

FIFTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE MIGRATION, DEMOGRAPHY AND LABOUR MARKET

Madrid 10 October 2019

The link between migration, demography and labour market has long been discussed. Reports, studies and conferences have focused on how this link works and how it is important to take advantage of the synergies existing among the three elements, thus promoting system-wide coherence. Different tools and programs to identify labour shortages and the extent of the need for labour migrants have been designed based on the relations among them.

However, current changes in labour market dynamics, specifically linked to digitalisation and rapid technological change, and new challenges not only in the economic field but also demographic and even institutional ones, require new approaches to let policy makers, both nationals and Europeans, design a migration policy, specifically a labour migration one, which addresses these different challenges which are the reflection of a polyhedral reality.

Bearing in mind that most migration flows towards and within the EU take place in a regular, safe and orderly way, that the number of irregular arrivals into the EU have decreased to match pre-crisis level and that demography dynamics shows Europe as one of the most aged regions, the renewed European Agenda on migration should be focused, within other elements, on the importance of having and developing an EU legal migration policy.

In parallel, countries are reviewing and updating their way to determine current labour shortages and or to forecast future needs as well as other measures such as market activation of the current resident population (a significant share of migrants entering for non-work-related reasons end up accessing the EU labour market¹) and reforming education and training opportunities. According to the EMN report *Determining labour shortages and the need for labour migration from third countries in the EU*, the importance of each measure differs in Member States. New technologies may play an important role in the re-designing of these tools or even in taking over new roles (i.e. public administration not only determining labour shortages but also making easier the international job matching). Finally, public concerns must be considered and dealing with feelings and perceptions requires also policy maker's action.

Besides, opening migration channels to migrants from third countries is a key element for fighting irregular migration and for enhancing bilateral relations with countries of origin and it is linked to the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact for migrants.

In this context, this conference pretends to gather institutions, representatives of different policy areas and Member states and other stakeholders like academia and business sectors to identify and better understand the challenges policy makers in the migration field should cope with as well as to collect and know more about the strategies or tools which other countries are currently designing and implementing.

This exercise will help identify the most effective practices, so that they can then be deployed wherever possible on a broader basis throughout the EU or in some member States maximizing the positive impact of a well-managed migration policy. As the new President of the Commission has said "*pathways for legal migration (will) help us bring in the people with the skills and talents we need*". On other words, migration made, makes and will keep on making a real contribution to our economies and societies.

Some ideas for the debate

What are the main challenges the EU is facing? Some data.

Demographic challenges in an ageing society. According to *Global Trends to 2030: Can the EU meet the challenges ahead?* drafted by the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System, in 2030 with an average age of 44 years, Europe will be the 'oldest' region — more than double the average age of 21 in Sub-Saharan Africa. People over 65 will account for close to 23 % of the European Union's population, compared with 16 % today (Eurostat, 2013). Assuming there is no change in current trends, between now and 2060, Germany's population will fall from 82 million (20 % of them pensioners) to 65 million (30 % of them pensioners).



Immigration alone cannot solve this challenge, but it can help to keep economies growing and to maintain social services.

Economic challenges related to a bigger international presence of Asia (China) and USA linked to the importance of technology (big data, and artificial intelligence).

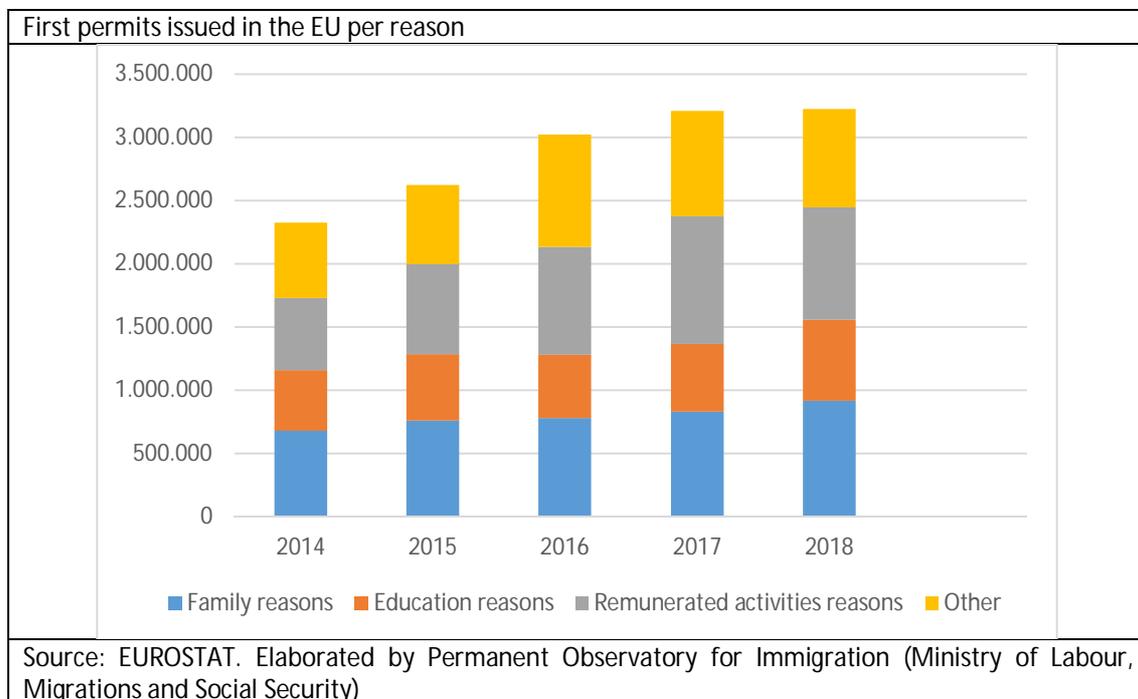
If demographic challenges will affect to the quantity of labour offer, technology will affect to the demand of specific skills. According to the OECD, only one in four highly-educated migrants residing in the OECD in 2015-16 had chosen an EU destination, while almost two out of three had chosen to settle in North America or Oceania.

In the decade from 2000 to 2010, 70 % of the increase in the European Union's workforce was accounted for by immigration.

Other elements to consider.

According to the OECD report *Building an EU talent pool: a new approach to migration management for Europe* (2019), various information barriers and costs – stemming from the geographical distance between prospective employers and migration candidates, limited familiarity with labour markets, education and training systems and professional networks on both ends, and from the complexity of labour migration regulations – make international job matching challenging and largely explain employers' reluctance to hire from abroad, even in the presence of severe skills shortages. In this context, public lead initiatives could play an important role.

Data regarding first permits issued in the EU per reason is also interesting.



Some questions for the debate/discussion

- For the upcoming decade, which should be the role of public administration (European or national) in the labour migration policy? Is there a need to go beyond the mere forecasting or identifying labour shortages?
- And the role of other stakeholders as social partners, other ministries or agencies, or even labour or migration experts? And the role of countries of origin? How could Mobility Partnerships, GAMM or national agreements contribute to the definition of the labour migration policy?
- How should be the role of new technologies?
- In the development of an EU labour migration policy, which should be the role of intra-EU mobility?
- Are current instruments that allow hiring migrants flexible enough?
- Bearing in mind that the rate of overqualification of non labour migrants is higher than that of migrant workers who entered the EU for working purposes, how other migration pathways rather than the labour ones, ie. education, family reunification should be considered? When considering skills needs, which role is expected from international students?
- How the employability of migrants already present in our territories can be improved? What is the role of market activation?
- How can the recruitment of immigrant workers be compatible with unemployment rates when it comes to the designing of a migration policy at national or European level?
- Should the strategy to bring our diaspora back be reinforced, and how?
- How could we be more attractive to migrant workers? Do we really know their needs and expectations, and whether we meet them?

Preliminary agenda of the conference

9:00 – 9:30	Arrival and registration
9:30 – 9:45	Welcoming remarks
9:45 – 11:30	Panel 1. Understanding the new challenges: drawing the scenario for the upcoming decade

	<p>Aims. Designing a public policy, specifically in migration field, requires a depth knowledge of the current situation but also of the trends. Identifying and understanding the main challenges of the European or national context and putting them in connection with the global ones will provide a good basis to start the re-designing of strategies, policies and tools.</p> <p>Chair</p> <p>Panellists</p>
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee break
12:00 – 14:00	<p>Panel 2. Experiences in managing legal (specifically labour) migration</p> <p>Aims. Learning about what other countries are doing for providing the most effective practices, so that they can then be deployed wherever possible on a broader basis. Strategies and specific programs developed by Member States but also the knowledge of academia will be shared.</p> <p>Chair</p> <p>Panellists</p>
14:00 – 15:15	Lunch break
15:15 – 16:00	Conclusions and closing remarks

ⁱ A comprehensive Labour Market approach to EU labour migration policy, Iván Martín and Alessandra Venturini, Migration Policy Center, EUI