

The European Commission and the need for dialogue and partnership on Migration and Development

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- International migration is one of the most important issues for the international community in the 21st Century. All countries around the world experience international migration and will continue to do so.
- Migration is closely interlinked with globalisation. It can bring substantial revenues through remittances and serve a complementary role in responding to shifting labour market needs. But such gains may also be challenged by economic downturns, for example by the current financial crisis. We can already see some signs in this direction.
- These are just some reasons why we all seek efficient migration policies. By working together, we can come closer to making the most of the opportunities and to avoid the downsides of migration.
- This is why we need dialogue. By exchanging views and good practice, we may also move from words to concrete deeds. Dialogue can foster the emergence of common approaches that help migration work to the mutual benefit of all.
- The Global Forum on Migration and Development provides this framework for dialogue, and the European Commission welcomes the opportunity to take part in it.
- We also welcome that the Global Forum has moved on from a potential one-off event to a multi-annual process. We now have host governments for the next 4 years. The Global Forum therefore gives us a unique opportunity to formulate a strategic agenda at the global level. We should use this opportunity.
- On the part of the European Union and the European Commission, we bring to the discussion our experiences in building a common European migration policy.
- As a core element in this policy, we are reaching out to other countries outside the Union through dialogue and in a spirit of partnership. This objective was evident in our first multiannual programme on Freedom, Justice and Security decided in Tampere, Finland in 1999 as well as in the second programme established in The Hague in 2004. We are now preparing for the third multiannual programme to be adopted in December 2009, during the Swedish EU Presidency.
- All EU policies on migration and asylum are based on the universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity, including full respect of the

Charter of Fundamental rights and the European Convention of Human Rights. These values also underpin our cooperation with other countries.

- Much of the agenda of the Global Forum corresponds to the international dimension of the EU's policy on immigration and asylum, and which is embodied in our Global Approach to migration. Through the Global Approach, we are covering all issues and policy areas of relevance to the management of migration in our external relations.
- As part of this approach, we are putting various measures in place to make migration and development interact in ways that are mutually beneficial.
- We are working closely together with partner countries in Africa, as well as with the African Union, and we are working with countries to the East of Europe, and in Asia and Latin America.
- The European Union is supporting projects to reduce skills shortages in the health sector and to counteract brain drain; by capacity building; by matching labour needs with demands and by informing migrants about labour market opportunities as well as the risks of using smugglers and traffickers; and by empowering migrants who want to invest in their countries of origin.
- A good example, as already mentioned by the UN Secretary-General and the IOM Director-General, is our €15 million EC-UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative, which we presented yesterday in Manila together with the Special Representative of the UNSG for Migration and Development Mr. Peter Sutherland. This initiative seeks to emphasize the links between migration and development by supporting local NGOs and local administrations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Eastern Europe. Through a Knowledge Fair and the financing of a wide variety of some 100 small projects, this initiative will showcase existing global experiences, identify good practices and promote networking among migration and development specialists.
- Another example, as mentioned by the Secretary-General of the ACP Group of States Secretariat, is the Intra-ACP Migration Facility of €25 million. It consists of three components related to the South-South migration flows: a) strengthening of capacities of regional institutions and of national authorities in 12 pilot ACP countries; b) strengthening of capacities of non-state actors to participate in the Migration and Development dialogue with the national and regional authorities; c) the creation, management and functioning of the Intra-ACP Observatory on Migration, which is a network of migration researchers and specialists originating from ACP and European countries providing “on demand” specific data to decision makers.
- In conclusion, the European Union is developing a comprehensive migration policy which relies on partnership and cooperation. We are here to share our experiences and to learn from each other. We also hope that the Global Forum will remain a major platform for dialogue and mutual learning. Thank you.