

Bilateral Labour Mobility Agreements

Georges Lemaitre

OECD

4 October 2004

Bilateral agreements

□ Montreux Conference June 2003

Organised by Swiss Federal Office of Immigration, Integration and Emigration and OECD

- Overview of labour recruitment practices
- Implementation within certain sectors
- Viewpoint of sending countries, employers and social partners
- Other forms of recruitment

Outline of presentation

- A typology of agreements / workers covered
- Objectives of agreements
- General characteristics of agreements
- Implementation - administrative procedures
- Recruitment methods
- Ensuring returns
- Outcomes

A typology of agreements / workers covered

- Guest workers
- Seasonal workers
- Cross-border workers
- Contract / project-linked workers
- Trainees
- Working holidaymakers

(Varying) Objectives

□ Receiving countries

- Create cross-border regional labour markets
- Offset labour shortages
- Promoting cultural / political ties and exchanges
- Encourage co-operation in managing migration

□ Sending countries

- Create cross-border regional labour markets
- Ensure protection of workers' rights
- Employ surplus labour
- Enhance welfare (remittances)
- Obtain foreign exchange

Some general characteristics

- Relatively common (150+ in OECD) but numbers of workers covered generally small, except for neighbouring countries
- Accord privileged access to labour market for specific nationalities
- Generally concern low-skilled jobs or workers, with age limits
- Limited by quotas

Implementation - administrative procedures

- Promotion / advertising of programme
- Recruitment, testing and certification of applicants
- Information sharing among administrations, intermediaries, employers, migrants
- Efficient travel logistics
- Joint review committee

Desire to manage process tends to result in additional procedures and restrictions.

Recruitment methods

- Private agencies (in both sending and receiving countries)
 - Simple matching function
 - Comprehensive hiring package
- Public administrations
 - Recruitment services by receiving countries abroad
 - Screening of migrants by sending countries
- Migrant networks

Ensuring returns

□ Through

- Involvement of all interested parties (public administrations, intermediaries, employers, workers)
- Possibility of subsequent assignment for worker
- Possibility of subsequent rehiring for employer
- Focus on jobs /assignments which are by nature temporary



Outcomes

- Participants happy but limited entries a problem
- Language proficiency an issue => intermediaries
- Agreements work best when labour needs are by definition temporary
- Best managed schemes are those that are less bureaucratic

Publication

Migration for Employment
Bilateral Agreements at a Crossroads
OECD / IMES
(Forthcoming December 2004)
English and French