

International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) 2011
The Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change
Intersessional Workshop: *12-13 September 2011,*

SESSION V: Governance for global mobility – a partnerships approach

13 September 2011, 15:00 – 17:30:

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank the IOM for providing me with the opportunity to participate in this very timely high-level debate. In my presentation, I will first try to share some thoughts with you on the main theme of this conference, that is, the link between the demographic perspectives, the economic cycles and migration coming from experience gained from monitoring the EU labour market trends. Then, I will briefly refer to the recent EU policy initiatives, namely those in the context of EU external migration policy.

Firstly, a few words on the link between demographic and economic trends. It is true that demography provides a relatively clear picture on future population trends. Nevertheless, we should remain extremely cautious in establishing links between demographic projections and future labour market needs since there is no easy escape from the complexity and uncertainty of economic trends.

We should not forget that in addition to demographic trends, the economic environment is changing too, often with an even faster pace. Increasing unemployment from declining sectors may co-exist with signs of economic recovery in the most promising industries. Labour supply should be able to quickly respond to these changes. If not, economic activity moves away and the so-called “future labour needs” fade away too. These structural challenges introduce a strong element of uncertainty when it comes to projections about “future labour needs”.

So far, Europe's long tradition of high quality workforce represented one of its key economic assets. In the highly competitive globalised economy of today, it is strategically very important for Europe to retain this competitive advantage. This is

even more important since Europe could not compete any more in the global markets with the emerging economies in a range of labour intensive, low-productivity sectors both for demographic and economic reasons. Therefore, focusing on new technologies, innovation and quality represents a strategic priority for Europe. Evidence shows that the larger the number of jobs created in high productivity sectors, the larger the multiplier effect for the whole economy and hence, the larger the possibility of expansion in lower productivity jobs in construction, social welfare or elsewhere.

Recent CEDEFOP studies on Europe's future skill needs indicate that highly-qualified jobs in the most dynamic economic sectors may rise significantly between now and 2020, while those held by low-skilled workers may further decline. Deficits in qualified job-specific skills are already observed in areas critical for innovation. For example, the demand for hybrid/electrical vehicles and for sustainable energy already requires many new skills. In addition, by 2020 shortages in the health sector are estimated to exceed one million. One million researchers will also be needed to meet Europe's ambitions to establish an Innovation Union.

There is already a growing awareness on these challenges. As I said before the timing of labour supply response to these changing demands is of critical importance, And indeed now Europe invests more on its human resources. However the needs in skill and geographical mobility are developing so fast that it would be practically impossible to be met by the domestic workforce alone.

We also realise that past EU and Member-State practices on migration could hardly help responding to these employment challenges. In fact, over the last decade, in the absence of a transparent and comprehensive legal framework on labour migration:

- The majority of 3rd country workers came in the EU for reasons other than employment, namely on the basis of their family reunion rights and for humanitarian reasons. Very often these people had not right to work;
- There were also several waves of regularisation of irregular migrants across Europe.

- Figures also reveal that foreign born workers with tertiary education account for only 2% in the EU, compared with 4.5% in the USA, 8% in Australia and almost 10% in Canada.
- Even more worrying, too often these skilled migrant workers coming to Europe, tend to be employed in low skill - low quality jobs.

What Europe does to address these issues?

- In the recently adopted EU policy initiative “Agenda for New Skills and Jobs” there is now a greater emphasis in strengthening the capacity to **anticipate labour market and skills needs**. There is already an on-going cooperation with the OECD and the CEDEFOP producing a series of studies and reports.
- In addition, the Commission is working on the so-called **EU skills Panorama** which will provide updated forecasting on skills supply and labour market needs up to 2020. The Panorama will be available online in 2012.
- Other policy initiatives aim to **promote intra EU geographical mobility** which is one of the four fundamental freedoms of the EU internal market. Recent policy efforts, focus on the removal of any remaining technical or administrative obstacles particularly those in the area of **recognition of qualifications** and **portability of pension rights**.

As far as the EU migration policy is concerned, there is a range of EU policy initiatives covering both the **internal** and the **external EU migration policy dimension**.

As far as the internal dimension is concerned:

- Several legal initiatives aim to harmonise the legal framework related to the admission and the rights of immigrant workers. I should mention in this context:

- The "**EU Blue Card Directive**", which establishes more attractive conditions for highly qualified third-country workers and their family members.
 - The "**Single permit directive**" which provides a single procedure for granting a common work/ residence permit and at the same time defines a list of rights for the migrant workers.
 - Two additional Directive proposals on **seasonal workers** and on **Intra-corporate transferees** are currently under discussion in the Council.
- Further to the legislative action, the Commission also developed policies aiming to facilitate the **integration of migrants** arriving or already residing in the European Union.
- Finally, the **external dimension of the EU migration policy** aims to promote the dialogue and cooperation with the sending countries on migration and development. The so-called **Global Approach to Migration** covers many areas of common interest. In particular, it promotes cooperation:
- on **visa facilitation**,
 - **education** and **skills recognition** and
 - the sharing of information on labour market trends.
 - It also aims to address challenging problems such as the issue of "**brain drain**" and the **trafficking or smuggling** of migrants.

There are different tools in place for promoting cooperation namely:

- the **regional frameworks for dialogue**,
- the **mobility partnerships** (already in place for Moldova, Georgia, Cape Verde and soon with Armenia) and
- numerous **bilateral agreements**.
- In addition, the Commission, following the recent political developments in the **south Mediterranean**, explores new possibilities of partnership and enhanced cooperation with the countries of this region.

Currently, the EU Global Approach to Migration is under **review**. More policy initiatives on the Global Approach are expected in the context of the

forthcoming **Commission Communication** foreseen in November. In preparing this Communication, the Commission run a wide public consultation earlier this year. The consultation revealed an overall **strong support** to the Global approach with suggestions for a **less dispersed dialogue** and a **better geographic balance** in the context of the regional frameworks. There were also calls for greater **coherence between migration and development policies**.

In conclusion, I think that despite its many weaknesses, the European approach of policy cooperation through its methods of setting and monitoring common objectives and promoting mutual learning and understanding represents a unique model in international relations and a promising pathway for promoting international cooperation in the area of migration.