

Session on: International migration: promoting management and integration.

I want to stress very succinctly a couple of points which remained rather unnoticed in both the debate and the background documentation: the sending countries perspective; the links between integration policies and the temporariness of migrations.

The economic literature has emphasised the presence for sending countries of both positive – the reduced pressure upon a given stock of economic resources, the remittances and the possible boost to capital accumulation, the induced increase in the returns to human capital accumulation and the boost to it, the experience accumulated by former migrants who return back home – and negative implications – the so called brain drain risk, involved by the selectivity of migratory flows. Similar considerations may be derived from the socio-political literature, as the reduced incidence in the total population of troublemaking youths may reduce the risk of civil conflicts and social unrest while risking to freeze the civil evolution of a sending country, also producing rather “unnatural” family (and childbearing) patterns. My intention is not that of stating whether the former or the latter prevail. The prevalence of the former or the latter very much depends upon several side conditions, so that no universal rule may be identified. My intention is more simply to stress that no proper international management and cooperation in the migrations field may be reached insofar as the implications of migrations upon sending countries are not fully considered. In this international forum, where the prevalence of receiving countries is widespread but far from being universal, the fact that the implications of migrations upon sending countries have not been duly considered somehow is a lost chance.

My second remark refers to the temporariness of migrations and its implications for integration policies. It seems to me that too often in the policy debate there is a gap between an economic perspective, in which migrants are considered almost as a possible cyclical buffer, and a social perspective, in which the families’ integration is emphasised. The first approach could imply stressing and favouring the presence and the access of individuals highly mobile, allowing them only a temporary residence status. Quite on the contrary, the second one would ask for the facilitation of the presence of individuals interested to establish strong roots in the receiving country, the presence of the family being an important element in such a prospect. The historical experience shows that too often the receiving countries have started from the first approach, trying to deny the need to plan for a proper integration, later on having discovered the impossibility to manage the unplanned for family reunification flows and ending up with an internal ethnic gap in the employment rate signalling the lack of a proper social and economic integration. While there are numerous issues here involved, a general message, which clearly emerges, is the need to deal with migratory policies in a very forward-looking frame.

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