



Statement  
on  
**The contribution of migrants to economic growth in the EU**  
(final text 20.02.2013)

1. Following the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the European Integration Forum in October 2012, the Civil Society participants wish to reiterate that migration is part of the solution to address the major challenges facing the European Union and societies. In this document we want to present our proposals for policy initiatives and concrete actions that can be taken by the relevant authorities, social partners and other stakeholders to enhance the contribution of migrants (Third Country Nationals) to economic growth in the EU as well as the recognition of their contribution to society in general. This statement reflects the views of the participants of the Forum and not necessarily those of the European Institutions.
2. The third Common Basic Principle on integration<sup>1</sup> of migrants refers to the contribution of migrants to society: *“Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible.”*
3. Europe 2020<sup>2</sup>, the EU’s growth strategy for the coming decade, identifies labour migration policy as one of the policy instruments to respond to the priorities and needs of labour markets. It recognises however that migrants’ potential is hindered and that improved integration and equality policies should enable them to take full advantage of their potential.
4. The valuable role of migrant workers and of migrant entrepreneurship is well acknowledged by the majority of European SMEs and craft organisations. Migrants often develop innovative approaches to markets and consumers’ needs. In that sense migrant workers have proved to be complementary to the employment of native workers, while migrant entrepreneurs create jobs when they set up small or medium enterprises.
5. However, still too often migrants are facing multiple discrimination in access to and are exploited within the labour market, and their only option to be legally employed is through a status of bogus self-employment.
6. The Civil Society participants of the European Integration Forum recommend to the European Institutions, the Member States, and local and regional authorities to develop actions facilitating

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<sup>1</sup> The Common Basic Principles were adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council in 2004.

<sup>2</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>

migrants' efforts to develop their full potential in contributing to economic growth in the EU in the following areas:

- a. Support initiatives aiming at **fighting discrimination** and inequalities towards women and men migrants in all spheres of society: fight discrimination and inequalities in **education** and professional orientation of migrant children as well as in accessing life-long training opportunities for all migrants, including parents with childcare responsibilities; counter the abuse and **exploitation** of migrant workers in particular in the informal economy , including domestic and care work in private households, and self-employed; employers' initiatives to fight discrimination on the work floor should also be encouraged;
- b. Support, in a coordinated way, initiatives to encourage migrants to **develop an economic activity** as entrepreneurs, such as facilitating development of business networks and launching integrated start-up and growth programs. Local authorities should be supported to set up "one-stop shops" for all administrative requirements related to setting up a business.
- c. Promote **equality** and diversity measures, fostering greater **representation** of women and men employees, self-employed persons and entrepreneurs with diverse backgrounds in mainstream social partner organisations in their country of residence and at EU level.
- d. Work towards converging standards across the EU Member States to **recognise the qualifications** (i.e. degrees, training certificates, etc.) of migrants as well as their "**soft**" **skills**, such as intercultural competence, multilingualism, informal work experience etc. to facilitate their access to the labour market. Mutual recognition could be a guiding principle in this process. Use the renewed social Open Method of Coordination to address the social integration and inclusion of migrants who face difficulties in accessing employment and training or lifelong learning.
- e. Facilitate **intra-EU mobility** of legally residing third country nationals.
- f. Broaden **legal channels for labour migration** in order to keep pace with the rapidly increasing needs of the EU labour markets due to demographic changes and ensure that the principle of non-discrimination and equality is applied in granting diverse types of residence titles and work permits to the migrants. The social partners should systematically be consulted in screening the evolution of the labour market.
- g. Promote the ratification and implementation of the UN **Convention on the Protection of the Rights** of all migrant workers and members of their families.
- h. Establish an efficient entry and **recognition system** that encourages migrants to access the European labour market, allowing for long-term settlement with options to naturalise and unite with their family members.
- i. Ensure access to social welfare systems, enabling social protection and pension schemes and facilitate the **portability of such rights** to third countries.
- j. Develop policies and practices to improve the **insertion of migrants, especially women, into the labour market** by addressing their specific needs and enabling work life balance, on-the-job trainings, etc. Local authorities and stakeholders are key stakeholders in this process.

- k. Establish **equality indicators** that are consistent throughout the entire EU, monitor and analyse them, and create relevant equality measures and targets to improve the situation of women and men migrants in the labour market. The new EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation<sup>3</sup> should include funding for local projects addressing inequality.
  - l. Continue to support the development and expansion of national **social inclusion projects** and initiatives for migrants and **with** migrant organisations.
  - m. Consider options to regularise the **residence and work situation** of undocumented migrants to prevent their continued exploitation and allowing them to officialise their contribution to economic growth in the EU;
  - n. Take into account the potential contribution of the **social economy** to promoting equal opportunities and access to the labour market.
7. The Civil Society participants of the European Integration Forum are committed to supporting action taken in these areas, in close consultation with the relevant stakeholders, and to implementing projects contributing to that aim. The Civil Society participants wish to maintain a dialogue with the European Institutions through the European Integration Forum and are convinced that the EU 2020 strategy will achieve its goals only if the contribution of all will be recognised and valued and the voices of migrants themselves taken into consideration.
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<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1093>