



## New Pathways for Labour Market: what role for skills partnerships in EU migration policy?

*On the 2nd of April the CEP held a conference with renowned experts in the field of migration policy and skills partnership to discuss the possibly applications of this new tool for migration management.*

**April 2nd, 2019**

### Speakers

**Michael Clemens** - Co-Director of Migration Displacement and Humanitarian Policy, Centre for Global Development

**Marta Foresti** - Director of Human Mobility with ODI

**Alexandra Sá Carvalho** - Legal and Policy Officer for Legal Migration and Integration (DG Home), European Commission

**Tilman Nagel** - Head of Selection Education, TVET & Labour Markets, GiZ

**Raffaella Greco Tonegutti** - Migration and Development expert, Belgian Development Agency

The event was opened by CEPS researcher, Mathias di Salvo, who presented some key insights into the US and Mexico migration relationship. The pattern of management for this border allows for the development of many key insights into the effect of legal migration channels, and the effects of tightening border control. This analysis showed that when the number of work permits declined within a period of a few years rates of illegal border crossings would grow. Mr. di Salvo highlighted that stricter borders have a history of incurring increased costs, reduce the frequency of cases of circular returns and bringing a number of other issues along with it. That is not to say that open borders or highly lax working permit policy will be the solution either as this may lead to other challenges such as visa shopping.

Michael Clemens, the key note speaker from the Centre for Global Development, then carried on with this idea in his key note address. He emphasized that those who are so clearly motivated to improve their lives, something he feels is clearly illustrated by the drastic measures taken by migrants along the migration pathway, represent new opportunities for Europe. He sees some of the innovations in the field of migration management to be ways to reduce the suffering of those who are looking to migrate, and channel that drive and ambition into entrepreneurship and innovation.

One such solution that Mr. Clemens and the CGD are exploring are the possibilities of creating Skills Partnerships between traditionally understood sending and receiving countries. This takes the form of bilateral agreements between two countries, incorporating both public and private stakeholders, to create systems that promote exchange of specific professional skills. Sending countries provide specific professional trainings to individuals before migrating, and receiving countries provide the technology and support required to operate these trainings in the sending country. This way Germany gets access to specialty training tailored to the needs of the receiving countries. These programs are meant to be bundled with training for individuals who will stay in the sending country thus enhancing the capacities of those who stay in the sending country as well. This system also strives to create the opportunity for more remittances to be earned and sent back, and significantly reduced fiscal drain on the country.

Mr. Tilman Nagel, of the GiZ, went on to describe one such system which Germany has been exploring. In Germany, Mr. Nagel explained, there has been a growing need for more nursing professionals. After exploring a number of potential sending country candidates Serbia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Bosnia were identified as key candidates. They are now working to develop a system where participants who follow the 'abroad-track' program, counter to the also offered 'stay-track', will receive language and professional training that would have them qualified enough to enter into the German nursing apprenticeship system, and shorten the period of this in-country apprenticeship to just one year. The success of this program, as Mr. Nagel presented it, comes through the cooperation of governments, education systems and those in the private sector.

Ms. Raffaella Greco Tonegutti, of the Belgian Development Agency, also presented the steps that Belgium has taken towards implementing a skills partnership system. This one to be focused on ICT professionals. Through a collaboration with the Belgian group Molengeek, the BDA has begun negotiations with Morocco to form what Ms. Tonegutti described as a quad- or sect-partied approach. What this means is that it would include input from the Moroccan government, Belgian, or more precisely Flemish, government, and representation from the corresponding private sectors.

The rest of the panel was dedicated to exploring the implications of these systems from the perspective of the European Commission, as represented by Ms. Alexandra Sa Carvalho, and Ms. Marta Foresti of the ODI. What was made clear during this event is that there needs to be more innovation and development in the way in which migration is being addressed and being framed. A repeated theme throughout the event is that migration management often follows, or is viewed to follow, the failure of a development project. This understanding does not serve us well in the modern migration context. What is needed now are ways to look at coming up with mutually beneficial systems that grounded in the realities of each participating member. The time for one-size-fits-all migration management must be over.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Kate Jackson  
Outreach Department Project Manager



/BICBrussels



@bicrh



@bicrhr

Avenue Louise, 89 - 1050 Brussels - Belgium

Tel: +32 02 725 84 66

[www.bic-rhr.com](http://www.bic-rhr.com)

[info@bic-rhr.com](mailto:info@bic-rhr.com)

