

## **EU MIGRATION POLICY AND LABOUR FORCE SURVEY ACTIVITIES FOR POLICYMAKING**

*European Commission*

Over the past few years, the European Union (EU) has been moving from an approach on migration focused mainly on control and security issues to one which fully incorporates the development and employment dimensions. In that context, the external dimension of the migration and asylum policies has developed very much and migration-related concerns have been integrated in the external relations policies and programmes as well as in the development agenda. This is particularly the case in the context of the relations with neighbouring countries. The European Union has created an institutional framework within which political dialogue and cooperation with neighbouring countries on migration and related areas are being strengthened.

In 2006-2007, the European Union developed the Global Approach to Migration, which aims to formulate comprehensive and coherent policies that address a broad range of migration-related issues, bringing together justice and home affairs, development and external relations in an effort to enhance dialogue and cooperation on migration in partnership, solidarity and shared responsibility with third countries.

### **A. GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE**

Speaking from a geographic point of view, the Global Approach gave the opportunity to enhance dialogue and cooperation between the EU and all regions in the world. Especially in Africa, substantial progress has been made.

The regional conference on “Migration and Development” held in Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, in November 2006 marked a turning point. It was the first time that the EU and Africa agreed to work together on migration and development. Since then, a roadmap has been developed with the African Union identifying the roles and responsibilities in implementing the Tripoli conclusions in the coming months and years. In December 2007, this discussion was taken to a higher level at the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon, Portugal, which resulted in the adoption of an EU-Africa Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment. This Partnership is part of a wider joint EU-Africa strategy, and reflects an agreed understanding and commitment to address migration and mobility issues in the framework of labour market disparities both within and between the two continents. The partnership will underpin concrete activities to better manage these labour markets, including through circular migration mechanisms.

Ministers from EU Member States and the European Commission met their counterparts from Central Africa, Northern Africa and Western Africa at an EU-Africa conference on migration and development held in Rabat, Morocco, in July 2006. For the first time, this summit brought together some 60 source, transit and destination countries to discuss migration issues of common interest and concern. A follow-up ministerial conference will be organized in France in October 2008, with the aim to reinforce dialogue and cooperation between source, transit and destination countries along the West-African migratory route. In preparation for this conference, three technical meetings will be organized during the first semester of 2008, dedicated to legal migration, migration and development, and irregular immigration. Migration is also a regular feature in the dialogue between the EU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

At the bilateral level, the EU is continuing to organize migration missions. In 2007, such missions, co-chaired by the Presidency of the European Union and the European Commission visited Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mauritania and Senegal. Further missions are likely to take place in 2008. These missions provide an opportunity to explain the Global Approach of the EU and to discuss the concerns of partners with a view to develop a joint action.

In May 2007, the Global Approach was extended to the Eastern and South-Eastern regions neighbouring the EU. This dialogue is already well established and it is quite different from that with sub-Saharan Africa. The real challenge with these regions is to reconcile the security concerns of the EU with the neighbours' expectations and the EU needs for increased mobility.

The Global Approach to the East also covers Asia where the main issue is that of irregular immigration. Efforts are under way to broaden the dialogue with these countries, covering issues such as migration and development, the movement of highly skilled workers and circular migration. The second Global Forum on Migration and Development, which will take place in Manila in October 2008, will represent an opportunity for the EU to deepen its dialogue and cooperation with Asian countries on migration-related issues.

As far as countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are concerned, migration will be addressed in the context of the preparation of the EU and Latin American and Caribbean summits, with the objective of developing more structured and regular dialogue and cooperation. In preparation for the next EU and Latin American and Caribbean summit in Lima, Peru, in May 2008, a third EU and Latin American and Caribbean seminar of experts on migration will be organized in Brussels, Belgium, in March 2008 to discuss the substance of the summit in Peru.

In December 2006, the Commission produced a working paper providing an overview of the implementation of the Global Approach in Africa and the Eastern and South-Eastern regions neighbouring the EU (European Commission, 2007).

## B. THEMATIC PERSPECTIVE

Speaking from a thematic point of view, the European Commission has started the implementation of its policy plan on legal migration, putting forward realistic proposals for a common policy in this field, covering rules on the admission of certain categories of immigrants, accompanying measures such as information and integration programmes and plans to facilitate circular migration and to create vocational and language training in countries of origin.

On 23 October 2007, the Commission put forward the first two legislative proposals: a directive on the basic socio-economic rights of all third-country workers and a directive on the admission of highly qualified immigrants. Proposals for directives on seasonal workers, remunerated trainees and intra-corporate transferees will follow in 2008.

The aim of the proposal for a directive on the admission of highly skilled migrants is to create a European-level playing field. Given that labour market needs differ, the common system will combine both a degree of harmonization and flexibility by:

1. Establishing a fast-track procedure for the admission of highly qualified third-country workers based on common criteria and labour market demands.

2. Issuing workers admitted under this scheme an “EU Blue Card”, a special residence and work permit.
3. Entitling workers to favourable residence conditions, including family reunification and the rights to move to another EU Member State to work under certain conditions after two or three years of legal residence in the EU.

The second proposal, a general framework directive on the basic socio-economic rights of all third-country workers, will simplify procedures for the admission of third-country workers by issuing a combined residence and work permit and by granting a common set of socio-economic rights to all third-country workers already admitted and legally working in a Member State.

In addition to these legislative steps, the Commission put forward two new policy concepts, namely mobility partnerships and circular migration. These concepts were developed in order to organize the various forms of legal movement between the EU and third countries and to structure ways and means to facilitate temporary migration.

The basic idea of “mobility partnerships” is that progress in the area of international migration can be made by putting together specific “packages” that include items of relevance for both the EU and interested third countries. EU offers could include short-stay visa facilitation, facilitated access to the labour markets of Member States willing to participate in the scheme and circular migration schemes, as well as the provision of capacity-building. In return, partner countries could pledge cooperation on fighting irregular migration, on return and on readmission. The concept of “mobility partnerships” will be tested on a pilot basis with a limited number of third countries in 2008.

Circular migration is the second concept. In-depth discussions are presently under way with Member States and other stakeholders in order to discuss concrete solutions for ensuring the smooth management of circular migration schemes, their relevance to the labour market needs in the EU or other policy objectives, and their contribution to the development of migrants’ countries of origin. Following the first Global Forum on Migration and Development held in Brussels in July 2007, the Commission is leading—together with the Republic of Mauritius—a discussion on circular migration and is encouraging EU Member States to engage in pilot circular migration schemes with partner countries to test the feasibility of the concept.

The facilitation of legal migration includes action to better match supply and demand, which is one of the aims of the project the European Commission is developing with the Government of Mali to establish a Migration Information and Management Centre. The Centre, which should be operational in the first half of 2008, will provide concrete information to potential migrants on legal migration opportunities within Africa and between Africa and Europe, as well as on the risks of irregular migration. The Centre will also provide pre-departure training and assistance to migrants who want to return to their home countries. A similar initiative had already been launched by the European Commission in Morocco, with the Agence Nationale de Promotion de l’Emploi et des Compétences (ANAPEC), in 2005, which has produced very positive results. Moreover, the Commission is currently examining whether a similar centre could be established in Senegal.

In addition to the opportunities for well-managed legal migration mentioned above, the European Commission is developing a number of other initiatives aiming at making migration work for development. For instance, the European Commission is promoting the development of “Migration profiles”, designed as a tool to help pool all the information required to develop policy in the field of migration and development and to monitor the impact of the policies implemented. Such profiles now exist for almost all ACP countries and will be attached to country strategy papers. These profiles should

be seen as “living” documents which should be regularly updated and further developed and enriched as a basis for more precise programming and evaluation in the migration area, in particular with a view to monitoring labour and skills gaps and surpluses in developing countries.

Another example is setting up networks of regional observatories on migration. Such a network has already been put in place in the Mediterranean area, which promotes the collection, processing and dissemination of information on migration movements. Efforts are now deployed to proceed similarly in sub-Saharan Africa, so that a basis can be built for evidence based migration policies in Africa. The first observatories in sub-Saharan Africa are expected to be operational by mid-2008.

One important area of current and future work is the promotion of the transfer of skills and remittances from expatriate communities. While remittances are private resources, much can be done to reform the banking and financial sector, promote innovative solutions for transferring money (e.g. mobile phones), and to promote new investment schemes in countries of origin.

Similarly, the negative effects of migration on developing countries, such as the emigration of highly skilled professionals should be reduced. The Commission has been very active in the area of human resources for health and is currently developing a Programme for Action. A questionnaire was sent to Member States to review the implementation of this commitment. Based on the answers received to the questionnaire and a review of best practices, a code of conduct for ethical recruitment of health workers is being developed.

In order to coordinate the implementation of these activities, cooperation platforms on migration will be developed, bringing together migration and development stakeholders in a given country or region, including representatives of the host country, EU Member States, the European Commission and international organizations such as the World Bank, United Nations agencies, the International Organization for Migration and the International Labour Organization. Ethiopia and Senegal are likely to be the first test-cases for the launching of such platforms.

In 2008, the European Commission will collaborate with UNDP on a 15 million euros initiative on migration and development, aiming at connecting local actors in countries of origin, transit and destination to create joint migration and development projects.

The European Commission is of the opinion that an effective migration policy cannot be limited to instruments for the admission and integration of international migrants or to migration and development. In order to combat unauthorized migration more effectively and with greater resolve, the European Commission is promoting various initiatives aimed at increasing operational cooperation among EU Member States and between EU Member States and third countries. EU Member States have launched joint operations in the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean and the Baltic Sea under the coordination of the FRONTEX agency<sup>1</sup>. One example is the joint operation Hera in the Canary Islands and along the West African coast that has proved effective in curbing undocumented migration and preventing humanitarian tragedies. The first results of this enhanced cooperation between Member States, FRONTEX and third countries, including some countries in Western Africa, were reflected in the decrease in the number of irregular migrants that reached the southern shores of the EU in 2007. Other recent measures to increase operational cooperation between Member States, under the aegis of FRONTEX, include the establishment of border intervention teams, which will allow for the rapid deployment of experts from Member States in urgent situations, a centralized register of technical equipment that Member States agree to put at the disposal of other Member States and the launching of a European Patrol Network for coordination of border patrolling schedules between neighbouring Member States.

The Commission is also seeking to address the pull factors of irregular migration. The recent Commission proposal for a directive to harmonize national rules on sanctions against the employers of irregular immigrants should be seen in this light.

However, migration pressure, especially from Africa and Asia, is expected to remain high. Increased involvement of third countries in efforts to control irregular immigration to the EU is vital.

As regards financial and technical assistance to third countries, the Commission not only intervenes in the areas of migration and asylum on the basis of its geographic instruments, but it has also put in place a thematic programme for cooperation with third countries in the areas of migration and asylum in 2007. This programme has been endowed with an overall budget of 384 million euros for the period 2007-2013. Its general objective is to support third countries in ensuring better management of migratory flows in all their dimensions. Thematically speaking, it covers all the essential facets of the migratory phenomenon, including migration and development, labour migration, undocumented immigration and human trafficking, migrant's rights, asylum and international protection. Geographically speaking, all developing third countries are eligible. The subject of the thematic programme is primarily, although not exclusively, migration to the European Union. In this connection, the regions of emigration and transit towards the European Union are considered in the first place. The thematic programme is particularly adapted to capacity-building and to encourage cooperation initiatives in which partners of countries of origin, transit and destination will develop and share experience and practices on the various aspects of migration.

#### C. EU LABOUR FORCE SURVEY – 2008 AD HOC MODULE ON THE LABOUR MARKET SITUATION OF MIGRANTS AND THEIR IMMEDIATE DESCENDANTS

The European Labour Force Survey (LFS) has two aims:

- To provide comparable statistics on the level and trend of employment and unemployment in the EU Member States and regions according to ILO concepts, and
- To describe the structure of labour participation at the level of individuals and households taking into account individual characteristics, job characteristics and household characteristics.

The LFS provides quarterly and annual results on the basis of a fixed list of core variables.

EU Member States are obliged under European law to undertake the survey based on a standard set of questions and topics, complying with harmonized quality standards and methodologies. The data collected are used widely at the national level, and are also supplied to Eurostat.

Additional variables may be added to the LFS as ad hoc modules to give more detailed information about the employment situation and to respond to new user demands and policy interests. In 2008, an ad hoc module will be added on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants.

The particular aims of the 2008 ad hoc migration module are:

- To provide a comprehensive assessment of the population of migrants and their immediate descendants.
- To provide comparable data on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants to allow for comparison of labour market outcomes with other groups, and on the integration and adaptation of migrants to the labour market.

- To analyse the factors affecting migrant integration in and adaptation to the labour market.

Information will be collected on each respondent concerning the main social, economic and demographic variables in the main LFS survey. This will be combined with the following additional questions from the migration module:

- Acquisition of citizenship, including year of acquisition.
- Country of birth of father.
- Country of birth of mother.
- Total number of years of residence in the host country.
- Main reason for migration (last migration).
- Duration of the current residence permit/visa/certificate.
- Restrictions to legal access to the labour market.
- The establishment of migrant qualifications in relation to the host country system.
- The role of language skills in obtaining employment, which is commensurate with the migrant qualifications and skills set.
- Assistance received in the host country in finding employment or setting up a business.
- Use of services for labour market integration in the two years following the migrant's arrival.

For reasons of reliability and data quality, some of the variables are optional for Member States with a small sample size for migrants.

An amendment to the core LFS variables is also planned in order to increase the relevance of the analysis of the labour market situation of migrants by obtaining more detailed information on the year of arrival in the host country.

The data will help promote policy initiatives for more effective management of migration in EU Member States. The results will provide necessary information for policymaking and to monitor progress towards the common objectives of the European Community's Employment Strategy. The employment guidelines (2005-2008) adopted by the Council of the EU in July 2005 state that particular attention should be paid to significantly reducing the employment gaps for people at a disadvantage as well as between non-EU and EU citizens. The strategy explicitly states that combating discrimination and integrating immigrants and minorities are essential.

The deadline for data transmission to Eurostat resulting from the LFS is March 2009. Provisional data after validation by Member States will likely be available in the second half of 2009.

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NOTE

<sup>1</sup> See: <http://www.frontex.europa.eu>.

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REFERENCE

European Commission (2007). Interim progress report on the Global Approach to Migration. *Commission Staff Working Document*, SEC (2007) 1632. Brussels: The European Commission.