

## Annex 2: REA methodology

A rapid evidence assessment is a tool of compiling the existing research evidence on a policy issue, as comprehensively as possible and using as many sources as possible within the constraints of a given timetable.

This report reviews the available literature on the drivers of migration, the profile of migrants and potential impacts of migration from Bulgaria and Romania to the UK. We survey literature available in three languages: English, Romanian and Bulgarian. We review about 300 papers and assess their quality to provide a balanced assessment of what is known about migration from the EU2 countries to the UK, using rigorous and systematic review methods to search and critically appraise the existing research.

The literature was identified through:

- a targeted search of research centres and national and international organisations which conduct research on migrants, as well as other organisations with an interest in migration, and
- search engines using a set of inclusion criteria.

In searching for research of relevance to the review, we found outputs produced in a range of formats. These included academic papers, reports produced for Government departments and agencies and working papers by research teams in universities, research institutes and think tanks. These reports varied in the strength of their evidence, and whether based on new or reported research, with a number of reports reviewing existing evidence rather than presenting new findings. Outputs reporting new findings included reports based on large and detailed studies and smaller, exploratory research involving key informant and stakeholder discussions.

As for the UK literature we have largely confined our searches to literature from 2004 onwards, since the nature and extent of migration has changed significantly over time and the study is principally concerned with current impacts since the addition of the accession countries at this time. Moreover, much research on migration drivers, the profile of migrants and the impact is likely to have been produced in the last five years, because of policy interest from the second half of the decade onwards. While our search covered literature on a wide range of social impacts, we have focused our review on the impact on key services: education, health, housing, social security and social care. We have also included evidence on access to services more generally. We have included in the review both qualitative and quantitative literature that looks at migration from both academic and policy perspectives and that has been produced by a range of national and international organisations. Wherever needed we also draw on relevant data on migration.

The Bulgarian literature survey is based on most recent research covering the period 2007-2012 and, whenever relevant, going back in time. Most of the information comes from academic and applied research papers and publications. They are the outcomes of specific EU funded research projects conducted by a range of policy and research organisations (Open Society Institute-Sofia being the most active in the area of migration policy issues). The second largest group of information comes from the publications of ministries, government agencies, and strategic policy documents along with action plans and reports of their implementation. Newspaper articles and interviews were also used but solely for initial orientation and future search directions. Informal websites and Internet fora are also included in the list of information sources provided in Annex 1 but they are of less significance. Although there is some information on migration issues available, given the importance of the emigration issues for Bulgaria in terms of demography and economic development, one would expect larger volumes of better quality information (including inter alia panel surveys). The policy process cannot rely on ad hoc surveys which are part of different (mainly research) agendas carried

out in most cases by non-governmental organizations. Most of the surveys focus on the intentions and the attitudes of Bulgarian for emigration while practically there is no information on its impact in host countries.

The Romanian literature survey is based on several types of documents such as papers, articles, working papers, reports, and books. Some of the studies were retrieved in electronic format, while others were accessible only as hard copies. The Romanian sections of the report review about 52 studies. About 20 per cent of these studies are written in Romanian, while the great majority are in English. It should be mentioned that over recent years, a large number of Romanian scientific publishers are publishing journals in English, in order to increase visibility of the publication, but also to increase visibility of Romanian research. Our approach to the review was to take account of the strength of evidence behind reported findings. For each output included in the review we assessed the methods used, including sample sizes and type of analysis used. Because of the range of methods used in the literature included in the review, we used a range of criteria to carry out this assessment, focusing on three main questions in our assessment of new evidence:

- Is there is an explicit account of the research process, including design and
- methods and analysis of data?
- Are the methods appropriate and reliable?
- Is the data of good quality?
- Are the findings reliable, credible and clearly related to evidence?

And in relation to our assessment of reviews of existing evidence:

- Does the review take explicit account of the quality of evidence?
- Are its findings credible?
- Are its conclusions firmly based on the evidence presented?

Using this approach, we have produced a table showing the full list of documents and reports found during search phase, with note on authors, content and research quality assessment. We have used a simple 3 grade assessment with A as the highest quality assessment and C the lowest. The quality assessment relates to the account of the research process and the apparent reliability of data.

We conduct a systematic and policy-focused review of available literature on migration from Bulgaria and Romania to the UK. A typical limitation of all review methods is the lack of evidence on certain issues potentially related to the main topic of the REA, or they may not be studies of sufficient methodological quality. Therefore, the report also identifies gaps in the evidence.