

International Migration: The Euro-Mediterranean Area in the Global Agenda

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In 2004 there was an important stimulus to incorporate the migration issue into the global agenda, with the creation in February 2004 of the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), an initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. The GCIM aims to place the international migration issue in the world's agenda, to analyze the existing failings in current migration policies and to examine the links between migration and other problems.

The GCIM itself makes a global distinction between the North and the South, with the aim of taking into account the regional differences and specific issues that occur in the field of human movements. At the same time, by making this distinction the GCIM highlights the existence of intermediate countries such as Mexico, South Africa, Morocco and Egypt.¹ To find two Mediterranean countries in the intermediate space between the North and the South raises the issue of whether the Euro-Mediterranean zone can be analysed as a migratory system, since it is where the North and the South intersect. In this context, it is worth considering the results from the World

Congress on Human Movements and Immigration (HMI) held in September 2004, since one of its sessions referred to the specific geography of Mediterranean migration.² The increasing differences in economy, demography, politics and security matters between sending countries and receiving countries are key to understand the flows of migration between countries in the South of the Mediterranean and the North. These disequilibria, added to the geographical proximity, may explain why Europe is, and will remain, the main destination of Mediterranean migration, despite the increasing effort to reduce entry of immigrants, whether regulated, unregulated or asylum seekers.³

The GCIM has held regional meetings both in the Mediterranean and Middle East, as well as in Europe. In both cases, the agenda included unregulated immigration, the economic aspects of international migration, the integration of immigrants into the host societies, the Human Rights of immigrants and on the governance of international migrations. This international migration agenda highlights, – for the Euro-Mediterranean area – the main issues addressed in the debate on migrations in this region: on the one hand, a debate on whether migration flows should be contained and orderly managed and on the other, the arguments presenting the positive impact of human mobility. This debate is also present in

the EU agenda and in the agenda of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

It has been argued in the context of this debate that, whereas on the one hand a well-organized management can promote stability in the region, on the other, the European Union and the Euro-Mediterranean area can be examples of how migration can lead to an overall positive result (*win-win game*).⁴ It has also been realised that migration must be considered as providing part of the solution to the excess workforce in sending countries and, to the North of the Mediterranean, as the solution to population aging and the reduction of the workforce. However, this potential will only be realised if Europe is capable of attracting immigrants with the appropriate skills and, moreover, if these immigrants are allowed to enter the formal workforce market.⁵ Finally, another important underlying reason for the need of a well-organized migration policy is that this management of migrations can be a key to provide stability and security. This last concept, in the context of migration, must be considered from a multidimensional perspective, in the sense that it must encompass concepts such as governance, cooperation, human security and political and social stability, assuming that the issue of security reflects a much more complex phenomenon.⁶

On the other hand, positive effects of

¹ *Global Commission on International Migration*. "Report on First Meeting of the Commission," Stockholm, February 2004

² World Congress on Human Movements and Immigration. www.mhicongress.org

³ MÜNZ, R. (2004). "European Migration Policy Options." Europe and the Mediterranean regional session. World Congress on Human Movements and Immigration www.iemed.org/mhicongress/dialeqs/regionals/papers/munz.pdf

⁴ Europe and the Mediterranean Regional Session (2004). Conclusions from the session. World Congress on Human Movements and Immigration (unpublished).

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

human mobility refer to the role of immigrants as crucial actors in the development of Euro-Mediterranean relations,⁷ as well as to those issues related to the duo migrations-development, as it is the case, for example, of co-development as an instrument for collaboration with the countries of origin in the sense that migration may serve development co-operation. Also emphasized is the potential for a positive impact on the country of origin that remittances of immigrants can provide, as well as the impact on civil society arising from trans-national relations.

In fact, the past year has seen differing stances towards the aforementioned two points of view. The European Union, for example, is more focused on well-organized management, which is reflected through the increasing importance that the European Commission places, on the one hand, on regulating the entry of an immigrant workforce,⁸ and on the other, on the fact that none of the member states wants to lose their central management of immigration that settles in their own societies.

As regards the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, it has been noticeable in the Euro-Mediterranean conferences that have been held in the past year, that there has been a softening of the budgets of the Naples summit of December 2003, where security played a vital part, highlighting the need to combat illegal immigration through re-admission agreements. The Dublin Conference celebrated in June 2004 stated that the fight against unregulated immigration in the Mediterranean remains a key issue, although a change in tack can be seen in the mention of the need to have a global approach to migrations, considering that, properly managed, migration can provide a positive factor for socioeconomic growth in the whole region. In November 2004,

TABLE 24		Workforce emigration policies
Workforce emigration policies in the south of the Mediterranean: preferences	Convergence of interests South-North	Political actions
Balancing the internal labour market	NO	The macro-economic measures of the North have negative effects on the labour markets in the South: -unequal commercial exchange -subsidized sectors (agriculture)
Control of illegal transitory migration	YES	5 Initiative: the involvement of governments in the South is not due to economic development of the south, but rather due to the increasing informality of certain sectors of the economy in the north
Maximize the benefits of immigration	NO	There are no specific measures in policies of the North, although there is debate about the impact of remittances, the use of official channels for remittances and as to ways of converting them into productive investments
Ensure the welfare of emigrants	YES	Derived from access to provisions of the Welfare State and from the principle of non discrimination against third-country nationals (Tampere). Nevertheless, <i>de facto</i> discrimination exists
Adjust to the demands of labour force by European countries	YES	Identification of the requirements in the middle to long term, to establish joint-measures that will reduce unregulated migrations. Search for <i>win-win solutions</i> to benefit countries of origin, of destination and immigrants themselves.

under the Dutch presidency of the EU, the influence of the new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) became evident. The ENP Action Plans become bilateral tools for cooperation, but once more consider migration as a threat, together with drug-trafficking, terrorism and organised crime. Nevertheless, as in Dublin, space is provided for the co-operation in relation to the main causes of migration⁹ and to the negative effects of transitory migration. Therefore, two tendencies are noticeable: the control of human movement as the most important issue and a stron-

ger engagement by all the members of the Partnership, sharing priorities in the field of migration and reinforcing their commitment to amplifying the concept of shared responsibility. In this sense, the conclusions from The Hague refer to the necessity of action against the negative effects, starting with co-operation in matters such as illegal migration, border management and migration – related capacity building, as a first step toward making migrations a positive factor toward growth in this area. Work-related migration offers a point in common between migration manage-

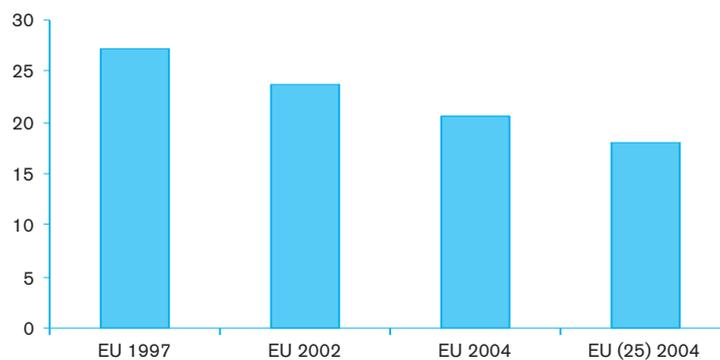
⁷ This last aspect has been claimed by the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Forum, where the importance of the immigrant as an active partner of co-development (ECF Barcelona, 1995) and as an agent of co-operation (ECF Marseilles, 2000) has been highlighted, and in which migrations have been recognized as a resource and cultural asset in the development of the Partnership (ECF Naples, 2003).

⁸ It is worth highlighting the process of drafting the *Green Paper* on migrations, which has the aim of establishing whether there is a need for immigration into the EU and to address the possibilities for regulating the workforce (admission, requisites etc.) at a common level, to avoid 25 different legislations. The working document is available in: “*Green Paper on an EU Approach to Managing Economic Migration*” (COM (2004) 811 final). http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/doc_centre/immigration/work/doc/com_2004_811_en.pdf

⁹ One must remember that the concept of *root causes of migration* is not exempt from discussion. To follow the discussions on this political concept, see: GENT, S: (2002) “The Root Causes of Migration: Criticising the Approach and Finding a Way Forward.” Sussex Migration Working Paper n. 11 www.sussex.ac.uk/migration/publications/working_papers/mwp11.pdf

ment and the positive effects of mobility. In the context of policies on workforce emigration of Mediterranean countries, there is both convergence and divergence with European countries.¹⁰ The prime aspect that can be identified from the preceding table is the importance of adjusting the demands for labour force of European countries in promoting collaboration between both shores. In this sense, temporary immigration linked to the labour market is considered one of the models capable of maximizing the mobility of people in the Mediterranean.¹¹ Nevertheless, it is necessary to follow the discussions concerning this model. On the one hand, in respect to implementation, there is talk about promoting temporary migration linked to the labour market, both for qualified migration (GATS 4¹²) and unqualified migration; the existence of a flexible system for visas that will permit wide mobility, whilst guaranteeing the economic and social provisions relating to retirement pensions (retirement will be in the country of origin¹³), continues to be a basic condition to establish movement of the workforce. On the other hand, to what extent

GRAPHIC 20 European Union. Immigration with origin in Mediterranean partner countries (MED12)



Source: own contribution based on data from *Euro-Mediterranean Statistics*, Eurostat 1999 and from *Euro-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM)* from several years.

temporary migration may be positive must be considered. Questions remain to be answered about the opportunities for integration and representation of temporary immigrants within the society, and questions related to money transfer. Equally, one should ask what effects sending a large part of income to the countries of origin may have on the working- and residence-conditions in the host

country.¹⁴ These aspects should point toward timeframes of temporal migration adapted to its requirements. At present, temporary migration schemes are a basic priority for receiving countries and the involvement of sending countries is crucial to achieve positive-sum solutions.

¹⁰ AWAD, I. (2004) "Migration policies in South Mediterranean Countries: Convergence and Divergence with European Orientations. International Migration in the Euro-Mediterranean Area and the Enlarged European Union." Training Session CARIM. www.carim.org/material/TS20041218.pdf

¹¹ AWAD, I. ob.cit.

¹² Mode 4 of GATS (General Agreement on Trade and Services) refers to temporary movement of people in the context of service-provision. Mode 4 represents a very specific sector of temporary immigration between WTO (World Trade Organization) countries and normally relates to highly-qualified workers. In this context, the WTO speaks of the necessity to "coordinate" the commercial and migratory policies and to improve the transparency of policies and actions relating to immigration.

¹³ FARGUES, P. (2004) "Demographic Complementarities and Mobility between Mena and Europe. International Migration in the Euro-Mediterranean Area and the Enlarged European Union." Training Session CARIM. www.carim.org/material/TS20041218.pdf

¹⁴ COLLYER, M. (2004): "The Development Impact of Temporary International Labour Migration on Southern Mediterranean Sending Countries: Contrasting Examples of Morocco and Egypt." Working Paper T6 *Sussex Centre for Migration Research. Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty.*