



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, DECENTRALIZATION
AND E-GOVERNANCE



RT 2 General Rapporteur's Report¹

Roundtable 2 addressed the theme of ***Migrant integration, reintegration and circulation for development***. The aim of the Roundtable was to identify policies that secure the rights and situation of migrants in the host country, for whatever time they spend there, and in the origin country if and when they return.

The two Roundtable sessions focused on two crucial phases in the life cycle of migration: the time spent abroad, and the return home if the migrants choose to return, or do so at the end of their work contracts.

These are critical phases for the migrants and for the families that depend on the benefits of their migration – moments that give them the opportunity to earn money, increase their skills, pick up new ideas and values, and when they can send or bring all these home, to benefit others, even if they are only doing this temporarily or on a repeated basis.

The discussions were set against the backdrop of emerging forms of temporary and circular mobility in recent years, which are challenging traditional approaches to immigrant integration in host countries, and to return migration. Temporary, seasonal or other circulating migrants often have less access to the rights and services that permanent immigrants enjoy, yet experts agree that lower skilled, temporary migration brings enormous

¹ Note that given the limitations of time, this report was selective of key issues, recommendations and proposed actions discussed in RT 2.1 and RT 2.1. The final Report of the Proceedings of the Athens GFMD meeting will provide fuller coverage, and will include a reference to Migrant Resource Centres as facilities that inform and support migrants in their emigration, their integration while abroad and their return home. These could be further strengthened through networking across countries, and their effectiveness could be evaluated from the migrants' perspective.

benefits for developing countries, often measurably larger than permanent or longer term migration.

The sessions drew some clear linkages between integration abroad and reintegration back home. For example, skills training and orientation for work abroad can also prepare migrants for return and job reinsertion at home, if they are linked to real labour market needs in both countries. Portable social security benefits can encourage people to return home and give them some additional capital for their business and job ventures back home. Similarly, reducing the costs of migration, and the risks of exploitation by recruiters in the country of origin can prepare the way for a safer, more protective life for the migrants abroad. These conditions can broaden people's choices, including their decisions to return and reintegrate in the home country.

In other words, integration can begin in the country of origin and return and reintegration can begin in the host country.

Roundtable 2.1: Inclusion, protection and acceptance of migrants in society – linking human rights and migrant empowerment for development.

RT 2.1 explored the assumption that the more migrants are included, protected and accepted in their host societies, the better they are able to secure the wellbeing of their families and contribute to development in host and origin countries. It expanded on the usual debate on migrant integration, as the domain of more permanent immigrants, and looked at the basic needs and human rights of temporary or circulating migrants as well.

Key recommendations

1. We need to revisit the concept of development in the integration context. The transfer of social remittances as an outcome of human development may be one of the most important links between integration and development.
2. Education and Training Policies enhance the human development of

migrants. Best practices include inter-cultural schools, language and vocational training courses for unemployed migrants, gender-specific counseling and language courses, and protection of children.

3. Migrant associations can help leverage the contribution of migrants to development back home. Governments can strengthen their capacities to undertake counseling, information sharing and investment back home.
4. Implement integration policies at local levels, which may require decentralization of funding and program development.
5. Consider the cost to society of excluding migrants, in addition to assessing the benefits of integration for development.
6. Reduce the cost of migration through pre-departure loans subsidized by donors. This can reinforce inclusion in the context of new forms of legal mobility.

Four concrete actions were suggested for governments and experts to implement:

- a) Compile best integration practices and publish these on the GFMD website.
- b) Undertake further research on how to evaluate impacts of integration policies on development (including cost-benefit analyses).
- c) Conduct a comparative study on social protection policies for migrants.
- d) Commence a pilot project on a bank/non-governmental program for low cost pre-departure loans to migrants as a follow-up to the Bangladesh study for RT 2.1.

RT 2.2: Reintegration and circular migration: effective for development?

This session revisited a theme already discussed in 2007 and 2008, but from the angle of reintegration, a key element of circularity, which is also new for the development discussion. It explored the assumption that effective reintegration of returning migrants can support development efforts, particularly at community level, and specifically in the context of circular

migration. Circular migration was defined as including temporary and long term or permanent migration, covering all skills levels.

Key recommendations

1. Different strategies are needed for different countries, depending on their stages of development, and on the skill levels and circumstances of the migrants.

2. Legal frameworks are necessary to facilitate reintegration schemes such as small and medium enterprise development or matched funding arrangements.

3. Countries of origin can factor circular migration into their broader development strategies. This will ensure the availability of general development-oriented incentives to return and reintegrate in productive ways.

4. Host countries can also integrate circular migration into their migration and development strategies with partner countries. These can include vocational training, reintegration support and capacity building in the origin country.

6. Origin countries can match migrants' skills with actual jobs in development sectors back home. This can begin before departure, through information and skill training aimed both at securing jobs abroad and job reinsertion after working abroad. Recognition of skills acquired abroad is critical for reinsertion in the labour market of origin countries.

7. Host and origin countries need to work together, and with private, non-governmental and international agencies, to link return and reintegration with development projects, particularly at local, community levels. Such programs should include the community as beneficiaries. The costs of reintegration, and of circular migration programs generally, can be shared through partnerships, matching of funds and Training Funds.

8. Gender-sensitive perspectives can be a way of adapting reintegration policies to new forms of mobility. Female returnees often have fewer incentives than men to return home or circulate their skills.

9. Regarding evaluations of the impacts of circular migration and reintegration, these are practically non-existent in the context of development. Data need to be collected urgently for this. Capacity to undertake evaluations needs to be strengthened in countries of origin; and key indicators need to be identified. The impacts of returns and reintegration on families, communities and local labour markets need to be monitored over time.

Four concrete actions were suggested for governments and experts to implement:

- a) Establish a database on Circular Migration programs as an information tool for the GFMD.
- b) Undertake longitudinal or one-time studies of the impact of reintegration on the local labour market in the origin country.
- c) Establish an observatory to collect data and experiences of reintegration, to support future evaluations. Non governmental organizations should contribute to this project.
- d) Define a set of indicators to evaluate the development impact of reintegration strategies.