

State of the Labour Market in the Counties of Partium (Arad, Bihar, Máramaros, Szatmár, Szilágy) in Light of the Current Crisis

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Abstract. The last decade has been successful from the broader Eastern Central Europe perspective. After the economic crisis prior to this, as a result of the economic transformation and the infrastructural renewal largely due to the support of the European Union, as well as the seemingly permanent regional peace, the countries in the region showed impressive economic growth each year, while on EU level they were quickly closing up. However, the processes were not linear. The strategies differed from country to country and at the same time, due to the peripheral nature within the EU, a negative tendency could also be identified in several dimensions. One of the key trends with regard to Romania is the large outflow of young employees. The record-size increase is due to low baseline conditions as well as the low income levels. However, the question arises as to when this rapid growth becomes no longer sustainable due to the loss of human resources, which is also high in comparison with the other countries in the region. The examined counties are located in the north-western parts of Romania and on the internal borders of the EU, constituting the Romanian economic semi-periphery. At the same time, as a part of a multilingual region they also contributed significantly to the outflow of working-age population. The labour outflow towards the EU would be difficult to follow precisely, the migrating population tends not to check out officially from their Romanian residence, therefore statistics show only a small proportion of this process. However, the specific socio-economic indicators are substantially affected by these differences between the theoretical and the actual population. As the legal interpretations of labour market concepts as well as the modality of calculations differ from one state to another, making international comparisons is difficult. At the same time, within the country, using the same data collection methods, with the help of time series data, displacements and territorial differences can be detected. Our study aims at presenting the current state of the labour market in the five counties of the Partium region, focusing on the changes in the second (crisis-) decade of the millennium.

Keywords: Partium, economic crisis, labour market, outflow, semi-periphery