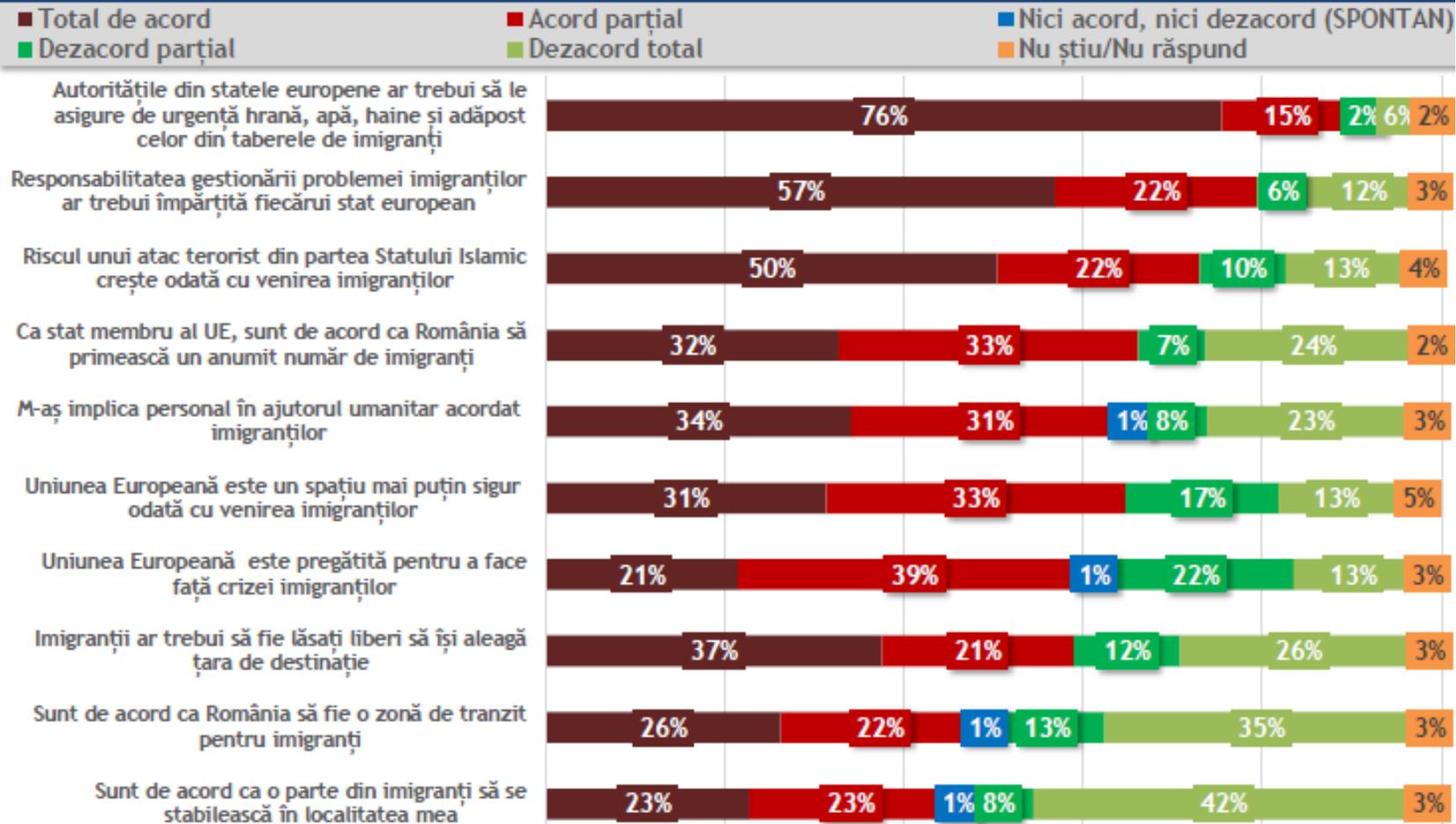
Public perceptions concerning the refugee crisis in Europe/ Survey of the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy-28-31 August 2015 (method CATI)

Sunteți mai degrabă de acord sau mai degrabă împotriva următoarelor afirmații?
Imigranții ar trebui să fie lăsați liberi să își aleagă țara de destinație



Public perceptions concerning the refugee crisis in Europe/ Survey of the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy-28-31 August 2015 (method CATI)

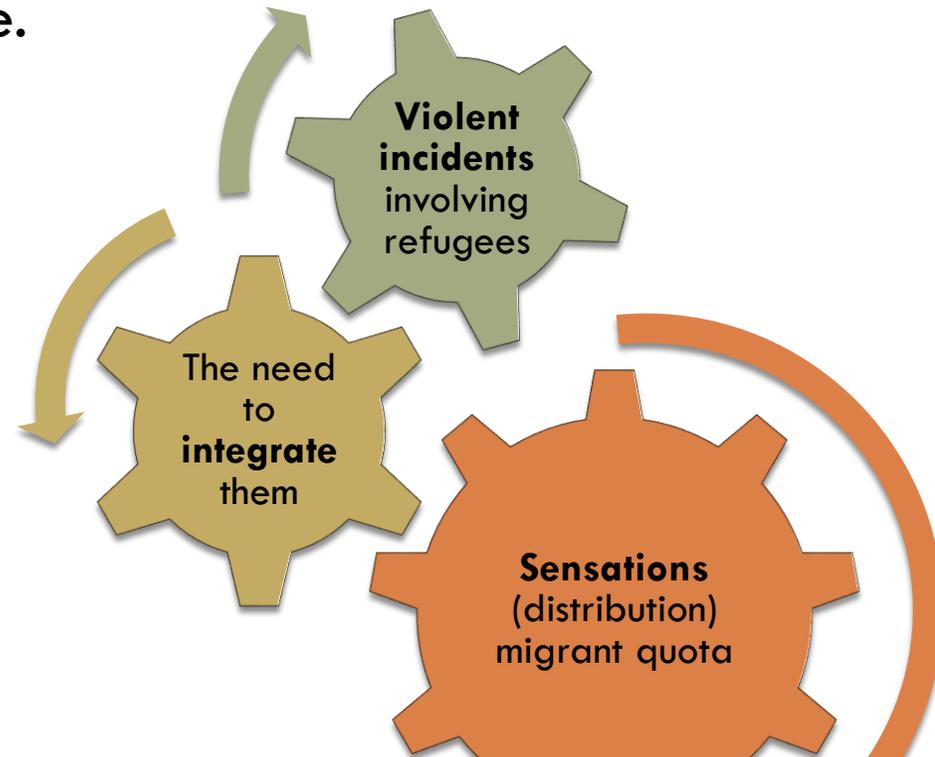
Sunteți mai degrabă de acord sau mai degrabă împotriva următoarelor propoziții?



How was the refugee crisis framed in the media?

- In Romania the topic concerning migration and asylum had been controversial, the media playing a very important role in diffusing information for the public. In mainstream media reports or debates, have tried to be objective in terms of presenting the “refugee crisis” but they also lean towards the negative impact that the reception of refugees could have.

Major themes



How was the refugee crisis framed in the Romanian online media? (April 2015- February 2016)

Intensity of frames by media outlet for news stories about the refugee crisis

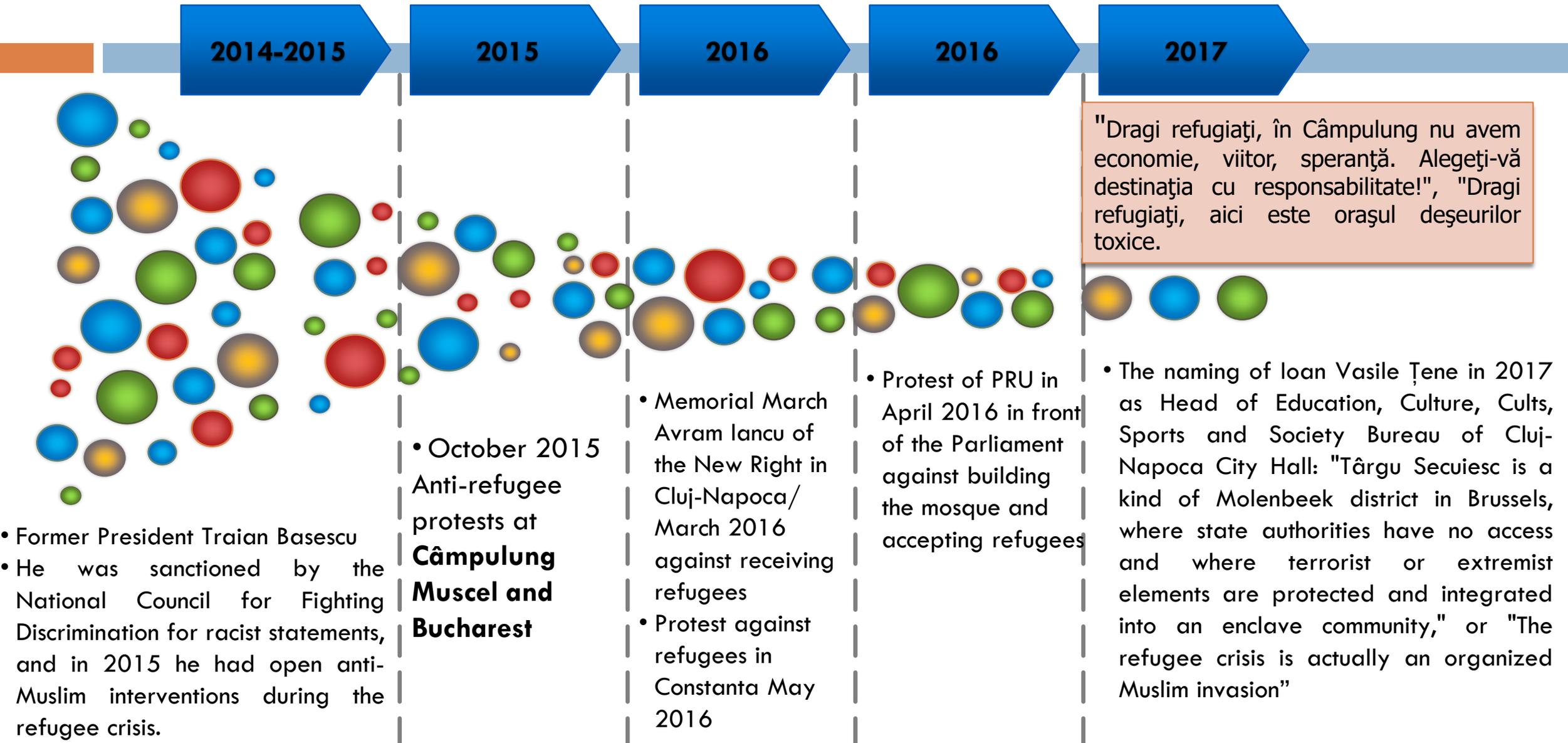
Media outlet		Responsibility frame	Conflict frame	Morality frame	Economic consequences frame	Human interest frame
www.hotnews.ro	Mean	.45	.20	.11	.12	.17
	N	376	376	376	376	376
	Std. Deviation	.37	.29	.26	.28	.31
www.ziare.com	Mean	.41	.21	.17	.16	.21
	N	367	367	367	367	367
	Std. Deviation	.38	.29	.31	.32	.36
www.adevarul.ro	Mean	.40	.23	.13	.14	.14
	N	436	436	436	436	436
	Std. Deviation	.36	.31	.29	.29	.29
www.gandul.info	Mean	.40	.24	.08	.16	.13
	N	314	314	314	314	314
	Std. Deviation	.37	.33	.23	.32	.28
Total	Mean	.41	.22	.12	.14	.16
	N	1493	1493	1493	1493	1493
	Std. Deviation	.37	.30	.28	.30	.31

How was the refugee crisis framed in the Romanian online media? (April 2015- February 2016)

Tone of voice of news regarding the refugee crisis (attitudes towards the refugees vs. attitudes towards the EU)

Media outlet		Attitude towards refugees	Attitude towards the EU
www.hotnews.ro	Mean	-.03	-.07
	N	376	119
	Std. Deviation	.74	.73
www.ziare.com	Mean	.04	-.09
	N	367	116
	Std. Deviation	.74	.74
www.adevarul.ro	Mean	-.04	-.24
	N	436	174
	Std. Deviation	.73	.74
www.gandul.info	Mean	-.04	-.10
	N	314	92
	Std. Deviation	.77	.74
Total	Mean	-.02	-.14
	N	1493	501
	Std. Deviation	.74	.74

Hate speech and violence against refugees





Traian Basescu, Islamic statements on the basis of the construction of a large mosque in Bucharest and the refugee crisis.

Regarding the subject of refugees and the situation of Muslims in general, Traian Basescu has positioned himself on the "market" of politics to attract extreme right-wing voters. In July 2015, in the context of public debate on the construction of a large mosque in Bucharest, the former president said that "such decisions are foolish, if not anti-national.

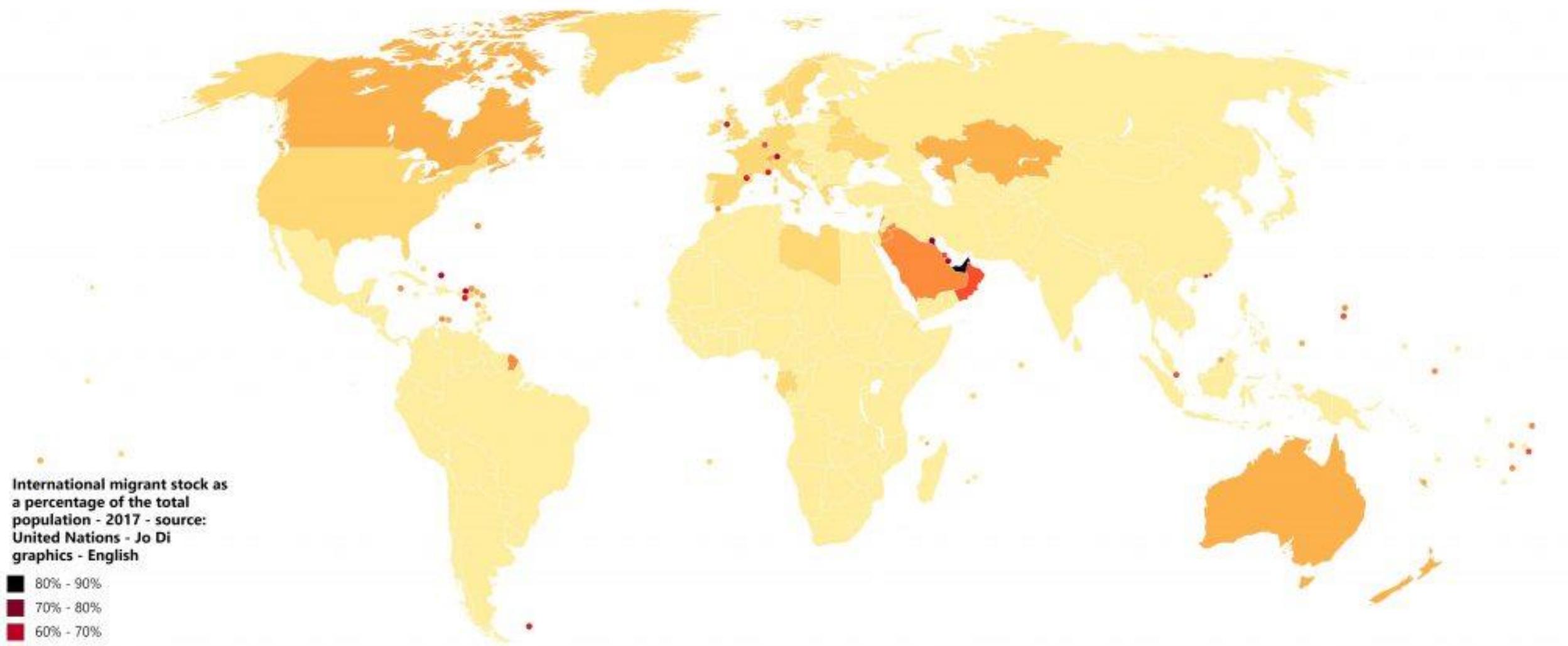
"We have a minority of 60-70,000 Muslims, we have mosques in Constanta, but to make the largest mosque in Europe and bring 6,000 Muslim students ... There is no greater risk than bringing Muslim students to the country " .

- "I'm thinking about the problem in terms of national security. Let us not forget that among these people are Sunni, Shia people who put bombs in each others' country (...) Why do we have to Islamize Europe? We should destroy the boats and vessels right in the ports." September 2015



International migrant stock as a percentage of the total population - 2017 - source: United Nations - Jo Di graphics - English

- 80% - 90%
- 70% - 80%
- 60% - 70%
- 50% - 60%
- 40% - 50%
- 30% - 40%
- 20% - 30%
- 10% - 20%
- 0% - 10%



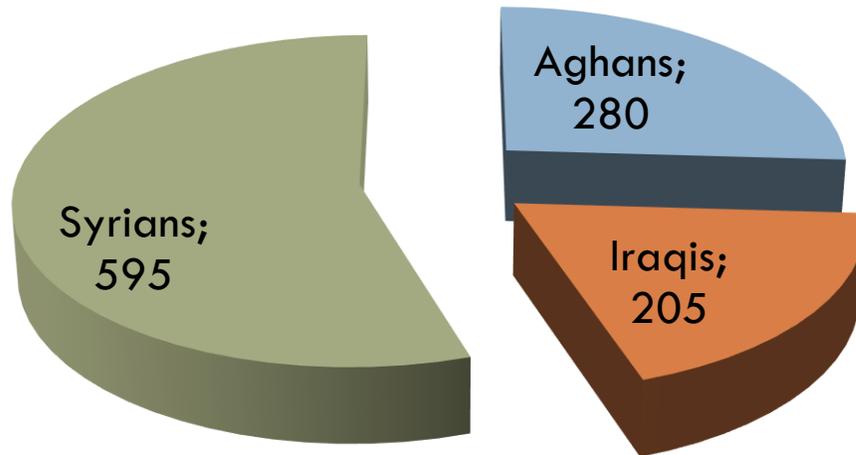
Immigration to Romania

First time asylum applications of non-EU citizens in Romania 2014 vs. 2015/ Eurostat

First time asylum applications in Romania
2014/ Top three applicants

Total Romania: 1 500/ 0.3% of EU

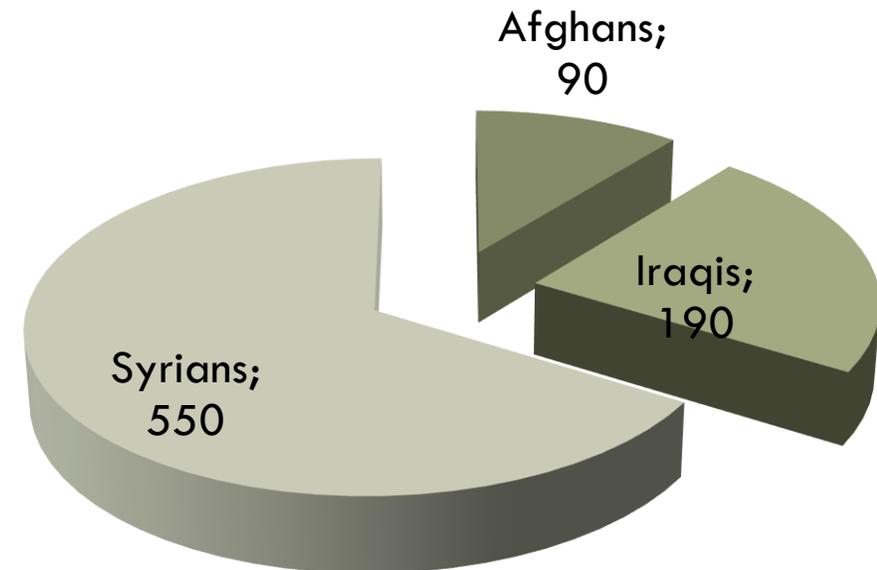
Total EU28: 561.625



First time asylum applications in Romania 2015/ Top three applicants

Total Romania: 1 225/ 0.1% of EU

Total EU28: 1.225.640



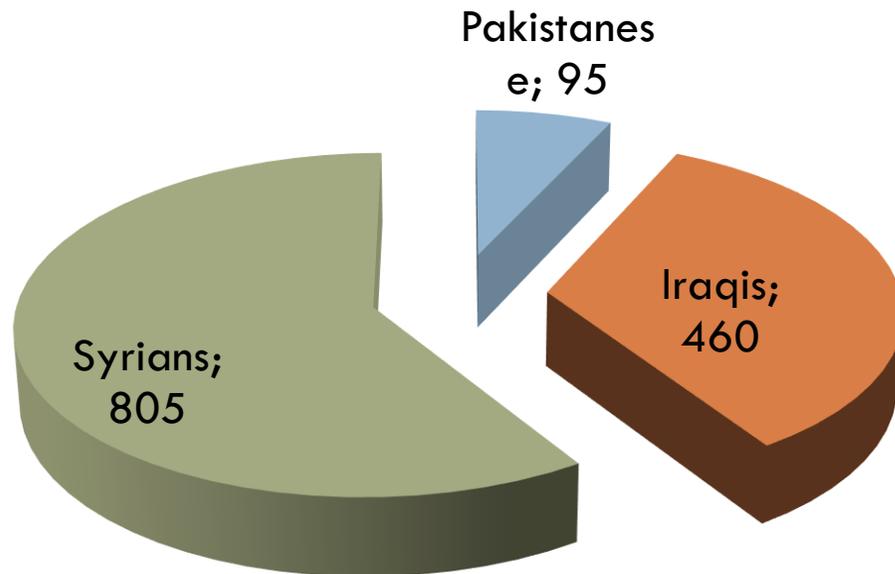
Immigration to Romania

First time asylum applications on non-EU citizens in Romania 2016 vs. 2017/ Eurostat

First time asylum applications in Romania
2016/ Top three applicants

Total Romania: 1855/ 0.2% of EU

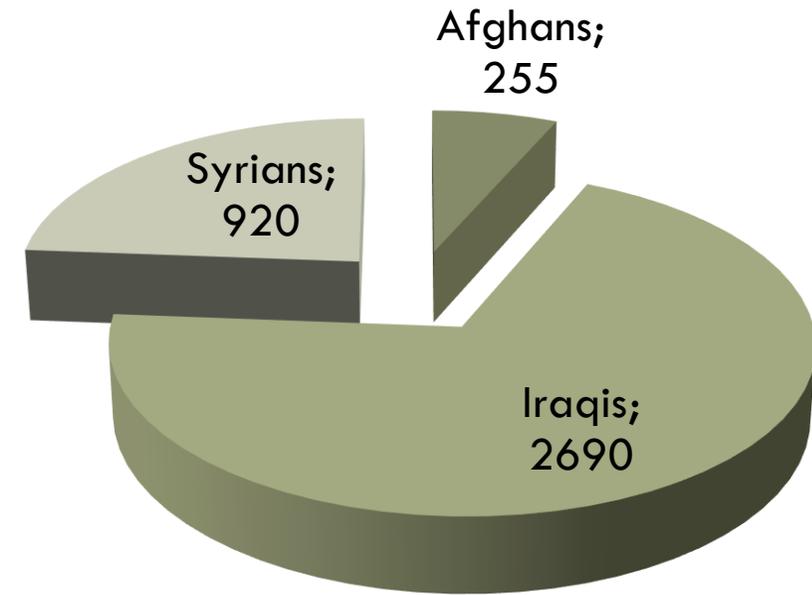
Total EU28: 1.204.280



First time asylum applications in Romania 2017/ Top three
applicants

Total Romania: 4700/ 0.7% of EU

Total EU28: 649.855

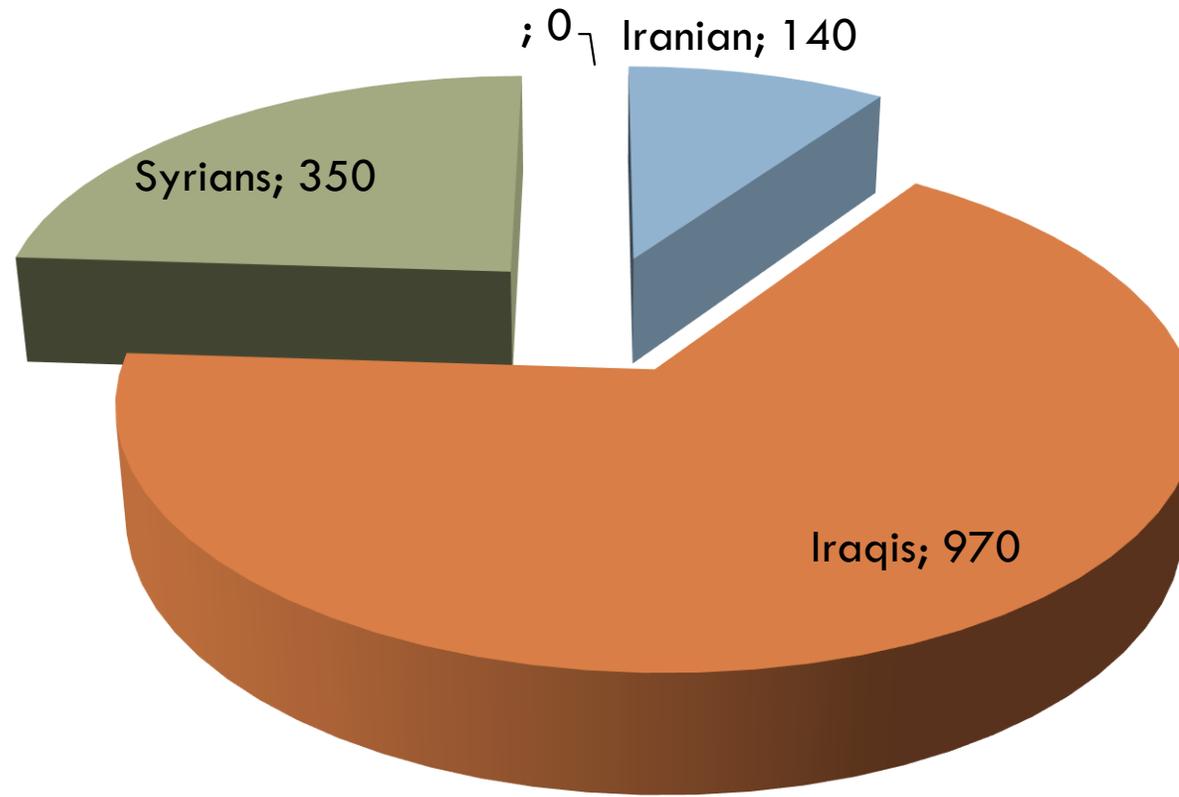


Immigration to Romania

First time asylum applications on non-EU citizens in Romania

2018/ Eurostat

First time asylum applications in Romania
2018/ Top three applicants
Total Romania: 1945 / 0.3% of EU
Total EU28: 580.845



Romania and the mandatory relocation quota

EU PROPOSAL OF MANDATORY MIGRANT QUOTAS

Proposed quotas of asylum-seekers per country* of a total of 160,000 refugees to be relocated



■ Based on the 40,000 migrants coming from Italy and Greece (Initial proposal in May 2015)

■ Based on the 120,000 additional migrants (September 2015)

Britain, Ireland and Denmark have an exemption from European asylum policy. Greece, Hungary and Italy are not subject to quotas due to the massive flow of migrant arrivals in their countries.

Member States	Relocated	
	from Italy	from Greece
Romania	45	683
Slovakia	x	16
Slovenia	81	172
Spain	235	1,124
Sweden	1,392	1,656
United Kingdom	x	x
Norway	816	693
Switzerland	920	580
Liechtenstein	x	10
Iceland	x	x
TOTAL	12,706	21,999

Member States' Support to Emergency Relocation Mechanism/ October 2018



Emergency: 262

accommodations

50
accommodations

100
accommodations

130
accommodations

200
accommodations

320
accommodations

100
accommodations

Moldova

Romania

Regional centres of procedures and accommodation for asylum seekers

- Currently in Romania there are 6 Regional centres of procedures and accommodation for asylum seekers at Timisoara, Somcuta Mare, Radauti, Galati, Giurgiu and Bucuresti. As the number of asylum seekers has an upward trajectory and already exceeds the existing capacity (900 places) of the centres, the General Inspectorate from Romania started a project to augment the number of the existent places by 100 in Timisoara, 100 in Radauti and 300 in Galati.
- Furthermore the takeover and transformation of a property into a regional centre in Crevedia, Dambovita county has also started.
- The Ministry of Development aims to develop a government program and strategy to rebuild some derelict buildings or to build new homes for people with a form of protection. The money needed for this project would be secured from the Romanian state budget and from European funds.

Positive examples of integration

- According to IGI data submitted in January 2018, on September 30, 2017, IGI's records included 1103 persons with a form of protection who opted for joining the integration program carried out between 30.09.2016-30.09.2017. Ranking countries of origin are: Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Palestinian stateless persons, Somalia, Yemen, Iran Pakistan, Egypt, Central African Republic, Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Libya, Armenia, Bosnia, Georgia, Ukraine and the Congo. (Report on Social Integration and Romanian Language Programs for Foreign Citizens residing on the territory of Romania, 2018).
- Within the integration program are offered three types of activities:
 - 1. Romanian language learning courses
 - 2. Cultural accommodation sessions
 - 3. Sessions / counselling activities

Integration programme

- The refugees participating in the integration programme will be granted:
- - Accommodation, upon request, in the centers of the General Inspectorate for Immigration, for the period of up to 12 months. To benefit from this service the refugees have to pay a monthly contribution toward the cost of utilities. Vulnerable people are exempted from this requirement, according to GO 44/2004.
- - Romanian language courses;
- - Cultural accommodation sessions;
- - Material aid, for a period of two months;
- - Social counselling which includes ensuring access to the rights they have in Romania: the right to employment, the right to housing, the right to health and social care, and the right to education.
- - Counselling and psychological support;
- - Material aid amounting to 540 lei (120 EUR) / person for a period not exceeding 12 months,
- provided under the condition of an active participation in the integration programme.
- After completing the programme, refugees can apply for financial support to pay for accommodation outside the center, settling up 50% of the accommodation costs for a period of one year

Good practices



+ Pro

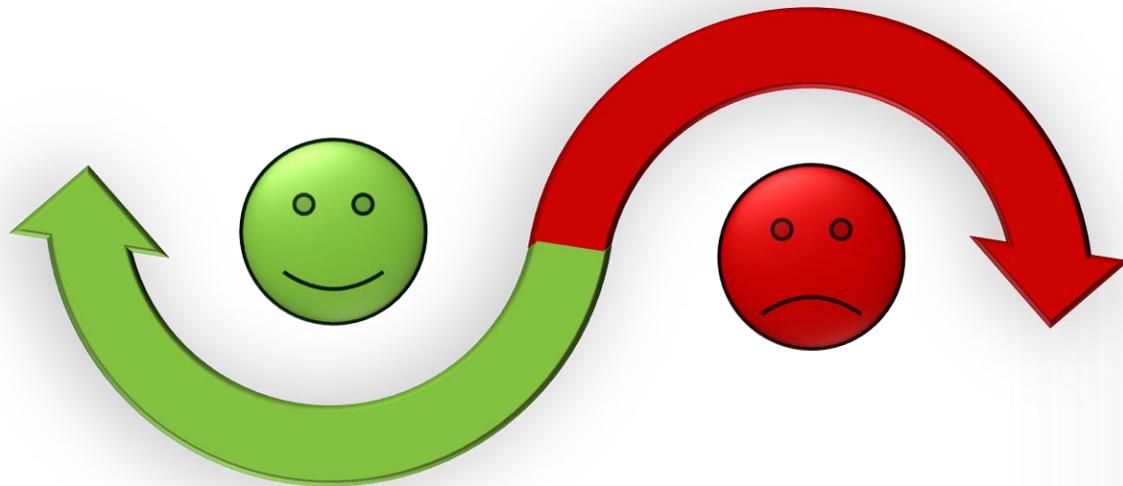
- positive mindset: is a “shame to waste a good crisis”/ “we do not deal with a crisis, but with an opportunity to create a functional system for the integration of refugee
- National Coalition for the Integration of the Refugees” reuniting both state authorities and non governmental organizations with responsibilities in the area of refugees
- Uphold all the obligations/ Quota
- Consensus between Government and Presidential Administration
- Willingness to try to manage the situation
- The setup Interministerial Committee the National Coalition for the Integration of the Refugees
- “Romania wants to be part of the solution, and not of the problem”/ leadership level/ Dacian Ciolos

Assessment

Instead of conclusions

- Contra

- Logistical, financial and administrative hurdles
- The level of services offered to asylum seekers is precarious, appropriate to the low level of salaries and social benefits that Romanian citizens also enjoy.
- Poverty, poor accommodation conditions/ Socio-economic factor
- Romania more of a transit rather than a destination country
- Romania a country of emigrants, not in Schengen
- Mentality of the population, aversion towards refugees
- The problems of integration and coexistence



- For Romania, admitting a greater number of refugees seeking protection would be a long-term chance to compensate for the deficits that have arisen over the past 15 years through massive labor migration to Western Europe.