

## OECD UNFPA conference in Tunis on "MOBILISING MIGRANTS' SKILLS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE MENA REGION.

### Speaking points

#### 1 – EU Relations with Southern Mediterranean countries on migration and mobility

- In 2011 the Commission and High representative proposed to launch a **Dialogue on migration, mobility and security with Southern Mediterranean countries**. This proposal forms part of the EU's wider engagement and offer of a "Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity" in the context of an enhanced European Neighbourhood Policy vis-à-vis the EU's southern neighbours and their new democratic aspirations.
- The Dialogues for migration, mobility and security are launched progressively with the Southern Mediterranean Countries taking into account: the overall relationship that the EU maintains with each partner country, the current level of capacity in the partner country to manage migration flows, and the willingness of the latter to engage in a constructive and effective dialogue aimed at establishing the Partnership.
- The Dialogues should lead to **Mobility Partnerships (MP)**, which will make sure that the movement of persons between the EU and the Southern Mediterranean countries is well managed and takes place in a secure environment. MP is a **Partnership** between a non-EU country and the EU (represented by the Commission) as well as an (unspecified number of) individual Member States on a voluntary basis. In addition to these signatories of the Partnership there are also 'partners' (notably the European training Foundation and FRONTEX).
- The MP is settled through a **joint political declaration and an annex** containing initiatives to realise the partnership. Through MPs partners set **common targets and commitments** for dialogue and cooperation. Each MP also contains a package of specific **support measures** offered by the EU and participating Member States.

- The signature of the **MP with Morocco** is scheduled to take place **in June**.

- The EU is currently negotiating a **MP with Tunisia** and hopes to conclude in 2013.

- The EU has started a dialogue on migration, mobility and security with **Jordan**.

- When conditions allow discussions may also start with **Egypt and Libya** (ref. Council decision 2011).

#### 2- Mobility Partnerships with South med countries in relation to labour migration and migration and development

The Mobility Partnerships can encompass specific schemes for facilitating **labour migration** between interested Member States and the Southern Mediterranean countries, such as:

- Technical support to enhance migration management capacities of the partner country,
- informing potential migrants about possibilities for legal migration to EU;
- undertake labour surveys;
- investing in pre-departure training;
- setting up exchange programmes for students or professionals,
- working towards mutual recognition of diplomas and professional qualifications,
- Strengthening social protection of legal migrants, portability of social rights.
- capacity building for efficient matching between labour supply and demand and for managing return and reintegration,

- improving co-operation and co-ordination between South Mediterranean countries and EU Member States on matters related to skills and how to better match labour supply and demand
- Taking into account their right to determine the volumes of economic migrants to be admitted, interested Member States may also decide to take other specific initiatives aimed at facilitating access to their labour markets for migrants from the partner country.

**Maximizing the development impact of migration** is another key pillar of the MP. This can be done through different measures, such as: reaching out to diasporas, facilitating their investments in country of origin and facilitating the return of highly skilled nationals. Within the mobility partnerships with Morocco and Tunisia, the EU will support efforts to map diaspora organisations and networks in the EU interested in contributing to the development of their countries of origin.

### **3- EU policy and legislation on labour migration**

- The EU recognises that labour immigration has a key role to play in driving economic development in the long term and in addressing current and future demographic challenges in the EU. The EU is therefore working on a number of interconnected measures which, together, aim to produce flexible admission systems, responsive to the priorities of each EU State, while enabling migrant workers to make full use of their skills. These measures cover the establishment of a single work and residence permit as well as the conditions of entry and residence for certain categories of immigrants such as highly qualified workers, seasonal workers and intra-corporate transferees.
- In December 2011, the EU adopted the so-called **Single Permit Directive**. It provides for a single residence and work permit, a single application procedure for this permit and a set of rights for all non-EU workers already admitted but who have not yet been granted long-term resident status, in a number of key areas: working conditions, education and vocational training, recognition of diplomas, social security, tax benefits, access to goods and services including procedures for housing and employment advice services.
- The EU has put in place attractive conditions for non-EU workers considering taking up **highly skilled employment** in the EU states, creating a harmonised fast-track procedure and common criteria (a work contract, professional qualifications and a minimum salary level) for issuing a special residence and work permit called the "**EU Blue Card**".
- The Commission has also proposed a directive on seasonal employment. When adopted, seasonal workers will be able to enter the EU faster when there is a demand for their work. It will be made possible through a fast-track procedure and a single residence/work permit simplifying the rules currently applicable in EU States. According to estimates, well over 100 000 **non-EU seasonal workers** come to the EU each year (this includes irregular migrants).
- Moreover, the globalisation of business and accompanying skills demand has made it desirable for multinational corporations to transfer employees temporarily to another branch or subsidiary. Intra-corporate transferees (ICTs) can potentially bring substantial benefits to the EU: innovation, enhanced competitiveness, increased investment flows, etc. To address this situation, the Commission has proposed a **Directive for intra-corporate transfer of non-EU skilled workers**. When adopted, it will improve the current situation in several ways: companies outside the EU will have a common set of rules and requirements and EU companies will have better and faster access to global talent to meet staffing needs for managers, specialists and graduate trainees.