



Preliminary Conclusions of the Thematic
Session on Highly-Skilled Migration
(HSM) into, through and from Southern and
Eastern Mediterranean (SEM)
and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)
29 November-1 December 2009

CARIM Coordination Team

**CARIM Analytic and Synthetic Notes
2010/01**

Highly-Skilled Migration Series



CARIM
Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration

Analytic and Synthetic Notes – Highly-Skilled Migration Series
CARIM-AS 2010/01

**Preliminary Conclusions of the Thematic Session on Highly-Skilled
Migration (HSM) into, through and from Southern and
Eastern Mediterranean (SEM) and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)***
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This publication is part of a series of papers on Highly-Skilled Migration written in the framework of the CARIM project and presented at a meeting organised in Florence: 'Highly-Skilled Migration into, through and from Southern and Eastern Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Africa' (30 November – 1 December 2009).

These papers will be discussed in two other meetings between Policy Makers and Experts on the same topic in early spring 2010. The results of these discussions will also be published.

The entire set of papers on Highly-Skilled Migration are available at <http://www.carim.org/HighlySkilledMigration>.

* The following CARIM countries were tackled: Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Palestine, Senegal, Sudan, Syria, and Tunisia. All were studied as origin, transit and destination countries

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CARIM

The Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM) was created at the European University Institute (EUI, Florence), in February 2004 and co-financed by the European Commission, DG AidCo, currently under the Thematic programme for the cooperation with third countries in the areas of migration and asylum.

Within this framework, CARIM aims, in an academic perspective, to observe, analyse, and forecast migration in Southern & Eastern Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Countries (hereafter Region).

CARIM is composed of a coordinating unit established at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS) of the European University Institute (EUI, Florence), and a network of scientific correspondents based in the 17 countries observed by CARIM: Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Palestine, Senegal, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey.

All are studied as origin, transit and immigration countries. External experts from the European Union and countries of the Region also contribute to CARIM activities.

CARIM carries out the following activities:

- Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan migration database;
- Research and publications;
- Meetings of academics and between experts and policy makers;
- Migration Summer School;
- Outreach.

The activities of CARIM cover three aspects of international migration in the Region: economic and demographic, legal, and socio-political.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: www.carim.org

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Introduction

Migration of tertiary-educated persons is common in the region but varies greatly from country to country in intensity, in causes and consequences and in relative and absolute terms.

Indeed, Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEM) and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries differ regarding:

- **Phases in the development of human capital and the educational system:** countries in an advanced phase experience an inevitable pattern of highly-skilled migration (HSM) and have thereby to deal with the effects of brain drain; at the other end of the spectrum, countries that are still in an initial phase have not yet invested much in higher education and must spend on it whatever the level of HSM; the intermediate group is facing a trade-off between investing in higher education and losing HSM;
- **Legal frameworks applying to highly-skilled migrants:** As countries of origin, SEM and SSA countries have neither legal obstructions nor incentives regarding the departure of highly-skilled migrants. A number of North-South bilateral agreements do though encourage the migration of skilled persons through scholarships, and in receiving countries legal incentives have been adopted to attract highly-skilled migrants (e.g. the Green Card in United States and the Blue Card in the European Union);
- **Political context:** while insufficient governance may be found across the region, the political situation varies from peace to open conflict, which affects the decision to migrate.

With a view to spurring further research and adequate policy responses on the issue, the following preliminary observations and conclusions were reached:

General conclusions

A. As demographic, economic and political trends indicate that cross-border flows will most probably increase, international, **regional and national policy-making challenges** with regard to HSM lie in:

- Devising policies that are circulation friendly for highly-skilled migrants;
- Reflecting on how the adoption of circular migration schemes can create a favourable context for highly-skilled migration;
- Establishing national *brain drain balance sheets* assessing whether there is brain drain or not, and in this case evaluating HSM advantages and disadvantages;
- Developing – on contextually-based grounds – sustainable strategies that create incentives for highly-skilled migrants in the Diasporas to:
 1. Engage in the development of the source country;
 2. Promote human-capital formation in countries losing skills;
 3. Repay the loss of human capital through compensation options;
- Looking at migration equity or better the sharing of costs between source and receiving countries;
- Ensuring the equality of treatment and non-discrimination of migrants (especially important in light of the current economic crisis).

B. Policy-making in the SEM and SSA contexts should put emphasis on:

- Including more stakeholders in the policy debate on HSM and more specifically:
 1. Social actors, private groups as well as multinational organisations so as to take into account corporatist conflicts;

2. International organisations, civil-society actors, transnational and migrant associations so as to provide a counterweight to state-led discourses;
 3. Diasporas' professional networks (such as medical doctors' syndicates across the Mediterranean and in Europe);
 4. Regional institutions (e.g. the Arab league, the General Secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union...)
- Inquiring into why certain national-policy agendas succeed and why others fail in steering or managing HSM;
 - Developing country-specific HSM public policies for the SEM and SSA that reflect national particularities and enable tailor-made solutions;
 - Focusing on collecting best practices from successful albeit limited scale programs (e.g. TOKTEN);
 - Dealing with bad governance in source countries that spurs HS emigration.
- C.** In view of **addressing the lack of factual knowledge** on HSM in SEM and SSA countries and its impact on social transformation, there is the need to:
- Spur the production and/or harmonisation of statistical data on the extent and effects of HSM with a view to converting research findings into policy-making;
 - Strengthen the exchange of statistical information between source and host countries;
 - Conduct inter-disciplinary research on financial as well as on social remittances;
 - Encourage comparative research on HSM success stories (e.g. Indian and Chinese Diasporas) that policy-making in the SEM and SSA regions can draw upon;
 - Revisit systems of thought and policy-making on HSM by:
 1. Giving more value to regional and local particularities both in research and policy-making;
 2. Creating networks of specialists in source countries;
 3. Reassessing the respective roles of governmental and non-governmental actors.
- D.** In order to strengthen the link between **education and policy**, priority actions should revolve around:
- Reinforcing the quality of national universities;
 - Expanding mutual diploma recognition;
 - Designing educational strategies that take into consideration local and international labour-market requirements;
 - Devising appropriate avenues to attract highly-skilled students back to the homeland;
 - Finding out why in certain cases highly-educated expatriates return and why in other cases they do not.
- E.** With a view to improving the efficacy of international, regional and national **legal frameworks**, SEM and SSA countries, should – as *countries of origin of HSM* – consolidate incentives which have already been adopted to **encourage the return of highly-skilled migrants** by:
- Designing with European host countries legal obligations that prompt foreign students to return after their studies, in order to favour the re-transfer and return of skills acquired during immigration;
 - Linking scholarships – and thus investments – provided by the source country to a return obligation and/or the commitment to work for the national public or private sector ;

- Defining in cooperation between source and host countries of HSM needed competences and return arrangements as already provided for by some bilateral agreements (e.g. the French-Tunisian or French-Senegalese “accords de gestion concertée”);
- Providing tax exemption and financial facilities for returning highly-skilled emigrates.