

# LEAVING FOR WORK, LEAVING FOR GOOD?

EVIDENCE FROM ETF PARTNER COUNTRIES ON MIGRANT SUPPORT  
MEASURES FROM AN EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PERSPECTIVE



*What the ETF wants to do right now is to make a call for collective action, in the hope that the momentum we can build is not going to be too late; not necessarily for us, sitting here in this room, but for those on behalf of whom we work with policies.*

Madlen Serban, Director, ETF  
Torino Process Conference plenary address, 3 June 2015

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## GOING FOR THE WIN-WIN-WIN

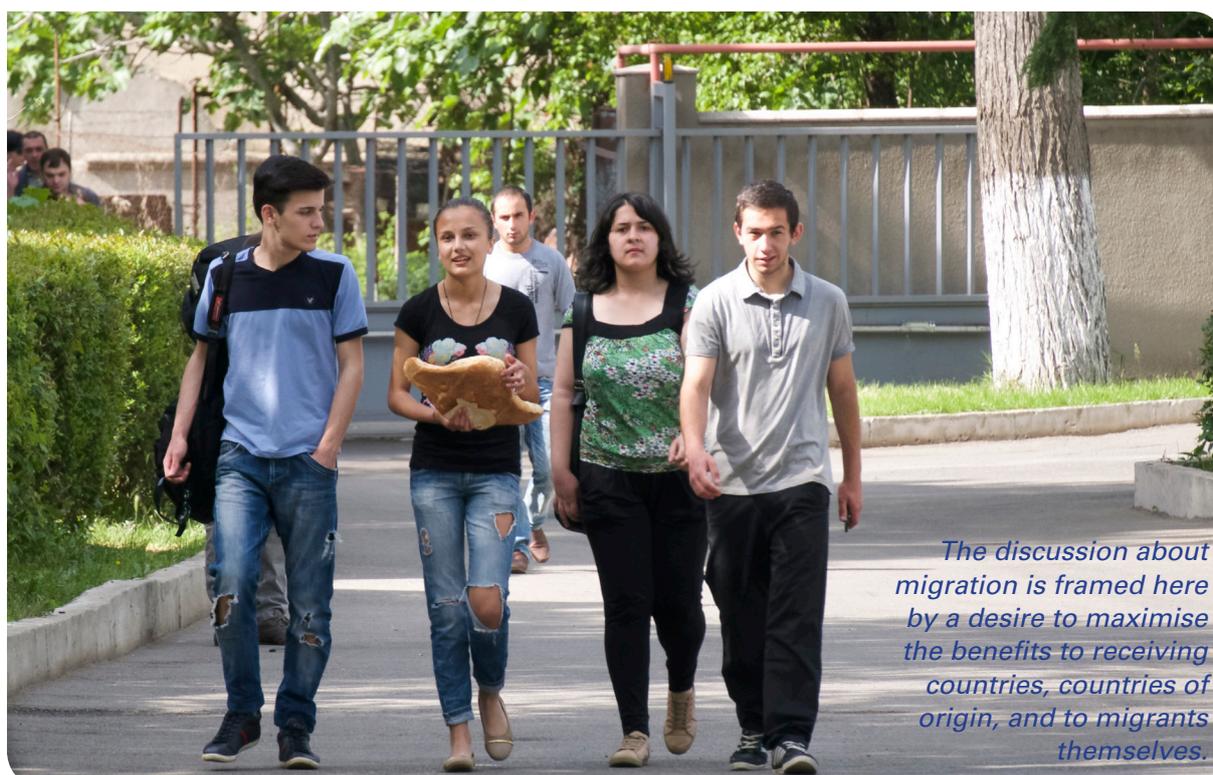
Human migration is growing, and as it grows it becomes more diverse and more complex, leading to greater demands on policy. This growth has been well documented over recent decades, for example in the UN Population Division's International Migration and Development reporting. At the start of the 1990s, 154 million people lived somewhere other than their country of origin. By 2013 the number stood at 232 million, or 3.2% of the global population. The majority of international migrants are people of working age, from 20 to 64 years old, and just over half are male (United Nations, 2013). Migration has become more global due in part to the availability of advanced communications technologies and cheap intercontinental travel, and more and more countries are both sending and receiving migrants, despite restrictive policies and an increasingly politicised attitude in many places.

The discussion about migration from countries in the EU's neighbourhood to EU member states, as well as to other destinations, is framed here by a desire to maximise the benefits to receiving countries, countries of origin, and to migrants themselves – the so-called triple win – whilst

also preventing irregular migration. There is a broad consensus that skills acquisition and utilisation are at the heart of the triple win, particularly as patterns of migration are tending more towards temporary and circular modes. As the renowned economist Thomas Piketty points out, "knowledge and skill diffusion is the key of the overall productivity growth as well as the reduction of inequality both within and between countries" (Piketty, 2014).

This triple win situation highlights the importance of support measures for migrants that focus on employment and skills issues, and which are delivered before they leave their home country, during the time they are in receiving countries, and after they return home. It can be simply articulated as follows:

1. Receiving country labour markets need to attract migrant workers due to a range of demographic, economic, and technological trends; the 'pull' factors. Migrants thus contribute to the receiving country economy by providing labour, skills, and knowledge that are in short supply, as well as by paying taxes and spending money on goods and services.
2. The experiences gained by migrants help them to develop their own human capital – i.e. the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours that enable them to find appropriate work and be successful, wherever they live.



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3. Sending countries benefit from the increased human capital of returning migrants because it promotes labour market improvement, increases entrepreneurial activity, and generates greater social cohesion. Sending countries also benefit from financial remittances sent by migrants while they are away.

Highlighting the benefits to receiving countries in this way is not at the expense of acknowledging the challenges. Whilst outside the scope of this paper, 'push' migration factors – poverty, conflict, persecution, and, increasingly, climate change-related disasters – are problems that all parties to the triple win must confront (Townsend and Oomen, 2015). At the time of writing, the news headlines are dominated by the horrific loss of life at sea as trafficked migrants drown in unbearable conditions and in shocking numbers while making desperate efforts to reach a place they believed might offer them the chance of a better life. It is clear that substantial and concerted efforts are required to address this crisis, which is above all a humanitarian crisis, and that no country acting alone can deal with it.

As President Juncker emphasised in his speech to the European Parliament on 29 April 2015, migration policies need to go beyond crisis management and tackle the root causes, if there is to be an orderly management of migration (Juncker, 2015).

By shifting the focus to employment and skills issues within legal migration there is better chance of delivering a positive message and initiating a 'virtuous cycle' to support the triple win. Moreover, the new European Agenda on Migration, besides addressing security concerns, highlighted the need to fill skills needs in European labour markets, facilitate job-matching for third country nationals and recognise migrants' qualifications (European Commission, 2015). Increased attention to the skills development policies of European Neighbourhood countries holds out the hope of more fruitful results for migration management.

## LEAVING FOR WORK LEADS TO DEVELOPMENT

As an organisation devoted in many ways to "knowledge and skill diffusion," the European Training Foundation (ETF) is actively involved in migration and development policy in order to see how policy makers can support people to get the best from the skills they have, develop new skills, and apply those skills to contribute to the economy of their country of origin as well as of the countries to which they migrate. The ETF's wider mission is to support partner countries in the EU neighbourhood regions to develop their national vocational education and training (VET) systems, improve their national employment policies, and help their people access the labour market.

### MIGRANTS' STORIES: LEAVING ARMENIA

Most Armenians who migrate go to Russia, as familiarity with the language, lack of visa requirements, and existing Armenian diaspora networks exert a significant pull. Although the research suggests that net emigration from Armenia has declined over the past six or seven years, the continuing lack of economic opportunity in the country remains a powerful driver for people – particularly men – to leave. Recent media reports have focused on the almost entirely women-only villages that must cope with the absence of men of working age during much of the year.

However, there are also those who return, both from periods of living temporarily abroad, and from the Armenian diaspora communities. Alex was born and raised in the UK, and had only visited Armenia as a tourist until a change of career from geographer to photographer made him see the country in a different light. In 2012 he moved permanently to Yerevan, establishing a photography studio after initially working as a teacher at a centre for creative technologies. He then found a job at Yerevan Zoo, where, he told the Repat Armenia website, "I had the opportunity to network and improve my skills as a photographer, I even managed to curate a Yerevan Zoo photo exhibition." His studio, Tarverdi Photography, now specialises in weddings, public events, and other creative photography.

## MIGRANTS' STORIES: LEAVING GEORGIA

Grigol works in a jewellery workshop in Tbilisi. After he spent ten months unsuccessfully looking for work in Latvia he returned to Georgia and found a course in jewellery making, part of a project funded under the EU Mobility Partnership. "I didn't get the status so I had to come back, but here I didn't have a job. I came back with EUR 40, and I'm not from Tbilisi so it was hard."

Grigol was one of more than 1,600 returning migrants who have been helped by the Targeted Initiative for Georgia (TIG). As the TIG project director explained, "We either assist them to establish their own business or we help them to find employment, or we help them to go through additional education so they can find employment. This is one of the main problems, to really help people to stay, to find a real reason for living back in Georgia, and remain in Georgia."

In short, the ETF is interested in how individuals can get the most from migration by using and developing skills; and on how the countries of origin can improve the outcomes of regular and circular migration in their own economies. In particular, the ETF supports policy makers in those countries to manage the interaction between labour markets and education and training systems, so they can harness the impact of the triple win to their particular development agenda.

As we have seen, within the triple win there are three distinct stages in the migration process at which specific policy interventions could bring about improvements before migration, during migration, and after migration. This has led to the emergence of a set of policy initiatives that have come to be known as migrant support measures from an employment and skills perspective, a term abbreviated hereafter as MISMES. For the sake of clarity, this abbreviation will serve as both a singular and a plural term throughout this report. Some of these measures target one of the three phases of migration, and others – known as multi-dimensional MISMES – operate in two or more phases.

Alongside the emergence of MISMES as a policy category, the EU has been developing a series of Mobility Partnerships that aim to bring coherence and stability to migration from important sending countries. Initially piloted with Cape Verde, the Mobility Partnerships now include the Republic of Moldova (hereafter "Moldova"), Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Morocco, Tunisia, and Jordan, and are seen as an important factor in the general direction of EU migration policy<sup>1</sup>. However, they are not static arrangements, as noted in a report by the Migration Strategy Group on Global Competitiveness; "Ultimately, mobility partnerships can be seen as institutionalized

dialogue processes in which objectives, methods, and reviews must be constantly renegotiated" (Angenendt, 2014).

Angenendt identifies three specific areas in which Mobility Partnerships have served the migration-development nexus: improved cooperation between EU member states; greater coordination between them and the Commission; and intensified exchanges between the European Commission and the partner countries. There is arguably a fourth area, in the form of improved coordination and cooperation among national institutions of sending countries, as highlighted in the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership Evaluation Report (European Commission, 2014). All of which helps to provide the necessary platform for action on employment and skills for migrants to drive development in sending countries.

## LEAVING FOR GOOD? EVIDENCE AND POLICY LEARNING

Over the past few years the ETF has been building a significant body of evidence relating to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of migrant support measures from an employment and skills perspective. This is based on the results of major surveys the ETF carried out to investigate migration and skills in Albania, Egypt, Moldova, Tunisia, Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, and Morocco (World Bank & ETF, 2010; ETF, 2013a). In addition to confirming the importance of successful migration experiences across the three phases and for each of the three benefitting parties, the results of the surveys highlighted the demand for effective policy measures in the pre-migration phase to support migrants in skills and job matching preparation; and in the post-migration phase to assist the reintegration of

<sup>1</sup> Negotiations with Belarus and Lebanon to sign Mobility Partnership declarations are on-going at the time of writing.

## MIGRANTS' STORIES: LEAVING MOLDOVA

After several years in Canada, Sergiu returned to Moldova to be closer to his extended family. "I know that when I have children they will be able to visit their grandparents whenever they want. I want them to grow up with their cousins, just as I grew up with my brothers and sisters, enjoying holidays together, and not via Skype."

"Although I could go to a European country illegally, as many of my compatriots do, I realized that this is not the best solution. I wanted a place where I can go legally, a society open to migrants that would recognize their merits and abilities, a society where the world is treated on an equal footing. So I looked into migrating to Canada." Impressed by the online assistance for hopeful migrants provided by the Canadian Ministry of Immigration, Sergiu eventually demonstrated a sufficient level of work experience and French language skills to migrate to Quebec. He brings back to Moldova invaluable knowledge and experience, and now helps other Moldovans to migrate legally and successfully as a member of the team at the NEXUS.net migration centre.

returning migrants into local labour markets and entrepreneurial activity (ETF, 2014).

The ETF held a major international conference in Tbilisi, Georgia, in November 2013 to review the findings of the surveys and further explore the links between skills, migration, and development. In the conference conclusions a commitment was made to develop an inventory of policy measures and good practices to support migrants and returnees from an employment and skills perspective (ETF, 2013b). In 2014 the ETF produced a global inventory and typology of measures implemented within sending countries that support labour mobility and sending-country development (ETF, 2015a). Developed with support from the Migration Policy Centre of the European University Institute, the research included in-depth case studies of the ETF partner countries that are also signatories to EU Mobility Partnership agreements, namely Armenia (ETF, 2015b); Georgia (ETF, 2015c); Moldova (ETF, 2015d); Morocco (ETF, 2015e); and Tunisia (ETF, 2015f).

The present document aims to open a window onto the nature and impact of this work in two parts of the triple-win paradigm – supporting the capacity of policy makers and individual migrants in sending countries. It is not a debate about whether migration is desirable or undesirable. It is a fact that labour markets are becoming more global and, despite all the legal and political barriers, people increasingly seek access to labour markets on a global basis. The more they succeed, the better the outcomes for everyone, and the manner of that success is inextricably linked to employment and skills.

## 2. MAPPING THE MISMES LANDSCAPE

### INTRODUCING THE MISMES FAMILY

The ETF defines MISMES as "specific policy interventions aimed at improving the labour market integration of migrant workers and improving skills-matching more generally in countries of origin and destination" (ETF 2015a). In other words, MISMES help both potential and returning migrants to find jobs in which they can make proper use of their skills, or to identify the skills they need to develop in order to access appropriate employment. As the migrants' stories found in this report illustrate, migration successes are linked to employment and skills successes. The range of migrant support measures from an employment and skills perspective – the MISMES policy family – is therefore hugely important for those charged with developing effective policy within the ETF partner countries, and indeed around the world.

Interest in, and implementation of MISMES has grown over the last 15 years, driven to a considerable extent by failures of market responses to job-matching and skills-matching needs. Between 2007 and 2013 a budget of EUR 40 million was spent for MISMES-type programmes within the EU Thematic Programme on Cooperation with Third Countries in the Area of Migration and Asylum, and there are also significant funds being invested in MISMES by

governments in many Asian countries of origin and large-scale migration destination countries such as Canada.

As the desire to improve the management of migration flows has risen up the policy agenda, so the introduction of the Mobility Partnerships and related initiatives has spurred MISMES creation. The Global Inventory (ETF, 2015a) identified and classified over 300 MISMES, which can be either employment-related or skills-related measures. Employment-related measures include access to labour market information in destination countries; international job matching and placement services; pre-departure information, orientation and training schemes; labour market reintegration of returnees; and entrepreneurship and business start-up support. Skills-related measures are professional skills development for migration; validation and recognition of migrants' qualifications and skills; and cross-border programmes for capitalizing on skills.

The Global Inventory categorises these policy instruments under 11 MISMES models that are presented within the separate stages of migration – before, during, and after – or as operating in two or more of the stages and therefore known as multi-dimensional. Interventions that occur at a point before people leave their home country are mostly focused on preparing them for the labour market in the destination country. These interventions include international job matching and placement services; pre-departure information, orientation and training schemes; professional skills development for migration; recognition of credentials; and facilitating access to labour market information and protection in destination

countries. Specific actions that support these objectives include setting up specialised international placement agencies, databases or services, liaising with social enterprise recruiting agencies, and developing specialised vocational training for migration, including international traineeships.

Programmes for migrants while they are living and, ideally, working in other countries, include capitalising on skills across borders, which might focus on the temporary or permanent return of skilled migrants to help stimulate their home country labour market and development. However, they can be undermined by a lack of cross-border recognition of skills and qualifications or by difficulties in accessing what is often a restricted labour market. During-migration measures also include facilitating access to labour market information in destination countries, setting up support services and promoting migrant workers' rights and obligations, and social security schemes and medical insurance.

The post-migration phase is about supporting the reintegration of returning migrants. The provision of information about return employment opportunities; active labour market policies to find jobs; targeted entrepreneurship and income-generating schemes that encourage returnees to create new businesses; and mechanisms for the validation and recognition of migrants' qualifications and skills gained abroad are some models implemented in the post-migration phase. Certain MISMES are located within a complex category of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR), the complexity deriving from the inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers along with labour migrants.

## MIGRANTS' STORIES: LEAVING MOROCCO

Abdelghani qualified as an assistant chef in his hometown of Casablanca after finishing school. "I took the assistant chef course because I thought this path could offer me many opportunities for work." But after leaving for Italy to find work Abdelghani searched for three years without any success. A friend suggested he join an assistant chef course, which would lead to an internship. Abdelghani's qualification wasn't recognised in Italy, so he had to retake it.

"When I arrived in Italy, I understood that in order to find a job you need to be able to speak the language properly, because working in a kitchen means becoming part of a team. And in order to be a good team member, you need to be able to communicate with colleagues efficiently." The course led to an internship in a bar, where he gained useful experience and learned to adopt Italian habits and customs. However, his dream is to return to Morocco and pass his skills on to future chefs there.

## MIGRANTS' STORIES: LEAVING TUNISIA

Speaking with passion and brimming with ideas for a boutique pizzeria in the La Marsa suburb of Tunis, Mohamed was one of four aspiring entrepreneurs who pitched in front of a formidable jury for the chance to receive start-up funding of between EUR 4,000 and EUR 6,000. The candidates were asked about their careers, qualifications, business plans, and support networks. They were also encouraged to demonstrate how their projects would create jobs. The jury's task was to assess the potential profitability of the plans presented, as well as their potential for integrating with the formal economy of the region. Mohamed defended his plans with conviction, and eventually the jury was persuaded.

All four candidates were migrants returning from having worked in France to resettle in Tunisia, and the pitching opportunity was part of a reintegration programme, which focuses on finding employment, or creating new businesses supported by training and with access to financial aid. Run by the French Office for Immigration and Integration in Tunisia, in partnership with the Tunisian Agency for Employment and Vocational Training, the scheme has been in operation since 2010.

These interventions are welcomed by sending countries but, as yet, not well integrated with national migration management strategies, public employment services, and other related policy areas.

Finally, MISMES such as broad-based migrant resource centres and welfare funds can be active at two or more stages of the migration cycle, and may include policy development and capacity building aspects. Therefore, they are identified as being multi-dimensional. Again, information provision via dedicated call centres and other pre-departure and pre-return platforms, which are increasingly internet-based, constitute a major area of opportunity for support measures that are holistic in their implementation across migration phases.

## MISMES IN THE CONTEXT OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS

The EU Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (European Commission, 2011) addresses both the causes and consequences of migration across four areas, namely policies targeting irregular migration; legal/labour migration; asylum and international protection; and migration and development. In line with the triple win paradigm, the objective is to encourage positive outcomes for sending and receiving countries through supported return and reintegration and to support migrants through legal mobility with facilitated integration (ETF, 2014).

The Joint Declaration between the EU and each of the countries establishing the Mobility Partnerships sets out a framework of policies that will support this objective, and a significant proportion of these policies is either made up of MISMES projects or projects that have MISMES components to them. While the policies are non-binding commitments contingent on the political and financial situation of the participating countries, most of the MISMES activities can be found within flagship programmes funded by the European Commission. These flagship programmes, known as Targeted Initiatives, are supported by EU member states and other actors and coordinated by the Commission to leverage their joint efforts to produce greater results.

For example, the Targeted Initiative for Georgia was implemented by the Czech Republic's Ministry of Internal Affairs with a main focus on reintegration of Georgian returnees and information dissemination for potential migrants, and aimed to strengthen the capacity of the Georgian Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons, Refugees and Accommodation. The activities of the programme offered returnee information and counselling, skills development, and labour matching within the Georgian labour market. In Moldova, a Targeted Initiative led by the Swedish Public Employment Service helped to build the capacity of the Moldovan National Employment Agency across the three phases of migration. The programme supported migrants living abroad and on their return to Moldova, focusing on the provision of information and

counselling, skills development, and labour matching for circular migration.

In these and similar programmes in Armenia, Tunisia, and Morocco, the underlying trend is towards establishing or strengthening national or local ownership of a range of skills development and labour matching activities. However, there are many complexities that make the sustainability of such programmes a challenge. These can range from the psychological implications of returning home to difficulties in engaging civil society actors to ensure that reintegration efforts are appropriately embedded. Thus, even with apparent successes from an employment and skills perspective, there may be personal and social factors that limit beneficial impacts. Overall, the ETF's review reveals that the best long-term prospects for MISMES lie in an integrated, sustainable, and locally owned approach. Where local authorities have been actively involved, successes are more apparent, which suggests that their role should be explicitly supported in Mobility Partnerships, along with the incentivising of local financial ownership.

The ETF's detailed inventory research carried out in five countries identified 131 MISMES, of which Moldova had the most, with 64 (ETF, 2015d); Georgia 29 (ETF, 2015c); Armenia 19 (ETF, 2015b); Tunisia 10 (ETF, 2015f); and Morocco 9 (ETF, 2015e). The reports start with the state of

labour migration and related institutions in the respective countries, and provide an inventory of MISMES implemented between 2000 and 2014 in each country, also identifying those MISMES that are specifically situated within the Mobility Partnership framework. Four of the five reports feature a case study of a particular project.

The research methodology was based on a special MISMES questionnaire to ensure a minimum level of standardisation in the data gathered, as well as desk research and in-depth interviews to understand the issues around the policy initiatives, particularly in relation to assessment. While there are some patterns of similarity across the five countries, the research strongly suggests that local circumstances and experience play a major role in the design, implementation, and effectiveness of MISMES, regardless of where the funding originated. Whereas Georgia and Armenia were focused on the post-migration reintegration of labour migrants, Tunisia was more focused on pre-migration job matching (or the apparent lack thereof). In this respect, Moldova was slightly more balanced between the two, but the Moroccan study reveals limited support for migrants to develop their skills before leaving.

The findings showed that during-migration is the phase receiving the least, or least effective, attention. Where MISMES projects were



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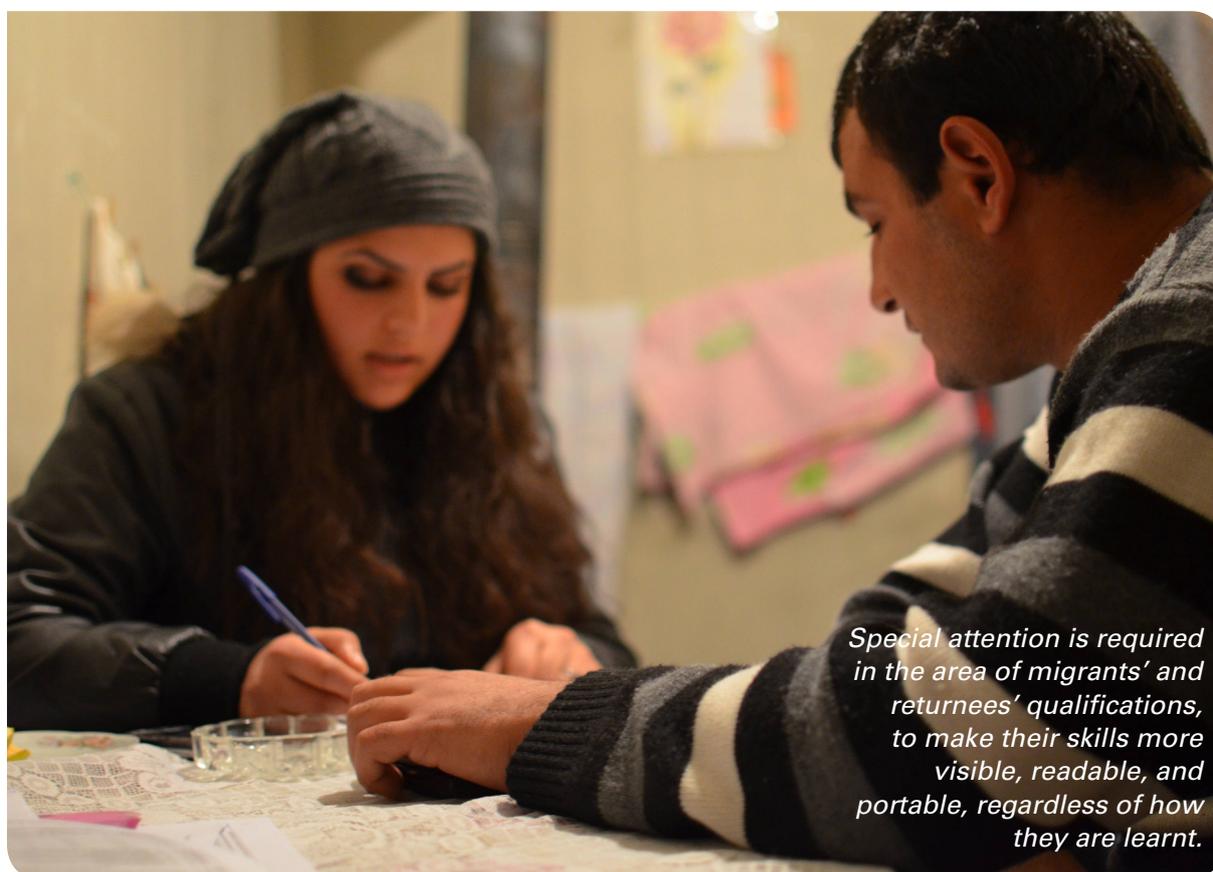
grounded in a unified state agency there was stronger coherence in delivering projects, less overlap (which, where it does occur, leads to obvious inefficiencies), and greater potential for the successful involvement of international bodies. Tunisia has strong state institutions demonstrating a high degree of coherence in their approach, but these appear to be struggling to use their wide reach in implementing MISMES effectively. Georgia has benefitted since 2010 from the coordination of previously disparate state agencies with regard to migration.

All the reports discuss the positive impact of the Mobility Partnerships on MISMES schemes. In Tunisia the potential is yet to be utilised, and the report additionally mentions the France-Tunisia bilateral labour agreement, although with some reservations, stating that formal-legal recognition has not ensured successful migration.

A common theme is the shift from a focus on migration and security as the core paradigm, to migration and development; however, some countries have struggled to make this shift. This is also reflected in the greater emphasis on post-migration MISMES, which in turn reflects an increasing desire for policies that boost temporary and circular migration. The

most common form of MISMES in the post-migration phase is AVRR. Tunisia's case study involves a Swiss-funded AVRR programme; while in Armenia there are doubts about just how voluntary this return migration is. In Moldova there has been a visible move within AVRR schemes away from a safety-nexus orientation to a development-nexus orientation. In Morocco there is no formal process to validate migrants' experience and new skills once they are back. More recent and EU-funded programmes, usually in the Mobility Partnership framework, have focused on multi-dimensional MISMES. Migration Resource Centres are mentioned in all but one of the reports, often taking the form of online platforms or call centres identified as employment information platforms.

All the reports consider cost efficiency and the portability and recognition of qualifications. Tunisia reports a low level of cost efficiency of MISMES projects, while Armenia had a lack of sufficient data recording to properly assess cost efficiency. Similarly, the institutions in Morocco that coordinate MISMES lack systematic effectiveness evaluation, so they are not able to measure the impact of programmes on migrants' reintegration. Moreover, in Armenia during-migration MISMES focused on the



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short-term return of highly trained Armenians working abroad, something that is felt to be unsustainable without foreign funding; indeed, most Armenian projects were foreign funded. Concerns were raised in a number of the reports about migrant skills mismatch with European employers' needs, and there have been criticisms of elitism because MISMEMS were seen to focus mainly on a minority of already highly-qualified migrants.

The Global Inventory (ETF, 2015a) set out to review internal and external efficiency assessment of MISMEMS. Internal efficiency assessment indicates the cost-effectiveness of measures in terms of their total cost and number of direct beneficiaries. External efficiency assessment looks at the impact of measures on the labour migration process in terms of migrants' employment, wages, skills utilisation, and skills enhancement. Assessment across both dimensions is obscured by factors such as the lack of disaggregated budget data for different measures, and the virtual non-existence of monitoring and follow-up mechanisms.

The ideal methodological approach to assessment would be to make a direct comparison of labour market outcomes for migrants who have benefited from MISMEMS with labour market outcomes for migrants who have not. However, current labour force surveys do not capture this information. Moreover, as noted above, there are other factors that can influence outcomes. Broader issues such as the general education system, language skills,

overall economic conditions, and access to formal and informal social networks may have an equal impact than employment and skills attributes or activities. It is therefore important to keep this context in mind when considering any conclusions.

It is not surprising then that policy makers doubt the cost-effectiveness of interventions in the light of low numbers of beneficiaries and problems with sustainability of implementation. Yet although the potential value-added of MISMEMS may be hard for policy makers to acknowledge, support for MISMEMS in the form of financial resources has been growing. There are obviously attractive benefits that could flow from the successful implementation of MISMEMS interventions. These benefits include:

- improving the overall management of migration flows;
- raising the level of human capital development, broadly defined;
- increasing the fit between labour market needs and workforce skills; and
- best use of migrants' skills for their own good and for the good of countries of origin and destination;
- realising social benefits from improved migrant community integration.

And all of this comes with the flexibility of mechanisms that are adaptable to local needs and to specific population segments.

# 3. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## WHAT THE RESEARCH IS TELLING US

The Transatlantic Trends: Immigration Survey (German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2014) which polled individuals in a range of European countries, as well as Russia, the US, and Canada, showed that a majority of people in most destination countries express strong favourability towards migrants who arrive with knowledge of the local language, a job offer in place, and a high level of education. In other words, recognised skills and facilitated access to the labour market make migrants more attractive from the perspective of social cohesion, thus firmly aligning international public opinion with MISMES-based policy actions.

Despite this public perception in receiving countries, the ETF inventory shows that MISMES remain a marginal tool in migration management, and a very small percentage of migrants is benefitting from them in the European Neighbourhood countries. Few policy measures are implemented to promote international job placement. Improving skills utilization and skills enhancement are often the 'missing link' of migration management; although they are key instruments in overcoming the labour market integration problems and skills mismatches widely observed in both countries of origin and destination. Skills-related measures are crucial to overcome skills mismatches between countries of origin and destination. Yet as the very small number of skills development and skills validation or recognition schemes reveals, this remains a problem. Much more can be done to help with prospective migrants' skills acquisition, recognition, and validation.

Another important finding is the success of specific skills development and migration-oriented VET training programmes in labour market integration, in particular when they are linked to employers and concrete job opportunities abroad. MISMES work best when they are linked to concrete opportunities for both potential and returning migrants in respective labour markets, and the lack of real job opportunities is self-evidently a hindrance. In addition, there is a need for greater emphasis on medium-skilled migrants; and besides VET

training, schemes must include modules on what is usually called core competences or soft skills, such as languages, ICT skills, and intercultural adaptation. Finally, special attention must be given to 'expectation management' for both potential and returning migrants, as well as prospective employers.

Given the fact that targeted training leads to greater impact, more investment in skills development should be a priority. This is exemplified in a project set up in the Egyptian city of Fayoum (ETF, 2015a), which was based on the idea that strengthening vulnerable youths' access to technical education and vocational training in rural communities with high migration pressure provides them with skills and knowledge to take advantage of economic opportunities, both at home and abroad. The project focused on the education and training curricula for three tourism and hospitality-related training profiles; improvement of school premises and laboratories; twinning agreements with national and international institutions; school-to-work transition counselling and partnerships with the private sector; and the training of teaching staff. The Ministry of Education in Egypt has evaluated the Fayoum model very successful and decided to duplicate in other schools. Despite the inevitable budget pressures on VET institutions and their line ministries, across sending and receiving countries, a case must be made for the investment required to ensure that learners from likely migrant populations gain, use, enhance, and renew skills.

Special attention is required in the area of migrants' and returnees' qualifications, to make their skills more visible, readable, and portable, regardless of how they are learnt (i.e. through formal, non-formal, or informal means). Although this is a difficult area to develop quickly, measures for the transparency of education systems and qualifications across the countries can help a great deal. For example, cooperation and networking programmes such as student exchanges, twinning schools, dual certification programmes, and shared curricula between education and training systems across countries are excellent for increasing standards, quality, and transparency. Developing National Qualifications Systems, preferably linked to international developments such as the EQF, Bologna, UNESCO, or GATS Mode 4, and recognition of prior learning systems (validation of informal and non-formal learning) are other possible long-term solutions.

Another notable point emerging from the ETF inventory is the fact that most MISMES interventions are aimed at encouraging return migration, but very little support is provided to sending countries for labour market reforms and job creation. Considering that the lack of decent jobs is the core reason for migration, employment policies require special attention. Donor-funded MISMES have a bias to general information tools and are not linked to actual employers or job offers, both in countries of origin and destination. MISMES also need to be inclusive, covering the full range of educational attainment among migrants and prospective migrants, not just graduates.

The experience of gathering evidence in this process has highlighted the need for greater coherence in identifying information and data requirements, and their systematic collection and analysis. At present, the lack of agreed indicators makes it difficult to monitor and assess the impact and efficiency of MISMES, which in turn makes it hard to share what has been learned from country to country. Indeed, sustainability is limited beyond donor funding unless local institutions are fully involved and programmes are made part of the regular system.

Applying a coherent framework within each country, and between the different countries, would make MISMES work better across the Mobility Partnerships. Bilateral migration agreements are an important part of the mix, and their continued implementation highlights the need for policy makers in sending countries to build integrated, national strategies that cover the span of inter-governmental, supra-governmental, and non-governmental action. And while the majority of MISMES are currently project-based, integrating MISMES into the structures of public employment services and VET systems in the migrants' home countries, and linking them to national migration strategies, would lead to greater sustainability.

## WHAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER DOING ABOUT IT

Measures to prevent corruption and to ensure transparency in labour market practices are a pre-requisite for long-term effectiveness of any policy action and for fair and equitable development and economic growth. This applies to domestic, non-migrant oriented employment and skills measures as much as to any migrant-

related measures, but it must be stressed that the process of migration creates additional vulnerability on the part of migrants and their families, and all actors must be alert to the potential for exploitation and abuse.

As the evidence base is strengthened MISMES will become more valuable as policy options within migration management. This can be seen in the fact that, since the establishment of the Mobility Partnerships, there are both more MISMES projects and more interest in their potential to bring the triple-win scenario to fruition. Thus, while identifying numbers of direct beneficiaries is at present problematic, there is a high expectation that numbers will increase as more effective assessment and evaluation processes are put in place at earlier stages of MISMES implementation.

On the basis of the overall findings, and bearing in mind that the present document represents only a brief summary of the wealth of evidence collected, steps should be taken to reduce overlap and duplication in interventions; share learning and best practices more effectively; improve clarity concerning cost-effectiveness, and mitigate the risk to the sustainability of MISMES that are dependent on donor funding.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The findings suggest that more investment in skills development should be a priority within migration management policies in the European Neighbourhood countries. If learners from likely migrant populations are able to gain, use, enhance, and renew skills, the long-term social and economic returns will be much higher than the initial investment. Migration management should also be better linked to international development cooperation. Creating training partnerships through investing in education and training systems in sectors of high labour mobility will not only improve the quality of education in sending countries, but will also support more orderly management of migration (as seen, for instance, in the Fayoum project in Egypt). And promoting global skills partnerships in the form of cooperation between VET institutions in sending and receiving countries will benefit learners in both migration and non-migration-related labour market access. This could be achieved, at least in the first instance, by involving some VET schools, if not whole

national systems. VET plays a crucial role in the MISMES story. The current findings – and the findings of future research into MISMES – should be used to secure effective, long-term investment in VET.

2. The importance of job matching, both in terms of social outcomes in the receiving countries and of migrants' economic outcomes, suggests that MISMES implementation should involve closer linkages between the sending countries' national labour market policies and existing public employment services (PES) in receiving countries. The enrolment of receiving country employers in any PES integration process is, of course, crucial to its success. The EU and European Economic Area are already covered by a PES portal known as EURES, which provides access to the labour market at local, national, and European level to all job seekers, employers, and companies specialising in staff recruitment. Although EURES is not currently available for third countries, the model should be considered as a means of raising the quality and accessibility of job matching from Mobility Partnership countries. This can be achieved by integrating public and private sector job placement systems with national and international public employment services.
3. MISMES are shown to be more successful where they are fully owned by the relevant local, regional, or national authority. Where implementation is only or mostly carried out by international organisations, there is a serious risk that interventions will be unsustainable. Quality must be carefully checked, with appropriate support and monitoring provided for sending country policy makers and other actors. MISMES need to be better integrated with local public institutions, which in turn need capacity-building support, and migration should be embedded in the design of other national policies, including domestic labour market, education, and VET.
4. There are very few programmes in skills certification, validation, and accreditation. This lack constitutes another serious obstacle to success in labour mobility, an attribute that is valuable not just for migration but also for domestic labour market access. There are existing policy tools that can be used as points of reference, for example the European Qualifications Framework and Europass. Europass provides a template and central repository for job seekers to upload information about their skills, qualifications, experience, languages, and other important employment and skills-related information. Setting up similar facilitation for better transparency and comparability, initially for Mobility Partnership signatories and eventually between sending and receiving countries more broadly, would allow employers and migrants alike to make better assessments of job fit and suitability. Governments and international donors should look for more projects to promote transparent, readable qualifications that can sustain greater labour mobility.
5. There are many agencies working to understand the causes and consequences of migration, and a great deal of investment is going into efforts to mitigate the challenges and maximise the benefits that migration can offer. These agencies have accumulated significant experience and expertise in implementing many MISMES in many countries. However, different teams within single agencies can be inclined to transfer approaches from one place to another without showing sufficient learning from the experiences of other teams, or of other agencies. All parties to MISMES activity should commit to efforts to consolidate the global learning curve and reduce 'carbon copy' transfer without sufficient adaptation.
6. Looking beyond the EU and the countries of the Mobility Partnerships, the Global Inventory (ETF, 2015a) proposes the development of a global repository of MISMES based on a mandatory template for the collection of MISMES project information. It is easier to describe such mechanisms than to create and universally apply them, but without increasing transparency and coherence in information and data collection there is little chance of progress in assessment and evaluation. Funders should consider introducing conditional linking of new projects with assessment and evaluation results from previous projects, as well as comprehensive information and data provision on implemented projects.

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