THE ROYAL SOCIETY

Received 23 May 2001
Accepted 30 May 2001
Published online 19 October 2001

New directions for migration policy in Europe

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There is a growing debate about the future direction of migration policy in Europe. After nearly 30 years of pursuing restrictive immigration and asylum policies, many European Union (EU) governments are beginning to re-assess their migration policies and to call for a new approach. For the first time in many years, several EU governments have begun to talk again about the benefits of labour migration and, even more significantly, have even begun to take action to recruit more migrants, especially skilled workers. This paper looks at the background to current calls for a new approach to migration in Europe and public reaction to these new initiatives. It first describes recent trends in migration in Europe and then briefly considers the demographic case for more migration. This is followed by a brief outline of some of the measures being considered by European governments to promote selective labour migration. The remainder of the paper is devoted to a discussion of some of the implications of this change in policy, focusing on two main issues: the likely consequences for sending countries, and the implications for the fight against the smuggling and trafficking of people.

Keywords: migration; Europe; trafficking; smuggling; labour migration

1. INTRODUCTION

Many European Union (EU) leaders have been calling for a new approach to migration and are urging Europe to reconsider the restrictive immigration and asylum policies which have been pursued over the last 30 years. Talk of a new approach to migration might seem surprising, given that the popular perception in many European countries is that there are already too many migrants and asylum seekers. There are also considerable fears that EU enlargement eastwards will lead to a further wave of migration threatening jobs in the West. Why then are there calls for a new approach?

This new debate about the future direction of migration in Europe has been prompted by several factors. First, there are short-term economic concerns about skill shortages in certain sectors of employment. Second, there are longer-term concerns about demographic trends in Europe. In a recent, widely publicized report, the United Nations (UN) drew attention to growing worries about the ageing of the population and population decline in Europe, and highlighted the need for more migration (UN 2000). Third, there are concerns about irregular migration and the perceived abuse of asylum systems in Europe. Despite the efforts of European governments to combat irregular migration, the smuggling and trafficking of migrants seems to be on the increase. Many argue that smuggling and trafficking, and irregular migration in general, could be reduced if there were more regular migration channels open to economic migrants. It is often suggested that there might be fewer unfounded asylum claims and less pressure on EU countries' asylum systems if regular labour migration channels were made more open.

These and similar arguments are all referred to in a recent Communication from the European Commission that calls for some fresh thinking on the future direction of migration and asylum policy. In November 2000, the European Commission published a 'Communication on a community immigration policy' in which it stated that 'It is clear from an analysis of the economic and demographic context of the (European) Union and of the countries of origin, that the "zero" immigration policies of the past 30 years are no longer appropriate' (European Commission 2000, p. 3).

In fact, as we show below, in a review of recent trends in migration in Europe, EU countries did not actually stop all immigration into Europe. Restrictive immigration policies did limit the number of migrants entering Europe through legal migration channels, but tens of thousands of migrants were able to immigrate legally or illegally through other channels.

Nonetheless, it is highly significant that the European Commission believes that it is now time for the EU to define a medium-term strategy for the admission of third country nationals 'in a gradual and controlled way based on a review of the present economic and labour market situation in Europe'. This is an important statement from the Commission given that Community competence has now been firmly established in the areas of immigration and asylum, and that the Commission has been given the task of promoting the development of a common EU policy on asylum and migration.

The Commission's Communication raises many questions about the future direction of migration policy in Europe. In this paper, we focus on two key issues: the likely implications of this new approach for sending coun-

† Views expressed are those of the author, not the International Organization for Migration.

DOI 10.1098/rstb.2001.0954
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tries, and the likely impact on irregular migration, especially the trafficking and smuggling of migrants. The Commission recognizes that an increase in labour migration to Europe will have an impact on the countries of origin of the migrants. EU Member States have acknowledged the principle that an EU asylum and immigration policy must necessarily involve co-operation with the countries of origin and transit of migrants. Therefore, the EC recommends that Member States develop their migration policies in 'partnership with countries of origin'. The Commission has also stated that efforts to open up legal labour migration channels should be accompanied by tougher measures to combat irregular migration, especially smuggling and trafficking.

This paper looks at the background to the new debate about migration in Europe and public reaction to these new initiatives. It first describes recent trends in regular and irregular migration in Europe and then briefly considers the demographic case for more migration. This is followed by a brief outline of some of the proposed measures being considered by European governments to promote selective labour migration. The remainder of the paper is devoted to a discussion of some of the implications of this change in policy, focusing on two main issues: the likely consequences for sending countries, and the implications for the fight against migrant smuggling and human trafficking.

2. RECENT TRENDS IN MIGRATION

This section draws on the findings for Western Europe from the International Organization for Migration's (IOM's) recently published World Migration Report (IOM 2000*a*). In this study, the IOM estimated that there are approximately 150 million international migrants, i.e. persons residing in foreign countries for more than one year, in the world (IOM 2000*a*). The scale of world migration is therefore quite modest. The figure of 150 million represents less than 3% of the world's population. In the EU, with a population of 375 million persons, there are approximately 18 million non-nationals (IOM 2000*a*), representing *ca*. 5% of the population (table 1).

In most countries of Western Europe, legal migration either levelled off or declined by the mid-1990s. In 1990, net migration into the EU was just over one million and by 1998 it had fallen to below 400 000 (table 2).

However, there are substantial differences in recent migration trends among EU countries. Although Germany, for example, chose not to see itself officially as an immigration country, in practice, it has absorbed large numbers of new immigrants. For example, between 1981 and 1998, nearly three million ethnic Germans, mainly from Eastern Europe and central Asia, immigrated to Germany (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2000, p. 63).

Roughly speaking, European countries can be divided into two groups: northwestern Europe and southern Europe. The countries of northwestern Europe have been countries of immigration for several decades. By contrast, the countries of southern Europe, which were traditionally emigration countries, have in recent years become net immigration countries.

Generally speaking, most legal migration over the past decade has consisted of family members joining migrants already resident in the EU rather than labour migration. Towards the end of the 1990s, there were about 7.54 million recorded foreign workers in Western Europe (Salt 2000). However, increases in foreign workers in Western Europe occurred almost entirely in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and since then the numbers have hardly changed.

In recent years, EU countries have tended to favour selective labour migration for special groups of workers, such as the highly skilled and managerial workers. For example, examination of the work permits awarded in most European countries indicates clearly that professional, managerial and technical workers constitute the bulk of workers accepted in many countries. In the United Kingdom, for example, around 80% of work permits are granted to highly skilled workers (Salt 2000).

Some countries have also promoted the employment of certain groups of unskilled and seasonal workers. For example, Germany recruits significant numbers of temporary contract and guest-workers under bilateral quota agreements with some 13 countries in central, Eastern and southeastern Europe. Quotas have been reduced in recent years as unemployment has risen in Germany, but in the late 1990s there were still more than 40 000 contract workers registered in Germany, mostly from Poland (IOM

Table 1. Non-nationals in European Union Member States in 1997.
(Source: Eurostat, *Demographic statistics, 1999*.)

country	total population	non-nationals
Austria	7 795 800	517 700
Belgium	10 170 200	890 400
Denmark	5 037 400	237 600
Finland	5 132 300	73 000
France	56 652 000	3 596 600
Germany	82 012 200	7 314 000
Greece	10 486 600	161 100
Ireland	3 660 600	114 400
Italy	57 461 000	884 600
Luxembourg	418 300	142 900
Netherlands	15 567 100	679 900
Portugal	9 934 100	172 900
Spain	39 298 600	550 700
Sweden	8 844 500	526 600
United Kingdom	58 185 000	2 121 000
total	370 655 700	17 983 400

Table 2. Net migration into the European Union during 1990–1998.
(Source: Eurostat, *Demographic statistics, 1999*.)

1990	1 008 251
1991	1 078 441
1992	1 350 132
1993	1 062 116
1994	782 855
1995	805 363
1996	734 596
1997	512 208
1998	378 687

2000*a*). More important, however, is the recruitment of seasonal workers. Several EU countries have agreements to recruit seasonal workers. France, for example, has labour agreements with Morocco, Poland, Senegal and Tunisia. In 1997, Germany recruited more than 226 000 seasonal workers (IOM 2000*a*).

In the absence of legal labour migration channels, hundreds of thousands of workers have found unauthorized work in Europe. Estimates of the number of workers employed illegally in Europe should by definition be treated with caution, but it is likely that there were as many as three million unauthorized migrants in Europe in 1998, compared with less than two million in 1991 (IOM 2000*a*). Many of these workers are engaged in low-paid and low-skilled work, which many EU nationals are no longer interested in doing, or at least not at the levels of pay on offer. Some countries, especially those in southern Europe, have introduced programmes to offer these workers a regular status. During the 1990s, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Greece and France all enacted amnesty programmes for unauthorized migrants. More than 600 000 workers were included in these programmes in 1996–1997 (OECD 2000).

3. ASYLUM

Another type of immigration includes asylum seekers and persons granted temporary protection. The number of asylum seekers in Europe has ebbed and flowed during the 1990s, from a high of more than 670 000 applicants in 1992 to a low of 226 000 in 1996 (IOM 2000*a*). The latest figures for 2000 indicate that 452 000 asylum applications were submitted in 25 European countries, of which almost 390 000 were submitted in the EU (UNHCR 2001). During the 1990s, the largest number of asylum applications was received in Germany. However, in 2000, the situation changed and the United Kingdom became the most popular country for asylum applications, accounting for 22% of applications lodged in Europe.

It is not clear why Britain is attracting so many asylum applications. One suggestion is that economic migrants are attracted by the United Kingdom's relatively strong economy and its more 'flexible' labour market. Migration to the United Kingdom has, in general, increased in recent years. This rise seems to be chiefly driven by economic factors, and is affecting a wide range of categories of migrants, including asylum seekers (Glover *et al.* 2001). Unfortunately, most research on asylum seekers has focused on policy, legislation and procedures that relate to asylum. Research on how and why asylum seekers choose particular countries is scarce (Salt 2000). Policy makers lack information on the skills, education and motivations of asylum seekers (Glover *et al.* 2001).

Only a minority of asylum seekers is granted full refugee status under the 1951 Geneva Convention. In only four European countries in 1999 was the recognition rate at or above one-quarter (Salt 2000). Many experts have suggested that the growth in the number of asylum seekers in Europe in the 1990s was due, at least in part, to the lack of regular labour migration channels for economic migrants: 'Many asylum seekers are not in need of protection and are attempting to migrate for economic and/or family reasons …' (Salt 2000, p. 20).

It is difficult, however, to distinguish between economic migrants and refugees, and many of those claiming asylum originated from countries affected by conflict and war. If we look at the main countries of origin of asylum seekers in Europe in the year 2000, we find that they are states that have been affected by conflict and serious violations of human and minority rights. The three main nationalities of asylum seekers in Europe in 2000 were citizens from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (42 300), followed by nationals from Iraq (34 700) and from Afghanistan (28 800) (UNHCR 2001).

Refugees and asylum seekers do represent, however, an underused source of labour in many EU countries. For example, one recent study in the United Kingdom found that even among qualified and skilled refugees, unemployment levels were extremely high. In a 1999 survey in London of 236 qualified and skilled refugees that were entitled to work, it was found that 42% of those with refugee status and 68% of the asylum seekers were unemployed (cited in Glover *et al.* 2001).

The British Medical Association (BMA) recently commented that 'Britain is squandering the talents of people who want nothing more than to get back into medicine at a time of national shortage of doctors' (Glover *et al.* 2001, p. 35). The BMA estimates that there are more than 1000 doctors in this position in the London area, many of whom are doing unskilled casual jobs.

4. TRENDS IN TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING

A high proportion of those apprehended trying to illegally enter Western Europe with the help of smugglers are asylum seekers (Salt & Hogarth 2000). However, despite growing concern about the rising scale of human trafficking and migrant smuggling in Europe, no official statistics are made publicly available on a regular basis to indicate trends in either of these. It is common to see estimates of up to 500 000 migrants smuggled into Europe each year, but there are few official figures on the actual size of this problem. A recent report to the Council of Europe reviews the latest migration trends in Europe and concludes that 'On balance, there is no hard evidence that illegal and unrecorded migration is strongly on the increase' (Salt 2000, p. 30).

Part of the difficulty in obtaining good statistics relates to the problem of accurately defining smuggling and trafficking.

(a) *Definitions*

During the second half of the 1990s there has been much debate about the concepts of 'trafficking' and 'smuggling', and many bodies have argued that a much clearer distinction needs to be made between these two terms. At the international level, the most important discussions have taken place in Vienna where the UN prepared a new 'Convention against transnational crime', which includes draft protocols that set new definitions for trafficking in people and migrant smuggling in international law. The UN Convention was signed in Palermo in December 2000, although far fewer states signed the trafficking and smuggling protocols. The UN defines traf-

ficking as '... the recruitment, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, either by the threat or use of abduction, force, fraud, deception or coercion, or by the giving of unlawful payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having the control over another person' (UN General Assembly 1999*a*).

Migrant smuggling is defined as '... the intentional procurement for profit for illegal entry of a person into and/or illegal residence in a State of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident (UN General Assembly 1999*b*). They thus included an element of profit in its definition of smuggling. So, for the UN, the person who assists a friend or relative to cross a border illegally, but does not take payment for the service, is neither a trafficker nor a smuggler.

Trafficking according to the UN definition does not necessarily have to involve international migration, whereas smuggling is defined from the outset as a migration issue because it involves the crossing of an international border.

Some commentators, however, have expressed reservations about these definitions and have argued that in practice it might be quite difficult to make a distinction between cases of smuggling and trafficking. For example, Skeldon (2000) in a recent article argues that 'while the general intent of the term "trafficking" may be clear, in practice it is difficult to apply ... Violence, coercion and exploitation are an integral part of smuggling and it is virtually impossible to discuss smuggling without trafficking' (Skeldon 2000, p. 9).

Although the main purpose of migrant smuggling might be to facilitate the illegal entry of the migrant into another country, there are many cases in which smuggled migrants are exposed to violation and exploitation either during transportation to the destination country or on arrival. Sometimes this can even result in the migrants losing their lives due to the negligence of the smuggler, as occurred in the Dover case (discussed in § 6c). It is estimated that at least 1574 migrants have lost their lives in smuggling incidents in Europe since 1993 (IOM 2000*b*).

(b) *Smuggling*

Many of the statistics cited in the European media on the scale of trafficking and the profits made by traffickers are somewhat dated. For example, one of the estimates most often cited dates from 1993, at a time when less distinction was made between smuggling and trafficking. The estimate by Widgren (1994) of 250 000–300 000 illegal entries into Europe in 1993 is one of the most widely quoted figures, but it is based on a series of assumptions that might no longer hold true (see IOM 2000*c*). For example, the number of illegal migrants and smugglers recorded depends not only on how many attempt a border crossing, but also on the effectiveness of the border guards at different sections of the borders. Higher numbers of illegals apprehended might simply reflect better efforts at border control.

Although it is difficult to be certain about the full extent of smuggling and trafficking into Europe, there are a number of indicators that show that the trend is an upward one. In the western Balkans (Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia), for example, the number of migrants apprehended trying to illegally cross the borders of these countries increased by one-third during 2000.

In Britain, a recent Home Office study concludes that the number of illegal entrants detected has been on a sharply upward trend since 1993. However, only 4600 people who had breached their conditions of stay were detected in 1998 (Glover *et al.* 2001).

(c) *Trafficking*

Turning to trafficking, in particular trafficking in women, there are even fewer reliable indicators of European trends. Ironically, the best estimates on the scale of trafficking in women and children to Europe are actually based on estimates made by United States authorities. A recent United States report estimates that worldwide trafficking in women and children alone ranges annually from 700 000 to two million. Out of those trafficked in 1997, 45 000–50 000 were estimated to have been trafficked to the United States (O'Neill 2000), and 175 000 women and girls were estimated to have been trafficked from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (O'Neill 2000). However, there is little explanation of how these figures were derived.

The EU has sponsored a great deal of research on trafficking under its STOP (Sexual Trafficking of Persons) programme, and Europol prepares regular situation reports on trafficking in each Member State. However, no estimates of the scale of trafficking in EU Member States are published. Eurostat, the EU's statistical office, does collect data on border apprehensions and smuggling cases in each Member State, but these data are not published and do not, in any case, provide indicators of trafficking. States are able to provide considerable data on illegal border crossings, but not on whether the migrants were subsequently severely exploited in the destination country. Nonetheless, these data might help us to better understand how trafficking occurs. For example, in IOM's studies in Hungary and Poland (IOM 2000*b*), it was clear that the vast majority of those apprehended trying to cross into Western Europe with the assistance of a smuggler were men. Women are more likely to enter Western European countries with false documents or enter legally and then overstay.

Having briefly reviewed some of the main trends in regular and irregular migration that affect the EU, let us now consider some of the arguments for a change in migration policy, beginning with an issue that has received considerable public attention—demographic change.

5. DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

Explicit demographic considerations have generally not been a key objective of migration policies in Europe (OECD 1991). Governments have tended to focus on short-term issues, and less on population ageing and population decline, which are gradual and long-term trends. Given the high unemployment during the past decade, few governments in Europe have promoted permanent immigration for demographic or other reasons.

In March 2000, the UN drew attention to the demographic challenges that face Europe owing to population decline and an expected increase in the proportion of people over 65. Demographers frequently use the term

'replacement fertility', but rarely the term 'replacement migration'. In its study on 'Replacement migration: is it a solution to declining and ageing populations?', the UN defines 'replacement migration' as 'the international migration that would be needed to offset declines in the size of population, the declines in the population of working age, as well as to offset the overall ageing of a population.'

The size of replacement migration needed was calculated for eight countries: France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, and for two regions: Europe and the EU. The possible effects of replacement migration on the population size and age structure for these countries were investigated as well. The study estimated that to keep constant the size of the working-age population, many countries would need to increase substantially in-migration flows.

The UN study concludes that 'The projected population decline and population ageing will have profound and far-reaching consequences, forcing Governments to reassess many established economic, social and political policies and programmes, including those relating to international migration.'

Most studies show that a very large number of international migrants—far larger than is the present case—would need to enter Western Europe each year to offer a significant benefit, given the rapid ageing and low fertility rates of many countries (IOM 2000, p. 26). More than 10 years ago, the OECD, in a report 'Ageing populations: the social policy implications', concluded that 'the influx of immigrant workers would need to be very large to fully compensate for shrinkage of the working-age population in many European countries' (OECD 1998, p. 58).

Migration is only one of several measures that could be taken to address demographic change. There has also been a great deal of discussion of the range of social and economic policies that could be taken to offset population ageing and population decline. These measures include raising fertility rates, increasing labour supply, improving the training and education levels of the existing workforce, reducing unemployment, and reforming the financing of health care and pension systems (see OECD 1991, 1998; Coleman 1992, 1995; Feld 2000; Tapinos 2000).

It also has to be recognized that the demographic benefits of migration might be short term. International migration does have a beneficial effect on the ageing of a population as immigrants tend to be younger than the host population and female international migrants coming from developing countries generally have higher fertility rates. Even though migrants' fertility rates do come down after residing in the new country for some period, in the interim they contribute to population growth. However, eventually immigrants also become old, so the demographic benefits of migration can be short term. An influx of foreign workers might swell the ranks of those that contribute to social security systems, but by so doing they acquire benefit entitlements and so eventually increase the beneficiary population (OECD 1998). For this and other reasons, policy makers might prefer to promote temporary rather than permanent labour migration.

Even if migration could have a substantial impact on population ageing and population decline, it would not be easy to regulate migration flows according to demographic considerations (Tapinos 2000). Immigration policies in favour of certain migrants on the grounds of age or sex might be seen as a form of discrimination. Experience shows that although states might be able to influence the entry of certain categories of migrants, it is difficult to regulate return migration, which makes it difficult to control the volume and composition of net migration.

In short, migration alone is unlikely to be the answer to Europe's demographic problems. Very high levels of immigration would be required, and even so the effects on population ageing would be short lived, although migration would boost the size of Europe's population. Moreover, there are probably several other less politically sensitive ways in which governments could reduce the costs of population ageing, such as increasing labour force participation among older people and women (Tapinos 2000).

6. SOME EXAMPLES OF NEW LABOUR MIGRATION INITIATIVES

More important than demographic change has been the realization among many EU Member States that they need to increase labour migration in the short term to meet the growing demand for skilled and unskilled workers in their economies. As a result of growing labour shortages and an increased worldwide competition for skilled workers, several Member States have already begun to actively recruit third country (non-EU) nationals from outside the EU. Some examples of these initiatives are given below.

(a) *Germany*

Germany has recently started to open up more legal labour migration channels. On 1 August 2000, Germany introduced a new so-called 'green card' programme allowing up to 20 000 foreign IT specialists to work in the country for a period of up to five years, with the possibility of these permits being extended. Applicants must have a university qualification or the promise of a salary of at least DM100 000 (US$50 000) a year. The Head of the Federal Labour Office reported in August 2000, just after the scheme was officially introduced, that 5486 people had already applied for a special permit to work in Germany under the scheme. It is the first time that Germany has formally opened its doors to economic immigrants since it halted recruitment of 'guest workers'—who had been recruited from Turkey and southern Europe to help sustain its booming economy in the 1950s—in 1974. Germany has, however, accepted temporary workers from Eastern Europe for some time (OECD 2000).

In March 2000, the German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer issued a memo urging German consulates to relax visa restrictions to make it easier for foreign professionals to come to Germany. Also, significantly, it was expected that asylum seekers, who have been prohibited from working since 1997, were from autumn 2000 to be allowed to work after 12 months in Germany (Anon. 2000*a*).

Most business leaders support the 'green card' programme and want to see easy-entry programmes expanded to cover other industries and occupations. However, the change in policy by the German government reopened

larger debates about immigration, including the question of whether the new 'green-card' programme should be linked to a further tightening of Germany's asylum and deportation policies.

The opposition parties argue that Germany already accepts enough immigrants, but that they are not the ones most needed for the economy. Germany now receives about 300 000 immigrants a year: 100 000 asylum seekers, 100 000 ethnic Germans and 100 000 family unification immigrants. Instead of taking in newcomers who need Germany, they argue, Germany should be attracting newcomers that it needs, such as computer specialists. The way to do this without increasing overall immigration, they argue, is to further restrict asylum and to limit family unification.

In practice, Germany has found it difficult to meet the target of 20 000 foreign professionals. As of mid-January 2001, only 4440 green cards had been issued, an average of about 1000 per month since the start of the programme (Anon. 2001*a*). This might be partly a reflection of the growing international competition for highly skilled workers, many of whom prefer to work in countries with a longer tradition of recruiting such workers.

(b) *Italy*

After many years of being a sending country, Italy has rapidly become a destination country for labour migrants, many of whom are in an irregular situation. One study, for example, indicates that Italy 'hosts probably the largest proportion of illegal immigrants in Western Europe' (Ghosh 1998, p. 12). In August 2000, the largest Italian farmers' federation, 'Coldiretti', called for 65 000 migrants to be allowed to work in Italy this year (Anon. 2000*b*). Foreign seasonal workers were needed, said its president Paolo Bedoni, to harvest cereals, grapes and vegetables—low-paid work that Italians, despite an unemployment rate of 11%, are reluctant to do.

The Italian Minister for the Interior, Enzo Bianco, said in July 2000 that Italy 'urgently needs a labour force and new vital energy because it is growing old very quickly. If Italy wants to develop and grow, it must turn to immigrants, who can act as a lifeblood' (Anon. 2000*b*).

However, there is no consensus on how to deal with labour migration. The Italian Parliament needs, under pressure from northern Italian businesses that complain of labour shortages, to grant legal status to more unauthorized foreigners. In 1999, 56 500 foreigners were regularized. Others argue that Italy should be more proactive and select the migrants it needs rather than the migrants who have already chosen Italy. For example, the Head of the Eurispes 'think tank' in Rome asserted that Italy needs immigration and should accept immigrants via front-door legal immigration rather than legalizing some of the illegals in the country. An example of the latter type of measure is a pilot scheme, managed by the IOM, that offers temporary work and training in Italy for 5000 Albanian workers. By opening up legal channels such as this, Italy hopes to receive more cooperation from Albania in the fight against smuggling and trafficking

(c) *United Kingdom*

There are also signs of a growing awareness of the need to recruit more foreign workers in Britain. On 11 September 2000, the Immigration Minister of the United Kingdom, Barbara Roche, made a well-publicized speech (Roche 2000) on the benefits of economic migration, suggesting that Britain should, for both economic and demographic reasons, consider recruiting more foreign skilled workers from abroad. Referring to population ageing in the United Kingdom, Minister Roche argued that 'migration is one of a range of measures that could help ease the economic impact of such demographic change'.

Roche argued, referring to the experience of the United States during the 1990s, that economically driven migration can bring substantial overall benefits both for growth and the economy. Roche referred to skill shortages in many sectors of industry in the United Kingdom. The National Health Service of the United Kingdom, which is the largest employer in the country, and which devotes a high percentage of its funding to providing health care for the elderly, has already begun to recruit nurses from abroad and relies heavily on foreign doctors. Nearly one-third of doctors in the United Kingdom were born abroad and nearly one-third of nurses in inner London are not trained in the United Kingdom.

In June 2000, the tragic deaths of 58 Chinese discovered in a container at Dover, England, once again highlighted the problem of irregular migration in Europe and led to calls for tougher measures to restrict immigration. Ironically, in the same month, authorities in the United Kingdom reported that, faced with a severe shortage of some 17 000 nurses, the National Health Service had decided to begin discussions with the Chinese authorities on the terms and conditions of receiving Chinese nurses as 'trainees' in the United Kingdom.

The weekly number of foreign nurses that apply to register in the United Kingdom has risen from 70 five years ago to about 1000 today. Critics of the policy of recruiting nurses from abroad argue that there is no serious shortage of qualified nurses in the United Kingdom. The real problem is that the wages offered are too low for qualified nurses in the United Kingdom to accept work in hospitals (MNS 2000). In addition to nurses, the United Kingdom is also faced with a shortage of workers in other low-paid jobs in the public sector, such as teachers and social workers. These posts are increasingly filled by South Africans, Scandinavians and Belgians.

7. POLICY APPROACHES

In the Commission's new Communication on a community immigration policy, there are no firm guidelines on what type of labour migration policy should be pursued by Member States. This Communication calls for more legal immigration channels to be made open to labour migrants, although it does not specify any targets. Responsibility for deciding on the needs for different categories of migrant labour will continue to remain with the Member States. The Commission is all too aware that, in reality, Member States have very divergent immigration policies, and believes that there should be an open debate to try to reach a consensus on the objectives of migration and asylum policy in Europe. The Commission recommends the need for a flexible approach and suggests that 'quotas are impracticable and that an appropriate system of indicative targets would be appropriate' (European

Commission 2000, p. 16). It is not clear what is meant by 'indicative targets', but as we have seen in the case of the largest country in the EU, Germany, quotas are being established for skilled workers.

The examples discussed earlier from Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom show that there is no common European approach to labour migration policy either within or between these countries. Although some countries have introduced regularization programmes, as mentioned above, others have targeted skilled workers. The latter programmes tend to be temporary, whereas regularization programmes provide the opportunity for migrants to remain permanently in a country. Whilst some countries have tried to recruit mainly small numbers of highly skilled workers, others have been more concerned with regularizing the employment of large numbers of low-paid and unskilled workers. Those who favour the recruitment of the highly skilled argue that it provides a means of selecting the migrants that are most needed for economic reasons. It enables employers to meet specific skill shortages and promotes labour market flexibility. This approach might also have demographic advantages, to the extent that the workers concerned are employed under temporary labour contracts. However, temporary worker programmes have proved difficult to manage in many countries as many temporary workers have been unwilling to return home at the conclusion of short-term contracts (for an extensive discussion and comparison of such programmes, see OECD 1999).

8. NEGATIVE PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE BENEFITS OF MIGRATION

Although the labour migration measures outlined and discussed earlier are fairly modest, public reaction to further immigration has been rather negative. For example, in Germany, most opinion polls find that 55–65% of Germans oppose the 'green-card' programme. A poll published in the newspaper *Die Woche* in July 2000 showed that 63% of those asked thought Germany did not need any more immigrants.

Earlier this year, *The Economist* commented that 'The European popular imagination, it seems, is gripped by panic about foreigners: that there are too many of them pouring in, that there is certainly no need for any more. In short, that Europe is 'full up' (Anon. 2000*c*).

Too often, migration is seen as a burden on advanced industrialized societies. Much of the public debate about migration in recent years has been in negative terms. International migration, especially in Europe, has for many years been viewed as something that must be restricted and controlled. Similarly, much of the debate about population ageing concerns ways to reduce the costs of an ageing society. New migrants are often portrayed as a burden on receiving countries even though many studies have shown that migrants bring great economic and social benefits to these countries, as well as contributing to their cultural diversity. There are many good economic arguments for immigration, including the energy, entrepreneurialism and fresh ideas that migrants bring.

There are also tremendous fears in some European countries of the migration consequences of EU enlargement. Many people simply fear being swamped by a new wave of migration from the East. This was dramatically reflected in a Danish election campaign poster that warned of the imminent arrival of 40 million Poles after EU enlargement eastwards (IOM 1998).

Significant changes in migration policy in Europe are unlikely to occur without greater efforts being made to educate public opinion about the benefits of migration. One of the ways in which this might be done is through awareness-raising information campaigns, which would challenge some of the current misconceptions about migration in Europe.

9. PARTNERSHIP WITH COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN?

If European countries begin to recruit substantially more migrants, especially skilled workers, what are the likely consequences for sending countries? In its report on 'replacement migration', the UN did not discuss the implications of 'replacement migration' for sending countries but focused primarily on the demographic problems of developed countries.

However, in its recent 'Communication on a community immigration policy', the EU puts a strong emphasis on the need for EU countries to develop their migration policies 'in partnership with countries of origin'. The EU must, therefore, also 'examine and take a responsible attitude towards the effects of emigration on the countries of origin' (European Commission 2000, p. 7). The emphasis on 'partnership with countries of origin' is also likely to be in the interests of European countries. At present, source countries have little incentive to reduce irregular migration because of the significant sums of money that migrants send back home. They might be more willing to work together with EU countries to more effectively manage migration if they felt that they were part of a partnership that involved migration benefits for both sending and receiving countries.

It is important to note that the sending countries include both developing and transition countries. The latter are countries that also face their own demographic problems associated with population ageing and population decline. It is likely, given EU enlargement, that a high proportion of immigrants to Western Europe in the future will come from central and Eastern Europe (CEE). At present, average wage levels in the CEE candidate countries are about one-quarter of those in the EU at purchasing power parities, and the gap is not expected to close significantly in the short term. Germany already recruits large numbers of temporary contract workers, as mentioned earlier. As a result of EU enlargement, there is likely to be an increase in East–West migration (and West–East migration), although it is unlikely to be on the massive scale that some fear. A recent European Commission study indicates that Germany might expect an inflow of 220 000 migrant workers a year after the EU admits new members from central and Eastern Europe (Anon. 2000*d*). This is approximately two-thirds of the total expected inflow to the EU from central and Eastern Europe. However, research conducted by the IOM indicates that much of the migration from central and Eastern Europe will be temporary, with many workers maintaining their houses, families, pensions and health insurance in their home countries (IOM 1998). On the basis of experi-

ence of previous enlargement, this labour migration is likely to help promote economic growth in the CEE region, eventually leading to declining emigration (Salt 2000).

Although there has not been a great deal of research on the effects that emigration, particularly skilled emigration, has on countries of origin, all agree that migration might have both positive and negative effects on sending countries. The effects of international migration are complex for both source and destination countries (IOM 2000). Often, the same factors that create benefits can also produce costs. For example, the brain drain of highly skilled migrants is often described as a loss to the source country and a benefit to the destination country. However, if the migrants help link companies in the home country with business opportunities in the new location, both countries might benefit (IOM 2000, p. 22). International migration can help to create international networks that promote trade and investment flows, benefiting both source and destination countries. An example of the latter is the network established between the Indian software industry in Bangalore and Silicon Valley in the United States, which has a very large Indian migrant labour force (Glover *et al.* 2001). In short, a new pattern of migration is emerging, whereby migrants often maintain and develop links with their countries of origin. The challenge for policy-makers is how to develop programmes for foreign workers that enable them to enhance these links with their countries of origin (European Commission 2000, p. 8).

Remittances sent back by migrants to their country of origin are one of the main reasons why so many sending countries are in favour of international migration. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated that US$77 billion was sent in remittances in 1997 alone (IOM 2000, p. 31). The economies of many sending countries rely to a significant extent on income from remittances. For example, in Mexico, remittances equal 10% of the total value of its exports. In West Africa, one study found that 30–80% of household budgets were comprised of remittances (IOM 2000, p. 32).

Remittances can also have negative effects if sending communities become too dependent on this source of income, leading to the need for continued emigration that might, in turn, limit investment in local communities. The range and complexity of international migration flows, as well as the fact that the scale of these flows is often under-reported, makes it difficult to assess the full impact of international migration on sending countries.

The effects of emigration on sending countries will vary according to the skill level of emigrants, the sectors of employment they leave, and whether they subsequently return to their country of origin. The loss of unskilled and semi-skilled workers can usually be made up relatively cheaply and quickly, but the loss of highly educated professional workers is a more serious problem. 'In the long term, migration of skilled labour may have costs for the country of origin by inducing a switch to products and processes that requires less skilled labour, and by causing a deterioration in the public services and public administration' (Glover *et al.* 2001).

We also know relatively little about how emigration of skilled workers affects different groups of countries and, in particular, the differences between the impact on transition and developing countries. Some states have lost much higher proportions of skilled workers than others. For example, between 1960 and 1987, sub-Saharan African countries are estimated to have lost 30% of their highly skilled manpower, chiefly to Western Europe (Stalker 1994).

This trend is continuing. For example, more than 500 nurses left Ghana in 2000, mostly to take higher-paying jobs in richer countries (Anon. 2001*b*). This figure is three times higher than in 1999 and more than double the number of nursing graduates Ghana produced in 2000.

The IOM's World Migration Report shows that there is a lack of consistent data mapping these outflows of skilled workers and even less research on the impact of such migration on sending countries (IOM 2000*a*). Past experience indicates that guest-worker and/or temporary labour importation programmes based on bilateral agreements have not worked very well (Martin *et al.* 2000). The benefits to the sending country have been sometimes limited because remittances have not been productively spent. Another problem with temporary worker programmes is that after a few years the worker is expected to return to his or her country of origin, where there might be few jobs for the newly acquired skills of the returning migrant. It is therefore better, at the outset of the programme, to plan for the return and re-integration of migrant workers. If this happens, the country of origin might benefit from returning migrants' new skills, experience and the contacts that they have established abroad.

There are few signs, however, that the new labour migration programmes for the highly skilled being discussed and implemented in Europe are being developed in partnership with countries of origin. This does not necessarily mean that these programmes are likely to primarily have a negative impact on the economies of sending countries. We need much more research before we can come to such a conclusion on this issue. It is likely, however, that the positive benefits of labour migration for both sending and destination countries will be enhanced when there is an active dialogue and partnership between sending and receiving countries. Partnerships with countries of origin may also help EU states combat irregular migration. Sending countries may be more willing to take measures to combat irregular migration if legal labour migration channels for their nationals increase.

10. COMBATING MIGRANT TRAFFICKING AND HUMAN SMUGGLING

The creation of greater legal opportunities for migration does not mean that EU states will reduce their efforts to combat irregular migration. On the contrary, as the European Commission admits in its recent 'Communication on a community immigration policy', a 'more open and transparent immigration policy would be accompanied by a strengthening of efforts to combat illegal immigration and especially smuggling and trafficking' (European Commission 2000, p. 22).

In practice, however, it is likely to be difficult to monitor the effect of more open immigration policies in Europe on smuggling and trafficking, because, as noted earlier, these concepts tend to be poorly defined, and there is a paucity of reliable data on recent trends in migrant trafficking and

people smuggling. It will also be difficult to distinguish between the effects of more open labour migration policies and tougher law enforcement, and other types of measure to combat trafficking and smuggling.

The impact on smuggling and trafficking will vary according to the types of labour migration policy that are pursued. Programmes that are limited to the highly skilled are likely to have less impact on migrant smuggling and trafficking than programmes open to the semi-skilled and unskilled. Many of those being smuggled into Europe are young males with few skills, who are seeking asylum (IOM 2000*b*).

Among asylum seekers and refugees, as mentioned earlier, there are highly skilled workers, but this does not mean that they are primarily economic migrants. As noted earlier, although the opening up of labour migration channels might ease pressures on Europe's asylum systems, there are many asylum seekers who are unlikely to meet the criteria for admission into programmes for labour migrants. The experience of countries like Australia, Canada and the United States might be relevant here. In these countries, even though they continue to admit large numbers of migrants through legal migration channels, asylum applications have followed broadly the same trend as in Europe (OECD 2000).

Increasing labour migration into Europe is probably more likely to have an impact on the smuggling of migrants than on trafficking. Among the trafficked, there are large numbers of women who are being primarily recruited for Europe's sex industry. It is unlikely that this group will be the first to benefit from the opening up of new labour migration channels. The main purpose of trafficking is to place people in situations in which their labour can be severely exploited under conditions that involve abuses of human rights.

In conclusion, there has been relatively little research on the relationship between the opening up of labour migration channels, and trafficking and smuggling. It is not clear, for example, how regularization programmes in various southern European countries have affected smuggling and trafficking. In the short term, such programmes might actually increase smuggling. When a regularization programme is announced by the authorities, there is often an increase in irregular migration as more migrants seek to enter a country to benefit from the regularization progamme. Such migrants are also aware that these programmes are often followed by tougher law enforcement measures to restrict the entry of irregular migrants.

11. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Alone, a rise in migration to Western Europe is unlikely to be a solution to declining and ageing populations, but together with other measures, it could be an important way in which governments could better respond to these demographic challenges. However, it seems unlikely at present that states in Western Europe are prepared to promote a substantial increase in permanent immigration. What is more likely is that there will be more selective and temporary labour migration into Western Europe, specifically to meet skill shortages in certain occupations and industries. This type of migration could also have demographic benefits, as migrant workers contribute to social security costs, fill jobs in areas providing services to the elderly and help reduce the ageing of the workforce.

However, even modest steps to increase temporary and skilled labour migration might not be popular in Europe. If selective labour migration schemes are to be successful, governments will have to give greater priority to educating public opinion about the potential benefits of migration. This will require information campaigns, using the mass media, to better inform the European public about migration issues.

Despite restrictive immigration policies, there has been considerable irregular labour migration into Western Europe over the past decade—even during times of high unemployment. Thousands of migrant workers are already employed illegally in Western Europe. Most of these workers are low skilled and low paid. Many countries in the EU are hesitant to recognize this problem and to accept that their economies need these workers. This would produce demographic benefits as well. By regularizing the workers' status, several mainly southern European states have brought these workers into their social security and health insurance systems in recent years.

There are also many asylum seekers and refugees who represent a potential labour reserve for many EU countries. Some are unable to work while waiting for long periods for their asylum claims to be considered. Others who obtain refugee status are more likely to be unemployed than other workers, or are doing jobs below their skill levels.

The creation of more regular channels for labour migration into Europe could help to reduce irregular migration pressures, and the smuggling and trafficking of migrants. This does not necessarily mean that the 'smuggled' and 'trafficked' have the skills that Europe is looking for, but by opening up legal migration channels EU states may be able to achieve greater cooperation from sending countries in the fight against irregular migration. Much will also depend on the scale and type of labour migration programme that will be established. Programmes that target relatively small numbers of highly skilled workers are unlikely to have much impact on smuggling and trafficking.

Finally, if immigration is to increase in Western Europe, it is important that this does not lead to costs for developing countries and countries in transition, many of which also have ageing and declining populations. The European Commission has stressed the importance of 'partnerships with countries of origin', but selective labour migration programmes have often been conceived and designed without much consultation with source countries. A managed approach to migration requires the cooperation of both source and destination countries. In an increasingly interconnected world, cooperation among countries is essential in addressing such global issues as international migration.

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