



The CEIPA Round Table

*Approaches Towards Global Migration Policy and Action
Views and Opinions on the Future EU Engagement
In the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)*

*At the premises of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Brussels, Thursday 25 November 2010*

Report of the Meeting

SPEAKERS

- **Opening and welcome: Mr. Frank Felix**, Director, Asylum, Migration and Anti Trafficking Department, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- **Her Excellency, Ms. Sandra Fuentes-Berain**, Ambassador of Mexico to the Kingdom of Belgium, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and to the European Union;
- **Mr. Sándor Sipos**, Special Representative of the World Bank to the EU Institutions, Belgium and Luxembourg;
- **Ms. Jelena von Helldorff**, Senior Policy Advisor, CEIPA;
- **Ms. Patsy Sorensen**, Director, Payoke, Belgium;
- **Moderator: Mr. Peter von Bethlenfalvy**, Executive Director, CEIPA.

H.E. Ambassador Ms. Sarah Fuentes-Berain provided an extensive and thorough report on the main outcomes of the fourth GFMD in Puerto Vallarta Mexico 2010. She summarised the debates of the round table sessions and explained the policies of the Government of Mexico towards the on-going process of organisation of the Cancun World Climate Summit.

She pointed out the following key issues debated during the round table discussions of the GFMD:

- The importance to address and assess the impact and benefits of migration on economic and social development;
- The crucial involvement of civil society and NGOs in the GFMD process;
- The labour market dynamics and its impact on migration: the need for extensive cooperation and mechanisms between origin and host countries (for better job matching, promotion of regular migration);

- The importance of stronger partnership between governments, diasporas groups, civil society and private sector and the need for long-term approaches and multilateral policies between all states involved when dealing with migration issues;
- The respect of human rights norms and principles (access to and provision of social services to migrants are essential whatever their status is, access to education, fight against racism/xenophobia);
- Population growth and combating of poverty;
- Partnership between developing and industrial nations when tackling root causes of migration;
- The prevention of irregular migration (necessity of joint strategies, clear regulations and cooperation between origin /transit and destination countries);
- The challenges faced by the migrants, in particular minors, in terms of family disintegration, abuse, discrimination, trafficking, marginalisation, etc.
- The impact and relevance of climate change on future migration trends and demographic development.

Mr Frank Felix, Director, Asylum, Migration and Anti Trafficking Department, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs represented the Belgian EU Presidency at the GFMD Conference in Mexico and shared with the Round Table participants his views on the future of the global migration and development debate. He stressed the positive working atmosphere which prevailed in Mexico and thanked the Ambassador of Mexico for her input and the support given by the Government of Mexico. The participating governments at the GFMD Conference engaged into an open debate on all political issues and topics of importance. This has been particularly relevant in contrast to previous GFMD conferences. He underlined the importance to keep the GFMD informal inclusive process in the hands of governments, rather than associate it closely with the UN at this stage. This forum is the ideal platform to discuss also sensitive Migration and Development issues amongst all stake holders' incl. governments, UN, international organisations, civil society representatives/NGOs and experts.

Belgium, in its capacity of current EU Presidency Member State and as the initial organiser of the GFMD Forum in 2007 has undertaken the important steps to assure the continuity of this forum.

Nevertheless, Mr. Felix highlighted a few challenges to be addressed prior to following GFMD conferences:

- Financial contributions: the current financing of the Forum lays on voluntary contributions of States. To make the GFMD sustainable, stable midterm funding is needed. Costs to organize the GFMD meetings should be reduced, to make them affordable for every state and government. Financial stability is essential for the continuity of the Forum.
- Assessment of the Forum: what are the results achieved by the Forum, how to measure them? What should be its future?
- The role of the Forum is to complement and to cooperate with the UN (not to duplicate). It is important for the Forum to remain informal.
- The role of the Friends of the Forum should be redefined and be more operational.
- The role of support units should be strengthened in order to ensure institutionalisation.
- The focus should be extended beyond migrants themselves, including family members remaining in the countries of origin.
- The nexus between migration and development is essential in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (education, health, poverty reduction) and addressing the root causes of migration. Further action is needed at EU level to strengthen the multidisciplinary approach and coherence in migration policies.

Mr. Sándor Sipos, Special Representative of the World Bank to the EU Institutions, Belgium and Luxembourg addressed the “Role of the World Bank in Furthering the Global Dialogue on Migration Economic Development”. He gave extensive information on migrant’s remittances based on the latest data contained in the recent WB report “Migration and Remittances”. He underlined the following:

- It is important to increase the efficacy of remittances beyond the private sphere. The costs for transfer transactions are high; there is a need for more transparency/competition among intermediary agencies and banks and wider use of new technologies to give access to savings and investments for migrants (incentives through special legal provisions, guarantees, collateral funds, etc.).
- Demographic trends: the ageing EU countries are in growing need of services but the question is if they are willing to accept cultural and social differences. Many countries are raising voice against liberal immigration policies and favour stricter security and control policies despite the increasing need for labour.
- Cooperation and sharing of targeted migration data is essential between sending and receiving countries. The World Bank is pointing to an increased demand for data, analysis and technical assistance from both, sending and receiving countries.
- Development of Diaspora bond: The role of the World Bank is crucial and can range from providing seed money for investment, providing guarantees and risk mitigation but also facilitating partnership between public and private sectors.
- The World Bank is coordinating the Global Remittances Working Group which is addressing 4 main areas: Improving data collection, facilitation remittances by migrants, making retail payment system more efficient and improving access through remittances.
- The World Bank is currently considering the creation of a knowledge platform on migration and global development.

Ms. Jelena von Helldorff, Senior Policy Advisor, CEIPA gave an overview of the Lisbon Treaty objectives in the field of EU External policy. Although not yet up and running the European External Action Service is expected to reform the fragmented EU external policy and enhance the EU effectiveness across policy fields. Creating a policy mix between foreign EU policy and other community instruments could make the EU a real agent of “soft power”. The role of the High Representative is to design a coordination body for a whole range of external and internal policies areas, including development and migration. Even though migration remains a heavily regulated province of national sovereignty, the EU can and should bring an added value to this area. Expanding possibilities for legal migration while limiting the illegal migration is the objective to be pursued when dealing with third countries. Legal migration options should include circular and temporary migration and should be closely coordinated with countries of origin. Preferably, the EU development aid should be disconnected from third countries efforts to collaborate on stopping illegal migration or carry out the return of illegal migrants. To ensure the efficiency of circular migration, development aid should be used to create conducive conditions for return, furthering reforms of labour market, health and administrative sector. EU delegations could be empowered to take up some common consular tasks including the possibilities of issuing multiple entry visas for circular/temporary migration. The issue of illegal migrants should be addressed along with granting them basic rights in line with the EU policy to promote and respect human rights.

Discussion and debate

Interactions between governments and civil society actors: Cooperation/interaction is important and civil society actors are now included into policy-making processes. It is fully agreed that civil society has to be an integral part of the decision process. Nevertheless, the interaction between civil society actors and government institutions is often problematic, especially concerning refugee issues. There is a need for trust and respect between all actors involved. A participant suggested the elaboration of a code of conduct for smooth dialogue and communication.

Remittances – as a private capital - should not substitute official development assistance aid or social protection. People migrating are not the poorest of the poorest. They have seed money to afford migration. Sometimes the money is going into the economic circuit of the country of origin and contributes to the economic development, although the situation varies from country to country.

Cost of the money transfer should go down, there are ways to reduce the costs and political will is also needed.

Assessment/monitoring of the GFMD: To evaluate progress, Francesco De Angelis, Honorary Director General of EC, suggested to make use of already existing tools such as the Paris Declaration and see how to integrate the Paris Declaration instruments. Mr. Felix agreed that this point should be brought to the Assessment Working Group Unit. Mr. Ralph Genetzke from ICMPD stated that if the climate of discussion is positive and if there is political discussion, this is already in itself a big achievement of the Forum. The role of GFMD should not be overburdened, but rather limited to its core functions of raising awareness, stimulating and allowing debate and promoting dialogue between all parts (governments, civil society and private sector).

Ms. Patsy Sorensen, Director, Payoke, closed the round table discussion by insisting on how ‘Migration’ is a huge challenge today and for the future generations.

She stressed the importance to give training and raise awareness towards migration issues and human rights for Embassy Staff and Consulates, Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministries but also in schools (inclusion in the school programmes of the new migration realities).

Training of EU delegations in the countries of origin and transit is important in order to raise awareness, inform on links between migration and development and set new principles for cooperation in this field.

It is important to find and explore new creative approaches to deal with migration issues and to involve all parts of the society in a positive and peaceful dialogue. Beyond regulative, organizational, legal aspects of migration management there is a human component and this should not be forgotten or neglected.

Peter von Bethlenfalvy, Executive Director, CEIPA thanked the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the speakers and participants for their stimulating comments and announced the next CEIPA meeting taking place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the 2 December 2010.