

## ● **Position Paper on Migration and Development**

● Prepared by the Working Group Migration and Development in the Global Responsibility - Platform for Development and Humanitarian Aid (3.12.2013)

The present Position Paper on Migration and Development is based on the position paper from AGEZ from 7 December 2007 on the same topic.

This document has two parts. First, the introduction will look at the fundamental issues and structural framework in the field of migration and development, which is then followed by concrete recommendations for important policy areas in migration and development.

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## **1. Notes on the political discourse**

The discourse on migration and development sways like a pendulum back and forth: from optimism in the post-war period to pessimism around the debate on the “brain drain” in the 1970s/1980s, and then moving back again towards the flank of optimism at the turn of the millennium with such discussions and concepts as “brain gain”, “brain circulation”, and “triple win effects”. Furthermore, this topic is increasingly gaining recognition at high levels through the organisation of international conferences<sup>1</sup> and the establishment of international discussion forums<sup>2</sup>, all of which should stimulate and improve the exchange of information and cooperation between decision-makers at various levels.

Despite the potential that migration harbours for development processes, one cannot neglect the fact that migration is closely tied to global economic (under-)development. The development context should primarily focus on diminishing structural constraints, combating global imbalances, supporting political and economical reforms in the countries of origin, and increasing the individual and collective choices for people.

### ***1.1. Managing migration through development cooperation?***

Development cooperation is often seen as an opportunity to manage international migration from structurally weak regions and states, and when possible, to decrease international migration. The European Union has described this connection between migration and development policies in the “Global Approach to Migration” (as of 2005). In principle, the European Union is poised to maximise the positive impact of migration for the development of partner countries while limiting the negative consequences stemming from migration.<sup>3</sup> This global approach on migration should ensure a link between migratory and developmental aspects. In doing so, partner countries should be made aware of the “possibilities to earmark development funding for migration-related initiatives”.<sup>4</sup> The “Global Approach to Migration” should be implemented through so-called mobility partnerships,

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<sup>1</sup> 1st High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (2006) and 2nd High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (2013).

<sup>2</sup> Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (in the early 1990s), International Dialogue on Migration (since 2001), Global Commission on International Migration (2003-2005), Global Migration Group (since 2006) and the Global Forum on Migration and Development (since 2006) [accessed on 28.11.2013].

<sup>3</sup> European Commission (2011): Commission Staff Working Paper: Migration and Development. Accompanying the document: The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, p.2 [accessed on 27.11.2013].

<sup>4</sup> European Commission (2011): Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, p.19 [accessed on 13.8.2013].

which are framework agreements between the EU and partner countries outside of the EU. In essence, support should be granted to those countries that limit illegal migration from their territory, that improve the border controls and successfully proceed against the falsification of documents and visas.<sup>5</sup> Factually, such an approach supports policies of exclusion by outsourcing the EU border regime – in other words – by relocating border controls outwards far from the actual borders of the EU Member States.

The European NGO-association CONCORD (Confederation for Relief and Development) criticises that, through the EU “Global Approach to Migration”, EU migration policies have shifted unilaterally towards the economic interests of the EU and the control of migration flows instead of focussing on the protection of human rights and supporting developing countries.<sup>6</sup>

In Austria, this direct link is reflected in the current three-year programme on Austrian development policy.<sup>7</sup> However, it also emphasises how development cooperation can contribute to the reduction of migration flows: “Uncertainty and fragility are the greatest development constraints worldwide [...] and also unleash streams of migrants, which can be mitigated by effective development-policy measures.”<sup>8</sup>

## **1.2. Freedom of movement for goods, but not for people?**

The massive restrictions in the field of migration pursued by rich countries of this world stand in contrast with other globalisation processes. While free trade with raw materials, all types of goods, capital through to services, have expanded in the past decades and are still in the process of expanding, people from poorer regions of the world remain without such comparable freedom to move freely between continents. Development organisations have been criticising the neoliberal dogma of open borders for all goods and financial transactions for some time. Regulations would be necessary in order to ensure financial market stability, to make food sovereignty possible and to stimulate local/regional economic activity. Such a measure could be the introduction of a global tax on financial transactions, from which revenues should be used for development purposes. Conversely though, the restrictive dealing with migration is completely disproportionate.

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<sup>5</sup> Angenendt, Steffen (2012): Migration, Mobilität und Entwicklung. EU-Mobilitätspartnerschaften als Instrument der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit. Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, p.16 [accessed on 13.8.2013].

<sup>6</sup> CONCORD (2011): Spotlight on EU Policy Coherence for Development, p. 60–61 [accessed on 13.8.2013].

<sup>7</sup> See: FMeiA (2012): Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy, p.10, 30, 40 [accessed on 25.10.2013].

<sup>8</sup> See: ibid., p.30. f

Whilst it is basically possible and allowed to migrate within the EU for work purposes, people from third countries, all the more, face strict regulations concerning their access to the labour market. As long as there are massive, global wealth disparities without an effective global distribution mechanism, a regulation for migration will also be needed in order to avoid a downward spiral in the level of employees' salaries in the industrialised countries, and to be able to finance infrastructure and social services. However, migration regimes based on solidarity should have priority over restrictive regimes that violate human rights!

Moreover, there is a demand for highly- and also less-qualified migrants in all rich countries, and for that reason there will always be immigration in countries that have such a demand. Aside from this, immigration in general also creates considerable economic dynamism, thereby contributing to the establishment of a new basis for social security contributions and tax revenues in the countries of destination. How much immigration (yet also how much emigration!) a country can tolerate without jeopardising its social cohesion (or losing its qualified workers) is very different between countries depending on their politics and social context, and does not have a fixed size. From a development policy perspective, one should ask which migration policies (that are implementable) could most benefit the population in developing countries. There are now a number of recommendations in place on how migration policies should be devised so that they positively impact development. How can destination countries contribute to development? To put it briefly: they should create more legal opportunities for immigration and strengthen the socio-economic and political rights of migrants.

### ***1.3. Which migration policy(-ies)?***

#### Legal immigration should be possible

The repressive EU border regime has cost many lives. It should be reformed in such a way that it demonstrates solidarity and applies a human rights-based approach towards both refugees and other migrants. When legal ways to immigrate into the EU remain as restrictive as before whilst global inequalities continue to rise at the same time, then there will mainly be “irregular” ways of migration and the pressure on asylum systems increases. “Irregularity” bears various risks for migrants and high costs for their families in the country of origin. The emigration of unqualified, young people provides relief to the labour markets of developing countries; however, the earning opportunities for irregular migrants are low as they are not protected by labour law and can easily be exploited. From a development policy perspective, there is a need for a significant expansion of the still too restrictive legal immigration regime that goes beyond the well-paid “key worker”.

#### Making migration gender-equitable

More gender-sensitive forms of migration management are needed to ensure equal migration opportunities and rights for women. Women represent just under 50% of all migrants. The role of women has gained little notice in migration; often, it is linked to them as victims of trafficking. Migration has an emancipatory potential, yet it can also lead to lowering their status or to a solidification of gender roles. The employment status is often very precarious in female-dominated segments of the labour market. There is a need for legal options of migration, as well as for strengthening migrants’ labour rights in order to improve their socio-economic status.

#### Promote circular migration

“Circular migration” means that the migrant can travel many times into and out of the country without infringing on their human rights in the countries of origin and receiving countries: during their stay in the receiving countries migrants gain experience and qualifications that they can apply in their countries of origin after their return.<sup>9</sup> The transfer of knowledge (in both ways) should be seen as a way to contribute to development, thus regular forms of migration could be fostered. Less rigid requirements for establishing legal residence status, simplifications in accessing Austrian citizenship (among others, decoupling it from the income, considerations on the proportionality of burden for the procurement of

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<sup>9</sup>[http://www.proasyl.de/fileadmin/proasyl/fm\\_redakteure/ARCHIV/Stellungnahmen/2008/Positionspapier\\_Zirkulaere\\_Migration\\_dt.\\_1008.pdf](http://www.proasyl.de/fileadmin/proasyl/fm_redakteure/ARCHIV/Stellungnahmen/2008/Positionspapier_Zirkulaere_Migration_dt._1008.pdf), p.3 [accessed on 28.11.2013].

documents), as well as the provision of dual citizenship would be simple ways to support self-determined forms of circular migration.

#### Strengthen the social rights of migrants

The more human rights and the rights of migrants are protected and strengthened, the better able they will be to protect themselves against exploitation, violence and racism, and to generate a higher income. Migrants' family members from countries of origin could also profit directly from this. We call for unrestricted access to the labour market for asylum seekers and other (partly) excluded migrants after a six months stay in Austria.

#### Recognition of migrants' qualifications

Facilitating the recognition of migrants' diverse qualifications and offering a wide range of supplementary courses for the recognition of foreign diplomas would be an effective way to facilitate immigrants access to better-paid jobs. "Dequalification", as it happens to women who are working in private households or as sex workers, for example, should be avoided through the provision of further education and the possibility to change jobs without losing residency status.

#### Making political participation possible

In the face of European states' reality – that they are destination countries for immigration – migrants should receive the right to vote much sooner than what is currently allowed. It is a violation of human rights that a large proportion of people are continuously left out of the political process.<sup>10</sup> Co-determination and, with it, participation in society, should be possible in the destination country after residing there for some years (also, for that, granting dual citizenship would be a simple solution). It should not – as it is the case in Austria – be coupled to a minimum level of income. Unless voluntary engagement is a criterion for quicker access to citizenship, migrants in diaspora organisations should be recognised for their engagement in development policy and integration.

#### Granting residence on humanitarian grounds!

The possibility to grant residence permits on humanitarian grounds should be better applied, and, where appropriate, expanded, such as for victims of women trafficking or for refused asylum-seekers with integration prospects.

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• <sup>10</sup> See International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 2 and Article 25 [accessed on 28.11.2013] and „Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.“ (Art 21 para. 1 UDHR)

## Voluntary return

The return of refugees, whose asylum application has been rejected, is most often coined under the name “voluntary return”. Since it is about “voluntariness” without real freedom of choice, it generally makes sense to support returnees in building their livelihoods upon their return in their countries of origin. In doing so, it should link up with already existing development programmes so that they can benefit from these experiences and create synergies.

## **2. Recommendations**

### ***2.1. Coherence between development cooperation and migration policies for development***

Coherence between migration and development policies means that migration policy matters should be considered in development policy and vice versa. In the context of development policies, the fundamental principle of policy coherence for development should be followed, meaning that policy coherence should be pursued in the interest of development.<sup>11</sup> In this sense, none of the political measures set by Austria or the EU should run counter to the development goals. The EU Member States, and thus Austria too, have an obligation to adhere to the principle of policy coherence in the interest of development as set out in the Treaty of Lisbon (article 208).<sup>12</sup>

Development policy concerns are currently underrepresented in Austrian migration policy and the measures are also not coordinated with migration policy. There are no institutional structures to promote and monitor policy coherence in Austria in the same way as there is no such structure at the international level. In this connection it is worth mentioning, by way of criticism, that Austria considers the costs for refugees and asylum seekers as official development assistance (ODA) – in 2010, it was around USD 36 million or 3 percent of the

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<sup>11</sup> Paragraph 41 of the draft resolution refers to the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly by the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, which posits: “We call for increased efforts at all levels to enhance policy coherence for development. We affirm that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals requires mutually supportive and integrated policies across a wide range of economic, social and environmental issues for sustainable development.”

<sup>12</sup> Article 208 in the Treaty of Lisbon states The Union's development cooperation policy and that of the Member States complement and reinforce each other. “Union development cooperation policy shall have as its primary objective the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty. The Union shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries.”

official development assistance.<sup>13</sup> Also, development cooperation should not be reduced to dealing with the causes of migration, nor should it be put at the service of a restrictive migration policy.

We therefore call for the following:

- The interlinkage between migration and development, as well as ensuring its policy coherence, should be stepped up and recognised at the political level.
- Partner countries of the EU for development cooperation, and especially Austria's development cooperation, should support the development of a migration policy that focuses on migrants' human rights.
- Austrian decision-makers in the area of migration and development should include development issues in migration policies and should not subordinate these to migration policy goals. Development assistance should not be linked to the signing of readmission agreements.
- Austrian decision-makers should create institutional mechanisms (e.g. an interministerial working group) in order to foster policy coherence between migration and development.
- Decision-makers in the area of migration and development policies should ensure that "migration" is included as its own topic in the post-2015 development agenda.
- The creation of institutional mechanisms to foster policy coherence and to enable the exchange of information between migration and development actors in the Austrian political landscape.
- In connection with that, the creation of a cross-cutting donor structure that would help to put into practice the elements of migration and development.

## ***2.2. Collaboration between development cooperation and diaspora organisations***

Organisations working in development cooperation (and public institutions, such as ADA, FMeiA, development banks, development assistance organisations from federal states, and others, such as civil society organisations, development NGOs, umbrella associations, etc) currently have little to do with diaspora organisations. Even if there have been isolated

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<sup>13</sup> OECD: ODA-Reporting of In-Donor Refugee Costs. Members' methodologies for calculating costs. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/RefugeeCostsMethodologicalNote.pdf> {accessed on 8.11.2013}.

initiatives of cooperation in the past years, contact between these organisations is still rather an exception. Diaspora organisations should have more possibilities to get involved through official structures and/or be able to cooperate with experienced partners from the development NGO-scene in line with a coherent development policy.

We therefore call for the following:

- More workshops and training courses for diaspora and development organisations at all levels in order to propagate the benefits and synergies of migration and development, and to get to know and understand each other better. Here, it is important that the concept of development remains broad without having pre-defined it.
- More networking and partnership opportunities in order to get to know the other side better and to entice cooperation at eye level on the local, national and international sphere. In doing so, diaspora organisations should not be instrumentalised by established development organisations.
- Diaspora's knowledge, and especially that of diaspora organisations engaged in their countries of origin, should be recognised and used for developing development policies. Not only does this foster diversity, but it also enables broader and more effective development cooperation.
- Diaspora organisations and their umbrella associations should be included programmatically at all levels of development cooperation (three-year programme on development policy, country strategies at the federal level, but also in the funding lines for development assistance from the federal states). A first step would be to set up round tables for the development of country strategies in the focus countries, which includes representatives from the relevant diaspora and their organisations.
- Diaspora organisations are, in the same way as development NGOs, entitled to be recognised as actors in development cooperation and they should be given equal access to funding and rights to participate (also see funding opportunities). In this context, equal treatment also means corresponding funding and support.
- Development NGOs should include diaspora organisations as experts, partners, dialogue and target groups, domestically and abroad. This should contribute to the realisation of tandem projects that are as equal as possible.
- South-NGOs working in development cooperation should be increasingly supported and encouraged to help projects and framework programmes stemming from migrants in the South.

- Changes in the human resources policy of (N)GOs to give preference to persons from the diaspora, and to address and encourage them specifically.
- Development of a special career plan to offer training and continued education to diaspora employees.
- Connections between development assistance projects abroad and projects from related diaspora organisation should be strengthened in Austria.
- Cross-thematic synergies based on a dialogue should be sought at all levels.
- Project evaluations from already implemented partner projects of diaspora and development organisations should be supported.

### ***2.3. Funding for diaspora organisations***

Migrants are often not part of development institutions and therefore not involved in the implementation of official and public as well as privately funded development projects. Moreover, diaspora organisation and their umbrella associations are underfunded so that their services are mostly offered on a voluntary basis. This leads – and has led – to many diaspora organisations being resentful as they do not feel like their know-how is seriously taken into account for Austria’s development cooperation and that they are not given sufficient support.

We therefore call for following:

- The recognition and strengthening of diaspora organisations as actors in development cooperation by public bodies and NGOs. Above all, it is about facilitating access to existing budget lines through more flexible provisions and capacity building.
- Introduction of own ADA budget lines for diaspora organisations and their umbrella associations working in development in the areas of “Development Communication and Education in Austria”, as well as in “NGO Cooperation International” with a special focus on diaspora organisations by women, children and persons with disabilities. As is the case with all budget lines, these budget lines should also take into account gender, human rights, and sustainability.
- Opening up ADA’s economic partnerships for diaspora entrepreneurship and link it to special funding opportunities and seed funding.

- The establishment of a small project pool for projects from diaspora organisations. Diaspora organisations and their umbrella associations should be involved in the establishment of small project tools.
- The involvement and cooperation with experts from diaspora organisations should be introduced as an additional funding criteria in development assistance projects.

#### ***2.4. Capacity building for diaspora organisations in development cooperation***

Diaspora and migrant organisations are important development actors; however, they are often not recognised as such. The reason for this could be in part that diaspora organisations are often only organised informally or are less institutionalised. They perform mostly voluntary work and only have few resources available for marketing and lobbying. Nevertheless, they still send individual and collective remittances to their countries of origin and provide, in that way, private health care, education and further comparable services of development cooperation. Debates around migration and development very often allude to remittances and its use for the development of a country, yet they do not refer to capacity development, something that is indispensable for diaspora organisations so that they can better fulfil their roles as development actors.

We therefore call for the following:

- The strengthening of diaspora organisations through tailor-made programmes to improve their capacities taking into consideration the gender specific needs as well as the needs of vulnerable migrants, thereby empowering them to contribute to development.
- Potential diaspora entrepreneurs should have access to measures and consultations that strengthen their capacities.
- Training sessions and workshops on project management, monitoring and evaluation, project design, strategic planning, fundraising, financial management, lobbying and advocacy should be offered.
- Development organisation and agencies, donors, ministries, and policy-makers should participate in training courses and workshops on the effectiveness of diaspora engagement in order to increase diaspora organisation's contribution to development.
- Support capacity development measures of diaspora organisations, e.g. through training courses and paid internships in development organisations.

## **2.5. Awareness-raising**

Migration is an important topic in public discussions. The complex link between migration and development are however rarely communicated in this context.

Awareness-raising on migration and development would therefore have to deconstruct the many contradictions that prevail in the public discourse. Three such examples shall be mentioned as being among the many inconsistencies:

- A notable number of people manifest xenophobic and racist attitudes and refuse migration as a whole. However, they do not realise that every family has their own migration story.
- The EU controls their borders with expensive specialised agencies; at the same time, the economy of whole regions in Europe depends on the exploitation of labour from irregular migrants.
- The EU's foreign trade policy strives to gain world market shares and dominance over foreign markets; simultaneously, their development policy partly tries to cushion the consequences from their own trade.

Awareness-raising means to respond and to work on those contradictions. They can be illustrated by transmitting a deeper understanding of these linkages, thereby achieving a coherent worldview that also leads to coherent (political) action for the sake of improving the well-being for humankind.

We therefore call for the following:

- The underlying foundation for this type of work is the need for an antiracist attitude. We therefore demand sufficient support for the set-up of relevant educational programmes that also transmit intercultural – next to anti-racism – competencies.
- Many institutions have been working since years – if not for decades – on raising awareness on this topic. This work should continue to be supported and promoted by public authorities.
- Town-twinning form direct bridges between Austrian and the partner regions and can thus also represent 'bridges for awareness and world perceptions'. Also, they need support so that the interconnection between migration and development topics can be better communicated.
- Migrants can speak for themselves and should be able to get more opportunities in the public media. We therefore request that the number of persons with a migrant

background represented in the public media is proportionate to the number in the population.

- Organisation dedicated to awareness-raising should make more use of the diaspora organisations' big potential. In that way, more synergies can be fostered.

## **2.6. Remittances as a factor for migration and development**

In the context of globalisation and of international financing for development, migration in itself, as well as remittances, have become important topics in the development discourse. In the time period between 2000 and 2012, remittances have almost tripled and are now estimated to be around 514 billion dollars.<sup>14</sup> In comparison: in 2011, only 113 billion dollars<sup>15</sup> were spent on development cooperation and assistance (ODA). Remittances statistics only take into account forms of payments that have been transferred officially and which have thus gone through formal channels. How much of these remittances from diaspora groups have really been used to support social, human rights and educational initiatives is hard to say since many of these projects – as already mentioned – are private initiatives that are organised informally.

Migrant researchers have been discussing the impact of remittances on social inequality since the 1970s. One should, however, be warned about the idealisation of remittances: the human costs associated with migration are often high (separated families, high expectations on the migrants from the side of family members, discrimination in the country of destination), and households become dependent on external revenues. With the improvement in the situation of individual households, governments and international (financial) institutions can forego economic reforms that would have targeted the actual root-cause of poverty. Moreover, remittances increase income disparities in the countries of origin, thus leading to higher inequalities.

However, this is offset by the fact that remittances have, in most part, an effect on poverty reduction (debt payment of households, improvement on the housing situation, payment for education, carrying out investments, etc), and they have a multiplier effect. Decision-makers can reduce the risk of increased social inequalities in the countries of origin by supporting the development of projects that benefit local communities.

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<sup>14</sup><http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTDECPROSPECTS/0,,contentMDK:22759429~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:476883,00.html> [accessed on 8.1.2014]

<sup>15</sup>[http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/development-aid-net-official-development-assistance-oda\\_20743866-table1](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/development-aid-net-official-development-assistance-oda_20743866-table1) [accessed on 8.1.2014]

When remittances are spent locally, they contribute with their three-fold value (approximately) to the GDP. However, there is a prevalent lack of country-specific data and research on the economic “sustainability” and the social impact of remittances. Furthermore, there are hardly any gender-disaggregated data.

We therefore call for the following:

- Access to information and training to motivate senders and receivers of remittances to engage in entrepreneurial activities.
- Establishment of an infrastructure to facilitate the administration of remittances in donor and receiving countries. It is a challenge for the local partner organisation to achieve some kind of structural impact, or to entice structural changes in the local government; this should be given adequate consideration in the country of origin’s development cooperation programmes.
- All efforts aimed at increasing the developmental impact of remittances should be supported. Part of this should be the minimisation of transfer costs, the provision of information about favourable transfer options (e.g. through the set-up of a website) as well as the increased access to formal, affordable bank services, especially in rural areas.
- Efforts from diaspora communities in the establishment of social initiatives, infrastructure or economic development projects in the countries of origin, especially initiatives by women, should be supported by targeted development cooperation.
- Since remittances are private funds that have been generated by migrants under significant threats and considerable efforts, they should not be instrumentalised as development assistance (or even be counted as ODA).