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Migration and public perception

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Migration and Public Perception – Executive summary

Migration – a phenomenon of crucial importance for Europe

Migration is a phenomenon that has contributed to shape the history of mankind. Recent times have seen a *striking increase in public attention* to migration. Dramatic events such as drowning of Africans in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean and terrorist threats have coloured debates and public perception. Coping with migration has become a serious challenge for the EU and its Member States.

Public perception of migration as a central theme

Member States and the EU have responded to this new situation with a variety of policies, ranging from tighter border controls, crackdowns on human trafficking, clearer asylum rules, continued emphasis on integration policies and cooperation with third countries to help control migrant flows. While these policies in themselves are important - and increasingly so – the thread that runs through them is the role that public perception plays in achieving effective management of migration. Yet the question of *public perception seems to be the missing link* that is too little discussed. Our study therefore focuses on the relationship between public perceptions and migration.

Perceptions and policy areas influence each other in both positive and negative ways. Public perception of migration is not uniform in the 25 Member States. Polls on attitudes towards migrants show large differences between Member States, between income groups and social classes, and between the types of fear and apprehension that migration arouses. Despite these differences and despite notable exceptions, the overall conclusion is that *public perception of migration tends to be increasingly negative* throughout Europe.

European citizens are living through times of strongly felt insecurity. Geopolitical Cold War structures have been replaced by an uncertain environment. Europe is challenged by security threats such as terrorism. Global economic competition is growing and results in fears of job losses. Against this background of felt insecurity, the public presentation of immigrants and migratory phenomena by the media and by politicians is often biased or negative, linking them often almost exclusively to security issues. The terminology commonly in use (such as “bogus asylum seekers” and “welfare scroungers”) has often become pejorative, while in reality migrants consist of different groups with different expectations and opportunities. Finally, the lack of reliable and comparable statistics contributes to public confusion.

Is migration supply or demand driven?

Although there are many different motivations to immigrate to Europe, human being's natural search for a job that holds out the prospect of better life is uppermost. Even the pressure for family reunion has labour migration as a related cause, albeit indirectly. The public perception is that migration is by and large a *supply driven* phenomenon. The evidence shows that the reality is much more nuanced. *The demand for labour* that migrants can meet is often the source of people's decision to migrate and of their choice of destination. As long as there are jobs for migrants, they will try to come, one way or the other. This phenomenon explains a substantial portion of migration to Europe in the past, it explains the presence of Mexicans in the U.S. today, and will explain migration pressures on Europe in the future. Many migrants may be poor and low skilled relative to the host society, but they are mostly not in relation to their country of origin since sellable skills and substantial amounts of money are needed to emigrate.

European labour markets will need migrants in the coming decades. Europe needs to be an attractive place to work for the highly skilled, but to a certain extent migrants of a large variety of skills are needed to partially offset demographic trends and to be employed in areas where there is insufficient supply of locals. While migration alone is not sufficient to meet the future demand for labour, increasing labour participation by the native population does not suffice either, or in the words of European Commission Vice-President Frattini: 'The new key message is: Europe will need more migration, since labour and skills shortages are already noticeable in a number of sectors and they will tend to increase.' (Speech at Harvard 7-11-2005).

Effects of migration

Migration is *potentially beneficial* for receiving countries and societies, as well as for countries of origin and migrants themselves. Immigrants can make valuable contributions by relieving labour shortages, increasing labour market efficiency, and acting as catalysts for job creation, innovation and growth. Immigrants can enhance cultural diversity and stimulate interest in other cultures and regions of the world among native populations. Immigrants have played such roles for Europe in the past. In addition, they can make important contributions to economic development in their countries of origin by means of remittances.

Reaping the benefits from migration is however far from automatic. The speed with which migration takes place requires careful management. In absence of such careful management, migration can accentuate existing problems on social housing, schools, labour markets and feelings of insecurity. Some of these problems are already visible today, but none of these problems is linked to migration per se. However, failing to act today could imply these problems will expand with serious consequences for European societies.

The following areas deserve special attention.

Integration is the key to beneficial immigration. Labour market integration is especially important as it encompasses other aspects of integration (e.g. language, culture). Integration is a two-way responsibility. Migrants need to make more serious efforts to integrate, while receiving countries need to continue to promote integration. The latter involves labour market reforms that yield equal opportunities to all, while public perceptions of migrants as 'welfare scroungers' or 'job thieves' need to be opposed.

Illegal migration is dangerous for the people involved, creates incentives for illegal activities and impacts negatively upon public opinion, damaging perceptions of legal migrants in almost equal measure. Breaking this cycle requires that Europe uses opportunities for legal migration beyond the strict conditions attached to family reunion. This provides a legitimate route of entry for some asylum seekers or irregular migrants, who would prefer to enter as legal or regular migrants. For such an expansion of migration opportunities to be beneficial and politically feasible, careful selection of new and existing migrants is necessary on the basis of employability, and illegal employment needs to be reduced as well.

The asylum crisis of the 1990s had its roots in the geo-political changes taking place outside of the EU. This resulted in unprecedented migratory pressure for the EU as thousands sought to escape from economic collapse or conflict and find a better life. The asylum channel was used increasingly as a means to do so, also by many who did not require international protection. This caused serious handling problems resulting in administrative backlogs, long decision procedures, rises in legal costs and overloading of domestic court systems. The administrative failings made asylum a favourite subject of media critics and the result was a general and growing malaise in public opinion towards migrants in general. Given that asylum application numbers are now at their lowest level for some years, the EU has a good

opportunity to make positive changes to public perceptions and positively influence the current debate on migration and asylum.

Security is an additional aspect which often frames public perception of migration. Terrorism and other crime are serious security threats that need a robust and appropriate response. Both may in certain instances have links to migratory phenomena but they are not intrinsic problems of migration itself. Were the public discourse to 'securitize' migration and perceive immigrants mainly as security risks, it would become much more difficult for migrants to integrate. Effective migration management has to strike a balance between the human security of migrants and their situation in countries of origin before departure and the primary duty of the EU and its Member States to protect the security of their citizens.

Gender issues need to receive more attention as women play a pivotal role in successful integration. The role and vulnerabilities of first and second generation female migrants often remains overlooked. Improving their status by empowering them with equal opportunities and rights should help integration in European societies. It may bring cultural differences to be debated with the full participation of everybody concerned. This would have a positive effect both on perceptions and to unbolt potential areas of conflicts linked to gender relations.

Putting migration in a broader context

For migration to be managed effectively the issue needs to be put in a broader context. Popular feelings of insecurity in which the outside world is perceived as a threat, relate to factors which sometimes have little to do with migration. The belief that the nation state finds it difficult to provide the degree of required security is one of them. The notion that individuals rather than states feel threatened by problems such as terrorism and the spread of infectious disease is another. International mobility is seen both as a cause and effect of these threats, even though mobility is a natural and indeed desirable phenomenon. The inability to resolve structural problems in the European economy and Europe's high unemployment is another factor contributing to negative feelings about immigration. Poor functioning of the labour market inhibits integration and leads to social exclusion, impacting on both members of the host country as well as immigrants. Whether for its existing inhabitants or for migrants present and future, Europe has to make itself a more attractive place to live.

Conclusion

The paper has five main messages. *First*, European labour markets need migrants in the future, which puts pressure on the need to effectively manage migration. Neither the current profile of migrants, nor the level of integration nor the public perception is in a state that allows Europe to reap the fruits from migration. *Second*, the most immediate concern is to break the negative cycle of hostility towards migration leading to restrictive policies towards legal migration which in turn lead to a diversion of migratory flows to asylum seekers or illegal migrants. Breaking the cycle requires a sufficient quantity of legal migration beyond family reunion. *Third*, a number of critical conditions must be met for such an expansion to be rewarding and politically feasible, including selectivity, improved integration efforts and a reduction of illegal employment. *Fourth*, none of these policies will be effective unless issues relating to public perception of migration are explicitly addressed. Justified concerns have to be tackled and misperceptions have to be cleared up, without presenting an overly optimistic view of the migration challenge. *Finally*, the need to put migration in a broader context implies that non migration policies are as important as migration policies. On a global basis, policy areas such as development, trade, external relations, agriculture and fisheries should be seen through a migration lens. On a national basis, the same applies for labour market policies, education, gender and housing policies.

1. Introduction

Migration is a phenomenon of all periods of history and of all continents. Recently it has once again become a phenomenon of growing public concern. The EU will most probably need to continue to attract substantial numbers of migrants in the future. A main challenge is therefore to design policies to manage these flows effectively. This entails striking a balance between attracting migrants for future EU labour markets - which are needed given the EU's ambitions laid out in the Lisbon Agenda - managing legitimate citizens' concerns on problems that may be associated with migration, and promoting the development of a diverse but cohesive society.

Although there are many different motivations to immigrate to Europe, human being's natural search for a job that holds out the prospect of better life is uppermost. The public perception is that migration is by and large a *supply driven* phenomenon. The evidence shows that the reality is much more nuanced. Whatever the precise reason, *the demand for labour* that migrants can meet is often the source of people's decision to migrate and of their choice of destination.¹ As long as there are jobs available migrants will move about the world. This phenomenon explains a substantial portion of migration to Europe in the past, it explains the presence of Mexicans in the U.S. today, and will underlie migration pressures on Europe in the future.

Because of ageing and the expected decline in working age population, European labour markets will need migrants in the coming decades. Europe needs to be an attractive place to work for the highly skilled, but migrants of a large variety of skills are needed to partially offset demographic trends and to be employed in areas where there is insufficient supply of locals (such as the caring sector).² While migration alone is not sufficient to meet the future demand for labour, increasing labour participation by the native population - often erroneously mentioned as a perfect substitute to 'low skilled' migration - does not suffice either.³

Given the European need for migration, it is essential to manage migration properly. In the absence of sufficient legal channels for immigration and appropriate support and incentives for integration, the demand pull implies that migrants enter and/or work illegally and, often as a consequence, do not integrate well in European societies. At the same time, societies are genuinely concerned about quick changes which need careful management as well. The combination of illegal migration, insufficient integration and poor management of change can sharply reduce the benefits of migration for the receiving countries, the countries of origin and for the migrants themselves.

The need to manage migration is the driving force behind many policy initiatives from the Member States and the EU. What is less well recognized is that the effectiveness of migration policies strongly interacts with the *public perception of migration*. Suppose that the public perceives migration predominantly as a phenomenon associated with illegal migrants crossing the Mediterranean in small boats, human trafficking and unemployment. Calls for tighter border controls and return policies are often the consequence. But if unchanged labour demand leads to further illegal migration, negative attitudes and stigmas will be reinforced. This will in turn further reduce integration possibilities, leading to self fulfilling prophecies and downward spirals.

¹ See e.g. A. Saith (1997), *Emigration pressures and structural change*, International Migration Papers 19, ILO.

² See e.g. Cichon M., F. Léger and R. Knop 2003, *White or Prosperous: How much migration does the ageing European Union need to maintain its standard of living in the twenty-first century?*, ILO Geneva.

³ See also: European Commission (2006) *The demographic challenge: an opportunity for Europe*, Communication October 2006.

If legal possibilities to enter exist and migrants show willingness to integrate, the public may see migrants as contributors to society, which opens the space for more constructive policies, which in turn helps the integration of migrants and the adaptation to change of the native population. Migration policies and public perception can reinforce each other, both in a positive and negative way. Eurobarometer surveys show that the public expects the European Union to solve 'the migration problem', but the same public may not always realize that they themselves are part of any solution. It is for this reason that the Commission in its recent Communication on illegal migration calls for more attention to public perception.⁴ For that same reason this paper analyzes the role of public perception in migration in more detail.

The link between migration policies and public perception is analyzed from five different angles. **First, a (perceived or real) lack of sufficient integration** on the part of migrants and their descendants into the receiving countries has repercussions on public attitudes, and conversely, public perception and resistance to change in society often makes integration more difficult. Inclusion in the labour market is a key element for successful integration, but cultural integration and adherence to common European values are equally important.

Second, migrants who enter the EU illegally have a negative impact on public opinion. It is also dangerous for the people involved who often face serious risks both in their attempted transit and after arrival. The persistence of illegal migration also creates incentives for illegal activities such as trafficking and illegal employment which damages perceptions of legal migrants in almost equal measure.

Third, the perception of asylum has radically changed over the last decades, from a humanitarian issue in the seventies and eighties, to a 'bogus asylum seeker' attitude in the nineties. Indeed in the absence of sufficient legal possibilities to meet labour demand, numerous potential migrants tried to use asylum procedures to enter Europe. This triggered policy responses of severe tightening of procedures, thereby hurting legitimate asylum seekers.

Fourth, apart from cross border trafficking of illegal migrants, **security** problems such as terrorism and other forms of crime are often linked to migration. There are security issues in relation to migration that in the essential interests of our societies must be addressed as a priority, but branding migrants, either generally or individually, or particular minorities or religions as by definition a security problem unfavourably influences public perception on migration as a whole.

Finally, we draw special attention to the position of women. Women constitute half of all migrants, and their profile has changed quite a bit over time, from the dependant "spouse" who moved on the grounds of family reunification to an autonomous woman who migrates to escape poverty or an oppressive situation, to exert and develop her skills and sends money back home. Yet, the perception of migrant women is often still based on a vanishing reality. This may impede integration by women and makes them vulnerable to discrimination.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 puts migration in a broader perspective. Section 3 develops the notion of public perception. What do we mean exactly by it, and how has it evolved over time? Section 4 discusses integration. Section 5 deals with illegal migration and section 6 with asylum. Section 7 discusses security. Section 8 develops the gender issue. Section 9 concludes.

Sections 4 to 8 answer the same three questions. (i) Why is public perception important? (ii) What are the public perceptions and the objective factors that shape them? (iii) How can

⁴ COM (2006) 402, Communication on Policy priorities in the fight against illegal immigration of third-country nationals.

public perceptions be improved? The last question can be approached from two angles. By improving policies, such as integration policies, reduction of illegal employment or asylum procedures, it becomes easier for the public to see migrants as contributing to society. Public perception can also be improved by addressing perceptions directly, e.g. through provision of adequate information and information campaigns.

2. Migration in a broader perspective

For the public perception it is first of all important to put migration in context and understand its scope. More often than not migration is seen as European problem or a problem of today. This section puts migration in context.

Definition and motivations

There is no such thing as a typical ‘migrant’. There are migrants for settlement; and others who see their stay as temporary – to work or study. There is labour migration, family reunification, refugees, asylum seekers, emigration for retirement, most of which are now defined in EU legislation. The motivation to migrate of each of these subgroups is different, and the composition of migrants varies between different EU countries. Although family reunification as a motivation for migration generally dominates, this is not the case in every EU Member State. In 2004, in Sweden, France and Austria over 60% of long-term residence permits were granted for purposes of family formation/reunion. In contrast, in Denmark, the UK and Portugal this proportion – that decreased in comparison to 2003 – was only between 30% and 40%. In the same year in Portugal, in 57% of the cases, employment was the reason for issuing a residence permit, against only around 12% in France. These different reasons of entry influence labour market outcomes and the situation of migrants (e.g. migrants entering based on humanitarian reasons or family reunification tend to have lower employment levels).⁵

In addition, there is a statistical issue. The exact number of migrants residing in Europe is difficult to calculate with precision for a number of reasons, comparability of Member States statistics being one important issue. For example, many European countries use citizenship instead of place or country of birth as a basis for their statistics. This concept distinguishes natives from legal foreign residents. The latter category consists of people living in Europe as citizens of another EU Member State or as third country nationals. Part of this group of people are immigrants, but their native born children, who at birth did not acquire the citizenship of their country of residence, belong to this group as well.⁶ Finally, the data on illegal migrants are unreliable at best.

It is important to go into the detail of the definition of migrants. If migrants are lumped together in public debates, one fails to take into account that in reality they consist of very different groups with different expectations and opportunities, leading to different problems that require different policy responses. As a result of the tendency to generalize, opportunities for effective management of migration can be lost. In this report, we use the term immigrant to mean a third country national residing in the EU for more than twelve months. Once such an immigrant has been legally resident in a Member State for at least five years he/she may now claim long-term resident status under EU legislation adopted in 2003.⁷ The Commission

⁵ OECD/Sopemi (2006) *International Migration Outlook*, OECD Publishing.

⁶ Münz, Rainer (2004) *Migration, Labour Markets and Migrants' Integration in Europe: A Comparison*. Paper for the EU-US Seminar on Integrating Immigrants into the Workforce, Washington DC, June 28-29 2004.

⁷ Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003 concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents.

has put forward a regulation⁸ to harmonise community statistics on migration and international protection which is expected to be adopted by the Council early in 2007.

Migration in an historical perspective⁹

Migration is frequently seen as a recent phenomenon, with people travelling over greater distances so that cultural differences and problems become larger. This public perception is erroneous. Neither qualitatively nor quantitatively can current levels of migration be considered exceptional. From the earliest time, when the world population diffused through migration out of Africa, migration has taken place over long distances and in substantial numbers in both relative and absolute terms.

Migration has nevertheless occurred in successive waves interspersed by periods of lower levels of migration. The period between the First World War and beginning of the 1950s was a period of low migration so that by comparison with that period, post WWII migration may appear to be high. The source and destination of migrants has also changed over time. From the Renaissance up to the 1950's, the Americas were the principal destination of migrants and since then North America at least has continued to attract large numbers of migrants.

However, it would not be true to say that most migrants were predominantly of the "north-north" variety, from Europe to colonies or former colonies across the Atlantic. Coercion formed the basis of the first big wave of migrants. It has been estimated that the New World received between 11 and 12 million slaves from Africa between 1450 and 1900. In addition, up to 20% of slaves died on the crossing and a further number between capture and shipment. Of those that arrived, 35% went to Brazil, 22% to the Spanish Empire, 18% to the British West Indies, 14% to the French West Indies and only 4% to British North America and the United States – the same number as the Dutch West Indies. Europe did not have a monopoly on the slave trade. Muslim traders are believed to have exported a further 17 million slaves to the coast of the Indian Ocean, the Middle East and North Africa.

European emigration to the Americas began to gather pace from the 1820s. This heralded what economic historians have termed the first big wave of globalisation. In the following century, an estimated 60 million Europeans set sail for the New World, of which about three fifths went to the United States. By comparison previous European migrations had been small and other 19th century migrations, for instance from India and China, relatively modest. Nevertheless, only in the 1840s did European migration into North America exceed that of Africans and it was not until the 1880s that the cumulative total surpassed African immigration.

Overwhelmingly, Europeans emigrated voluntarily, although a few left as convicts and others fled persecution, particularly after the 1848 revolutions, and famine. From around 300,000 per annum in the period 1846-50 the number rose to over a million per annum at the turn of the century. To begin with the dominant stream came from the British Isles and Germany, followed in mid-century by those from Scandinavia and north-west Europe and then from the 1880s from southern and eastern Europe. Interestingly, return migration also became important (30% of gross inflow in the US, 1908-14), particularly among immigrants from southern Europe.

Massive migration across the Atlantic had significant impacts on the population of both sending and receiving countries, dwarfing those seen today. Emigration rates of above 40 per

⁸ COM(2005)375

⁹ Hatton T.J. and Williamson J.G. 1992, *International Migration and world development: a historical perspective*, NBER Historical Paper No.41; Hugh Thomas (1997), *The slave trade*, Simon and Schuster; *Making sense of globalization: a guide to the economic issues* (2002) CEPR Policy Paper No.8.

thousand during the decades 1891-1900 and 1901-10 were experienced by countries as diverse as Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Italy, Portugal and Spain and Austria-Hungary (in the second period). The New World immigration rates per decade mirrored those of the sending countries in more extreme form. Both on receiving countries and on sending countries, the levels of 19th century migration had a major impact on wages on both sides of the Atlantic, powerfully driving convergence of incomes.

Migrants were typically young adults, male, single and unskilled. Given their age, migrants would have had little chance to acquire skills in their country of origin and may well have acquired them instead in their country of destination. Nevertheless, they competed mainly with native born unskilled labour, driving the wages for this type of labour down in their country of destination and while increasing it in their country of origin.

Migrants, particularly the more recent migrants, were attracted to previously established communities from their country of origin. The phenomenon of clustering of immigrants in Europe today therefore follows a well trodden path. Again, immigrants from different countries tended to specialise in certain occupations. While Italians accounted for only 4.2% of the US population in 1900, they accounted for 55% of the male barbers and hairdressers, 97% of the bootblacks, 34% of the shoemakers, 18% of the masons and 16% of the peddlers.

The world stock of migrants was 2.3% of the world population in both 1965 and 1990. Within Western Europe, the share of migrants in the total population increased from 3.6% to 6.1% over the same period. In North America it increased from 6% to 8.6%. This is substantially below that at the beginning of the 20th century: in 1911 the foreign born accounted for 14.7% of the population of the United States and 22% of the Canadian population.

It appears that recent migration trends to some extent replicate the underlying trends of the 19th century. At that time, Europe was substantially poorer than the New World and migrants left to seek a better life, attracted by more jobs and higher wages. In the late twentieth century the share of developing country migrants in total US immigration rose from 50% in the 1960s to 80% in the early 1990s. Similar trends are apparent in Canada, Australia and Europe so that recent European experience can in no sense be considered exceptional.

There are more similarities between current and historical migration than most people think. The main novelty for Europe is that it has converted from an emigration continent into an immigration one. The conversion does create serious challenges, but history puts the challenges in perspective.

Fear of change and public perception

History showed that it is possible to envisage a well functioning European society with substantial numbers of migrants, but were – hypothetically - the number to be doubled each year, it would obviously raise all manner of practical difficulties on housing, welfare payments, perceptions of security, impact on labour markets, on schools, besides a general fear of sudden and disturbing change. The relevant dimension is often the speed of change as well as the absolute size of the migrant population.

In more realistic situations less extreme versions of these problems can be discerned already today. In the seventies and eighties in several European countries - be it for a lack of understanding or for fears of political incorrectness – the real problems including the social impact of migration that influence public perceptions of migration were less well-recognized than today. In the current political discourse integration and illegal migration have risen to the top of the political agenda and dominate the front pages of the newspapers. This poses a risk of an overshoot in the opposite direction. Linking a large variety of social and economic problems with the issue of migration can have a distorting effect on public perception.

Migration in the global world

Migration must also be put in a global perspective. As in the past, it is in the interest of today's Europe to be open. Open for trade and for investments, but equally open for people. Europe competes with the rest of the world to hold and attract creative talent. For Europe to become an attractive place migration needs to be properly managed and migration policies require broad citizen assent. This will only become possible if genuine problems associated with migration can be tackled and negative public perceptions addressed.

A global perspective also implies that supply side (or push) factors and humanitarian problems should not be addressed as a European problem, but as a global problem for which often global solutions are needed. The EU is taking such an approach and this is what drives many international organisations and NGO's but is not always recognized as such by the public when migrants want to enter Europe.

Benefits and costs

Another factor influencing public perception is the perceived costs and benefits of migration. Over the years migration has brought economic benefits for both sending and receiving countries as well as for the migrants themselves. A recent study by DG ECFIN,¹⁰ looking backward at European experiences, concludes that these benefits have been small but positive. Economic theory suggests that there will be some net gains from immigration. Foreign workers may relieve labour shortages, act as a catalyst for the creation of new jobs, and increase labour market efficiency. The available empirical evidence on the impact of migration on domestic wages and employment is inconclusive, but it does not support the view that migration has either raised unemployment or significantly depressed the wages of the low skilled. The net budgetary impact of immigration appears to be overall positive, though not hugely so, with the contributions of migrants in extra tax revenue outweighing additional costs in public services and welfare benefits.

The World Bank report on Global Economic Prospects 2006 adopts a more forward looking approach. It reaches more optimistic conclusions albeit on a conditional basis. Migration could generate substantial welfare gains for origin and destination countries, for migrants and their families. The relative gains are higher for developing countries than for developed countries. However, the World Bank asserts that to achieve these gains conditions under which migrants cross borders, seek and obtain employment, and ways of facilitating remittances have to be improved.

Although coming from different angles both reports tell a similar story. Migration has the potential to be beneficial, but it is not always easy to gather in the fruits. Global trends reinforce that conclusion. With globalisation migration has continued, with significant movements from developing to developed countries. The world is opening up, in terms of trade, tourism, student exchanges and culture. There is more to gain, but also more at risk.

The most important point is that migration is most beneficial for both receiving countries and migrants themselves if migrants find jobs and integrate well; this has not yet become a reality if one considers the profile of today's migrants in Europe. The potential is large but to reap the benefits adjustments to policy and public perception are needed.

Concluding, when put in broader perspective public perception is shaped by the number of migrants, their profile, the speed of change and changed social and political contexts. While none of these features is unique in historical perspective, it still creates serious challenges for policy makers. The next section delves deeper in the nature of public perception.

¹⁰ The EU Economy 2005 Review, DG ECFIN.

3. Public perception

This section looks at why public perception of migration matters and which are the main characteristics of today's public perception and the factors conducive to them. Although our focus is on European public perception of migration, given the global nature of migration, public perception abroad - notably in sending and transit countries – also has implications for the EU's ability to attract support for its migration policies.

Why public perception on migration matters

Migration is not a new phenomenon but it is more on the public mind than before. The last Eurobarometer survey issued in June 2006 finds that migration is high among the second group of main concerns expressed by European citizens, coming before terrorism and just after health care. The first group of concerns is related to unemployment, crime and the economic situation, which happen to be often connected in public perception to migration.¹¹ In individual Member States immigration ranks at the top of the list of issues citizens regard as currently most important.¹²

Migration is regarded by many citizens as a problem that politicians should seriously address. Interestingly, European citizens expect European leadership – and not only their national leadership - to tackle this issue. The Eurobarometer 64 published in December 2005 found that 57% of EU-25 citizens think that decisions with regards to migration should be made jointly within the EU.¹³ Citizens also increasingly expect decision makers to consult them, and to explain policy settings to them.

Public concern about migration should not come as a surprise when one looks at the changes in the scale and speed of migration. For centuries European countries were emigration countries. Only in the 1950s for the first time in centuries European countries emerged as major immigration countries. Liberal migration policies favoured the recruitment of contract workers to compensate Western European labour shortages while the European economy was growing rapidly. Migration was perceived as a contributing factor to economic growth in the receiving countries. The status of the migrant - legal or not - was not an issue of public debate.

Since the 1970s the situation has significantly changed. The guest workers, who were meant to be temporary and hence were not integrated, often turned out to become permanent residents while the 1973 oil crisis marked a turning point with the introduction of restrictive migration policies favouring family reunification but closing the door to many other potential migrants. However, migration has not decreased. In 1975 it was estimated that there were 84 million migrants worldwide. According to a recent UN report,¹⁴ worldwide international migrants numbered 191 million in 2005. Notice however that the proportion of international migrants in relation to world population has remained about the same 3-4%. The changing nature of migration has increased public distrust and even hostility towards migrants and lack of confidence in the political leaders' ability to address the issue effectively. Illegal migration in particular has become a more prominent phenomenon, which has gained major public

¹¹ The Eurobarometer 65, published in June 2006 finds that a first group of main concerns of European citizens are related to unemployment (49%), crime (24%) and the economic situation (23%). A second group of concerns which scores raise between 18% and 10% includes health care (18%), immigration (14%), inflation (13%), terrorism (10%) and pensions (10%).

¹² In the UK, a survey of July 2006 has race relations and immigration as the top issue which 38% of respondents mentioned; <http://www.mori.com/polls/2006/mpm060724.shtml>

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb64/eb64_en.pdf

¹⁴ *Globalization and interdependence: international migration and development*, (2006) Report of the Secretary General of the United Nations, 18 May.

attention since the early 1990s. The Migration Policy Institute states that “in the past two decades, the Member States (...) have seen their population of irregular immigrants grow at ever increasing rates. (...) No Member State publishes official estimates of the size of its irregular immigration. Impressionistic accounts - which should not be taken as official statistics - suggest that the population of unauthorised immigrants in the EU might start at about one percent of the population of the EU25 (...) and is growing at annual rates that are well into the lower hundreds of thousands.”¹⁵ The growing number of illegal migrants both reinforces the perceived connection between migration and criminality and raises doubts about the States’ ability to control those who enter and stay on their national territory. Migration then tends to be perceived as a process out of political control.

The fast-growing number of asylum seekers was another new trend in the 80's and 90's, which increased public scepticism about the legitimacy of many migrants. Furthermore, migration has also become a societal issue. European societies are becoming more multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-racial and multi-religious. This means that public perception of migration plays a crucial role in our societies’ ability (or inability) to absorb differences and foster social cohesion while valuing social diversity. This raises the question of the limits of cultural tolerance, which has been addressed by the Commission in its 2005 Common Agenda for Integration - Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union.

The need to look at how diverse people can live together and interact in a positive way can boil down to the question what it means to be a European and to belong to a given society, country, citizenship. What is the meaning of Austrian-ness or French-ness in a more integrated Europe or in more diverse Austrian, French, Italian societies? Where is the glue to get some unity beyond diversities? As stated in the Common Agenda for Integration, shared basic values, promotion of fundamental rights, non discrimination and equal opportunities all are key issues to tackle the structural barriers faced by migrants, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups.

Adverse economic conditions and a growing and more diverse foreign population have turned migration into a major political and societal issue while the 1990s’ change in the geo-strategic environment has also played an important role in (re)shaping public perception of migration. The Cold War period was characterized by a world divided into two blocs and a clearly defined strategy based on deterrence and containment. The Post-Cold War period is characterized by uncertainty and a lack of clarity. Today’s threats are multiple – terrorism, proliferation, organized crime – and non-state actors have emerged. Over the last decade the European Union has changed its external borders while opening its internal borders. European citizens have to cope with those changes and be reassured that they can trust Member States and European institutions to protect them adequately in this new environment.

Threat perception plays a large role in today’s European outlook of the world. Fears include fear of unemployment and feelings of insecurity in a world of numerous and often ill-defined “enemies”. There is a growing distrust in public authorities and the political establishment. The general threat perception influences anti-immigration sentiments, reactions of distance or even hostility towards immigrants. Populist groups exploit the circumstances, further aggravating these sentiments. This general context prompts immediate and visible restrictive policies which reassure electoral worries by a phenomenon that they perceive to be out of control, instead of policies aiming at curtailing the desire to migrate by addressing the root-causes - which take time before producing results, and may not be so tangible.

¹⁵ *Managing Irregular Migration* (2005) by the Staff of the Migration Policy Institute (with the assistance of Patrick Weil), MPI, Policy Brief 4.

What the surveys say

The growing use of opinion polling suggests that public opinion as a meaningful factor in politics has increased. Recent surveys and opinion polls describe increasingly negative public attitudes towards migration and provide evidence on the main factors that trigger differences in public attitudes to migration.

The European Monitor Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) has a comprehensive report on European public attitudes to migrants and minorities. The document analyses European cross-national data within the framework of standard Eurobarometer 1997-2000-2003 and European Social Survey 2002-2003 related to majority's attitudes towards migrants and minorities.¹⁶ The authors pay specific attention to aspects related to the influx of growing and more diverse foreign populations, i.e. resistance to immigrants, resistance to asylum seekers, and resistance and limits to multicultural society. The study also considers aspects related to the presence of migrants in European societies and the actual process of their social integration, such as ethnic distance¹⁷, opposition to civil rights for legal migrants, support for repatriation policies for legal migrants, and insistence on conformity of migrants to national and EU law. The report identifies "collective ethnic threat" as being the dominant perception of minorities in Western and Eastern Europe. This is a view held by 58% of the respondents.

Most of the factors identified by the EUMC report are reflected in many other European polls. This is true in particular for the geographic disparities. Sensitivity to immigration varies significantly from one country to another. This actually reflects the existing differences between EU countries in terms of migration experiences, histories and concerns, and different levels of economic dependency on migration. For example, a well known negative public perception on migration is related to the concern that immigrants take jobs away from natives. A 1995 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) found that this view was indeed held by half of the respondents in the UK but only by 16% of the Swedes and about the same percentage in the Netherlands and Norway.¹⁸

The strong influence of the role of education on attitudes towards migration is also corroborated by a number of studies while nuanced by some others. An in-depth analysis of the 2003 European Social Survey (ESS) finds that the link between opposition to immigration in Europe and fears of labour market competition does not work the same way for all education and income groups.¹⁹ The study emphasises that "people with higher education levels are more likely to favour immigration regardless of where the immigrants come from and their likely skill attributes." The more educated hold more positive views towards migration and cultural diversity. However, the relation is not automatic. The 2004 British Social Attitude Survey found that between 1995 and 2003 "the group whose attitudes towards immigration has changed the most is actually the most educated, particularly those with degrees. The proportion believing the number of immigrants should be reduced rose by 21

¹⁶ Coenders M., M. Lubbers and P. Scheepers, (2003) *Majority Populations' Attitudes Towards Migrants and Minorities*, Report for the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, EUMC, Vienna.

¹⁷ The phenomenon of *ethnic distance* was first observed by Bogardus (1933) who studied race relations in the US. He found strong evidence for the proposition that the closer minority groups approached majority groups, the stronger majority groups would try to keep minority groups at a distance and try to avoid actual interethnic contact. A long research tradition has built that evidence and led to contemporary studies (cf. Hagendoorn, 1995; Parillo and Donoghue, 2002) which still show similar evidence.

¹⁸ Bauer Thomas K., Magnus Lofstrom and Klaus F. Zimmermann (2000), *Immigration Policy, Assimilation of Immigrants, and Natives' Sentiments Towards Immigrants: Evidence from 12 OECD Countries*, Swedish Economic Policy Review, Vol. 7, 11-53.

¹⁹ See Hainmueller J. and Michael J. Hiscock (2004) , *Educated Preferences : Explaining Attitudes Toward Immigration* , paper prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago , September 2-5, 2004.

percentage points among graduates compared to the next highest increase of 12 percentage points among those with O-level or equivalent.”²⁰

Furthermore other surveys have highlighted the crucial role played by prejudices in public attitudes to migrants. For example, in the UK a 2004 YouGov/Economist survey asked respondents if they thought people in their neighbourhood would approve or disapprove of different nationalities moving into their area. 85% approved or did not mind Australians moving in and 56% approved or did not mind Poles as against 39% for Black Africans, 32% for Romanians, 26% for Pakistanis and 16% for Iraqis.²¹ Being in contact with migrants - which brings a personal human experience - may help to overcome some prejudices. Actually areas with more ethnic diversity and a longer history of migration tend to be more tolerant. Nevertheless, it seems that migrants’ presence plays a positive role on perception of migrants only if there is a genuine acquaintance. If not, it may just reinforce prejudices.²²

EUMC Report on Majority populations’ attitudes towards migrants and minorities

Resistance to immigrants is shared by half of the populations.

Resistance to asylum seekers is supported by almost a third of the general public.

Resistance to multicultural society is shared by a stable minority of about a quarter of the Europeans, whereas more and more Europeans perceive that the ***limits to multicultural society*** have been reached. This latter view is supported by a majority of about two thirds.

Ethnic distance is present among one fifth in Western and Eastern societies trying to avoid social interaction with migrants both in the public and private domain.

Opposition to civil rights for legal migrants is supported by stable minority of about four out of ten Europeans.

Support for repatriation policies for legal migrants is growing over time and subscribed to by a minority of about one out of five.

Insistence on conformity of migrants to law is subscribed to by an over time fast growing majority of about two out of three people.

Main factors influencing public attitudes to migrants and minorities

Geographic factors. EUMC finds large cross-national differences on attitudes towards migrants and minorities. Resistance to immigrants and asylum seekers is widely shared by Mediterranean countries (in Greece 87% of the respondents express resistance to immigrants and 31% resistance to asylum seekers), also by Central European societies (87% of Hungarians show resistance to immigrants and 41% to asylum seekers), whereas Nordic countries disassociate themselves (only 15% of the Swedes express resistance to immigrants and 11% to asylum seekers). A similar story applies to resistance to multicultural society and ethnic distance (77% of Greeks express strong resistance to diversity against 29% of the Irish respondents). Repatriation policies for legal migrants, strongly favoured in Mediterranean and Central European countries, less so in Nordic and Central European societies. Insistence on conformity to law, favoured by people in Nordic, Western and Central European countries as well as in the Baltic states, less so in Mediterranean and Eastern European countries.

²⁰ Quoted by Heaven Crawley (2005) in *Evidence on Attitudes to Asylum and Immigration: What We Know, Don't Know and Need to Know*, COMPAS, Working Paper No. 23, University of Oxford.

²¹ YouGov-Economist - Attitudes to Immigration – 2004 http://yougov.com/archives/pdf/OMI040101093_1.pdf

²² See Heaven Crawley, *op.cit*

Social categories and education. The authors find consistently that people with lower levels of education support ethnic exclusionism; as well as people who perform manual labour and self-employed people, people who depend on social security, people running a household, those in the lowest income quartile (related to educational level); and people living in the countryside.

Individual perceptions. The authors find that people favour ethnic exclusionism to a stronger extent when they perceive decreases in their personal safety, distrust other people or their political leaders, consider themselves to be politically on the right wing; and perceive ethnic minorities to pose a collective threat.

Other factors. The report finds that unemployment has a negative effect: the higher the unemployment rate, the more widespread is resistance to a multicultural society and the stronger the support for repatriation policies. However, in many other instances the relationship between the unemployment rate and dimensions of ethnic exclusionism turned out to be non-significant. Finally, the report also shows that net migration induces resistance to diversity and support for repatriation policies regarding criminal migrants.

Difficulties to disentangle perception from reality

The surveys may confirm the existence of an increasing anti-immigration attitude, but they often assume a level of knowledge of migration (for example, clear understanding by the respondents of the differences between “migrants”, “asylum seekers” and “ethnic minorities” or some assessment of the existing level of immigration in their country) that does not really exist. Surveys are about public opinions, wishes and preferences rather than knowledge and understanding of a given issue. They may not properly reflect the complexity and deep interconnection of the factors influencing public attitudes towards migration. In practice it is difficult to disentangle perception from reality.

It is difficult to seize the reality of migration partly due to the lack of reliable statistics; in particular illegal migrants by definition avoid statistical coverage. An optimal usage of available statistics is also hindered by the dispersion of information on migrants between different agencies, as well as by different legal considerations about illegal entry and criminal offence. The lack of clear definition and the imprecise use of a number of terms related to migration add to the confusion. The lack of accurate information strengthens public perception of migration as a dangerous phenomenon beyond the control of the national authorities and enhances suspicion of official statements on the matter.

It should also be noted that public attitudes on migration are sometimes ambivalent and emotionally charged. Even if they tend to be increasingly negative, there are notable exceptions reflecting an existing tension between threat perception and human rights concerns. Take the sometimes desperate situation facing illegal migrants and asylum seekers. In 2000, the deaths of 58 Chinese illegal migrants found in the back of a lorry at the port of Dover as they were smuggled into Britain came as a profound shock. Some media and human rights organizations blamed the British authorities and their counterparts in Europe for being responsible for the spread of trafficking in migrants due to their increasingly harsher anti-immigrant policies. More recently the controversy in France over the deportation of undocumented child migrants is another illustration of the sometimes ambivalent public opinion on migration.

Migration is mainly presented and then perceived as a basically crisis-driven issue. As shown by the "Copenhagen School" on security studies “security is an act of speech, an issue becomes a matter of security when it is presented as such, not necessarily because in reality it

exists as such.”²³ The media coverage of migration and the political discourse on migration feed the perception of a crisis. Politicians and media often discuss migration in the context of border controls, illegal migration or human trafficking.

In the UK, for example, a 2002 survey asked respondents which three words of a list of 20 descriptions – some negative, others positive - they feel the media most uses when referring to asylum seekers and refugees. The top answer was “illegal immigrant” (mentioned by 64%), next came “desperate” (35%), “foreigners” (24%) and “bogus” (22%). In the British media stories focusing on crimes committed by migrants often outnumber the articles covering racially motivated crimes, civil injustice or institutional racism experienced by migrants.²⁴ In Portugal studies of media coverage of migration similarly show that “the Portuguese media has constructed images of immigrants and ethnic minorities as “others” and often as “criminals”, “delinquents” and “undesirables”.²⁵ Moreover “reports about radical Islam and the threat it poses to Europe are regarded as newsworthy, reports about cultural diversity and co-existing communities are comparatively rare. In addition, reference to majority and minority populations with respect to shared human rights is absent from media reporting.”²⁶

As shown in this section, the factors influencing public perception on migration are very complex. Migration in itself is a complex issue whose narrative does not always fit well in a world where communication often gives preference to news making good headlines and lacks capacity or willingness to concentrate seriously on some important and long-standing issues. The currently prevailing perception of migration is fed by a public discourse that focuses too much on security issues and fails to explain how to manage migration in a balanced but constructive way. Besides seeking to provide better, accurate and unbiased information, there is clearly a need to de-dramatize migration issues in order to change some public attitudes towards migration. Migration is not a temporary phenomenon. It is there to stay and it cannot be constantly viewed as a long-lasting crisis. Moreover whereas migrants are basically seen as workers, the human dimension could be further highlighted in public debates on migration.

4. Integration

Integration of migrants is a key area of immigration policies and intimately linked to public perception. This section shows how public attitudes can influence integration and conversely, how policies can form public perceptions. The section ends with ways in which public perception may be improved.

Integration and public perception – why is it important?

The European Council defines integration as a ‘two-way process’, involving the mutual rights and corresponding obligations of immigrants and the receiving society.²⁷ One practical problem is that it is not clear what integration exactly is. There are different models of integration available in Europe (French republican, British multicultural), but the models

²³ See Ole Wæver, Barry Buzan, Morten Kelstrup and Pierre Lemaitre, eds. *Identity, Migration, and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, London: Pinter, 1993. Ole Wæver, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, in Ronny Lipschutz, ed., *On Security*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995. / Buzan, Wæver, et al. *Security: a New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder, Col., Lynne Rienner Pub. 1998.

²⁴ Berkeley R., Omar Khan and Mohan Ambikaipoker (2006), *What’s New About New Immigrants in Twenty-First Century Britain*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

²⁵ *Current Immigration Debates in Europe: A Publication of the European Migration Dialogue* (2005), Jan Niessen, Yongmi Schibel and Cressida Thompson (eds), - *Portugal* by Lucinda Fonseca, Jorge Macaistra Malheiros and Sandra Silva.

²⁶ EUMC (2005) *Majorities’ Attitudes Towards Minorities – Key Findings From the Eurobarometer and the European Social Survey*.

²⁷ Council Conclusions of 4/5 November 2004, annex I; see also COM(2003) 336 final, COM(2005) 389 final.

cannot easily be transposed to other countries. Each Member State has its own model of integration forged over the years. The Council has now adopted the Common Basic Principles on integration (CBP) that serve as a framework for the implementation and evaluation of current and future integration policies. The CBP is a first step to a common EU approach, built on evaluation of good practice.²⁸

There are nevertheless several contexts in which the two-way process can be interpreted and understood. The *structural and social integration* (or social inclusion) of migrants includes labour market integration, access to public services such as education or health care, and access to financial benefits such as retirement pensions. Structural and social integration can be defined as being achieved if comparable groups of people (both migrants and natives) enjoy comparable opportunities and outcomes in terms of employment, remuneration, socio-economic status and other relevant characteristics.²⁹ Social inclusion involves granting social rights to migrants,³⁰ and social integration implies adequate health conditions, quality education and housing, non-segregated residence patterns, etc. Segregation in employment, education or residence can strengthen negative attitudes (both among natives and among migrants) which can contribute to discrimination in the access to jobs, social services and to further social exclusion.

Labour market integration is a crucial issue for several reasons.³¹ Firstly, employment is a cornerstone for any integration into a new society and, very often, one of the main conditions of social inclusion. To a certain extent labour market integration encompasses other aspects of integration as, for example, successful integration to the labour market can bring an improvement in language skills. Secondly, high unemployment among migrants can create more problems to a society than native unemployment. If migrants face hurdles to find a job, there is a risk that they take up jobs in the informal economy, which poses further problems. At the other side of the spectrum, migrants are on average more entrepreneurial than natives and find more ways out of unemployment.

Furthermore, regardless of its reasons, the unemployment of migrants negatively affects public opinion towards migrants, which, in turn, hinders the integration process. If migrants are unemployed they are easily perceived as ‘welfare scroungers’ who do not contribute to the welfare of the society. Even if they are employed, they are sometimes presented as ‘stealing the jobs’ of natives (see ‘the lump of labour fallacy’ in the box below). One of our tasks is to assess the validity of these perceptions.

Political-legal integration involves a clear legal status and participation rights that include ‘the right to vote and to stand as candidate in democratic elections’.³² The political-legal integration also includes many aspects, such as the prohibition of discrimination and the participation in the democratic process more generally. The European Council and the Commission have encouraged Member States to provide migrants with political rights and develop their integration through civic citizenship (rights and responsibilities) over time.

²⁸ Common Basic Principles (CBP) in integration policies: Council Document 14615/04 of 19 November 2004 and COM(2005) 389 final: *A Common Agenda for Integration – Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union*.

²⁹ Böhning, W.R. (1995) ‘Labour Market Integration in Western and Northern Europe: Which Way are We Heading?’, in: W.R. Böhning and R. Zegers de Beijl (eds), *The Integration of Migrant Workers in the Labour Market: Policies and their Impact*, Geneva: International Labour Office.

³⁰ Bauböck, Rainer (2005) ‘Citizenship Policies: International, State, Migrant and Democratic Perspectives’. Global Migration Perspectives No. 19.

³¹ For an excellent overview of the literature see ‘The Economics of Migration’ (2002), four volumes, K. Zimmermann and T. Bauer eds., Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd. Cheltenham.

³² Bauböck, Rainer (2005) Op cit.

Studies on political integration often discuss the different citizenship practices in EU Member States and rules of naturalisation. Though by no means sufficient as tool for integration, granting citizenship is an important step in the integration process as it involves both inclusion of migrants into the receiving society by securing their political and social rights and the acceptance of the society's basic conventions and ensuing responsibilities by migrants.

Finally, the *cultural elements* of integration imply both the migrants' identification with the receiving society and the receiving society's inclusive attitudes and acknowledgement of cultural heterogeneity (cultural rights). As such, these elements of integration are inherently linked to the aim of changing perceptions. Cultural integration involves aspects such as migrants' knowledge of the receiving society's 'basic values', language, history and institutions, a frequent interaction and dialogue between immigrants and receiving country citizens, safeguarding the practice of different cultures and religions, and positive attitudes towards migrants.³³ Educational programmes play an essential role in achieving social and cultural inclusion.

Public perceptions and labour market integration

Public perceptions can influence the integration process of migrants both directly and indirectly. Firstly, it is more difficult to integrate into a society that does not accept the presence of or is hostile towards foreigners, and conversely, integration becomes easier if the receiving society is more tolerant. It also works the other way. Public perception can change as a result of visible efforts to integrate by migrants themselves. Secondly, and even more importantly, negative public perceptions are manifested in institutional and social practices that contribute to the marginalised position of migrants. Discriminatory practices or labour market segmentation represent such 'institutionalisation' of stereotypes and negative perceptions. The result of these practices is the vicious circle of exclusion, marginalisation and further discrimination since if migrants have the worst jobs and lowest wages, they can become stigmatised, which brings about negative attitudes and again, further discrimination. This vicious circle can only be reversed if steps are taken to remove discriminatory practices and to curb public perception.

The disadvantageous position of migrant groups can be illustrated by several data, for example high unemployment.³⁴ In the second quarter of 2005, 8.9% (8.4% men and 9.5% women) of the native active population was unemployed in the European Union while this rate was 17.0% (16.5% men and 17.6% women) among third country nationals (23.1% among the young between 15 and 24 years of age, 11.2% among the total of 15-24 year olds). Unemployment rates have increased considerably in the past years.

Unemployment among migrants is partly caused by a lack of skills (language, education etc) or lack of recognition of skills or foreign qualifications. The structure of the immigrant population by level of education varies amongst Member States. In France, Italy, Portugal and Belgium, nearly 50% of immigrants between 25 and 64 years of age have not attended upper secondary school. In other countries (Ireland, the United Kingdom and Denmark), the proportion of less educated immigrants is significantly smaller. Although the comparisons should be treated with caution, the examples of Canada and Australia show that a selective immigration policy might improve these numbers. Such selective policies are more complex than a simple high-skill/low-skill division. The mixed experience from the German

³³ See Common Basic Principles (CBP) Council Document 14615/04 of 19 November 2004.

³⁴ <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>. Certainly, those migrants who became citizens do not appear in statistics on foreigners. Nevertheless, studies such as *Employment in Europe 2003* (Chapter 6) and 2004 (Chapter 1) underline the role of naturalization for facilitating labour market integration.

'technology green card'³⁵ shows how difficult it is for governments to forecast too specifically defined labour market shortages, but since European labour markets will likely face shortages in a variety of sectors, it seems better to select on employability that requires a broader qualification than just 'high skills'.

While human and social capital may explain part of integration problems, structural and institutional factors in the labour market hinder integration as well.³⁶ Evidence generally suggests that discrimination in employment on grounds of race, ethnicity, or citizenship is considerable in most EU Member States. This is accumulated for migrant women, who are often subject to double discrimination. Based on discrimination testing, for example, the EUMC reports that total net discrimination rates (measured as 'the differences in success rates [in getting a job, after all stages had been completed] between majority and minority testers'³⁷) were 33% in Belgium, 37% in the Netherlands, and 36% in Spain. Parallel to discrimination, labour market segmentation is usually regarded as another structural factor hindering the integration of migrants. The majority of migrants from third countries are employed in low-skilled, low-paid, sometimes even dangerous professions in the medium and low segments of the labour market with little prospect of upward mobility.

Long-settled or second and third generation migrants face labour market disadvantages, even in the absence of language deficiencies. Wage disadvantages of migrants persist even if one corrects for the level of education, the type of job and other relevant characteristics.³⁸ This holds in particular for vulnerable groups such as women, the elderly, refugees, and asylum seekers and may also be observed for certain minority groups, e.g. Muslims.³⁹

Employment protection laws in some European countries may also generate barriers to employment for new entrants, for example for young people or for women.⁴⁰ Moreover, a side effect of labour market rigidities can be observed when one analyses opinion polls. A recent study⁴¹ shows that in countries with more 'rigid' or generous welfare state institutions (e.g. wage rigidity associated with collective bargaining or minimum wages) the conflict of interest between migrants and natives tend to be greater, which is reflected by the more negative attitudes of the natives towards migrants. In these countries, a higher proportion of people think that 'migrants abuse the welfare system' or 'migrants take jobs from natives'. These opinions reflect one of the most widespread misunderstandings related to migration: the lump of labour fallacy. This is explained in the box below.

The lump of labour fallacy

Europe has an unexploited low skilled population that undeniably competes to a certain extent with migrants. It is a widespread and persistent misunderstanding that this implies that migration leads to unemployment of the locals. This misunderstanding is related to the so-called 'lump of labour fallacy'.

³⁵ Hunger, U. and Kolb, H. (Eds.) (2003). Die deutsche 'Green Card': Migration von Hochqualifizierten in theoretischer und empirischer Perspektive. IMIS-Beiträge Vol. 22. Osnabrück: IMIS.

³⁶ EUMC (2003) *Migrants, Minorities and Employment. Exclusion, Discrimination and Anti-discrimination in the 15 Member States of the European Union*.

³⁷ Ibid. p. 57.

³⁸ Wrench, John (2002) *Diversity Management in Different EU Countries – The New Way of Combating Ethnic Discrimination?* Conference paper 'Labour supply and diversity – locally to globally', Göteborg.

³⁹ EUMC (2003) op. cit.

⁴⁰ Nickell, Stephen (2003) *Employment and Taxes*. CESIFO Working Paper No. 1109, prepared for Venice Summer Institute, Workshop on Tax Policy and Labour Market Performance, July 2003.

⁴¹ Boeri, Tito and Herbert Brücker (2005) 'Why are Europeans so Tough on Migrants?' *Economic Policy* October 2005: 629-703.

The most beneficial form of migration occurs when migrants are able to fill gaps that are left open by locals. This is favourable for the migrants themselves (jobs, wages) and for the society at large. This is a variant of the standard trade theory result that says that benefits are largest when there are differences between trading partners.

Although this phenomenon is well-understood, it is often erroneously inferred that if differences in skills between migrants and natives are smaller, migrants compete with locals and therefore take away their jobs. This lump of labour fallacy assumes that the number of jobs is somehow fixed. However, in reality the number of jobs depends on demand for goods and services (more demand, more output, more jobs) and on labour costs (at a given level of demand lower labour costs increase the demand for labour). What happens when migrants come in? In a first step, labour costs decline and demand for labour will increase (cf footnote 39). Supply of labour will also increase because of migration but the incipient fall in the (real) wage will lead to some already employed workers leaving the labour market. The net result for the number of jobs available for the native population is unknown as it would depend on the relevant elasticities.

Recent empirical evidence confirms that even major migration flows had only small labour market effects. The experiments of Sweden, U.K. and Ireland illustrate that immigration does not have to lead to unemployment. Such overall pictures on aggregated levels of the economy do not exclude more profound effects on specific segments of the labour market or specific regions. The fallacy is most clear-cut where a causal relationship is assumed of the type “more immigration – more unemployment”.

An important factor that determines the effect of migration on unemployment and wages is often overlooked in policy debates, namely the general functioning of the labour market. Adding a large quantity of migrants to an inflexible labour market necessarily implies unemployment, although more often for (discriminated against) migrants than for (protected) locals or alternatively immigrants are hired on an irregular basis (i.e. below minimum wages). However adding migrants to a flexible labour market is much more likely to help the economy grow.

How to improve public perceptions on integration?

While negative public perceptions hinder integration, positive attitudes can contribute to a successful integration process reversing the downward spiral of stigmatisation and marginalisation. Below we identify some illustrations of policies that can improve existing public perceptions, directly or indirectly. These should be regarded as elements of a more comprehensive strategy; none of them can solve the problems alone, and there are many additional steps (e.g. changing curricula in schools, increased responsibility for migrants and attention by the media, etc.) that need to be taken.

1. Public perception is connected to the perceived impacts of migration on labour markets. From the above and from the empirical literature⁴² it follows that this

⁴² For a more detailed overview see a background note of DG ECFIN ‘*Labour Migration Patterns in Europe: Recent Trends, Future Challenges*’. Further, recent estimates show that the decline in native born employment following a 1% increase in the ratio of migrants in the active population is 0.02%. Likewise, as regards the wage impact, the percentage wage of a native worker with respect to a one percentage point increase in the ratio of immigrants over native workers concludes to a decrease of 0.12%. Longhi Simonetta, P. Nijkamp, J. Poot (2006) ‘*The impact of immigration on the employment of natives in Regional Labour Markets*’. ISER Working paper 2006-10; Longhi, Nijkamp, Poot (2005) ‘*A Meta-Analytic Assessment of the Effect of Immigration on Wages*’, *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 19(3) 2005.

perception is often more negative than the factual evidence would justify. Political leaders can play a crucial role in correcting these views. This is particularly needed if Europe wants to manage legal labour migration in the future.

2. Anti-discrimination legislation is not only an effective instrument to combat discriminatory practices, but can also contribute to changing attitudes in the long run. Anti-discrimination laws draw the attention to the phenomenon of discrimination as a cause of the disadvantageous situation of migrants; thus helping to understand why integration cannot be successful unless these practices are changed. Furthermore, as a result of such legislation, employment practices can change and the situation of migrants can improve, which can indirectly influence public opinion.
3. Selective migration policies can also contribute to improvement of public perceptions. First, they provide legal channels for migrants with demanded skills (high and low) to enter and stay in EU Member States (recall that migration is largely demand-driven). Selective policies can further help to match demand and supply while reducing the scope of illegal migration. Many natives tend to associate migrants with low skills and unemployment, which these policies can alter. Selective policies are not about low or high skills (the difference is not always so clear anyway) but about *needed skills*. Attracting migrants with needed skills will improve public perception since they are more easily associated with contributions to society. Possible consequences for brain drain should be taken seriously but can also be nuanced (migrants from developing countries often pay substantial amounts of remittances and when there is circular migration, a selective policy could incite people to invest in education that could benefit the sending countries).⁴³
4. Integration does not only imply direct ways to integrate migrants but also efforts to enhance social cohesion of all residents. The EU has been active in this field. To be effective integration needs, therefore, to involve a wide range of stakeholders: local authorities, migrant organisations, religious communities, sports associations, NGOs etc.
5. Public perception will also be enhanced if migrants and migrant organisations themselves make increased visible efforts to integrate.
6. Finally, as general labour market modernisation could improve the position of labour market outsiders in general and migrants in particular, it could enhance the integration process, and with this, it could contribute to changing public perceptions.

5. Illegal migration

Why is public perception on illegal migration important?

Illegal migrants are defined as those migrants who have entered a country illegally or those who have entered legally and then lost their legal status. Although data on illegal migration are notoriously lacking, the latter is most likely to be by far the larger group of illegal immigrants. However, there is not always a clear dichotomy of legal and illegal immigrants. Legal immigrants with residence status may work illegally. There are 'grey' areas of legal status, e.g. for asylum seekers who have been denied asylum status but are tolerated, some with humanitarian status. Cases exist where asylum seekers are sent away from temporary asylum shelters who have no status or rights but who are not considered illegal either. People who fall into such legal 'grey' areas form a very vulnerable group of migrants.

⁴³ It is outside the scope of this paper to treat the phenomenon of 'brain drain' in detail. It is currently being addressed by a number of EU and other international initiatives.

Often neglected in discussions is the growing group of 'illegal migrants' who were legal migrant residents who turned illegal. Their illegal status can come about in a large variety of ways. For example suppose migrant students or au pairs are allowed to work for a certain number of hours. If they work more they do so illegally in violation of employment restrictions attached to their migratory status. Suppose that migrants entered the country for a specific job in a specific area. Moving out of the area or out of the job sector would make them illegal. Turning legal migrants into illegal migrants may also happen through changes in policies or criteria after their arrival. Migrants falling into such categories, called 'semi-compliant migrants' by an Oxford based Migration think tank,⁴⁴ are important for public perception since very few people would associate them with illegal migrants.

Illegal migrants do not always act out of free choice. They form a vulnerable population which often has been forced to flee from poor and unsafe areas. A number of the illegal migrants are smuggled or trafficked. Hence, one of the sensitive issues when working out policies on illegal migration is how to strike the right balance between state security and the basic rights of individuals. However, illegal migrants are perceived as challenging the sovereignty of the state and in particular its capacity to control its borders.

Public perception is of particular significance in relation to illegal migration as it is this form of migration which dominates current debates over migration in general. Current events such as increasing numbers of migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean understandably focus media attention on illegal migration. However, the strong emphasis on the 'dramatic' side of illegal migration also influences the public perception of the broader phenomenon of migration as it displays migrants as people who are desperate to enter Europe by whatever means rather than as people who can contribute to our societies.

How are public perceptions and illegal migration connected?

Illegal migration feeds public perception in three different ways.

First, it associates migration with illegal activities. This is not entirely wrong as illegal activities (e.g. trafficking) are conducted in relation to migration. The public perception of illegal migration is in part based on real concerns which need to be addressed. However, it is often understandably coloured by what is shown in the media. To name just one example: If people watch television they see Chinese illegal migrants suffocating in trucks, desperate Africans drowning in the ocean and foreign young women trafficked for prostitution. This will undoubtedly influence their perception of the broader phenomenon of migration. Contrary to popular belief, though, the vast majority of illegal migrants do not enter Europe in perilous boats or trucks. Most of them enter legally via student or tourist visa and then stay illegally.⁴⁵ This seemingly innocent misperception can have far-reaching consequences for migration policies, e.g. with understandable but out-of-proportion attention to border control and fortification.

Second, illegal migration is perceived as a phenomenon beyond political control. This refers to a perceived control failure of government at whichever level. People enter/stay/work illegally in any given country and it is difficult to produce precise data on illegal migration. This perception favours restrictive migration policies and may be easily manipulated by populist politicians. Another illustration is the perception of crisis-driven policies, i.e. predominance of emergency politics over "normal" politics. If the political leadership is

⁴⁴ Ruhs M. and B. Anderson (2006), *Semi-compliance in the migrant labour market* Working Paper No. 30, University of Oxford.

⁴⁵ *Migration without borders: an investigation into the free movement of people*, Antoine Pécoud and Paul de Guchteneire, UNESCO, Global Migration Perspectives, No. 27 April 2005.

perceived as having failed to anticipate the problem and work out a proper policy, the logical consequence is a reactive approach under the pressure of events.

Third, incidents with illegal migrants appeal to sentiments of solidarity with people in trouble. The ambiguity of public opinion on migration is that it is sometimes torn between the will to see illegal migrants sent back to their countries and the compassion for what can turn out to be a cruel fate for unfortunate people. This gives room for the political leaders to address the human security aspect of migration, and to push forward policies linking migration and development.

What to do to improve public perception?

As mentioned above, to improve public perception one may work from the policy side or tackle public perception directly.

Most people agree that one should try to reduce the number of illegal migrants. Less clear is how one can achieve such reductions in a reasonable way. The typical response towards illegal migration has been more vigorous border controls. Many Member States have made great efforts to control their frontiers better and have had some success. Considerable efforts to coordinate activities and to promote cooperation between Member States to improve border controls have been made in recent years and the establishment of the FRONTEX agency will ensure that this continues in the future. But although border controls are needed, few would argue that they are particularly successful. Building a ‘fortress Europe’ is expensive and not very effective, since it strongly risks to reduce return migration, such that net effect of ‘closing borders’ can even be counterproductive. Among other things it lowers the benefit from circular migrations and, accordingly, increases the risk of negative effects of brain drain for third countries.⁴⁶

There are two potentially complementary ways of reducing illegal migration. One is to work on the stock, the other on the flow. Different policies are needed for each of these groups and there is no easy single-dimension solution for any of these groups.

1. Reducing the numbers of illegal migrants through the flow

The central theme here is to reduce the incentives for illegal migration. This requires a wide-reaching set of policy initiatives, since there are many root causes for illegal migration. On the demand for labour, reducing incentives first means to control and sanction employers hiring illegal migrants, or more generally to reduce illegal employment. The informal economy attracts illegal migrants (many of Europe’s illegal migrants live in EU countries where employment in the informal sector is high among migrants and natives alike) and illegal migrants make the informal economy more profitable. This will remain as long as a well established informal economy demands and sustains illegal recruitment (e.g. through employers unwilling to pay more for legal migrants; illegal migrants find it easier to find a job in the informal sector because of the role played by the immigrant networks in this sector). A second type of demand policy is to make better use of legal opportunities for those migrants that can contribute to European societies and to make the legal possibilities more transparent (see further the section on integration).

From the supply side, long term policies are needed that are targeted at the root causes for emigration from sending countries. Policies which address political, human rights and development issues are all aimed at improving good governance and respect of human rights, and reducing the income gap in the long run, thereby reducing the need for migration and

⁴⁶ Pécoud, A. Paul de Guchteneire (2005) , *Migration without borders: an investigation into the free movement of people*, UNESCO, Global Migration Perspectives, No. 27.

asylum. In addition, providing adequate information on the dangers of illegal migration, or more generally addressing public opinion in sending countries, in the sending countries could also help. Policies aimed at the root causes of migration are also at the heart of the United Nations' High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development.⁴⁷ The European Commission has been very active in this field as well.⁴⁸

2. Reducing the number of illegal migrants through the stock

Reducing the number of illegal migrants from the stock requires one to accomplish a certain form of selectivity of illegal migrants. There are a number of Member States which decide that illegal migrants who fulfil certain criteria qualify for regularisation. There is a large variety of types of regularisation each with its own complexity. There are permanent procedures or one off actions, individual or collective, for reason of protection or of 'fait accompli' etc.⁴⁹

Regularisation is double-edged. On the one hand it acknowledges that it is unacceptable for the State to maintain people in an irregular situation on its territory, and that part of the existing stock can either stay for humanitarian reasons (e.g. because procedures have been excessively long) or because of proven track records of being able to contribute to the European society. In addition - and importantly in today's world which is highly sensitive to security issues - regularization is a fairly effective way to reduce the number of 'unknown' residents, which is conducive to better security screening.

On the other hand, repeated regularisations provide the wrong 'signal'. If the perception among potential migrants in sending countries is that the easiest way to get into Europe is entering illegally and becoming regularized, this may reduce the effectiveness of the policies mentioned under the previous heading ('reducing the flow'). Therefore, regularisation although useful does not aim at the root of the problem.

The flip side of the regularisation coin, in which those who qualify become legal, is a policy in which those who do not qualify are sent back. Recent experiences showed that this is easier said than done though. There are also various ways of tackling this difficult problem. The European Commission plays an active role since 2001 in furthering the development of 'common principles, common standards and common measures' in return policies of Member States.⁵⁰

Finally, there are many implicit ways in which illegal migrants can be made legal. This may not be the most popular of issues among politicians, but in fact this is actually going on in many Member States. It varies from regularising illegal migrants who apply on an individual basis to authorities to making employment restrictions more flexible (thereby effectively legalizing a number of previously illegal or illegally working migrants) to introducing annual quotas for legalisation and other possibilities. For public perception it would be preferable if

⁴⁷ Draft Commission contribution to the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, 2006.

⁴⁸ See e.g. Communication "The European Consensus" {SEC(2005) 929} or Communication 'Thematic programme for the cooperation with third countries in the areas of migration and asylum', COM(2006) 26 final, or Communication - Integrating migration issues in the European Union's relations with Third Countries.

⁴⁹ Apap J. P. De Bruycker and C. Schmitter (2000) *Regularisation of Illegal Aliens in the European Union, Summary Report of a Comparative Survey*, European Journal of Migration and Law 00, 1-26.

⁵⁰ See e.g.: Green Paper on Community Return Policy 2002; Communication on a Community Return Policy on Illegal Residents, 2002; a Return Action Programme 2002; the Council Directive 2003 on assistance in cases of transit for the purposes of removal by air; the 'Hague Programme' adopted by the 4-5 November 2004 European Council; Commission Proposal for a Directive on Common Standards and Procedures in Member States for Returning Illegally Staying Third-Country Nationals, (COM(2005) 391 final).

these practices were discussed in a more transparent way, since it could enhance the image of (illegal) migrants in Europe.

3. Improving public perception itself

As mentioned above, there is a dual causality between migration policies and public perception. Improving public perception itself can yield benefits for migration policies. Working directly on public perception can be done by showing a realistic picture of the actual situation of illegal migration. This involves providing objective information on how illegal migrants get into the EU (notice e.g. the difference between the perception of illegal migration in the media and the reality), about trafficking and smuggling, in how they are treated when they are in, on the motivations and on the role of the informal sector. Another way of improving public perception is to show the humanitarian side of the illegal migration problems, not referring only to the situation in sending countries but also to the fate of illegal migrants in Europe. Many NGO's, religious communities and others are very active in this area, which helps to create a balanced picture between legitimate concerns and serious humanitarian issues with illegal migrants before and after arrival in receiving countries.

6. Asylum

Asylum seekers form a different category of migrants or potential migrants with important implications for public perception. While the granting of asylum in Europe has a history spanning centuries, asylum in Europe in the modern migration era is underpinned by the 1951 UN Convention relating to the status of refugees according to which States Party have an obligation to give shelter to people who are fleeing from persecution. Since 1999, the EU has been working towards a Common European Asylum System and has adopted measures setting minimum standards on reception conditions for asylum seekers, procedural guarantees and a common interpretation of who should qualify for protection. The EU will move to a common asylum procedure and a uniform status for those granted protection by 2010.

During the 15 years between 1991 and 2005, 5,192,000 asylum applications were made in the EU15, an average of 346,000 applications per year. 1992 saw the highest number of applications (672,000) at the time of the Bosnia war. 228,000 applications were recorded in 1996; they increased to 371,000 in 2000 (Kosovo war) and decreased again to the lowest level in 15 years in 2005 (200,000). Between 1991 and 1999 and in 2001 the primary country of asylum was Germany; in 2000, 2002 and 2003 it was the UK. Since 2004, the main country of asylum has been France. The second most important country of asylum during the period 1991-2005 was the UK for 9 years, the Netherlands for 3 years, Germany for 2 years and France for 1 year. The main countries of origin of asylum-seekers during the period 1991-2005 in the EU15 were the former Yugoslavian republics, Turkey, Russia, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The main rise in application numbers in the 1990s was primarily caused by the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia which displaced large numbers of people, many of whom were genuine refugees or persons requiring international protection. Increased ease of travel from the 1980s also enabled those displaced from conflicts further afield to arrive in the EU. However, across the EU, application numbers have steadily declined since the end of the 20th century.

Why public perception is important

Asylum statistics illustrate the pressures under which many EU Member States found themselves and can certainly give an indication of why certain policies were adopted often

under considerable public pressure and accompanied by increasingly negative public perceptions of asylum seekers.

While the capacities of some European country's administrations were sorely tested by the numbers of applications in the mid-late 1990s and Governments introduced reforms and restrictions in their systems to cope with these numbers, it would be premature to use statistics to draw any direct correlation between policies and their effect on application numbers.⁵¹ In some cases Governments introduced comparatively more generous legislation (Sweden 1999, UK 1999, France 2002).

A general rise in global migratory pressure (exacerbated by the fall of the Iron Curtain) increased the use of the asylum channel by many who did not require protection to circumvent the normal immigration rules, which resulted in increased administrative capacity problems. Administrations were bound by the principle of *non refoulement* and were obliged to initiate asylum determination procedures at the border or on the territory for anyone who lodged an application. The problem which faced administrations was identifying those who required protection and how to deal fairly and efficiently with those who did not. This caused serious logistical, accommodation and processing problems resulting in backlogs, a long wait for a decision, a rise in the cost of legal support and the overloading of domestic court systems with asylum appeal cases in some Member States. The picture was worsened by an inconsistent policy on the employment of asylum seekers across the EU which sometimes caused asylum seekers to move from Member State to Member State.

In justifying or calling for often stringent reforms, Governments and the media sometimes used intemperate language and inaccurate terminology – for example, warning of being 'swamped' or 'flooded' by 'bogus' asylum seekers. The administrative failings associated with the systemic problems asylum brought in these years made asylum a favourite subject of media critics and the result was a general and growing malaise in public opinion, across the EU, towards migrants in general, of which asylum seekers formed a perceptibly vague but significant part. That perception of asylum seekers as possibly 'bogus' refugees in reality escaping from economic hardship still largely prevails, although recent years have seen some slight softening of attitudes in some countries as public awareness of international obligations improves (e.g. the concern of Spanish media at arrivals in the Canary Islands – many of whom are not asylum seekers – has been largely humanitarian; in the UK the asylum debate has been subsumed into the general debate on migration where it is increasingly recognised that there are those who it is not possible to 'send back'). The main victims of this generally downward spiral have been those asylum seekers genuinely in need of protection, who already form a very vulnerable group and risk both being unjustifiably disadvantaged by newly introduced restrictive policies and general disapproval of the public.

What are the public perceptions?

Surveys have shown that resistance to asylum seekers is supported by almost a third of the general public in the EU15. Media coverage is predominantly negative too. Although it is perhaps too harsh to call it an independent source of negative public perception, media coverage certainly amplifies existing trends. As mentioned in chapter 3, surveys show that the public feels that the media often link asylum seekers and refugees to illegal immigrants. General articles about drug related issues are often illustrated with pictures of African people, adding to the perception that asylum seekers (from Africa) will not contribute positively to society (source EUMC). A recent Scottish survey on public perception of asylum seekers

⁵¹ Vaughan Robinson and J. Segrott, (2002), '*Understanding the decision making of asylum seekers*', University of Wales, Swansea.

concluded that the increased negative attitude of the Scots to asylum seekers was caused by a combination of misinformation, tabloid language, political discourse, lack of meaningful contacts with asylum seekers (those with contacts had a more positive attitude), racist motives and unequal distribution of asylum seekers over the regions.⁵²

How to improve public perception?

Given that asylum application numbers are declining and are now at their lowest level for some years, the EU has a good opportunity to make positive changes to public perceptions and positively influence the current debate on migration and asylum. As mentioned before there are two general ways to improve public perception. One starts from the policy angle, the other from the public perception angle itself.

1. Improved asylum procedures should enable a clearer and quicker distinction between those in need of asylum and those who are not. This saves resources and bolsters perceptions. A crucial aspect of public policy on migration in general, and asylum seekers in particular, is to avoid misunderstandings on definitions, e.g. not blurring asylum seekers with illegal migrants. A clear legal status for asylum seekers, as well as for those whose applications have been rejected but who are tolerated is crucial. More efficient policies will enable Member States to identify those who require protection and those who do not much more quickly. A balanced approach should see the opening up of an honest debate on all aspects of migration including asylum. In order to reduce the use of asylum channels by those seeking to circumvent normal immigration rules it is also important to work with third countries in looking at the reasons why people move and the different options open to addressing that movement. EU cooperation with third countries puts the protection of refugees high on the agenda and the introduction of initiatives such as Regional Protection Programmes have begun to succeed in directing more funding towards protecting refugees. Finally, one might employ strategies that enable asylum seekers to take part in the labour market under certain conditions.
2. There are several actions that can be undertaken to improve the public perception itself. A significant role can be played by media, civil society associations etc. to improve the image of asylum seekers. The EU has dedicated Community funding for this purpose. In terms of media approach, 'real life' stories giving asylum seekers a 'human face' fare much better in the public realm than stories of faceless hundreds arriving at the border who are perceived as attempting to profit from a generous welfare system. In this respect successful 'resettlement' stories can also improve the general image as well as the direct identification of refugees with the conflicts from which they flee. NGO's and religious organisations have been very active in this field though there has yet to evolve a 'mass market' campaign in favour of refugees in the way that such campaigns sponsored by UNWFP, Oxfam and the Red Cross raised public awareness of the situation of famine victims in the 1970s and 80s with considerable success.

7. Security

Particularly after the recent terrorist attacks, an increasing number of issues are regarded through a 'security lenses. Migration features prominently among them. However, the nature of the link between migration and security is far from clear.

Why is public perception important? - The problem of 'securitization'

⁵² Lewis M. (2006) *'Warm Welcome? Understanding public attitudes to asylum seekers in Scotland'*, IPPR 2006.

Linking security with migration is an understandable reaction. After all, recent terrorist activities were undertaken by people with a migratory background. This makes it necessary and important to analyze any alleged link, but the analysis should be based on facts.

Public perception plays an important role in this context since policies require acceptance from the public. If perceptions of migration are dominated by security considerations the public will only be receptive to a limited number of policies. The main problem is therefore posed by 'securitization' which refers to the process of turning each policy issue into a security issue,⁵³ thus presenting its substance as a potential threat.⁵⁴ This process is applicable to part of the current migration debates with important consequences. Migrants are especially prone to be used as scapegoats in times of uncertainty. They are often 'blamed' for terrorism, a disproportionate share in criminal activities and for jeopardizing the social cohesion of society. The data on citizens' attitudes toward migrants presented in section 3 confirms this observation. Such perceptions can run counter to policy goals and successful integration of migrants.

It is important to note that while one may define 'security' in an objective fashion, security is also a subjective and very much individually 'felt' concept. The existence of security has much to do with whether people believe it exists in a given place at a given time. At the same time it is difficult to determine exactly when and why individuals or groups feel secure. Subjective feelings of security influence public discourses and policy making. The subjective aspect of security is therefore as important as objective aspects.

Public perception and the migration - security link

The term 'security' is not a single concept and has developed considerably over the past decades from a concept of 'hard' security towards a wider and more inclusive term encompassing many aspects of 'soft' security. With regard to migration one may evoke three concepts of security which are addressed in the following sections.

National security comprises all forms of 'hard' security, particularly military security and internal security. Aspects of national security which are regularly evoked in the context of migration are terrorism, figures of crime involvement of people with migratory backgrounds, illegal migration, and human trafficking. At second glance, though, these linkages seem to be less straightforward than some public discourses suggest.

Terrorism is a serious security concern and given the migratory background of perpetrators a link with migration is there. The threat of terrorist attacks is real as recent events around the world including in the EU have shown and public perception mirrors this.⁵⁵ One may question, however, whether public perception draws the correct conclusions from terrorist threats with regard to the phenomenon of migration. One has to fear that terrorist threats may result in attitudes towards migrants and fellow citizens of migratory background which are not based on a sober assessment of facts. The following points therefore seem worthwhile to recall.

While Europe has seen a number of terrorist activities and networks of 'indigenous' nature in the recent past (e.g. IRA, ETA) the recent type of terrorism seems to have taken on a new quality in its 'globality' of scope as well as its alleged religious ideological base. However,

⁵³ Conf. Faist, Thomas (2004) *The Migration-Security Nexus. International Migration and Security before and after 9/11*, Willy Brandt Series of Working Papers in International Migration and Ethnic Relations, 4/03.

⁵⁴ Huysmans, Jef (2000) *The European Union and the Securitization of Migration*, Journal of Common Market Studies 38: 751-777.

⁵⁵ According to the 2006 Transatlantic Trends published by the German Marshall Fund 94% of European regard terrorism as an important or very important threat; <http://www.transatlantictrends.org/index.cfm?id=37>

this type of terrorism is a problem intrinsic to migration. Causes and facilitating circumstances have to be sought elsewhere. In some cases, e.g. 9/11, it was international mobility rather than migration which made the attacks possible. In other cases, one has to evoke the issue of lacking integration into society in the sense of and the adherence to its values as a basis for explanations.

The migratory background of terrorist perpetrators itself does not tell us much about other migrants and their propensity to be involved in such crimes. It is difficult, for example, to discern a clear pattern of a lack of integration for terrorist perpetrators. In the case of Madrid and London the bombers were members of second or third generations of actual former migrants. They were living legally in the countries concerned. A number of them had the citizenship of the country of residence. They were not economically marginalised but had received education and were included in the labour market.

Rather than a general link between migration and security, the real concern should be the link between migration, cultural integration and adherence to values.⁵⁶ This may be the key issue with regard to the link between people of migratory background in our societies and issues of security. Second and third generation immigrant off-spring with an uncertain identity may be more prone to become mobilised against the receiving country, especially if the missing feeling of belonging to the receiving society is combined with an underprivileged status.

Because the perpetrators of attacks such as in Madrid and London claimed to be committing the attacks in the name of Islam the question of culture and values is predominantly linked in public discourse with the compatibility of Islam with European values. This compatibility discussion moves way beyond terrorism (forced marriages, family revenge, genital mutilation, and the veil). While this paper does not provide the space for an in-depth discussion on Islam in Europe two points should be made.

On the one side it is certainly too simplistic and potentially destabilizing to accuse an entire religion with a large variety of different schools of thought, complex adaptations to different environments, and a community of 1.3 billion followers worldwide of being intrinsically unable to accommodate Muslims living in conformity with the laws and values of Western societies.

On the other side a subset of Muslims undeniably abuses the religious pretext to create fear through terror and makes deliberate attempts to undermine Western societies. Europe has to be on its guard to effectively counter such attempts. The terrorist acts that create fear, strengthen reservations towards migrants, and fuel populist discourses, should be treated as an issue of criminality but not be construed as an argument against migration in general. The majority of European Muslims has nothing to do with these heinous acts of terror. This needs to be made clear by politicians and policy makers.

For integration to work as a two-way responsibility both sides have to make more efforts. Muslim representatives and organizations have to increase their efforts to visibly show the will to adhere to European values. European societies have to continue and strengthen the offer to integrate Muslim communities. Of course this is a highly complex issue, since it is not easy to determine exact definitions of European values (beyond well established ones such as the European Convention on Human Rights and national laws), the extent to which these values need to be respected, and to what extent respect for differences from the side of native European citizens is required. This is not an issue, however, that can be solved through a 'top-down' approach. It can only be resolved in good cooperation between national governments, local authorities and Muslim organisations themselves.

⁵⁶ Compare the Common Basic Principles as a framework document.

A second aspect of security with considerable influence on public perception is the involvement of migrants in crime more generally. It appears that different phenomena are often treated with little differentiation in public discourse which may have unwanted effects on public perception. Two fields should be treated separately.

On the one hand, migrants are often victims of crime, particularly when they are subjected to human trafficking. Some research states that criminal organisations control approximately half of the migratory movements in the world.⁵⁷ Global networks of human trafficking exist which certainly pose security problems to EU Member States as countries of designation, not only in terms of illegal immigration as such but also because of potential usage of these networks specifically for the purpose of organized crime and terrorism. It is necessary to stress, however, that it would be incorrect to associate the migrants themselves with this form of crime as the large majority of those who come in contact with it are the subjects not the perpetrators.

On the other hand, there are crime related problems with subsets of migrants which need addressing. Criminal statistics show that people with a migratory background (foreigners and naturalised immigrants) are overrepresented among prison inmates.⁵⁸ Research shows too, however, that these statistics have to be interpreted very cautiously. Such numbers often neither take a comparable sample of the national population of the same social background into account, nor do they specify which types of crime (e.g. border crimes related specifically to migration, 'ordinary' crime, capital offences etc.) are involved. In addition, they often do not differentiate between the different groups of migrants implicated in certain crimes. This is important as public perception may be easily influenced by statistical evidence which can be very suggestive. Numbers therefore have to be well researched and explained to the public.

Evidence in European research suggests that if statistics and research on deviant behaviour of migrants took into account the aspects mentioned above, the difference between the involvement of immigrants and natives in criminal activities would prove to be less striking than mere percentages suggest.⁵⁹ In addition, research suggests that (i) discriminatory practices of the police lead to higher rate of arrests and longer stays in jails among migrants; (ii) migrants are overrepresented in the least 'serious' crimes and underrepresented in the more serious ones, and, finally (iii) that while there has been a considerable increase in prison sentences, there is no corresponding increase in the number of crimes committed.⁶⁰

The lack of integration and a marginalised status in society can also cause or support deviant behaviour among migrants. Second-generation immigrants in particular are more vulnerable and in turn appear to be more at risk of becoming involved in criminality.⁶¹ It is therefore important to emphasise the importance of integration and adequate social status in connection with the discussion of criminal activity of migrants.

Societal security is a term used to conceptualize concerns over perceived threats to modern societies emanating not from hard security problems but from a large variety of complex sources. It deals with concerns of societies over their ability to persist in their essential character and identity under changing conditions and perceived or actual threats. 'Specifically,

⁵⁷ Gozzini, *The Global System of international Migrations: 1900 and 2000: A comparative approach*.

⁵⁸ Palidda, Salvatore, Maria Frangouli and Antonios Papantoniou (1999) *Deviant Behaviour and Criminalisation of Immigrants*. Brussels: European Commission.

⁵⁹ Compare with regard to Germany, Albrecht, Hans Jörg, *Ethnic minorities and crime – the construction of foreigners' crime in the Federal Republic of Germany*, in Palidda, Salvatore, ed. (1996), *Social Construction of Deviant Behaviour and Criminality of Immigrants in Europe*, ed., Brussels: European Commission.

⁶⁰ Palidda, Salvatore, et.al. (1999) op.cit.

⁶¹ Yeager, Matthew (1996), *Immigrants and Criminality: A Meta Survey*, Ottawa, Canada.

it is about the sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture, association, and religious and national identity and custom.⁶²

Migrants are increasingly perceived as threatening a society's cultural, religious or national identity. This is true for Europe as whole where 76% say that large numbers of immigrants coming into their country is an important or very important threat⁶³ as well as for individual EU Member States.⁶⁴ These perceptions are in part based on concrete examples, such as the competition for low cost housing or the need for quality schools in areas with highly diverse ethnic mix. In part they stem from a general and often unspecified feeling of uncertainty and uneasiness about the future which seems to have gripped many European citizens and which is – albeit falsely – associated with migration among other phenomena.

The discussion on the limits to diversity has parallels with the discussion on numbers of migrants.⁶⁵ Clearly, numbers are important particularly in relation to numbers of native populations. However, the speed of change plays an important role too, often more important than the actual numbers or levels of diversity. European societies are far more diverse today than anyone could have predicted 40 years ago. Yet, at the same time the EU has well recognized national and regional identities which show no sign of being eroded.

Some argue against migration because of resulting pressure on the welfare system. However, partly because of diversity and increased individuality – trends that are not only related to migration – the welfare states have become less based on uniform schemes and contain more choice elements. Some empirical studies try to measure the effects of diversity on the welfare state. For example, in the case of Canada there is no evidence that ethnic diversity erodes the welfare state.⁶⁶

It is legitimate for any society, of course, to wish to decide the speed of change it can handle. It is very unlikely though that the rate of optimal speed is 'zero'. Historically, societies which were socially and economically successful had a better developed capacity to absorb change. They were able to see diversity and change in their societies as advantageous and benefited from it socially and economically. Such favorable scenarios can only be realized if a public debate is geared towards managing change, not stopping change. This holds for migration as it holds for welfare state modernizations and many other changes.

European nation states will not go back to times of less diversity in their societies. More likely, diversity will increase. Economically speaking, this is a welcome development as European economies demand the influx of appropriately selected migrants. The challenge is to manage the diversity to society and alleviate fears through positive examples of the benefits of migration.

Human security is primarily about protecting *individuals*.⁶⁷ It may be defined as the 'freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, their safety or even their lives.'⁶⁸ The concept is of high relevance for migration as numerous threats to individuals can be involved in migrating.

⁶² Weaver, Ole (1993) 'Societal Security: the Concept' in B. Buzan, O. Weaver, M. Kelstrup and P. Lemaitre (eds.), *Identity, Migration, and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, Pinter: London, pp. 18-40.

⁶³ German Marshall Fund of the U.S.; *Transatlantic Trends – Key findings 2006*, p. 13;

www.transatlantictrends.org/index.cfm?id=37

⁶⁴ The August/September 2006 YouGov survey gives an example with 66% of respondents saying that "Britain is losing its culture"; <http://www.yougov.com/archives/pdf/TrevorMcDonaldtoplines.pdf>

⁶⁵ See e.g. Goodhart, David (2004) 'Too Diverse?' Prospect: February 2004.

⁶⁶ E.g. Stuart Soroka, Keith Banting and Richard Johnston (2006) 'Ethnicity, Trust and the Welfare State' in Fiona Kay and Richard Johnston (eds.) *Social Capital, Diversity and the Welfare State*, UBC Press.

⁶⁷ <http://www.humansecurityreport.info/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=24&Itemid=59>

⁶⁸ <http://www.humansecuritynetwork.org/menu-e.php>

Migratory flows often have their origin in poverty but also in political violence, and migrants may face considerable dangers during their travels. Recent pictures of the increasing numbers of immigrants arriving in the Canary Islands show this grim reality.

When the perceived link between migration and security is evoked, however, the concern over the ‘human security’ of migrants often stays underdeveloped. This is inadequate since human security problems are often a key factor leading to migration in the first place. In fact, solving human security problems may help overcoming other threats to security as different types of security are inextricably linked.⁶⁹ Public perception which is sympathetic with the potential immigrants and the hardships they endure will be instrumental in tackling the human security problems as this will require political leadership, long-term commitment, and adequate funding for a large number of policy fields.

The issue of migration needs to be addressed far outside Europe’s borders. Migrants typically leave their home for the hope of a better future abroad. Vital needs and freedoms⁷⁰ of the population are often threatened in countries of origin. Ensuring human security of (potential) migrants has to start in those countries and needs to continue in case of immigration to Europe. For this, comprehensiveness of policies is needed as recognized by the European Council.⁷¹ Policies for development and trade, but also for agriculture and fisheries have to be tested for their effect regarding migration.

The human security of immigrants is also directly linked to integration policies discussed above. On the one hand, prospects for integration are very much connected to the social and legal status accorded to migrants. On the other hand, migrants need to be protected against ‘insecurities’ such as social and employment insecurity, or discrimination and harassment. Protection involves legislation and proper communication that aims to reduce xenophobia and discrimination. EU standard setting through legislation on anti-discrimination is a good example and needs further implementation at Member States’ level. Working to ensure human security also serves Europe’s own interests. Comprehensiveness of policies could alleviate the migratory pressure from abroad. More efforts to protect and empower immigrants can help better integration here.

What can be done to improve public perception?

The EU will not reap any benefit from a political climate where migrants are mainly perceived as a security threat. Policy makers as well as media therefore have to treat migration in a responsible way which does not reinforce the ‘securitization’ of the issue. Influencing or changing public perception is a daunting task as people take up information selectively based on preferences and opinions they already hold. However, the urgency for better managed migration requires a serious attempt at improving perceptions of migration and security. Again, the attempt should take the two-track approach mentioned earlier:

1. On the one hand, work from the security policy side is needed with a special emphasis on transparency and information for the public. It is essential to disentangle for the citizen the concepts and relevant facts about threats to security and to give reassurance by explaining the real threats and showing how they are countered. Member States and EU institutions have to pull together to take security threats such as terrorism and other crime at face value while taking extra care to not feed into potentially rising negative attitudes among

⁶⁹ Roxanne Lynn Doty (1998/99), *Immigration and the Politics of Security*, Security Studies, vol.8, nos. 2/3.,

⁷⁰ The Commission on Human Security connects the term ‘human security’ to the protection of vital freedoms – ‘freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to take action on one’s own behalf’; *Outline of the Final Report of the Commission on Human Security*, (2003) www.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/Outlines/outline.html

⁷¹ European Council Brussels, Presidency Conclusions, 15-16 Dec 2005 recognizing the “Global Approach”.

citizens towards migrants in general. In addition, deeper dialogue with migrant and religious organizations is necessary in several respects: (1) with their special knowledge of migrant communities they can be helpful in preventive and reactive law enforcement measures against criminals; (2) their knowledge of migrant backgrounds and social situations helps to understand phenomena as marginalization on which terror and crime can feed. They can help design long-term policy responses for integration and improving social status.

2. On the other hand, work is needed to improve public perception directly. For one, this requires more thorough and wider spread explanation of the phenomenon of migration. EU citizens need to be better informed on the benefits of migration and related misunderstandings and misbeliefs, including the inadequacy of regarding migration as a general security risk. Here, too, politicians, policy makers and media alike have a special responsibility and should test their statements and coverage of the issue of migration for balance. In addition, a successful strategy for improving public perception has to include migrants themselves. Migrant and religious organisations should be called upon to engage more in working for a public image of migrants which shows the will to take a stand against individuals and networks which pose a threat to security. Such visibility of the majority of peaceful migrants who are in risk of being branded a 'security risk' could do a lot to disperse negative public opinion. The EU can be instrumental in helping migrants to achieve this visibility through common initiatives underpinned by adequate funds and organisational background.

8. A gender perspective

Women represent more than half of migrants world wide. In Europe they represented 52.4% of all migrants in 2000.⁷² More recent Labour force surveys confirm that the proportion of immigrant women in the total foreign born population in 2004 was higher than that of immigrant men in most of the Member States.

Why is a gender perspective important for public perception?

Together with the "feminisation of migration flows" political attention has recently been drawn to migrant women under two negative headings: their low labour market participation and the growing phenomenon of trafficking.⁷³ The combination of poor integration, low labour market participation and violations of human rights (trafficking) reinforces the "victim" and "dependant" image of women migrants, while in fact their typical profile is changing from the dependant "spouse" who moved in the 1970s and '80s on the grounds of family reunification to an autonomous migrant woman who migrates (perhaps to escape poverty or an oppressive situation) to exert and develop her skills and sends money back home.

Since migrant women also form a promising potential on future labour markets (for example in the caring sector) it is important that public perception picks up these new gender realities. But a shift in perception is made difficult if migrant women continue to be labelled "invisible", "ignored" and "unproductive" and not contributing to the economy of the receiving societies, no matter the high skills that they often possess.

Their lack of access to integration structures and the marginalisation of the first generation of migrant wives have created a "stereotypical model of poorly integrated Islamic immigrant

⁷² H.Zlotnik (2003), *The global dimension of female migration*, www.migrationinformation.org.

⁷³ These are the two main issues related to women migrants which have featured on the EU agenda.

woman", who do not speak the language of the receiving country, and "is used as surrogate to all immigrant women in western Europe".⁷⁴

In addition, while the reconfiguration of gender roles, encouraged by EU and national gender policies, has shaped major evolutions in European societies in the last decades, debates around the veil or hijab, polygamy, forced marriages or excision give the impression that the whole of migrant communities wish to be exempted from recognising women's rights in the name of cultural relativism. Despite the fact that gender equality often came as no more than a pretext⁷⁵ and that the veil only concerns a minority of Islamic women who are subjected (or have chosen) to cover their head, the unresolved debates around the veil have had a lasting damaging effect on the perception of migrants by native communities (all migrants being stigmatised as culturally remote) and vice versa (migrants feeling rejected on the basis of their cultural identity, reinforcing their feeling of belonging somewhere else). It tends to freeze or reverse the evolution of gender roles, to spoil efforts of migrants to integrate and of native communities for their integration.

The predominant old fashioned perception of migrant women ignores that the profile of migrant women has considerably evolved in the last decade: "Female migration now has a wide range of characteristics and varies according to the generation, country of origin and the length of time during which the woman has been in the country".⁷⁶

Public perceptions of gender issues in migration

How are gender relations related to migration perceived by studies, policy makers, the media, and by migrant themselves? The commonly accepted interpretation that labour migration has been overwhelmingly male, followed by a period of overwhelmingly female family reunification reflects an expectation of men producing and women reproducing. This ignores the many women who, already in the 1970s, entered as independent migrants.⁷⁷ Many more today are heads of households, or have to make decisions for themselves and their children. But the mode of entry (family reunification), the organisation of the labour market and the fiscal and welfare systems in a number of Member States concur to reinforce a single model of migrant woman only expected to assist her husband and children, with no independent status. This model is based on the presumption that the male breadwinner model is still operational, prevails in entry provisions,⁷⁸ in the media and is often idealised by migrants and their children. It ignores that the needs of families for money generally exceed the husband's income. It does not account either for the changes in gender relations which take place under the very process of migration and for changes in gender relations which have occurred world wide in the last thirty years.

The static model does not correspond to the reality of the majority of migrant families but it contributes to keep women migrants out of the official labour market, and to undermine the benefits for the receiving society of the empowerment process entered into by migrant

⁷⁴ Kofman E. (1999), *Birds of passage a decade later: gender and immigration in the European Union*, International Migration Review, 33 (3), pp. 269-299.

⁷⁵ Most of the concerns that trouble Europeans about Islamic minorities emerged then: questions of religious freedom and of national identity and the status of Islamic women – see Jytte Klausen (2005) *The Islamic challenge, politics and religion in Western Europe*, Oxford University Press.

⁷⁶ Opinion of the Supreme Council for Integration to the Prime Minister of France on the rights of women of immigrant origin 2003 p.28.

⁷⁷ For instance, the situation of young Spanish women who migrated to France in the seventies for economic reasons is only starting to be researched now.

⁷⁸ The right to work is not automatically granted in the case of access on the basis of family reunification (EU directive on family reunification 2003, Art 14 Para 2, leaves it to Member States to decide according to national law the conditions under which family members may exercise an employed or self-employed activity).

women. It also tends to reinforce women's vulnerability to subjection and abusive environments. As they hardly exist as autonomous subjects, they tend not to feature in public debates, leaving an impression of all male migrant communities.

*Gender and integration*⁷⁹

As mentioned earlier, a successful participation in a new society requires labour market participation which is still the best way to acquire the language and social skills needed to integrate and be perceived positively as a contributor in the host country. The integration of women migrants in the EU today is particularly poor with significant differences according to their country of origin and the receiving country. It is characterised in following ways. (i) An under-representation in the labour force; they are less present on the labour market and less-paid than migrant men (employment gap of 4.5 in Sweden to 20.7 in Germany) and than native women (employment gap of 12 in the UK to 16.8 in Germany). (ii) Double discrimination; given equal characteristics (age, education, family status and number of children) they have a much lower participation, qualitatively as well as quantitatively, than natives as a result of specific hurdles, such as lack of access to the labour market⁸⁰ and to child care arrangements⁸¹, discrimination, non recognition of skills⁸², and language barriers. (iii) Concentration in low skilled and limited employment protection jobs in e.g. domestic services, healthcare, and social services hotels and restaurants, part time jobs. (iv) Lack of direct access to welfare and social protection systems: many migrant women are more exposed to poverty because of their dependent status, their inferior and informal labour market participation. Many fail to accumulate social security entitlements.

Perceptions on illegal migration and human security

Two specific gender issues stand out in relation with public perception: one concerns informal labour market demands which act as a pull factor for women to enter or remain illegally in receiving countries, the other is about migration organised by criminal networks or trafficking. Both issues involve a particular sensitivity where women are concerned due to their greater vulnerability and to the specific sectors involved.

On the one hand, the demand for labour in the care and household sector is increasing. Migrant women are responding to real demands (compensating for the lack of gender sharing of domestic tasks; replacing the deficit of childcare and eldercare facilities, filling essential low paid jobs in the health sector) and the risk to see a proliferation of illegal workers in these sectors is very real (with consequences for the workers themselves and for the public perception) if solutions are not found provide a workforce under decent conditions.

On the other hand, trafficking in human beings (illegal migration managed by middle men and criminal networks for slave labour or sex) is felt as a diffuse threat to society. While men can be the victims of such trades (9%), greater vulnerability of women makes them (together with children and in particular the girl child) easier targets. Trafficking is a multifaceted problem

⁷⁹ Most of the information in this section draws from papers presented at the OECD/EU joint seminar in Oct 2005 and more particularly: *'The feminisation of international migration'* Laura Oso Casas, Jean Pierre Garson; *'participation des femmes immigrées sur le marché du travail: un double handicap en dépit des progrès'* and *'les femmes immigrées et le marché du travail : diversité et enjeux'* Jean Christophe Dumont et Mario Isoppo.

⁸⁰ J. Klausen (2005), op.cit.

⁸¹ Migrant women with small children have an even lower participation rate than natives while beyond 55 their activity rate is higher than natives in some countries.

⁸² Highly qualified immigrant women of third countries are particularly disadvantaged according to the gap in employment rate with all immigrant women and with natives in this category. It is also clearly established that immigrant women in general in OECD countries are more likely to be overqualified for their job than natives (OECD international migration outlook 2006).

which most often involves human rights violations; sexual exploitation, fosters conditions akin to slavery and raises grave issues concerning the human rights of women and children. The circumstances under which it happens are usually complex: trafficked persons may enter the receiving country legally as “documented” migrants who may have willingly accepted to pay in order to be transported across borders in search of better life prospects, but are victims of criminal groups that exploit them.⁸³

Efforts to combat trafficking have gained prominence on the international migration policy agenda in response to a steady rise of the phenomenon, but as mentioned in the latest UN report on “Trafficking in persons, global patterns”⁸⁴ there is still an information deficit. A Commission study of 2001⁸⁵ already estimated at 120.000 the number of persons trafficked in the EU each year. World wide, the IOM estimates that annually some 500.000 to 700.000 women and children are trafficked by criminal networks. Countries from Central and South-Eastern Europe are cited most frequently as the origin of victims trafficked to Western Europe, followed by the Commonwealth of Independent States, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, mapping out where bilateral cooperation should be strengthened.

Governments can influence the demand (e.g. legislation condemning the client⁸⁶) and the supply (fight against the poverty of women and gender discrimination in the countries of origin) to defeat trafficking. A strong enforcement of legislations to combat violence against women is another way to contribute to combat trafficking as well as to address the necessary protection of migrant women against domestic violence⁸⁷, genital mutilation, forced marriages and honour crimes. While public sensitivity tends to push political leaders to argue for restrictive immigration policies in countries of destination, interviews with trafficking victims suggest that nationals from countries with automatic or facilitated access to the EU through temporary visa schemes are less likely to have been trafficked. Hurdles to immigration results in forcing potential migrants (and even just travellers) to resort to using middlemen who, in the absence of legal channels, provide false documents, jobs in the irregular sector of countries of destination as well as financing international travel through the provision of credits. This overdependence on intermediaries makes young women excessively vulnerable to being lured into prostitution and further exploitation through debt bondage, while their illegal status and the associated threat of deportation prevent them from seeking assistance or reporting their traffickers.

What can be done to change public perception?

From their “invisible” status, migrant women now take a variety of responsibilities and play a role which places them as a target group in the integration process. The question for public authorities is to facilitate an ongoing process likely to improve the visibility and integration of migrant women, improving thereby the public perception of migrant communities. Experience and existing literature on migration and on the promotion of gender equality, seem to suggest three complementary ways to address the problem at both national and EU level:

1. Promoting migrant women's integration should be a priority for most Member States. This can include helping women migrants to meet for hobbies, for training, cultural activities but also work with immigration services to ease access to the labour

⁸³ 2004 World survey on the role of women in development: women and international migration, UN 2005.

⁸⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (April 2006).

⁸⁵ Preventing and combating trafficking in women: a comprehensive European strategy, EC 2001.

⁸⁶ In Sweden legislation passed in 1999 condemns the purchase of sexual services.

⁸⁷ Migrant women are more likely to be victims of all sorts of violence because of their specific vulnerability. The perpetrators of violence are nationals just as well as migrants.

market,⁸⁸ to inform women about their rights, support work experience, provide mentoring schemes and childcare support, link work experience with training and language acquisition and recognise previous skills and qualifications.⁸⁹ The Commission has been promoting the inclusion of the gender perspective in migration policies.⁹⁰ So far, some Member States have started developing labour market and training-oriented activities, information campaigns, or support to municipalities to increase the participation of women of foreign descent, but these initiatives tend to be isolated.⁹¹ In its recently adopted road map for equality between women and men 2006-10,⁹² the Commission committed itself to monitor and strengthen gender mainstreaming within several of its recent migration policy initiatives.⁹³ A strengthened gender proofing of some national labour markets, social inclusion, pension and health policies could also bring improvements for migrant women.

2. A second approach entails starting to improve public perception directly. This is not easy, but can be obtained by producing and disseminating information about the situation of migrant women and the changing gender relations in migrant communities to challenge false stereotypes and make the perception of women more realistic. This should include more detailed statistics taking gender questions into account. It can also entail giving migrant women a 'face'. Perceptions have shown to improve when the human and individual aspects are displayed.⁹⁴

Finally, consideration has to be given to (1) structural measures on the most sensitive sectors in the labour market, (2) to actions to act on the push and pull factors of trafficking, and (3) to a commitment to empower migrant women (status, rights, and image). Considering the increasing needs for services in the caring sector, appropriate forms of employment in the caring and household sector have to be set up. Arrangements to formalise the informal jobs⁹⁵ should aim to protect the holders of abuses, to alleviate difficult situations of ageing, divorce, separation and to account for their contribution to the economy. Many Member States have experimented initiatives to professionalize household and caring work (e.g. cheques-services) which could be developed elsewhere. The exponential increase of trafficking which feeds criminal networks, creates unacceptable violation of human rights and devastating psychological effects on the

⁸⁸ E.g. by suppressing restrictions to work if immigration occurs for the purpose of family reunification.

⁸⁹ Alexandra Heron for OECD in *'Migrant women, what is working'*, has analysed selected initiatives in 6 OECD countries which have fostered the labour market participation of migrant women with less than a tertiary education (see International Migration Outlook 2006 edition OECD page 68).

⁹⁰ Through the European Social Fund the EU has given funding to the labour market integration of migrant women. In particular, the 'Equal' initiative has supported a number of partnerships which include migrant women and develop measures to reconcile work and family life, reduce gender gaps and support job desegregation. The situation of immigrant women has also been addressed in the context of the European employment strategy.

⁹¹ This information is based on the 2005 round of National Action Plans for Social Inclusion.

⁹² COM(2006)92 final.

⁹³ E.g. in the integration of third country nationals in the EU and the proposed European fund, and in the follow up to the policy plan on legal migration.

⁹⁴ Huysmans J. (1995), *'Migrants as a security problem : dangers of securitizing societal issues'*, in Miles R., Thränhardt D., eds, pp. 53-72.

⁹⁵ "In the domestic staff sector, undeclared employment frequently accounts for more than half of the total employment" (study on 20 OECD countries of which 17 EU member states). "In Belgium and Italy, undeclared employment in the "hotel and catering" and "domestic staff" sectors alone appears to account for more than 2% of total employment (in terms of earnings)" Informal employment and promoting the transition to a salaried economy – OECD employment outlook 2004.

victims (costs)⁹⁶ and on the general perception of migration has to be addressed both by suppressing demand in receiving countries and within agreements with countries of origin to affect the root causes for trafficking (poverty, armed conflict and gender discrimination). Finally, the “empowerment” of migrant women, necessary to challenge a number of negative public perceptions of migrant communities, will happen if they are made visible and given a voice, not only as contributors to the labour market but also as public figures (media, politics, NGO's).

9. Conclusion

The previous sections demonstrated that public perceptions of migration may strongly influence the effectiveness with which migration can be managed. On the *negative side* public perception has the capacity to block progress on developing effective policies. While the fears of citizens have legitimate roots, they are not always based on a fair evaluation of the opportunities and risks associated with migration. Nor do they take into consideration the fact that migration into Europe can not be halted, but only managed. Migration can produce large benefits to society if the right policies are adopted. Sensible policies towards migration require that account is taken of negative public perceptions and that fears are addressed. To make a success of migration, inspired measures need to show that migration can be managed rather than endured.

On the *positive side* public perception can be used to reverse the negative spiral. This might be achieved in two different ways. The first is to improve policies, both migration policies and more general policies. By reducing the number of illegal migrants, by improving integration of migrants, by making women migrants' contribution more visible and bolstering asylum procedures, the public may find it easier to see migrants as contributing to society. On the more general policy side, improving the functioning of labour markets is an example that helps reducing the exclusion of migrants, and thereby improves the public perception of migrants as contributors to society rather than 'welfare scroungers'. The other approach is to work from the public perception side itself. By improving the public perception itself migration policies become easier to implement and accept.

Migration policies

The most immediate concern should be to ***break the negative cycle*** of hostility towards migration leading to very restrictive policies towards legal migration which in turn lead to a diversion of migratory flows to, on the one hand, asylum seekers and, on the other hand, illegal migrants. Breaking the cycle requires a ***sufficient quantity of legal migration*** beyond family reunion. This is necessary to provide an alternative to asylum seekers or illegal migrants, who would prefer to enter as legal or regular migrants. However, according to the Eurobarometer surveys about two out of three Europeans believe that the multicultural society has reached its limits. The speed of change European societies are willing to accommodate can therefore not be ignored. Therefore, a number of ***critical conditions must be met*** for such an expansion to be rewarding and politically feasible.

1. Making legal migration work implies a ***selection of migrants***. Selectivity mainly relates to the ***job prospects*** of potential migrants and should be determined according to skills needed. In order to allay fears, provisions for legal migration could begin at relatively modest levels and then be expanded subsequently as the advantages of this

⁹⁶ See 'Stolen miles: a summary report of the physical and psychological health consequences of women and adolescent trafficked in Europe', London School of hygiene and tropical medicine for the Daphne programme.

approach become clear. The appropriate level of migration is clearly something Member States should decide on. It will vary from country to country, if only because the needed skills of labour markets differ.

2. Legal immigration must be ***complemented by positive measures*** that ensure effective integration of migrants, already by the first generation. Such measures have to include many strands of policy. Among other things, they should include allowing asylum seekers to take up paid work while their applications are processed and granting illegal migrants wider access to public services. Better integration also presupposes extra efforts on the part of migrants and migrant organisations.
3. Greater openness to legal migration will lessen the pressure on illegal migration. However, such migration will continue to occur in the foreseeable future, both because of demand from employers in Europe and because of supply from Europe's neighbours and further afield. Restrictions at the border alone will never be fully adequate to regulate the flow of illegal migrants. They may even make policies on the return of existing illegal migrants more difficult to implement. ***A more effective way to address the issue of illegal migration is through the demand side and those that provide employment to such migrants.*** One needs to be aware that the informal economy is a prime employer of illegal migrants and that this implies therefore measures to restrict, limit or formalise that part of the economy, which is by no means restricted to the employment of migrants. Women in general, and female migrants in particular, are particularly at risk of being employed in the informal economy in areas such as household production, health and caring services, and the so called 'entertainment industry'. In the light of the increasing demand of the care economy, action is required to avoid shortages and exploitation.

Migration policies in line with these proposals will help to improve the situation for native European citizens and migrants alike in terms of labour markets and integration. In this way, fears about negative consequences of migration can be allayed as benefits become clearer over time. This may reduce the largely negative perception of "the migrant" and lead to more acceptance of open policies in the future.

General policies

Problems related to migration can be viewed as ***symptoms of wider and more intractable general problems*** in European society. The feeling of insecurity and the outside world perceived as a threat are related to a number of factors, which may have little to do with migration. The belief that the nation state can no longer provide the degree of required security in a globalised world and that nothing has yet taken its place is one of them. Related to this is the human security aspect in which individuals rather than states feel threatened by a broad set of problems including terrorism and the spread of infectious disease. International mobility is seen both as a cause and effect of these threats, even though mobility is a natural and indeed desirable phenomenon. The inability to resolve certain structural problems in the European economy and Europe's high unemployment is another factor leading to the rejection of migration, even though labour shortages prevail. Poor functioning of the labour market inhibits integration and leads to social exclusion of both members of the receiving country and migrants. Europe has to become more attractive in general, whether for its existing inhabitants or for future migrants.

A number of ***policies that are required to bolster perceptions towards migrants therefore fall outside the remit of migration policy strictu sensu.*** Putting in place effective institutional arrangements for the governance of globalisation, more effective action by the EU externally and recovered domestic dynamism will undoubtedly do much to alleviate the fears that are

currently dominating perceptions and undermining the possibility of implementing a forward looking and effective policy on migration. Development, regional and agricultural policies can be used to reduce income differences between developed and developing countries.

Policies on migration should therefore be seen in a broader perspective and should be complemented by more general policies that address these underlying issues. They will allow migration policies to focus on the specific issues linked to migration, and therefore make such policies more effective.

Public perception

Public perception can be influenced directly in a variety of ways. Policy makers can give a good example by not blurring categories (asylum seekers, illegal migrants, ethnic minorities), by *sketching balanced and nuanced pictures of migrants* and by clearing up misunderstandings on employment or criminality. At the same time, such a *balanced picture also includes actions to cope with genuine problems* associated with migrants. The mass media plays an important role which entails considerable responsibility for balanced and correct coverage. Though as a mirror of society the media are often not the main source of public perceptions they are often instrumentalized and sometimes used, even by politicians, to portray problems in an amplifying fashion.

One way of counterbalancing unfavourable perceptions of migrants is by giving migrants a 'human face'. By showing real life stories of asylum seekers, job seeking migrants or the trafficking of women on mass media and otherwise, public perception on migration has proved to be able to advance. Personal contacts with migrants and asylum seekers lead to a more favourable attitude. Policy makers, NGO's and other organisations can organize this.

Role of the EU

Citizens are interested in outcomes, in the successful resolution of problems, rather than in allocation of responsibilities. This applies to issues of migration particularly. In fields such as migration, the policies adopted or managed at EU, national and local level should be perceived as part of a unified whole, working together towards a common objective. As demonstrated in the previous sections, issues related to migration can only be addressed by taking appropriate measures at different administrative levels and over a wide range of policies.

At the heart of successful policies therefore lies the question of general policy coherence and how to achieve it. There are strong interactions between policies that are mainly the responsibility of Member States, especially those with regard to the labour market and social inclusion and those which could be dealt with more appropriately at EU level. Several EU policies are relevant for migration. These include external policies (e.g. development, trade) and internal policies (e.g. justice and security, employment and social affairs, gender equality, agriculture). Equally, different policies with regard to migration interact at the Member State level. Migration is one of a growing list of subjects that cannot be dealt with on an individual or stovepipe policy area basis.

The EU has set out to develop a common immigration policy to assure such policy coherence. Of course, room for further development remains to ensure that policy areas as well as different administrative levels interact positively on an EU-wide scale. Taking into account the particular situations of individual Member States, the EU will continue to propose measures to implement common policies and approaches to properly manage migration.

Regarding the *aim of improving public perception* of migrants and migration in general the EU and the Commission in particular are well placed to make essential contributions. On

migration policies and general policies mentioned above, *the Commission has been particularly active* in recent years. These policy initiatives could be pushed a step further by *also paying explicit attention to public perception*. The following elements could prove useful in this endeavour.

- A first step for policies designed to address public perception is better information on the perceptions themselves. Although important studies and surveys are being conducted on perceptions related to migration more detail and regularity is necessary. Possible causalities between actual events, media coverage and resulting perceptions could warrant more attention.
- The Commission can be instrumental in designing Europe-wide strategies to target specifically public opinion on migration which may then be implemented by EU institutions and/or Member States.
- The Commission can work directly with European or national migrant and Muslim representatives and organisations to help them develop a more positive public image for their constituencies and bolster effective integration.
- It may further develop its own efforts to disseminate information on the facts and benefits of migration and thereby help foster acceptance of migration as a potentially beneficial phenomenon. In relation to this, more efforts are needed to improve comparable statistical data on migration to serve as a base of information.
- Awareness may be raised by framing such information campaigns through special events or overarching themes such as a European Year devoted to migration.