

Obstacles to Collection, Analysis and Exchange on Labour Migration Statistics in the EU

Topic 7 – Better statistics for a globalised world

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Introduction

The free movement of people, which is a fundamental acquis of European integration, highlights the major challenge of external migratory pressure. This is due to the sheer numbers of new arrivals prompted Syrian Civil War. Some member states, mainly Austria and Slovenia temporarily reintroduce checks at the internal Schengen borders in September 2015, as provided for in the Schengen Borders Code.

The ongoing challenges have served to underline the inextricable link between robust external border management and free movement inside those external borders. Given that, no useful exchange on labour migration issues between the EU member states can take place without reliable figures on working age foreign populations who have recently arrived. Sound data are required for good migration policy and management. This study aims to shed on the numerous serious obstacles to collecting comprehensive, accurate and timely labour migration statistics.

Such obstacles include operational problems of how data are retrieved including the incompleteness of information over time and political motivations that may influence how statistics are reported within and among governments. A particular attention is given to an analysis of policy implications for the European labour market with a view to improving the quality of data so that foreign labour can be better managed at the EU level.