

Forum: Economic and Social Committee
Issue: Labor Migration in Eastern Europe and Central Area
Student Officer: Evangelia-Ioanna (Evana) Pliakou
Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION:

Dear delegates,

My name is Evangelia-Ioanna (Evana) Pliakou and it is my honor to serve as the Deputy President in the Economic and Social Committee of this Conference. I am a member of the MUN since 2012 and I have participated in 11 MUN conferences in total and I have served in the ICJ 3 times. However, this is my first time chairing. I have participated in previous PS conferences and I am really glad that I was given the opportunity to serve as a chair.

I am an IB student from Costeas-Geitonas school hoping to study law in the future. However, I believe that the ECOSOC is one of the most of my favorite committees to participate and chair in since it engages the social and economic aspect unlike other committees.

As a Chair, my role is to enhance your efforts in researching, forming your resolutions and making your proposals. This study guide it's the first tool that will help you enhance your knowledge on the topic. In any case, you should not rely solely on this study guide. The issue of labor migration is a vast one and you will certainly need to research more, in order to adapt your ideas to your country's policy. I strongly urge you to contact me anytime if you need my support. I am looking forward to meeting you at the conference.

Regards,

Evangelia- Ioanna (Evana) Pliakou

INTRODUCING TOPICS:

There are 232 million international migrants estimated around the world. Globalization, demographic shifts, conflicts, income inequalities and climate change encourage everyday even more workers and their families to cross borders in search of employment and security. Migrant workers contribute to growth and development in their countries of destination, while countries of origin greatly benefit from their remittances and the skills acquired during their migration experience.



When properly managed, labor migration has far-reaching potential for the migrants, their communities, the countries of origin and destination, and for employers. While job creation in the home country is the preferred option, demographic, social and economic factors are increasingly the drivers of migration. As a result, a growing number of both sending and receiving countries view international labor migration as an integral part of their national development and employment strategies. On one hand, countries of origin benefit from labor migration because it relieves unemployment pressures and contributes to development through remittances, knowledge transfer, and the creation of business and trade networks. On the other hand, for destination countries facing labor shortages, orderly and well-managed labor migration can lighten labor scarcity and facilitate mobility.

Today, an estimated 105 million persons are working in a country other than their country of birth. Labor mobility has become a key feature of globalization and the global economy with migrant workers earning US\$ 440 billion in 2011, and the World Bank estimating that more than \$350 billion of that total was transferred to developing countries in the form of remittances. However, despite the efforts made to ensure the protection of migrant workers, many remain vulnerable and assume significant risks during the migration process.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS:

International Labor Migration (or Labor Mobility):

International labor migration is the movement of people from one country to another for the purpose of employment.

Migrant: Also called migrant worker. A person who migrates; moves from place to place to get work.

Occupational Mobility: Occupational mobility refers to the movement of workers from one occupation to another. This mobility is further divided into the following two types:

- i. **Horizontal Mobility:** The movement of labor from one occupation to another in the same grade or level is called horizontal mobility. For example, a bank clerk joins as an accounts clerk in a company.
- ii. **Vertical Mobility:** When a worker of a lower grade and status in an occupation moves to another occupation in a higher grade and status, it is vertical mobility. Just as a school lecturer becomes a college lecturer, a clerk becomes a manager, et

Globalization: Globalization is a process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology. This process has effects on the environment, on culture, on political systems, on economic development and prosperity, and on human physical well-being in societies around the world.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND/ TIMELINE OF EVENTS:

Historically, migration was considered and used as a last resort to maintain a moderate living standard which was considered as impossible to acquire in origin countries, and at the time it responded to significant labor needs of the destination countries. Then, migrants had no difficulty to find jobs in host countries. With the economic turbulences fueled by the global oil crises, migration was essentially stopped and almost in all countries it tended to be more and more concentrated around family and/or humanitarian migration.

However, economic, demographic and political developments coupled with the mounting concerns over the future of labor supply have renewed the attention of policy-makers on labor migration issues once again. Those were the years of a good economic climate, high economic growth and lower unemployment rates in some developed countries. The demographic developments in those countries, on the other hand, tended to imply an ageing workforce and ultimately result in a declining population of working age. In such environment, employers started to experience difficulties in finding workers with necessary qualifications. This meant a renewed interest in services of migrant workers. The need for migrants coincided with the growing global unemployment crisis, and the migrants enthusiastically responded to the calls for recruitment by the developed economies.

At the same time, the governments of the developed countries inclined to develop policies which placed new mechanisms in order to better address their labor market needs. The new immigration policies were selective in nature and targeted those migrants who can fully respond to the labor market needs and easily integrate with receiving communities, causing new challenges for the economies of sending countries.

Against this backdrop, the need for formulating effective policies, which will enable the governments of the receiving countries to reconcile the interests of their populations and the demands of millions who are in search of better living standards, has become the most daunting issue to address. The answer to this question is certainly not an easy one and requires meticulous analyses of the issue considering the fact that we live in such a globally interconnected world that any decision taken in one country for action will have to take into account the possible adverse effects it may give rise in another.

Central and Eastern Europe:

Since the beginning of 1990s countries of Central and Eastern Europe experience extraordinary shift from communist regime towards market economy and democratic state. An important part of these changes is transition in migratory behavior. Prior to 1990 migration was severely limited in all countries of the region. After an initial and rather brief episode of rural-to-urban exodus in the 1950s, spatial mobility was moderate if not meagre. A leading form of the mobility was circulation, especially commuting to major industrial centers for work. International labor migration was principally contained within the CEE region, and tightly controlled by the governments. Only limited-scale settlement migration connected mainly with family reunion or “repatriation” of ethnic minorities and movements of workers (strictly controlled) were recorded.

Since the early 1990s the situation has been changing dramatically. The intensity of population movements increased, especially the intra-regional migration intensified. The region witnessed a huge increase in complexity of migration forms – from labor

mobility through transit migration to forced migration of asylum seekers and refugees. In many countries of the region immigrants of different status appeared for the first time in the post-war history. Last but not least, there was a fundamental shift observed from the prevalence of long-term migration to short-term mobility, very often cyclical in nature.

GENERAL KEY STATISTICS ON LABOR MIGRATION:

- In 2005 there were 191 million migrants (which includes those migrating for employment, their dependants and refugees and asylum seekers)
- ILO estimated that 86 million of the 175 inter-national migrants in the year 2000 were economically active – migrant workers, distributed as follows:
 - Africa: 7.1 million
 - Asia, including Middle East: 25 million
 - Europe, including Russia: 28.5 million
 - Latin America and the Caribbean: 2.5 million
 - North America: 20.5 million
 - Oceania: 2.9 million.
- Women now constitute 49 per cent of migrants world-wide and more than 50 per cent in Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America and Oceania.
- The US\$250 billion sent home by migrant workers is a larger sum than all official development assistance, and foreign direct investment.
- Developing countries lose 10 to 30 per cent of skilled workers and professionals through “brain drain.” LDCs are especially affected.
- There is a high level of labor market discrimination against migrant workers in industrialized countries.
- ILO studies showed that more than one in every three qualified immigrant applicants were unfairly excluded in job selection procedures.

RELEVANT ORGANIZATIONS:

1. International Organization for Migrants:

IOM is an intergovernmental organization established in 1951, IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society.

IOM strives to protect migrant workers and to optimize the benefits of labour migration for both the country of origin and destination as well as for the migrants themselves.

2. Solidarity center:

The Solidarity Center joins with migrant workers, trade unions, governments and civil society coalitions around the globe to create community and workplace-based safe

migration and counter-trafficking strategies that emphasize prevention, protection and the rule of law.

Economic and Social Aspect; Strengths and Problems:

Labor migration feeds the global economy. There are more than 150 million migrant workers worldwide who generated global remittances of more than \$580 billion in 2013. They are domestic workers, construction and agricultural workers, factory and service workers, teachers and professionals. Migrant workers often travel long distances due to a lack of decent work at home to support their families and build a better life.

One of the most significant issues for the global economic, social and democratic development communities is addressing the conditions under which migrants travel and work. Because the economies of many countries have come to rely on the remittances of migrant workers, even as destination countries depend upon their cheap labor, governments and business interests seek to “manage” the movement of migrants as if they are commodities. Often the result comes at the expense of the workers, who are usually denied even the most basic human rights. Labor rights organizations have a vision of labor migration that promotes shared prosperity by lifting up and empowering workers in both origin and destination countries.

Most destination countries continue to deny migrant workers fundamental labor rights such as freedom of association and the right to form unions. In many countries, migrant workers are explicitly excluded from labor law protections. Because labor costs increasingly are sliced to the bone, migrant workers are often forced to work in the informal economy, which is characterized by little government regulation, few legal protections, no benefits and a lack of labor standards.

In many developing countries, women workers increasingly represent the majority of migrant and informal economy workers. As more women migrate, they also become the largest group of exploited workers. They often are employed as domestic workers or in other jobs in which they are isolated, unable to join with other workers to improve working conditions.

Migrant workers are especially targets of human trafficking and forced labor, which have at their core, worker rights violations and a lack of labor standards and worker protections. One of the biggest factors underlying the vulnerability of migrant workers are the actions of unscrupulous labor brokers. Many labor brokers charge such exorbitant fees for securing work that migrant workers cannot repay them even after years on the job, essentially rendering them indentured workers. Some labor brokers also lie about the wages and working conditions workers should expect in a destination country. Migrant workers often are forced to remain in dangerous working conditions because their debt is too great.

For more than a decade, the Solidarity Center has advocated an approach to combating human trafficking, forced labor and other forms of severe labor exploitation that puts worker rights at the forefront of solutions and calls for the labor movement, and unions in particular, to be involved.

Useful LINKS:

- [ILO Global Estimates on Migrant Workers](#) (December 2015)
- [Trafficking in Persons](#) report by the U.S. State Department (2014)
- [Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labor](#), ILO report
- [ATEST](#) (Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking), a U.S.-based coalition that includes the Solidarity Center, advocates for solutions to prevent and end all forms of human trafficking and modern slavery around the world.
- [RecruitmentReform](#), an initiative of Open Working Group on Labor Migration and Recruitment.
- [Fair Labor Recruitment](#) is the website of the International Labor Recruitment Working Group which strategically addresses abuses in international labor recruitment across visa categories and includes as a member the Solidarity Center.
- [Fair Migration: Setting an ILO Agenda](#) report (2014)
- [‘There Is No Inevitability, No Excuse: Forced Labor Must Be Stopped,’](#) statement by ILO General Secretary Guy Ryder
- [HumanTrafficking.org](#), aimed at combating human trafficking in East Asia and the Pacific.
- [Free2Work.org](#), a joint project of the Not For Sale Campaign and the International Labor Rights Forum that rates products and companies based on their policies related to forced and child labor.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

Educate workers who plan to work abroad about labor laws and workplace rights in their origin and destination countries.

Promote union-run legal aid, counseling and information centers.

Advocate for greater regulation of labor recruitment processes and the elimination of recruitment fees.

Helps draft and pass improved anti-trafficking and safe migration legislation.

Establish relationships between migrant rights organizations, government officials and trade unions in origin and destination countries to promote migrant

worker rights, increase access to justice for migrant workers and help migrant workers to exercise their right to organize

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"Does Immigration Increase Economic Growth? | Manhattan Institute." *Manhattan Institute*. N.p., 24 Aug. 2015. Web. 31 Jan. 2016.

"More Work Needed to Make Labor Migration a Safer Option for Youth." *Voices*. N.p., n.d. Web. 31 Jan. 2016.

MULTIMEDIA SOURCES:

1. "Leaders' Voices on Labour Migration"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdRAHDW0HzQ>
2. "The International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) Database for ASEAN"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZLvCTwAWyc>