

## Foreword: Banking on mobility over a generation

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**Europe need not renounce its freedom of movement; it should instead develop a better controlled mobility regime. It would then, in effect, much better control its borders.**

Migration cannot be stopped, without massively violating the human rights of the migrants. It may be deflected and rerouted, for a time. But European efforts to stop irregular migration will fail on a massive scale given the push and pull factors at work, such as survival needs on the part of the migrants and labour market needs on the part of European countries. 'Fighting the smugglers' in isolation is useless; the irregular migration market is created by the barriers to mobility. As for many other social issues, prohibition is part of the problem, not part of the solution. People need to move and mobility services are being offered by opportunistic mafias. It would be a lot more efficient and less costly to organise mobility than to try resisting it.

Equating territorial sovereignty with the power to stop everyone at the border is a fantasy. All borders are porous and democratic borders are particularly porous. We are facing a paradox: in the name of controlling the border, states have lost control of the border. Territorial sovereignty should rather be interpreted as the ability to know who crosses the border; for that, migrants should come to the border guard, not to the smuggler, which means that states should offer the mobility solutions that migrants need – controlled mobility, allowing migrants to obtain visas and buy ferry tickets – and reclaim the mobility market from the smugglers. And security agencies need more than anything else information about individuals, which visa processes can provide.

For refugees such as the Syrians, Europe needs to implement massive resettlement programmes over several years. Migrants will not pay huge sums to smugglers and risk the lives of their children if they can see that safe, legal and cheap mobility will be available to them in the foreseeable future. Enabling organised regular departures and arrivals would considerably reduce the smuggling

market and help fight the stereotypes associating migrants with chaos. It would also support mainstream European politicians in developing a pro-mobility, pro-migration, pro-diversity political discourse, which has been sorely lacking for the past three decades. The 'crisis' in Europe is one of political leadership, not one of capacity. Two million refugees over five years, distributed among all 28 European Union countries, in proportion to their population, amounts to small numbers per year per country.

For other 'survival migrants' – those who need to leave in order to feed their family – Europe needs to bank on mobility over a generation and open the border progressively to people who come to look for work, through developing visa facilitation and liberalisation regimes, and creating smart visa options with incentives to respect the conditions. The objective would be to allow for a regulated open flow back and forth across borders, migrants coming when there are jobs for them and moving on when the jobs disappear. A collateral aim would be to reduce considerably the underground labour markets which attract irregular migration, by having stronger labour inspections and much tougher employer sanctions.

Banking on mobility and building a better controlled mobility regime will allow this extraordinary economic opportunity to be tapped and will protect the rights of all. Doing it over time, even a generation, allows for preparing the ground, experimenting with mechanisms, and establishing confidence that this is not a destructive process but on the contrary an enriching opportunity, both materially and culturally.

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