



Guide on Post-Employment Roma Inclusion

Authors: CĂPRAR Elena and KISS Julien-Ferencz
Revised edition, August 2020

The contents of this guide represent the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



This guide was funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020) under grant agreement No 849089.

Contents

- 1. Executive summary 3
- 2. Why is post-employment inclusion of vulnerable people important? 4
 - 2.1 Drawing on experience of past project 4
 - 2.2 Context of Roma in Romania 6
 - 2.3 Benefits of diversity management 7
- 3. PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN RESULTS OF THE SURVEY 8
 - Employees 8
 - Middle management and Human Resources 9
 - 3.1. SATISFACTION AT THE WORKPLACE AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION 9
 - 3.2. ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AND THE RELATION WITH THE RETENTION RATE 14
 - 3.3. STRESS AT THE WORKPLACE AND ITS IMPACT 17
 - 3.4. LABOUR ETHICS AS WORK INVOLVMENT PREDICTOR 18
 - 3.5. AUTONOMY AT THE WORKPLACE 20
 - 3.6. INDUCTION, ABSENTEEISM AND SEARCHING FOR ANOTHER JOB 21
- 4. MODULES FOR TRAINING (RECOMMANDATIONS FOR MIDDLE MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES) 24
 - 4.1. HR AND MIDDLE MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES ON ROMA EMPLOYEES 25
 - 4.2. INDUCTION AND ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE 27
 - 4.3. EMPLOYEES MOTIVATION 31
 - 4.3.1. FINANCIAL MOTIVATION 33
 - 4.3.2. NON-FINANCIAL INCENTIVES 34
 - 4.4. STAY INTERVIEW 36
 - 4.5. EXIT INTERVIEW 37

1. Executive summary

Experiences of previous employment projects showed a lack of post-employment inclusion measures for vulnerable employees, which lead to many workers leaving the company a short time after a successful job-mediation.

This guide intends to address this gap by providing ideas and recommendations how satisfaction at the workplace and communication between employer and employees can be increased, leading to a better inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable employees at the workplace, respectively to an increased retention rate for the employers.

According to the study realised as a basis for this guide, the main reason people leave the company is not remuneration level, as wrongly considered by some of the managers. Roma employees, beside material benefits, would be happier with the following:

- **a more flexible work programme** so they can solve family and personal issues, while still respecting the rules and procedures of the company;
- **respect and appreciation from management** – they usually are engaged in manual labour in difficult working environments which is usually not highly appreciated in society. In this context it would mean very much for them that their superiors are considering their jobs as relevant and meaningful. This could bring a significant change also in the affective commitment to their employer.
- **help from the company** – Roma employees are not used to get very much help, neither from the authorities in their communities, neither from their peers. Internalizing that they are on their own has a negative influence on dealing with complex professional responsibilities. The collected data shows that their desire is to be helped in a meaningful way, and to be understood firstly.

An overview of the findings of the study can be found in chapter 3.

Because these critical aspects of Roma and other vulnerable employee's needs are often neglected in the daily work environment, a range of organisational measures are presented in this guide, with the motivational aim of raising the personnel retention rate mainly in the companies participating the study, and applicable in any entity having employees from vulnerable groups.

Those organisational measures include:

- Reflection of HR and Management perspectives on Roma employees;
- Induction strategies, which address the needs of Roma and other vulnerable employees;
- Motivational strategies and incentives;
- Appraisal strategies as a way to increase commitment within the organization and promote professional development;
- Exit strategies.

The presented recommendations have been developed and tested in training modules for the companies who participated in the study.

2. Why is post-employment inclusion of vulnerable people important?

2.1 Drawing on experience of past project

The importance of post-employment inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable groups emerged as a priority based on direct experience in the field of Roma employment, from previous projects.

Starting 2016, HEKS/EPER Romania Foundation joined the project “Social inclusion and improvement of living conditions for Roma and other vulnerable groups in the counties Mures, Cluj, Bihor, Alba, Covasna, Salaj and Harghita” (Social Inclusion), implemented between 2013-2019, by a consortium of NGOs led by HEKS/EPER Switzerland. Under the “Economic empowerment” component, the project offered access to training; information, counselling and mediation services; and access to micro-loans for Roma and other vulnerable groups. For three years, 1’553 persons were informed, 1’518 counselled, 1’050 persons were mediated into the labour market, 258 being employed. Over 80% of them were Roma and over 50% were women.

However, having additional information and counselling meetings in the same communities, and follow-up phone calls, it became clear that many of the people who were hired stopped going to work after short periods of time (even days, in some cases). As the Social Inclusion project did not include post-employment monitoring activities, systemic regarding the post-employment behaviour was not

collected neither of the employer nor the employee. On the other hand, qualitative responses of both employees and employers allowed first insights into reasons for either staying or leaving the workplace.

The reasons given by those who remained employed for longer periods (over six months) and the corresponding action that can be taken by the organization are presented below:

Reason to stay	Action taken to increase the retention rate
They received <i>what they settled for</i>	Respecting the employer's recruiting, selection and employment offer
They got used to it (<i>I learned</i>)	Induction training adapted for employees from vulnerable groups (explanations of legal provisions, counselling, assignment of a mentor)
They liked the working environment (<i>it's good here, nobody is yelling</i>)	Efficient communication by providing immediate feedback and conducting regular trainings
Having time for the family (<i>it's good to work in shifts as I can organise my other chores</i>).	Keeping working time schedules, implementing a program of 8 hours/day, 5 days a week
They go in group from the same neighbourhood or community (<i>more of us are going there</i>).	Capitalising on feelings of belonging
They succeeded to have a stable income (<i>I bought various things for home or for the children</i>).	Covering basic needs through their income
Transportation to and from work, meal vouchers, bonuses	Motivating salary package

The main reasons for leaving the workplace, resulted after discussions with both side (employee and employer) were:

Reasons for leaving the workplace	
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I received another offer than the initial one. I had problems at home and I couldn't get to work. I did not think it's so hard to work in shifts. I want to receive my salary "in hand", not on card.

Employers	<p>They didn't complete their workload.</p> <p>They are not serious.</p> <p>They don't understand the requirements.</p> <p>They did not show up, we don't know why, we did not ask.</p>
------------------	---

After examining the reasons for leaving the workplace, it became clear that most of them can be solved through efficient communication and an adapted induction training.

All these qualitative findings led to the question of how these situations could be avoided, leading to a better inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable employees at the workplace, respectively to an increased retention rate for the employers.

In order to answer this, needing to find out more about the dynamics in the companies, two questionnaires were applied in companies from Bihor and Cluj counties, gathering data by direct interviews at the workplace from two target groups: middle management and human resources specialists on one side and operating personnel (Roma and non-Roma) on the other side.

2.2 Context of Roma in Romania¹

Roma population experienced a significant growth in the last 40 years in Romania. Since the census of 1977, when 232,341 Roma people were recorded, the official report of 2011 mentioned 621,573 Roma people. However, Romani experts' data indicate a number of 1,215,846 Roma people in Romania in 2011, a six times growth since 1977. In the project's area of implementation, Bihor and Cluj counties, there are similar differences between official and Roma experts' data: 34,640 Roma people officially recorded in Bihor in 2011, while Roma experts indicate 45,332 persons 22,531 Roma citizens officially recorded in Cluj, while Roma experts indicate 24,064 persons. Bihor County has 140 Roma communities and in Cluj are 70 communities.

As related to the minimum guaranteed wage (MGW), in Bihor County 45.4% of the Roma people benefits from this support and in Cluj County 33.1%.

¹ Data interpretation from Horvath, I. (2017). *Raport de cercetare Socioromap. O cartografie a comunităților de romi din România*. Cluj-Napoca: Institute for National Minorities Problems Studying

Regarding employment, Bihor County has 10.8% of Roma people working legally and 29.2% have occasional, informal jobs. In Cluj County, 15.3% of Romani people are working legally and 29.2% have occasional, informal jobs.

On the other hand, the Roma are a young population, and an increasing share of new labour market entrants come from Roma families. Children and youth aged 0–14 years—the new generation of labour market entrants—make up almost 40% of the total Roma population, compared to 15% among the general population. At the same time, about 17% of the general population in Romania is 65 or older, a proportion that is projected to grow rapidly in the near future. The youth of the Roma thus stands in stark contrast to the fast-ageing profile of Romania’s general population. Depending on the estimates of the Roma population, between 6% and 20% of labour market entrants in Romania today are Roma. As the overall working-age population in Romania is projected to fall by 30% by 2050, the Roma share is expected to grow².

2.3 Benefits of diversity management

The forecasts for the coming years show that the workforce will be increasingly diversified in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, etc., mainly due to the integration measures of Roma people and people with disabilities, population aging, the increase of retirement age, measures to diminish the level of segregation, from the gender perspective, of the fields of activity and professions³.

In this context, companies must develop policies that help them integrate and benefit from this diversified workforce, getting performance. Diversity refers to all aspects in which employees differ from each other. These include a number of visible personal characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity and also less visible personal characteristics such as skills, needs, work style⁴.

A study by Deloitte indicates that companies supporting diversity and inclusion in all aspects of their business have better performance than their competitors. Deloitte study, [„Unleashing the power of inclusion”](#), showed that the number of directors who consider inclusion a priority increased by 32%

² *Achieving Roma Inclusion In Romania – What Does It Take?*, World Bank, 2014, page 6

³ *Managementul diversitatii in organizatii. Beneficii pentru angajati si companii. Masuri de implementare*, Centrul Parteneriat pentru Egalitate, 2007, page 4

⁴ *Ibidem*, pages 4-7

between 2014 and 2017. The results of the study reveal that inclusion is a critical component of the organizational culture, having a major impact on the retention rate of companies⁵.

The consolidated data from the questionnaires filled in by the managers and workers led to a study elaborated by Adrian Hatos (SC Praxis SRL).

The results of the study also revealed differences between employees, depending on their ethnicity, sector of activity or position in company (middle management and HR or workers). A radical contradiction between employees and managers was observed, regarding the most important aspects in assessing the quality of a workplace. While the managers are convinced that the fundamental aspect of their employees' motivation is the income level, the interviewed workers assign a higher importance to days off, management respect, paid vacation, etc. The wage, as the unskilled workers declare, is on the 6th rank as the source of satisfaction at work. Therefore, by not exploring other options than the financial aspect or not acknowledging the differences between employees' needs, companies could be in the position of spending many resources (time and money) for recruiting and selection processes due to high personnel fluctuation instead of implementing strategies to make the current employees feel respected and involved and of applying non-financial motivation methods in order to retain them.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

During this chapter of the guide, based on the data collected during our survey, we'll highlight the differences between Roma and Non-Roma employees on essential workplace issues related to employees' retention and work satisfaction. We'll analyse dimensions like satisfaction at the workplace, organisational commitment, stress at the workplace, the labour ethics, autonomy at the workplace, induction strategies and absenteeism as an indirect sign of the desire to leave the company. All those data which were collected and processed quantitatively will be also enriched with the qualitative information derived from the face to face discussions with the employees.

Employees

The data of the survey conducted for this guide was gathered from 216 workers from Bihor and Cluj Counties. Out of the interviewed workers, 57.3% were men and 42.7% women. 56% of them are

⁵ *Unleashing the power of inclusion*, Deloitte, 2017

Roma, 24% Hungarian and 20% Romanian. 49.8% are officially married, 23.6% are unofficially married, 20.7% are not married, 3% divorced and 3% widowers.

79.6% are employed as unskilled workers and 20.4% are skilled workers.

11.6% have no education, 16.9% have finished primary school, 18.8% have finished the first eight grades of the secondary school, 12.6% ten grades of the secondary school, 18.4% graduated a vocational school, 12.1% graduated high school, 5.3% have obtained the high school graduation diploma and 4.4% have higher education.

Seniority at the current workplace is on the average of 4 years and seniority in working is on the average of 14 years.

83.8% perform simple physical work, 4.6% operate machines and 11.6% perform other types of work.

Middle management and Human Resources

In addition to the employees, interviews were conducted with 74 responders who are in a Human Resources or Middle Management role in 10 companies, 91% of them from the middle management and 9% from human resources departments – from Cluj Country and Bihor County.

3.1. SATISFACTION AT THE WORKPLACE AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION

The quantitative analysis indicates that employees are generally satisfied by the working conditions, the workplace, the relations with colleagues and management but less pleased with wages and promotion opportunities (which may be understood as financial conditions improvement).

Satisfaction at the workplace (in relation with the aforementioned aspects) is not influenced by ethnicity or the field of activity.

The support for training (most of the time associated with promotion) is provided by the management although few workers go through such stage. Especially regarding Roma employees, this lack of using those training opportunities is explained by the fact that most of them require above average level of literacy and actually therefore are inaccessible to them.

However, there are some differences that emerged during the interactions with the employees which are not captured by the statistical analysis:

- Roma employees, given the low level of literacy, are aware and they are speaking openly about the lack of opportunities on the labor market. They recognize that most of the better paid jobs require reading, writing and basic mathematical skills. Even in face to face, “off the record” discussions, Roma employees did not complain about discrimination. Rather, they talked about the lack of study opportunities in childhood, the fact that their parents did not take care of their education and that they lived in very harsh conditions. It is this aspect that determines them to stay at work, in order to offer their children a chance for education.
- The locus of control was somewhat internal at Roma employees, meaning that they did not had the tendency to blame their colleagues or the management of the companies for their problems.
- Most of the Roma employees are rather reconciled than satisfied with their jobs.
- A significant number of Non-Roma employees prefer the lower paid jobs due to a decrease in responsibility and less stressful conditions.
- We can acknowledge that Roma employees / same as the Non-Roma employees are quite satisfied with the overall situation because they did not have other expectations.
- Based on those observations we can highlight the fact that employee retention right now it is better explained by the lack of alternatives for the Roma workers, rather than the satisfaction at work.
- The quantitative data and also the qualitative face to face discussions with the Roma employees did not reflect significant issues regarding discrimination. Also, most managers consider discrimination issues are very low within the companies. But we can still identify especially attitudes from the managers stating that Roma employees can’t change, can’t progress and they don’t want to change for the better. Even if those attitudes are not directly discriminating Roma population, indirectly may lower the chance that any kind of progress from them will be observed by the managers.

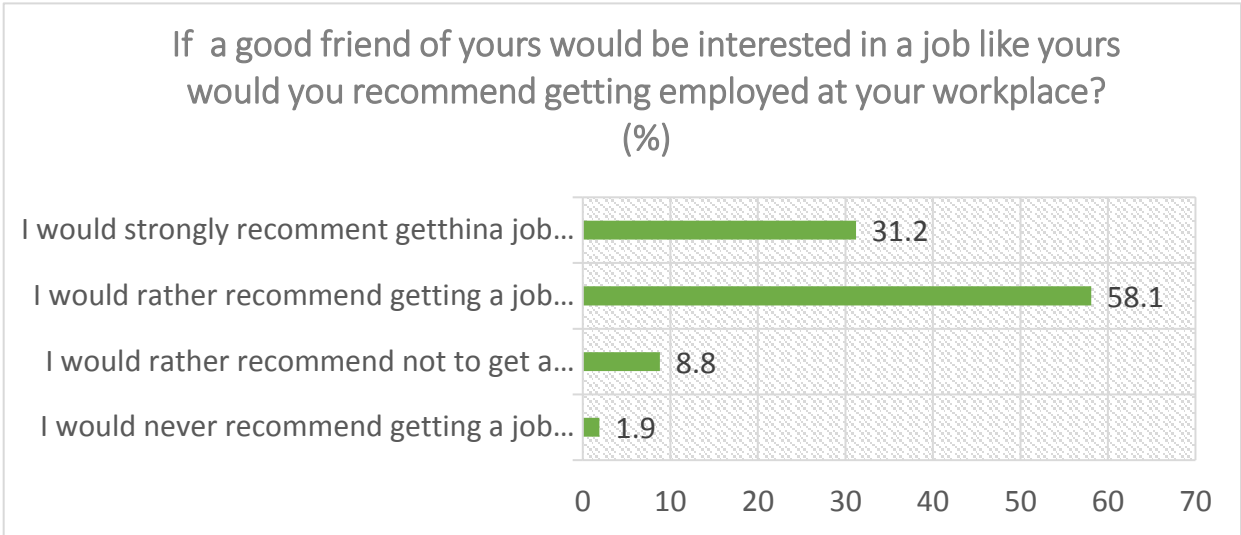


Figure 1 – recommendation of the actual job to others

The data is consistent with the approximate percentage of employees willing to change their job (approximately 10%).

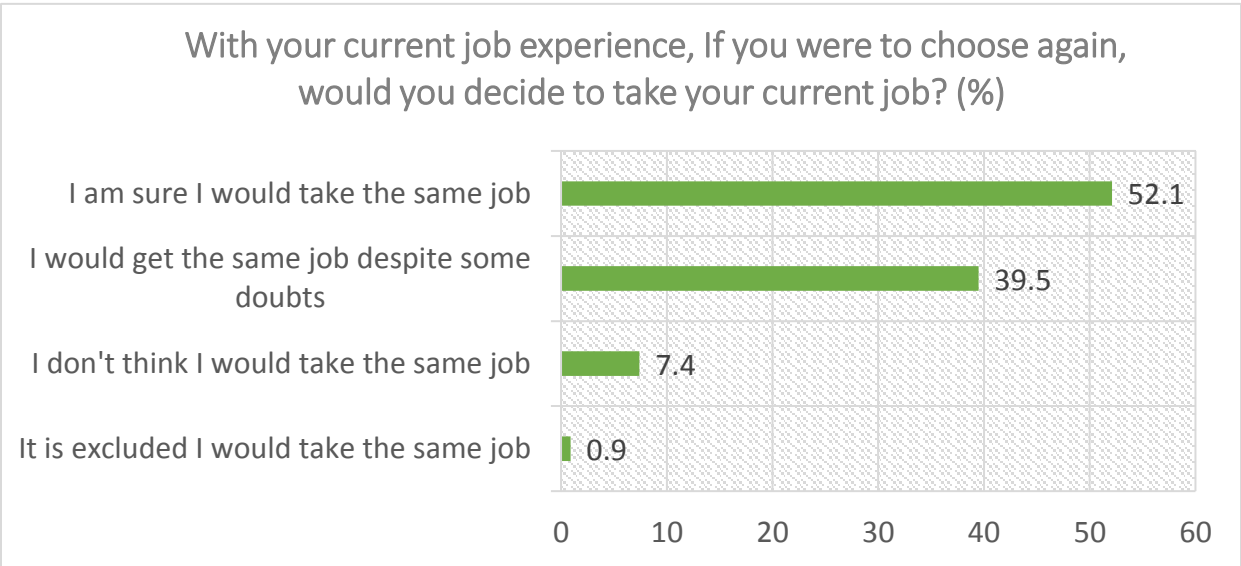


Figure 2 – choosing the same job again

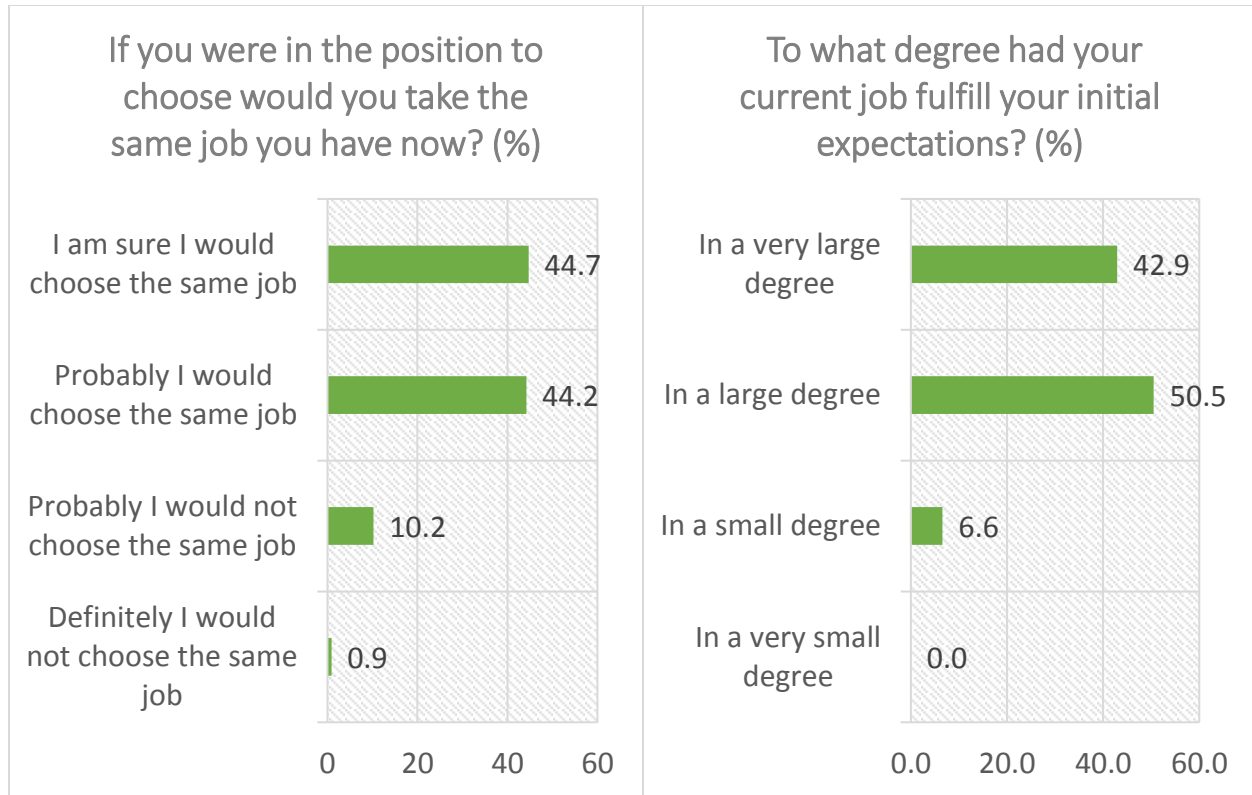


Figure 3 – choosing the workplace

Figure 4 – satisfaction with the workplace

In relation with work satisfaction, the factors the employees consider important at the workplace were analysed. There were no significant statistical differences between Roma employees and Non-Roma employees.

When asked about the importance of different factors for their work satisfaction, the factor mentioned most often is the possibility to take some time off to solve family problems, followed by the need to be respected within the company and only on the 6th place is the wage (Figure 5). Beside normal material needs like paid vacations (3) and meal coupons along with salary (4), there is also another essential factor – the help from the company when needed.

We may extract some general ideas from the chart:

- Most of the Roma employees usually prefer to have a greater freedom and they are not particularly interested in a very strict labour environment. Our qualitative analysis suggests that it's neither the case to interpret this as a lack of work discipline. It's more a result of missing formal education, on understanding a programme, a scheduled activity.

- The respect from the management is particularly important. As we mentioned already, work satisfaction and commitment attitudes that were expressed are more likely to be somewhat constrained by the lack of opportunities. In this context, finding appreciation at work saves employees from developing a sense of meaningless, automatic work.
- Another important factor that could increase the retention rate is the help from the company when needed. This could transform entirely the “sterile” attitudes of the Roma employees towards the company. Usually they are used to be on their own, with little or no help from authorities or even peers. And for a Roma employee that already decided to accept a formal job, such an attitude from the management/colleagues could mean very much, probably more than a cornerstone in achieving actual satisfaction and commitment.

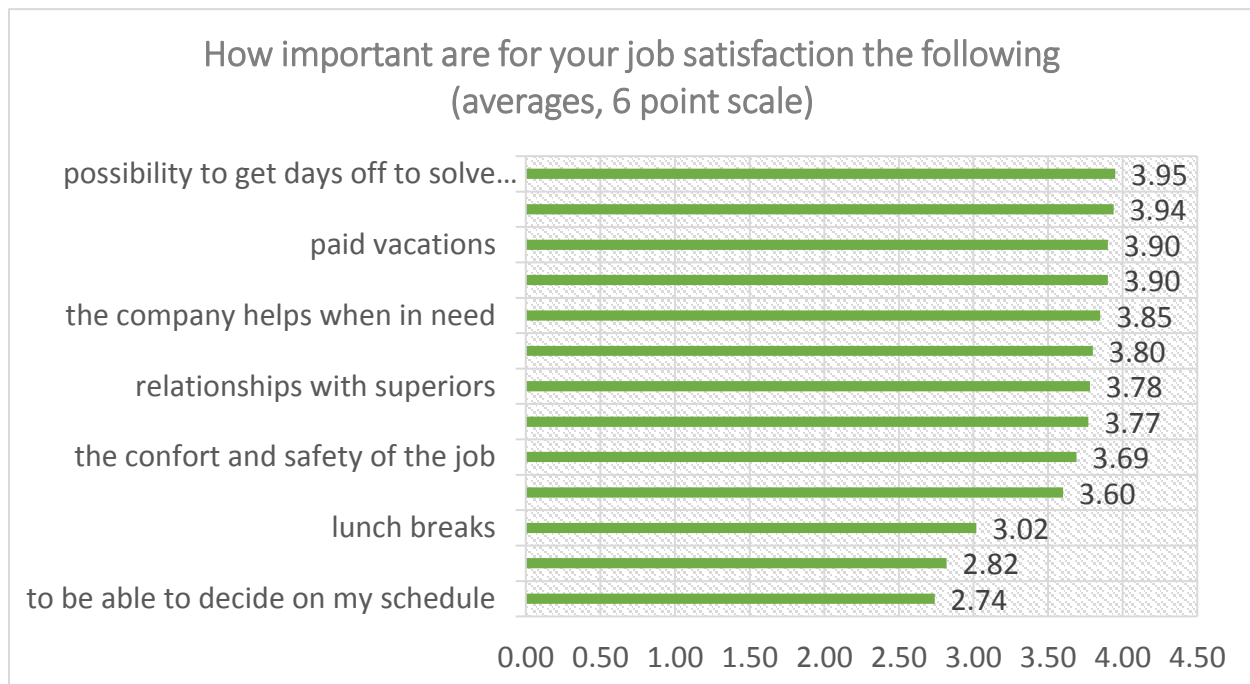


Figure 5 – important factors at the workplace

In managers' opinion regarding the reasons for which the employees decide to leave the company, we may notice that they believe the employees are unsatisfied with the wages/benefits and find other better paid jobs (Figure 6). Managers' opinion is right to some extent – many of the Roma employees willing to leave the company are doing it for higher wages. But that is because they are not primarily satisfied with other issues, as the above chart represent it.

Our perspective on the matter is that the management could tackle other important issues like flexible program, performance-related reward, a closer relationship and care towards the employees' problems.



Figure 6 – managers opinion regarding employee departure causes

3.2. ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AND THE RELATION WITH THE RETENTION RATE

It was measured by means of 3 dimensions:

1. **Affective commitment** – the employees want to stay at the workplace due to some strong emotional connections. It leads to enhanced performance and employees’ retention.

The level of emotional commitment is high, the mean of the scores is 24 (Figure 7). But Roma employee’s affective commitment is rather lower compared to Non-Roma employees. If we link those data with the one from previous subchapter (work satisfaction) we may understand that Roma employees are in a situation where they don’t have too many options, due to lack of literacy and education, and implicitly they’ll be satisfied (but not happy) with any kind of job they can get. But a significant number of Non-Roma employees opted voluntarily for those jobs due to lower level of responsibility and less stress, explaining the greater affective commitment.

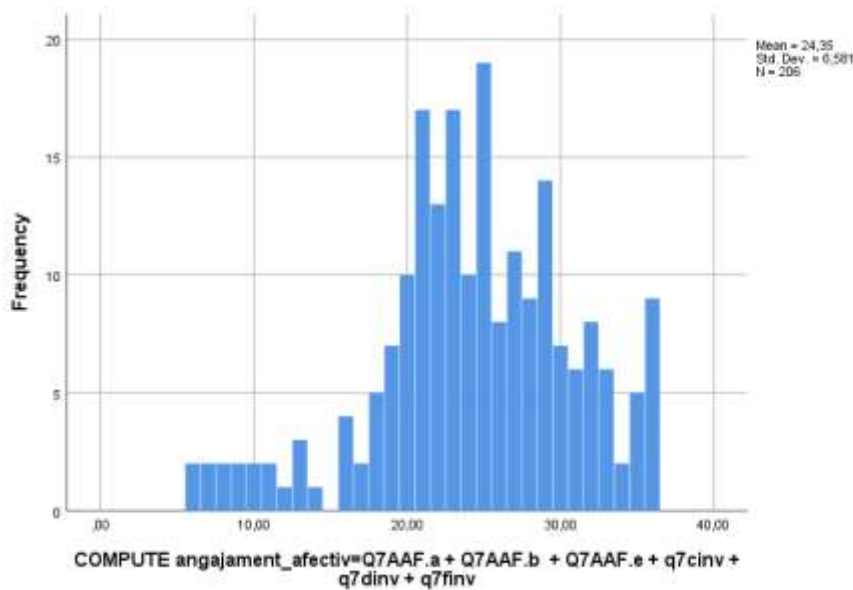


Figure 7 – affective commitment

Also, the perspective of most managers is that the main issues are represented by lower motivation and lack of discipline at the workplace, and those can be linked with a lower emotional commitment

As considering employees motivation, money/income/salary package would be the most important from managers' perspective, followed by the warm relations at the workplace. This is worthy to be highlighted because the fact that warm workplace relations are taken into account is a good sign that some of the essential issues are known by the managers, but only to some extent.

2. **Constant commitment** – the employees balance the advantages which may be obtained at another workplace and choose to stay or leave.

The mean of constant commitment is also high, the score being 28.8 (Figure 8).

In the situation of Roma employees, the high level of constant commitment comes as natural, given the lack of alternatives. Usually, most of them can change only for a similar job, but such a decision would not be economic for them. We already saw in the previous subchapter that they are rather satisfied with their colleagues and the management staff. So, their decision not to leave the company (constant commitment) is rather a rational one – because it would be more like taking a risk of leaving the actual satisfactory conditions for an unknown situation at another organisation.

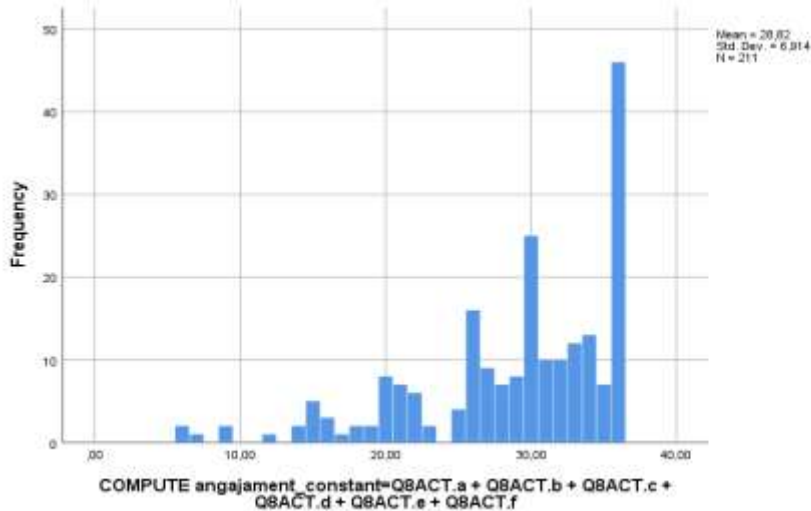


Figure 8 – constant commitment

3. **Normative commitment** –refers to the employees who do not consider it is fair to often change the company and remain in a company especially due to this attitude.

The score of the normative commitment is of 20.6 points (Figure 9).

Roma employee's normative commitment is explained better by the acknowledgment that there are not quite a lot of better job opportunities, given the circumstances. Internalizing this attitude, in time it became a structural cultural drive that coordinates Roma employee's commitment. The sample of the research is quite relevant towards such an explanation. Most of the employees had about of 4 years mean work experience at the same employer.

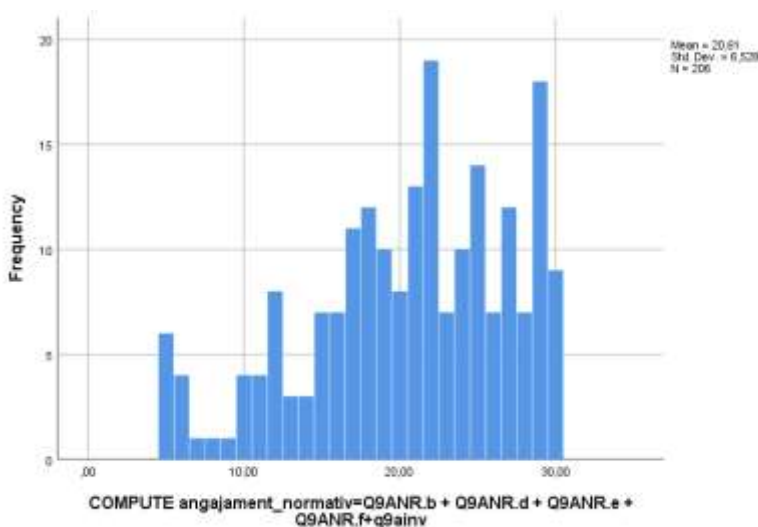


Figure 9 – normative commitment

Roma employees have a significantly lower affective commitment with the company than Romanians – meaning that they are not bound to the workplace and consequently their performance, at least theoretically, is not sustained. Roma employees have instead a better constant commitment than Romanians or Hungarians and Romanians' normative commitment is similar with Roma's, as it is significantly higher than in Hungarians. Roma's constant commitment may be explained as they have very low employment options on the labour market, as such, they are not willing to leave their current workplace.

Summarizing the commitment of the Roma employees, we would reveal that it is more likely that their attitudes are generated under the burden of lack of alternatives and implicitly lack of decision-making power.

3.3. STRESS AT THE WORKPLACE AND ITS IMPACT

The level of stress was measured by elements like the lack of safety, pressure, lack of resources, discrimination or physical insecurity.

The mean score obtained with the stress scale is of 18.04. No significant changes of the stress score is registered depending on ethnicity and the field of activity (Figure 10).

During the face to face meetings with the employees, many claimed that they appreciate the current job due to the fact that the work is not difficult, the conditions are good and the responsibilities are not very high. A lot of them accentuated that their decision to remain at the company is because the low level of stress and that they prefer to stay under those conditions for lower wages, than to switch to other, more stressful work environment, if the wage difference is not significant.

We consider that the stress factor has a significant influence on work satisfaction and also on commitment and it could be critically linked with retention policies for Roma employees.

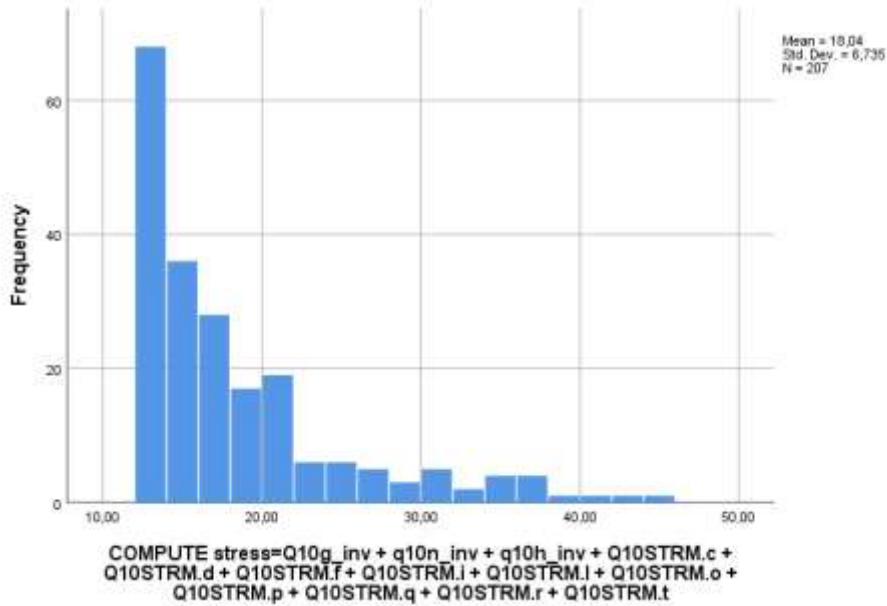


Figure 10 – stress at the workplace

3.4. LABOUR ETHICS AS WORK INVOLVMENT PREDICTOR

Regarding independence at the workplace, a low level is usually correlated with neutral attitudes regarding entrepreneurship and more likely the preference for being employed (Figure 11). A high level of independence indicates more likely a desire towards more decision and acting freedom. Analysing the chart, we can see that mean independence level is slightly above average, indicating that the employees would enjoy more decision and acting freedom.

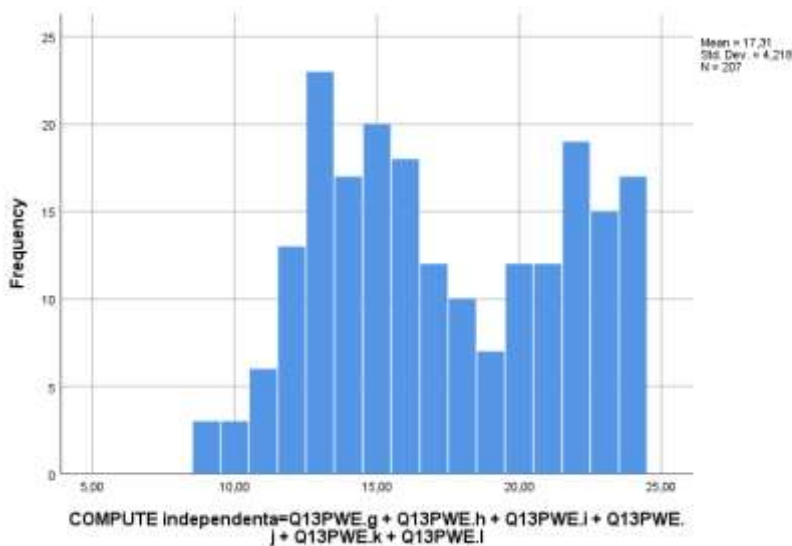


Figure 11 – independence at the workplace

Regarding the time off, the score is little above average, meaning that even if the employees tend to having more time off, they are also quite willing to invest more time in labour in order to obtain material benefits. The mean scores for time off assessment do no vary significantly by ethnicity and field of activity. (Figure 12)

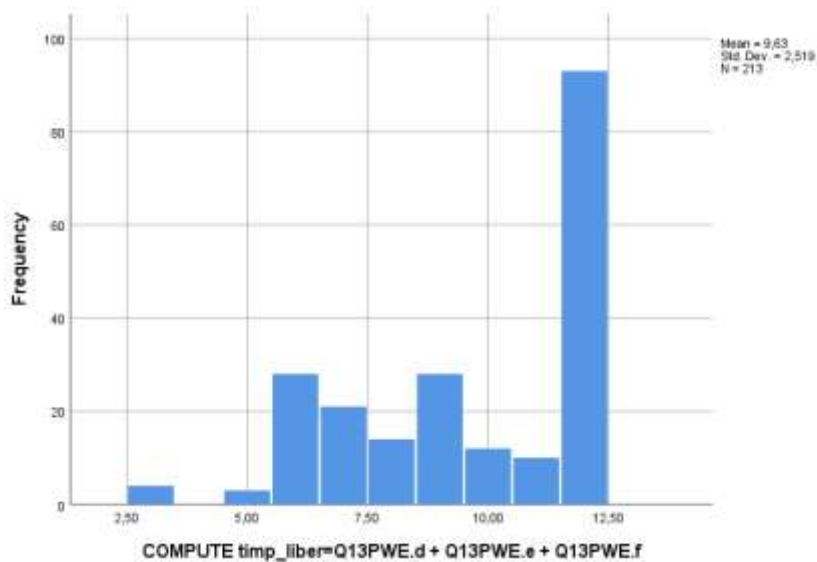


Figure 12 – time off assessment

Employees appreciate to a great extent hard work and it is considered as a wellbeing factor. According to the data of the study, Romanian employees appreciate to a much lower extent hard work than Roma or Hungarian people do.

Analysing Roma's greater attitude towards hard work in the context of the face to face discussions, we can highlight that it's more likely the idea to earn more that drives the employees. This can be interpreted as a positive attitude towards work, and the willingness to earn more. But given the lack of perspectives due to low literacy and educational levels, this can be achieved only by hard work (more working hours if possible) at the actual workplace.

This may indicate that Roma employees are sometimes analysed using stereotypes – for example that they don't really want to work. The results show us that their will to work and earn money for a better life is quite normal, and in the circumstances of lack of opportunities they are willing to do more in the actual context.

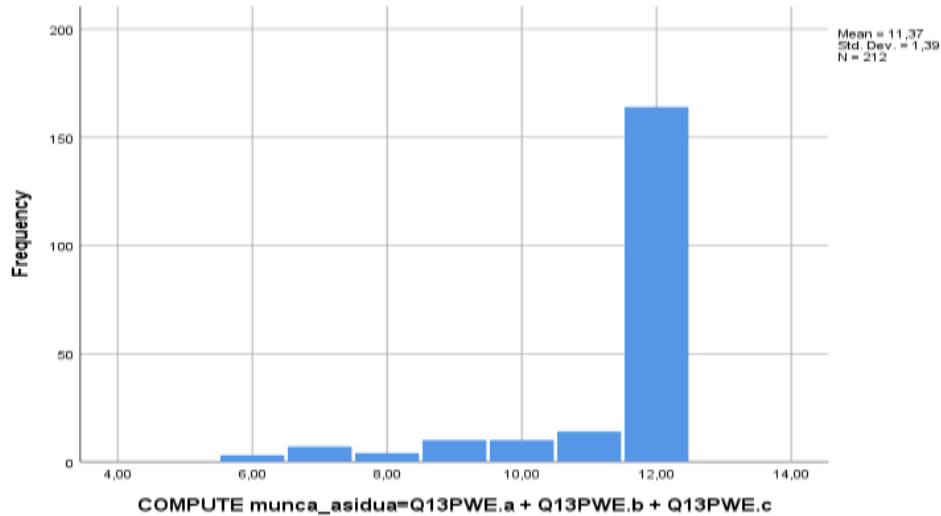


Figure 13 – hard work

3.5. AUTONOMY AT THE WORKPLACE

Autonomy at the workplace is usually linked with the possibilities of having critical decisions regarding the labour process, which stimulates one's self esteem and positively impacts the employee.

As for autonomy at the workplace, the score obtained – 15 in a scale from 0 to 50, indicates the fact that its level is rather low – moderate. The differences of autonomy score are very high between units/companies reflecting differences between sectors.

The Romanian employees perceive a greater autonomy at the workplace than the Roma and Hungarian minorities.

This is partially because of the standard-automatic processes that they have to execute in the companies from our survey, but Roma people perceive a lower level of autonomy also due to internalizing their low status (due to education and low literacy) in relation to decisions.

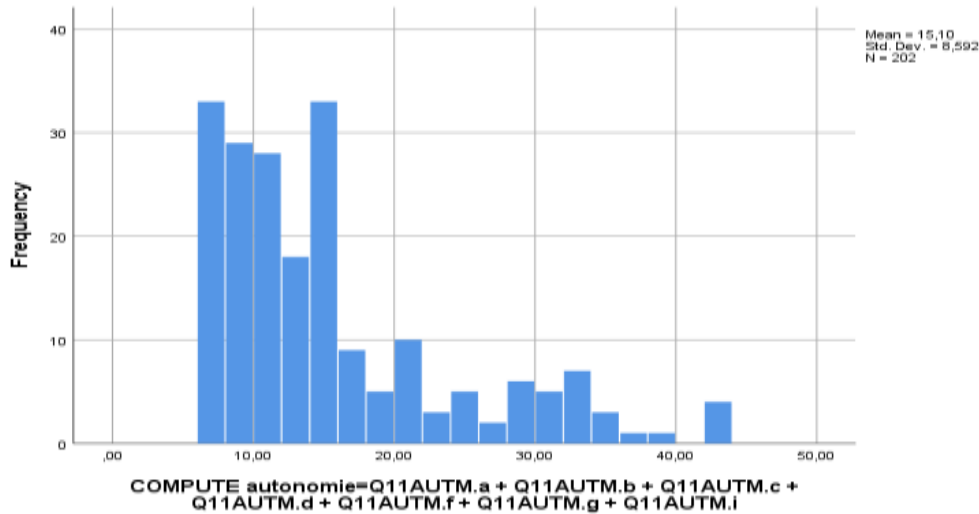


Figure 14 – work autonomy

3.6. INDUCTION, ABSENTEEISM AND SEARCHING FOR ANOTHER JOB

Mentoring, adapting period and initiation courses (as induction strategies) are considered by managers as being essential for employees' professional integration. These are also applied in more than 90% of cases within the companies. Those policies are appreciated also by the employees.

The managers also consider that the most efficient human resources policies are a full-time employment agreement on undefined period and motivation by incentives which corresponds to employee expectations only partially.

Almost 7% of the interviewed employees get acquainted by themselves with the requirements of the job. The others, who benefited from help, were assisted both by colleagues and by their direct their supervisor.

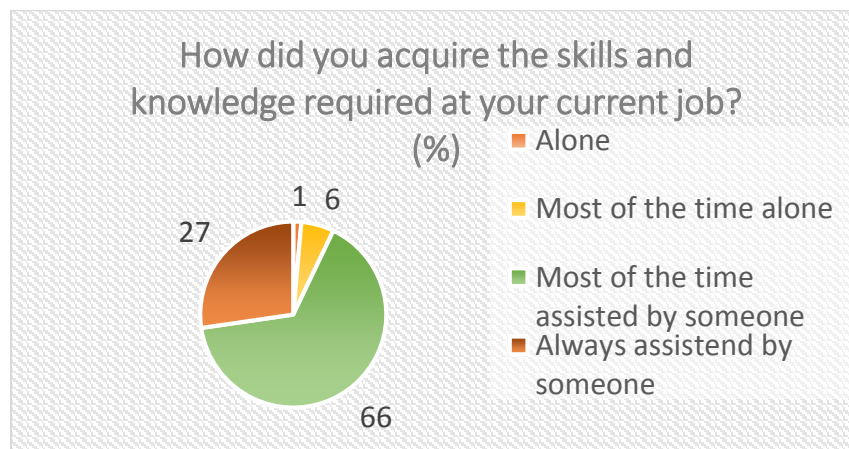


Figure 15 – coaching at the workplace

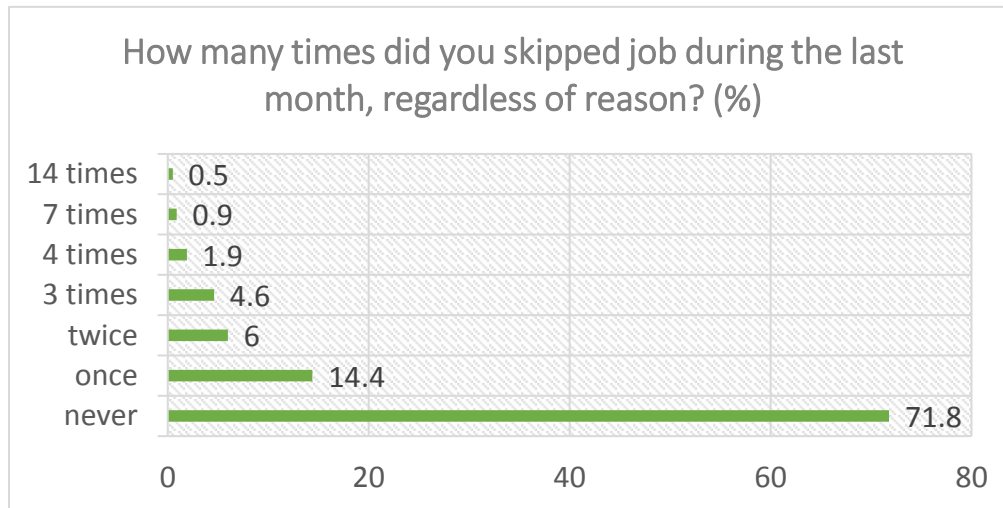


Figure 16 - absenteeism

The absenteeism is low and it is more likely that it is linked with solving some personal problems or with medical leave (Figure 16) than with lack of motivation.

Active searching for a job correlates percentagewise (in part) with those who are not satisfied with the current one. 70% have not considered to leave the current job, around 25% are undecided and approximately 5% are decided to search something else.

The data suggest that between 7-10% of the subjects want to leave the current job and took steps in this respect.

5% of the subjects have considered to change the workplace and 7% declare that is possible or it is sure they leave the current job. In the same period, a double percentage (10%) asked acquaintances about another job.

During the process of data collecting, the discussions with Roma employees indicates that the decision to change the workplace is usually associated with the issue of low earnings. This confirms the data analysis which concluded that the major issues regarding work satisfaction are related to earnings, but this has to be analysed together with other job satisfaction factors.

The score of a new job searching varies significantly among the companies but not likewise among ethnicity and sectors.

The fluctuation issue is considered as “less serious” by 47.9% of the respondents from middle management and HR and as “at least serious” by 52.1% of them. Personnel recruitment is considered as difficult by 69% of the respondents, 31% considering it at least easy (Figure 26).

The managers assess employees’ intention of leaving the company by analysing involvement, absenteeism or the fact that they are directly noticed by the employees and by conversations with them or with their co-workers.

Conversations, clarifying the reasons and wage increase are especially considered by the managers in convincing them to not leave the company.

It is relevant that 63.6% consider that higher wages and other benefits are the solution for personnel fluctuation issue and only around 12.3% are taking into account better work climate, transparency, responsibility or equity.

But the essential discovery of our survey is related to the methods that managers consider efficient regarding the problem of retention. It is interesting that 51.4% did not answer, fact that indicates a lack of solutions for critical issues. 20.3% consider that a wage increase would be enough. This is to a certain extent different of the way the employees consider the working conditions may improve, signifying a gap between representations and perspectives of the two categories - workers and managers.

When the employees want to leave the company, 59% of the managers hold an exit interview where they question the reasons of leaving, professional satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Following the exit interviews, the managers consider that the pay system is the absolute reason of company leaving (82%). This varies significantly of the way the employees perceive the reasons for leaving the company.

As essential predictor, affective commitment has a stronger impact upon professional stability, each additional point on the affective commitment scale leading to the decrease with 19% of the risk relating to a new job searching. In exchange, each additional point on the stress scale leads to the increase of the probability of searching for a job⁶.

⁶ A. Hatos, Report on the personnel retention rate, the possible reasons for a low retention rate of Roma employees, the interactions between co-workers and with management inside the companies (realized under HOPE project, first version, March 2020), p. 45

4. MODULES FOR TRAINING (RECOMMANDATIONS FOR MIDDLE MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES)

Following the results of our analysis, detailed in the report and highlighted in the present guide during the previous chapter, we consider that the basis for an intervention strategy regarding the increase in Roma employees retention rate should be built around few critical organisational dimensions:

- HR and Middle Management perspectives on Roma employees
- Induction strategies
- Motivational strategies
- Appraisal strategies
- Exit strategies

Each company's human resources strategy is based on the business type, focusing on personnel skills and on the medium- and long-term retention methods of the personnel with good performance and added value.

Employees' retention is a key process in any company because depending on the positions they hold; their replacement cost is higher than the recruitment cost.

Generally, employees' retention process, at all levels, means the implementation of the following measures:

- Financial and non-financial motivation;
- Compensations and benefits packages;
- Career plans;
- Social protection plans;
- Identification of the affective commitment, organisational commitment, normative commitment, all with the purpose of convincing the employees to stay as long as possible within the companies.

Given the specific scope of this project, focusing on Roma employee retention, we have to take into consideration an alternative type of approach. By alternative we mean ecological approach. This implies taking into account Roma population's culture and local social history elements that are critical in elaborating meaningful strategies. A significant proportion of this data was presented in the previous chapter and now we'll develop our strategies around it.

4.1. HR AND MIDDLE MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES ON ROMA EMPLOYEES

The organisational efforts for raising the retention rate, in order to ensure the employees do not intend to leave the company, require first of all a very good collaboration between the human resources department and managers of all levels, to identify the reasons why the employees want to leave company. After the identification, the reasons may be included in human resources policies with immediate application at company level.

Our data reveals that even there was no discrimination mentioned, neither by the Roma employees, neither by the managers, there are still a lot of perspective biases in use. By perspective biases we mean stereotypes that indirectly are guiding especially manager's representation of Roma populations.

So, first of all it is important to be aware of those stereotypes in order to elaborate adequate policies. The most relevant are:

- Roma employees can't be changed towards being integrated to the mainstream culture;
- Roma employees are not interested in professional development;
- Roma employees can't be trusted regarding higher professional responsibilities.

Before elaborating critical policies, we have to prepare the way for their implementation and by that we mean a first step on clarifying the management's and HR perspectives regarding the stereotypes mentioned above.

We acknowledge that those stereotypes are general in Romanian society, but during our face to face time with the Roma employees it emerged that there are some core factors which influence Roma employee perspectives/decisions and professional behaviour:

- Lack of literacy and low education level. This is a key factor which has a huge influence on Roma employee professional approach. Given the lack or low level of literacy, Roma communities are characterized by oral culture and communication. And oral communication is usually characterized by a strong distortion. Some of Roma employees are strongly influenced by those distortions. Our experience from the previous project revealed numerous cases in which Roma employees renounced to a good job offer only because they heard that at another company there are better conditions. Because of the lack of access to reliable information, their decisions are affected.

- Managers should be aware that lack of critical thinking can be tackled by gaining their employees trust and by a normal, friendly relationship. In order to influence their employees in adopting rational professional decisions, managers must be trusted by employees.
- Roma employee interest in professional development is significantly undermined from the start by their educational prerequisites. They are aware of this situation and of the fact that professional development and promotion is linked with a higher level of literacy and education. That's why most of them have preconceived ideas that a higher professional level can't be reached.
- Regarding the trust invested in Roma employees in relation to higher professional responsibilities it is important that the employee understands those at first. Usually when Roma employees are dealing with complex professional challenges and they feel they can't manage them, there is a tendency towards abandonment.

The impact of personnel retention is answering the question: is more beneficial for the company to employ new people or to develop the existing ones who have promotion or new competences development potential (either vertically but especially horizontally)?

As such, in order to avoid extended recruitment processes, increased costs for the company and unskilled personnel employment, the focus shall be on employees' retention. The companies may, in exchange, understand its employees, listen to employees needs and implement strategies making them feel appreciated and involved in order to retain them. These retention methods may have a significant and positive impact upon personnel fluctuation rate.

The reasons the employees leave the workplace (according to Leigh Branham, Strategic Planning Consultant, 2016, Careers Magazine) are:

1. The employees feel that what they do fails to meet their expectations.
2. The person does not match with that job.
3. There is much less coaching and feedback.
4. There are less promotion and development opportunities.
5. The employees feel a lack of appreciation.
6. The employees feel stressed with the overworking and do not have a balance between personal and professional life.
7. There is a lack of confidence in senior leaders.

According to the study realised within the project, the main reason people leave the company is not remuneration level, as wrongly considered some of the managers. Roma employees, beside material benefits, would be happier with the followings:

- **a more flexible work programme** so they can solve family and personal issues (that should be not confused with not respecting at all the working program);
- **respect and appreciation from management** – they usually are engaged in manual labour in difficult working environments which is usually not highly appreciated in society. In this context it would mean very much for them that their superiors are considering their jobs as relevant and meaningful. This could bring a significant change also in the affective commitment
- **help from the company** – Roma employees are not used to get very much help, neither from the authorities in their communities, neither from their peers. Internalizing that they are on their own, as stated above, has a negative influence on dealing with complex professional responsibilities. The collected data shows that their desire is to be helped in a meaningful way, to be understood firstly.

So, those critical aspects of Roma the employee needs are quite neglected by managers and the majority of them considers that the reasons the employees) leave are the income/wage. It is true the wages increases are immediate compensations and may increase the employee involvement, but all is on short term. This is the reason why a range of organisational measures are further presented, with the motivational aim of raising the personnel retention rate mainly in the companies participating the study, and applicable in any entity having employees from vulnerable groups.

The presented methods shall take into account the actions the human resources department and each coordinator/team leader may apply for vulnerable employees (Roma, women, etc.) with whom they work.

4.2. INDUCTION AND ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE

Our data reveals that mentoring and initial training is quite frequent in all of the organisations and those approaches are appreciated by the employees, Roma and Non-Roma equally.

Managers think that a full-time contract on undetermined period is appreciated by the employees, so those have to be fulfilled as essential conditions.

As to bring and keep good employees in any company, on any position, it is also important to:

- ✓ Understand which are their expectations regarding the job and the company;
- ✓ Respond as close to these expectations.

As already mentioned throughout this guide, a persistent misunderstanding regarding the Roma employee expectations is that they only want more money. Even if the data confirms this, that Roma and also Non-Roma employees, for sure, want more money, other essential expectations are neglected. The flexibility of the programme, respect and support for the employees are not taken into account as important factors. Building an induction strategy also including those factors could improve the organisational climate and also could increase implicitly the retention rate.

The Human Resources Department with middle management support should provide:

- ✓ Clear and transparent description of all job requirements (job description, procedures, rules) to be applied from day 1 by all employees;

When discussing with Roma employees it is recommended that such an action should not be taken with a formal approach because they are not used to it and they may have difficulties in managing all that information. A formal and strict approach could generate high levels of anxiety which can lead to a decrease in self-efficiency beliefs.

- ✓ The benefits should be communicated and the employers should comply with them.

Given the fact that Roma employees are generally employed on jobs where the minimum wage prevails, managers should explain them the contextual advantages offered by the company. As already stated, given the lack of access to reliable information, Roma employees are keen to frequently leave their jobs with hope of a better situation at another company. Usually they are taking such decisions based on rumours and irrational representations.

All these are to celebrate more than an employment agreement by and between the employee and employer, namely a moral, psychological contract which has a greater impact on retention. On contrary, without these details, the length of collaboration between employer and employee may be on short term. This requires a warm, human approach during the induction period, adapting the language, the explanations, reducing anxiety and raising trust.

Within the induction period which may coincide with the probation period, each new employee should be *referred to* an experienced, motivated employee who may monitor and assess him/her at the end of the probation period.

An induction plan, adapted for Roma employees, may be as follows:

RESPONSABLE	ACTIONS
<p>Human Resources representative or the Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Welcomes within organisation; – Presents the organisation (background, strategic objectives, structure, functions, organisational chart, general rules, ethics code, etc.) with adequate language and explanations; – Presents the workplace and the future team; – Presents and explains the specific rules and procedures avoiding anxiety generation by a too formal approach; – Presents and explains the job description; – Presents and explains the equipment the new employee shall operate with; – Presents the telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for the entire organization (employment kit); This is particularly important for Roma employees – so they can acknowledge that there is a person/or more in the company who they can address any kind of issues. It should be a person who is patient, who has a warm social approach and who is willing to help others. Without one or more colleagues like that, Roma employees will develop again a sense of helplessness which is, sadly, frequent in their communities. – Settles progressively the tasks and objectives for the new employee during the probation time.
<p>Human Resources Departments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Draws up the periodical assessment of the new employee integration; It also addresses the integration issues, and is talking directly to the employee on those – Presents the Internal Rules and also explains in a practical manner why they are important – it may sound as redundant, but when it comes to Roma employees, it's not; – Offers to the new employee information about the facilities he/she may benefit from; – Presents the new employee information about the working hours, lunch breaks, transportation, leave, unpaid leave etc.; Our qualitative data suggests that managers are quite familiar with the need of flexibility in the programme for

	<p>Roma employees – but they see it as an anomaly. Also, they accept it to some extent. An initial, direct and rational approach on this issue could increase Roma employee affective commitment because flexibility is one of their main requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Presents the promotion possibilities (which may be only horizontal for the operating positions occupied by vulnerable persons or who have minimum education). This is also critical, due to the fact that Roma employees internalized the idea that they are not prone to promotions and development due to lack of formal education. – Communicate to the new employee the method of wage payment.
Administrative Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prepares the working equipment; – Hands over the equipment of his/her use. Some of the managers complained that Roma employees are not taking care of the equipment. An incentive strategy is welcomed regarding this issue
SSM (Work Health and Safety) and PSI (Fire prevention and extinction) responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Presents organisation particularity a from work security and health point of view; – Instructs specifically and checks if understood by filling in the particular documents.

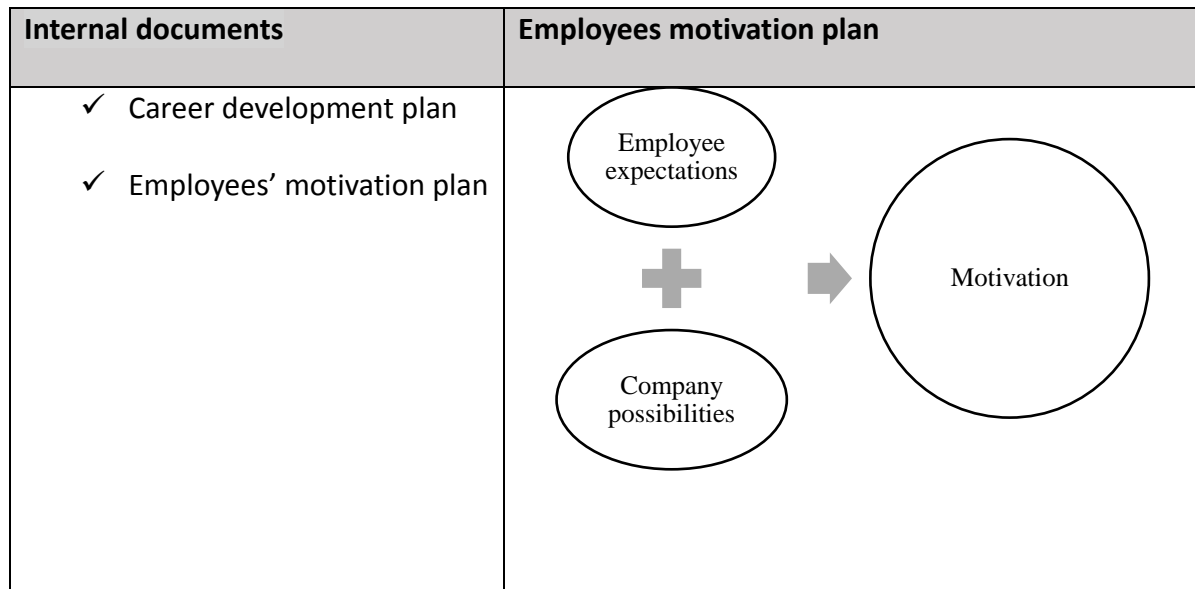
All the above may be comprised in an **employee handbook** which each employee and middle management shall have.

The study reveals that, from the conversations with the employees, they consider much the starting time of the activity, as they keep in mind for long and appreciate any help they received at the beginning, from whom, who coaches them, who supports, shows them and considers that person as a **MENTOR**. For example, this affection is very important for Roma people because they are loyal to their direct supervisors rather than to a great name of a company, which emerges after collaboration. That's why it is very important that the person that has the mentor role should be free of any stereotypes and also should be trained for a better understanding of Roma population cultural, social and educational characteristics.

4.3. EMPLOYEES MOTIVATION

Motivation is defined in dictionary as: *All the reasons, considerations or mobiles (conscious or not) which makes someone to do some action or to tend to certain aims.*

As to bring and retain employees, especially persons coming from vulnerable backgrounds, it is important the implementation at the company level of:



Employees motivation plan

Regarding the motivation of the Roma employees, we can link it to most of the data collected throughout the project so far. The essential dimensions linked with motivation are:

- Work satisfaction
- Organisational commitment
- Stressful environment
- Work ethics and autonomy

Work satisfaction in relation with motivation – our data suggests that even if Roma employees declare themselves satisfied with most of current conditions, they are more likely resigned or at peace with the current situation and not happy. Usually they internalized the idea that there are no better opportunities for them. What is rather very interesting is that their locus of control is internal – they don't blame others for their fate, they are speaking about the fact that they did not had the conditions in childhood to get an adequate education. This can be interpreted as a rational approach towards opportunities and faith in better conditions. That's why our recommendation is that, contrary to some

stereotypes, Roma employees have a quite rational representation. Also, it is doubled by a sense of helplessness which make them work more like mechanically, and without too much hope for better outcomes. But this can be changed. As data suggests, they are motivated by a flexible approach, by appreciation and also by the help from the others, more than the money.

Organisational commitment and motivation – as we saw in the previous chapter, affective commitment (which leads to an enhanced motivation and performance) is lower at Roma employees. That means that they accept the job but aren't happy. This is due to the fact that they don't really have too many options for better jobs. The constant commitment (meaning that they analyse the opportunity of leaving the company in a win/loss perspective) supports the idea that have a rational approach. The data suggests that the majority of Roma employees won't risk losing their actual job because they are aware of the fact that given their education it's quite difficult to get a better position. And it could turn out to be even worse if the organisational and social climate is not like at the current job. It's important for managers to know this because in case a real better opportunity shows up, employees will leave if they are committed to the company only due to lack of better alternatives. And the normative commitment (which is related to the internalized norms regarding the opportunity of frequently changing jobs) reveals that most of Roma employees would not be interested in changing jobs frequently. The data suggests that the vast majority of them have about 4 years spent at the current company, which is quite a high period of time. But again, this is only due to internalizing the idea that there are no better opportunities.

Stress and motivation – most Roma employees would prefer lower level of stress, even when compared with more earnings. And stress is strongly correlated with motivation. For Roma employees stress is usually associated with a high level of formalism in rules and procedures, which is quite difficult for them to understand and to internalize due to lack of formal education. It is recommended that they will be approached more like in a semi-formal way regarding work issues and rules and procedures should be presented in a friendly manner by a trustworthy (for Roma employees) person from the company.

Work ethics, autonomy and motivation – data revealed that Roma employees appreciate independence/autonomy, which is also associated with more decision making. So, there is a great desire to be involved in important decisions regarding their lives. In an environment where they feel more or less trapped, without opportunities or the capacity of taking a decisions, they will be strongly affected and their motivation will decrease significantly. Also, it is interesting that they appreciate free time, but

are rather ready to work extra hours if that means extra earnings. That also supports the data presenting Roma employees as rational decision makers, contrary to the general stereotype that they are more irrational.

4.3.1. FINANCIAL MOTIVATION

- ✓ It is an important factor that may be used on short term, and which shall cover the employees' needs (at least at appurtenance need level).
- ✓ As it climbs up the flow chart it will increase.
- ✓ In case of vulnerable groups, the appurtenance need is very important.
- ✓ in the study conducted within the project, the managers have noticed a motivation increase when this was financial.
- ✓ Nevertheless, the motivation was not on long term. This is the reason why our recommendation is combining financial motivation with the non-financial one (stronger on medium and long term).
- ✓ It may be between 5-10% higher than in competitors for the operating positions occupied by persons from vulnerable groups, as to prevent leaving to competitors due to wage reasons



Motivation according to Maslow's theory

4.3.2. NON-FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

The non-financial methods of motivation (non-wage compensations) are limited by tax code provisions and by company type but are very much appreciated by the employees as they consider themselves important for the company. Page | 34

Among the most often non-financial incentives we met at the studied companies are:

- ✓ Meal tickets or the daily meal
- ✓ Transportation to and from the workplace
- ✓ Labour vouchers (Easter and Christmas)

The employees have also mentioned the following strong motivational aspects:

- ✓ Day off in case of health issues with a child or other social issue
- ✓ Good working conditions (working and protection equipment, facilities, medical assistance, canteen)
- ✓ Meeting the contractual commitments (pay up to date, tickets, bonuses)
- ✓ Nice organizational environment
- ✓ I learn and earn (dual education system)
- ✓ I was welcomed back – gratitude. We recommend a limited employee readmission procedure.
- ✓ Working with other family members – internal recruitment.
- ✓ I was hired even if I am 45 years old – seniors' employment.

We want to present non-financial motivation from both perspectives - employee and employer – with the advantages and disadvantages for the positions occupied by persons from our target group, aiming to a practical and applicable guide. Here is what could also be applied as non-financial motivation having great impact upon employees from vulnerable environments, Roma and Non-Roma:

1. Small, same value, different presents, offered depending on performances.
2. A thank you note on the employee's desk.

3. A picnic with all colleagues of the team is more than welcomed – company day.
4. Company newsletter displaying the employee of the month.
5. Ice-cream / coffee, etc., offered by the manager in person.
6. One-on-one recognition: manager and employee to be awarded compensation meeting, when assessing the professional performances.
7. T-shirt with company logo.
8. Free hours/days off for employee's personal needs, that may be recovered.
9. A handshake and a greeting card from you / the general manager.
10. Cinema and theatre tickets or any kind of vouchers.
11. Knowing their family members, having information about his/her family.
12. Small prizes publicly awarded for the best performance, idea, best suggestion, client orientation etc.
13. Yearly prizes bearing the name of some employees who had done something remarkable.
14. A simple "Thank you!" and "Well done!" has a magical effect.
15. Flowers or candies accompanied by a greeting card sent from the manager.
16. Greeting for birthdays.
17. Flexibility to choose the leave period for an employee who had the best results or exceeded the target.
18. A quarterly prize for the best attendance / the most punctual employee (the prize may be a few free hours), correlated with the performance.
19. An annual prize for the most punctual employee (as for example a customised ballpoint pen, a diploma).
20. Bring something from the holidays for your employees.
21. Make always time to congratulate and encourage your team.
22. Give a daily feedback about employees' performance.
23. Recognising publicly the merits of an employee.
24. Announce publicly customers' positive feedbacks.
25. Calendar with all Company employees.

The employees want to know how much you care about them, not your knowledge!

4.4. STAY INTERVIEW

The appraisal interview procedure may be a formal or informal talk identifying the reasons the employees like or don't like the company, what they appreciate / do not appreciate the most, what are the main issues or any other aspects regarding labour environment. It may be applied directly by each manager and by Human Resources Department.

If you hold the formal appraisal interview it may be applied at professional performance assessment, in feedback official moments, in one to one discussion.

If you hold the informal interview, it may be applied in any conversation with the employees by the direct supervisors as to identify the motivational aspects. Roma employees tend to be more open when informal approaches are used.

Examples of appraisal interview questions:

- ✓ What motivates you working in this company?
- ✓ What is you like and do not like at this job?
- ✓ What would you like to happen or change in order to improve your activity?
- ✓ Would you like to change something here?
- ✓ Which is the ideal job for you?
- ✓ What issues do you encounter?
- ✓ What else would you need?

The commitment within the organisation increases, an important aspect, detailed at the beginning of this guide.

Implementing a strategy for employee retention is beneficial for any company as it has better performances, employment costs decrease, the employees are satisfied and motivated.

Identifying the work issues and work environment characteristics during the appraisal interview may lead also to profiling employees, depending of certain variables, also candidates who have a higher probability of performance and adaptation in the company may be recruited.

4.5. EXIT INTERVIEW

Also, as related to the study conducted within *HOPE* project, the direct managers find out about personnel intention of leaving rather late, although there are *signs (delays, lack of involvement, usual tasks failure to perform, etc.)*.

It is difficult when an employee leaves - for both parties and raises lots of questions, both for the employers and for the other members of the team.

The exit interview is a required tool in the process of raising the personnel's retention rate, especially for the personnel from vulnerable backgrounds. It is important to organise it (even if in most companies it is not organised and not due to employer fault) as this is a tool providing information about:

- The way the employees work and feel in the provided teams,
- Problems they face,
- Give him the possibility to make things right.

When the employee decided to leave the organisation, the most unknown information about the company emerges, what can be done to improve it on the future, and the leaving employee says all because he/she has nothing to lose. The information the employer receives from the resigning employee are the most honest as he/she may speak openly without fearing repercussions upon him/her.

After an exit interview, the employer may raise the retention rate by improving the conditions leading to dissatisfaction of the remaining employees.

The data including the reasons for leaving may be:

- Choosing another professional path,
- Conflicts with the other colleagues, the supervisor,
- The wage and unsatisfying benefits package,
- Overloaded working hours.

The exit interview questionnaire may have this structure:

Position:

Department:

Direct supervisor:

Labour seniority in this company:

Date:

1. Which are the main reasons you leave the company for?
2. What was you liked most at this workplace?
3. What was the most frustrating regarding this workplace?
4. Please assess the following aspects of your labour according to the scale below. Explain.

1–very bad 2–bad 3–acceptable 4–good 5–very good

..... Labour organisation

..... Working conditions

..... Relation with the colleagues

..... Relation with the direct supervisor / company management

..... Wage system

..... Communication system

..... Consideration for the achievements reached

..... Company policies

5. Do you have other improvement observations or suggestions for company management?
6. Would you recommend the company as a good workplace for others? YES NO

Why?

To prevent the almost irreversible situation of a resignation and to raise the personnel retention rate, we recommend applying the stay interview procedure.