

# Mobile Identities: Migration and Integration in Transnational Communities

European Policy Recommendations

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**Mobile Identities: Migration and Integration in Transnational Communities (HOME/2012/EIFX/CA/CFP/4201)**

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1. Introduction

In the globalization era, migration has adopted a variety of forms and it needs to be re-conceptualized. The view according to which migration is aimed at long-term settlement has to be revised. While migration was necessarily a life-long project until a few decades ago, today it is “mobility” what shapes migration. In a policy perspective, Temporary and Circular Migration (TCM) is to be understood within such globalized context – a context in which concepts such as “transnational” and “mobility” combine together to play a key role. Circular migration has in itself nothing truly innovative, but what is really new is the attempt to manage it “from the above”, based on the theoretical justification of the “Triple win”: benefits for the destination country, for the country of origin and for migrants themselves.

Through interviews with stakeholders and migrants as well as through the exchange with experts and stakeholders at the national and international workshops, the project sought to respond to the following questions:

- WHO are TC migrants in EU countries?
- Do current integration processes in EU countries match the needs of TC migrants? If so, how? If not, what is needed?
- What can be done in EU countries to foster the well-being of TC migrants? And what can be done in no-EU countries?
- What are the (potential) benefits of TCM for: i) EU countries; ii) Origin countries; iii) Migrants and their families.

It is worth to highlight, however, that the implementation of “Mobile Identities” project has taken place at a time of great political changes in regards to migration, both at the European level and within each of the project partner countries. In particular, such changes have affected the policy approach to temporary and circular migration, which ceased to be regarded as a top priority and has started to be viewed as a strategy of secondary relevance within European migration strategy. Such change has also affected the implementation of the project itself, as the task of involving national policy-makers and key stakeholders in the discussion on temporary and circular migration was particularly hard and the project had to find new strategies to adapt to this changing context. Nevertheless and beyond these difficulties, the project events witnessed the great interest of many stakeholders at local, national and international level, to the potentialities of temporary and circular migration.

The present Policy Recommendations have been drafted from the results of the European project “Mobile Identities: Migration and Integration in Transnational Communities” (HOME/2012/EIFX/CA/CFP/4201) funded by the European Commission, DG Home, within the framework of EIF Fund. The project has sought to understand how TCM current policies can benefit both sending and receiving countries and, in particular, the impact of TCM policies on migrants – not only economically but also emotionally and in terms of their overall well-being. In particular and beyond the partners’ joint reflection on transnational project findings, the recommendations presented in this paper reflect the inputs gathered from stakeholders and external participants at the International workshop held in Barcelona (May 7th, 2015) and partly at the Final Conference held in Rome on July 21st, 2015.

Note on working definitions

“Circular” and “temporary” are commonly used as synonyms, it should be noted however that while circular migration is always temporary, temporary migration is not necessarily circular too. “Circular” includes “temporary” and adds something to it, yet what the two terms share is their time-limited nature. For the purposes of Mobile Identities project, and of the present Policy recommendations report too, the two terms have been used combined together so as to comprise both forms of migration. When used separately, the two terms have been used with the following meaning:

- **Temporary** = migration that is time-limited and not aimed at a long-term settlement;
- **Circular** = migration that involves the repeated crossing of borders and, in so doing, it implicitly excludes the possibility of long-term settlements. Moreover, circular migration “denotes a continuous engagement in both home and adopted counties; it usually involves both return and repetition” (Newland et al 2008)

## 2. Temporary and circular migration: overview of key-issues

**“There is nothing more permanent than temporary foreign workers”**

(Phil Martin)

Although empirical data show that the share of international migrants in the world’s population has remained remarkably stable (at around 3 per cent) over the past 50 years (Haas, 2009), international migration has changed in nature, becoming more complex and diversified. In this new context, traditional representations based on the supposed unity of people, culture and territory do not hold. As Hannerz (1996) put it, the contemporary world is characterized by diversity and “multiple identities”. This perspective promotes the “flexibility paradigm” within which temporary/circular migration can be viewed as perfectly fitting in.

Also, it should not be forgotten that temporary/circular migrants, too, inevitably move into specific social, cultural, political, economic and policy contexts which strongly contribute to affect migration outcomes. Relevant issues (see Pinelli, 2011, for a concise discussion of literature) include the following:

- The socio-cultural and spatial characteristics of the local system (Wallman 2011);
- The policy framework for integration and interculturality (CoE, 2012);
- The formal governance and welfare state setting (defining rights and duties of residents: eg, access to vote and to public services);
- The role and strength of civil society organizations as well as the economic structure (eg, small vs. large enterprises; formal and informal economy); and
- Labor market functioning.

Furthermore, several cross-cutting key features (aims and mechanisms) inspire the elaboration of the TCM programs set up at different times by different European countries:

- **Policy objectives.** Declared policy objectives vary across schemes. Most schemes are intended to alleviate labor shortages in (specific sectors of) the national economy. Other declared policy objectives

are: the reduction of illegal immigration (for instance in many bilateral agreements signed by Spain and Italy); the training of migrants (Germany); foreign policy objectives for the promotion of cultural ties/exchanges and/or special relationships (as in the Netherlands);

- **Mechanisms for regulating admission.** It is possible to distinguish three basic mechanisms for regulating admissions. The most adopted is the use of annual quotas fixing the maximum number of migrants admitted every year, distinguishing or not by employment sector, reason of admission and/or characteristics of migrants (eg, skills). Such is the case of Italy where annual quotas are set, for example, for seasonal workers in agriculture. An alternative to quotas is represented by the use of economic instruments to manage foreign labor demand by domestic firms by imposing fees on foreign employment (Ruhs, 2005);
- **Bilateral or multilateral agreements.** Temporary/circular migration schemes may be open to nationals of any country or operate on the basis of bilateral agreements. Examples of the latter include the bilateral agreement that Spain has with Morocco “to regulate (...) the flows of labor between the two countries” (Preamble of the agreement). Italy also has bilateral agreements, notably with, Egypt, Morocco, Moldavia, and Sri Lanka. Under most of these agreements, the destination country commits to giving some sort of preferential treatment to the migrants that are nationals of the other signatory country. In exchange, the origin country commits to some actions, eg, exchanging information, monitoring borders or helping integration at origin<sup>1</sup>.
- **Required skill level.** Temporary/circular migration schemes may also define a certain level of skills. Indeed, most countries have separate schemes for high-skills vs. low-skill migrants. In the UK, the policy framework explicitly distinguishes different skill tiers of workers with differential treatment and conditions (more favourable for the higher skills). Low-skill migrants are accepted into the UK only temporarily and upon a sponsorship mechanism. Around 2/3 of migrants are high-skill mainly working in managerial and professional occupations, especially in the fields of ICT, health and education (Layton-Henry, 2004; Clarke and Salt, 2003; Castles, 2006). Italian legislation is geared towards low-skill migrants, although special provisions are in place for nurses. At the European level, the EU Blue Card (Council Directive 2009/50/EC<sup>2</sup>) enables employers to bring in skilled third country nationals at any time outside of existing quotas established at national levels. Indeed, high-

skill schemes are generally geared towards allowing/encouraging long-term settlement. This is the case, for example, in the Netherlands and Germany;

- **Sector of employment.** Temporary/circular migration schemes are often put in place to respond to labor market shortages. For this reason, they may be specific to those sectors that are in special need of labor (either high or low skills). This is the case of Germany where number of foreign-workers programs (often referred to as “new guestworker programmes”, Castles, 2006: 15) are in place to respond to sector-specific needs. This includes the seasonal workers programme to respond to seasonal needs (particularly in agriculture); or the ‘contract worker’ programme allowing entry for up to two years to work on specific projects (particularly in the building sector). Sector-specific schemes are in place also in Italy and Spain for agricultural seasonal workers, and in Ireland for specific sectors (such as ICT, Health professionals) within specified salary scales. In general, sector specific schemes do not allow the worker to change sector.
- **Duration of the work permit.** The majority of past and existing schemes concern permits for a period valid from a minimum of 3 months to a maximum of 5 years. Duration of less than 1 year is usually foreseen only for seasonal peaks of labor demand (or in any case, strictly temporary labor market conditions). Extension/renewal of the permit is normally allowed for a limited number of times only;

- **Other conditions** attached to the permit. Schemes may attach additional conditions to the permit aiming at limiting the rights/choices of migrants in the destination country. Specific provisions may, for instance: affect the possibility of changing employer (in most schemes, often with exception for high-skill workers, as in the UK); restrict access to public services; or put conditions on the right to family reunification.

### 2.1. The view of the European Commission on circular migration

In *The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility* (2011) the European Commission explicitly refers to circular migration as a means to: a) mitigate brain drain; b) reduce irregular work; c) respond to labor market needs; and (implicitly) d) promote skills and knowledge exchange. Although reference is primarily made to high-skill migrants (e.g., students/researchers/health personnel), low-skilled migrants are implicitly included within the general framework of “legal labor mobility”. This Communication recommends that circular mobility be further encouraged by EU Member States by promoting: i) Greater portability of social security rights; and ii) Mobility partnership schemes. Additionally, the EC Communication embraces the “Triple Win” solution when it states that circular mobility has to be encouraged “...so that the benefits of migration can be maximized, for the migrants, source countries and destination countries alike” (see table below for detailed extracts from the EC Communication).

#### Circular migration in the EC Communication

“Global Approach to Migration and Mobility” (2011)

- *Portability of social and pension rights could also be a facilitator for mobility and circular migration, as well as a disincentive for irregular work, and should therefore be improved;*
- *Greater mobility for students and researchers from third countries could also be a promising path towards catering for labor market needs in Europe if some students were to be able to work after completing their studies. This issue could be further explored, taking into account Member State competence and measures to combat brain drain, e.g. through circular migration. This could be done, in particular, by making better use of existing Mobility Partnerships to enhance and facilitate exchanges;*
- *Efforts to mitigate brain drain have been advanced by supporting the WHO Code of practice on the international recruitment of health personnel. The EU should promote Member States’ endeavours to facilitate circular migration of health personnel, so that skills and knowledge can be acquired*

*to the benefit of both source and destination countries. The EU Blue Card Directive allows Member States to reject applications in order to ensure ethical recruitment and enables the Commission to monitor application of the Directive with a view to mitigating brain drain;*

- *Assistance to partner countries to identify and monitor bona fide recruiters in order to empower migrants, notably with a view to facilitating circular migration;*
- *Circular mobility has been encouraged by a number of national and EU legislative measures and by specific projects. Greater portability of social security rights should be promoted as a key incentive to circular migration and, more generally, to legal labor mobility. The EU and its Member States should continue to establish legal frameworks that provide for multiple entry permits and periods of absence from the country of temporary residence so that the benefits of migration can be maximised, for the migrants, source countries and destination countries alike.*



### 3. Policy findings

**“We asked for workers, but we got people instead.”**

(Max Frisch)

#### 3.1. Temporary and circular migration programs in Europe: Are they needed at all?

There is high scepticism and uncertainty about the future role of TCM programs. In the present scenario of economic downturn and unfavorable attitudes to explicit migration policies, most stakeholders participating in the project activities do not see a major role for specific circular migration programs in the short term. This also reveals a major difference between Northern and Southern European countries that increasingly emerged from the project findings in the partner countries. In the UK, Netherlands and Germany, for example, there seems to be very little formal openness to low-skilled migrants, not even a few thousands per country. Even if there might be more room for skilled positions, the recent UK abolition of post-study work visa is a telling sign that high-skilled migration would also be restricted to particular jobs and needs. On the contrary in Southern Europe, Italy and Spain in our case, there is a significant de-facto CM of low-skilled migrants in seasonal activities - mainly agriculture, tourism, and

health care sectors. But precarious working conditions and high unemployment, especially in Spain, deter national Governments from any clear support of CM. This difference between Northern and Southern European countries, together with other issues detailed below, raised up the need to clearly differentiate between the situation and the policies oriented towards high-skilled or low-skilled migrants, a tricky debate where the selective criteria of human resources intermingles with the logics of citizenship rights.

Contrarily to these not very promising prospects in the short term, most of the involved stakeholders showed optimism as to medium- and long-term prospects of circular migration policies. In particular, the role of TCM programs is viewed as a migration-flows policy and management tool within the framework of a broader repertoire of migration policies. Particularly once European economy will have recovered, CM programs could gain relevance as a key element in several multi-area policies: development and geo-political relations North-South; temporary buffer for labor market adjustments; and as an institutional tool for targeted groups.

At the International workshop held in Barcelona in May 2015, workshop participants were asked to point out the main Pros and Cons they see in programmed TCM. The table below summarises the result of such discussion:

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary migration programmes as a management tool that can provide a legal framework to prevent problems</li> <li>• The programmes can also be used to anticipate the needs and offer some provisions</li> <li>• Migrants could gain knowledge and experience (professional and socio-cultural) which they can share with others in the sending country</li> <li>• New Ideas and innovation that can benefit the sending country</li> <li>• By having transnational cooperation, there is a possibility of enhancing mutual understanding between the countries</li> <li>• Satisfying much needed labour force and skills shortage in the host country</li> <li>• Reduction of poverty (remittances) in the sending country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risks of social dumping</li> <li>• Family separation</li> <li>• Lack of integration</li> <li>• Limited rights</li> <li>• Lack of future prospect</li> <li>• Vulnerability of TC migrants (risks of exploitation and abuse)</li> </ul>

The temporariness of employment-oriented circular mobility we have considered in this project has inputs to offer, in terms of institutional devices and capacities, for situations where the doubts or lack of political consensus on giving temporary stay permits arise from the wariness about these permits becoming automatically permanent entitlements. In this case, a clear commitment to return may actually contribute to open doors. Furthermore, a buffer arrangement where the temporary nature of the answer is granted, including clear criteria about return when the situation in the country of origin is not threatening, could certainly widen the operating space for national governments to accept more refugees. Mobility is easier if every entry/exit is not assumed as an all-or-nothing irreversible event. European Member States should then essentially translate this assumption into more flexible and detailed measures.

Which forms of TCM may develop in the future is unclear, but a growth of spontaneous circular mobility is foreseeable and the regulatory forces of the market may not be enough to guarantee the best conditions. There is, and there will be more and more, a need for a political management of these processes in order to guarantee better living standards to TC migrants. In addition, TCM policies at any level - local, national, European or international - should not be regarded as a distinct single policy but rather within and in complementarity with a wider political framework – that includes education and professional training, health, social policies, and international development, among others.

#### 3.2. One European framework for TCM policies?

Throughout its transnational events, “Mobile Identities” project has revealed an urgent need for the harmonization of data and working definitions on TCM across Europe. In the words of one participant at the International workshop: “When we talk about TCM across Europe, it often looks as if we were speaking different languages”. Besides definition and operationalization issues, circular migration entails a serious challenge when trying detailed assessments of its reality. Official statistics in most EU countries are far from providing a realistic picture of the real situation of circular migrants in the country. The usual problems of invisibility and informality in anything related to migration are even more evident in the case of circular migration, since for most countries it is very difficult to keep track of all the cross-border movements whether they are back-and forth or more or less definite (long-term) returns. Not to mention cases like Italy, where in the absence of

proper TCM schemes, a relevant number of spontaneous circular migrants, living 6 months in Italy and 6 months in their home country, are statistically invisible since they entry mostly through family reunification and then renew their work permit year by year.

When discussing about the European policy recommendations, many participants at the International workshop highlighted the need to be realistic: for example, recommendations for lower skilled workers in the UK may not work given that the UK is not interested in this group of migrants. How to manage the ‘reality’ and the impact of such ‘reality’ is a key issue. Particularly in regards to the management of a short term entry, mobility should be managed in a ‘realistic’ way to both satisfy the needs and avoid problems.

In recognising such ‘reality’, it is important to figure out which problems are for whom. The needs of employers may influence the policy but should not decide about the policy. Although involving NGOs and employers is important and beneficial to improve the situation of migrants, we should remember that the State is fundamentally responsible for guaranteeing that the basic needs of workers (such as working conditions, accommodation, rights of workers) are met.

In no country there were detailed assessments of how circular migration may have affected salaries and working conditions of local workers employed in the specific sectors receiving circular migrants, but within each of the three major actors – migrants; source countries; destination countries - there exists a huge diversity of actors, perspectives and interests. A better knowledge and awareness of each actor’s goals is crucial. Labour market and employers’ needs are certainly a key factor, but should not be exclusive. The employers’ needs should not be overrepresented in the decision-making processes otherwise there is a risk that TCM programs might become instrumental to their needs only. Besides, a strong cooperation between all key-players is regarded as necessary to achieve a good management of TCM. Public administrations should coordinate with employers, employment agencies, trade unions, and possibly professional education centres, in order to ensure a successful implementation of TCM programs.

#### 3.3. Spontaneous vs programmed TCM

While different forms of (limited) programmed temporary/circular migration, with diverse implications

and outcomes, were reported in the Northern European countries participating in the project (Germany, Netherlands and the UK), the research carried out in the Southern countries (Italy and Spain) revealed an outstanding existence of forms of spontaneous circular mobility. This distinction is crucial also because it conveys one more difference that was found to be key in regards to circular migration policies – the difference between low-skilled and high-skilled TC migrants. The national schemes on TCM implemented in European countries, in fact, seem to be mostly interested in, and addressed to, high-skilled migrants or certain types of professionals such as nurses in the German case. Spontaneous circular migrants seem instead to respond to the needs of a lower-skilled labour supply: mainly seasonal jobs in the areas of agriculture and tourism. In Italy, some of the circular migrants interviewed were high-skilled Albanians whose preference for circularity was motivated by geographical proximity. Many of them came to Italy to improve their professional skills and left their families in Albania. They use to spend half a year in Italy and half a year in Albania, with a view to definitely return “home” with renewed skills and some more money to start their own business. Many Moroccan migrants in Spain opt for spontaneous forms of circularity, notwithstanding the existence of a specific programme of TCM, because this allows for more flexibility in their stay. Other spontaneous circular migrants in Italy whose origin is from Third Countries. Whereas the “Top-down” circular mobility schemes implemented in Northern Europe address majorly high-skilled migrants, spontaneous circular mobility applies more to low-skilled employment.

As gathered in Italy and Spain, there exist some commonalities that seem to be shared by these spontaneous circular migrants regardless the country of origin or of destination:

- They enter the European country (i.e., Italy or Spain) through a regular work permit (i.e., a 1- or 2-year permit, which they renew when they come back to Europe the following year), not through national schemes of TCM, and thanks to their social capital;
- It derives a statistical invisibility of these migrants, since they do not appear officially as TC migrants;
- They enter for economic reasons and/or to acquire new skills with a view to invest and start an activity in their home countries in the future;
- They opt for not bringing their families to Europe;
- They implicitly opt for a “light” form of migration – one

that does not entail the high social and emotional costs of integration. Staying 6 months a year in Europe makes it easier to accept the hardships of being a migrant.

National migration policies that reckon the importance, also economically, of circular migration should not underestimate the existence of these forms of spontaneous migration. More specifically, policies aimed at favouring temporary/circular migration should support the migrants’ right to mobility by guaranteeing that they receive adequate housing and are equally treated at work. Spontaneous circular migration seems to better respond to the needs of both the labour market of the destination country and the economic needs of migrants themselves. “Mobile Identities” project findings revealed that many migrants opt for spontaneous circular migration mainly because they can find the flexibility (particularly in regards to length of stay and skills requirements) that programmed TCM do not offer. Furthermore, the research demonstrated that there is also a symbolical and emotional value of migration of which these migrants are aware of and they seek to soften the costs connected to such values by opting for spontaneous circular migration. An example of this are some of the migrants interviewed in Italy, who view circular migration as a strategy to prevent their families (often with elderly parents or young children) from experiencing the hardships of migration. Some other migrants seem to need to mark a symbolic distance between the destination country and their home country so as to distinctly separate the sacrificing time (work only) from their private life (family, leisure, socialization).

### 3.4. Integration

Integration-related issues were the most debated issues at all national and international events of Mobile Identities project. The “Triple win” theory assumes that one of the major benefits for the receiving country derives from the absence of integration costs. However this is an unrealistic picture and the experts involved in the project repeatedly highlighted the need for appropriate integration measures addressing temporary and circular migrants as well as more permanent migrants. Although efficient integration measures are sometimes taken at local level by local authorities or associations/NGOs, many European countries (among them Italy and the UK) have fragile integration policies at national level. The situation is even worse in the case of circular migration. Due to their temporary status, isolation and segregation are more than a risk to most TC migrants. More than “permanent” economic migrants, TC migrants are aware that their

migration plan is exclusively linked to work and tend to limit their life to work exclusively. Because of this and in addition to the practical difficulties they face since they entry the destination country, they may feel discouraged in finding coping strategies to overcome the major obstacles in their daily life and break isolation.

Furthermore, TC migration includes very different projects with very different integration needs. As different forms of circular mobility consolidate, migration policies in different areas including integration have to be differentiated to adapt to diverse needs. Integration policies need to be highly flexible and capable of matching as much as possible to different migrants’ circumstances and, as is the case of communication and information, should be present throughout all the stages of the migration project. Language classes, the recognition of foreign titles, are only examples of some of the interventions that could greatly facilitate the insertion of TC migrants in their temporarily new environment.

Among the many measures that the experts participating in the project events pointed out there are three that seem to be common to all:

- **Language skills** are regarded as key to the life of a migrant in the host country, at work as well as in their daily life. Language skills help prevent discrimination and facilitate the individual’s access to her/his basic rights. It was commonly acknowledged that even TC migrants need to understand the political, juridical and socio-cultural system of the host country. – key;
- **The role of associations**, NGOs and community organizations should be highlighted as key integration agents. Migrants’ associations in particular have proved very successful in providing concrete support as well as fighting non-income migrants’ problems like isolation, and, particularly relevant, in overcoming the language barrier. Associations and NGOs can provide basic information in many languages and can help the migrant orientate in the local context. For isolated migrants or migrants at risk of isolation, having a contact with an association can represent the only connection to the local community in the host country;
- Finally, **appropriate information** should be provided both in the source country and in the host country, not only so as to inform migrants of their duties and rights but also so as to provide a more realistic picture of the potential benefits as well as hardships connected to migration.

### 3.5. Programmed return

It is commonly hold that, in order for TCM policies to be truly effective, they should foresee the migrants’ mandatory return to the source countries – and this is also what truly differentiates programmed- from spontaneous TC migration. Such commitment, however, conveys at least two core questions that are highly controversial. Firstly, how to enforce the commitment to leave; secondly, which are the criteria behind the setting of temporal requirements for staying, returning and having the option to come back to the host country.

There is significant variation across Europe in the conditions regulating these key aspects of CM. Some countries allow for extensions for some types of temporary contracts but not for others; other countries are very strict as regards visa extensions. Any policy designed with the commitment to return to the country of origin has to confront with overstayers. Here, again, there is a huge diversity across Europe as regards how open/close the border should be. There are calls for softening the renewal criteria and offering exceptional windows to regularization mainly through participation in the labour market. In the words of one of the participants in the workshop: “If they work, if they get a job offer, they should have a chance to be regularized...to get out of the limbo situation”. At the same time, more restrictive views would recommend principles such as the “Depart now, appeal later” one that was called during the last British elections.

A similar restrictive discourse could be combined with different degrees of knowingly turning a blind eye to overstaying and illegality. On the other hand, the institutional capability to actually pursue systematic plans of enforced return may also vary across countries: passport checks and overall identification procedures demand bureaucratic tasks and entail risks of administrative backlogs in each step. Even if the European Court of Justice considers deportation as mandatory in several cases and the States’ regulation is restrictive, mandatory deportation is difficult to implement.

The difficulties in monitoring regular stay and avoiding overstaying are probably the main challenges that any policy on TCM need s to confront with. Differently from spontaneous circular migration which is officially rooted in more stable Stay permits, TCM programs may lead to undesirable segmented access to key social rights since some States, unable or unwilling to enforce return, may be tempted to “push” the irregular migrants’ return by making their life difficult – e.g., by restricting migrants’ access to work, housing, healthcare, benefits, and even everyday

administrative procedures such as bank accounts or getting a driving license.

In the debate about how to favour/enforce return, a promising alternative is promoting temporary returns to the country of origin with the right to come back to the host country.

### 3.6. Working conditions, social dumping and discrimination

The links between circular migration and the host country's labour market demands close supervision of two mixed realities: the migrants' working conditions and also the working conditions of the host country permanent residents (born and foreign born) working in the sectors where circular migrants are recruited.

Legal minimum conditions must be guaranteed and these include measures to monitor and combat social dumping and the black economy, regarded as among the main risks connected to circular migrants' workforce. Once minimum conditions are met, the next regulatory battleground is what happens when Third-country workers systematically get lower-earning contracts for equivalent jobs. Many migrants would accept much lower salaries but, sadly, discrimination does not need to be illegal, since the growing segmentation between permanent and temporary workers often disguises actual discrimination under the temporary on-off nature of their contracts. Many economic sectors would accommodate to these realities, keeping workforce pressures to increase international recruitment hand in hand with stagnating minimum conditions. Evidence of this can be found all over Europe in sectors such as agriculture, tourism and domestic care – the privileged sectors for many circular migrants. When employing circular migrants, the risks of unequal treatment appears at all stages of the employment relationship and it is even more concrete than for other migrants. It should be noted, in particular, that most experts in the project workshops have pointed out the lack of a gender perspective in all debates on TCM. In this perspective, initiatives targeting the empowerment of women, both in source countries and in countries of origin, were indicated as highly recommendable.

Furthermore, the growing differentiation in migration debates and policies between high-skill and low-skill migrants poses more ethical dilemmas. When too much stress is put in recruiting high-skill migrants, the focus on merit which characterises the labour market could

be stretched too far in terms of the implications for other human rights. Issues like the points systems to select high-skill migrants, systematically limiting the entrance of low-skill, following too closely the pressure of business organizations on the government to let some migrants enter for certain placements, all of them have to be supervised closely so that a labour market logic does not pervade into the human rights arena. In addition, it should not be forgotten that the recruitment of high-skilled migrants also poses the problem of brain-drain – one more issue that defies again the triple-win theory and strongly calls back for cooperation between European and non-European countries.

One more issue that was pointed out by experts and stakeholders regards the recognition of foreign educational titles and professional experience. This is not a new issue since for more “permanent” migrants but it also regards temporary and circular migrants, particularly when they return to their home countries. In fact, an official validation of non-formal and informal learning/work experience could maximize the human capital gains of the destination country and would hence contribute to the economic re-integration of the TC migrant.

### 3.7. Communication and information

Most workshop participants recommended improvements in communication and information throughout all stages of the cross-border mobility of TC migrants. Again, a close cooperation between source and destination countries can contribute to the efficiency of the information process in all three phases described below.

Prior to departure, many migrants overestimate the information about the high wages they might get or the glamorous lifestyles in western capitals; and undervalue, when not completely ignore, drawbacks as the costs of life (rent, food, health...) as well as social and emotional costs (integration problems, isolation). Many migrants, as also many natives indeed, end up suffering a situation close to what the writer Calvino described in one of his invisible cities. Once in the destination country, many low-skilled migrants with no foreign language knowledge and ignoring many of their basic social and labour rights would certainly benefit from clearer on-spot information. Many migrants, particularly temporary/circular migrants, are afraid of getting anywhere near an official institution and do little use of conventional information channels; thus, the importance of migrants' associations, NGOs, and informal migrant mediators. Additionally, the information should be

delivered so as to guarantee the migrant's appropriate understanding – clarity, translation in native languages, use of real/simulated life cases representing different main situations, and wide use of visual elements such as info graphics, comics and videos are all highly recommendable. Finally, whether migrants have already returned to their country of origin, are planning it in the short term, or they are just considering it, they need accurate information on the country of origin in order to maximize the return outcomes. Such information should include key topics such as labor market demand for their occupational skills and experience; any specific support plans, access to credit for self-entrepreneurs, and future chances for more migration should their return expectations fail.

### 3.8. Does Temporary and Circular Migration benefits all? Conclusion

Research findings as well as exchange with experts and stakeholders at the project workshops show that programmed TCM policies are only partially a Triple Win solution – and mainly for the destination country.

As abovementioned, destination countries are hold to benefit from TCM in consideration of two main assumptions: i) TC migrants can efficiently fill the temporary/seasonal gaps of the labour market of the destination country; and ii) No major integration costs, as these type of migrants are regarded as not needing any integration/insertion in host society due to their temporary permanence. However, while TC migrants can indeed respond to the labour market needs, there are still a number of implications – the risks of social dumping and discrimination, etc. - that need to be taken into serious consideration. As for the integration costs, the project findings demonstrate that specific integration measures must be devised for temporary migrants too.

Source countries may be benefitted by TCM programs, provided that there is a plan for the social and economic reintegration of these migrants and that low-skilled migrants are also addressed. This should be pursued in cooperation with the destination countries and inserted as part of wider TCM programs. The risks of brain- drain should also be considered.

Finally, migrants and their families: while TCM programs may truly represent a good career opportunity for high-skilled migrants, low-skilled migrants are rarely benefitted by TCM programs and are mostly addressed either as seasonal workers or on a temporary base

without the possibility to return to the reception country, as in the case of UK. They do have an economic gain but it is moderate and time-limited. Yet, they are confronted with the risks of discrimination and isolation and they sometimes face hardships in their families as well, because of the psychological consequences on their children, or the difficulties connected to managing such an unstable relationship. In addition, most of them do not get any training and they hardly bring back any professional experience that is officially validated.

Even so, many migrants end up choosing informal circular migration because it is more realistic and it responds better to their needs. In order to be successful, TCM policies should thus explore the migrants' real needs and combine them with the employers' needs.



## 4. Policy Recommendations

**“When we talk about TCM across Europe, it often looks as if we were speaking different languages”**

(One participant at the International workshop)

1. In today’s globalised world, temporary and circular migration represents a potential source of richness (cultural and economic) for all three actors involved – destination countries, source countries and migrants themselves. In this view, migrants’ capability to adapt and re-adapt to different contexts – languages, cultures, values – is undoubtedly an added value and should be encouraged. National policies should thus explore the diverse dimensions connected to the temporary status of these migrants and devise appropriate measures aimed at supporting temporary and circular transnational mobility.

- Informal temporary and circular migration is a reality in many European countries and, although difficult to detect statistically, the reasons lying behind spontaneous circular migration should be analysed so as to enhance understanding of TCM potentialities and challenges.
- Formal temporary and circular migration schemes should also be promoted as they may represent a valid political tool for the monitoring of the living and working conditions of migrants. However, in order to be more effective, TCM schemes should:
  - i) address majorly low-skilled migrants so as to respond to the real challenges posed by the presence of spontaneous TC migrants in Europe;
  - ii) allow for some flexibility in both the length of permitted stay and the possibility of repeated mobility between reception and the source countries.

2. The issue of integration should be addressed as a priority within temporary and circular migration schemes as the temporary status of these migrants adds precariousness to their condition. Specific integration measures addressing TC migrants should include, among other issues:

- **Language courses – language skills** are essential for migrant’s survival as well as for their

work. Temporary and circular migrants need to learn the local language in order to better orientate themselves in the juridical, social and cultural systems of the reception country and avoid the risks of segregation and exploitation;

- **Appropriate information on the benefits and duties of TC migration.** Information should be an integral part of integration strategies addressing TC migrants and it should be provided throughout the whole migration process, from pre-departure to return;
- Migrant **associations** as well as other volunteer associations, NGOs and community organizations, should be supported and they should be acknowledged a key role in the integration process of TC migrants. Associations and NGOs are often very active in engaging the local community and they may efficiently contribute to prevent the risks of isolation of TC migrants, as a contact with an association may represent the only connection of the migrant with the reception society beyond work. TCM policies should thus envisage the role of associations and NGOs as active facilitators of integration;
- Finally, national policies addressing the integration of TC migrants should be viewed within the framework of an ongoing process that includes the re-integration of these migrants in their home countries.

3. A strong cooperation between source and reception countries is strongly recommended in order to have a clear understanding about the needs of both countries. Source countries participate in the management of circular migration. In this view, bi-lateral agreements may represent a successful tool to engage both destination and source countries on the following issues:

- The integration and re-integration of TC migrants, envisaging forms of economic re-insertion in the source countries that may include loans to start small business;
- The promotion of return migration;
- The adoption of measures to prevent exploitation

of seasonal workers, notably through collaboration between the State and employers’ associations in the destination country;

- The empowerment of women is strongly recommended both in host and source countries;
- Finally, the impact of TCM on development in the source countries should be explored and the global aspects of migration should be also taken into account;

4. With regard to return migration, broader development issues should be addressed. This involves varying issues of geo-politics, security, and citizenship. Bilateral agreements between the sending and receiving country may be essential. Voluntary return may be promoted by giving priorities to facilitate returning migrants to invest in new business.

### Notes

1. In literature the terms ‘re-integration’ is used to refer to integration processes at origin. This however would suggest that it takes place upon return. Here we prefer to use ‘integration at origin’, which suggests, consistently with the transnationalist perspective, that it takes place also during the period of stay abroad.

2. [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/internal\\_market/living\\_and\\_working\\_in\\_the\\_internal\\_market/114573\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/internal_market/living_and_working_in_the_internal_market/114573_en.htm)



1. National Workshop, University of Huelva. Work and debates conducted in plenary and in smaller groups. 13 March 2015.
2. National Workshop, University of Huelva. Work and debates conducted in plenary and in smaller groups. 13 March 2015.
3. International Workshop in Palau Macaya, Barcelona. Work and debates conducted in plenary and in smaller groups. 7 May 2015.
4. International Workshop in Palau Macaya, Barcelona. Work and debates conducted in plenary and in smaller groups. 7 May 2015.
5. Palau Macaya (Barcelona).

## 5. List of main acronyms used

- CM Circular migration
- CMg Circular migrant
- HORECAT Hotels Restaurants and Catering
- MI: Migrant interviews
- IWS: International workshop
- NWS: National workshop
- OE: Own elaboration from our analysis based on secondary literature, press reports, SHs' documents, and interviews with SHs and migrants
- PCM: Programmed circular migration
- PCMg: Programmed circular migrant
- SHI: SHs' interviews.
- SH: Stakeholder
- SHs: Stakeholders
- TM: Temporary migration
- TCNs: Third country nationals
- VCM: Voluntary circular migration
- VCMg: Voluntary circular migrant





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