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Article

Enlargement: The Challenge of Migration from the New Member States

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BRUNSON MCKINLEY

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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Migration is coming into focus as one of the big issues of our time. Currently approximately 175 million migrants are living and working outside their native countries – three percent of the world's population. Long-term social and economic trends – the declining birth rate in the richer countries and the aging of their population – encourage the growth of migration for work. Today most senior business people and many policy-makers understand that migration is both necessary and inevitable, especially in the modern version of temporary migration for work. We at IOM want to help governments, corporations, employers and civil society to cope better. We are convinced that migration can be useful and beneficial if managed intelligently. In this field, Germany is taking the lead and deserves much credit.

Looking at the new Europe of 25, IOM anticipates the following trends.

- We expect to see some new migration flows from East to West inside the EU, but these will be neither sudden nor massive. They will take place largely through regular channels of employment and work permission and are likely to be more of a temporary nature than permanent. Such flows should be easily manageable in terms of social and economic integration.
- The example of Spain's accession is likely to be repeated in the new Member States. Beginning in the mid 1970s, some 200,000 Spaniards left their home country to work in EC countries every year. After EU accession in 1987, Spanish emigration dropped quickly. Today Spain is a net immigration country, attracting labour migration to its growing economy, especially from Latin America and Northern Africa.
- At the same time, the new EU Member States of Central and Eastern Europe will rapidly become

new countries of destination for migrants from further East and from other continents. A recent IOM study called "Migration Trends in Selected EU Countries", shows that this development is already well under way.

- For migrants from outside the enlarged EU, the temptation will continue to use irregular channels, including smuggling, trafficking and inappropriate use of asylum systems. The existence of growing non-EU communities in all 25 Member States makes irregular entry and unauthorized stays easier.
- Security concerns naturally accompany irregular migration flows. In this area adequate control measures demand international cooperation. Biometric technology to monitor movements is a good example. Germany has a leading position, but one-country solutions are not viable.
- All in all, there is a great need for effective migration management policies throughout the territory of the enlarged EU. In many areas, common policies are likely to work more effectively than a series of different national policies. Especially important will be the possibility of regular migration for work.
- That said, national differences will remain, both on the policy level and in implementation choices. German businesses are more open to Eastern Europeans; the Mediterranean countries naturally look to Northern Africa. Spain has affinities with the New World.
- A major test of EU migration policy will be to strike the optimal relationship with the wider migration world in terms of migration for work.

These observations cause me to reflect on how Europe can and should contribute to the creation of a better regulated international and interregional market in professional talent and skilled work.

The new German law is an important first step. Other European nations are likely to emulate Germany's achievement if it brings the desired results. German corporations and employers will be on the cutting edge. The German system could become the basis for an EU-wide attempt to regu-

late an international market in skilled workers and professionals.

IOM is in close touch with the important sending countries. In the developing world, many nations literally live off the remittances their workers send home. The sums dwarf foreign assistance, lending and even direct foreign investment. Qualified labour is the most important export of these countries.

Of course, we are not talking here about commodities, but about human beings. So whether the market works well or badly makes a huge difference. At present, one must admit that it could work better. What we need is a more comprehensive approach, one that embodies at least some of the following elements:

- A forward-looking analysis, country-by-country, of the skill gaps in industrialized economies. The private sector is perhaps more likely to succeed in this analysis than government. Today one finds foreign workers in the fields of computer technology, health care, construction and agriculture. What will be the needs five years from now? Twenty-five years from now?
- A system of validating credentials so that employers can have confidence in the quality of foreign-born workers and professionals.
- Pre-departure orientation programmes that help the newcomers off to a successful start in their new workplaces.
- Remittance systems that allow for savings, low-cost transfer and a socially useful investment of earnings.
- Re-integration assistance for the many workers and professionals who will wish to return home once their goals in overseas work have been achieved. Employment in a partner corporation may turn out to be the most appropriate form of reintegration assistance.
- Perhaps most important of all in the long term, an educational plan in the countries of origin that allows them to get ready to supply the needed workers and professionals in the foreseeable future.

In all of this, IOM can play a useful role in support of government, business, local communities and the migrants themselves. We have the global network of offices and contacts to support diplomatic and corporate efforts aimed at putting in place an efficient, fair and mutually beneficial system for managing international migration for work.

I've moved away a bit from the original subject, common European policies on migration, so let me come back to it now. For IOM the search for common policies is a worthy and sensible goal. That goes for all the main areas of migration management. One thing we know for sure: good policies develop from good practices, and the way to identify the best practices is to try different ideas and see what works.

So let's get started!