



Discussion Paper

AFTER THE BLUE CARD

EU POLICY ON HIGHLY QUALIFIED MIGRATION

Three Ways out of the Impasse

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Criticism towards the EU Commission's approach to highly qualified migration:

1. Blue Card is ill-attuned towards political realities
2. Focus on policies is insufficient and must be extended

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- But the integration and procedure of training „native“ labour force and resident migrants needs improvement
- Possible adoption of sovereignty-lite efforts
 - Fuller exploitation of EU's existing human potential
 - Establishment of a common European education market attracting students

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Challenge 1: EU policy and national sovereignty

EU member states agree that qualified migrants bring societal benefits to the Union. Further that “demand”, “need” and “capacity” for highly skilled migrants are higher than for other forms of migrants. EU member states are ready and in need for qualified migrants responding to acute shortage of skills.

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However, the awareness has not induced overcoming certain obstacles:

1. recent economic downturn
2. differences among member states concerning their labour market needs and practices
3. Changeability of labour market demands

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Challenge 2: Broadening highly qualified migration policy

Should governments, as opposed to businesses intervene and steer the mobility for economic purposes?

Criticism:

- EU already houses highly qualified migrants, immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers ill-matched to skill shortages
- Restrictions to newcomers de jure and de facto pertain failures in training and integration
- Lack of uniform approach within EU are an obstacle for migrants to gain qualifications here and stay

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II. What scope for an alternative approach?

1. Attract highly qualified migrants in a „sovereignty-lite“ manner
2. Ensure that highly qualified can make use of their qualifications
3. Become more attractive for students and encourage them to remain in Europe

But where should the EU draw her inspiration and developmental tendencies from?

The EU is too aware of its rivals as the US, Canada and Australia although the EU labour market is practically and politically not a realistic option given the Union's structure as a conglomeration of still relatively autonomous states.

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Option 1: Attracting highly qualified migration by sovereignty-lite means

Pull factors of highly skilled migration are notoriously complex.

- Economic opportunity
- Generous welfare provisions
- Career development
- Language, cultural, historical links

Strengths are not rigorously exploited by member states, but especially language differences perceived as obstacles in intra-EU mobility.

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New policy tools allow national differences to be accommodated. Such as the the „Mobility Partnerships“ established at the Stockholm Conference. This can be achieved by different EU countries setting different priorities in their areas of expertise. Examples are the agreements with Moldova and Cape Verde. Regulating illegal migration through qualified migration and cooperation. The EU must make a competitive advantage of the diversity in ist inter-national makeup.

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Option 2: Matching highly qualified resident migrants to labour market shortages

What more can be done to enhance mobility of the highly skilled?

- portability of pension rights
- mutual recognition of qualifications
- differences in taxation practices
- renewal of Erasmus programme for student mobility
- A shift from quantity to quality high skilled work force
- EU workers should have different traits than US workers with fewer barriers to his or her mobility
- Follow global education practices recognising qualification levels
- Mentoring and support in job search
- Educational performance of immigrants
- Competences of individual members

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Option 3: Establishing an EU-wide education market

- EU would do good in establishing an international education market to align cultural differences and reduce high propensity of migrants to leave
- „High potential students“ with a grasp of language, working practices, undergone education and calibrated to the needs of the local economy
- Qualifications are uniformly recognised
- Potential for mobility among students has improved

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Prospects:

Policy options are all mutually compatible. Such as the harmonisation of education practices which would make the EU more attractive as an education resort and afford students and migrants with labour market access when qualified. It is indefensible for member states to pursue a sovereignty-lite approach towards attracting migrants thus laborious structural changes are necessary and would display the quaestionability of European activism and effectiveness.