

## **INCORPORATING MIGRATION TO THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY UNDER THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES**

*The history of Europe had been shaped by migration and at the eve of EU's gradual formation it seems to be the same again that migration will certainly play a significant role in shaping the future of Europe. This is very clear especially on the fact that, considering the demographic challenges Europe is passing through, and its possible foreseen negative impacts on the future of social security systems and the economies of the European countries, migration is being studied as a solution to the labour force deficit in Europe. In this regard, the European Neighborhood policy gains significance since the neighboring countries of Europe constitute the potential main source of labour force. However, this requires an efficient and multi-disciplinary approach of migration management, otherwise it is inevitable to face the worse economic results in the European labour markets together with the social and economic integration problems on the migrant and host societies. Therefore, European migration policy and the European Neighborhood policy which have been studied mostly separately, should develop new policies in cooperation and ENP should change its general simple approach towards migration by including a more active and enhanced migration and mobility content together with a feasible management of priorities and targets. Accordingly, a critical eye should be put on the new members of the Central and Eastern European countries- standing at the new borders of the Union- in terms of assigning them a more active role on migration management with regards to the new needs and priorities of the Union under demographic challenges.*

### **Demographic Challenges in Europe and its Implications on the European Labour Markets**

Today, it is a very crucial problem that many European countries are encountering demographic challenges stemming mainly from the population decline and aging. According to many studies and future projections, this demographic trend will reach more critical levels for the next 50 years. The most prominent impact of this demographic situation will be on social security systems that the functioning and sustainability of pension and health care systems will be severely damaged with regard to the rapidly increasing number of elderly and the decline in number of young labor force resulting from the low births rates all over Europe. In this context, labor migration that received significant attention, has risen up to the agenda of Europe to serve as a policy option to mitigate the adverse consequences of demographic challenges.

Migration has always been one of the most debated and rooted concerns of the European society. It is very often perceived as a burden on the society, but on the other hand many times it proved to be a benefit. Several times in the European history, it acted as a decent solution to severe problems, first by sending out migrants while expanding international, transitional economy in the 19th century and then by accepting migrants to overcome labor force shortages while rebuilding the European economies after the Second World War. However, the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought Europe new challenges which induced to open new discussions on migration in a new context of environment. It is the case that two demographic phenomena, aging and population decline will shape European populations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and will have profound implications on all sectors of European economies. In this regard, migration comes onto the agenda as an effective strategy and in fact a reality. Many studies and projections devote

attention to a very vital reality that Europe is severely facing demographic challenges stemming from population decline and aging. Higher life expectancy due to higher welfare standards, and lower fertility rates are the driving forces behind a secular trend towards this demographic trend. Among many other projections, the United Nations (UN) clearly supports this claim in its much debated report of March 2000 titled “*Replacement Migration: Is it a Solution to Declining and Aging Populations?*”. According to this report, it is a major concern that all countries of Europe are expected to decrease in population size with a relatively rapid aging process over the next 46 years. Most significantly, population decline and aging will be on such a scale that, it risks undermining the European social model as well as economic growth and stability in the European Union. Since, the critical decline in the potential support ratio of working age people to the non-working age population, will negatively affect the labor markets in Europe. A smaller proportion of population in the age group of 0-14 years in West Europe (around 19 per cent of total population, compared with world average of 33.5 per cent), alongside a relatively large group of people, aged 65 years or more, implies that the growth of European labor force is nearly at an end. Over the coming decades the number of older people will persist to rise sharply in relation to people of working age. As the most significant result of this process, with the increasing labor force shortages originating from the demographic dynamics, there is no doubt that the financing and the sustainability of the present systems of social security especially highlighting the pensions and health care for the elderly would be extremely damaged even under the risk of collapse. The change in population structure exacerbates already serious financing problems for old-age retirement programs. This will either impose an intolerable tax burden on future workers or force more of those over age 65 to remain in the labor force.

### **Migration as a policy response to the demographic challenges**

Under these conditions, like many other scholars, the UN report concludes and exerts special emphasis on the fact that Europe will need massive amount of labor migration which is specifically studied as “replacement migration” in order to compensate and plug the required labor force shortage which will contribute to the economy and to the financing pool of the social security systems for the increasing number of elderly. The report suggests that in order to maintain a constant “support ratio”, EU would need to achieve net annual migration of 13 million new migrants per year between 2000 and 2050 to cope with these potential problems. This is a very huge number of mass migration that Europe has never experienced in its history before. Thus, particularly with the UN report that has captured much attention and raised the eyebrows of international spheres, migration is proposed as this time in the history as a policy option to balance the demographic situation and mitigate its negative impacts on the labor markets in Europe.

However, the role of migration in European population change has come under increasing scrutiny concerning growing concerns of many European countries. The critical point which stimulates Europe is the foreseen high numbers of immigrants needed to offset declines in the working-age population and to reassess again their migration policies by opening the doors of the borders to the new comers. Whereas European demographers have sounded warning bells for at least the last 30 years and “replacement migration” came on to the agenda as a suggested policy option to declining population and aging of labor force, most of the EU countries hesitated to respond firmly to the migration option until 2000.

Ultimately, Member States are trying to set out clear strategies and policy options for ensuring the adequacy of their social security systems without undergoing a huge amount of mass migration. Thus, they develop policy responses and propose some strategic solutions different from migration due to the fear of possible negative effects and costs of anticipated labor migration. These policies mainly aim to increase fertility rates or ameliorate the social security systems (increasing retirement age, promoting labor force participation or encoring private pension systems etc) The question is whether these alternatives allow for quick adjustment and supplies the profile of workers needed in the labor market. All alternative policies to labor migration prove to be failed or insufficient. It is notable that no single type of policy intervention will necessarily slow fertility declines. Although fertility rates tend to be higher in Member States implementing a sound policy of reconciliation of family and working life, they remain too low to prevent population aging. On the other hand, the policies and reforms to ameliorate the social security systems do not offer a consistent long-term solution. Hence, it is noteworthy that without absolute migration, no reasonable policy measures will be able to counteract this change in the demographic structure of the European Union and its negative impact of the future welfare of Europe.

### **European Neighborhood Policy: Managing Migration in a Different Content**

Migration cannot be treated as a purely internal issue since an efficient migration policy can only be developed by the countries of origin, transit and destination with a shared responsibility. Thus, migration constitutes an essential part which possesses strategic priorities of the Union's external relations. In this regard, migration is one of the important components of newly emerging European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), however the current approach of ENP toward migration is lack of wider understanding and policy development concerning the migration need of Europe stemming from demographic challenges.

Europe had faced one of its unique experiences with the enlargement in 2004 to 10 new member states. The accession of ten new members gave rise to expansion of the EU and changed its external frontiers. The changing borders of EU that stretched to Belarus, Ukraine in the north; Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and other Arab Islamic countries in the south underlined the need for rearrangement of EU's engagement with its new neighbors. In this regard, the ambitious enlargement process of the EU encouraged the formation of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) that is closely associated with the new framework of relations with its neighbors. In other terms, the former enlargement strategies within this new framework gained new dynamics and new dimensions and it is employed in a form of newly-launched ENP. It aims to promote an area of stability, prosperity, and security by developing and deepening political cooperation and economic integration with the neighboring countries. In this term, with the main aim of providing a significant degree of integration for non-EU members, the ENP can be regarded as an alternative to accession and it is a move away from bi-lateral treaties to a joint foreign policy.

In this regard, the framework that new 10 Member States are integrated to the Union changed and the migration from the new members of Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) to the Western Europe is now being treated as inward mobility as a result of the enlargement process. The former major source of migration countries of the Central and Eastern Europe, now became the transit or even destination countries since Europe is an attractive destination for

migrants. Thus, the CEECs that were standing at the borders of the EU and treated under different policy frameworks as non-members, now became the member states and they now draw the borders of the Union and they gain importance in terms of their undertaking tasks on regulating the border management within ENP.

The tasks and the role that CEECs should play in terms of border management, could be developed under ENP through the Action Plans which are the principal tool of ENP. Since migration plays a significant role in EU's relations with its neighbors, migration management and mobility is one of the major issues in these Action Plans. However, the Action Plans of ENP treats migration with a weak and insufficient approach by totally underestimating the great need of Europe to migrant workers. Although the demographic challenges brings to the fore the migration need of Europe which deserves significant attention, it is observed that ENP mainly covers the mobility and migration issues on the bases of border management, visa facilitation process, fight against asylum and illegal migration. Nevertheless, ENP should cover more than these with more actors inside. Thus, an enhanced ENP with substantial improvements is required that addresses specific tasks and actions to the CEECs in terms of migration management.

Another main contribution should be on bringing ENP together with the European migration policy and to develop a comprehensive approach. It is certain that, migration would notably contribute much to the elements and context of current and future ENP. In this regard, ENP and its priorities, strategies should be developed in cooperation with the migration policy of the EU. In fact, it is a difficult task since EU countries demonstrate diverged migration policies with respect to their distinct nature and interests and the development of European migration policy lacks significant progress due to its nature of being a very controversial issue. In this context, special focus should be devoted to CEECs and they should be one of the main actors, commit active tasks in developing policies of migration management especially in the Action Plans of the ENP with a wider and more active approach. It is no doubt that, the demographic challenges that Europe faces and the migration need as a policy option should contribute to the evolution and implications of ENP and as a result, ENP should be revised with a new context of migration phenomena, with new actors and active tasks.

Paper will include

- ❖ Strategies that has to be developed
- ❖ Proposed Tasks of CEECs
- ❖ Potential numbers, figures
- ❖ Proposed problems