

OPENING NEW LEGAL MIGRATION AVENUES

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The European Agenda on Migration

The European Agenda on Migration (EAM) 2015 responds to the need for immediate and determined action in response to the human tragedy in the Mediterranean. It includes four pillars to better manage migration: (1) Reducing the incentives for irregular migration, (2) Saving lives and securing the external borders, (3) A strong asylum policy, and (4) A new policy on legal migration.¹ Survey results offer useful insights on the issue of legal migration. In particular, two questions in the Survey questionnaire are directly related to the development of a new policy on legal migration: questions 12 and 16.²

The more legal ways to move, the less room for unauthorised crossings of the Mediterranean.

From a Euromed regional point of view, the responses to these two questions indicate once again that there is a demand for broader and effective mobility schemes in the region, including in the context of visa facilitation schemes and programmes aimed at enhancing the mobility of students, researchers and business persons. It is often argued that further expanding legal schemes would result in curbing unauthorised crossings of the Mediterranean.

Contrasted priorities: while the concern in origin countries relates mainly to facilitating legal migration, the main concern in destination countries is on strengthening the common asylum policy.

The results indicate that, among the four pillars, developing a new policy on legal migration is identified as the first priority by 39% of respondents, followed by reducing the incentives for irregular migration and strengthening the common asylum policy, both identified as the main priorities by 24% of respondents. Border management was ranked as the main priority of the EAM by only 14% of the respondents (see Table 1).

The results point to different patterns of answers between respondents from Northern Mediterranean countries on the one hand and Southern and Southeast Mediterranean countries on the other (see Table 1). Despite the fact that the two groups of respondents ranked developing a new policy for legal migration as the first priority, there is some variation in the weighting of this priority. MPC respondents rated this priority higher than EU-28 respondents (46% and 37%, respectively). This reflects different prevailing concerns in origin and destination countries.

1, European Commission (2015). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A European Agenda on Migration. Brussels, 13.5.2015 COM(2015) 240 final.

2. For the exact wording of the two questions and the context of the questions within the questionnaire see appendix III.

Table 1: Respondents' ranking of the European Agenda on Migration by respondents' affiliation.
(EU-28 versus MPCs)

	All survey					EU-28					Mediterranean Partner Countries				
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
Reducing the incentives for irregular migration	24%	17%	20%	40%	100%	22%	14%	22%	43%	100%	26%	22%	16%	36%	100%
Border management: saving lives and securing external borders	14%	21%	37%	29%	100%	13%	18%	42%	28%	100%	15%	27%	28%	30%	100%
Strengthening the common asylum policy	24%	35%	27%	14%	100%	29%	38%	21%	13%	100%	14%	31%	38%	18%	100%
Developing a new policy on legal migration	39%	27%	16%	18%	100%	37%	31%	15%	17%	100%	46%	20%	18%	16%	100%

Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 12

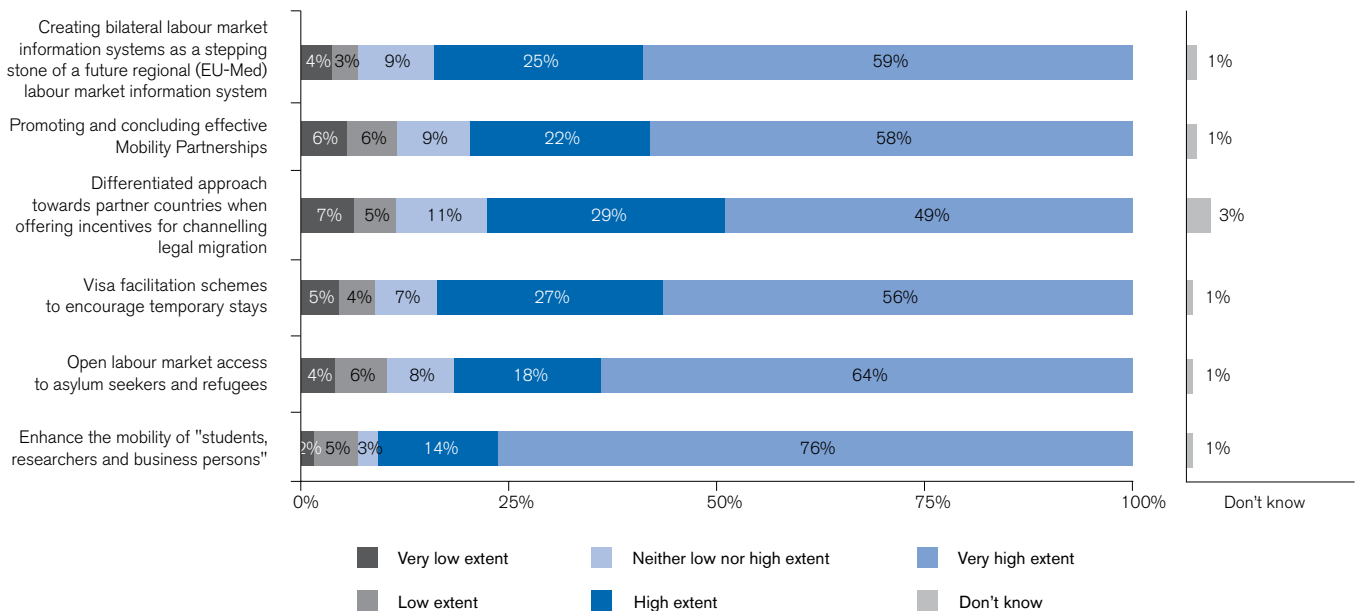
Moreover, the ranking of other priorities differs between the two groups. As for EU-28 respondents, the second priority was strengthening the common asylum policy (29%), followed by reducing the incentives for irregular migration (22%) and then comes the last priority, which is border management (13% of respondents). These results do not mirror the reality of the policy focus over the last years; EU member states have indeed been giving priority to border control, while progress on the asylum front has been more limited. One can assume that these results partly reflect the perceived failure of border management to stop/reduce the flow of border crossing over the last few years.

As for MPC respondents, the second priority was reducing the incentives for irregular migration (26%) followed by border management (15%), and then comes the last priority, which is strengthening the common asylum policy (14%). These results reflect, among other things, the concerns related to transit migrants on their way to Europe and the effects of their concentration in big cities or border areas.

Legal Migration Channels to Be Promoted to Enhance Human Mobility in the Euro-Mediterranean Region

In question 16, participants were invited to specify the legal migration channels to be promoted to enhance human mobility in the Euro-Mediterranean region (see Graph 2). Respondents identify promoting the mobility of students, researchers and business persons as the main priority.

Graph 2: To what extent should the following legal migration channels be promoted to enhance human mobility in the Euro-Mediterranean region?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 16

The results indicate that respondents put more emphasis on enhancing the mobility of students, researchers and business persons (76%), followed by opening labour market access to asylum seekers and refugees (64%). Creating bilateral labour market information systems as a stepping stone of a future regional (EU-Med) labour market information system ranked third (59%), while promoting and concluding effective Mobility Partnerships ranked fourth (58%) (see Graph 2).

Respondents from EU-28 and the Southern and Southeast Mediterranean countries agree that enhancing the mobility of students, researchers and business persons should be promoted as a matter of priority (73% and 81% for EU-28 and MPCs, respectively). Although it affects a limited segment of populations, this result shows a clear consensus on the need to effectively enhance the mobility and employability of students and researchers which, at the same time, is seen as an element with positive impacts on the economic development of the region.

The second priority for the EU-28 was opening labour market access to asylum seekers and refugees (64%) while the MPCs put more emphasis on creating bilateral labour market information systems (74% of MPC respondents compared to 53% of the EU-28 respondents).

Promoting and concluding effective Mobility Partnerships was established as the third legal migration channel to be promoted in the region by both MPC and EU-28 respondents, but the percentage for MPCs respondents was higher than their EU-28 counterparts (72% for MPCs and 53% for EU-28 respondents). This is an interesting result given that the EU concluded Mobility Partnerships only with Morocco in 2013 and Tunisia in 2014.

Breaking down the respondents into sub-regional groups shows that respondents from Maghreb countries put more emphasis on enhancing the mobility of students, researchers and business persons (85%) followed by visa facilitation schemes to encourage temporary stays (74%), while Mashreq respondents put more emphasis on creating bilateral labour market information systems as a stepping stone of a future regional (EU-Med) labour market information system (83%), followed by enhancing the mobility of students, researchers and

business persons (79%). This may be attributed, in part, to the fact that the Maghreb countries have more established and longer labour migration relations with the EU as well as more established diaspora communities in Europe than Mashreq Countries.

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