

How to Improve Intra-European Mobility and Circular Migration? Fostering Diaspora Engagement

Rīga, 11-12 May 2015

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The aim of the conference is to examine the macro-economic and fiscal effects of intra-EU labour migration after 2004, and to look at existing legal, social, cultural and cognitive impediments to greater mobility of people. The conference's ambition is to establish a set of policy recommendations for more integrated and better functioning internal market for labour, including maximizing the utility of diaspora communities, to be forwarded to the EU's decision-makers.

This high-level expert conference is organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia in cooperation with the non-governmental organisation the "Europeans Throughout the World", the Latvian Institute of International Affairs and non-governmental organisation the "European Latvian Association" and is supported by the European Commission, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia.

Conference language: English with Latvian and French interpretation

11 May

8:30 – 9:30 REGISTRATION. WELCOME COFFEE

9:30 – 10:00 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

– Mr. Pēteris Elferts, Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Latvia

– Dr. Inna Šteinbuka, Head of the Representation of the European Commission in Latvia

OPENING SPEECH – Mr. Rihards Kols, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary of the Prime Minister, Latvia

10:00-12:00 **PANEL I: Labour mobility in the EU: from fundamental right to freedom of movement to a more efficient allocation of labour resources?**

This session will be devoted to labour migration as a more efficient allocation of resources. Freedom of movement is a fundamental right of the citizens of the EU. Moreover, this right is closely linked to better economic performance of the EU, as cross-border movement of people is contributing to overall productivity growth. However, the great number of cases annually considered by the Court of Justice of the EU related to mobility points to significant loopholes in application of this fundamental right and, thus, also to a waste of economic potential. The purpose of this session would be to look at the evidence from the court room on most pertinent issues connected to people's mobility, and to assess how the current EU's legal framework could be improved to overcome the existing hindrances.

Chair: Mr. Niels Jørgen Thøgersen, President, Europeans Throughout the World

Speakers:

Mr. Egils Levits, Judge, Court of Justice of the EU

Dr. Yves Pascouau, Director of Migration and Mobility Policies, European Policy Centre

Ms. Marina del Corral Telléz, Secretary General of Immigration and Emigration, Ministry of Employment and Social Security, Spain

Mr. Jörg Tagger, Deputy Head of Unit, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission

12:00-13:00 **LUNCH**

13:00-15:00 PANEL II: Macro-economic aspects of people's mobility

This session will address the macro-economic aspects of mobility in the EU. Without doubt, the EU as a whole has benefited from a better utilisation of the workforce through labour mobility. However, from the EU economic governance perspective, labour mobility complicates timely identification of macroeconomic imbalances. Labour flows can be volatile – it is difficult to know how much of inflows/outflows are permanent. Migration affects wage dynamics – containing wage pressures in the recipient countries and stimulating wage increases in the countries of origin. The session will start with the examination of the overall numbers and profiles of migrants, and will address the problem of statistical “intangibility” of people’s cross-border movements. Once there is a notion of overall figures, some general assessments can be made as to the effects on both sending and receiving countries. Is this true that the mostly motivated, harder-working have left/are emigrating? If yes, what impact will it have on competitiveness and economic prospects of affected Member States? And what implications will it have for the EU as a whole?

Chair: Mr. Pauls Raudseps, Columnist, Magazine “Ir”

Speakers:

Mr. Walter Radermacher, Director General, Eurostat, European Commission

Mr. Jonathan Chaloff, Administrator, International Migration Division, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD

Prof. Raul Eamets, University of Tartu, Chairman of the Fiscal Council, Estonia

Prof. Mihails Hazans, University of Latvia, Research Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA, Bonn)

Mrs. Ilona Kiukucāne, Adviser on Sectoral Economic Issues, Permanent Delegate to Business Europe, Employers’ Confederation of Latvia

15:00-15:30 COFFEE

15:30-15:50 SPECIAL INTERVENTION. Q&A – Mr. Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe

15:50-17:30 PANEL III: Social, cultural and perception aspects of mobility

This session will be dedicated to social, cultural and perception aspects of mobility: access and strain to social security systems and the transferability of social payments between/among the Member States. Allegedly, labour mobility has induced changes in the social security systems in the Member State, exposing weaknesses of the existing social welfare models (e.g., detrimental work incentives, welfare tourism, social benefits in one country pay more than salary in another country). This session will also examine how mobility affects family members of mobile citizens, especially children. Moreover, the diverging perceptions of how certain perceived problems correspond to reality, notably, how real is the receiving Member States' and their citizens' concerns about the risks of labour mobility on their countries' social systems and public services will also be addressed.

Chair: Mrs. Elizabeth Collett, Director of Migration Policy Institute Europe

Speakers:

Ms. Klára Fóti, Research Manager, Living Conditions and Quality of Life , Eurofound

Mrs. Ylva Tivéus, Member of Board, Europeans Throughout the World

Mrs. Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, Ambassador, Director General IV for Legal and Consular Affairs, Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Austrian Coordinator on Combating Human Trafficking, Austria

Ms. Marie-Hélène Boulanger, Head of Unit, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, Union Citizenship Rights and Free movement, European Commission

19.00 – 21.00 DINNER. INFORMAL PANEL: Mobility from the perspective of non-EU countries

Venue: Bellevue Park Hotel Riga, Slokas iela 1, Rīga

The informal session - over the dinner - will be devoted to examination of the views of some non-European countries with large diaspora communities inside the European Union on the issues of freedom of movement and engagement of their diaspora communities. Language regime – only English.

Chair: Dr. Werner Rechmann, Coordinator, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in the Baltic States

Speakers:

Ms. Anna Goos, Migration Expert, Secretariat of the State Commission on Migration Issues, Public Service Development Agency, Ministry of Justice, Georgia

Mr. Ofir Lahav, Manager, Senior Department of Policy Planning, Budget, Work Program and Research, Ministry of Aliyah and Immigrant Absorption, Israel

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09:00-09:30 MORNING COFFEE

09:30-11:30 PANEL IV: Return migration and working with diaspora communities: what advice to Latvia and others?

This session will deal with sharing Member States' experiences in fostering return migration and working with diaspora communities. If Latvia and other sending countries are to move from middle-income level countries to high income countries (with higher levels of innovation, higher value added exports, etc.), they will need to boost productivity very significantly. One potential source for high-qualified, educated, experienced workers are overseas' diaspora communities, which may have not only economic but also sentimental reasons to return and contribute to the economy. What are the lessons learned and 'success stories' from the Member States which have been able to re-attract their compatriots?

Chair: Dr. Aija Lulle, Director of Diaspora and Migration Studies Centre, University of Latvia

Speakers:

Dr. Inta Mieraņa, Scientific Director, University of Latvia

- The emigrant communities of Latvia: National identity, transnational relations, and diaspora politics

Mr. Pierre-Yves Le Borgn', Member of the French National Assembly, France, and Rapporteur for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

- Highlights from the Report to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe “Educational and cultural networks of communities living abroad”

Ms. Ginte Damušis, Director, Department of Lithuanians Living Abroad, Ministry of Foreign affairs, Lithuania

- Examples from Lithuania

Dr. Raymond C. Xerri, Director, Directorate-General – Political, EU Affairs and Maltese Abroad, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Malta, Vice-President, Europeans throughout the World

- “Linking Malta with its Diaspora”

11:30-12:30 CONCLUSIONS. Q&A FOR MEDIA

During this concluding session a revised text of policy recommendations addressed to European institutions regarding internal mobility and diaspora engagement will be presented.

Mr. Pēteris Elferts, Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Latvia

Mr. Aldis. Austers, Chairman, European Latvian Association, Latvia, Vice-President, Europeans Throughout the World

12:30-13:30 LUNCH. DEPARTURE