



**-The Impact of Labour Migration Policies on Migrants' Socio-Economic Welfare:  
Improving Practice in Asia and Europe-**

**Experts' Workshop  
8-9 November 2013/Geneva, Switzerland**

**Concept Note**

**1. BACKGROUND**

As a central dynamic of globalisation, migration is an integral part of individual and community actions as more and more people relocate, seeking opportunities to better their lives away from their home countries, most of them motivated by the desire for higher wages. Traditionally migration flows have been going from South to North. However, migration between developing countries (South-South) and between industrialised countries (North-North) is increasingly becoming equally important.

The ASEM<sup>1</sup> member countries account for more than half of the world's GDP, around 60% of the world's population and up to 60% of global trade.<sup>2</sup> Together Asia and Europe host two-third of all international migrants. Considering these figures, the Chair's Statement of the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit called 'to identify appropriate means of maximising development benefits and responding to the challenges which migration poses to countries of origin, transit and destination, especially in light of the impact of the financial and economic crisis'<sup>3</sup>.

**2. ASEF-FES PROJECT**

In line with the above recommendation, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), Office for Regional Cooperation in Asia, are embarking on a new programme to provide a platform for ASEM-wide dialogue on the impact of migration policies on the socio-economic welfare of migrant workers and to examine and improve the formulation of migration policies in sending and receiving countries. As the 10<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit will take place in 2014, the policy recommendations resulting from the workshop will be consolidated in a publication and shared with ASEM decision makers including the ASEM labour ministers and other relevant departments.

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<sup>1</sup> The **Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)** is an informal process of dialogue and cooperation bringing together 49 member states (Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Laos, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam) plus the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat [www.aseminfoboard.org](http://www.aseminfoboard.org).

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/133251.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/133251.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Chair's Statement 2012, 9<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit, 5-6 November 2012, Vientiane, Laos <http://www.aseminfoboard.org/summit-statement.html>

As an initial step, the two partnering organisations commissioned two experts, Mr. Manolo Abella, Senior Research Associate, COMPAS, and former Director of the International Migration Programme of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva, and Mr. August Gächter, Project Manager, Centre for Social Innovation in Vienna, to draft a **background paper** mapping regional trends and highlighting best practices of migration policies in Asia and Europe.

The initial findings of the background paper will be presented during this **workshop** where participants will provide feedback on the draft and input for policy recommendations, informing relevant migration policy makers and influencers about the best practices and emerging trends to track migration policy and practice in Asia and Europe

### **3. WORKSHOP**

#### **3.1 Focus**

Recent trends in migration illustrate that there is a need to focus on the design of effective policies to address specifically the socio-economic welfare of migrants. Based on the initial findings of the mapping and background paper, the workshop seeks to discuss the following themes further into detail:

##### **Essential policies in support of fair and equitable migration systems**

What lessons may be drawn from Asian and European experiences in meeting labour shortages through the admission of foreign workers? What institutions and policies must be in place to generate win-win outcomes for both foreign and national workers as well as for countries of origin and destination?

##### **Reducing migration risks and providing migrants access to protection**

What lessons can be drawn from experiences to successfully prevent or minimize irregular forms of migration? How can malpractices and fraud in recruitment be minimized or avoided? What services must host governments provide to give migrants effective access to remedies in case of abuse and exploitation?

##### **Integration of migrants**

What remedies have proven effective in promoting employment and curbing discrimination against migrants? What policies and strategies promote harmonious relations between migrants and their host communities? What measures and institutions have proven valuable in promoting religious freedom and better inter-faith understanding? What procedures and processes need to be in place to promote political participation of immigrants?

#### **3.2 Objectives**

The workshop aims to:

- Utilise the key issues and questions identified in the background paper to provide input into the development of policy recommendations for labour migration policy stakeholders;
- Compare best practices on labour migration policies for decision makers across ASEM countries through a multi-stakeholder approach;
- Share expertise and case-studies from participants' own experience, that can be utilised as best practices to encourage good policy decisions on labour migration.

#### **3.3 Participants**

The 2-day workshop in Geneva, Switzerland, will invite 25 Asian and European experts in the field of labour migration to discuss the initial findings of the mapping mainly focussing on the issues above. The expert group will comprise of practitioners from international, regional, and national

organisations, representatives from NGOs and civil society, think tanks and academia, labour unions, and the private sector.

### About the Organisers

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The **Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)** was founded in 1925 as a political legacy of Germany's first democratically elected president, Friedrich Ebert. Presently, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung maintains its own representations in more than 100 countries worldwide.

Since the beginning of the foundation's work in Asia nearly 50 years ago, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung has focused on promoting democracy and strengthening the social dimension of economic development. Furthermore, FES has promoted international dialogue within Asia as well as between Asia and Europe for many years.

For more information, please visit [www.fes-asia.org](http://www.fes-asia.org)

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The **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** promotes understanding, strengthens relationships and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe.

ASEF enhances dialogue, enables exchanges and encourages collaboration across the thematic areas of culture, education, sustainable development, economy, governance and public health.

ASEF is a not-for-profit, intergovernmental organisation located in Singapore. Founded in 1997, it is the only institution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM).

Together with about 700 partner organisations ASEF has run more than 600 projects, mainly conferences, seminars and workshops. Over 17,000 Asians and Europeans have actively participated in its activities and it has reached much wider audiences through its networks, web-portals, publications, exhibitions and lectures.

For more information, please visit [www.asef.org](http://www.asef.org)

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