



Policy Brief

Global Migration Governance: Germany as an Architect of International Migration Policy

Summary

Migration characterises our globalised world like no other phenomenon. While there are clear regulations for the movement of people within the EU, international policymakers instead leave these kinds of regulations to bilateral negotiations. But the pressure to take action is mounting: the number of challenges associated with migration hasn't just risen in Germany in recent years; international migration has long been a globally relevant issue. More and more countries think that migration should be discussed and, in part regulated, at international level.

International migration always automatically involves two countries. It is virtually impossible for an individual country to manage the diverse aspects of migration if it doesn't coordinate with other countries. This starts with the recruitment of foreign workers and the costs and channels for sending financial remittances and ends with issues related to political participation in the countries of origin and destination. **Migration has a wide range of impacts on the countries of origin, transit and destination. A balance needs to be found between protecting state (control) interests on the one hand and the rights of migrants on the other to ensure that the positive effects of migration on development are maximised for the migrants themselves, the countries of origin and destination and that the security of people and states is guaranteed.** This requires cooperation at bilateral, regional and multilateral level. At the same time, however, migration management is one of the last bastions of national sovereignty; as a result, most countries traditionally tend to be more cautious when setting international standards related to migration. **The international laws that govern migration management are similar to a patchwork quilt.** Contrary to the migration of refugees, there is no separate, all-encompassing international agreement and no UN organisation dedicated to migration – the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is an intergovernmental body which is not part of the UN system. As a result, it does not play a normative supervisory and leadership role; it is not mandated to protect the rights of migrants.

Since the turn of the millennium, however, there has been considerable movement in the international fabric of norms and rules on migration: migration plays a role in many areas of the UN system, outside of the UN as well, migration issues are increasingly discussed on the international stage. Germany is also more and more involved in global migration policy, and not just since the sharp rise in refugees over the last two years. It supports, for example, various relevant initiatives such as the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) and the Nansen Initiative to protect refugees displaced due to the effects of climate change. In 2017/2018 Germany, together with Morocco, will chair



the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD); this shows Germany's willingness to set and advance the international agenda and also enhance its profile in the debate. Germany is therefore working with other countries to shape international migration policy. This is occurring largely out of view of the German public. International positioning on migration and development issues also reflects how policymakers see their own role in relation to migration: **as a modern immigration country, Germany has gone from an observer to an active architect of global migration policy.**

The analyses for this Policy Brief give rise to five recommendations for action for German policymakers:

- (1) To ensure a coherent migration policy, the State Secretary working group "International Migration" should either be reactivated, or another unit formed that coordinates the work of the individual ministries and develops long-term guiding principles for migration policy (national level).
- (2) Migration policy consultation should be expanded for the countries of origin and transit under the scope of development cooperation to create the conditions necessary for equal partnerships (bilateral level).
- (3) Together with the EU, Germany should create positive incentives for cooperation in regional foreign migration policy for third countries (regional level).
- (4) Germany should use its currently favourable position to actively collaborate in international dialogue in the role of intermediary (multilateral level).
- (5) As a medium-term goal of global discussions, it should also be clarified how the institutional architecture of Global Migration Governance should be (re-)structured (multilateral level).