

Migration and Development

Human migration is a phenomenon that has existed throughout history, picked up its pace with the onset of industrialisation and shifted to an even higher gear with globalisation. The latter is an important force behind the shaping of today's reality. One of its trends is the free movement of capital, goods, services and labour across countries' borders. All economic and political powers encourage the transfer of capital, goods and services, while the movement of people is approached with more caution.

Migration and development is a topical issue. Despite the fact that only 4% of non-EU nationals live in the European Union (EU) and that the net migration to the EU in 2012 was 1.7%¹, some political parties use the fear of foreigners to gain votes in many EU countries. This was especially visible during the European Parliament elections in spring 2014.²

Development cooperation is often perceived as the means to manage migration, especially to decrease the "unwanted" migration of unskilled persons by improving the situation in their countries of origin. This, however, is a misperception, as development does not stop people from moving. Evidence actually

suggests³ that higher levels of development increase people's capabilities and aspirations and consequently lead to increased migration.

This policy digest will address three issues: firstly, the connection between migration and development issues; secondly, how the topic is addressed at global level and how the EU is contributing to the debates; thirdly, what civil society organisations are bringing to the migration and development debate.

How are migration and development connected?

Over the past years, discussions and research on the nexus between migration and development have grown substantially. This is a consequence of many factors, including the ever-present debate on national security, the changing demographic reality of most countries that receive migrants, and the role remittances⁴ are being given as a tool for development. The global debate has been slowly shifting from a rather economic and security perspective to a wider range of aspects, showing both positive and negative links between migration and

¹ 2012 data: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-17072013-BP/EN/3-17072013-BP-EN.PDF and http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-20112013-AP/EN/3-20112013-AP-EN.PDF

² <http://one-europe.info/in-brief/how-many-foreigners-are-there-really-in-your-country>

³ H. De Haas (2007) Turning the tide? Why development will not stop migration, International Migration Institute.

⁴ A remittance is a transfer of money by a foreign worker to an individual in his or her home country.

development.⁵ It is important to understand, however, that further research is needed to bring more clarity to the costs and benefits of migration on development.

Remittances have a prominent place on the migration and development agenda. To a large degree, this can be attributed to their substantial growth over recent decades: according to World Bank data, since 1988 there has been a 20-fold increase in remittances to developing countries, which reached approximately US\$ 401 billion in 2012.⁶ This gives remittances a prominent place in the overall external resource inflows to developing countries, as they come second only to foreign direct investment, and represent approximately three times the size of Official Development Assistance (ODA)⁷. Remittances are thus seen as an important tool for contributing to development. A World Bank study⁸ shows that a 10 per cent increase in per capita international remittances leads to an average 3.5 per cent fall in the number of those living in poverty. There is a crucial difference between remittances and ODA however. One is a personal financial transaction that benefits a limited number of individuals and the other is a strategic contribution to the development of a society.

Yet, the migration and development debate is not limited to remittances. Other important topics include the potential of diaspora and its linkages with the countries of origin versus the “brain drain” as well as the migrants’ skills and knowledge (“social remittances”) gained by them while living abroad and the benefits after their return to their countries of origin.

Migration and development at the global level

Migration is a highly disputed issue in the global arena. The so-called developing countries are very critical towards the so-called developed countries because of the latter’s continuous violations of migrants’ rights and their approach towards irregular migration. The receiving countries often prioritize keeping migration in the Global South and remittances

concerning migration and development.

With increasingly more attention being paid to the nexus between migration and development, this discussion has found its way into the corridors of the United Nations (UN).

The first international UN event focusing exclusively on migration issues took place in 2006. An important outcome of the **High-level Dialogue (HLD) on International Migration and Development** was the creation of the **Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)**, which can, due to its informal nature, ensure constructive dialogue between governments, with the involvement of the civil society.

In the same year, the UN Secretary General established the **Global Migration Group (GMG)**, an inter-agency group, aimed at ensuring more coherent, holistic and coordinated approaches to international migration. Fifteen UN agencies and the International Organisation for Migration are currently represented in GMG.⁹

Six years later, on 3-4 October 2013, the UN convened the **second HLD on International Migration and Development** in New York, with an eight-point agenda for action on making migration work¹⁰:

- Protect the human rights of all migrants
- Reduce the costs of labour migration
- Eliminate migrant exploitation, including human trafficking
- Address the plight of stranded migrants
- Improve public perceptions of migrants
- Integrate migration into the development agenda
- Strengthen the migration evidence base
- Enhance migration partnerships and cooperation

During the 2nd HLD, the UN states unanimously adopted a Declaration¹¹ that calls for the respect of human rights and international labour standards, reiterates the commitment to fight human trafficking and strongly condemns manifestations of racism and intolerance.

Efforts are also undertaken in other international organisations. The International Labour Organisation has been active in the field of **labour migrants**. It is important to mention that none of the EU Member

⁵ ECDPM and ICMPD (2013) Migration and Development Policies and Practices; Marlene Keusch, Nadja Schuster (2012) European Good Practice, Examples of Migration and Development Initiatives with a Particular Focus on Diaspora Engagement.

⁶ World Bank (2013) Migration and Development Brief

⁷ United Nations Development Programme (2011) Towards Human Resilience: Sustaining MDG Progress in an Age of Economic Uncertainty

⁸ R. Adams and J. Page (2003) Poverty, Inequality and Growth in Selected Middle East and North Africa Countries, 1980-2000 (World Development, 31(12), pp. 2027- 2048

⁹ <http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org/what-is-the-gmg>

¹⁰ http://www.un.org/en/ga/68/meetings/migration/pdf/migration_8points_en.pdf

¹¹ http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/L.5

States is a party to the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families¹², which is a sign that the EU does not believe in the universality of human rights, but rather differentiates between “us” and “them”.

The latest **Global Forum on Migration and Development** in May 2014 called for more coherent and comprehensive migration and development policies and practices¹³. This is also in line with the general quest for **policy coherence for development** (PCD) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, which has launched dialogue on policy coherence between development and migration.

How has the EU contributed to the UN HLD in 2013?

Strengthening the synergies between migration and development is one of the four priority areas of the **Global Approach to Migration and Mobility** (GAMM), which provides the overarching framework for the EU external migration policy. Migration is also a specific priority in the EU development policy framework document “**Agenda for Change**”. The migrant’s perspective is a central feature of the GAMM, and enhancing the human rights of migrants is a priority across all EU actions on migration and development.

In May 2013 the European Commission prepared the **Communication “Maximizing the Development Impact of Migration”**¹⁴ to contribute to the UN High-level Dialogue. The Communication provided the basis for a common position of the EU and its Member States at the HLD, including key messages for enhanced global cooperation. The Communication expresses the hope that the 2013 HLD will mark the beginning of a new era of global cooperation on migration and development. The Commission calls for:

- a more coherent, comprehensive and better coordinated approach at global level;
- a strengthened development-migration nexus, both by better integrating migration and mobility issues in development programming and through stronger

participation in relevant international fora;

- development concerns to be fully reflected in migration policy and respect for and protection of the human rights of all migrants to be ensured through all dimensions of migration governance.

Council Conclusions on the 2013 UN High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development and on broadening the development-migration nexus were adopted in July 2013 by the EU Member States. Even though protection of human rights is described as a cross-cutting policy priority, the traditional approach emphasising well-managed migration and national sovereignty remains at the core of the document.¹⁵

In view of the 2nd UN HLD on International Migration and Development, the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States adopted a Joint Declaration¹⁶ which emphasised the following main points: the migration-development nexus as part of migration policy; migration as both opportunity and challenge for development; commitment to human rights of migrants, decent working standards, and to combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling; effective cooperation in the area of migration, notably in the Post-2015 context.

Civil society efforts within the GFMD

The 7th GFMD was held from 14 to 16 May 2014 in Stockholm, entitled “Unlocking the potential of migration for inclusive development”. Civil society gave a strong message, calling for a change in migration and development policies, which should be based on human dignity and accountability. Four areas were highlighted as priority ones:

- **Migrants in distress:** stressing that all migrants in all situations should be treated with dignity, while criminal approaches as a means to address irregular migration should be reconsidered.
- **Labour:** calling for protection of migrant workers at all stages of employment, both at national and international levels.
- **Children in the context of migration:** requesting protection for children, whether they remain in the countries of origin after the migration of their parents, travel alone, or are reunited with their

¹²<https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/MTD5G/Volume%20I/Chapter%20IV/IV-13.en.pdf>

¹³ See also D. G. Papademetriou, K. Newland (2014) How Migration Can Advance Development Goals, Migration Policy Institute.

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/policies/immigration/general/docs/maximising_the_development_impact_of_migration.pdf

¹⁵ <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2012415%202013%20INIT>

¹⁶ http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article_14028_en.htm

families.

- **Post-2015 framework:** stressing that no one should be left behind, especially as the existing development paradigm causes inequalities, which are detrimental to migration. CSOs also launched a campaign for the inclusion of migration in the post-2015 agenda.¹⁷

What policy processes concerning Migration and Development are coming up in the near future?

The **review of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action** will take place in the framework of a UN General Assembly Special Session on 22 September 2014. In preparation of the Conference, the ICPD Beyond 2014 review process¹⁸ was launched, including the ICPD Beyond 2014 Global Report.

During the **Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union**, in the second half of 2014, migration issues concerning to Europe's external relations will be one priority working area. The Italian Presidency will have a decisive role in ensuring follow up to the Conclusions of the June 2014 European Council, which will have to rule on a new work programme in matters of justice, security, asylum and immigration.¹⁹ There is a possibility for the EC to issue a new Communication on migration and development next year.

Example(s) of development NGOs' activities concerning migration and development

Seven newer EU Member States²⁰ civil society organisations (CSOs) are involved in the project "World-Wise Europe: a more coherent Europe for a fairer world". The aim of the project is to strengthen political support and raise public awareness for more **coherent policies**, which do not hamper development efforts, but rather contribute to the global fight against poverty.²¹ As part of the project, CSOs from three different countries directly or indirectly deal with the relationship between migration and development. The Estonian partner AKÜ is studying

the incoherencies between their highly conservative asylum policy and the development policy which is promoting human rights approaches in those same countries from which asylum-seekers originate. The **Romanian** partner FOND is primarily focusing on the lack of coordination between their development policy, which to a large degree allocates resources for scholarships, and the development needs of their partner countries.

In **Slovenia**, the focus of development cooperation lies in the Western Balkans, from where the majority of migrants come. Unfortunately, in Slovenia there are very weak mechanisms coordinating migration and development policies²². However, there is an active advocacy process taking place, which aims to consolidate the position on migration and development of broader civil society, including development NGOs, NGOs working on migration and other relevant issues, migrants and diaspora organisations, trade unions, research institutes and social enterprises. After numerous capacity building initiatives, jointly identifying the state of affairs, and thematic meetings, the work on a common CSO position on migration will commence. It is hoped that the participation of a broad strata of civil society will lead to more power to emphasise the current rigid position of the government on the issues of migration and development.

A variety of CSOs, including the European Council on Refugees and Exiles, Red Cross, Amnesty International and Caritas Europe have come together for lobby actions concerning migration and development. Recent major EU lobby actions were directed at FRONTEX²³ and at the new Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund²⁴.

The European NGO confederation for relief and development – **CONCORD working group on Policy Coherence for Development (PCD)** and its sub-group Migration Caucus work on advocating towards the European institutions concerning development and migration issues. The CONCORD PCD Spotlight report from 2011 specifically concentrates in chapter five on European policies that affect migration and development. In CONCORD, the national development CSO platforms from Southern Europe are currently working on a position paper tackling the issues of migration and development in the Euro-Med area.

¹⁷ <http://us7.campaign-archive2.com/?u=233fa9a0ed4257ad77ac77d14&id=03980a1758>

¹⁸ <http://icpdbeyond2014.org/>

¹⁹ http://www.iai.it/pdf/convegni/Tepsa_140324-25_bg-paper.pdf

²⁰ EU Member States that joined the EU since 2004

²¹ Find more examples of CSO projects on Migration and Development from: <http://www.comide.net/projects/>

²² World-Wise Europe PCD Study: eight case studies to promote policy coherence for development (2014)

²³ http://www.caritas.eu/sites/default/files/statement_eu_funding_asylum_and_migration_7_march_2012.pdf

²⁴ <http://www.migrationonline.cz/en/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund>



What can I do?

- Advocate for the respect and safeguarding of migrants' rights in your country and in the EU
- Advocate towards your government to sign up to the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- Collect information and conduct research on the inter-linkages between migration and development
- Think critically about who benefits from migrants – developing countries or developed countries
- Work with the diaspora in your country to maximise the positive effects of migration
- Join the CONCORD PCD working group and its sub-group Migration Caucus
- Advocate for smaller transaction costs for sending remittances to developing countries

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This project is funded by the European Union.

With funding from

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