

Forum for 21st century

on Visa Policy issues

Migration is a phenomenon that has existed for centuries. According to the data of the International Organisation for Migration there are currently over 214 million of international migrants living worldwide, which amounts to 3,1 % of the world's population. In 2000 there were only 150 million international migrants. There are examples on countries in history that got rich thanks to the migration and that greeted migrants from all over the world. Migration may have several positive effects on both a country of destination and a country of origin. The country of destination may benefit e.g. from labour inflows (often skilled labour) and the country of origin experiences a decreasing unemployment rate due to a migration of those inhabitants who are not able to find employment on the country's labour market. But growing migration has become a problem for many countries over the last years. Social unrests, brain drain or growing crime rate. Those are factors caused by migration which has become more and more unpredictable since the end of the Cold War. The number of countries affected by migration is growing as well.

Forum for 21st Century does realize these threats connected with growing migration rate and is convinced that an early solution of this problem may (at least partially) eliminate consequences. Therefore it calls together all the members - delegates of the ASEAN organization, the European Union and the United States of America - to the negotiations concerning migration and visa policy. These members represent the most developed and the richest countries of the world which means they have enough resources to avert above-mentioned threats. However, a success will require huge efforts and a willingness to make concessions.

Notes

- ✕ The year 2011 has been affected by significant social and political changes resulting into the growth in migration rates. Turmoil in Middle East and northern Africa or the break-up of Sudan have resulted into many refugees, seeking refuge in developed countries. We can anticipate that the situation won't become stable in the coming months. The numbers of emigrants from countries like Libya, Tunisia or Syria is probably going to grow further.
- ✕ There are plenty of reasons leading to migration. The theories of migration distinguish so-called *push* and *pull factors*. The push factors drive people to leave their country of origin and the pull factors attract them to the country of destination. Incentives to migrate may also be economic (low wages, lack of job opportunities etc.) or political (political flux, persecution or censorship). In case of the Arab Spring we can speak mainly about political factors that drove people to leave their homes. An example of economic migration is the migration of Mexicans into the USA or the migration of inhabitants of the SEA countries into some Muslim countries.
- ✕ A special factor of migration may be considered the climate changes. This type of migration will be growing on importance mainly from a long-term point of view. It is estimated that over 200 million of "climate migrants" will have been displaced by shoreline erosion, coastal flooding, degradation of agricultural land and other factors by 2050. The affected will in most cases come from developing countries. It is therefore necessary to pay a special attention to this phenomenon.

- ✗ There are growing nationalistic tendencies in several countries and some countries of the Schengen area are calling for a temporary re-introduction of border controls. On the other hand, migration might contribute to the solution of a problem with aging population and growing social expenditures that affects most of the developed countries. But in order to transform migration into a successful remedy for economic, political and climate problems, it is necessary to introduce a common visa policy with clearly set regulations on the inter- or supranational level. Today, every country (or regional bloc in some cases) invokes its own visa policy. These policies are markedly different. Therefore it would be more effective to harmonise them.

Goals

Regarding the above-mentioned issues and in order to contribute to the prosperity of the international community, the Forum for 21st Century proposes following goals:

- ✗ To establish the Single Visa Policy (SVP) towards third parties that will be legally binding on all the parties involved. Among other things, a higher involvement of countries that don't have serious problems with migration yet would be achieved. A common approach prevent the creation of potential conflicts in the future.
- ✗ The SVP would be funded by a budget made up from contributions of all the member states. The Forum proposes to set an amount of the contributions as a percentage of the country's GDP but also to take the ratio of immigrants to the country's population into account. The concrete calculation method will be a subject of negotiations.
- ✗ The Forum further proposes to establish a body (the Visa Council) responsible for a proper implementation of the SVP. The Council will be comprised of the president and three experts (one expert from the ASEAN, one from the EU and one from the USA). These experts will have to meet special criteria (also subject of the negotiations). The president would be only a kind of coordinator, the real power would be in the hand of the experts. This small apparatus ensures the promptness of the decision process and an odd number of experts avoids the equality of votes.
- ✗ The Forum proposes also to discuss these items: implementation time schedule of the obligations agreed on, sanctions imposed in case of failure to meet the obligations...
- ✗ A special attention should be paid to the climate migrants, since the reasons for their displacement are very specific. The effects of climate changes are becoming more and more significant. Therefore we can participate that the number of climate migrants will rise. The sooner we will pay attention to these issues, the lesser the consequences will be. In this context, the Forum for 21st Century proposes to discuss concrete quotas determining the number of climate migrants which would be compulsory for each member state to accept (a formula for the calculation should include number of inhabitants, amount of the GDP p.c., density of population etc.).
- ✗ The Forum further proposes to establish a special fund in order to cover expenses caused by the climate migration. The fund would comprise contributions from the SVP budget.
- ✗ The negotiations should result into a framework agreement, regulating the basic characteristics of the SVP and signed by all the members of the Forum for 21st Century. This agreement would lead to a working out and an adoption of an international agreement that would specify the SVP more concretely.



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