



CONCEPT NOTE

Panel Meeting on Economic Integration of Migrants

Warsaw, Poland
14-15 December 2017

Migrant integration into host societies and labour migration in general have both already been discussed during the previous Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration and Asylum (EaPPMA) meetings. This discussion enabled their participants to exchange some valuable experience, and taking a look from different perspectives contributed to fuller understanding of some of the identified problems. For the upcoming meeting, it is the first time that the focus has been given to the more specific but cross-cutting issue of economic integration of migrants which may be defined as migrants' inclusion into the economy of the host country – taking up economic activities and building a sustainable livelihood.

With more and more people on the move globally, the question of how to govern labour migration in a way that not only makes it regular, orderly and safe but also maximises the potential benefits for migrants, positively impacts the economies of the host countries and contributes to development of countries of origin has gained a lot of additional attention from the international community in the recent years. The possibility of contribution of migrants to inclusive growth has been highlighted in UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and reaffirmed in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants 2016. More in-depth discussions on the matter came as the process of developing the Global Compact for Migration gained momentum. There is a lot to be done for addressing the main challenges and we are still in need of finding the right shape of the policies that can actually ensure migrants successful economic integration.

There are evidence showing that migrants coming to the EU still face problems on the Member States' labour markets – from salaries inequality to labour rights infringements and even extreme cases of trafficking and labour exploitation. The rates of unemployment are in most cases significantly higher among migrants, compared to EU citizens. One of the main obstacles for migrants on the labour markets concerns the



The Project is funded by the
European Union



The Project is implemented by
International Organization for Migration



recognition of their skills and qualifications acquired in their home countries. Lack of recognition as well as limited access to vocational training for migrants in hosting states hampers skill matching and may lead to structural underemployment, with large groups of migrants working below their qualifications. At the same time in many sectors across Europe, companies experience recruitment difficulties or identify skill gaps that can be bridged by migrant workers. Some tools that could support job matching like the EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals are being developed. Additionally, the private sector itself provides migrants with some sets of opportunities.

Large scale irregular, economic migration is also a complex challenge for the destination countries. It usually results in illegal and unregistered employment which negatively affects their economies and hinders efforts to protect labour and social rights of migrant workers. In turn, it also makes them vulnerable to various forms of exploitation.

Well-balanced migration policy has to assess and take into account the objective needs of the host states' labour markets and their integration capacities. Effective economic integration should lead to a situation in which migrants are able to take up work and build sustainable livelihoods. Integration aims at making migrants self-reliant and capable of participating in the economic and social life of the host community. Essential part of a comprehensive integration is not only the acceptance of the values and legal norms of the host society but also readiness of host society to integrate the migrants. Effective access to labour market, supportive environment for launching a small and micro business, and opportunities to acquire and upgrade relevant skills and competences needed to pursue a professional career in the country of residence, determine migrants' chances for successful economic integration.

Lines of discussion

The EU regulatory framework on regular migration is laid down in several 'sectorial' Directives. The EU measures on regular migration cover the conditions of entry, stay and residence for work or study purposes, together with a set of rights for different categories of third country nationals such as long term residents, Blue Card holders, intra-corporate transferees, students and researchers, seasonal workers etc. Regular migration is a complex domain of shared competence between Member States and the EU. In particular, in terms of actual admission of labour migrants, Member States maintain a national competence in determining the volumes of admission.

Although integration is a national competence, with its Action Plan on the Integration of third country nationals, adopted in June 2016, the European Commission has put in place a comprehensive framework to support Member States in their integration efforts. In addition, many bilaterally and nationally developed solutions that may facilitate access to labour markets and effective integration exist.

We would like this Panel meeting to outline and briefly assess the effectiveness of the existing regulatory frameworks on the EU and national levels, including frameworks for multilateral and bilateral cooperation and take a closer look at how the general approaches towards migration adopted by particular states influenced the levels and



dynamics of migrants' economic integration. We would also like to discuss how to measure migrant's economic integration and how can we protect migrant workers from abuse on the labour market and positively influence their integration and what can be the role and responsibilities of private sector actors in this regard.

Taking up the perspective of origin countries we aim at finding how can we facilitate economic integration on the pre-departure stage and look at the role that well economically integrated diaspora can play in building and harnessing the potential of the migration-development nexus.

Proposed thematic areas:

1. Legislative frameworks for economic integration.

During this session, will be discussed current EU framework for regular migration and some examples of national regulations and strategic level documents of EU Member States and EaP countries. Discussions will focus on solutions supporting economic integration such as aligning migration with labour market needs, recognising qualifications, making connections between migration and development, and facilitating access to labour markets including through bilateral and multilateral cooperation tools.

2. Measuring economic integration, identifying barriers and facilitators.

This session's aim is to outline the concept of economic integration in more detail, focusing on the indicators that can be used to assess the effectiveness of economic integration and identify barriers of economic integration such as poor skills recognition, language and culture barriers and others. We would also like to discuss the impact of diaspora networks existing in the destination countries on economic integration.

3. Tools of economic integration including pre-departure stage support.

During this session, will be considered government, private sector and civil society led initiatives, projects and programmes facilitating integration on different stages, including pre-departure stage. In addition, it will be discussed how to prevent abuse of migrants' rights on the labour markets and combat the crime of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation. Some attention should be also given to the issue of taking up economic activity by migrants, which can be considered an indicator of entrepreneurship or a last resort in circumstances hindering migrants' participation in the labour market.

4. Practical session, based on the active interaction among present experts, will consider one or several of the most relevant problematic aspects of economic integration of migrants. The topic will be identified in the process of preparation of the meeting jointly with the participating countries.



Panel meeting will become a platform for discussion and experience exchange between EU, EU Member States and EaP countries representatives, as well as representatives of international organizations, academia and non-governmental sector.

