Training course on China-EU Labour Migration: Challenges and Opportunities

20-22 June 2016, Beijing

Summary Report

A training course on China-EU Labour Migration: Challenges and Opportunities was organized from 20-22 June 2016 by the ILO Office for China and Mongolia in cooperation with the ESRC Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) of the University of Oxford, and the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO). This training course was organized within the framework of the Support to EU-China Dialogue on Migration and Mobility Project, funded by the EU. It aimed to enhance the understanding of Chinese policy-makers and practitioners on effective labour migration management so as to maximize the development impact of migration. The course was opened by Mr Marcin Grabiec, Home Affairs Counsellor, Delegation of the European Union to China, Professor Michael Keith, Director, COMPAS Oxford, Mr Tim De Meyer, Director, ILO Country Office for China and Mongolia, and Mr Pär Liljert, Head of Office, International Organization for Migration (IOM) Liaison Office in China.

The training course provided a learning and exchange platform for 26 participants including representatives from the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), China International Contractors Association (CHINCA), State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs (SAFEA), Ministry of Public Security (MPS), Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS), All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), employment agencies working on labour migration, and leading academic institutions to interact with international and national experts and practitioners on labour migration management and relevant issues in China.

The training modules covered different dimensions of labour migration (in particular in the China-EU two-way migration context) including:(1) Regional Labour Migration and Labour Market trends in EU and China; (2) The regulation of labour emigration; (3) Regulating labour immigration; (4) Assessing labour market needs; (5) Urban transformation / internal migration; (6) Rights and protection of women and men migrant workers, and (7) Labour migration statistics.

The training adopted an interactive approach and offered the space for a range of activities including the analysis of national case studies, the discussion of "good practices" and role play.

Highlights:

- Regional Labour Migration and Labour Market trends in EU and China

   ILO Regional Migration Specialist for Asia-Pacific, Mr Nilim Baruah introduced the regional labour migration trends, issues and developments. He pointed out that Asia is the fastest growing region with regard to labour migration, which is marked by substantial remittance inflows. He also introduced the ratification of migrant & related UN/ILO Conventions by Asia Pacific countries and the inclusion of migration targets in the relevant Sustainable Development Goals. However, labour migration also faces many challenges, in particular where irregular migration is involved. Successful governance of international migration, strengthened regional and inter-regional dialogue and the ILO's role in promoting fair and effective labour migration policies through technical cooperation, standard setting and partnership building are all key to addressing the challenges and maximizing the development impact of labour migration. Professor. Michele Bruni of CAPP University of Modena and Team Leader of EU-China Social Protection Reform Project, presented the demographic and labour market trends in EU and China and the impact of the demographic trends on total populations, its main segments and its interaction with labour migration.

- The regulation of labour emigration

Mr. Wang Yiwu, Deputy Director, Labour Service Department of CHINCA, explained the approaches to protect lawful rights and interests of Chinese overseas contractual workers. He reviewed the administration framework and emphasized the importance for workers to receive trainings in order to better protect themselves. He introduced the service to help protect contractual workers' rights including the assistance and compensation mechanism, contract protection and the use of deposit as well as bad credit record to regulate labour migration. Concerning Chinese overseas migrant workers, Professor Xiang Biao, COMPAS Oxford, posed some thought-provoking questions for the participants. He noted the difference between Asia and Europe in labour migration and raised the issue of migration cost from the recruitment companies' perspective. He also noted that the migrant workers' expectations, their transformation and the relationship between the government and the labour market all play a key role in the development and management of labour migration.

- Regulating labour immigration

Mr. Wang Huiyao, president of the Center for China and Globalization (CCG) gave a presentation with comparative study on policies and practices to attract and retain skilled workers and foreign talents (an ILO study under the EU-China Dialogue on Migration and Mobility Support Project). He analyzed the global background, main motivation for seeking foreign skilled labor and introduced two major immigration systems (i.e. the employer-led and the point-based system respectively). China's talent attraction policy was reviewed and comparative studies with Germany, Japan and Singapore were presented. The analysis showed the advantages and existing problems of these different approaches and corresponding recommendations were drawn from the study. Ms. Wang Xiangrong, Deputy Director General from the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs (SAFEA) explained that to promote a more active, more open and more efficient Talent's Introduction Policy, it is necessary to strengthen top level policy design, establish and improve Foreign Talents Permanent Residence System and relevant regulations as well as to improve the incentive system.

- Assessing labour market needs

When assessing labour market needs, Prof. Michele Bruni focused on labour market information system, noting that in the era of internet (in which more and more data are made available by Statistical Offices through Internet) the primary role of a LMIS (Labour Market Information System) should not be that of collecting information, but of providing

intelligence and forecasting. Mr. Chang Qing, Director, Exchange Department for International Talents from Weihai Lianqiao Group looked at the issue from a more practical aspect. He shared with the participant's the operational models adopted by his enterprise, in particular the models concerning Japan and Australia, and introduced the perspective of how the enterprise managed to satisfy different needs of the overseas labour market.

- Urban transformation / internal migration

Prof. Michael Keith analyzed the issues and challenges of hukou-based urbanization process in China against a historical background, and went on to comprehensively blueprint the future of the city and migration in China. He also referred to the issues involved in the urbanization process with Chinese characteristics such as Chengzhongcun (villages in city). Ms. Du Guoyu from the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security introduced the policies and practices of progressively advancing the urban integration of migrant workers, the main measures and effects as well as the focus of next-step work by the government of China in this area.

- Rights and protection of women and men migrant workers

Mr Etienne Micallef from IOM pointed out that China has now become a transit & destination country for foreign migrant workers, including irregular migration. Illegal entry, illegal residence and illegal employment are becoming common offences in China (referred to as the three "illegals" by the government). In order to cope with irregular migration problems, China has set up laws and legislations and national measures to manage irregular migration. He also briefly introduced the status of irregular migration from China to the EU. Prof. Liu Minghui of China Women's University shared the research findings on recruitment, employment and working conditions of domestic workers in China (an ILO study under the EU-China Dialogue on Migration and Mobility Support Project) and put forward recommendations to further improve policies and practices, in particular to develop sector-specific labour standards to better protect domestic workers' (who are mostly female migrant workers) rights. Ms Miriam Boudraa from the International Training Centre of the ILO introduced a rights-based approach to labour migration and protection of migrant workers and their families' rights based on relevant ILO instruments. The case study of an overseas domestic worker Rose gave rise to lively group discussions with recommendations on how to better protect the labour rights of migrant workers such as Rose and help them build a better life.

- Labour migration statistics

Mr Tite Habiyakare, ILO Regional Labour Statistician for Asia-Pacific introduced relevant conceptual frameworks, definitions and categories of international migrants and migrant workers, essential criteria to measure international migrants and migrant workers, trends in international migration, and ILO estimates on migrant workers. Mr Marko Stermšek, consultant of ILO ASEAN TRIANGLE Project referred to the widespread recognition of the need for improved data collection and sharing on international labour migration as international migration to and from China is increasing quickly. He then introduced the International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) Database and made recommendations for improving data collection.

Mr Nilim Baruah introduced the Labour Migration statistics from China to EU Member States as part of an ILO study on Scope and Potential of China-EU Labour Migration, under which ILO is collecting data on inflows and stocks of employment-related (and education-related) migration from China to six EU Member States (France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Netherlands and the UK), in particular by: Sex, Educational attainment, Economic activity, and Occupation.

The training course provided a platform for participants to enhance the understanding of the complex challenges of migration management in terms of governance, migrant workers' protection, migration and development linkages, and international cooperation, in particular in the context of EU-China labour migration. It helped to equip government officials, practitioners and other professionals working on migration issues in China with analytical skills and knowledge of relevant international experiences which can contribute to sound national policies and practices on immigration and emigration. It also offered an opportunity for participants to critically analyse and discuss contemporary labour migration issues, in particular in the context of EU-China labour migration, and review the appropriateness of current approaches in light of international practices and standards.

The dissemination of Information

Visibility materials of the 'EU-China Dialogue on Migration and Mobility Support Project', including; project brochure, newsletter, promotional notepads, bags, etc. were widely distributed to all participants.

Following the workshop the ILO Country Office for China and Mongolia issued a news release on its website:

http://www.ilo.org/beijing/information-resources/public-information/press-releases/WCMS_495199/lang--en/index.htm

Evaluation

Analysis of evaluation sheets and online assessment showed positive feedback from the participants. The participants expected to engage themselves in such kind of training and exchange activities more often and hoped that more similar training courses could be organized.