

## Improving EU and US Immigration Systems' Capacity for Responding to Global Challenges: Learning from experiences

The project is co-funded by the European Commission DG Relex in the framework of the Pilot Projects on “Transatlantic Methods for Handling Global Challenges in the European Union and United States”. The project is directed at the Migration Policy Center (MPC – Shuman Center for Advanced Studies – European University Institute, Florence) by Philippe Fargues, director of the MPC, and Demetrios Papademetriou president of the Migration Policy Institute (MPI-Washington) the partner institution.

The rationale for this project is to identify the ways in which EU and US immigration systems can be substantially improved in order to address the major challenges policymakers face on both sides of the Atlantic, both in the context of the current economic crisis, and in the longer term. Ultimately, it is expected that the project will contribute to a more evidence-based and thoughtful approach to immigration policy on both sides of the Atlantic, and improve policymakers' understanding of the opportunities for and benefits of more effective Transatlantic cooperation on migration issues.

The project is mainly a comparative project focusing on 8 different challenges that policymakers face on both sides of the Atlantic:

- **Employment challenges:** Employment is not only the magnet that draws many immigrants to advanced industrialized nations; it is also crucial to immigrant integration. Immigrants' ability to obtain jobs that pay family-sustaining wages has huge implications for poverty, inequality, and social welfare. The crisis has increased employment vulnerability enormously, for both migrants and native workers. Migrants are particularly vulnerable, since they share socio-demographic and occupational characteristics with the workers who tend to lose most during economic downturns. Impacts are differentiated by gender, education, occupation and region of origin. The purpose of this paper is to explore these impacts in the EU and in the US and their implications for economic integration.
- **Social cohesion challenges:** Global migration is bringing migrants from increasingly diverse social, cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds. Proactive, persistent, and innovative integration policies are required to preserve social cohesion. Economic sluggishness and lower demand for labour (which will persist well beyond the end of the recession) not only hinders migrants' economic integration, but may also increase irregular employment in the informal economy. These factors in turn might lead to social hostility undermining social cohesion and provoking xenophobia.

- Development Challenges: The Crisis has deeply affected sending countries, not only through reduced opportunities for emigration, but also through substantially dampened remittances flows. Such reductions can be expected to have a measurable effect on poverty. If the immigration effects of the crisis last much longer, they are likely to affect social and cultural remittances – migrants’ capacity to contribute to their home countries through entrepreneurship and the transfer of ideas and growth-inducing knowledge.
- Challenges for economic growth and prosperity: Immigration plays an important role in helping developed economies to maintain and improve their standards of living. Developed economies are increasingly dependent upon highly skilled immigrants to provide scarce skills and boost innovation; they also rely on a broad range of low and middle-skilled immigrants to perform work for which few native workers are available. Even in times of economic weakness, many of these needs remain – particularly the need to attract and retain the most talented immigrants. The purpose of this paper is to outline how the US[EU] approaches the immigration-growth question, and to examine the short- and long-term trends in the immigration system’s preparedness to support economic growth and prosperity without exacerbating inequality.
- Demographic Challenges: Ageing and below-replacement fertility will challenge EU member states and the United States in the next two decades, albeit in different ways and to differing degrees. Western economies’ ability to maximize the contribution of their own workforces and recruit the needed workforce all along the skill spectrum, therefore, could become increasingly important. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the nature and extent of the demographic challenge facing the US[EU], and examine immigration’s role in responding to it. The EU paper in particular will need to consider the diversity of circumstances facing different European nations.
- Human Rights: The number of refugees and people in need of protection has increased over the last decade, while fewer and fewer have actually been recognized and granted settlement. The pressure to protect and resettle more people is expected to intensify as a result of the crisis.
- Security challenges: Border management and the fight against illegal immigration have become top priorities on both sides of the Atlantic, as has the fight against unauthorized access to EU and US labor markets. However, these priorities must remain respectful of individual rights and freedoms, and must preserve high ethical standards.
- Cooperation Challenges: The Main challenge lies in finding trade-offs which could address the needs and expectations of countries of origin with view to ensuring their cooperation. Few policy areas are more ripe for true two-way dialog and innovative solutions – and few so far from meeting their policy objectives.

For each of these challenges two different researches will be prepared: one dealing with the US, and the other concerning the EU. Besides these major challenges some specific case studies will be also tackled (for example, the analysis of specific migratory corridor, the integration process faced by specific community in the EU and in the US, the issue of crime among migrants etc.).

Against this background, the project will critically address policy responses to the economic crisis and to the longer-term challenges identified. Recommendations on what can and should be done to improve the policy response to short-, medium- and long term challenges will follow from the

research. This will include an assessment of the impact of what has been done, and the likely impact of what can be done.

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