



DIRECTION **EXECUTIVE** DIRECTORATE

## **EMN conference on climate change and migration**

# **PANEL 2: POSSIBLE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON MIGRATION TOWARDS THE EMN MEMBER AND OBSERVER COUNTRIES – WHAT CAN WE EXPECT?**

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## Migrants could play a positive role in mitigating climate change



- > A large and growing body of research investigate the relative influence of climate factors in instigating migration
- > Other interlinkages between migration and climate change has received less attention, such as:
  - > **Migration not solely affected by climate change, but can also be part of the efforts to mitigating climate change**
  - > **Besides migration due to slow- and fast onset climate events, future migration flows may also be indirectly influenced by policy responses to climate change.**

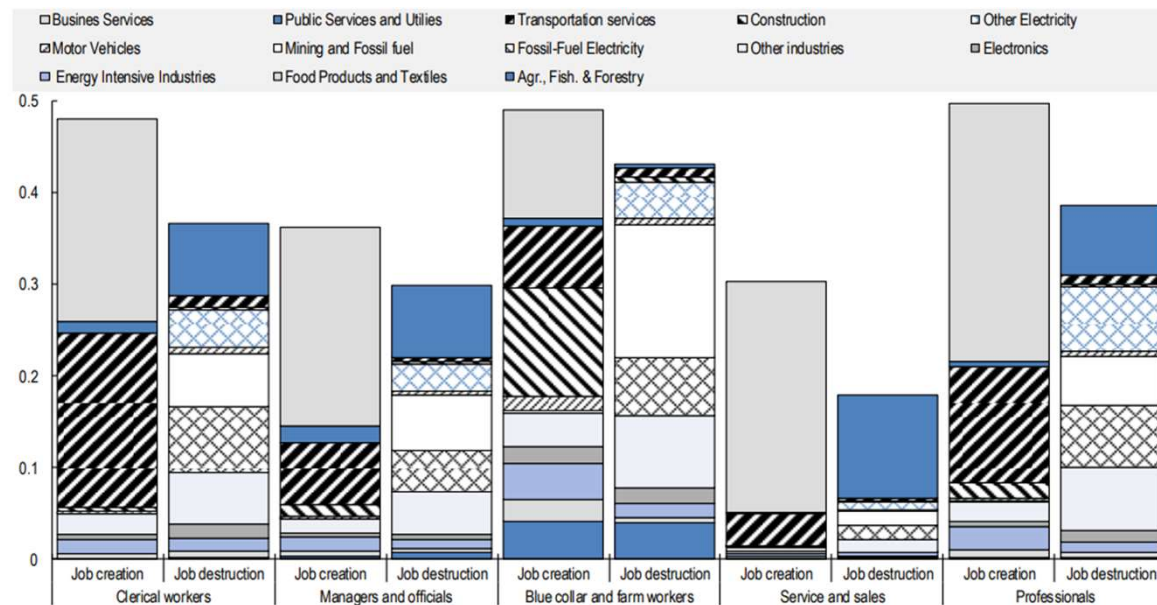


- > **Green policies and the green transition will impact labour markets and create labour and skills bottlenecks**
  - > Labour market rigidities hamper the reallocation of workers between sectors and occupations and generates skills gaps and shortages.
- > Migrants constitute a key workforce in OECD countries, representing between 16% (OECD Europe) and 25% and above (Australia, Canada and New Zealand) of the employed
- > A considerable share of the migrant workforce in OECD countries is concentrated in sectors that are important for the green transition, e.g. construction and ITC

## Green transition- labour market implications

- Example of policy simulations shows the effect of green growth policies on labour markets in OECD and non-OECD countries
- Green transition is not only creating high-skilled jobs, low-skilled workers will also be in demand
- Phasing out of fossil fuel likely to increase the demand for high-skilled occupations, such as software or electrical engineers. Other expanding industries, conversely, may still need low-skilled workers, as e.g., the construction sector

**Change in sectoral composition of job creations and job destructions in OECD countries, by job category**  
*Mixed policy scenario (carbon tax and energy efficiency measures)*



OECD, 2018



## Effects of climate policy beyond OECD/EMN countries may also affect future migration flows

- **Less oil dependency in major migrant hosting countries**
- Impacts of job creation and destruction resulting from decarbonization policy expected to be higher for non-OECD countries
  - > particularly for countries and regions which heavily depends on fossil fuels, e.g. Middle-East and North Africa
  - > The members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) together hosts around 30 million migrants, often employed in constructions projects that revolve around oil
- A global shift towards more renewable energy sources, and a sequential fall in oil prices, is likely to result in some changes in the levels and patterns of future migration flows
- **Adaptation and mitigation efforts in climate vulnerable migrant origin countries**
- Could both deter or spur migration depending on context (reference to studies showing climate mitigating effects can both lead to increase and decrease of migration depending on initial income level)
- One example is the Great Green Wall in Africa, to fight desertification that is predicted to cause future large-scale emigration from the African continent
  - > Impacts on migration flows uncertain: access to adaptation measures generate different impact on out-migration depending on income level



## Opportunities and challenges ahead

- **Facilitating mobility that can help meet labour and skill demands in migrant destination countries**
  - Labour migration offers one way to address labour and skills demand-supply mismatches and speed up the transition process
  - International students constitute one of the most promising pools of future innovators. Students can also help spur international knowledge transfers
  - Immigrant entrepreneurs play a vital role in spurring innovation, job creation, attracting foreign investment and driving economies forward. The green tech start-up sector plays a key role for the green transition
- **Integration of settled migrants important, especially for low-skilled migrants**
  - Unequal distributional effects from the green transition will affect certain (more vulnerable) groups of the population.
  - Low-skilled migrants are likely to face above-average adjustment costs when faced with job displacement, especially since migrants are less likely to access training, and that the training gap persists also in times when training needs of migrants are particularly high
- **Balancing the need for green workers in countries of origin and destination**
  - important to ensure that the green transition can take place on both migrant origin and sending countries
- **Facilitate for diaspora and remittances to contribute to climate adaptation and mitigation in migrant origin countries (investments and knowledge transfers)**

## How to make migration policy future ready

### Labour migration policy

- > Labour migration programmes need to be flexible, respond to specific needs and facilitate the mobility of migrant workers of different skill level that are relevant for the green transition
- > Recognition of skills is important factor ensure migrants can contribute their maximum capacity, and improve labour market outcomes
- > Helping refugees and people displaced by climate change factors access existing labour immigration programmes

### International students and entrepreneurs

- > More and more OECD countries offer extended possibilities to former international students to stay and work in the country upon graduation, and make years of residence as student count towards residence requirements for naturalisation
- > Attracting top entrepreneurial talent through start-up visas and favourable conditions for international entrepreneurs is becoming popular among OECD countries

### Integration policy

- > Make sure immigrants has equal access to skilling and re-skilling, above all low-skilled migrants that are particularly vulnerable to adverse labour market impacts

### Facilitate for global green transition

- > Ensure that green skill development (for origin and destination country) can occur in parallel (e.g., “Green” Skills Mobility Partnerships)
- > Facilitate for remittances and diaspora investments to be used for climate adaptation and mitigation in migrant origin countries