

## MIGRATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

### DID YOU KNOW ...?

- ✓ **Mobility has reached a high and unprecedented level and it is expected that in the future the number of international migrants continues to increase, as a result of economic globalisation and demographic and environmental pressures.**
- ✓ **Most international migrants born in developing countries live in other countries from the "South" and 86% of refugees live in the poorest countries.**
- ✓ **Migrants contribute very positively to the development of host countries and countries of origin; however to promote this beneficial impact, integrated and coherent policies are required.**
- ✓ **Most of the existing myths about migrations are disassembled by facts. For example, the improvement of socio-economic development at national level tends to stimulate in the short and medium term an increase of international migration, rather than a decrease. Immigrants tend to contribute more in terms of taxes and social contributions in the countries where they live than they get in benefits. The European space needs, in a structural and growing way, immigrants with different levels of skills and competences.**
- ✓ **Migrations are connected with several aspects of the global development agenda, which defines as a specific goal "to facilitate migration and mobility of people in an orderly, safe, regular and responsible manner, including the implementation of planned and well managed migration policies" (2030 Agenda, SDG 10 target).**
- ✓ **The migration policies of the European Union - particularly in the past two years, in response to the increased flow of migrants and refugees - evince several inconsistencies, including their fundamental values, which materialise in a security approach at the expense of development, in the limitation of legal immigration channels and restrictive policies that tend to criminalise the irregular migrant, as well as the instrumentalisation of development aid.**
- ✓ **Portugal continues to be mainly an emigration country. It is considered internationally an example in receiving refugees and integration of immigrants, but the connection between migration and development can be strengthened at several levels.**

## Introduction

Human mobility has reached a high and unprecedented level: the global number of international migrants currently exceeds 244 million, both voluntary and involuntary. If they integrated a country, they would be the 5th largest country in the world in terms of population. Only a small part – less than 10% - concerns refugees: approximately 22.5 million, although these have increased 65% in the last 5 years (UNHCR, 2017).

The migration causes are very diverse, ranging from personal motivations to social or economic factors. Among the factors that influence migration patterns are the existence of networks of migrants from a country - family, friends, communities - in a particular destination country, immigration policies, the increase in schooling levels in developing countries, the demographic changes and the changing needs of the labour markets at global level. **In the future, it is estimated that the number of international migrants continues to increase, as a result of economic globalisation, demographic and environmental pressures.** Thus, it is expected that in 2050 more than 405 million people will be living in a country different from their origin country, in a global population estimated 9.7 billion.

To ensure a fairer, more decent and sustainable world is more than ever a requirement of the international community and national levels. In this framework, Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) stands as a concept, an approach and a tool for ensuring that the several sectoral policies do not collide with the efforts of eradicating poverty and promoting development at global, European, national and local level.

In a globalised society and interdependent world where challenges of development are complex and multidimensional, it is necessary that public policies on migration, climate change, trade, security or food sovereignty contribute to an effective transformation and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The European Union (EU) and its Member States have ensured PCD as a political commitment and obligation legislation in the framework of the Lisbon Treaty, but will the European institutions and countries continue to pursue sectoral policies that contribute effectively to sustainable development?

Migrations have been pointed out as one of the main engines of development, both in countries of origin and host countries. In the mobility era, the global agenda on migration and development is increasingly complex and recognises this multi-faceted interconnection, providing a framework for concrete measures that have a significant impact on the lives of migrants and their communities. However, the instrumentalisation and securitisation of this subject has hindered the promotion of migration and mobility as a development factor. Moreover, while there have been made enormous efforts to allow for a greater and freer movement of goods, services and capital, the third element of this economic triad – work or the movement of people – remains restricted to a multitude of national controls. *Are the implemented policies and measures coherent and coordinated? Do they enhance the contribution of migration to development, and respect the dignity of migrants and of their fundamental rights? What have been the approaches of the EU and Portugal in this context? How to ensure a more effective and positive connection between migration and development?*

## 7 Myths about Migration and Development

### MYTH 1

Poverty is the main cause of migration. More development will lead to less international migration.

### REALITY

Migrations are part of human nature, and there are several factors at its root, including personal motivations, poverty, conflict, fear of persecution, natural disasters, human rights violations, discrimination associated with a group or sector of a country's population, among others.

Many studies demonstrate that **the majority of international migrants are not the poorest populations of the poorest countries**, for the simple reason that they don't have the capacity to do so. The majority of migrants come from middle-income countries, and it was in these countries that migration further increased in the last 15 years (UN, 2016a). It turns out that the countries with the highest emigration such as Mexico, China, or the Philippines are in this classification and these are countries experiencing an improvement of their indicators of socio-economic development. This stresses the fact that the motivations for migration are multiple and multidimensional.

For example, **the improvement of socio-economic development at national level tends to stimulate in the short and medium term an increase of international migration, not a decrease**. This happens because there is an increase of expectations regarding the quality of life and a greater access to resources that allow people to consider the hypothesis of leaving their own country. Only at a later stage is that the rate of emigration tends to decrease in long term, when the country consolidates its development process and reaches a higher level (for example, middle-high income country).<sup>1</sup>

The relationship between migration and poverty reduction is complex and uncertain. Some studies have pointed to the lack of a direct relationship between poverty, economic development and population growth on one hand, and international migration on the other. **The reduction of poverty is a necessary but not sufficient condition to reduce migration**. Other factors such as inequalities within and between countries, the redistribution of income, or the existence (or not) of an inclusive economic growth should be considered.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, *Development Aid to Deter Migration will do nothing of the kind*, NewsDeeply, 31/10/2016.

## MYTH 2

The large majority of migrants come from the poorest countries to the richest countries

### REALITY

Although international migration has increased in absolute numbers over the last decades, **international migrants represent only about 3% of the world's population** – a proportion that has grown little during these decades.

**From all the international migratory movements , the most expressive part (over 35%) takes place between developing countries.** International migrants from developing countries and residents in developed countries are about 82 million, accounting for a third of international migration and 1% of the world's population. The amount of people from the countries of the “North” that live abroad is beyond 67 million, the majority (53.7 million) living in other developed countries.

Regardless of their provenance (whether rich or poor countries), **people tend to move to nearby or neighbouring countries and/or to countries where there are historical and cultural ties.** This explains the fact that in the European Union the majority of migrants are from other European countries.

### MYTH 3

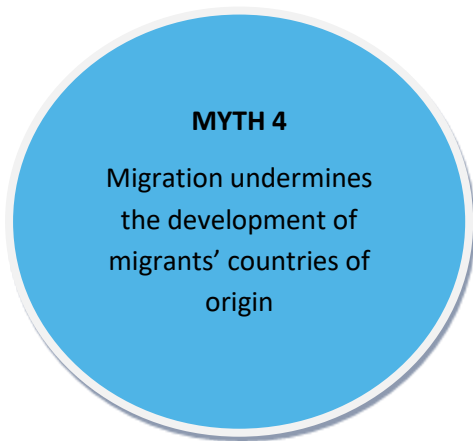
Development  
cooperation can  
reduce irregular  
migration

### REALITY

The main goal of the European development policy is to reduce poverty and promote the development of the countries concerned, as set out in art. 208 of the Lisbon Treaty. Namely, the aim of development **aid is not to prevent migration, or to prevent people from moving between countries**. However, this rhetoric is frequently observed in the speeches of European leaders, with the goal of gathering more political support, particularly in election periods.

If development cooperation can contribute in the long term to make migration a choice and not a necessity (by the expected impacts on the improvement of the conditions of life, in access to education, contributing to lower inequalities and economic growth), its goal should not be focused on the reduction of irregular migration. This would imply, for example, that countries receiving aid would be selected based more on their numbers of emigration than in their development needs. It would also imply that development aid would be diverted to short-term emergency responses and not for the implementation of strategies for long-term development. In addition, the use of development aid as a “bargaining chip” in negotiations on issues relating to migration between the EU and third countries, is contrary to the goals expressed in the European development policy.

In this sense, **the instrumentalisation of development aid for goals concerning the security of the borders or the containment of irregular migration** is not justified, neither by the EU principles, nor by the effectiveness of such aid.

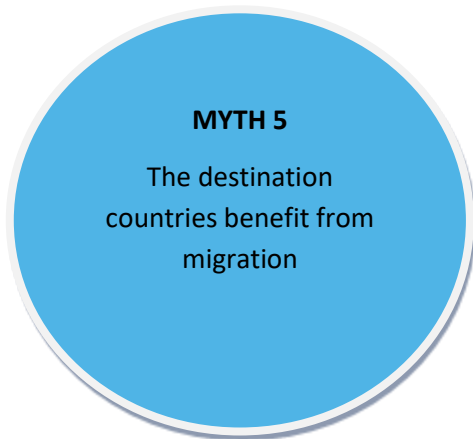


#### REALITY

**Migrants contribute significantly to the development of their countries of origin** either through money transfers (remittances), transfers of skills, technology, values, or ideas. Overall, the value of the migrants' remittances sent to their countries of origin is nearly three times more than development aid, being a financial flow of great relevance to the development of the countries. In many developing countries, remittances represent a considerable part of the GDP, and in many poor, small, fragile or conflict-affected countries, remittances from family members who had migrated, are essential to the livelihood of many families, allowing them to pay their current expenses and also contributing to domestic consumption. Unlike other streams such as development aid or investment, remittances arrive directly to families and communities in these countries, and do not cease in times of difficulties. The majority of migrants maintains close relations with their country of origin.

The issue of brain drain is often used to characterise a negative impact on the migrants' country of origin, but this is superficial and simplistic. For example, the emigration of a family member can increase the capacity of this family to invest in the education of the members who have stayed (through remittances) or to function as a motivation for young people to have success in their studies. The focus on brain drain can be misleading, because **the flows of skills (*brain drain /brain gain*) are not static and vary a lot** depending on how much the countries invest in the education and training of its nationals, the capacity of attraction of professionals and technicians from other countries, the incentives for young people who studied abroad, the existence of employment opportunities in the country of origin, etc.

In many developing countries, **a considerable part of top positions in universities, companies and government bodies is occupied by people who have studied or worked abroad** and have returned to their countries of origin, bringing skills and experience that should be valued. In this sense, for a developing country, there are measures that encourage circular migration and the effective contribution of migrants to development is much more effective than having the goal of "zero emigration".



### REALITY

About 2/3 of all international migrants are part of the labour force, and 3 in every 4 work in the services sector (ILO, 2015). Although the socio-economic impact of migration is hardly measurable, studies point broadly **to a beneficial impact on the economies of destination or host countries, as regards the labour market and economic growth in general** (OECD, 2014). Migrants enrich the economies and societies of the countries where they reside, bringing a greater diversity of ideas and innovative technologies, contributing to the development of human capital, increasing production and creating new jobs and businesses.

In European labour markets, the contribution of immigrants is essential to increase the labour force in countries with rapidly ageing populations - and that need to increase their working-age population, in particular to balance the accounts of social security. On the other hand, the vast majority of migrants do not migrate with the aim of being dependent on social protection systems, but rather to improve the lives of their families, rebuild their lives, work and/or study. In the overall, migrants **contribute more in terms of taxes and social contributions in the countries where they reside, than they receive in benefits** (i.e. through social benefits) (OECD, 2013). And many studies, particularly in countries such as the United States, Switzerland or the United Kingdom, it is concluded that immigrants have virtually no impact neither on wages nor on the availability of employment for nationals (Mackenzie, 2016). Even with regard to the specific case, and recent refugees who arrive in Europe, it is estimated that these have a positive economic impact in the Euro zone<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *Analysts: Refugees 'may end up booking European economies*, Euractiv, 16/09/2015.

### MYTH 6

In such a competitive  
global economy,  
Europe should only  
accept highly skilled  
migrants

### REALITY

The low-skilled jobs are the most available jobs in the European labour market (Westmore, 2014), which demonstrates how the European economies also rely on jobs with low wages and with minimum qualifications. The European space needs, in **a structural and growing way, immigrants with different levels of skills and competences.**

In many European countries, there are sectors where there is a lack of workers, and are already dependent on the labour force of foreigners and migrants, due to a mismatch between demand and supply in a particular region or economic sector (i.e., agricultural sector). This means that, in many cases, the skills of these migrant workers are complementary to those of the local workers and **fill important gaps in the sectors that will be relevant to the future of European economies**, as in the case of industry and services in the food sector, retail sales, construction, and transportation, among others. However, national and European migration policies continue to offer few possibilities for migrant workers from third countries to work legally and in a regular way in this type of sectors.

The idea that migrants “steal” jobs from nationals is based on the wrong idea that the number of jobs in an economy is a fixed number. Indeed, as consumers of goods and services, investors and entrepreneurs, migrants often contribute to the creation of new employment opportunities and for the expansion of labour supply in the economies.

The restriction of channels of legal migration for low-skilled workers encourages the use of **irregular migration from employers, and promotes illegal trafficking schemes**, for example. Migrants working in the informal sector are particularly subject to poor conditions of work and vulnerable to abuse and violations of their rights. Thus, the limitation of the migrants’ entry to highly qualified sectors and functions does not make sense either economically, including from the point of view of real labour market needs, nor in terms of rights (human and labour rights).



### MYTH 7

Europe cannot accept  
more migrants and  
refugees.

### REALITY

The European Union is an economic area with more than 500 million inhabitants. The **wave of migrants and refugees over the last few years represents less than 1% of the European population**, that is, a minimum percentage, particularly if we consider that some developing countries receive proportionately many more refugees and migrants (such as Lebanon, hosting around 1.2 million Syrian refugees, with a population of 4.5 million, that is,  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the population). Migratory pressure also varies considerably between European countries, since the exceptional situation that is lived in Italy and Greece also requires exceptional measures, including the biggest efforts of migrants' relocation and support to these countries.

The rhetoric that the current wave of migrants and refugees puts in question the economic and political survival of the European Union<sup>3</sup> does not make sense from an economic point of view (*see myths above*) **and diverts the attention from EU's real political problems**, as demonstrated by the ineffectiveness of the European institutions and by the lack of coordination and solidarity between the Member States in the management of this matter (*see the following chapters*).

The rhetoric of threat to the cultural identity of the European comes from the principle that there is a unique and unchanging European culture, when European identity is in itself composed by the diversity and rooted in a constant exchange with other peoples and cultures. Over the centuries, **societies influenced, stimulated and enriched each other with the plurality of cultures and human mobility**. Just as emigration of European countries has contributed and still contributes to the formation and consolidation of the cultural identity of other countries and spaces (e.g. in the United States), immigration in Europe contributes to the evolution of European identities. The lack of social cohesion is often the cause of a growing discourse against immigration as a threat to national identities (Mackenzie, 2016), despite the existence of many successful examples.

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<sup>3</sup> See *I leaders to declare: 'We cannot take more migrants'*, Euractiv, 23/04/2015.

It is a fact that greater diversity implies more wealth but also more complexity, which means that it should be given a particular attention to the adequacy and effectiveness of the policies and practices of migrants' integration in European societies.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### General and global recommendations

1. Due to a securitisation of migration, it is necessary to strengthen the combination of the migration-development nexus, recognizing and encouraging the contribution of migrants to development in origin and destination countries through policies and concrete measures at global, national and local level.
2. To ensure respect for the international conventions on Human Rights, urging the countries to implement policies that effectively protect the human rights of migrants, including the right of asylum.
3. To clarify the mission and mandate of the key international organisations in this area, to coordinate more effectively the existing institutional framework, and to develop more harmonised and common normative guidelines, based on the existing conventions about the multiple aspects of migration.
4. To adopt a Global Pact for migrants and refugees as an effective global agreement on migration policies, having political traction and based on concrete commitments, and the sharing of responsibilities between the several actors.
5. To provide the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of means and resources necessary for its implementation, including monitoring the effectiveness of commitments undertaken in the field of migration.
6. To identify existing good practices in countries of origin and destination and from there on to encourage the adoption of frameworks that enable a greater mobility and contribution of migrants to development beyond remittances (including circular migration, portability of migrants' rights, recognition of qualifications, among others).

### Recommendations for the European Union

7. To ensure that the European Cooperation and Development Policy pays special attention to the migrants' rights and migration policies and that these are consistent with the development goals set out by the European Union.
8. To recognise the impacts and human cost of EU policies and adopt a humanitarian approach that saves lives and provides proper assistance, protection and reception to refugees and migrants. To reinstate human rights at the heart of policy-making and to ensure fair treatment regardless of immigration status, since refugees and migrants have the same human rights and fundamental freedoms, paying particular attention to women and children and in line with the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda.
9. To strengthen the positive relation between migration and development in all sectoral policies and instruments available, internal and external, with a focus on issues of mobility and integration.

10. To define a body of rights and duties for foreigners (as there is for European citizens), that integrates the specificities of immigration and mobility, and that is comprehensive, coherent, and common in the European space.
11. To strengthen opportunities for legal migration, improving the legal means for nationals of third countries to work, study and live in the European Union, giving them effective conditions so that they can socially and economically contribute to the host countries. This is to create more secure, sustainable and transparent, temporary and permanent mobility options. It also involves a revision of the “Blue Card Directive”, or to ensure the rights and non-discrimination of labour migrants and international workers, in line with the ILO standards, to more adequately respond to the needs of the European labour market, in several sectors and qualification levels.
12. To fight all forms of xenophobia and anti-immigration speech based on populism instead of facts, in particular through campaigns to disseminate actual data and the significant contribution of migrants to the economies and societies.
13. To promote the integration of refugees and migrants’ rights in the sectoral policies of Member States, including plans related to development, at central and local levels.
14. To take objective measures against Member States that do not fulfil their duties regarding the commitments made in the European Union framework in the matter of replacements and the right of asylum, or who contravene the legal obligations arising from binding legal instruments existing at European level.
15. To strengthen the existing legal and institutional framework through a systematic exchange of information between the European Commission and Member States about agreements, projects, and initiatives planned or implemented in the area of migration.
16. To ensure that any return/repatriation of any migrant is actually made in security, respecting the dignity and human rights, and taking into consideration the existing conditions in the migrants’ countries of return or origin.
17. To ensure that the new Coast Guard and Border Control is part of the impact on human rights in the definition and assessment of its operations and to strengthen the reporting and monitoring of human rights violations identified during the course of its operations or in operational areas where it is present.
18. To prevent an instrumentalisation of development aid for the purposes of insurance and management of migration, particularly in the relationship with third countries, ensuring that policy development and the use of its funds comply with their central purpose (to fight poverty and promote development).
19. To build strategic and long-term partnerships in developing countries, which do not limit the arrangements of the return/repatriation of migrants or to migration policies, implementing more comprehensive and coherent approaches than capable of responding to the root causes of migration.
20. To invest more in the knowledge of the reality and research on the causes of migration in origin countries and on the impacts of EU policies on migration, as the basis for the design and implementation of policies that will be more coherent in the future.
21. To adhere to the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all migrant workers and their families, adopted in the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 1990.

**Migration is the world's oldest poverty reduction strategy and is a key to a world in tune with itself. As we face the continuation of simultaneous, unprecedented and complex emergencies, the international community needs to tackle the root causes actively and promote commonly shared values and interests. Turning migration challenges into opportunities for all requires good migration governance.**

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Cofinanciamento

