

BACKGROUND NOTE

NEW APPROACHES TO EU MIGRATION: INNOVATIONS IN DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING NEW LABOR MIGRATION PATHWAYS

Significant demographic shifts are characterizing the global labour market. Europe's working age population is declining – it is predicted that between the years 2015-50 Europe would lose 49 million from its working age population.¹ The shortage of workers and professionals across different sectors already poses a socioeconomic challenge in many EU countries. Consequently, the European Commission emphasises the importance of developing new labor migration pathways to respond to labour market needs as one of the core elements of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum.

At the same time, with limited employment prospects in their local economies labour market entrants in low- and middle-income countries will seek opportunities abroad. With 25% youth unemployment rate in North Africa and the Middle East² there is growing interest in creating access to overseas jobs such as in Europe. This could contribute to closing the skills gaps in Europe while expanding employment prospects for youth.

Consequently, some European countries have revisited their immigration policies to allow access to their labour markets for third country nationals through new legal migration pathways.³ Interesting initiatives and pilot projects have been launched in recent years to address labour market needs in both countries of origin and destination.

The objective of this EMN-World Bank roundtable discussion is to examine and highlight what is required to make these pathways successful and sustainable for all stakeholders. The following questions will be addressed:

1. What are the interests and labour market needs in countries of origin and destination? What are important elements to consider in designing fair and effective labour migration programs?
2. Who are the main stakeholders in these pilot initiatives and why does a public-private partnership make sense?
3. What can we learn from these pilot initiatives and how can they be upscaled into long term, mutually beneficial, structured and sustainable partnerships?

Representatives of employment agencies from countries of origin and destination will discuss respective needs for labour migration and development sensitive approaches. Practitioners from

¹ [Developments and Forecasts of Changing Nature of Work | Knowledge for policy \(europa.eu\)](#)

² <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS>

³ For example, the Skilled Immigration Act, is a new law (adopted in 2019) which expands the possibilities for qualified professionals to come to work in Germany.

implementing agencies will share insights on innovative good practices and lessons learnt. Finally, you will hear from both migrants and employers about their personal trajectories and experiences.

Speakers (TBC):

- Alexander Wilhelm, Director of International Placement Services (ZAV) of the Federal Employment Agency, Germany
- Representative of Enabel (Belgian Development Agency)
- Rob de Lobel, LHD Programme and Policy Officer, IOM Belgium
- Salima Bensalem, Head of International Placement, ANAPEC

Testimonies: Employers and labour migration program participant summaries