

Remittances and Co-development in the Mediterranean Region

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Assessing Migration and Remittances Trends: a Problematic Exercise

In spite of the growing efforts made by some international organisations and lately by Eurostat, international migration statistics are still “patchy, of varying degrees of reliability and subject to problems of comparability.”¹ This is especially true if we consider statistics collected from the point of view of sending countries, concerning for instance the overall volume of emigration and of returns, either temporary or stable; also detailed mappings of regional provenance of migrants are deficient, when not entirely missing, in most sending countries relevant for Europe, including Mediterranean ones. Such deficiencies seriously undermine the possibility to produce solid and comprehensive knowledge on Euro-Mediterranean migration processes and particularly on their developmental impact on areas of origin.²

Despite all these structural obstacles, it is nevertheless possible to point out some recent migration and remittances trends that affect any serious policy reflection on co-development perspectives in the Mediterranean.

a) Irregular migration flows from North Africa are still sustained, with Morocco and to a lesser but growing extent, Egypt, as leading source countries. However, as demonstrated by the results of the 2001 Spanish regularisation and of the 2002 Italian one, migrants from Maghreb to Southern Europe lost relative weight in the overall unauthorised inflow, to the advantage of Latin Americans and Eastern Europeans (Ecuadorians were the first group in the 2001 Spanish amnesty, whereas Romanians were predominant in the 2002 Italian one).

From this reduced centrality of North African nationalities in migratory flows to Southern Europe, we can not infer, though, that the migration pressure and the propensity to emigrate from the area have on the whole decreased. It is more plausible that the described effect derives on the one hand from an increased effectiveness of migration controls in the region and on the other hand, from a general preference granted by employers (and by governments, through the negotiation of bilateral labour agreements) to nationalities other than North African.

b) Even in the absence of reliable, systematic and comprehensive data on financial transfers from Europe to the Southern shore of the Mediterranean, the evidence existing for some key emigration countries suggests that the

volume of remittances is expanding. Since the impressive increase of 57.5% in 2001, Moroccan remittances – for example – seem stabilised on this new and remarkable level.³ As for Egypt, another major recipient of remittances on the world scene, official figures continue to describe Europe as a relatively marginal source of transfers compared with the USA and Gulf countries.⁴ Nevertheless, ongoing empirical studies on recent waves of irregular Egyptian migration to Italy, for instance, show that remittances are on the rise, even though they take almost exclusively informal channels.

c) Finally, a trend that has marked very visibly and even dramatically the Mediterranean scene in the last few years is the growth in irregular transit movements across the Sahara desert to the Maghreb (Libya, Morocco, Tunisia) and from there, through dangerous maritime smuggling routes, to Italy (Sicily, predominantly the island of Lampedusa), Malta and Spain (especially Canary Islands). The reason to mention this phenomenon in this chapter is that, besides its human security dimension, unauthorised transit migration has sizeable economic implications. Once prosperous commercial centres situated along the main caravan routes – Tombouctou in Mali, Agadez in Niger, Tamanrasset in

¹ SOPEMI, *Trends in International Migration. Annual Report. 2003 Edition*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris, 2004, p. 26.

² A recent and potentially very important novelty is the availability on-line of the statistical database collected and managed by CARIM (the Euro-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration, based at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies of the European University Institute, Florence); see the database at www.carim.org/.

³ N. Nyberg Sørensen, *Migrant Remittances as a Development Tool: The Case of Morocco*, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Working Papers Series, No. 2, June 2004, p. 5.

⁴ International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Contemporary Egyptian Migration*, Cairo, 2003. See in particular Chapter 4.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE EU AGENDA ON MIGRATIONS

In December 2004, the Presidency of the European Council adopted the Hague Programme, an agenda for the next five years following the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, which was also known as the Tampere Programme and represented the first step towards the creation of a common EU immigration policy. Certainly, one cannot make a too positive assessment of the Tampere objectives, since only very basic legislation has been established in matters related to standards for asylum applications, and the directives on the long-term residence of non-EU nationals, regulations for students and family reunification, with a deadline for transposition into the legal system of each Member State of February 2005.

The major contribution of the Hague programme compared to the Tampere programme is a new policy which has as its goal the effective integration of non-EU nationals. Nevertheless, the policy of integration of immigrants is not based on legislation that has been adopted, but on coordination between policies of the Member States. Faced with the difficulty of managing to harmonise this policy, the Member States have agreed to apply the open coordination method, which has already been used to implement the Treaty of Lisbon. To

this end, 11 basic common principles have been adopted (political but not legislative principles) which can act as the foundation for the beginning of a certain degree of coordination in terms of the integration of immigrants. However, this is not a case of achieving a common asylum policy. The Hague programme does not indicate a clear path towards the establishment of a common asylum system nor for the acceptance of legal immigration, leaving the Member States to take the lead in formulating these policies and thus reducing the possibility of moving consistently towards a common immigration policy.

However, we must not forget certain aspects proposed by the European Commission which over the last year have acquired great significance: on the one hand, the correlation between migration and development and, on the other hand, the debate over civic citizenship. With regard to the first aspect, the European Commission recognises the correlation between immigration policy and development, in which immigrants play the role of agents of development (exchange of human capital, social capital and know-how). During this period, the European Council is influencing the encouragement of immigrants to qualify to follow this path and is calling on the

Commission to draw up a report on Migration and Development, which discusses aspects which need to be developed, such as the improvement of connections and contacts among trans-national communities, the efficient use of transfers and support for a policy of hiring a highly-qualified labour force which would be consistent with the policies for development cooperation.

With regard to civic citizenship, even though it amounts to nothing concrete in legal terms, there is significant potential for recognition in this mixed status, through which people attain some rights and duties specific to the Member State in which they live, in addition to the major Community rights and duties in force in the EU.

Integrating migration issues in the European Union's relations with third countries COM(2002) 703 final

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2002/com2002_0703en01.pdf

Draft Council conclusions on migration and development (8472/03)

www.statewatch.org/news/2003/may/1218473-03-pa.pdf

Algeria – are now revived by the boom of smuggling and other related services: there is also a dark side to co-development.

Policy Attention: Booming but still Confused

For a long time and still at the end of the 1990s, when European leaders drew the influential Conclusions of the Tampere extraordinary European Council (October 1999), the relationship between migration and development policies was still very much shaped by what can be labelled as the “root causes approach”: it was widely and somewhat naively belie-

ved that addressing underdevelopment as a determinant of international mobility could almost automatically reduce migration pressure. It was only at the end of 2002 that a deeply different and more realistic view of the relations between migration and development found expression in an important, although still preliminary, EU policy document.⁵ Following this paradigm shift, migration started to be viewed increasingly, by European policy-makers, as a potential vector of social and economic development, rather than just a side-effect of poverty and instability.⁶

This new approach paved the way for a greater convergence of policy objectives between European receiving States

and the governments of origin countries, traditionally more aware of the development potential of international mobility. Such convergence around co-development objectives manifested itself, at the rhetorical level at least, also in the Euro-Mediterranean context. In the groundbreaking Tunis Declaration of the 5+5 Ministerial Conference on Migration in the Western Mediterranean (October 2002), for instance, an entire section was devoted to co-development; among several other items, the governments representatives engaged themselves to “recognize the economic, social and cultural contribution of migration in the countries of the Western Mediterranean” and to “improve conditions to enable migrants

⁵ European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament – Integrating migration issues in the European Union's relations with Third Countries, COM/2002/0703 final, 3 December 2002.

⁶ On this crucially important evolution in the European political culture around migration, see F. Pastore, “More development for less migration” or “Better migration for more development”? Shifting priorities in the European debate, special issue of *MigraCtion Europa*. Periodical analysis bulletin on migration policies in Europe,” Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI), Rome, December 2003, available on www.cespi.it/bollMigraCtion/MigSpecial3.PDF.

to fully play their rightful role in the development of their country of origin, in particular through savings and investment” (points 13 and 14).⁷

More recently, the co-development approach “European style” found its way even further and started influencing some global fora, such as the G8, whose Sea Island Summit (8th to 10th June 2004) produced for the first time a document specifically dealing with remittances, where some French and Italian pilot-projects on Morocco were mentioned as specifically Mediterranean experiences in this area.⁸

In spite of these important, although still vague, advances at the highest institutional levels of the policy debate, when we turn to the drafting and implementation of concrete policies still much remains to be done. Too many politicians, in Europe, still believe and let their voters believe that migration could be stopped through some modest increase in international charity. A persistent cultural delay of politics in dealing with the migration-development nexus is to be observed also in most Mediterranean sending countries, where the role of migrants as development actors is often rhetorically claimed but not yet entirely accepted with all its implications. Full empowerment of migrants is undoubtedly a great development chance, but it would bring with it deep political and social changes that are not necessarily welcome.

Towards a Map of Policy Practices

In spite of the lack of any clear and consistent policy paradigm, a few interesting policy experiments in linking migration and development are being conducted in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Some models are *de facto* emerging and a few promising practices may cautiously be pointed out. Greater

efforts for better mapping, networking and carefully assessing the impact of such disperse policy practices are key-preconditions for further improvement. The idea here is not to give an exhaustive description of experiences linking migration and development but, looking especially at the Italian context, to highlight some interesting similarities and discrepancies in co-development practices adopted in comparative terms in two other EU Member States of the Mediterranean region: France and Spain. These three countries have a great array of co-development practices and while Italy and Spain present similar developments, France stems as a different experience and a more advanced context from which to critically learn.

In France, a co-development approach – based on the idea of enhancing the contribution that migrants can make to the development of their countries of origin and of involving civil society in this process – was developed progressively and was eventually formulated as a policy at the end of the last decade. In France therefore, the central government has developed a policy scheme and a co-development strategy that, far from being perfect, is in place. Programmes progressively focused on the quality of returns rather than on their quantity; the issue of brain drain was taken into consideration to make co-development successful, facilitating the circulation of migrants by allowing them to take advantage of training opportunities in France and put the skills acquired at the disposal of home communities once migrants return to their countries of origin; the cooperation of countries of origin and co-development conventions were signed with different countries; the question of remittances has been addressed in different programmes where banks have also been involved.⁹

In Spain instead, at the national level, the law and the norms on development

co-operation policy do not mention any links between migration and development. Experience tells us that it is at the local levels that authorities deal with immigration on a day-to-day basis and indeed local authorities at the local, sub-regional and regional levels have come up with different strategies in the field of integration (jobs, race relations, etc.) and amongst them and most innovatively, the implementation of development projects with migrants. Legislation of autonomous regions and practices of local bodies recognise the evident connection between migration and development. In particular, we can mention here the experience of the Catalan Fund for Development Cooperation (*Fons Català de Cooperació al Desenvolupament*) that has financed more than 20 projects based on the creation of trust and communication between immigrant bodies, local public authorities and communities of origin of migrants. The positive effect of this strategy is twofold: on the one hand it encourages development projects defined and executed by migrants and, on the other, it promotes their integration into their communities of origin. Another interesting example is represented by the Catalan farmers' union (*Unió de Pagesos*), which has managed its own solidarity programme with the aim of helping to regulate migration flows: putting in place a strategy of co-development framed in the seasonal work of immigrants from the Maghreb and Latin America to Catalonia. The objective of this initiative involves three phases: a) hiring on origin, giving information and training on the usual wage rates and working practices in destination areas; b) promoting immigrant groups who work to the advantage of their community's development; c) the creation of a Course for Development Agents, enabling training of seasonal workers in order that they may return to their country of origin and share their expe-

⁷ The full text is available at www.iom.int/en/know/dialogue5-5/index.shtml.

⁸ Annex to the *G8 Action Plan: Applying the Power of Entrepreneurship to the Eradication of Poverty*, available on www.g8usa.gov/d_060904a.htm.

⁹ This part is drawn on the following sources: a) Petra Mezzetti, Alessandro Rotta, Andrea Stocchiero, co-ordinated by Ferruccio Pastore 'The role of the regions in co-development policy in the Mediterranean and the Balkans' – Outline document for Working Groups II and III, Bari Conference (23-24 October 2003) – [www.cespi.it/PASTORE/Mig-Bari/Comm-seconda.PDF]; b) a recent background paper containing a research study carried out in November 2004 by CeSPI, Centro Studi Politica Internazionale, for the Municipality of Milano, *Migranti e città: un patto per il co-sviluppo*. Flavia Piperno's and Jonathan Chaloff's chapter on Italy in Jan Niessen and Yongmi Schibel, 2004. *International migration and relations with third countries: European and US approaches*, MPG, Brussels.

MIGRATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

Human Movements and Immigration World Congress. Europe-Mediterranean regional session:

www.iemed.org/mhicongress/dialegs/regional/eeuropa.php

Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM)

www.gcim.org/en/

Final assessment of the Tampere programme. European Commission COM(2004) 401

Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. Area of Freedom, Security and Justice: assessment of the Tampere Programme and future orientations

http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/doc_centre/intro/docs/bilan_tampere_fr.pdf

The Hague Programme: Strengthening Freedom, Security and Justice in the European Union. European Commission (2005/C 53/01).

Text of the Hague Programme, an agenda for the next five years following the Area of Freedom,

Security and Justice, which was also known as the Tampere Programme, and represented the first step towards the creation of a common EU immigration policy.

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/c_053/c_05320050303en0010014.pdf

Five Years of EU Migration and Asylum Policy-Making under the Amsterdam and Tampere Mandates. Migration Policy Group.

Analysis which offers an evaluation of the results of policy formulation in this area in a period of five years from May 1999 until May 2004. The text also includes suggestions on how to tackle those aspects of the agenda yet to be developed.

www.migpolgroup.com/publications/default.asp?action=publication&pubid=141

International Migration in the Euro-Mediterranean Area and the Enlarged European Union

Training Session CARIM.

Work sessions organised by the CARIM. There were some striking contributions made by spe-

cialists from the north and south Mediterranean which touched on the key and major aspects contained in the agenda for Euro-Mediterranean migration, in the context of enlargement.

www.carim.org/material/TS20041218.pdf

Euromed Civil Forum

During the period covered by the yearbook only the Naples Civil Forum was held. However, during 2004 the EuroMed Non-Governmental Platform was officially institutionalised to strengthen the role of civil society in the Partnership. The founding assembly of this Platform was held in Limassol (Cyprus) in June 2004.

www.euromedforum.org/

Mediterranean Social Forum. One of the MSF's thematic areas focuses on migration. Specifically, the sessions are held under the slogan "Criteria for elaborating a cross-frontier and cross-cultural framework for migratory phenomena in the Mediterranean." The various contributions made during the period prior to the MSF can be accessed on the Internet.

www.fsmed.info

rience, promoting collective projects for economic and social improvement.¹⁰ It is however important to mention that in France also, co-development initiatives were not only promoted and funded by the central government, but equally operated within the framework of decentralised cooperation between local communities.

In Spain and in Italy the only practices conducted at the national government level, have been temporary labour schemes. Such schemes are operation-

al and are likely to be extended significantly in the coming years. In particular we can mention here the *Labour Agreement* between Morocco and Spain signed in 2001¹¹ and the *Integrated Migration Information System Project* between Egypt and Italy.¹² Temporary labour migration schemes will not have significant development effects unless greater attention is paid to the needs of the countries of origin: these agreements have the potential to guarantee a regular supply of labour and ensure some

degree of return of qualified migrants, if they can be fixed in the long-term. This has yet to be implemented in current schemes because of concerns over labour demand flexibility.¹³

In Italy in recent years, as in Spain, sub-national governments rather than the central government have played an increasingly important role in shaping a co-development approach in migration and cooperation policies.¹⁴ Italy became relatively recently a country of 'immigration' and migration flows have affec-

¹⁰ This part is drawn on: Jan Niessen and Yongmi Schibel, 2004. *International migration and relations with third countries: European and US approaches*, MPG, Brussels.

¹¹ The convention is signed by the Minister of the Interior, Work and Social Affairs, Spain and the Minister of Employment, Professional Training, Social Development and Solidarity, Morocco.

¹² Which began in June 2001 as a result of a collaboration between the Emigration Sector of the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, the Italian government as the donor partner and the International Organisation for Migration, IOM as the implementing agency.

¹³ This information is drawn from: Michael Collyer. 2004. "The Development Impact of Temporary International Labour Migration on Southern Mediterranean Sending Countries: Contrasting Examples of Morocco and Egypt", Working Paper, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty

¹⁴ This part is drawn on the following sources: a) Petra Mezzetti, Alessandro Rotta, Andrea Stocchiero, co-ordinated by Ferruccio Pastore 'The role of the regions in co-development policy in the Mediterranean and the Balkans' – Outline document for Working Groups II and III, Bari Conference (23-24 October 2003) – [www.cespi.it/PASTORE/Mig-Bari/Comm-seconda.PDF]; b) a recent background paper containing a research study carried out in November 2004 by CeSPI, Centro Studi Politica Internazionale, for the Municipality of Milano, *Migranti e città: un patto per il sviluppo*. Flavia Piperno's and Jonathan Chaloff's chapter on Italy in Jan Niessen and Yongmi Schibel, 2004. *International migration and relations with third countries: European and US approaches*, MPG, Brussels; See also: Stocchiero, Andrea. 2005. Policies and Practices on Migration and Development in Italy: Lessons to be learnt and Suggestions for the EU's Aeneas Programme, CeSPI Position Paper, Presented at a EU Meeting, March, 2005, available at: www.cespi.it/migration2/Migr&Dev%20positionpaper%20CeSPI.pdf

ted unevenly the different regions according to the needs of the labour markets, this implying moreover a difficulty to manage and monitor this demand at a central level. During the 1990s sub-regional governments have played an increasingly important role regarding both in migration and decentralised development cooperation. Since the beginning of the last decade local governments have intensified and institutionalised international cooperation activities in particular matching geo-political priorities, therefore towards the Mediterranean countries and the Balkan region, but also towards some Least Developed Countries in Sub Saharan Africa.

Migration and development are two policy areas that have been often – at the regional level – structurally connected and therefore a range of pilot schemes in the area of co-development have been put in place especially in the recent years. These practices can be grouped in the following explanatory typologies:

1. Mobilization of economic circuits and productive returns
2. Recruitment projects

3. Mandatory and assisted returns of weak categories
4. Community development projects
5. Channelling and fostering remittances

The actors promoting such practices include, as mentioned, Municipalities, Provinces, Regions, as well as migrant's associations, NGOs and the private sector: in a word, the whole set of actors of the so-called 'decentralised cooperation'.

Despite the significant amount of experimentation and creativity in the Italian regional and local co-development projects, they suffer from a series of structural shortcomings. The most frequent are associated with isolated actions, the excessive sectorialisation, and the lack of continuity (lack of long-term planning), as well as with an inadequate coordination with programmes and activities with similar objectives undertaken by other regions or central institutions. Two overall problems are the need for specialised staff within the administrations and the scarce coordination and promotion of migrant associations. Furthermore, the

budget allocated for the management of migratory flows is very low and concentrated on urgent needs, on issues of integration and assistance, and therefore co-development projects based on a transnational approach, as well as the number of beneficiaries, are numerically limited. Due to the fragmentation of the situation, it is still early to speak about 'best practices'. However the ways in which some projects have been handled seem rich of perspectives for the future. In particular the elements that constitute models of intervention of great interest are: the multi-situated management of flows, developed through activities that are undertaken simultaneously in the origin and in the destination country, and often within interregional partnerships, or "city to city" agreements, and the involvement of a network of multiple actors working in the same territory. Trans-local territorial partnerships in managing migration for co-development seem to be a new tentative path for integrating the Mediterranean basin, but it needs a more decisive and coherent commitment of central governments and the European Union.