WHICH POLICY ON LEGAL MIGRATION FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION?

Conference of the Belgian Presidency of the EU

Co-organised with the

Odysseus Academic Network

European Economic and Social Committee,

rue Belliard 99, Brussels

26 November 2010

I. GENERAL PRESENTATION

The conference on legal migration, organised by the Belgian Presidency of the European Union, falls within the scope of the Stockholm programme while trying to prolong the reflection beyond the economic dimension of the immigration policy.

Economically speaking the European Council, while insisting on the necessary flexibility of the admission policies in order to meet the priorities, needs and volumes as defined by each Member State under the Treaty of Lisbon, believes that there is a need for a better labour matching between the EU and third countries. For this, it proposes instruments such as a better capacity of analysis of the labour market's needs, transparency of European employment online information, adequacy of competences in countries of origin as well as recognition of competences. The Commission's Action Programme for Legal Migration will continue to be implemented for the seasonal workers and personnel transfers within international enterprises, while being evaluated to determine whether it is necessary to reinforce the European acquis regarding the worker categories for which currently no relevant legislation exists within the Union.

Even though the economic dimension of the immigration policy is important, we should be careful not to loose sight of the demographic challenges the European Union will face in the near future. It is no secret that the European population will soon know a substantial aging which will confront us with several problematic issues such as the financing of social security, economic dynamism, competition with the other continents and, generally speaking, Europe's place in the world of tomorrow. Immigration is one of the possible answers to the demographic problem and its potential contribution must thus be taken into consideration.

Taking the demographic perspective inevitably leads to questions about the political challenge posed by immigration. The European Union is looking for a model in this matter. The new concept of circular migration remains to be defined, but this does not bar from discussions on the traditional forms of the immigration policy. After having experienced temporary migration policies in the 20th century that in the end did not prevent the settling of the received immigrants, the Member States of the European Union will need to face the issue of opening up channels for permanent migration. The sensitivity of this issue in a difficult context makes that a political debate should be launched urgently.

This reflection should be made taking into account the geopolitical environment of the European Union. It borders to the South and to the East to states with diverse demographic situations of which the populations consider the European Union an attractive continent. The development of a genuine partnership with the third countries for migration must integrate multiple dimensions. « The global approach » promoted by the European Union is an effort in this direction that must be continued and could be extended to the education and training in the third countries.

With this conference, the Belgian Presidency hopes to contribute to the launch of an open debate that could lead to the implementation of new instruments that allow for the forging of an active migration policy of which the European Union will have more and more need.

II. PROGRAMME

Simultaneous translation in EN/FR/NL will be provided. It will also be possible to follow the Conference in DE/HU/ES.

Introductory session

Chairman: Staffan NILSSON, President of the European Economic and Social Committee

9h00 Introduction by Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner for Home Affairs (15 minutes)

9h15 Presentation of the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on legal migration and the demographic challenge by Luis Miguel Pariza Castanos (15 minutes)

First session : The demographic and economic dimension

Chairman: Pierre-Paul MAETER, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the FPS Employment (Belgium)

9h45 The demographic challenge by Philippe FARGUES (Carim, IUE, Florence) (30 minutes)

10h15 Panel :

- Comments by Costas FOTAKIS, DG Employment of the European Commission
- Canada's experience with settlement migration by Denise HELLY, Professor at the National Institute for Scientific Research, Quebec

10h30 Discussion with the audience (30 minutes)

11h00 Coffee break (30 minutes)

11h30 The economic challenge by Jean-Pierre GARSON, OCDE (30 minutes)

Chairman: Freddy ROOSEMONT, Director General of the Immigration Office (Belgium)

12h00 Panel

- Comments by a representative of DG Home Affairs of the European Commission on the basis of the study « Labour shortages in the Member States of the EU » done in the framework of the European Migration Network
- Comments by Mati MAASIKAS, Bureau of European Policy Advisers of the European Commission on the basis of the Handbook "Opening Europe's door to unskilled and low skilled workers"

12h30 Discussion with the audience

13h00 Lunch break (1h30)

14h30 Second session: The political dimension: temporary, permanent or circular migration ? Philippe DE BRUYCKER , "Odysseus" Academic Network, IEE-ULB (30 minutes)
Chaired by a representative of the Libe Commission of the EP

15h00 Panel:

- Comments on circular migration by Bernd PARUSEL, German contact point for the European Migration Network (EMN), Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Germany
- Comments by Liz COLLETT, EU Representative of the Migration Policy Institute (Washington)
- Presentation by Frederico SODA, Representative of IOM, entitled: *"Circular migration: setting the conditions to make it work"*

15h30 Discussion with the audience (15 minutes)

15h45 Third session : The external dimension by Prof. Henri LABAYLE, Faculty of Bayonne, France (30 minutes)
Chairman: Luigi SORECA, DG Home Affairs, European Commission

16h15 Coffee break (30 minutes)

16h45 Panel:

- Comments by Elizabeth ADJEI, Director of the Immigration Service of Ghana
- Contribution of Ummuhan BARDAK from the European Training Foundation (ETF)
- Comments by Yann POUGET from the World Bank on the report "Shapping the Future".
- Comments by Susanne MELDE from the Observatory on African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Migration

17h15 Discussion with the audience (15 minutes)

17h30 Ministerial closing speech presenting the conclusions of the Belgian Presidency in view of its presentation at the JHA Council of Ministers on December 3 and 4

End of the work at 18h00

III. Venue and Organisation

The conference will be held in the ***European Economic and Social Committee*** premises (Rue Belliard 99, 1040 Brussels) on **26 November 2010**.

For security reasons, personal registration is mandatory.

Please complete and send the registration form via E-mail, **before 12 November 2010** (MigrationEUtrio.Be@ibz.fgov.be).