Policy Dilemmas of Labour Importing Areas

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The European Commission (2005) on Europe’s labour ‘need scenario’ (a)

• EU25’s working age population will fall by 20 million between 2010 and 2030.

• This ‘will have a huge impact on overall economic growth, the functioning of the internal market and the competitiveness of EU enterprises’ (b)

• Member States are already experiencing substantial labour and skill shortages.

• These concern ‘the full range of qualifications – from unskilled workers to academic professionals’ (a)
UN Population Division: labour force projection for developed countries

Projected population aged 15-64 (medium variant)

With migration

Without migration

100 million
BUT: Migration and minorities are perceived as a MAJOR PROBLEM

_Politicisation_ of migration since 1990
- Media campaigns
- Growth of extreme right
- Negative public opinion

- Migrant workers seen as _threat to jobs_ and _welfare states_
- Perceived _failure of integration models_
- New minorities seen as a _threat to security_
- Diasporas thought to _undermine nation-state_
Migration as a problem: The myth of ‘invasion’
Policy Dilemmas

1. Industrial countries want workers but not people

2. The more governments try to control migration, the more irregular migration there seems to be

3. Government cannot resolve conflicts between economic and political objectives (states versus markets dilemma)
Solutions of Northern states

‘Migration management’

- **Differentiation** of migrants:
  - highly-skilled: welcome
  - lower-skilled: strictly limited
    - Mainly from EU Accession States
    - Only temporary or seasonal from outside EU
  - asylum seekers: reduce numbers

- **Circular** migration

- Linking migration to *development*

- Tight *border control*
Hadrian’s Wall between England and Scotland – started in 122 AD to keep the barbarians out of the Roman Empire:
Policy failure

- Policies to attract qualified personnel cause *loss of human capital* for poor countries
- Restrictions on low-skilled migration lead to *exploitation* and *violation of human rights*
- Inability to meet labour market demand for workers *all skill levels*
- Result: *undocumented migration*:
  - 12 million undocumented residents in USA
  - 4-7 million in Europe
  - Undocumented migration as a *deliberate system*
Reasons for policy failure

• Migration seen as *exceptional and problematic*
• Inability to see migration as an integral part of *globalisation*
• Inability to see migration as a *self-sustaining social process*
• Border control as *ideology* – difficult for governments to resolve economic and political contradictions
• *Dishonesty* in migration policies
• *Short-term perspectives* of politicians
Global fertility decline 1970-2050
(Total Fertility Rate = children born per woman)

Source: UNPD 2007
Migration issues by 2050?

• Severe shortages of workers in all of Europe?
• Shortages of labour market entrants in former non-European sending countries?
• Serious gender imbalances in China, India?
• Many new industrial countries competing for migrant labour?
• More diverse societies?
• Towards global governance of migration?
Towards *fairer* and *more effective* policies: National and European levels

- Consultation with public on migration policies
- Assessment of demand for migrant labour with employers and unions
- Honest policies and good information
- Stronger role for European Parliament
- Sanctions against smugglers, traffickers and exploitative employers – not migrants
- Effective anti-discrimination and anti-racist laws
International level

- *Cooperation on migration* with states of sending countries
- Skilled migration policies to *avoid brain drain*
- *Circular migration* must:
  - include option of *permanent stay*
  - be linked to *training and investment programmes*
  - return migration based on *incentives*
- *Full social and civil rights* for all migrants
- *Migrants and their associations* as key partners in policy development and implementation
THE END

Thank you for your attention