



Legal migration for work and training: Mobility options to Europe for those not in need of protection

“Legal migration for work and training: Mobility options to Europe for those not in need of protection” is a project of the Research Unit of the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration in cooperation with the Migration Policy Institute Europe, funded by Stiftung Mercator.

The project focusses on legal migration to Europe against a backdrop of large-scale spontaneous migration flows towards the continent. Facilitating legal migration is considered to be a critical element of a comprehensive migration policy. In particular, legal migration is often called for as an alternative to irregular migration for individuals and groups not in need of international protection. Providing legal migration opportunities has also become an important item in negotiations with third countries on joint migration management efforts. Furthermore, legal migration can contribute to meeting labour market needs in destination countries and have positive development effects in countries of origin. Yet, little analysis and few concrete proposals exist to demonstrate what new or alternative migration channels to Europe for the purposes of work, training and education could look like in practice. The research project addresses this gap by reviewing existing policy and programmatic frameworks at European Union (EU) and national level that facilitate legal migration. It critically assesses their design, implementation and impact, and generates ideas and options for the development of future legal migration opportunities. The overall goal of the project is to contribute to better informed and concrete policy options for effective legal migration to Europe in the context of mixed migration. Due attention will be paid to challenges, leverages and constraints whether in the national context or in interactions between the EU and individual Member States.

A set of five country case studies (France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden) will provide a comprehensive overview of the domestic legal, policy and programmatic framework, both past and current. The analysis will focus on migration opportunities for work (particularly in the low- and medium-skilled sector) and for vocational training and education, as relevant for third-country nationals. The case studies will take stock of the current state-of-play, deriving a picture of who has access to legal migration to Europe as well as the scale of that access.



The country-level analysis will also reflect on how the approaches to legal migration adopted in Member States to date have been shaped by the broader context (such as labour market structure, social welfare model or relationships with countries of origin of the target group). Particular attention will be paid to how efforts to facilitate or promote legal migration of third-country nationals have affected related action at EU level, and vice versa.

Alongside the lessons gathered via each of the individual case studies, the study team will conduct a comparative analysis of these case studies, as well as examining EU external migration policy. Building on these elements, the final study will categorise the available policy options for legal migration, explore challenges in policy design and implementation, and reflect on the future options for legal migration policies and programmes.

Project results will be made available in a series of shorter publications between December 2018 and June 2019. The final study is scheduled for release in English and German in autumn 2019.

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