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*Towards a pro-active European labour migration policy concrete measures for a comprehensive package**

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contribution of Peter Bosch¹*

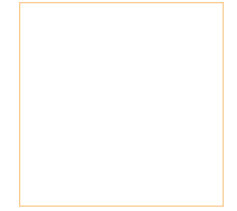
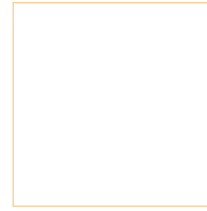
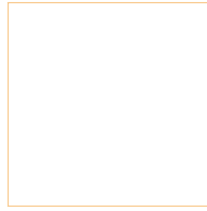
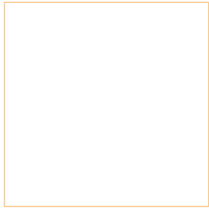
**This policy brief was written up following a brainstorming session at
the Migration Policy Centre*

Abstract

Today, Europe is confronted with a remarkable paradox on its labour market. While many are out of work, there is also a serious need for labour. In addressing labour needs, the first priority for the EU and the Member States will be to reinforce policies directed at getting unemployment down. But given demographic characteristics and labour market realities, attracting skills and talents from outside the EU needs, at all costs, to be part of the policy response. This paper aims to identify a number of concrete measures that could be considered when constructing a pro-active European labour migration policy. The ideas and suggestions presented also aim to contribute to the implementation of the Commission's work programme 2015 and to the new agenda for migration which the European Commission is to present shortly.

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POLICY
BRIEF



Introduction

'To remain an attractive destination for talents and skills, Europe must develop strategies to maximise the opportunities of legal migration through coherent and efficient rules, and informed by a dialogue with the business community and social partners'. The June 2014 European Council leaves no doubt about the importance of migration for the future of Europe. President Juncker shares this view when he identifies *Developing a new European policy on regular migration to help to address skills shortages and attract the talent Europe needs* as the first priority for the newly appointed Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs.

At first sight such a clear political positioning might seem odd. In a European Union where unemployment, especially among youth, is still exceptionally high, advocating a policy that encourages inward migration is certainly not among the subjects that politicians would usually care to embrace.

Still, the position expressed can be better understood when looking at the European demographic, economic and labour market realities. Today, Europe is confronted with a remarkable paradox on its labour market. While many are out of work, there is also a serious need for labour. Many jobs remain unfilled, causing serious damage to the European economy and hurting its international competitiveness. In a response, employers are increasingly looking outside their national borders to find the manpower they need.

In addressing labour needs, the first priority for the EU and the Member States will be to reinforce policies directed at getting unemployment down. This was the main objective of the Employment Package of the European Commission launched in April 2012.

But given demographic characteristics and labour market realities, attracting skills and talents from outside the EU needs, at all costs, to be part of the policy response.

The facts are obvious. The labour market is expected to lose about 30 million people in the next 20 years; the old-age dependency ratio will change dramatically from 1 to 4 to 1 to 2, meaning that our social systems will be under severe pressure.

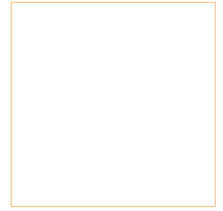
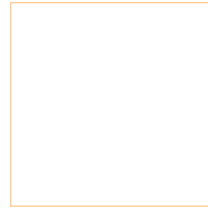
Although it is impossible to predict in great detail the exact demand for skills, it is expected that demands will not be limited to higher skills levels. There will also be a critical need for people ready to perform mid and low skilled labour in the EU.

While confronted with serious unemployment, the EU is receiving a large number of people for non-labour purposes. An average of 1.7 million people annually come to the EU on the basis of family reunification (41%), education (28%), or for other reasons including to seek international protection (31%). Many of these people will however want to access the labour market at some point.

With the non-working population in Europe increasing rapidly at a time when the active population is expected to decrease with a speed never seen before in European history - except for the Black Death in the XIVth century and for the World Wars - these two opposite developments put a serious burden on sustainability of European prosperity.

Ensuring a strong and energetic labour force, which can compete in an increasingly global economic environment goes way beyond being just a labour market issue. Not succeeding will have serious consequences for the European social model and Europe's position in the world. Failure to attract the rights skills and talents will make the European model unsustainable and will have serious consequences for our standards of living.

While the case for more pro-active labour migration might be made from an economic point of view, its implementation is less evident. The perception of 'migration' by large parts of the European population is downright negative and most politicians duck the issue. Others, instead, stir up emotions in a way that is sometimes xenophobic, creating a toxic environment that makes public perception hostile towards a more open policy.



Ways need to be found to overcome short-termism that too often dictates politics and policies. Political leaders need to demonstrate leadership and address this situation in a frank and honest manner. One has to make citizens understand that a pro-active labour migration policy is needed and that it is in their interest.

This paper aims to identify a number of concrete measures that could be considered when constructing a pro-active European labour migration policy. The paper will argue:

- That there is a need to better understand current and future needs;
- That there is a serious need to make much better use of existing human resources and
- That there is a case for innovative measures to ensure the right skills and talents in sectors where existing human resources will not be sufficient.

In a final paragraph, the paper will also deal with the politics of migration and public perception. The ideas and suggestions presented also aim to contribute to the implementation of the Commission's work programme 2015 which calls for a "new boost for jobs, growth and investment" and for a New Policy on Migration to attract talent and skills, to fight irregular migration and to offer protection to people in need. Some of the measures might be feasible only in the long term, but might, in any case, give food for thought.

1. Know your needs: identifying the EU's present and future labour needs

Already, today, there are sectors in the EU where serious labour shortages are felt (science, technology, engineering and mathematics, but also agriculture, construction and health), coexisting with surpluses in other sectors. Despite several attempts, there is still insufficient understanding about the real labour market needs. Therefore an effort needs to be made to make a detailed analysis of the current and future European labour markets. Such an analysis has different components and must contain a labour market forecast and an international migration forecast.

1.1 Knowing present and future labour surpluses and shortages

How many jobs are currently unfilled in the EU? What are the expected labour market impacts of developments in education, training and life-long learning? How many jobs will be affected by changes at retirement age? These and related questions need to be answered as part of an analysis that must have a high degree of detail and needs to be done per member state, per labour sector and per occupation. Knowing current needs is essential for any labour migration policy.

Besides better understanding the current needs, we need to invest, in a serious manner, in labour market forecasting. This will allow us to identify the segments where labour needs are expected and will also provide insight into the dimensions of labour needs. It will help, too, to identify segments that will be crucial for boosting economic development. We should make an effort to provide the best estimates of labour surpluses, shortages and needs to be addressed in the next 5, 10 and 20 years. For a number of sectors such forecasting is difficult; for others this is less difficult. Establishing the best parameters on which different scenarios can be built will help to create a better understanding of current and future needs and permits to adjust our policies.



1.2 Taking European Labour Market Forecasting to a higher level

A pro-active immigration policy targeting those specific skills that will be needed on EU labour markets must be substantiated by robust labour force projections. Despite earlier attempts, the EU still lacks a serious labour market forecasting system that recognizes migration as a factor. Labour market projections need to provide information on: 1) future supply by occupation at member state level in the no-migration scenario; 2) future demand for the same categories; 3) Labour force movements that will be necessary to address imbalances between supply and demand. Labour force movements include several forms: mobility from occupations with a surplus for those with a shortage; intra-occupation, intra-EU mobility of labour; international migration (positive or negative) to respond to needs that cannot be addressed by intra-EU mobility.

This new approach will overcome the main drawbacks of previous modelling approaches. The CEDEFOP model by forecasting the demand for labour in all EU countries and the supply provides a preliminary measure of the discrepancies between supply and demand. The model is to forecast the demand of goods which is already a very difficult task and the demand for labour is derived from it. No different institutional labour market functioning nor innovations in the production system are taken into account. No distinction between natives and foreign nationals is made, which makes this approach difficult to use as a benchmark.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics provides projections of labour supply and demand and employment by industry and occupation. Labour supply is based on projections of the resident population by the U.S. Census Bureau which include assumptions on future migration. Migration is built into the projections, not calculated as a result of projections that would show discrepancies between supply and demand.

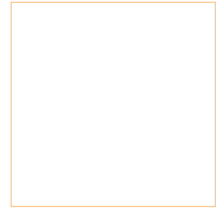
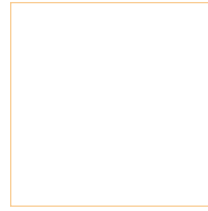
Therefore, these projections are not a useful tool to address the specific issue of what migration, positive or negative, would be necessary to respond to future labour market needs.

1.3 Extending projections to potential sources of future labour migration

In order to assess in an operational way the quantity and quality of international migration that will be necessary to address unmet labour needs on EU markets, labour forecasting will need to cover labour supply from selected third countries and match them with demand in the EU. Data needed for applying this methodology will be obtained from national statistical offices, drawing on the experience of the UN (Population Division), ILO, the OECD (SOPEMI), CEDEFOP and other institutions, merging labour force datasets at multi-country level.

Migration forecasts will consider the kind of migration (e.g. temporary vs. long-term) and labour mobility. When looking at labour migration, the traditional view is that one is looking for a person who would fill their job and will remain in the country for a certain period if not for the rest of his/her life. But market and recruitment realities are changing rapidly. Many jobs are filled on the basis of short-term contracting by mobile people. Increasingly third-country nationals move to a job in a different country for a brief period of time without the intention to stay. Attention needs to be paid to the legal status and the rights of people working on short-term contracts. Currently they have hardly any incentive to register as they would have to pay pension and social contributions, which are not transferable to their country of origin upon return.

What are today's labour market realities, how are workers contracted and what do these realities imply for our thinking about future labour migration and policies aimed at filling jobs? The EU will need to do a better job in understanding these realities.



1.4. Creating sectorial labour market Councils

The European efforts to attract skills and talents need to be steered by the short and medium term labour needs in the various sectors of our economy. Such markets, however, change rapidly and so do ways of recruitment. The Commission should create separate platforms with different sectors of the economy to get a firsthand understanding of the labour needs. A first such sectorial platform, that is to be chaired by the President of the Commission, should be for the Technology sector. This idea is inspired by the US Technology CEO Council that meets from time to time under the chairmanship of the President of the US. In this way, politics is directly connected to the labour market realities of vital parts of the European economy and allows adjustments to be made in a timely manner.

II. Making best use of already present migrants' human resources

Labour markets are presently characterised in most EU member states by high levels of unemployment (surpluses are greater than shortages). Unemployment affects both natives and migrants. In what follows we focus only on the latter and look at ways to make best use of the skills and talents of the human resources already present in the EU.

As a result of labour supply and demand mismatches, unemployment among the migrant populations compared to the 'native' population is often twice or three times as high. The EU and its Member States will need to adapt their policies to address this situation and intensify their efforts, not least by introducing new initiatives. These initiatives should aim at (2.1.) seriously improving the employment of migrant workers who are already established in the EU and (2.2.) integrating into the labour force migrants who have entered the EU for reasons other than work. Given the vital role of education, a special effort will be required in this area (2.3.).

2.1 Making sure that migrant workers already established in the EU have access to regular employment

a) *Establishing mentoring programmes for skilled migrants who have a hard time finding a job suitable to their qualifications*

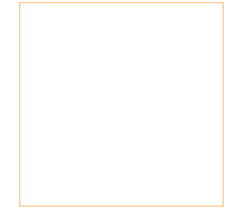
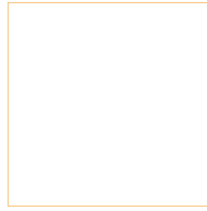
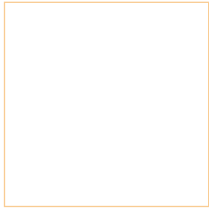
It is proposed that skilled immigrants who have already established themselves in a member state will support the recently arrived ones for instance by making their own work experience and networks available. Creating such mentorships might also be specifically targeted to the spouses of highly-skilled labour migrants. In many EU countries such spouses have the right to join their partners and to work but are often not included in any integration programme.

b) *Enhancing the offer and the effectiveness of language training*

A lack of language skills remains a serious hindrance for entering the labour market for many newly arrived migrants and people with a migrant background. The capacity to provide language training is inadequate, leaving many without the possibility of learning the language of the country in which they live. Therefore, more resources should be allocated to language courses and the training of teachers. The EU and its Member States should work towards a 'language guarantee' ensuring that all migrants are given the opportunity to learn the language of the country they live in.

c) *An 'education-guarantee' programme*

Educational systems, including vocational training programmes, need to be fundamentally adapted in order to facilitate connections with the labour market. This applies to all European youth, but especially to youth with a migrant background. Evidence shows that the cultural and languages differences and social circumstances too often frustrate entry and continuation in the existing educational systems. In addition to, or as part of the European Youth guar-



antee programme, the EU should, therefore, consider developing an tailor-made ‘education-guarantee programme’. This would ensures that every minor with a non-EU nationality arriving in the EU or with a migrant background will be connected to an educational programme that is adapted to his/her specific situation.

d) Improving the recognition and portability of qualifications

Measures addressing the assessment, certification, validation and recognition of (potential) migrants’ skills are crucial if one aims to reduce skill underutilization and brain waste. Still, efforts in this direction are limited. Building on existing programmes in some member states like Sweden, the EU should aim at promoting mechanisms (testing schemes) enabling swift and full recognition and portability of qualifications that migrants and people from a migrant background bring. To achieve this goal, deeper collaboration with the DG Employment, Social affairs and Inclusion and DG Education and Culture is necessary.

e) Regularisation of unauthorised workers

Although difficult to get trustworthy estimates, it is believed that there are between 2 and 4 million irregular migrants in the EU. The EU and its Member States have an interest in addressing this issue.

Targeted regularisations of third-country nationals working illegally can help to reduce the size of the black labour market. Such initiatives should be carefully prepared in close cooperation with social partners (employers and employees) and done in a way so as to assure that these regularisations do not attract new irregular migrants. The recent US regularisation proposals provide a useful example in this respect.

Calculating an estimate of the possible impact on tax revenues but also other, non-tangible benefits and (possible) costs in terms of the social cohesion of such an EU-wide regularisation could be useful.

In this respect, it would be important to 1. carry out a systematic analysis of the (social and economic) effect of regularisation in the EU Member States; 2. analyse the results of recent regularisation campaigns in the EU; and 3. follow and assess the results of the recent US initiatives providing irregular migrants with a legal status.

On the basis of these results the EU and its member states should engage in a serious discussion about how to reduce substantially the numbers of people living in the EU in a non-regular manner.

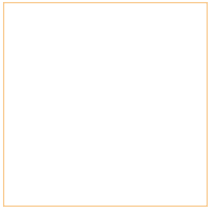
2.2 Integrating migrants entered for reasons other than work into the labour force

The EU has received a large number of people for non-labour purposes. In recent years an average of 1.7 million people come annually to the EU on the basis of family reunification (41%), education (28 %), or for other reasons including to seek international protection (31%). Many of these people will, however, want to be part of the labour market at some point. Specific measures targeting these groups are required.

a) Employing persons entered the EU on the basis of family reunification

Family members that come to the EU to be reunited with their relatives can make an important contribution to the EU’s labour market. With family reunification constituting the main flow of people entering the EU legally, this contribution cannot be underestimated.

The EU should more strongly recognize the importance of family migrants as (potential) economic actors in the labour market. Knowing the skills and qualifications of family members that are coming to the EU in an early stage might help to better connect to schooling and/or education opportunities or an early connection to the labour market.



These elements might be part of a welcoming and integration process in the country of destination.

b) Employing asylum seekers and refugees

In recent years the number of people applying for asylum in the EU has increased, reaching approximately half a million in 2014. As part of the Common European Asylum System, member states have agreed that applicants will have access to the labour market no later than 9 months from the date when the application was lodged. Today, there is no one who has an understanding of what the recognized asylum seekers could mean for the European labour market. Therefore, a special effort must be undertaken to screen the capacities of all recognized asylum seekers in an early stage to make them contribute to the European economy and promote their rapid integration.

c) Intensify the integration policies

Migrants coming to the EU for work will do so on a temporary or permanent basis. However, most migrants will be EU citizen at some point. It is, therefore, important that integration policies start at an early stage. Evidence shows that integration policies that are implemented at local level can be useful but that pre-departure efforts can make a positive contribution. Pre-departure integration efforts, for instance by informing migrants about the rules, culture and customs of the society of destination and procedures for finding a job should be intensified.

2.3 Measures targeting education

For the last 15 years the EU has been the most attractive area in the world for internationally mobile students (UNESCO data, NB: data available for the period 1999-2012) and its attractiveness has even increased recently. From 2007 to 2011, the net flow of internationally mobile students stood at 4.59 million for the EU, 3.68 for the US, 0.43 for Russia

and 0.28 million for Canada. The same values stood at 3.30, 3.09, 0.23 and 0.12 for 2001-2006.

However, there are two issues which mean that the EU does not profit extensively from this investment :

A) these students are not always the best and the brightest because of selection mechanisms;

B) most of them leave the EU, once graduated.

EU policies should be adjusted to address these two issues. The following measures could be considered:

a) Increase the attractiveness of top-level European Universities for research, development and training in areas where there is a skills need (European MITs and CALTECH's; European Academic Chairs)

The best and brightest students in third countries interested in studying abroad do not see Europe as their first choice as opportunities are (considered to be) more favourable in the US, Canada and in other countries. In order to be more competitive on the market for the best and the brightest, the EU should increase the attractiveness of European top-universities, especially those sectors where labour shortages are expected and that will greatly contribute to economic development and international competitiveness. The EU should seriously beef up its support for top universities and research centers.

Considerations should be given to creating European Academic Chairs in those areas of science and research to attract the best of the best. Such chairs should be in real competition with the American equivalents. This will not only attract the highly-talented people the EU badly needs, but will also help to boost scientific development.

b) Education and work force interfaces

In order to better connect education programmes and labour needs, European universities - especially those in the professions where there is a serious need for people - should organise qualification testing



departments. These testing departments would be organized by universities in close cooperation with the business sector. All foreign students should receive an invitation to have their qualifications tested at the start of their final year of their studies in the EU. Those who meet the test should get information about job opportunities in the EU (see also under d. and g.).

c) An EU Apprenticeships programme

The EU should develop an Erasmus Mundus'-like programme but for VET graduates.

The 6 to 12 months apprenticeships would serve:

- to find out whether the beneficiaries can find a job in the EU labour market and
- to select the best and the brightest and to attract talent to Europe.

d) Retain foreign students after education

The EU has many programmes attracting students and researchers. Most of the time, these students and researchers return to their country of origin or to countries outside the EU to start working. These are often highly-skilled people who could contribute significantly to the EU's economy. The EU and its Member States are not active enough in trying to keep those much needed skills in Europe.

How different is the practice in the US: the US government and employers work closely together to monitor universities and research programmes to identify the best and the brightest. Once spotted, these people are approached actively and are made aware of the job opportunities in the US. Special efforts are made to limit the bureaucratic procedures in order to facilitate the access of those graduates to the labour market.

The EU and its Member States should develop a skills retention initiative aimed at keeping the best and brightest students and researchers participating in national and in EU-funded programmes.

Third country nationals studying at universities in Europe should be systematically briefed about labour opportunities in the EU well before these students graduate.

e) Modify the European Training and Educational programmes to target European labour needs

European programmes like EURASMUS, ERASMUS Mundus, Leonardo, Marie Curie and the like provide opportunities to thousands of EU nationals and third-country nationals to improve their skills and talents. Consideration should be given to modifying these programmes in a way that they focus more on the (expected) labour needs in the EU.

Before ending their participation in these programmes, participants should be actively informed about the labour possibilities in EU member States.

f) Ensuring a visa is provided to foreign students in EU (financed) programmes

Too often bright students that have applied and that have been admitted to these programmes are prevented from participating because of a member state not issuing a visa. This has to stop. Those students that have been admitted to EU programmes should automatically receive a visa well before the start and for the duration of the programme.

g) Create a European top-student visa

In order to facilitate the travelling back and forth of any student from a third country that has graduated from a European University and has a European diploma in higher education should be entitled to get an EU visa with a validity of a maximum of five years.



III. Helping migration to address unmet needs

The measures in the framework of the European Employment package and the specific efforts to increase labour participation among European (former) migrant population contribute but will not be sufficient to fully meet expected labour demand. The EU and its Member States will need to take a number of pro-active measures to meet this objective. Suggestions will be proposed below.

3.1. Review admission policies, in particular the EU's visa policy

The current EU admission policies, and especially the visa policy, contain several hindrances for (potential) workers coming to the Schengen area. Procedures are costly and complicated. Bona fide workers and business people have to go through burdensome procedures time and time again and one can never be sure if a visa is issued in time or at all. Compared to our competitors in the global competition for skills, the EU's visa system is outdated. There is a serious need to facilitate the access of workers and business people. The proposals that were presented by the European Commission in 2014 contain useful elements, but should be considered just the start of a more fundamental review of the EU's visa policy.

Other parts of the world are moving much faster. In December 2014, the US and China agreed to seriously modify their bilateral visa arrangements. The two nations will grant each other's citizens business or tourist visa with a maximum validity of 10 years, while student exchange visas will remain valid for up to five years. Canada and China recently have agreed similar arrangements. The EU should not be blind to such developments and recognize that seriously modifying its visa will be important in boosting its economy and strengthening its links with other countries.

a) Longer validity of student and business visa; reciprocal agreements

The EU should consider granting visas with a longer validity than is currently the case. The EU should agree with other countries on a reciprocal basis a facilitation of legal mobility. Examples can be students' participation in exchange programmes who would get a visa with a validity of maximum 5 years; bona fide business men and women should be issued a visa with a maximum validity of 10 years. This not only will seriously increase travel from and towards the EU but will give a tremendous boost to the EU's economy. Such facilitation would be done on a reciprocal basis giving European students and business people a much better access to the partner country.

b) Create a job search visa

Since 2012 Germany has been testing a system of issuing job search visa for workers with a grade from German universities of VET institutions or qualifications recognized in Germany. This programme could be taken to the European level and extended for any qualifications grants, recognized in any Member State. If the worker finds a job, it would be up to the respective Member State to grant the work permit. The system might be modulated to grant job search visas only to professions where there are non-filled vacancies in the EU. This system could be offered in the framework of Mobility Partnerships.

The job search visa (with a validity of 12 months) should also be systematically provided to all students that have participated in an EU funded programme, in particular if these students have an education in those sectors of the labour market where there is a skills need.

c) A European Start-up visa

The EU badly needs entrepreneurial people who are ready to invest in the EU's economy. Several countries, including the US and Canada have already introduced the Start-up Visa, specially aiming at attracting foreign start-up talent. The logic is very



simple: people who are ready to start-up a company or are otherwise ready to invest a substantial amount of money (500,000 or 1 million \$) get a visa for the time that it will take to develop their initiative. Should the initiative work out, residence can be obtained.

Some EU member states are currently experimenting with this instrument. 1 January 2015, the Netherlands introduced the national start-up visa. The scheme is aimed at attracting ambitious entrepreneurs from outside the European Union. The scheme's associated residence permit entitles the applicant to be a resident of the Netherlands for one year. As a prerequisite, the start-up must be guided by an experienced mentor based in the Netherlands. This means that within that year, the start-up entrepreneur can develop a sustainable business based on an innovative product or service under the guidance of the experienced mentor.

The Commission could explore the potential of an EU start-up visa as part of its wider visa policy.

d) Create a European Express Entry System

Several States are already exploring ways to attract potential workers to their labour market and make procedures swifter. The Canadian 'Express Entry System' that started on 1 January 2015 is the most recent example. Potential candidates are requested to complete an online Express Entry Profile where they will provide information about their skills, work experience, language ability, education and other details. Those who meet the criteria of jobs on offer in the provinces will be placed in a pool of candidates. The best candidates will be moved to Canada's Job Bank which will connect him or her with eligible Canadian employers.

The candidates that seem to match best with the jobs on offer will receive an Invitation to Apply.

The Commission could launch a study to see if a European Express Entry System might work for the EU.

e) Screening the skills of those in EU Resettlement programmes

Developing a scheme to better test/evaluate skills and qualifications could also be part of an EU resettlement programme for those in need of international protection. Though skills and qualifications never should be a decisive factor, they might help to encourage certain member states to participate in such programmes.

3.2 Informing potential workers:

Initiatives should be taken to actively inform people outside the EU of labour opportunities in the Member States. Modern technology offers many new opportunities for labour matching, possibilities that should be looked at as a matter of priority.

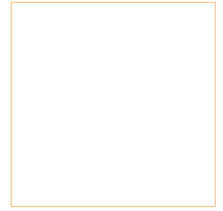
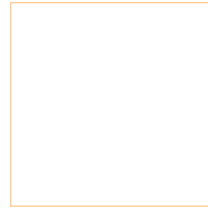
a) Create a European Job Pool

The current EURES system already provides the basic infrastructure. Its potential is enormous but it has not yet been fully exploited. EURES is a complicated system with heavy administrative procedures and requires the involvement of public employment agencies. This seriously limits its scope and effectiveness. EURES however has the potential of becoming the European Job pool within a couple of years. The EURES database should be made wider and should be accessible to Member States' and third-country employment services.

b) EU Delegations should play an important part in a pro-active labour migration policy, working at the service of the Member States and European employers.

The EU Delegations should offer the possibility to European employers of posting their job vacancies on the web site and there should be links to the national employment services of all member states, also making use of the existing Migration portal.

'EU Labour Information points' as part of the EU delegations should be explored. People interested in



working in the EU would get information about the labour opportunities in the EU and answers to their questions.

c) The creation of a ‘standard Europe Electronic-CV’ for specific jobs, which are in strong demand, is to be considered.

d) A European skills certification office

Member States and European employers would highly appreciate that the CV/ qualifications of potential workers will be verified before people actually move to Europe. Using Canadian experiences as a source of inspiration, the EU should establish skills certification offices. This office assesses whether the person who wants to apply for a job in the EU/MS matches with the requirements of specific jobs. This office is organised by the EU level and it is there to help Member States and employers. The number of people that enter Canada that do not match the job qualifications is extremely limited. For further information see this report: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/239080658/Foreign-Credentials-Report>

The European Training Foundation (ETF) has already some experience with such activity in neighbourhood countries. A part of the ETF should develop into a European Skills Verification and Validation Office that ensures that potential workers are, indeed, fit for the job. Such Offices could be tested as pilot projects in a couple of interested third countries.

e) Establishing country specific On line labour recruitment platforms

Many third countries are interested in labour opportunities for their citizens in the EU and several have already established web portals where information about labour opportunities in the EU Member States can be obtained. The EU should assist countries in establishing such portals. Online labour recruitment platforms should be designed in compliance with relevant EU standards, allowing European

employers, private and public employment agencies to make use of these.

f) Creating a Migration and Development Portal for Innovation (MDPI)

Where possible, the international mobility of highly-skilled workers should also be beneficial for the development of the countries of origin. An initiative dedicated at facilitating the accumulation of human and social capital in the origin countries through the international mobility of their citizens would enhance migration potential for development. To trigger such a virtuous circle, the EU could consider launching a portal where highly-skilled migrants can exchange ideas and experiences among themselves at international level, as well as being connected with the relevant actors in their countries of origin, thereby fostering the creative circulation of ideas.

The MDPI rationale is as follows:

- In addition to remittances, migrants send to their origin countries ideas, know-how and business connections that they have acquired in their destination countries (the so-called ideational or ‘social remittances’).
- Through the social remittances channel, migration is thought to work for innovative approaches to solve development issues.
- Origin countries should be able to tap into the intellectual resources of their willing citizens and diaspora members.

3.3 Activities in and with third countries

a) Reach out to third countries and widen the geographical scope of Mobility Partnerships

A number of third countries have specific policies in place to promote their nationals to work in third countries (e.g. Philippines, India, Morocco). The EU should engage with these countries to establish a framework that would facilitate the movement of



such workers. Facilitating recognition of skills and diploma's, transfer of social and pension rights, setting up pre-departure vocational and training programmes and insurances of the return of migrant workers could be among the subject to be addressed. As managing labour migration will requires dealing with many aspects in an overall package, the EU should consider beefing up the instrument of Mobility Partnerships. Although there certainly is room for improvements, the first generation Mobility Partnerships have demonstrated themselves to be a useful tool and there are good reasons to widen the geographical scope of these partnerships to other countries. Until now these partnerships are used in the context of the neighbourhood. Applying the instrument to countries that are important sources of skills and talents would be a logical next step that could prove to be a real stimulus for well-managed labour mobility.

b) Bilateral agreements on labour market information

Creating bilateral labour market information systems between willing EU public employment services and partner countries public employment services. These bilateral systems should be developed as stepping stones or modules of a future regional labour market information system (at EU-Maghreb or EU-Mediterranean level and at EU-Eastern Partnership level). These bilateral or regional LMISs would implement labour market matching across labour markets in the EU and target qualified as much as non-qualified workers.

c) Bilateral agreements on labour market access

These labour agreements would grant the access of non-skilled workers to the EU labour market in the framework of the Mobility Partnerships. This would be an upscaling of bilateral BLAs (which have proved to be the most effective way to protect rights of non-skilled workers and to organize circular migration). They would involve the MSs which are part of the Mobility Partnerships and would include a limited quota (collectively granted by them) of temporary work permits. Beneficiaries having had two or more

temporary work permits in the EU would have the right for a multiple entry visa to the EU (so as to facilitate current circular migration administrative procedures).

d) EU labour market information fairs

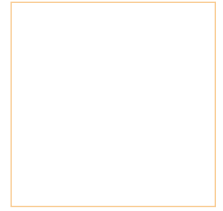
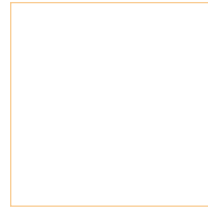
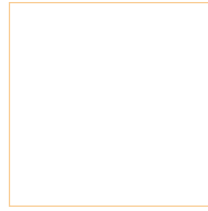
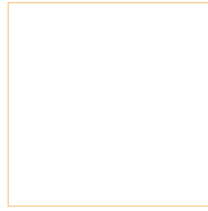
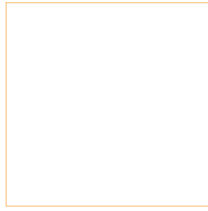
Several countries organise, on a regular basis, job markets abroad. European labour market information fairs in third countries could seriously contribute to making labour opportunities in member states known to a wide audience in third countries. Participation in such fairs would be on a totally voluntary basis and would be open to any private or public employer with job opportunities in the EU.

e) Encourage the return of Europeans who have left

Besides attracting third-country nationals, such gatherings should also be targeting Europeans who have emigrated. Virtually every Member States is watching many of its best brains leave for the US, Canada and other countries. The EU is confronted with a silent brain drain which has a devastating impact on our economies. Emigration drains our capacities in industry, finance and the services. Many who have technical skills and mid-level skills that are and will be seriously in need in Member States are leaving the EU. Still, this draining of skills is not discussed at the European level.

It would be important to get a better understanding of the size of the skills and talents leaving the EU and its causes and consequences. A study should be carried out soon; as a start maybe the experiences of students and professors working at the EUI could be collected.

Several third countries have an active policy of attracting natives back to their country of origin by organising diaspora meetings. Maybe the best example is India where the Ministry of Indians Abroad (MOIA) (together with the Indian provinces) organizes, on a regular basis, fairs in countries with a large Indian diaspora to inform them about labour opportunities in India.



The EU should develop a programme aimed at using the brains and skills of those who emigrated in a way that these contribute to the development of the EU. This can be done by attracting them to come back (on a temporary or permanent basis) for instance by using research grants, logistical support and public recognition. It can also intensify networks and create better conditions for (circular) movement.

f) Establish an EU list of certified recruitment agencies

Many employers in the EU make use of recruitment agencies/intermediaries to find the people to fill their vacancies. Often, the people selected do not meet the requirements and often this is the case because the intermediaries are not up to their task or were established with mala fide intentions.

In order to ensure member states work with trustworthy intermediaries, a European list of bona fide recruitment offices/intermediaries should be established. Only those offices that meet certain quality standards can get on this list.

g) Intensify return and readmission policies

A continued large presence of irregular migrants will hinder efforts to boost economic growth and can frustrate access to legal employment. Therefore the EU should step up its efforts to return migrants to their countries of origin who have no (longer) the right to legally remain in the EU. In recent years a lot of emphasis has been put on readmission agreements; although such agreements could have some added value, a more effective return policy should be designed. Such a policy should be comprehensive in the sense that it will bring together the instruments and areas the EU has at its disposal to convince third countries to be more cooperative when it comes to returning their nationals. Return efforts need to be part of the overall external policies of the EU, bringing in political, economic, trade, cooperation and development instruments in a concerted manner.

IV: The legal framework

In recent years the EU and individual Member States have taken initiatives to address the issue of labour needs and important efforts are made to construct a European (labour) migration policy. On the legislative level, the European Blue Card was established and various instruments, each addressing separate categories, were agreed (inter-corporate transferees, students, researchers, seasonal workers and the like).

a) Reviewing the EU Blue card

Commission President Juncker is already asking for a serious review of the Blue Card. When evaluating the Blue Card it should be noted that according to the Directive Member States are free to decide whether the application for an EU Blue Card has to be made by the third-country national and/or his/her employer. However, should a Member State chooses that the application can be made only by the employer, this gives the employer additional bargaining power and the possibility to limit the opportunities of the employee to look for another job in the future. This contradicts the purpose of the Blue Card. When evaluating the Blue Card one also needs to assess the adequacy of the current definition of a highly-skilled worker. Some would consider this definition too large; a more targeted definition of its beneficiaries could allow us to agree on a more ambitious scheme on the basis of the principle of mutual recognition of Blue Cards delivered by one Member State in other Member States, with the aim to extend the principle of freedom of movement of EU workers to Blue card holders (maybe with a limit regarding job-seekers).

b) The Family Reunification Directive

From a labour market perspective, the Family Reunification Directive contains some unhelpful barriers for families to be reunited in the EU. The ease with which family members can come/work/study is a significant factor for attracting migrants



who are choosing between destinations. In this respect it should also be noted that in a number of cultures, the possibility of servants/au-pair joining the reuniting member is of importance in selecting the country of destination and EU legislation is less favourable, in this respect, compared to, for instance, the US or Canada.

c) Promoting the intra-mobility of third-country nationals

Increasing mobility can help to address labour shortages in regions and sectors. While good progress is being made in promoting the intra-EU mobility of EU nationals, the legal possibilities for intra-EU mobility of non-EU labour migrants (who have already proven to be mobile) is still limited. Non-EU labour migrants are “chained down” by the formal requirements of duration of stay to obtain permanent residence (approximately 5 years), to apply for citizenship (approximately 10 years) etc. Instead of hindering this mobility, Europe could modify its rules and encourage their mobility. Legal and practical measures that stimulate such intra-mobility should be designed and hurdles that limit such movement abolished.

d) Facilitate the change of status for legal temporary migrants towards work for instance from students to worker

The European legislative framework should allow for a change of status of TCN’s legally present on EU territory. Students and asylum seekers should have to possibility of getting the status of a legal worker.

V. The politics of migration and public perception

5.1 Liaise with employers and other social partners

In developing any policy, it is crucial to engage with those who, in the end, are the beneficiaries of such policies. In the European context more should be done to organise such a dialogue. The June 2014 European Council explicitly calls for an informed dialogue with the business community and social partners. Such a dialogue needs to be established at a European level, but should reach out to the national level too. Getting to know the specific market situation of each of the individual Member States will be important in building a European dimension that should be Member State sensitive.

On the basis of an existing study, we would conclude that a European platform would help to enhance cooperation in the assessment of labour markets needs between Member States as proposed by DG Home in its communication on the strategic guidelines.

(The European platform on the prevention and deterrence of undeclared work proposed by the Commission (COM(2014)0124 of 9 April 2014) could be used as an example, knowing that the Council found a first reading agreement about it recently)



5.2. Informing Public Opinions

A pro-active immigration policy cannot be developed at EU level unless it is understood and accepted by EU citizens. After six years of economic crisis the dominant discourse among EU politicians presents migration as an obstacle, not an asset on the way to economic growth and social cohesion. Moreover, opinion polls seem to support the anti-immigration views expressed by mainstream politicians. The problem is that public opinions are ill-informed as to the potential and the complexities of migration. Telling the truth about the necessity of a pro-active labour migration and what such a policy could bring is now required together with dispelling popular migration myths.

In sharp contrast with politicians, social scientists and economists have accumulated evidence demonstrating the net positive impact of migration. It is high time to develop an ambitious outreach programme using a variety of media to convey this evidence to EU citizens.

a) A European skills and talents initiative; a new narrative

A European skills and talents initiative might be considered which would underline the need and the added value of filling vacant jobs in ensuring the continued prosperity of Europe. The contribution needs to be presented in terms that are easily understood such as 'growth of GDP' and 'expected income gains' and 'additional jobs created'. It must be made clear to European citizens that a well-managed and targeted admission policy of workers needs to be part of Europe's future.

b) Creating a receptive environment

A proactive labour migration policy can be successfully implemented provided that there is an environment that allows for this. Such an environment can only be established if various actors plan an active role.

National politicians also need to take responsibility. Instead of ducking the subject and leaving the debate to right-wing politicians and allowing xenophobic tendencies to rise, they must openly acknowledge that such policies are required for continued prosperity and to sustain existing social schemes.

European employers need to contribute by sending the message to the wider public that there is a real need to bring in skills from abroad. Migration should be an integral part of formal corporate policies and practices within human resources, corporate responsibility and other business functions. Greater company input into public policy is required.

The WEF's working group on migration is a good example. Last year, the business-led organisation produced a white paper on the economic rationale for migration reform. The publication fed into a subsequent UN conference on the subject.

A European White Paper on the need for skills and talents is to be considered. European employers should present their views about how the EU should satisfy their labour needs, giving a clear message that labour migration is to be part of such a policy. Employers could propose a number of concrete measures that they would consider useful for boosting their performance and competitiveness.



Migration Policy Centre

The Migration Policy Centre at the European University Institute, Florence, conducts advanced research on global migration to serve migration governance needs at European level, from developing, implementing and monitoring migration-related policies to assessing their impact on the wider economy and society. The Migration Policy Centre is co-financed by the European Union.

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