

Launch Seminar
on the Mediterranean edition of the OSCE-IOM-ILO
“Handbook on Establishing Effective Labour Migration Policies”
in Rabat, Morocco
12-13 December 2007

Concept Note

Migrants generally, and migrant workers in particular, are actors in development, in both destination and origin countries. They contribute skills, labour, knowledge and initiative to the progress of host countries. They also make major contributions to home countries with their remittances and the return of talent, which contribute to improving human capital and local economies. On the demand side, labour migration has become a key feature in enabling industrialized countries to meet economic, labour market and productivity challenges in a globalized economy. Migration today serves as an instrument for adjusting the skills, age and sectoral composition of national and regional labour markets. It provides responses to fast-changing needs for skills and personnel due to technological advances, changes in market conditions and industrial transformations. In countries with aging populations, migration offers a potential for replenishing a declining work force as well as injecting younger workers and increasing dynamism, innovation and mobility in the labour force. They frequently fill vital jobs unwanted by natives, and their presence, activity and initiative create additional employment. Their contributions to social security systems are helping balance national accounts in a number of countries. Public-private initiatives to build capacity and increase migrant employability can further enhance these contributions for business and society alike.

Migration is increasingly recognized as an asset and stimulus to development. Enhancing these contributions is a policy imperative for governments of origin and destination countries alike. The very real supply and demand pressures driving international labour mobility need to be acknowledged and addressed if labour migration is to be effectively regulated. This is especially important to the extent that “supply side” migration pressures result from the absence of adequate employment opportunities and decent work in countries of origin. Meanwhile, deteriorating environmental conditions due to unsustainable land-use, climate change and other factors are reducing the resource base on which agrarian communities depend for their livelihoods, thus forcing people to migrate to survive.

International dialogue and consultation on migration have increasingly focused on identifying *common approaches and means for cooperation among states* in governance of what is by definition a phenomenon requiring international cooperation. Over the last several years, regional migration dialogues between Europe and Africa and Europe and the Caucasus-Central Asia regions have elaborated common approaches. Recent conferences in Rabat in July and in Tripoli in November 2006 brought together representatives of European and Africa nations along with international and regional institutions involved in this matter to expand cooperation on migration management and development.

Women migrants are increasingly becoming important actors in the economic transformations taking place in their home societies. Consequently, it is important that policy-makers become more aware of the significant role that women play in labour migration and the specific

issues their migration raises. They should also ensure that gender aspects of labour migration are mainstreamed into the relevant policies developed both in countries of origin and destination.

Governments at both ends of the migration spectrum are increasing their regulatory capacities for governance of labour mobility to the mutual benefit of society, migrants and the state. Many are turning more and more to international and regional organizations for expert support in the formulation of effective labour migration policies.

To contribute to policy formulation, capacity building and effective implementation of migration measures, the OSCE, the IOM and the ILO have cooperated to elaborate a comprehensive *Labour Migration Handbook*. The Handbook contains policy models, practical guidelines and good practice examples from the Mediterranean region as well as other countries of the OSCE region that experience similar migration management challenges. It is expected to add value to ongoing regional and international dialogues.

Launch Seminar

To contribute to the international dialogue towards cooperation and to support implementation of effective national migration policies, the OSCE, the ILO and the IOM are organizing a *Launch Seminar* to present the policies and practices described in the *Labour Migration Handbook* as building blocks for a comprehensive, cooperative and balanced approach to labour migration management. The Handbook and the discussion at the launch seminar are intended to contribute to already existing dialogue structures that the parties are involved in.

Objectives

The main **objective** of the seminar is to enhance dialogue and cooperation among OSCE participating States and countries of the Northern and Southern Mediterranean on recognizing the mutual benefits of legal migration, developing effective labour migration policies in countries of origin, transit and destination, reducing irregular migration and promoting fair treatment and integration of migrants through the exchange of good practices and innovative approaches.

Specific goals of the seminar are to:

- 1) Present the handbook as a policy tool for government and social partner practitioners
- 2) Review the main lines of the handbook content
- 3) Facilitate sharing of participating countries' concerns and experiences
- 4) Consider application of practical models in participating countries
- 5) Encourage dialogue and cooperative networking among participating countries and partners

Invited Countries

Countries from the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region: **Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia** and from the Northern Mediterranean **France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain** will be invited to the seminar. Other OSCE participating States will also be invited to participate.

Participation

Senior officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Labour will be invited as well as representatives from trade unions and employers' associations, in particular from the Mediterranean countries of the OSCE participating States and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation.

30 delegates will be sponsored from Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries: each country will be represented by 2 or 3 government officials and 1 representative of an employer and trade

union federation. Invited countries may designate up to two additional participants at their own cost.

A total of 5 experts will also be sponsored.

Participants from Northern Mediterranean countries are expected to cover their own costs.

Programme

The programme will take place over two days. The agenda will comprise of plenary presentations and discussion on selected main themes drawn from the Handbook and its Mediterranean context. Several discussion group sessions will be included to facilitate full participation and to consider sub-thematic issues in more detail.

Intended Outcomes

- 1) Increased knowledge and capacity on part of policy makers in participating countries.
- 2) Disposition to utilize the Handbook in setting and reviewing national policy and practices.
- 3) Expressed interest in dialogue and cooperation among participating countries and partners.
- 4) Identification of several common themes or issues for further regional dialogue and exchange.

Main Themes:

- Migration and Development
- Reasons for Migration: push and pull/ labour supply and demand considerations
- Environmentally induced migration and its links to labour migration pressures
- International Legal Framework for the Protection of Migrant Workers
- Policies in Countries of Origin to optimize benefits of organized labour migration
- Policies in Destination Countries to assess labour demand and regulate labour migration
- Gender Sensitive labour migration policies
- Measures to Prevent or Reduce Irregular Labour Migration and to Combat Trafficking for Labour Exploitation
- International Co-operation on labour migration

Outlines of Thematic discussions

Theme 1: Migration and development

This section will document migration contributions of skills, labour, knowledge and initiative to progress of destination countries and contributions to origin countries through remittances, return of talent, and development of trade and business initiatives. Concrete models on how to better support the contributions of migration to development will be considered.

Theme 2: Reasons for migration: push and pull factors

A review of the various factors driving migration into, across and from countries in the region, notably labour supply and demand pressures, as well as other factors including environmental degradation and social and political conditions. Attention will be drawn to policies and practices to improve employment and decent work prospects as well as environmentally sustainable practices in both origin and destination countries.

Theme 3: Environmentally induced migration and its links to labour migration pressures

Discussion of the role environmental factors have in contributing to 'push factors' for migrants. An initial examination will be made of the interconnections between environmental change, desertification, water scarcity, loss of livelihoods, economic performance, and (forced)

migration. This session will focus on ongoing research initiatives in this area in the Mediterranean region, their methodologies, preliminary results and potential scenarios.

Theme 4: International Legal Framework for the Protection of Migrant Workers

Presentations and discussion will consider the relevance of international standards – in particular UN and ILO conventions and OSCE commitments - for strengthening national law and practice on regulating labour migration, in particular to ensure protection of basic human and labour rights of migrant workers and to combat trafficking for labour exploitation. Regional instruments of the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Strategic Framework for a Migration Policy for Africa will also be referenced.

Theme 5: Labour Migration Policies in Countries of Origin

The Seminar discussion will examine a range of policy strategies and institutional arrangements cited in the Handbook, which can assist in improving the scope and efficiency of their regulatory mechanisms and support services: information dissemination, legal migration procedures before departure and different support services to departing and returning migrants.

Theme 6: Policies in Destination countries to assess labour demand and regulate labour migration

Examination of policy strategies and measures described in the Handbook to improve the scope and efficiency of regulatory mechanisms, institutions and support services of destination countries in admitting migrant workers at all skills levels and in regulating their insertion in labour markets and host communities. Attention will be given to labour market regulation, migrant worker legal and social protection, anti-discrimination and integration and social security issues.

Theme 7: Gender sensitive labour migration policies

A session will highlight the significant roles that women play in labour migration and specific risks faced by migrant women. It will discuss policy options to ensure that gender aspects of labour migration are mainstreamed into the relevant policies both in countries of origin and destination.

Theme 8: Measures to Prevent or Reduce Irregular Labour Migration

A review of options presented in the Handbook regarding enhanced channels for labour circulation, visa policies, sanctions regarding irregular migration and international cooperation to tackle irregular labour migration in the Mediterranean region.

Theme 9: International Co-operation on labour migration

Consideration of existing and potential mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation among countries involved in labour migration processes. Bilateral and regional labour agreements and cooperation mechanisms in the Mediterranean region featured in the Handbook will be highlighted as well as the essential roles and involvement of social partners in migration policy and practice.

Organization

The OSCE, the ILO and the IOM are jointly responsible for developing the programme, issuing invitations and making the logistical arrangements for the Launch Seminar.

Venue

The Kingdom of Morocco has kindly offered to host the seminar in Rabat.