

Left Behind

The impact of economic migration on
Children Left Behind and their families

Hotel Leopold - European Parliament

2 March 2011



Alexandru Gulei

Freedom – of positive and negative effects

CONFERENCE

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Romanian's Migration

Stages

- Before 1989 – «the runnaways»
- 1989 – 2007 – «over 2.5 million Romanian families had at least one member working abroad» (12% of adults aged 18-59) – Open Society Foundation (2006)
- 2007 – present – «350.000 children have one or both parents working abroad» (UNCEF/Alternative Sociale, 2008), over 60% of the Romanians working in Italy would look for a job in another EU country rather than return to Romania (CARITAS, 2010)



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Romanian's Migration

Why do parents migrate –
of positive intentions

- Motivation – social and economic
- Relative poverty and achieving life goals (Alternative Sociale, 2005)
- Sacrifice vs. priorities



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Romanian's Migration

Parents' migration – positive effects

- Better financial condition
- Higher life standards (better living conditions, health, education for the children left at home)
- Debts paid
- Less conflicts
- Positive life experience for all family members (parents and children get in touch with different cultures)
- A more positive outlook on life



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Parents' migration – negative effects

- Mental health issues
- Vulnerability to abuse/neglect
- Deterioration of family relations
(between parents, between parents and children)
- Economic issues (34 % of the migrants declare that they did not achieve the material goals which determined their migration)
- Negative models related to how families should function
(responsability to one another/distribution of roles, strength of relations etc.)



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Children of migrants

- «Home Alone» (Alternative Sociale)
- «Children of Migrants/ Children left Behind» (European Parliament resolution of 12 March 2009)
- «Euro-orphans» (Poland, Netherlands, Baltic countries)
- «Children with parents working abroad»
- «Children (temporarily) abandoned»



Children left behind

Independent statistics (UNICEF, Alternative Sociale)

- An estimated 350.000 children with one or both parents gone to work abroad
- An estimated 126.000 de copii have both parents working abroad
- Half of the children with both parents gone to work abroad are under 10 years old
- 4% of the children with both parents gone to work abroad are under 1 year (over 5000 children)
- 16% of the children have spent more than 1 year apart from both parents gone to work abroad
- 3% of the children have spent more than 4 years away from both their parents
- More than half of the “home alone” children come from rural areas

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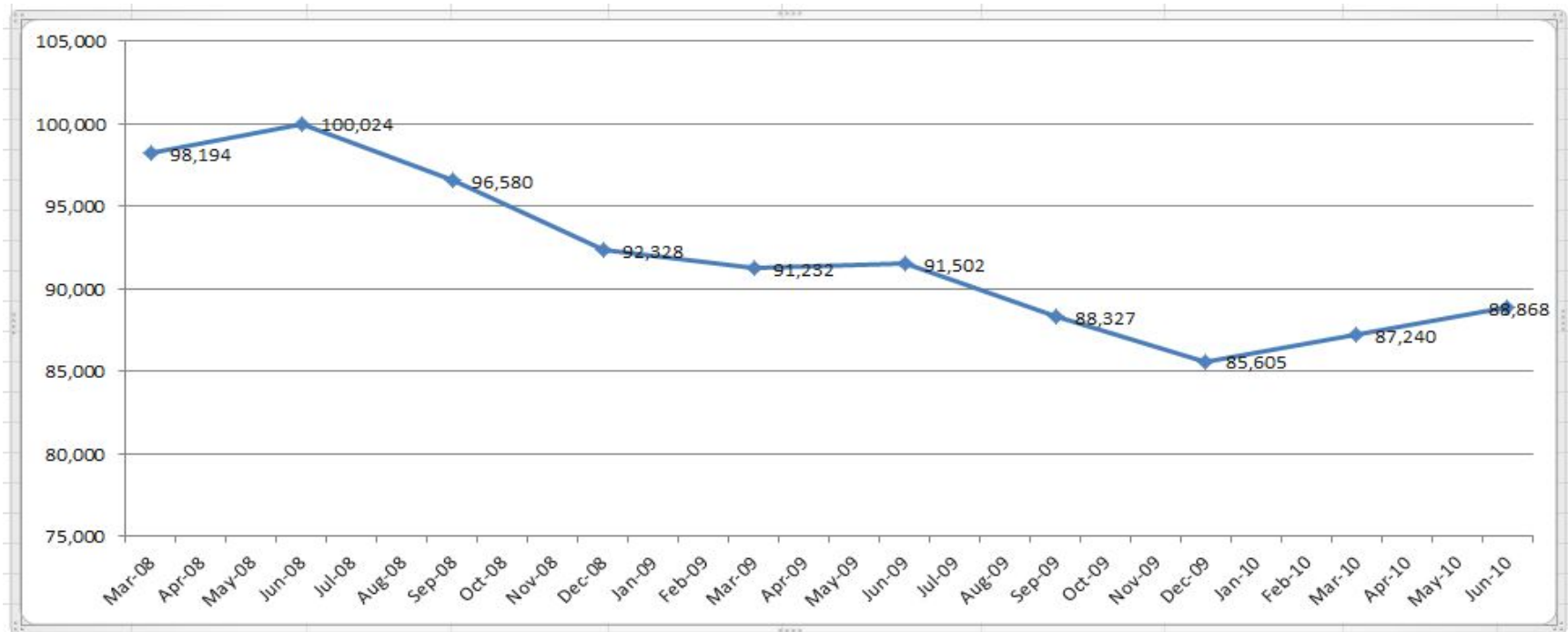
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Children left behind (official data)



Number of children with one or both parents gone to work abroad (2008-2010)

National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights

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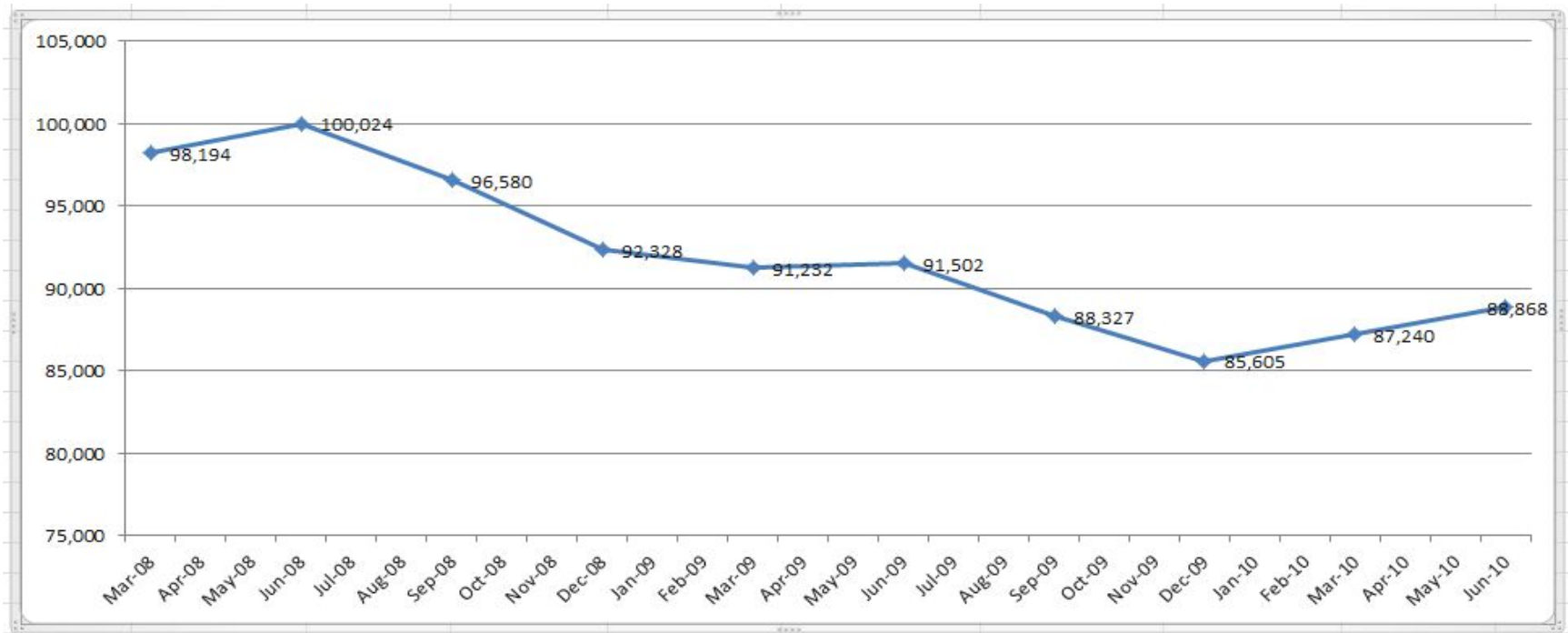
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Children left behind (official data)



Number of children with one or both parents gone to work abroad (2008-2010)

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Children left behind – a European issue

EU Countries

- Hungary
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Poland

• Non – EU Countries

- Rep. of Moldova
- Ukraine



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Alternative Sociale – a resource organization

- 2005 – 2009 - **Researches** for defining qualitative and quantitative aspects of the phenomenon
 - 2005 – *Study Made In Iasi Area On Children Separated From One Or Both Parents As Result To Parents Leaving To Work Abroad*
 - 2008 - *National Analysis of the Phenomenon of Children Left Home by Their Parents Who Migrate Abroad for Employment;*
 - 2008, 2009 - *Comparative studies Iasi (Romania)– Chisinau (Republic of Moldova)*



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Alternative Sociale – a resource organization

- 2005-2011 – **Direct services** for over 900 children with one or both parents gone to work abroad;
- 2006-2008 – **Awareness raising and information campaigns** on the risks and vulnerabilities of children and families associated with the migration of parents;
- 2007-2010 – **Trainings for professionals** – social workers, psychologists, teachers, police workers etc.;
- 2007 – An awarded **Methodology for the Social, Psychological and Legal Assistance of Home Alone Children**;

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Alternative Sociale – a resource organization

- 2007 - **Lobby** for the optimization of the relevant legislation and of practices in the activity of public institutions for the prevention of separation (of parents and children) and for the assistance of home alone children;
- 2007 - www.singuracasa.ro **website** containing information (research reports, methodologies, legislation, advice, a discussions forum) for children, parents, caregivers and professionals.
- 2009 - **Strategic partnerships and collaborations** for bringing the issue to the attention of Romanian parents abroad, to the attention of European institutions and for assessing the European dimension of the phenomenon.

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Thank you!



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