

**EUROPAN DEVELOPMENT DAYS 2006**  
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**SUMMARY**

*Migration and Governance*

**Participants**

Mr. Colin MANCHIP  
Ms. Ndioro NDIAYE  
Mr. Gibril FALL  
Mr. Jonathan FAULL  
Mr. Joseph Kiticki KOUAMBA  
Mrs. Aminata TRAORE  
Mrs. Rita SÜSSMUTH

The “Migration and Governance” roundtable prompted interesting and lively debate. As the facilitator **Colin MANCHIP**, a former UK Immigration Service Director now working for Euroasylum Ltd, pointed out at the beginning, the discussions were timely following in the wake of the migration and development discussions at the Rabat conference and the UN Higher Level Dialogue in New York. The event also preceded the Africa and EU ministerial conference on migration held in Tripoli by just a week.

Two clear messages came out of the roundtable discussions. The first was that migration is not just an issue of control: migration should also work for development. The second and more controversial message was that migration policies should not stand in the way of mobility. Among other important issues raised were racism, policy coherence and human rights.

### ***Migration for development.***

Everyone was in agreement that migration is neither a new phenomena nor purely a security matter. "*Migration is as old as the ice age,*" said **Ndioro NDIAYE**, Deputy Director General of the International Organisation for Migration. "It is crucial to all development programmes...it is also not a problem which can be solved by one country alone, we need regional and international cooperation".

This view was echoed throughout the session. The audience also heard of the importance of the three 'classical' elements that need to be addressed to make migration work for development: migrant *remittances*, *diaspora* engagement and *brain drain*.

*Migrant remittances.* **Gibril FAAL**, from Remit Aid, gave an informed presentation on the importance of making remittances conducive to development. He highlighted the startling fact that money sent home by migrants abroad often represents four or five times the amount of Overseas Development Aid (ODA) that poor countries receive. In fact, in Ghana and Senegal remittances apparently account for 40-60% of household incomes. Unlike profits from most foreign investments, money from remittances goes in to developing countries and stays in. Remittances also have the tendency to grow whether through good or bad times.

Why then do remittances not benefit from tax relief as development money does? FAAL proposed an interesting concept whereby money taxed from remittances would be pooled to address the negative aspects of remittance sending and used to help those desperate families who make up the new poor: those who receive no remittances.

*Diaspora engagement.* Despite the considerable amount of money they send home, FAAL signalled that there is little government dialogue with remitters. This raises the importance emphasised by participants in creating EU and African policies that actively engage the diaspora in developing their countries of origin. This involves not only the transfer of resources but also of skills. However, **Joseph Kiticki KOUAMBA** highlighted the difficulties often faced by members of the diaspora who want to help out in obtaining visas to allow them to return to their host countries afterwards. Pioneering work carried out by Belgium was cited, in which diaspora members helped rebuild the Great Lakes Region. KOUAMBA also noted that governments cannot be relied on to make all the progress, "the diaspora also need to do more to organise themselves".

*Brain drain.* Brain drain remains a major obstacle to the further development of Africa's economies and social delivery systems. NDIAYE pointed out that one in five doctors leave Africa each year and asked "*why are African countries not capable of retaining their mind? It is not enough for doctors to earn \$200 a month after seven years of study*". Issues of brain drain need to be addressed through radical improvements in working conditions and environments in the countries concerned, including through better governance. But developed countries also have a responsibility to put in place ethical recruitment policies. **Jonathan FAULL**, Director General of Justice, Freedom and Security in the European Commission, elaborated on the EU's commitment in this field, particularly in the health care sector. The Commission has tabled proposals to tackle the shortages of health care workers in Africa, which would involve disciplining EU recruitment.

### ***Migration and mobility.***

The issues surrounding mobility, including employment opportunities, legal migration and visa requirements provoked some heated exchanges. Well-managed labour migration is a key driver for economic growth, therefore mobility within Africa and between Africa and the EU is essential for the development process. **Aminata TRAORE**, founder of the African Social Forum, highlighted the urgent need to create employment opportunities, particularly for the African youth. She also noted the unfairness of policies on free circulation of goods in the absence of similar agreements for labour.

A member of the audience from a Dakar-based NGO described how a colleague had been invited to speak at a conference in the EU but had been unable to obtain a visa. This led to several personal accounts from roundtable members highlighting similar experiences, including lengthy hold-ups at EU border controls. KOUAMBA questioned why there is such a negative attitude in the EU to issuing visas to students, businessmen and scientists.

FAULL responded, *"let's not delude ourselves, there is no fundamental right to mobility. We live with states, with papers, with frontiers"*. Earlier he had explained that it was important for EU policy to cover both legal and illegal migration, but that slower progress had been made on legal migration, partly because this remains a member state competency. The new Commission Communication on the Global Approach, due to be presented in the following weeks, was an attempt to redress the balance and to tackle the root causes. However, the Commission Director General stated that "laws must also be enforced, countries have the right to maintain borders and irregular migrants should be returned home, in full respect for human rights". He indicated that EU is making funding available for this combined approach.

NDIAYE stressed that African countries need to "stand up and talk about these issues" but that there is a lack of technical capacity. The EU should help Africa enhance its capacities so that it can become an equal partner. One of IOM's proposals is that migration should be built into the curriculum at universities in Africa. In this respect, Africans will gain the essential knowledge to devise their own migration policies.

*Why focus on Africa?* It is true to say that in 2006 the EU's migration agenda has focussed heavily on Africa. In an impassioned speech, embellished with personal experiences, TRAORE said that she had hoped the fall of the Berlin Wall would be *"the birth of a new era"* but emphasised that it *"is only whites who can circulate more easily"*. She pointed out that the majority of migrants in Spain come from Eastern Europe and Latin America and not from Africa. Consequently, she questioned why the focus was on Africa and accused the EU of racism. Referring to the EU's separate policies on North and Sub-Sahara Africa, she asked, *"if the EU is not racist then why distinguish between black and white Africa"*?

The Director General of JLS reasoned that the EU's focus was currently on its African neighbour because large numbers travel to the EU, often in tragic circumstances. *"Hundreds die on route and others are exploited by criminal gangs"*, he reported. Faull strongly denied there was an anti-black policy, *"the focus on Africa has only been in the last year as there has been a real problem in the Mediterranean. But there have been*

*other crises before, which were white. Look at the problem with the Balkans. We can't just shun these issues."*

*Policy coherence?* EU trade, agriculture and fisheries policies all impact on migration. Another strong message delivered by TRAORE was the need to give Africa the means to develop itself. She proposed that migration is the sign of the failure of development and blamed EU trade policies. *"Africa has opened its economy to world trade yet it is still unable to live from agriculture or have enough food or water,"* she stated.

*Migrants, the individuals.* A member of the audience working for the Council of Europe reminded everyone of the importance of considering human rights issues given that in some situations migrants were receiving first and second level rights. **Rita SÜSSMUTH**, a German member of parliament and also a member of the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), described how human rights had been the starting point for the work carried out by the GCIM. They had taken "a more progressive approach" than EU Member States, who sometimes "*forget*" the migrants themselves. SÜSSMUTH proposed that we should change the starting point from how to prevent migrants from coming to what is the contribution migrants can make. She emphasised that migrants, and especially women, are the active drivers of development. *"Given the numerous human rights conventions, the task should be to ensure that they are implemented and monitored". "The fact is",* she continued, *"countries have good intentions but little real progress has been made".* KOUAMBA agreed that human rights are fundamental. *"We should not talk about good governance without talking about the participation of migrants."* FAULL also outlined that fundamental human rights are already respected in the EU, and cited the example of the right to vote for long-term residents.

The discussions could have continued if time was no issue. However, it could be said that there has been much talk and it is time to focus on concrete measures that really make migration work for development. As SÜSSMUTH said, *"our papers are better than our actions, what we need now is to increase our co-operation initiatives"*.