MIGRATION AND MOBILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Towards a migrant-centred approach

Discussion paper

The European Commission will by the end of 2011 present proposals on how to enhance the external dimension of the EU's migration policy ('The EU Global Approach to Migration'), to better meet the policy objectives and interests of the EU, its partners countries and all migrants concerned. This package of proposals will include a specific focus on the 'Migration and Development' dimension of the EU migration policy.

This discussion paper has been prepared by services of the European Commission to facilitate the internal Commission discussion, as well as discussion with EU Member States, partner countries, non-state actors and other stakeholders in this matter. The paper has a strictly informal status, with the sole intention to generate debate. It does not bind the Commission, its services or other parties in any way.

INTRODUCTION

Improving the positive synergies between migration and development is one of the three pillars of the EU Global Approach to Migration (the others are better organising legal migration, and fighting irregular migration). Earlier communications on this subject were presented in 2002\(^1\) and 2005\(^2\).

Since 2005 the agenda has much evolved and the Commission has made substantial progress in putting in place concrete initiatives, some of them emerging on a pilot basis, others more advanced\(^3\).

The forthcoming 2011 Global Approach package will again contain an important section on migration and development. It will take stock of progress made since 2005. It will identify challenges that stand in the way to a full implementation of the migration and development agenda. It will also broaden and renew priorities and orientations on the subject of migration and development in the light of

- The Stockholm programme 2010-2014\(^4\)
- The European Consensus on Development (currently under revision)\(^5\)
- The EU Work Programme 2010-2013 on Policy Coherence for Development\(^6\),

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\(^1\) COM(2002)703

\(^2\) COM(2005)390

\(^3\) Examples include migration profiles, migration observatories, cooperation platforms, migration information centres, diaspora meetings, the African Remittances Institute, migration capacity building programmes, and more.


\(^6\) http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/SEC_2010_0421_COM_2010_0159_EN.PDF
Ongoing migration dialogues within the framework of the Cotonou agreement and relevant bilateral Partnership and Cooperation Agreements

Ongoing migration dialogues in regional dialogue processes, such as the Africa-EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment, EU-Latin American and Caribbean countries dialogue or the Prague Process on Building Migration Partnerships.

It is envisaged that the Global Approach package will make a case for broadening the traditional migration and development agenda to include other relevant topics, including how to more generally favour mobility, and how to enhance the human rights of migrants. Both topics came out very strongly in political dialogue meetings over the last few years, as areas where more cooperation is required, and where considerable development benefits can be expected.

It is furthermore considered that the human and social dimension of migration and development policies can and should be further strengthened, through the introduction of an explicitly migrant centred approach. It is also believed that the operational aspects of the migration and development agenda can be strengthened, including by better involving migrant groups, research institutes, media and other non state actors. Finally, policies and interventions could be better adapted to the specific situation of third countries concerned.

AN INTEGRATED AND MIGRANT-CENTRED APPROACH

Migration is a complex phenomenon that should be looked at from multiple angles to fully capture its implications and interactions with development. It is considered that policy makers should make an effort to look at migration and mobility issues at different levels, starting with the perspective of the migrant and his/her family, the migrant’s local community, up to the level of the migrant's country of origin and his/her country of destination. On each level potential benefits can be identified, as well as challenges and possible solutions on how to make migration and mobility more conducive to development.

At the level of the individual migrant potential benefits include increasing income, improving skills and broadening social and cultural perspectives. On the other side there are challenges that prevent mobility, such as constraining factors at home, or potentially restrictive mobility and admission policies, or a lack of recognition of skills and qualifications at the intended destination (which is a factor of brain waste, but may also prevent the return of qualified migrants and their contribution to the development of their country of origin). Migrants may also be faced with social exclusion, lack of means for proper integration and discrimination, which may all impact their capacity as development actors.

From the perspective of the migrant's family / household in the country of origin, migration is often a collective income-strategy. As such, migration may be beneficial; with children and other household members having a better access to healthcare and being able to go to school for a longer period thanks to the additional financial support received from the migrant. But migration can also have negative social consequences - children growing up without their parents, dropping out of school, becoming dependent on the financial transfers from their family member abroad. Such effects can also create additional social costs for the community and country of origin of the migrant.
Countries and local communities of origin that are at the receiving end of remittance flows have an interest in ensuring that a proportion of these flows are directed towards socially productive investment rather than only to consumption. In order to favour specific investments by migrants as well as a possible skills-upgrading by (temporary) return of qualified migrants needed for the development of the country, countries of origin may want to establish – as part of their national development strategy – mechanisms to reach out to their diaspora members and provide them with incentives to invest and (possibly) return.

Finally, for countries of destination (both in the EU and within the developing world) a major challenge is the integration of migrants in host societies. Policy measures to strengthen this integration, measures favouring a greater mobility of migrants and their ability to travel back and forth between their country of origin and destination supported by a legal framework, measures granting equal rights to long term residents, favouring legal migration possibilities as well as measures enabling protection against discrimination and exploitation, will all play a favourable role towards development.

ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED

As argued in the previous section, there is a strong case for giving migrants, and their families and communities a more central place in the analysis – and hence in our policies – in the area of migration and development. This immediately leads to questions on what such a shift of focus would imply in practice: How can governments (both in EU and partner countries) effectively empower migrants? How can they enhance the development potential of migration? How can they better address the challenges posed by it? And what would this mean for our policies, and for their operational modalities?

Putting migrants more central in the analysis also implies that more policy attention should be directed towards south-south migration, which in terms of numbers of people involved largely exceeds migration towards the EU. The contribution of South-South migration to development should be recognised and supported.

The following topics seem relevant in such a migrant-centred approach (but more may be identified):

Mainstreaming

- Ensure that EU migration policy also contributes to EU development policy (the 'Policy Coherence for Development agenda'). Mainstream development concerns in EU migration policies and legislation.
- Support the mainstreaming of migration issues in partner countries' development policies (including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers). Support partner countries to take maximum advantage of the developmental potential of migration.

Diasporas

- Enhance – at the EU side - the involvement of migrant and diaspora groups in the development of their countries of origin. This may include better access to EU development finance, notably the NGO budget line, and the establishment of an EU wide network of migrant groups involved in development.
• Support partner countries to reach out and connect more effectively to their nationals living abroad, as a development strategy to attract investments, promote trade and facilitate the transfer of skills, knowledge and innovations.

• Strengthen capacities of diaspora groups in destination countries to provide social support, including by channelling information on rights and procedures, to improve the resilience and integration capacities of migrant communities.

Remittances

• Strengthen ongoing efforts to make remittances cheaper, faster and safer. The EU could consider extending the obligations contained in the Payment Service Directive (PSD) to extra-EU transfers (PSD revision scheduled in 2011). The EU may also explore the added value of setting up a common EU portal on remittances.

• Support partner countries in deploying strategies to promote remittances as a lever for development. This may include enhanced capacity building of central banks and governments in this domain. It could also involve migrant centred savings and investment vehicles. These strategies should be informed by country specific analyses on the potential impacts of remittances on families, communities and social cohesion at large.

Brain drain

• Assist countries that are severely affected by brain drain to define and implement appropriate strategies, focusing on the retention of locally employed qualified staff, increasing the level of training for jobs that are particularly prone to brain drain, as well as the return and professional reintegration of qualified staff working abroad.

• Address – at the EU side – the pull factors of brain drain. This could include enhanced monitoring of the implementation of the WHO voluntary code of conduct on the recruitment of human resources in the health sector in developing countries. It could also include stronger cooperation between health workers associations, employers and government stakeholders in the EU and in the partner country to better manage health workers’ mobility, including through circular migration schemes.

Circular migration and labour mobility

• Promote mechanisms which have the potential to facilitate circular migration at all skills levels, such as the portability of social rights (including acquired pension rights and/or the reimbursement of pension contributions at the end of the worker's contract), enhancing labour matching services, introducing dual citizenship schemes, reducing the administrative costs and complexity of (temporary) migration, facilitating return migration.

• Assist partner countries to provide appropriate job opportunities for returning migrants, and facilitate their reintegration in the labour market.

• Assist regional organisations (e.g. ECOWAS, SADC) to set up regional circular migration schemes, where considered relevant and appropriate, to underpin regional free movement protocols, to effectively respond to fluctuating needs of national labour markets between groups of countries that share similar language or educational systems.

Ex: Migrant’s Mutual Development Funds (to channel savings into productive investments, ensure seed money/access to credits and provide migrants with a minimum return on their savings).
• Promote recognition of skills and qualifications between countries of origin and destination, to avoid brain waste, and maximise development benefits of migration. Support the adaptation of curriculum and training to international labour market requirements, where necessary.
• Support cooperation between recruitment agencies and labour market authorities in order to facilitate skills matching and well functioning labour markets.

Migrants' rights

• Make progress towards the definition and implementation of a common EU approach to strengthen the human rights of migrants, with a focus on enhancing effective access to existing legal rights.
• Promote – both in the EU and in partner countries - protection mechanisms for most vulnerable migrants, especially victims of trafficking and unaccompanied minors. Address the specific needs of migrant women.
• Support the effective integration of migrants in their country of residence, in parallel with facilitating measures to allow migrants to foster and maintain their ties and links with their country of origin.
• Strengthen dialogue and cooperation with third countries on migrant's access to information regarding their own rights, as well as means of enforcement of these rights.
• Work with third countries on licensing and monitoring systems for recruitment agencies and other labour market intermediaries to counteract abuse and exploitation.
• Raise awareness on the need to fight xenophobia and discrimination as factors undermining social cohesion of hosting societies.

CROSS-CUTTING PRINCIPLES

When addressing the issues identified above a series of cross cutting principles should be applied. These principles belong to the best practices in the area development cooperation, and should also underpin the EU policy in the area of migration and development. The principles include:

• Ensure that policy on migration and development is evidence based. Need to continue supporting data gathering on migration flows and its development impact through promoting use of migration profiles and migration observatories.

• Ownership and integration in development strategies: PRSPs, Supporting the development of national migration policies that are conducive for development and the integration of migration in development tools such as PRSPs.

• Aid effectiveness: pool funding on the basis of the country’s own policy when possible, especially in an EU context

• Partnership and dialogue. This is already strongly anchored in the Global Approach to Migration and should continue to be the basis of our relationship with third countries.

• Involvement of a wide range of stakeholders to favour transparency: civil society monitoring role on migrants’ human rights should for instance be encouraged, in when it comes to EU funded cooperation on migration issues
Coherence and capacity building: further initiatives to assist partners with whole-of-government approaches should ensure better coherence between migration and development policies with a human dimension.

If you wish to react to this paper in writing, please send your contribution (preferably no more than 5 pages) to the following email address: Europeaid-Mig@ec.europa.eu, before the 30 May 2011.