



In the framework of a joint project on labour migration governance in Europe called LAB-MIG-GOV*, the EPC, in cooperation with FIERI, is committed to setting up a task force with EPC members and relevant stakeholders in order to exchange views on the way the EU should design - or not - a labour migration policy.

DRAFT BACKGROUND NOTE WORKSHOP 3

“DEVELOPING EXTERNAL RELATIONS”

Objective/Background – Workshop 3

Achieving coherence internally is of crucial importance for how the EU is seen to the outside world, both by partner countries, and potential migrants. However, there is also a need to address what the EU is specifically doing in the external dimension of migration policy.

For the time being, the EU and Member States have shown little progress in this field. This is due, on the one hand, to a problem of EU competences in dealing with legal migration questions with third countries. Although the EU has no clear competences, or has not exercised its competences internally, it is not allowed to exercise them in the external field. On the other hand, an over emphasis has been put on irregular migration issues since the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty. In this context, progress achieved thus far in the external dimension has mainly concerned the conclusion of readmission agreements. Regarding legal migration issues, they have been partially addressed in visa facilitation agreements and non-legally binding mobility partnerships. In other words, this patchwork of policy fails to provide for a holistic approach that includes admission policies and strategies.

In this context, the workshop aims at clarifying the framework within which this policy is taking place, the tools already existing and their efficiency and, finally, the ways forward for the development of the EU's external relations regarding labour migration.

* The full title of the project, which has been launched at the beginning of 2011, is “Which labour migration governance for a more dynamic and inclusive Europe?” LAB-MIG-GOV is coordinated by the Turin-based research institute FIERI (www.fieri.it) and it benefits from the support of the “Europe and Global Challenges” Programme promoted by Compagnia di San Paolo, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and VolkswagenStiftung.

Framework

Regarding external action in the field of labour migration governance, it is useful to base discussions on the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility. This approach addresses, among other themes, questions related to labour migration. More precisely, it states:

“Migration and mobility in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy aim to contribute to the vitality and competitiveness of the EU. Securing an adaptable workforce with the necessary skills which can cope successfully with the evolving demographic and economic changes is a strategic priority for Europe. There is also an urgent need to improve the effectiveness of policies aiming at integration of migrants into the labour market. Policies in place need to be reviewed and strengthened as the Union faces pressing labour market challenges, particularly shortfalls in skill levels and serious labour mismatches. Labour market strategies for meeting needs and promoting the integration of legal migrants should be discussed with the Member States and reflected in the dialogue with partner countries where there could be mutual interests. There must also be a dialogue with the private sector and employers to explore why some vacancies are difficult to fill and the potential for a more demand-driven legal immigration policy”.

The GAMM makes clear that shortages in the EU labour market should be addressed adequately and within a dialogue with partners. It also makes clear that there is an “urgent need to improve effectiveness of policies aiming at the integration of migrants into the labour market”.

Discussion

However, taking into account problems of competences, progress achieved so far and the external action tools at disposal, the key question is whether the European Union is “well-equipped” or able to face current and forthcoming challenges regarding labour migration? In order to answer this question, several issues need to be addressed.

The first one relates to the never-ending issue of distribution of competences between the EU and its Member States. The EU’s competences in the external dimension are rather limited. As a matter of fact, Member States have concluded (and continue to negotiate) numerous bilateral agreements with third countries, some of which deal with labour migration issues. With this situation in mind, an evaluation of some bilateral agreements will be addressed. The analysis and discussions would also seek to highlight to what extent bilateral agreements are of help, or hindrance, to broader cooperation at EU level.

The second question to address deals with the existing tools and their efficiency in helping to enhance integration of migrants into the EU labour market. Two main instruments have been developed at EU level which may have an effect on labour migration. The first one is Visa Facilitation Agreements. They are adopted in order to make the movement of people, and in particular business people, easier. Issued on a temporary basis, these visas have a huge impact on the mobility of businessmen and women. As they assist movements from countries of origin to the EU and vice versa, they can be considered as a first step in the field of mobility and enhanced economic integration and act as an experience that can be further developed. The second instrument is that of mobility partnerships. Established recently, mobility partnerships are considered a valuable framework in which migrants labour mobility can be enhanced. While the workshop will discuss in greater details the case of the EU-Moldova mobility partnership, it will also try to define whether

such an instrument is appropriate for reaching the goals set up by the GAMM. Finally, the issue of the possibility for third country national students to stay in the receiving state after their studies, and its impact on the relations with sending countries, could also be addressed during the discussions.

As a third and final issue, the workshop will identify forward-looking issues, one of which would be how the EU, and its Member States, plan for future needs and the mechanisms employed to address these needs in terms of facilitating migration from outside the EU. What role should be undertaken by employers and/or employment services in this field? Are migration profiles of third countries, which are established progressively, of help in planning further ways to address needs? Finally, how will the EU evaluate skills needs, and should such an evaluation include the external dimension and contribute to properly addressing forthcoming needs and challenges? This session of the workshop will also try to identify the involvement and added value of the newly created European External Action Service in the identification of skills in countries of origin and in providing appropriate information. Discussions may also touch upon the question related to the geographical approach in order to see whether it should primarily address neighbouring countries or be larger in scope.



Programme

9.00-9.15 Words of welcome

9.15-11.15 - Morning session #1

9.15-09.45 Topic 1: Questions of competences and interactions (7-8 minutes each)

External EU and/or national competences with regard to labour migration
Yves Pascouau, Senior Policy Analyst, European Policy Centre

Bilateral agreements concluded by a sample of Member States with third countries:
help or hindrance?
Paula Garcia Andrade, Comillas University, Madrid

Comments
Janusz Gąciarz, Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU (tbc)

09.45-10.15 Open discussion

10.15-10.45 Topic 2: Evaluating existing tools (7-8 minutes each)

Visa facilitation Agreements and their impact on business mobility
European Commission, DG HOME (tbc)

Mobility Partnerships: the EU-Moldova example
Ecaterina Buracec, Former Chief of the Migration Politics Unit, Ministry of Labour,
Social protection and family of the Republic of Moldova

Comments
Sophie Dernelid, Swedish Permanent Representation to the EU (tbc)

10.45-11.15 Open discussion

11.15-11.45 Coffee break

11.45-13.00 - Morning session #2

11.45-12.15 Topic 3: Planning labour migration mobility and needs (7-8 minutes each)

What role for companies and/or employers services or representatives?
Robert Plummer, BUSINESSEUROPE (tbc)

Migration Profiles: how can they be used for meeting labour market needs?
Olivier Grosjean, IOM

Comments
Jean-Louis De Brouwer, DG EMPL, European Commission

12.15-12.45 *Open discussion*

12.45-13.00 ***Closing remarks***

13.00 Sandwich Lunch