



TEMPORARY AND CIRCULAR MIGRATION:

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE, CURRENT POLICY PRACTICE AND FUTURE OPTIONS IN EU MEMBER STATES

SWEDEN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Parliamentary Committee for Circular Migration and Development (CiMU) was appointed by the Government in July 2009 and is currently working in Sweden. The Committee Directive to CiMU states that circular migration refers to “temporary or more long-term and usually recurring legal movements between two countries. Movement can occur either through migrants moving from their countries of origin or residence to a host country and then returning, or through migrants moving to their countries of origin for a shorter or longer period.”

However, Sweden has not adopted formal definitions of the terms “circular migration” and “temporary migration”. Sweden views circular migration as a natural phenomenon in which people are moving more often between countries, sometimes for longer periods, sometimes for shorter, and making key contributions in both their host countries and countries of origin.

Several different forms of migration are covered by the term (including labour migration, seasonal workers, movement within international corporations and international students) and it does not include classification of any specially selected group of migrants based on level of education or occupation.

Circular migration can be divided into “spontaneous” migration flows and “managed” circular migration. *Managed migration* refers to migration within the bounds of a bilateral agreement or a specific programme that states the conditions for length of stay, issuance of permits, return, etc. *Spontaneous migration*, on the other hand, refers to migration flows that arise spontaneously, outside special programmes, for example in situations controlled by supply and demand.

CiMU has determined that spontaneous circular migration is most relevant to Sweden. The fundamental premise is that migrants themselves are best equipped to determine when the right conditions for moving exist. This premise differs materially from the point of departure in the EU definition of the term provided in the study specifications, where return within a specific time period constitutes a fundamental prerequisite.

The Swedish Government’s stance on circular migration is based on the principle that increased mobility is fundamentally good: for Sweden, the EU, the third country and the migrant. Circular migration can profit the country of origin, the country of destination and the individual – in what is called the “triple-win” situation, or “*win-win-win*”.

Sweden has laid the foundation for a development towards increased circular migration through the Labour Migration Act, since the law makes it easier in many ways for companies to recruit the workers they need. The amended rules on labour migration that took effect in December 2008 entail needs-governed labour migration that fulfils important needs on the labour market.

As mentioned, Sweden has no specific programmes for temporary or circular migration. The preconditions for circular migration are created by general regulations on migration, which also encompass the rules on labour migration.

Since December 2008, an employer who cannot find the required labour within Sweden, other EU/EEA states or Switzerland may employ workers from a third country – if the conditions for obtaining a work permit are met. These conditions are that the job must have been advertised in Sweden and the EU, that wages are sufficient to support the worker and that the terms of employment are on par with those applicable to other employees. The permit may be extended one or more times. The employee may be granted a permanent residence permit provided they have had a residence permit for work for an aggregate period of four years during the past five years.

Unsuccessful applicants for asylum may apply for a work permit within two weeks after an expulsion order has entered into force. To be granted a work permit, the applicant must have been employed at a living wage for at least six months and the employment must continue for at least another 12 months.

As Swedish policy is based on demand in the labour market, Sweden has chosen not to enter into any bilateral agreements on labour migration. Nor are there any special quotas or regulations as regards requirements for particular education, training or experience on the part of foreign workers. As a direct consequence, there is no immediate need for bilateral agreements.

At the turn of the year 2009/2010, the population of Sweden was 9,340,000 persons and of the entire population, about 14 per cent were born abroad and have already embarked on their migration “careers.” Of Sweden’s total population, 283,400 people (3 per cent) have moved at least twice across the national border and may hence be considered circular migrants in the statistical sense.

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1. INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

1.1. PURPOSE

The aim of the study is to:

- understand the characteristics of temporary labour migration and circular/repetitive migration patterns of third-country Nationals, including:
 - the categories, such as the following indicative ones: third-country nationals moving temporarily to the EU for short-term employment, seasonal work, study or research; or settled migrants living in the EU moving temporarily to their countries of origin
 - the definitions and conceptualisation in the Member States
 - the criteria and conditions applied in the Member States (e.g., entry conditions, work and residence permits),
- review and analyse existing statistical data and empirical evidence for circular/temporary migration and to examine possible approaches for measuring/estimating whether, and if so to what extent, migration has become increasingly circular or temporary in nature, and
- analyse policy preferences, convictions and conceptualisations of political actors, the research community and other stakeholders (such as immigrants' associations and development agencies) on temporary/circular migration, and to discuss policy options both for the national and the EU level.

The study also aims at responding to requests from the Council through Council Conclusions and the Stockholm Programme regarding further exploration and development of circular migration as a part of EU migration policy.

Consistent with the remit of EMN and with previous studies, the study will focus on third-country national migrants.¹

¹ "Specifications for EMN Study – Temporary and Circular Migration: Empirical Evidence, Current Policy Practice and Future Options in EU Member States, Final Version: 22nd March 2010. MIGRAPOL, European Migration Network, Doc. 192.

1.2. METHODOLOGY

The report was prepared on the basis of the common specifications drafted by EMN,² in order to enable comparisons between EU Member States. Among else, the specifications state the questions the study is meant to answer.

The report was prepared by experts within the Ministry of Justice and the Migration Board in cooperation with the National Contact Point for EMN. The methodology followed was to collect currently available information and statistics related to circular migration.

The report is based primarily on an interim report from the Parliamentary Committee for Circular Migration and Development (hereinafter CiMU) appointed by the Swedish Government.³ CiMU's work is rather unique in the EU, since this is the first time a Member State has undertaken to perform such a thorough mapping of circular migration and its fundamental preconditions and development potential.

Parts of the report have been taken from Sweden's contribution to the EMN study on labour migration from June 2010.⁴ The report is otherwise based on factual sources such as studies and other public material, including laws, legislative bills, and Government Communications. The statistics on circular migration reported in section 3 were derived from CiMU's interim report, which were in turn based on statistical extracts from databases kept by Statistics Sweden (SCB).⁵ All material and reports used in the study are listed in the bibliography of sources.

One challenge encountered during the work with this study concerns the problem of defining the term circular migration. On the one hand, it is important to encompass the full range of migration phenomena such as long and short term labour migration (thus including seasonal work etc.), student migration and so on. On the other hand, temporary visits are in most cases

² "Specifications for EMN Study – Temporary and Circular Migration: Empirical Evidence, Current Policy Practice and Future Options in EU Member States, Final Version: 22nd March 2010. MIGRAPOL, European Migration Network, Doc. 192.

³ The Government decided on 2 July 2009 to appoint a Parliamentary Committee for Circular Migration and Development, which was tasked with examining how people's increased mobility to and from Sweden can be facilitated and how the positive impacts on development deriving from mobility can be enhanced. The Committee is made up of representatives of all political parties represented in the Riksdag and experts from relevant ministries and public authorities. On 28 May 2010, the Committee submitted its interim report Circular Migration and Development (Swedish Government Report SOU 2010:40). Proposals aimed at eliminating obstacles to increased mobility will be presented in a final report in March 2011.

⁴ European Migration Network: Satisfying Labour Demand through Migration, Swedish National Report, June 2010

⁵ The Total Population Register (TPR) kept by SCB has been computerised since 1969. As a result, computerised analysis is possible only for 1969 and later.

not to be considered migration. Taken together this means that a comprehensive definition of circular migration is quite difficult to specify. The task becomes even more complicated if one considers the availability of material to factually prove the existence circular migration. Categories defined as “migrants” are hard to distinguish from categories defined as “visitors” in the statistical sense. This is one explanation for why Sweden has not adopted a formal definition of the term circular migration. In the statistics, a person has moved when he or she has left or entered the Swedish population register. The criterion for entry in the Swedish population register is that a person has a legal right to stay in Sweden and intends to stay for at least 12 months. Many of those who come to Sweden on a temporary basis are not registered in the population register since their stays do not exceed one year, and are therefore not included in the available statistics on circular migrants.

1.3. DEFINITIONS

Sweden has not adopted formal definitions of the terms “circular migration” and “temporary migration”. Please note that this means that Sweden’s conceptualization differs from the definition given in the EMN Glossary.

Sweden views circular migration as a natural phenomenon in which people are moving more often between countries, sometimes for longer periods, sometimes for shorter, and making key contributions in both their host countries and countries of origin.

The Committee Directive to CiMU states that circular migration refers to “temporary or more long-term and usually recurring legal movements between two countries. Movement can occur either through migrants moving from their countries of origin or residence to a host country and then returning, or through migrants moving to their countries of origin for a shorter or longer period.”⁶

Several different forms of migration are covered by the term (including labour migration,⁷ seasonal workers, movement within international corporations and international students) and it does not include classification of any specially selected group of migrants based on their level of education or occupation. Since Sweden has no specific projects or programmes for circular or temporary migration, the term does not imply any specific limitations regarding length of stay.

⁶ Committee Directive – Circular Migration and Development, Dir. 2009:53

⁷ The term “labour immigrant” covers people who move to Sweden for labour market reasons with a permit to settle in the country. Normally, a person must be registered in the population registry to be considered resident. To be registered in the population registry, immigrants must intend to stay in Sweden for at least twelve months. Immigrants do not have access to all aspects of the Swedish welfare system until they have been registered in the population registry. Thus, people who have been granted permanent resident status for labour market reasons and workers with temporary work permits valid for at least twelve months are included in the definition of labour immigrant. Thus, seasonal workers and other people who work for periods of less than twelve months in Sweden are instead classified as “migrant workers”.

Swedish usage of the term circular migration is based on the assumption that all economic migration can initially be regarded as temporary. This makes sense, partly because the decision to migrate can often be seen as a temporary life strategy, and partly because an eventual return can usually not be ruled out.⁸ The actual duration of the migration can thus be determined only after the fact (and thus whether or not the migration can be described as circular). For instance, a stay in the host country that was originally intended to be temporary may transition to a permanent state of affairs. If the migrant stays in the host country for the rest of his or her life, this may then be regarded as *permanent migration*. If the migrant decides to return⁹ to the country of origin for good, this should then be regarded as *temporary migration*. If the migrant who has returned eventually decides to migrate again – one or more times – this is regarded as *circular migration*. The term circular migration can thus be considered as also encompassing temporary migration.

1.3.1. WHO CAN BE REGARDED AS A CIRCULAR MIGRANT?

In the statistical sense, a circular migrant is regarded as a person who has, with respect to the population registry, moved across the Swedish national border at least twice. This includes both Swedish-born persons who have moved out of the country at least once and then returned after a time (at least 12 months) and persons born abroad who have, at least once, moved to Sweden, moved out of the country, and moved back again (and thus have crossed the national border at least three times and have on those occasions either been deregistered from or reregistered in the Swedish population registry).

In principle, the entire population of Sweden is composed of potential circular migrants, and some have already lived and worked a period of their lives outside Sweden's borders. People who moved to Sweden earlier may later in life leave the country and hence become return migrants and circular migrants in their country of origin or some other country. People who have never left Sweden (such as Swedish citizens born in Sweden) can later in life both move out of Sweden and move back again – in this way becoming circular migrants.

⁸ From the very first move, the individual may be considering the opportunity to return to the country of origin and, perhaps well into the future, to repeat the first migration once again.

⁹ The term “voluntary return migration” refers to the process in which a person with permanent resident status makes a conscious and voluntary choice to return to their country/region of origin for an extended period. The return is voluntary because the person, by virtue of the permanent resident status, does in fact have a choice. The term “return” refers to the process in which a person who has no legal right to stay in the country returns to their country/region of origin. This group may include, for example, unsuccessful applicants for asylum. Return covers all levels of “voluntariness” and “coercion” and thus applies both to people who cooperate in the enforcement of a return order and those who resist an enforcement order.

1.3.2. MANAGED AND SPONTANEOUS CIRCULAR MIGRATION

Circular migration can be divided into “spontaneous” migration flows and “managed” circular migration.

Managed migration refers to migration within the bounds of a bilateral agreement or a specific programme that states the conditions for length of stay, issuance of permits, return, etc. Here, the migrant circulates between the country of origin and the country of destination during a specified time period to perform a particular task. Once this time period is up, the migrant is expected to return. Managed migration is often aimed at seasonal workers, but may also cover other forms of migration. These programmes often give migrants the opportunity – provided they have complied with applicable regulations – to repeatedly return to the destination country. A notable example of managed circular migration is the agreement between Spain and Colombia to facilitate temporary and circular movement.¹⁰ After four temporary stays in Spain, migrants who participate in this programme are eligible to apply for fast-track Spanish citizenship.¹¹

Spontaneous migration, on the other hand, refers to migration flows that arise spontaneously, outside special programmes, for example in situations controlled by supply and demand. However, spontaneous migration can be stimulated or restricted through various policy regulations and measures. Factors identified as facilitating circular migration include low transaction and communications costs, flexible permit rules that allow migrants to be away from the destination country for extended periods, allowing naturalisation and dual citizenship, simplifying the process for granting entry permits to migrants who have previously lived and worked in the host country and offering an opportunity to transfer social rights, such as pensions. Those with the best conditions for spontaneous circulation are those who feel secure in their affiliation with both their countries of origin and their new countries.¹²

CiMU has determined that spontaneous circular migration is most relevant to Sweden and is the form which the Committee should promote. The fundamental premise is that migrants themselves are best equipped to determine when the right conditions for moving/circulating exist. This premise differs materially from the point of departure in the EU definition of the term provided in the study specifications, where return within a specific time period constitutes a fundamental prerequisite. This premise is also well in line with the vision of the Migration Board: “Sweden – a nation open for the possibilities of global migration.” The overarching goal is that migration should be seen as an opportunity rather than a problem.

¹⁰ The *Contingente de Trabajadores Extranjeros*

¹¹ Newland, 2009

¹² Newland, 2009

Even when migrants do not return physically, but still maintain close contact with their countries of origin, there is an exchange of vital experiences (“social remittances”) that could be seen as an aspect of circular migration. This has been called “virtual circulation”.

2. APPROACH TO CIRCULAR AND TEMPORARY MIGRATION IN SWEDEN

2.1. NATIONAL VISION, POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

The Riksdag adopted a new overarching goal for Swedish migration policy in the 2009 Budget Bill. The goal is to ensure a sustainable migration policy that safeguards the right to asylum and which, within the framework of managed immigration, facilitates movement across borders, promotes needs-governed labour migration, utilises and takes into consideration the effects of migration on development and enhances European and international cooperation.¹³

The goal of promoting needs-governed labour migration has already been attained with the introduction of amended rules for labour migration that took effect in December 2008. The new rules also contribute to improving conditions for circular migration to and from Sweden. More people now have the opportunity to come to Sweden to work and hence the number of potential circular migrants can also grow. Facilitating circular migration is not, in and of itself, part of the Government's strategy for addressing labour shortages, but can be regarded as a positive side-effect, since it contributes to positive impacts on development in migrants' countries of origin.

However, the facilitation of circular migration and promotion of its positive development impacts is a significant element in the Government's efforts to facilitate movement across borders and utilise and take into consideration the impacts of migration on development. The Government's stance on circular migration is based on the notion that increased mobility is fundamentally good for Sweden, the EU, third countries and migrants themselves. Increased mobility is being created by means including offering migrants' social security in Sweden while avoiding regulations that prevent voluntary return to the country of origin or back to Sweden. The Government thus welcomes legal frameworks that create the conditions for spontaneous circular migration. With the above mentioned vision as guidance, the Migration Board is working towards a growing consciousness of the connection between migration and development and enhanced cooperation with other countries to facilitate circular migration.

In Sweden's Policy for Global Development, the Government has established that all policy areas have common responsibility for the overarching goal: to promote equitable and sustainable global development.¹⁴ The policy underlines the importance of coherence among policy areas in order to attain this goal. In a Government Communication, "Global Challenges – Our Responsibility", the government marked an increased ambition with respect to the

¹³ Government Bill 2008/09:1, Expenditure Area 8 - Migration

¹⁴ Government Bill 2002/03:122

coherence policy. Migration flows are identified as one of six global challenges, thus revealing the connections between migration and development. In this Communication, the Government establishes that “the Government will seek – *inter alia* through reform of Swedish labour migration policy and within the EU – to facilitate mobility among labour migrants and ensure that obstacles to voluntary return, either to the migrants’ countries of origin or back to Sweden, are avoided to the extent possible. The Government will also seek to ensure that future legislative processes in the area of migration do not impede mobility.”¹⁵

2.1.1. CIRCULAR MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT – ALL ARE POTENTIAL WINNERS

The emphasis on the links between migration and development is one of the factors that distinguishes circular migration from the traditional, more one-dimensional perception that migration involves moving from one place to another and then staying there.

Migration affects development in both countries: the country the migrant leaves and the one he or she goes to. The person who migrates changes and develops in the process. Circular migration can profit the country of origin, the country of destination and the individual – in what is called the “triple win” situation.

2.1.1.1. THE WIN FOR THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

By sending money home, so-called remittances, migrants help raise incomes for the family still in the country of origin – money that can be invested in education, health and infrastructure and in businesses that create jobs and hence provide incomes. The remittances are private monetary flows, but through their contribution to the local economy, they can generate development gains for a wider circle, and not only the recipient. The World Bank estimates that total global remittances currently amount to USD 338 billion,¹⁶ more than three times as much as total official development aid.

Promotion of trade flows and investments is another important impact of migration, along with knowledge transfer and transfers of “social remittances”, that is, ideas and values that make important contributions to shaping societies. In times of severe unemployment, an outflow of migrants can also help ameliorate social tensions in countries of origin.

¹⁵ Government Communications 2007/08:89 and 2009/10:129

¹⁶ Ratha, Mohapatra and Silwal, 2009

2.1.1.2. THE WIN FOR THE COUNTRY OF DESTINATION

Migrants' contributions to their countries of destination are multifaceted. In many cases, migrants are welcome workers who fill important needs that keep society running smoothly. At the same time, migrants bring with them values and attitudes from their countries of origin that enhance cultural diversity, broaden horizons and encourage innovative thinking in the countries of destination. Another key gain is the contribution of migrants – or the Diaspora – as “bridge-builders” and drivers of such things as trade and investments between countries of destination and countries of origin, creating jobs and tax revenues in both directions.

2.1.1.3. THE WIN FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

The reasons an individual chooses to migrate are often many and complex. Several factors come into the picture – personal relationships, family circumstances, family or friends abroad, persecution, poverty and vulnerability of various kinds are behind many people's decisions to cross a national border. For well-educated migrants, better working conditions, higher pay, new development opportunities and career development are important reasons for taking the step to move. For others, the attraction is simply the challenge of getting to experience something new. What they all have in common is the desire for a better future.

2.1.2. RETURN

No special measures are taken to ensure return to the country of origin when a job and the associated work permit expire. The rules and regulations anticipate that persons whose residence and work permits expire will also leave Sweden. However, the view has been such that it has been presumed that many foreign workers also want to obtain permanent residence permits to stay in Sweden. For people who hold temporary or permanent residence permits in Sweden, brief returns to the country of origin do not present an impediment to returning to Sweden.

2.1.3. VOLUNTARY RETURN PROGRAMMES

The Migration Board runs return programmes aimed at making return easier for people who wish to do so and who hold a permanent residence permit based on their status as a refugee or person in need of protection, or who were selected in the refugee quota. Support is provided in various ways including a financial grant, but also in the form of advice, skills enhancement initiatives, etc., in partnership with non-government organisations. The fundamental premise

is that people who are thinking about returning should make the decision based on as much good and relevant information possible.

Several Swedish organisations have been working with voluntary return in various guises, some of them funded by the European Return Fund. Support for reintegration in the country of origin is an important aspect of this work. Organisations including the Swedish Red Cross, *Sociala Missionen*, the Gothenburg Initiative, and the City of Stockholm Repatriation Office either have or have had programmes to support this aspect of circular migration to countries including Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq (Kurdistan).

In 2009, 115 people applied for travel grants to return to their countries of origin. Of these, 73 were granted economic support. The main countries for these travel grants were: Iraq (38 people), Russia (5), Sudan (5) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (5).

2.1.4. EVALUATION OF LABOUR MIGRATION POLICY

The OECD is performing a thematic review of Sweden's labour migration policy within the framework of the Working Party on Migration. The aims of the review are to systematically examine the characteristics of the immigration system and analyse the impacts of the labour migration policy on the labour market. The thematic review started on 15 December 2009 and will end with a special publication to be presented in spring 2011.

CiMU's task includes examining the positive and negative effects of circular migration patterns in certain developing countries, countries of origin and Sweden. One key conclusion from CiMU's interim report is that circular migration is a reality and that it can have positive impact on development in both countries of origin and countries of destination. CiMU also finds that the trend towards more extensive circular migration is welcome.

2.1.5. ATTITUDE OF CENTRAL LABOUR MARKET ORGANISATIONS TOWARDS CIRCULAR MIGRATION

In order to describe the relevance circular migration may acquire within various business sectors and with respect to how the labour market functions, CiMU has consulted with employers' organisations, trade unions and companies with experience of circular migration.¹⁷

¹⁷ Including the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO), the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (SACO), the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), Ericsson, Tetra Pak and SKF.

Most organisations believe that migration and mobile workers have a role to play in the Swedish labour market in one way or another. The trade unions believe that much of the circular migration issue has to do with worker mobility and the opportunity for supply and demand to converge in a way that brings about fair terms for workers and creates competition neutrality among companies. However, circular migration is not regarded as a solution in the health and social care sector, where future labour shortages are expected due to large numbers going into retirement and a burgeoning need for health care. It is better for most municipalities and counties if workers do not circulate and instead come to Sweden to stay. For municipalities and counties, continuity in the organisation is central, especially because communication and language are so important within health and social care.

Sweden has laid the foundation for a development towards increased circular migration through the Labour Migration Act, since the law makes it easier in many ways for companies to recruit the workers they need. The gains of the reform include greater opportunities for employers to find qualified workers and better conditions for individuals to realise their aspirations. However, several trade unions believe robust control systems are necessary that allow the terms of offers of employment to be checked, and where the Migration Board can subsequently inspect the employers. The problem with jobs based on false offers of employment, for which the terms of employment are much worse in practice, is already showing up. Even as there is concern from the unions that increased labour migration may eventually lead to poorer conditions for workers, it was also noted that expedited mobility may bring great advantages and opportunities for workers. Having access to more than one labour market may, alongside opportunities to increase pay and improve skills, also entail a certain level of protection against unemployment. Several trade unions stated that it is now a challenge for the unions to engage the mobile labour force. This will require new methods and new recruiting paths. However, it is also an opportunity to, for example, spread knowledge about occupational health and safety issues to workplaces outside Sweden.

2.1.6. ATTITUDE OF MIGRANT ORGANISATIONS TOWARDS CIRCULAR MIGRATION

It is well-known that there is concern among many organisations representing migrants about a development toward a return policy in which people are encouraged to return at the expense of their status in Sweden. Many migrant organisations believe that while it is important that people are afforded an opportunity to return, this should always be at the initiative of the individual.

Thus, most migrant organisations support the broad view on circular migration by which it is up to the individual to decide if and when a return should take place.

2.2. NATIONAL LEGISLATION, CONDITIONS, CRITERIA AND ENFORCEMENT

2.2.1. CONDITIONS FOR CIRCULAR MIGRATION TO AND FROM SWEDEN

At present, there are several conditions that encourage and facilitate circular migration to and from Sweden. The following may serve as examples:

- Short-term returns to the country of origin do not present an impediment to returning to Sweden. People also commonly work in Sweden with short-term temporary work permits.
- The new regulations for labour migration with temporary residence and work permits which eventually make migrants eligible for permanent resident permits, even after brief interruptions in residence, may contribute to some labour migrants choosing to return to their countries of origin after a period of work in Sweden.
- Under Swedish rules, migrants also have the right to have their income-based pensions earned in Sweden paid out anywhere in the world after age 61.
- Sweden has made more than 20 bilateral agreements¹⁸ on social security. Some of these agreements were made before Sweden acceded to the EU and may be partially obsolete. Nine¹⁹ were made with countries outside the EU/EEA.
- The Swedish Citizenship Act (statute 2001:82) increases the opportunity to enter and live without restrictions in both Sweden and the country of origin, since persons who become naturalised Swedish citizens are free to retain their previous citizenship, as long as the other country permits dual citizenship.
- In the Member States of the European Economic Area (EEA), free movement for workers is a fundamental right that makes it possible for citizens of one EEA country to work in another EEA country on the same terms as the citizens of the Member State.
- The common Nordic labour market provides free movement for Nordic workers.
- Sweden has a system that allows a lower tax rate for highly qualified foreign experts.

¹⁸ A research project at the Institute for Future Studies will be studying which benefits, when the agreements were negotiated, were found to be easiest and which the most difficult to regard as portable.

¹⁹ United States, Chile, Israel, Yugoslavia (later assumed by the new states), Canada, Cap Verde, Turkey, Algeria and Australia.

- In agreements with a number of states, Sweden has regulated that a migrant who moves earned money between different countries should in principle be taxed only once. In total, Sweden has agreements with more than 80 states.

2.2.2. WORK PERMIT CONDITIONS

As mentioned above, Sweden has no specific programmes for temporary or circular migration. Conditions for circular migration are created by general regulations on migration, which also encompass the rules on labour migration.

The conditions for granting a work permit, which were also reported in the Swedish EMN study on labour migration, are stated below.

Since December 2008, an employer who cannot find the required labour within Sweden, other EU/EEA states or Switzerland may employ workers from a third country – if the conditions for obtaining a work permit are met.

The Swedish Migration Board is the authority that grants work permits for employees and reviews the conditions offered, such as pay, insurance cover and other conditions of employment. Pay and conditions must comply with the levels under Swedish collective agreements or be customary within the occupation/sector. Trade unions are given an opportunity to express their views on the conditions of employment to ensure sound competition, protect employees and prevent wage dumping.

The employer must demonstrate to the Swedish Migration Board that the job has been advertised.²⁰ The principle of Community preference applies, which means that citizens of the EU/EEA and Switzerland are given priority to apply for the position.

A residence and work permit is granted for the period of employment or a maximum of two years at a time. The permit may be extended one or more times. The employee may be granted a permanent residence permit provided that they have had a residence permit for work for an aggregate period of four years during the past five years. Family members such as husbands/wives/cohabitants/registered partners may also be granted residence and work permits, and are then afforded the same rights as the employee.²¹ The same applies to children

²⁰ In connection with new recruiting, the employer must make it possible for residents of Sweden, other EU/EEA countries and Switzerland to apply for the job. This is most easily done by advertising the job for ten days with the Public Employment Service – in which case the advertisement is also accessible in EURES (the European Job Mobility Portal). The employer can announce a vacancy via the *Annonsera Direkt (Advertise Now)* service on the Public Employment Service's website by contacting customer service or the local office of the Public Employment Service. The Public Employment Service also offers intermediary services to identify the supply of available labour in the EU/EEA and Switzerland. For further information, see www.arbetsformedlingen.se and www.migrationsverket.se.

²¹ When a person has moved to Sweden from abroad, they must report to the local Tax Agency office that covers the area in which they now live. The main rule is that people must be *entered in the population registry* in their place of residence. The

under the age of 21. A work permit may be withdrawn if the worker's employment ends. The person in question then has three months to find a new job before the residence permit is withdrawn.

Foreign students who are studying at university or college are entitled to work while studying. After the period of study, a work permit may be applied for from within Sweden, provided the person has completed at least 30 higher education credits or has completed one term of postgraduate education in Sweden and has received an offer of employment that meets the criteria described above.

Unsuccessful applicants for asylum may apply for a work permit within two weeks after an expulsion order has entered into force. The following conditions must also be satisfied:

- The person must have a valid passport that applies for the entire term of the permit
- The person must have been employed for at least six months previously and employment must continue for at least another 12 months
- The employment must be with the same employer.
- It must be possible for the person to support him/herself on wages earned from the employment
- Otherwise, the same conditions apply as for other work permits

The new regulation for labour market immigration opens a new and legal way to come to Sweden as a migrant. It cannot be ruled out that at least some of the asylum seekers coming to Sweden could have been labour migrants if they had been aware of this possibility.

The main rule is that residence and work permits must be arranged prior to entry into Sweden. This means that the application must be submitted in the applicant's country of origin or legal residence. However, in certain cases the Swedish Migration Board may grant a residence and work permit applied for in Sweden. This applies, among other things, to extensions of work permits, students at colleges/universities in Sweden, certain applicants for asylum and people who have come to Sweden to visit a prospective employer.

As mentioned above, no special measures are taken for return to the country of origin when a job and a work permit end. The rules and regulations anticipate that persons whose residence and work permits expire will also leave Sweden. For people who hold a temporary or permanent residence permit in Sweden, brief returns to the country of origin do not present an

population registry is the basic registration of the population in Sweden, where all those who live in the country and their addresses are registered. Where someone is registered has impact on a wide variety of rights and obligations. For example, the right to child benefit and housing benefit depends upon *that* someone is registered. Where someone must pay taxes and vote depends on *where* they are registered. Civil status and other personal details are also registered in the population registry. For more information, see www.skatteverket.se

impediment to returning to Sweden. As long as the person holds a valid temporary or permanent residence permit, he or she is welcome to return to Sweden.

According to current regulations, permanent residence permits held by aliens no longer residing in Sweden shall be withdrawn. Assessment of whether residence has ended is based on circumstances in the relevant case.²² CiMU has been tasked with examining the advantages and drawbacks of, as is done today, withdrawing the permanent residence permits of aliens no longer residing in Sweden.

2.2.3. OTHER AREAS THAT IMPACT UPON THE CONDITIONS FOR CIRCULAR MIGRATION

In addition to the conditions stated in section 2.2.1, the following circumstances have been identified which may have a bearing on the conditions for circular migration to and from Sweden.

2.2.3.1. PRACTICAL MATTERS UPON MOVING TO SWEDEN

A migrant who arrives in Sweden is immediately confronted with several questions of a practical nature that must be managed so that the entry into Swedish society will function smoothly. This applies regardless of why a person has chosen to come here – refugees who are fleeing conflict and suffering, people who have come because they have a connection to someone who lives in Sweden, labour migrants, international students and researchers – all of them must go through certain bureaucratic procedures. Even Swedish citizens who have spent time abroad – for work, studies, or other reasons – must jump through certain hoops to reenter the Swedish system. This may, for instance, involve reregistering in the Swedish population registry, registering with the Social Insurance Agency and buying necessary insurance policies.

Swedish public authorities have put great effort into creating user-friendly systems and preparing various kinds of informational materials aimed at explaining how the Swedish system is constructed, what rules apply and the individual's rights and obligations, which are directed at both newly arrived migrants and returning Swedes. The Swedish Institute's web portals, *workinginsweden* and *studyinsweden* are good examples of "one-stop shops" that

²² There is no established definition of what is meant by that residence has ended in the sense meant in the Aliens Act. Thus, how long the stay abroad must have been for the permit to be withdrawn has not been established. The circumstance that the Tax Agency has deregistered someone from the population registry cannot be the sole basis for withdrawing the residence permit, although the condition is highly material (MIG 2007:34). The assessment that residence has ended is based on the circumstances of the individual case. Circumstances which may indicate that residence has not ended, despite deregistration or a long-term stay abroad, may be that the alien has been settled in Sweden for a very long time, still has family or a home in the country and that the *intent* to return to Sweden is very clearly expressed. Isolated long-term stays abroad for the purposes of a visit, work or other assignments are permitted without the person's residence being considered at an end (MIG 2009:12).

gather relevant information in order to make things easier for everyone who comes to Sweden.²³

However, in order to promote the circular migration elements, these systems and the information and marketing of current conditions may need to be reviewed and adapted to a reality in which people are moving back and forth to a greater extent, for shorter or longer periods. Such systems must be based on flexibility and clarity so that people will feel secure. One of the important issues for Sweden in the future is to be regarded as attractive for immigrants so they are willing to come to our country.

2.2.3.2. FEES FOR THIRD-COUNTRY STUDENTS

In a bill presented to the Riksdag, the Government proposed in February 2010 that foreign students should pay fees to study in Sweden, starting in the autumn term of 2011. Fees will be charged at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Education at the doctoral level will remain free, although doctoral students are already required to be self-supporting, either through scholarships or doctoral studentships paid by the university. The fee system will not apply to students from the Nordic countries and the EU since they have the right to study in Sweden on the same terms as Swedish citizens, according to the EEA agreement. The amount of the fee will be set by each university and must fully cover the university's expenditures for providing the education.²⁴

There is a concern, not least from the universities, that the introduction of a fee system will result in fewer foreign students applying to study in Sweden. This would in turn impact the course selection, primarily at the graduate level where foreign students dominate in many programmes. There is also a concern that the introduction of fees will eventually affect the labour market, especially in the technical area, since the selection of recently graduated exchange students would decline. There is also concern among Diaspora groups that the new system may make it more difficult for students from certain countries, primarily African nations, to study in Sweden.

The universities are stressing the need for an effective scholarship system. The need for an expanded scholarship system for foreign students is also emphasised in the Globalisation Council's report presented in May 2009. The Council states that an expanded scholarship system is important so that Sweden will still be able to attract gifted students from other countries after a fee system has been implemented.²⁵

²³ <http://www.sweden.se/work>, <http://www.studyinsweden.se/>

²⁴ Government Bill 2009/10:65 (2010), *Compete with Quality – Study Fees for Foreign Students*.

²⁵ Globalisation Council. (2009) *Beyond the Crisis. On a Successful Sweden*. Ministry Publication 2009:21.

The Government Bill also proposes the introduction of two scholarship programmes, one directed at students from the countries with which Sweden is engaged in long-term development cooperation and one directed at students from other countries outside the EU/EEA. In its Bill, the Government asserts that the introduction of a fee system, combined with a scholarship system, will not lead to fewer foreign students. On the contrary, by charging for their services, universities will be able to improve the quality of education and thus become more competitive.²⁶

2.3. COOPERATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

Sweden has not entered into any bilateral agreements with third countries aimed at facilitating circular migration. Nor are there any current agreements or established forms of dialogue for discussions among stakeholders in Sweden who wish to bring in labour with partners or representatives in countries outside the EU. Sweden has chosen not to enter into any bilateral agreements on labour migration because Swedish policy is based on demand in the labour market. Nor are there any special quotas or regulations as regards requirements for particular education, training or experience on the part of foreign workers. As a direct consequence, there is no immediate need for bilateral agreements.

However, Sweden does have a Memorandum of Understanding concerning mobility for young people (between the ages of 18 and 30) with Canada, Australia and New Zealand, regarding *working holiday schemes*. The aim of these Memorandums of Understanding is primarily to promote cultural exchange between these countries and give young people an opportunity to gain a mutual understanding of cultures and community life in the respective countries through being able to stay in the other country for a longer period, primarily during working holidays. These agreements also make it possible for young people to work during their holidays to earn more money for travel.

With the aim of making more information available to third country nationals who want to come to Sweden to work, the government tasked the Swedish Institute with producing an Internet-based web portal: www.workinginsweden.se, which contains both relevant information about the rules for coming here to work and information about the Swedish labour market, including reasons for choosing Sweden as a destination.

²⁶ Government Bill 2009/10:65 (2010), *Compete with Quality – Study Fees for Foreign Students*. There has been a long-standing discussion of recruitment of foreign students by Swedish universities. Critics claim that universities with declining enrolments have filled spaces with foreign students in order to avoid necessary reforms. They believe that by charging for education, universities will instead gain the scope to improve quality.

2.1.7. MOBILITY PARTNERSHIP

Sweden participates in the Mobility Partnerships between the EU and Moldova and Georgia, and intends to participate in the planned Mobility Partnership with Armenia.

Within the framework of the Mobility Partnership with Moldova, the Swedish Public Employment Service is heading up a project entitled “Strengthening Moldova’s Capacity to Manage Labour and Return Migration within the Framework of the Mobility Partnership with the EU”. The project’s aims include supporting Moldova’s efforts to promote voluntary return and reintegration of Moldovan citizens who work and live abroad, and to gather and spread information about how Moldovan citizens can legally make their way to Europe. Within the framework of the Partnership with Georgia, the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) has contributed funding to the country’s population registry, which among other duties is responsible for monitoring migration flows.

2.4. OTHER ASPECTS

2.4.1. EVIDENCE THAT THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS ARE INTERESTED IN RETURNING TO THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

There is research which indicates that traditional immigration with the intent to settle permanently has become increasingly replaced by temporary and repeated immigration. According to the OECD’s 2008 International Migration Outlook Annual Report, more than 2.5 million temporary labour migrants arrived in OECD countries in 2006. These temporary labour migrants were more than three times the number of permanent labour migrants. The OECD also estimates that 20 to 50 per cent of migrants in OECD countries return to their countries of origin or move onward to another country within five years. However, most return within three years. Except for people of retirement age, the percentage that returns is considerably lower after five years. Support for the notion that many migrants prefer temporary migration over more permanent migration can also be found in the World Bank report *Migrants and remittances: Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* from 2007. The authors of the report refer to a study that shows that an estimated 60 to 70 per cent of migrants in the EU from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Georgia, Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan would prefer to leave their countries of origin temporarily and to return relatively soon.

An analysis of returns by persons born in Sweden was provided in the interim report from the Committee for Labour Migration to Sweden (Swedish Government Report, SOU 2005:50). The interim report points out that former foreign nationals who have acquired Swedish citizenship in recent years have made up one fifth of migrating Swedish citizens.

Although there are material shortcomings in the statistics as regards the countries people who have left Sweden have moved to, one can discern certain patterns. Circular migrants born in the Nordic countries and the EU 27 return more often to their countries of origin or another country in the same region. People born in Africa tend to move onward to other regions where the standard of living is similar to that of Sweden.

2.4.2. CIRCULAR MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

People's attitudes towards integration in a new country are affected by whether or not they intend to stay permanently in the country. If people intend from the outset to stay only temporarily in the country to which they have moved, there is often less of a perceived need to learn the language, vote and otherwise get involved and assume shared social responsibility. However, many people who stay for a long time or move permanently to a new country originally intended to stay only temporarily.

The traditional perception that migration involves moving from one place to another, where the migrant intends to stay permanently, has proven to be increasingly inadequate to describe the migration patterns of our time. As distances have shrunk in the wake of globalisation and technical progress, the circular elements have shaped migration to an increasing extent. People move between countries, sometimes for longer periods, sometimes for shorter, and make important contributions both "here" and "there". This perspective on migration patterns also has consequences on attitudes towards integration.

Some believe that migrants who are constantly aware of their countries of origin and who are "driven by homesickness" have difficulty putting down roots. Others believe that it is only through preserving strong transnational and cultural ties to their countries of origin that migrants can feel secure and confident enough to successfully put down roots in a new society.²⁷ While a generally accepted notion was once that "too much" focus on the country of origin had negative impact on integration, more studies are now showing that these two perspectives are instead mutually and positively reinforcing²⁸ and that migrants' engagement in and contacts with the old country may have positive impact on integration in the new country. Successful integration in the country of destination also helps improve conditions for successful reestablishment in the country of origin.²⁹ This also maximises the positive effects for circular migration.

²⁷ Vertovec, 2005

²⁸ Mazzucato, 2009

²⁹ Government Bill 2002/03:122 (p.40)

Factors that contribute to successful integration include strong ties to the labour market, language skills, relevant education or work experience and social networks. These factors are relevant to both integration in the country of destination and reestablishment in the country of origin.

2.4.3. BRAIN DRAIN AND CIRCULAR MIGRATION

Although brain drain is a pressing problem for certain countries of origin, particularly in certain sectors, the general assessment is today that, overall, the advantages of migration outweigh the disadvantages. The solution for the countries of origin is not found in limiting migration flows. Instead, they must capitalise on the opportunities – *brain gain* – that mobility brings. The UNDP believes that emigration of highly qualified workers is an expression of substandard conditions in the country of origin that cannot be managed through restrictions on migration flows, and must instead be countered with measures that make it more attractive for people to stay and make a living at home.³⁰ Hence, much of the responsibility for managing the de facto problem that brain drain entails for certain countries of origin is put on the countries themselves.

The outflow of people with university degrees has immediately tangible as well as more indirect consequences for the countries of origin. When these people choose to migrate, they naturally leave a void behind. Often these situations involve people whose education was subsidised by the state and whose knowledge and skills might have been very useful in the development of their own country. But migration also sets other forces in motion that also contribute to development. The migrant becomes part of the country's Diaspora and can contribute through financial and social remittances as well as skills and technology transfer, which promote productivity and can make an important contribution to development in the country of origin.³¹

The increased interaction across national borders in the wake of globalisation has reduced the negative impact of brain drain. Modern technical platforms make it possible for migrants who so wish to play a part in the development of their country of origin, financially, politically and socially. Many migrants become important “bridge-builders” between the new country and the old, by virtue of their cultural background, skills and experiences.

Alongside the positive impacts of increased migration in the form of remittances, investments, increased trade, etc., the outflow of highly educated people and the attendant opportunities in the form of better jobs, higher pay and new experiences are an inherent incentive for other people to pursue higher education. Considering that, despite everything, it is only a small percentage of people who migrate, this can contribute to a general improvement of skills in

³⁰ Human Development Report, 2009

³¹ Lowell and Findlay, 2001

the society, which in turn paves the way for development.³² *Brain drain* has been replaced by *brain circulation* when people's skills benefit both the country of origin and the host country in this way. Involving the Diaspora in development in their countries of origin by establishing networks and organisations has proven to be an effective way to counter the negative impacts of brain drain.

Since December 2008, the Migration Board has been tasked with reporting statistics over granted permits for each of the ten most common occupations represented by labour migrants. Among else, these reports provide an opportunity to monitor any increases in the number of labour migrants from particularly vulnerable social sectors in developing countries.

2.4.4. FUTURE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR CIRCULAR MIGRATION

As mentioned above, CiMU is supposed to submit proposals for possible legislative amendments and other measures that should be taken to facilitate circular migration to and from Sweden and thus increase the positive development impacts of this type of migration. The proposals will be presented in a final report in March 2011.

2.4.5. IMPLEMENTATION OF EU DIRECTIVES RELEVANT TO CIRCULAR MIGRATION

Sweden has implemented the relevant provisions of Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003 concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents. According to Chapter 5 a, Section 5 of the Swedish Aliens Act (statute 2005:716), long-term resident status in Sweden must be withdrawn, *inter alia*, if the person granted such status has stayed outside the territories of the EU Member States for twelve consecutive months or if the person granted such status has stayed outside Sweden's territory for six consecutive years.

At present, it is too early to state how Sweden intends to implement the relevant provisions of the Blue Card Directive.

³² Tamas, 2004

3. DATA ON CIRCULAR AND TEMPORARY MIGRATION

3.1. HOW CAN CIRCULAR MIGRATION BE DESCRIBED IN STATISTICS?

The composition of the population at any given time is a point of departure for mapping circular migration to and from Sweden. The population changes over time as people join or leave this population group. In our context, this usually occurs through an international move. This can be described as a population pool with inflows and outflows of people.

The pool, that is, the registered population in Sweden at any given time, is made up of people who are already circular migrants or may become circular migrants in the future. The pool is made up of subsets of the entire population that are characterised by different traits and can be divided into groups according to certain criteria. The flows of people who move across a national border during a certain year show how common migration is during a certain time period. Data on migration, and thus circular migration, in the statistics are connected to the population registry. The people included in SCB's ongoing statistics are those who are in the Swedish population registry. People are required to register with the population registry in Sweden if they intend to stay here – with a right of residence or a permanent residence permit – for longer than one year.

In addition to the people in the population registry, there are a number of groups of people who can be regarded as having migrated here to stay for less than one year, or who are not in the population registry for other reasons, but who still cannot be regarded merely as tourists or temporary visitors. In this group, there are naturally problems with delineating who of these people should be considered migrants. Nor are these groups covered in a statistical description of migration based on SCB's population registry.

3.2. MAPPING OF MIGRATION AND CIRCULAR MIGRATION IN SWEDEN

At the turn of the year 2009/2010, the population of Sweden was 9,340,000 persons and of the entire population, about 14 per cent were born abroad and have already embarked on their migration "careers." Of Sweden's total population 283,400 people (3 per cent) have moved at least twice across the national border and may hence be considered circular migrants in the statistical sense. Of these, 202,400 people were born in Sweden and have thus moved out of the country at least once and then returned. Just under one per cent of Sweden's population, 81,000 people, are circular migrants born abroad, who have at least once moved here, moved out of the country and then moved back to Sweden again. A large proportion of the circular migrants in Sweden born abroad consists of people born in another Nordic country, with 41 per cent originally from a Nordic country. Barely one in five is from an EU country and a

further 10 per cent come from another country in Europe. Thus, almost 70 percent of circular migrants in Sweden were born abroad and come from Europe. Those who originate from countries in Sweden's immediate vicinity made the most moves. A larger proportion of circular migrants have post-secondary education than the population as a whole. However, for circular migrants who are not highly educated, the level of education is lower than the average in Sweden.

Few of the elderly are circular migrants, but among the total population of persons born abroad, some 365,000 people are either retired or will retire within a couple of years. They constitute a group of potential circular migrants. Many of those born abroad and who are above the age of 55 have been in Sweden for such a long time that they have become naturalised Swedish citizens.

There is a group of people who previously lived in Sweden but who have now left the country and constitute a Swedish Diaspora abroad. This partly concerns persons born in Sweden. There are 21,400 Swedish-born circular migrants abroad who left Sweden at some point since 2000. Most of them, 32 per cent, have moved to other EU countries and 29 per cent to another Nordic country. Regarding the total number of Swedish-born persons abroad, it is very difficult to assess how many are currently abroad. However, estimates indicate that it is likely to be more than 250,000 people. If they all chose to move back to Sweden, the population would increase by almost three per cent. Persons born abroad who were registered as residents in Sweden for a period but have now left Sweden also constitute a kind of Swedish Diaspora abroad. There are 169,500 persons born abroad who lived in Sweden for a period of time and then left the country after 2000. The patterns of movement look different for people from different countries and regions. Circular migrants born in a Nordic country or the EU 27 return to a greater extent to their home country or to another country in the same region. People born in Africa often move onward to another EU country or North America.

Between 1969 and 2009, over a period of 40 years, 850,000 people made circular moves that involved Sweden. The circular migrants that can be identified in available statistics – people who moved at least twice across the national border – have together generated 2,039,000 moves or “events” in the statistics since 1969. Women and men largely made the same number of circular moves. Children accounted for about 440,000, 22 per cent, of circular moves. Underlying every move is a new decision and a different set of individual reasons for moving.

Table 3.1 Sweden's population in 2009 – the basis for circular migration

Category	Number	Percentage of total population
Swedish population	9,340,682	100%
<i>of whom</i> born abroad	1,337 965	14%
<i>of whom</i> born outside the Nordic countries and EU/EEA	809,160	9%
<i>of whom</i> foreign nationals	602,893	6%
<i>of whom</i> nationals of a country outside the Nordic region and the EU/EEA	295,633	3%
<i>of whom</i> born in Sweden of two parents born abroad	395,948	4%

Source: SCB

Table 3.2 Diaspora groups in Sweden 2009

	Country of origin	Born abroad	Citizens of country of origin
1	Iraq	118,000	47%
2	Iran	59,922	20%
3	Bosnia-Herzegovina	56,127	15%
4	Turkey	40,766	27%
5	Somalia	31,734	78%
6	Thailand	28,739	60%
7	Chile	28,320	25%
8	Lebanon	23,701	10%
9	China	21,202	56%
10	Syria	19,646	17%
11	United States	16,555	53%
12	India	16,456	35%
13	Russia	14,443	49%
14	Ethiopia	13,052	23%
15	Afghanistan	12,745	70%

Source: SCB statistics processed by CiMU

The amended rules for labour migration to Sweden have been in force since 15 December 2008. Once more time has passed, it will be possible to see to what extent labour migrants become eligible to stay in Sweden with a permanent residence permit, how many leave Sweden for good or choose to leave Sweden and return later for another period. The new legislation provides unique opportunities to track an individual over time from the date of immigration and forward as the worker's legal status changes (a "cohort approach"). Analysis based on this type of factual input can answer questions about how an individual's career develops over time, how common the transition to a permanent residence permit is, how developments differ between those who have short-term residence permits compared to people who are registered residents, the average length of stay in Sweden for those who leave Sweden, and other similar questions.

It is statistically difficult to show whether circular migration is a growing phenomenon since it is something that occurs over a lifetime. However, there are tendencies in the statistical material ordered by CiMU which indicate that circular migration is becoming increasingly common – and especially that it is an increasingly global phenomenon. We have had intra-Nordic circular migration for a long time, but as it becomes easier to travel between countries, long-haul circular migration is also growing.

There is a tremendous need for research, especially as regards cohort analyses in which researchers can track migrants over time.

4. CONCLUSIONS

As mentioned, Sweden has not established any specific projects or programmes intended to bring about or manage circular migration. Unlike many other EU Member States, Sweden regards circular migration as a naturally occurring phenomenon that can be facilitated by means including a legal and policy framework that creates preconditions and, as far as possible, avoids impediments to mobility. The Swedish point of departure hence differs from that of the EU's definition of the concept as provided in the specifications to this study, wherein return within a specified time period is a fundamental precondition. It is therefore difficult to identify any best practices as regards "managed" circular migration.

The amended regulations for labour migration that took effect in Sweden in December 2008 have provided increased opportunities for more people to come to Sweden to work and hence the number of potential circular migrants may also increase. As noted in section 2.2.1, certain preconditions already exist that can encourage and facilitate circular migration to and from Sweden – such as the right to maintain dual citizenship – which could be regarded as good practices.

In order to further study how spontaneous circular migration to and from Sweden can be facilitated and its positive impacts on development promoted, the Government appointed in July 2009 a Parliamentary Committee for Circulation and Development. The Committee has been asked to submit proposals concerning possible legislative amendments and other measures by March 2011. Consequently, it is too early to draw any conclusions about best practices.

It is understood that increased mobility provides no inherent guarantee of positive impacts on development. A wide array of factors in countries of origin and countries of destination affect both the prerequisites for and the effects of circular migration. At the national level, the Swedish Government's decision to appoint a Parliamentary Committee constitutes one avenue to systematically analysing the issue and preparing a basis for possible future policy changes.

Initiatives are also required at the European level to engage third countries in dialogue about circular migration and development. The EU's global approach to migration, which encompasses collaborative instruments such as Mobility Partnerships and Cooperation Platforms, provides scope for dialogue and practical collaboration concerning these matters.

The Stockholm Programme includes an invitation to the Commission to submit proposals regarding ways to further explore the concept of circular migration and study ways to facilitate orderly circulation of migrants, either taking place within, or outside, the framework of specific projects or programmes, including a wide-ranging study on how relevant policy areas may contribute to and affect the preconditions for increased temporary and circular mobility.

There is a substantial need for research in this field, particularly as regards cohort analyses which allow migrants to be observed over time.

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