



“Integrating migration on the agenda of the 21st Century”

8th Global Forum on Migration and Development 2015

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Ministers, Ambassadors, distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to make the keynote speech at the beginning of the common space of the Global Forum on Migration and Development 2015. I would like to thank the Turkish authorities for giving me the opportunity to share the views of my organisation on migration, which is a key issue for our societies and economies.

[Before I start, I would like to express my sincerest condolences to the Turkish people after the tragedy occurred on Saturday in Ankara. Our thoughts are with the victims, their families and all those affected. Turkey can count on the support and solidarity of the OECD]

I cannot either start this speech today without thinking about the migrants who are at this very moment, with their families, on boats fearing to drown any minute, fearing the extreme violence of their smugglers, hoping for a rescue and a safe shelter. We are facing a terrible humanitarian tragedy.

People all over the world are seeing images of people landing on European shores. These powerful images make us realise that migration is not a matter of statistics and quotas; it is about real people whose lives have fallen apart. However, these images contribute to shape a partial and often distorted perspective on migration issues. It is as if Europe was a citadel under siege, as if migration was only about these unregulated flows.

We know that, in fact, most flows to most countries continue to be through legal entry. Some argue that these large flows will be very costly because immigrants displace native workers and come to OECD countries for social benefits. But we have solid evidence that this is not the case.

At the same time, images of massive arrivals, particularly when concentrated on a few spots and countries as is currently the case, create legitimate concerns. Of course, international migration is a sensitive issue in most countries. One of the reasons is that it touches upon the very notion of the nation state.

In the face of growing migration flows, public opinion surveys consistently find that the public, including migrants themselves, is losing confidence in governments' capacity to control borders, manage migration and ensure successful integration.

It is therefore important to rebuild trust in migration policies and institutions. Fears about migration must be addressed by using a balanced and facts-based discourse – not only in the international fora, but also back at home. 'Leadership' in this case means addressing the challenges that do exist, not echoing the fears of ill-informed prejudice.

Leadership in this refugee crisis in particular, means addressing the challenges in adapting and coordinating policy responses at both national and EU levels. Beyond the crucial issues of quotas and re-settlement which need to be addressed, integration programmes will need to be scaled-up and adapted to ensure refugees successfully integrate as quickly as possible in their new homes.

On all these aspects the OECD has a long expertise and is providing support to its Member countries. We are ready to help European leaders take bold decisions to face this challenge, so that Europe, as a whole, emerges stronger economically, socially and politically.

Thinking now beyond this refugee crisis, the fact that under the Sustainable Development Goals, policymakers view migration as a “reality of major relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination”, opens the door for real progress in addressing key challenges and fostering international co-operation in this area.

I would like now to highlight a series of steps that need to be taken in order to make migration an advantage for countries of origin, countries of destination and the migrants themselves, while at the same time properly informing the public opinion.

First, we need to have accurate and timely information on migrant flows and migrant communities. We need to be able to tell people that the refugee flows to Europe which seem massive in our TVs represent only a part of the annual flows to OECD countries – 4.3 million permanent entries in 2014¹, according to our OECD International Migration Outlook² which we just published a few weeks ago. The bulk of migrant flows take place in an orderly manner.

It is also important to have detailed information on immigrants and their characteristics because we know that one policy does not fit all.

¹ International Migration Outlook 2015, Fig 1.1, p. 18. And Editorial, Executive summary, Chapter1 main findings.

² http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/international-migration-outlook-2013/the-fiscal-impact-of-immigration-in-oecd-countries_migr_outlook-2013-6-en

Successful policies require comprehensive, well-tailored measures that consider migrants' countries of origin, education background, and category of entry.

The OECD has a long experience in monitoring migration flows and the size and composition of emigrant populations by country of origin. Tomorrow, in the side-event "Building on migrants' skills: recognizing and promoting them for development", we will present a new report on "*Connecting with Emigrants: a global profile of Diasporas*"³, a joint publication of the OECD and the Agence Française de Développement.

This report provides up-to-date information on emigrant communities by country of origin: how many there are and where they live; who they are and what they do in the labour market. It also provides evidence on the evolution of these populations over time and the changes in their composition. It shows that migration within regions is on the rise. What is more, there were 31 million tertiary educated migrants in the OECD in 2010, 13 million more than in 2000.⁴

However knowing "how many", "who", "where from" and "where" is obviously not sufficient to make migration a powerful engine of our economies and a positive element of our societies. We need to know the "what" and the "how".

³ The publication is not available online yet although the pdf is and printed copies will be distributed at the GFMD. This publication will be officially launched on 3 November in a press-event jointly organised with the Agence Française de Développement.

⁴ Key finding number 5, chapter 1, p.18 in forthcoming publication *Connecting with Emigrants. A Global Profile of Diasporas 2015*.

How to develop a well-defined and robust migration policy, while maintaining the ability to respond to unexpected events such as the current refugee crisis into Europe.

As witnessed currently by many countries, geo-political crises can produce a sudden and large influx of migrants or asylum seekers. Other events such as the enlargements of the European Union over the past decade also had a profound impact on migration flows. To remain in control of the situation, migration policies must be able to adapt promptly to such unexpected changes.

A second challenge is how to reconcile positions taken in international fora with the growing hostility against migration that is increasingly visible in many major destination countries. One approach might be to spell out the potential benefits of migration more clearly, but also more honestly: There are both winners and losers associated with migration.

Migration can be beneficial overall, but some groups, such as the unskilled, may be faced with increased competition in the labour market if many unskilled migrants enter a country. A balance must be struck between the need to offer opportunities to the local workforce and to allow for labour migration to fill structural skill shortages, for instance.

A third challenge is to promote policies which improve opportunities in countries of origin, including by harnessing the skills of returnee migrants. Above all, countries need strategies to integrate migrants into their social and economic life, preventing seclusion and alienation. Well-integrated

migrants, who can fully use and further develop their skills, are in a better position to contribute to development in their countries of origin.

Because of this, integration is the cornerstone of any positive migration story. The difference between “us” and “them” is not about background – after all, almost everyone has some migration history in her family background, and often dating not that far back – but rather that “we” are the integrated ones, whereas “they” are not. All the more reason why integration is so vitally important for the public acceptance of future legal flows. Furthermore, only those who are successful in the destination country will have new skills and sufficient financial resources to share with their communities of origin.

Indeed, scepticism regarding immigrants’ willingness to integrate into the host society needs to be addressed as a pre-condition for reaping the benefits from migration.

The OECD, together with the DG Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission, has recently released a publication entitled “*Settling In*”⁵ with detailed indicators of integration comparing native-born with immigrants and the children of the two groups.

A key result of this work is that immigrants have lower outcomes than the native-born⁶, but, it is at the top end of the qualification scale where the differences in integration outcomes between immigrants and the native-

⁵ http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/fr/social-issues-migration-health/indicators-of-immigrant-integration-2015-settling-in_9789264234024-en

⁶ In various parts of International Migration Outlook 2015, for example Figure 1.8, p.18 and chapter 5.

born are most pronounced⁷. A successful integration of immigrants and their children is a precondition for ensuring public support for future migration and migration policy reform. But it is also a precondition for maximising the positive impact of migrant on destination countries, origin countries and the migrants themselves.

In 2010/11 in OECD countries, there were 10 million high-educated migrants who were not employed.⁸ A further 8 million high-educated were in lesser-skilled jobs, a situation where Brain Drain is coupled with Brain Waste.⁹

This Brain Waste concerns in particular the migrants who have foreign qualifications – and this is the majority. Better assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications helps here, and increasing transparency about foreign degrees will also reduce the cost of migration by reducing obstacles to mobility.

It will also be important to better share the cost of education and increase supply of skills in origin countries, for example by investing in training and education. The issue of international students must be equally considered in this context. Many students return to their origin countries - with higher skills - whereas others will stay, so the benefits and costs are more equally shared.

⁷ Key finding 4, p.11, International Migration Outlook 2015.

⁸ Information from the Database on Immigrants in OECD countries: <http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/dioc.htm>

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Information on the overqualification rate by region is provided in Figure 1.13, p.41 of the forthcoming publication *Connecting with Emigrants. A Global Profile of Diasporas*.

These are some of the key issues for integrating migration on the agenda of the 21st century. The OECD is fully committed to move forward an ambitious and critical agenda to better use the skills of migrants, to remove obstacles to mobility, and to better share the costs and benefits of international migration. If migrants integrate well and international co-operation is enhanced, migration can become a source of hope, rather than fear.

Let me end by thanking you all for your attention. I look forward to a rich dialogue and exchange of ideas with you.