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NEUJOBS: LABOUR MIGRATION AND MOBILITY IN THE EU

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- Europe has an historic demand for labour. This was witnessed in the aftermath of the Second World War when workers from outside of Europe were actively recruited by a number of governments to fuel economic growth.
- Today, there continues to be a need for workers to supplement the EU's workforce. This will become all the more apparent in the coming years as more and more people reach retirement age.
- Labour migration and mobility in the EU is an essential part of the EU's policy mix, but it is also important to remember that it is not the only answer to sustaining Europe's workforce – education and labour market reforms also play an important role.
- In the Lisbon Treaty, EU immigration policy is now a common policy. Many initiatives have been taken in the last years. This conference is timely to take stock of what was done, before setting the priorities for the next EU programme in the area of justice, freedom and security for 2015-2018.
- It is important to evaluate properly the blue card directive's implementation and to conclude the ongoing trilogues for the directives on intra-corporate transferees and on seasonal workers.
- Should the Commission identify gaps, duplications or even contradictions, we would understand that some action might be needed to consolidate existing directives. In any case, a full consultation phase should be conducted before any adaptations to existing directives would be proposed.
- EU immigration policy should be evidence-based, taking into account economic and labour market needs, and not be limited to a rights-based approach.
- Due to a lack of data, it is very difficult to evaluate labour market needs at European level. We know that around 80 million people will retire by 2020. But in the short-term, available data on vacancies are not reliable. And the data on skills needs is also scarce and hard to collect due to rapidly changing needs.

- For example, we have some doubts about the credibility of the European Vacancy Monitor and EU skills panorama in achieving this.
- Nevertheless, there is a high demand for highly skilled workers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics related occupations. Moreover, some sectoral needs are clearly evidenced such as in the ICT sector where there are important shortages today and in the short-term, 900.000 jobs by 2015.
- Therefore, in the short-term, also taking into account the very high levels of unemployment in Europe, a focus on the highly-skilled is justified.
- We are unsure that compiling data at European level on vacancies and skills needs in a harmonised way is achievable at reasonable costs.
- In fact, a better approach might be to identify good practices at regional/sectoral level in countries where an effective identification of skills needs in new job openings is ensured - bottom up. And to spread these practices at European level to ensure that all countries improve labour market needs monitoring.
- We believe that the setting of quantitative targets in terms of migration should be determined as close as possible to where the needs are.
- In line with this, rather than creating new European policies, consideration could be given to reinforcing the migration dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy in the context of the European semester process.
- In any case, it is essential that employers wishing to recruit third country nationals have access to clear information on applicable rules and on how to proceed, avoiding excessive administrative burdens falling onto companies.
- In the longer-term, the future of EU immigration policy will depend to a large extent on Europe's economic recovery. Renewed economic growth combined with demographic change would certainly require more migrations at all skills levels.
