

OECD HIGH-LEVEL PARLIAMENTARY SEMINAR

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION - CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

22 February 2007

Draft programme

- 9.00 **Welcome coffee**
- 9.30 **Opening remarks**
- 10.00 **Introductory session**
Overview of recent developments in migration movements and policies -
Jean-Pierre Garson, Head of Non-Member Economies and International Migration
Division, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Directorate

Currently close to three million long-term immigrants enter OECD countries legally every year; this does not include unauthorised movements. The number of temporary seasonal and contract workers has been increasing over the past ten years as OECD countries continue to recruit temporary foreign workers. In the countries and categories for which detailed data are available, temporary entries for employment increased by approximately 7% in 2004, reaching 1.5 million. The number of asylum seekers is declining, while international students are increasing. Many movements, especially of low-skilled workers, occur irregularly. More workers are likely to be needed in the near future due to ageing populations and falling interest in certain occupations in OECD countries such as sciences and building trades.

Economic impact of migration in OECD countries - Orsetta Causa, Economist,
Structural Policy Analysis Division 1, Policy Studies Branch, Economics Department

The increasing share of immigrants among unskilled individuals of working age raises concerns about the consequences for labour market outcomes of natives, in particular the unskilled. The labour market integration of immigrants is problematic in numerous OECD countries, as illustrated by either lower wages or lower employment rates, in comparison to natives.

Immigration influences relative wages and unemployment rates for individual categories of workers, depending on the skill mix of immigrants. In all OECD countries studied for given individual characteristics, immigrants underperform natives in terms of wages, unemployment or both. Because labour market experience in the host country is an important channel of integration, the often low employment rate among recently arrived immigrants does not bode well for their future labour market assimilations.

10.20 - 11.00 **Discussion**

- 11.00 **Managing migration - systems in place, main challenges and future prospects -**
George Lemaitre, Principal Administrator, Non-Member Economies and
International Migration Division, Employment Labour and Social Affairs Directorate

Patterns of international migration have changed substantially in recent years. Immigration pressures are increasing in most OECD countries, with some countries experiencing unprecedented waves of immigration and others tightening their entry policies. In a number of countries, the nature of immigration itself has changed, be it in terms of motivation, expected duration of stay or lawfulness. Migration flows are likely to continue on a sustained path in the

coming decades, due to widening demographic imbalances between developing and OECD countries, coupled with diminishing transport and information costs, in the context of persistent income disparities across regions.

Governments are faced with the task of achieving a balance between openness to international migration with the hope of attracting the required skills to satisfy domestic needs, firmness in managing migration inflows to demonstrate to public opinion and to potential migrants that unauthorised movements are not tolerated, and the implementation of effective policies to ensure immigrant integration. To do this requires getting the right mix of selected and non-selected migrants, of temporary and permanent migrants, of high-skilled and low-skilled, and more generally of openness and control.

11.15 - 12.30 **Discussion**

12.30 - 14.00 **Lunch**

14.00 - 14.20 **Integration of immigrants – educational and labour market outcomes -**
Andreas Schleicher, Head, Indicators and Analysis Division, Directorate for Education

Thomas Liebig, Non-Member Economies and International Migration Division,
Employment Labour and Social Affairs Directorate

There are growing signs in some OECD countries that integration is proving less successful than in the past. In many countries, immigrants tend to be more exposed than citizens of the host countries to unemployment and social exclusion. They often face less stable jobs and long-term unemployment. In a longer-term perspective, the question of integration concerns not only immigrants, but also their children, the so-called “second-generation immigrants”, in particular through their educational attainments and labour market outcomes. In many countries, second- and third-generation offspring of immigrants still face barriers to employment.

The OECD argues that lessons from successful integration initiatives can be successfully applied elsewhere if administrations are willing to put necessary policy frameworks in place, including anti-discrimination legislation. At a national level, it calls on host countries to ensure that immigration systems meet local labour market needs. It also recommends flexible education policies that provide opportunities for training and recognition of prior competences and qualifications. At a local level, the OECD urges policy makers to ensure strong co-ordination between institutions and the involvement of employers in local partnerships.

An OECD report, “Where immigrant students succeed: A Comparative Review of Performance and Engagement in PISA 2003.” analyses evidence from PISA 2003 on outcomes of schooling, including how well immigrant students perform in key school subjects at the age of 15 as well as how they assess themselves as learners and what their general attitudes are towards school. The results suggest that high levels of immigration do not necessarily impair integration. Immigrant students are motivated learners and have positive attitudes towards schools. Despite these strong learning dispositions, immigrant students often perform at levels significantly lower than their native peers and performance levels vary across countries

14.00 - 15.30 **Discussion**

15.30 **International migration – a developing country perspective**

Jeff Dayton-Johnson, Senior Economist, Research Unit 1-Structural Issues and Policy Reform, Development Analysis, Development Centre

Immigration is not only of relevance to OECD countries because of its relation to labour-market, social cohesion and other domestic policies. Because immigration has impacts upon migrants' home countries, OECD-country immigration policies also influence their development co-operation objectives. Migration to OECD countries affects labour markets and productivity in sending countries; these in turn influence growth, poverty and inequality back home. As such, well-managed migration may generate important gains for both the host countries and the migrants' countries of origin. In many cases migration has direct and indirect positive impacts on development. Emigration opens up job opportunities, generates remittances transferred home by migrants, encourages higher levels of schooling, and gives rise to diaspora networks that can benefit home economies. Nevertheless, there are also cases of massive and unmanaged migration, especially of highly-skilled migrants, with deleterious effects on delivery of critical services such as health care and education. A more effective partnership between sending and receiving countries will help both sets of countries to maximize the benefits and mitigate the risks associated with international migration.

15.50 - 17.00 **Discussion**

17.00 **Closing remarks**

References:

[International Migration Outlook 2006](#)

[Where Immigrant Students Succeed](#)

[From Immigration to Integration: Local Approaches](#)

[Effects of Migration on Sending Countries](#)