

8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the European Integration Forum Summary  
“The contribution of migrants to economic growth in the EU”  
Brussels, 16 – 17 October 2012 - <http://www.integration.eu>  
Submitted to BEWC Board by Adrianne George Lind, Sweden

Tuesday, 16 October 2012

Opening session:

*“Due to the predicted shrinking of European population of 12%, the role of the economic contribution of immigrants is important”.*—**Cecilia Malmström, European Commissioner for Home Affairs**



**Cecilia Malmström, European Commissioner for Home Affairs**

*“There are more than 2 million vacancies in Europe cannot be filled. The EU lags behind countries including Australia, Canada and the US in attracting skilled immigrants. We need a skills drive to attract skilled workers. Europeans are still receiving education in skills no longer needed”.*—**Koos Richelle, Director General of Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission**

*“The contribution of people in the EU is perhaps a better use of the word migrant, due to the xenophobia and other reactions caused not least by the economic crisis. The remittance of money from immigrants/migrants back to their home countries is larger than the EU budget of aid to foreign countries.*

*Why is it that now we focus on migrants as taking someone else’s business or job? In my country, in the UK, we welcomed workers to take jobs that the British didn’t want.*

*Why is it when there is a downturn in the economy there is a ghettoization of workers that leads to Poles and Lithuanians saying that the French, when asked, instead of claiming their homeland. The parallels between the 1930’s are astounding”.*—**Michael Cashman, (S&D/UK), Member of DEVE Committee European Parliament**

Dialogue speakers – participants, chaired by **Brenda King, member of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), rapporteur of the opinion on *The contribution of migrant entrepreneurs to the EU economy***

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**Brenda King, member of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC),**

General profile of a migrant/immigrant in Europe:

- Over 35 years old, highly skilled, educated, lived in their receiving countries for at least 10 years;
- Come from regions associated with entrepreneurship;
- Tend to be male;
- Migrant females tend to go into entrepreneurship more than the native women in the receiving countries
- Between 2007 and 2008, 750,00 jobs were created by immigrants/migrants in Germany; 400,00 in France; and 300,00 in Italy;
- 1.5 – 3% of the total labor force in Europe are employed by migrant entrepreneurs;
- Migrants facilitate foreign trade: Swedish research shows that 22% of foreign owned businesses in Sweden target the foreign market vs. 15% Swedish business started by natives;
- There is a 10% increase of migrant entrepreneurs which represents a 6 % increase in exports and 9% increase in imports;
- Regarding sustainability, despite high transition of migrants into entrepreneurship, there is also a high closure rate. For example In France 40% of firms own by foreign nationals still operated after 5 years compared to 54% of French natives.

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**Forum participants.**

*“19 million unskilled jobs will be lost in the next 10 years. 12 to 15 million skilled jobs will be needed in the next 10 years. For example we don’t have enough people learning design, mathematics and technology. We have a shortage of people who can work with their hands”.—Koos Richelle*

*“Educating workers of their rights, employers of their responsibilities, and use transnational organizations to lower the risk of and incidents of exploitation”.—Michael Cashman*

*“It is tragic that we still label ourselves as migrants/immigrants even after they have lived in a receiving country for over 20 years and have citizenship”.—Dr. Adem Kumcu, European-Turkish Business Confederation*



**Atiaf Hussain, New Communities Partnership, Ireland with Adrianne George Lind, BEWC, Sweden**

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*“The term migrant will always be with us. Those terms we lose at our peril because they help cement policies in place. We need to change the way we define nationality”*. -- **Ram Gidoomal – South Asian Development Partnership**



**Nola Andaya, Migrentrepreneur Network, France and Akule Dace, Centre for Public Policy, Latvia**

*“We are not here to solve countries’ labor problems. We are all human beings. Who can say, “I am better than you?”* – **Dace Akule, Centre for Public Policy, Latvia**

*“I promote the idea of microloans and micro-credits for migrants”*.--**Francesca Bioni, NCPA Italy**

*“Migrants are human beings and not tools for economic growth”*.--**Michael Cashman**

*“It takes 7 years for a company like IKEA to open a store in Brussels. Imagine the red tape a small business has to cut through to get started. We definitely have to make the process easier and that would also benefit migrant entrepreneurs”*. -- **Cecilia Malmström**

Plenary session, chaired by Giovanni Facchini, Prof. of Econ., U of Nottingham

*“Migrants should be given equal rights and fully integrated. We can’t resolve the problems we have on the labor market unless we solve the issue of how to integrate migrant workers, beyond the issue of legality and safety. It is not enough to make grand statements. It is difficult to come up with a uniform policy. There is a clear need to collect more and better data to see how the flows work between countries. We need to stabilize the labor market.”* --**European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), Luca Visentini, Confederal Secretary**

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*“There is much we need to do including developing ties with the business community, encouraging the increase of STEM courses, intra-EU mobility to match supply and demand including 3<sup>rd</sup> country nationals, harness the skills that migrants already in the EU have”.*— **Business Europe, Robert Plummer, Advisor on Social Affairs**



**Plenary session panel.**

*“There is a huge for SME because the work mainly on the local level, recruit locally and hire more migrants/immigrants, than larger companies do. The result is on the job training significantly improving the situation of migrants in the community. Illegal immigration must be stopped. It jeopardizes the rights of all immigrants. We believe in the continued a regulation of certain professions is necessary, but it had to be easier to validate competences possessed by migrants.”--*  
**European Associate of Craft and SMEs (UEAPME), Luc Hendrickx, Director for Enterprise Policy**

*“We pioneered niche marketing because we have the ability to see what others miss. We miss things from our homelands and cultures, bring them to our new countries, and fill in the gaps. In the UK Asians are 7.6% of the population but own nearly 12% of all UK SMEs which is a total of 444,000 businesses”.--*  
**Ram Gidoomal, Entrepreneur (UK), Chairman of South Asian Development Partnership**

*“Any entrepreneur can tell you that it is not easy starting a new business, especially in a foreign country. Many have overcome these difficulties. Why not see entrepreneurship from an immigration point of view. Support and build networks. --*  
**Nola Andaya, Entrepreneur (France), Founder of Migrentrepreneur Women Network**

*“What is the plan to protect domestic workers in Europe, how to regulate the industry. These women are often not treated well” .--*  
**Lina Vosyliute, National Institute for Social Integration, Lithuania**



**Yvonne Thompson, Founder, European Federation of Black Women Business Owners**

*“What are the tools to be implemented to help visible minorities?”* **Yvonne Thompson, Founder, European Federation of Black Women Business Owners**

*“The burden of proof needs to be simplified for employers who need to justify if they want to employ someone out of the EU or their home country”. --*  
**Robert Plummer**

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**Forum participants.**

*“What does mainstreaming minorities mean? The whole idea of policy and practice is to identify those in our community who need help. You’ve got to keep using the terms used by sociologies and economists that identify minorities so that we can have data, track and make policies. The terms we want to use in the UK are minority ethnic and majority ethnic”. Why is it that more people from minority backgrounds end up in employment tribunals? Why are there more race cases? In the UK the research showed that Brits will sort their problems out in the pub or by the water cooler. But the minorities didn’t have those relationships and didn’t know what to do other than go the legal route. We need to build these relationships across communities”. -- **Ram Gidoomal***

*In Greece foreign credentials are not recognized, trade (lawyer, hair dresser, etc) is closed to foreigners and a 60,000 euro deposit (guarantee) is required for a foreigner to start a business, and migrants cannot represent a trade union. --**Andreas Bloom, Asante, Greece***

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**Lunch break.**



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### Roundtable C – Migrant entrepreneurship

Moderator: Adem Kumcu, President of UNITEE (European Turkish Business Confederation)

1. Migrant enterprise entrepreneurship is a success story in most countries. How can this be further encouraged? How can best practices be taken up by all Member States?
2. What are the major difficulties that migrants face in setting up their business?
3. How can the public be made aware of the positive contributions made by migrant entrepreneurs? Will this reflect positively on migrants in general and help their integration?



4. What is the role of social partners (European Trade Union confederation, Business Europe and ?) in supporting migrant entrepreneurship? Can they provide support networks for migrant entrepreneurs? Can they help reduce the risk of social dumping or exploitation?

Introductory speaker: **Anna Ludwinek, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Condition (Eurofound)** –

(1) Benefits of migrant entrepreneurship:

Economic aspects include the creation of jobs for themselves and others and provide new and better products and services. They often fill gaps not covered by indigenous section and rejuvenate neglected crafts. Social aspects include chances for social upward mobility, becoming community leaders and revitalization of street and neighborhoods. They bring new economic, social and cultural life.

Challenges include:

There is often segregation of communities, support and strengthen parallel societies. Embedding in ethnic niche as an economic impediment and threatens long term survival.

Over 35% of the business in cities from Amsterdam to Strasbourg are owned by migrant entrepreneurs. The number is even higher for start ups.

(2) Involvement in local business networks is very important to success. Local authorities that provide information are very helpful. Encourage the establishment of ethnically-specific business associations catering to specific needs to provide practical support including the exchange of experience. But these associations are often vulnerable because they lack resources and it can be difficult connections to mainstream business association. Many cease to exist after a while because they don't have any political clout.

Banks have to open up and diversify in terms of locations and employees.

**Yvonne Thompson, Athelston Sealey** – More recognition has to be made to the success stories. We have to celebrate ourselves and there is no reason why the EU can't do it annually.

**Athelston Sealey** – I firmly believe that as a citizen of the EU I want to know how we will get the best return on investment on the money we have already spent. Some will be successful entrepreneurs, some will fail. The success can only engender other people to get involved in sustainable economic development.

**Adrianne George Lind** – are there programs in Europe similar to those initiated by the Small Business Admin in the US that allow voluntary declaration for women and/or minority owned business to get preferences for government contracts, government loans, etc?

**Ram Gidomal** – such practices were deemed illegal in the UK.

**Anna Ludwinek** – cities are starting to include diversity requirements in public procurement contracts.

**Deidre Denise Matthee** – in Portugal there is a disconnect because migrant entrepreneurs and NGO. Each group is suspicious of each other.

Immigrant Entrepreneur of the Year award is given in Portugal.—**Ademar Marques, Portuguese Presidency of the Council of Ministers**

Presentation of a best practice by **Jas Bains (Birmingham, England), Ashram Association (UK)**

(and a look at questions 2 and 4).

In Birmingham there are 1.1 million people, record youth unemployment, child poverty, cuts to youth services, 40% of the population in below 24 years old and 20% are born outside of the UK.

Suggested stops to enterprise:

**maker culture** (events & competitions to boost maker culture) | **ideas** | **a-lab** (individuals can use a-lab to make, test and prototype ideas, get advice & collaborate) | **start up booster** (10 founders get a stipend of 1.5 thousand GBP as pre-startup funding to develop their ideas and business model) | **a-fund investment** (2 prize winners receive co-op investment for their start up) | **citizen funding** (startups are listed on a map, for anyone to invest and support) | **success!** (product returns not just financial ROI, but reputational value, shared access, local multiplier effect) | **ideas!** (a virtual cycle)

*“The issues are institutional and structural. Secondly there is a policy of incoherence and the disjointedness of agencies and government and underutilized resources. In order to address the policy incoherence is we have to create a single eco system. The world of investment is changing, crowd funding is an important tool (citizen investment). Get the metric right. They have to be more sophisticated (it’s not just about the financial returns – social capital). The process has to be understood”.*

(2) What are the major difficulties that migrants face in setting up their business?

**Yvonne Thompson** – “Funding is a big issue. Crowd funding and micro financing can be a solution. Community cohesion is historically successful in the black community in the UK. The contemporary Asian community seems to be successful”.

**Brenda King, ESCC** – “Training for bank personnel about what a migrant entrepreneur “looks” like. If you are new to the EU you need support and information and perhaps training and support”.

**Habane A. Hassan, Somali National Association in Sweden** – “I am part of a micro loan program started by myself and several colleagues where we contribute 1,000 euro/month”.

**D. D. Matthee, Migretrepreneur Women’s Network** – “one hindrance is isolation and lack of access to business networks”.

Wednesday 17 October 2012

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Conclusions session chaired by Prof. Giovanni Facchini

**Why governments find it hard to talk about economic migration:**

1. Xenophobia, racism, labor market mismatch, educational credential recognition, migrants seen as a liability.
2. Need to look at economic migrants as humans and not economic tools. Emphasize the positive role that migrants contribute economically. Celebrate the successes of migrant entrepreneurs. EU rights often only apply to citizens and 3<sup>rd</sup> country nationals often live legally in Europe for years but are denied citizenship, including those born and university educated in Europe.



**Forum participants.**

3. Migrants can form new approaches including uniting networks between countries, transnational cooperation and business. Implement diversity management within business and the public sector. Better skills matching of migrants. Possibilities include direct matching of needed skills or training students. Improve the recognition of foreign degrees.

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**Victoria Kamondji-Johnston, Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe**

The issue of nationality is not directly covered by legislation. We need support structures in place to support migrants who bring forth discrimination claims. Often times the public and private sector are not working together where both could benefit in building frameworks.

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**EC representative addressing the forum.**

EC representative clarifies that it is not an easy thing to get diplomas outside of the EU recognized. We have to look a little bit at what others have done and exchanging best practices. It is not an easy issue but it is a very important one. We would like concrete examples of labor matching skills initiatives that are working.

We get a lot of questions about the “blue card” program. It is important that people know that it exists and ask for it. The “blue card” gives some right about EU mobility. Long term resident permits are often national cards which do not allow living in other EU countries. The Commission is also looking at increasing the mobility.

Helping employ migrants that want to return to their home countries, as was suggested by one forum participant, sort of reverse family unification, while that may be a good idea, there is a financial crises in Europe and the Commission would not be able to employ these people.

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**George Gamkrelidze, European Youth Forum, Georgia**

Funding for migrant entrepreneurs can be tricky, often created through the community and crowd sourcing. Crucial to reach sustainability and move to scale. Mentoring is important as well as business networking and government programs that provide support, education and facilitate growth.

There continues to be preferential treatment across the EU on several factors including skilled/unskilled, educated/uneducated, etc. This does not go along with the principle of non-discrimination.

Suggestion to put forth several concrete recommendation resulting from this forum to the Commission and that we monitor them. Suggested for the EU to adopt one method for recognizing diplomas. EU public sector agencies could use their procurement power for the public sector and ensure that they only go to companies to companies that implement diversity measures.

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**Part of the UK delegation (successful migrant entrepreneurs).**

We need to be absolutely clear, at least 5 bullet points, that should be submitted to the Commission to move forward so that this is not just a talking forum, and we get a commitment on if not all, some of the suggestions so that we can see that we are moving forward.

Canada implements a “buddy” program where they are paired with a friend. This helps them build relationships and navigate the country.

**Closing session, chaired by Peter Verhaeghe, representative of European civil society organizations in the Bureau of the European Integration Forum**



**Closing panel.**

The Forum will start writing an opinion paper for this session and participants are invited to participate in this exercise.

**Naddja Hirsch, (ALSE/DE), Member of EMPL Committee, European Parliament**

In the parliament in the internal affairs and employment committee we have a report on how one

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can work towards the integration of migrants and coordination of the social security systems across the EU. As the rapporteur, the basis is a study of the commission studying these various topics. We are dealing with integration in the employment market. One important question is the demographic developments. In some member states there are lots of qualified positions that cannot be filled, including doctors in Germany where I come from. This concerns labor markets and business: where can we get qualified workers in order to grow the economy. One potential pool from which we can pull includes non-national and EU migrants. Immigration is not just an issue for the home or employment committee, it cuts across legal, education, environment areas. Integration affects all policies. Integration, like gender, should be a part of all policies. I'm often asked what I can do in Brussels and the answer is that we can create the framework. It is important that the local authorities become involved: access to kindergarten, health provision, etc need to be formulated so that they favor integration. Both migrants and welcome countries have to be active, especially at the local level.

There are many young people that come to the EU as students and make friends, may work during school, learn the language and culture and often after studies they have to leave. It makes sense if they want to go, but if someone says I want to stay longer and get professional work experience, we have to look at how we can make that possible.

We have a point system for attracting qualified workers that could probably be improved, but we need a working system. It is hard to immigrate to the EU to join the labor force.

**Andrea Ashiotis, Cyprus Presidency, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Interior**

Science, health, engineering, tourism sectors in many member countries are experiencing a labor shortage. If we overcome the lack of recognition of educational qualifications and work out social security transfers and enhance migrant entrepreneurship we can make steps in enhancing economic growth.

**Stefano Manservigi, Director general of Home Affairs, European Commission**

We still act like we have to work with the phenomenon instead of manage an asset. We are still not at the place where we plan and anticipate. We must allow more mobility, exercise migrants' rights. 20 million people in Europe are 3<sup>rd</sup> country nationals. Microenterprises in Europe are mostly created by migrants but they are also the weakest because of their vulnerability in financial crisis. Is migration creating conflict between active EU workers? We have to look at this and other issues so that we can take initiatives.

**Luis Miguel Pariza Castanos, President of the EESC Standing study group on Immigration and Integration**

The conclusions will be taken on board and used by us and we will attempt to relay them to the other institutions and conversations ongoing. The leaders we will be meeting with tomorrow don't have the courage to say the things we all know and have discussed during this forum. The obstacles that national states put in from of migrants and citizens need to be addressed. I don't think we are asking the right question, our leaders don't want to put it on the public debate. But we can do that. We've discussed the obstacles and ways to get around them.