

# How to Improve Intra-European Mobility and Circular Migration? Fostering Diaspora Engagement

## Rīga, 11-12 May 2015

This high-level expert conference is organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia in cooperation with non-governmental organisation the “Europeans Throughout the World”, the Latvian Institute of International Affairs and non-governmental organisation the “European Latvian Association” and is supported by the Representation of the European Commission in Latvia, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and the Nordic Council of Ministers’ Office in Latvia.

### 11 May

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| 8:30 – 9:30   | REGISTRATION  |
| 9:30 – 10:00  | OPENING REMARKS<br>Mrs. Laimdota Straujuma, Prime Minister, Latvia (tbc)  |
| 10:00 – 10:30 | KEYNOTE SPEECH<br>Mrs. Marianne Thyssen, Member of the Commission for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, European Commission (tbc) |
| 10:30 – 12:30 | PANEL I<br>Labour mobility in the EU: from fundamental right to freedom of movement to a more efficient allocation of labour resources?                 |
| 12:30 – 13:30 | LUNCH   |
| 13:30 – 15:30 | PANEL II<br>Macro-economic aspects of people’s mobility   |
| 15:30 – 17:30 | PANEL III<br>Social, cultural and perception aspects of mobility  |
| 19:00 – 21:00 | DINNER. INFORMAL PANEL<br>Mobility from the perspective of non-EU countries   |

### May 12

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| 09:30 – 11:30 | PANEL IV<br>Return migration and working with diaspora communities: what advice to Latvia? |
| 11:30 – 12:30 | CONCLUSIONS  |
| 12:30 – 13:00 | PRESS CONFERENCE   |

## Participants

The speakers of the panels have been selected based on merits and will include high ranking officials from the EU's Member States' governments, dedicated experts from international bodies dealing with mobility issues, including from the European Commission, the Court of Justice of the European Union and OECD, as well as representatives of non-governmental organisations.

By 15 March, the following distinguished speakers have confirmed their attendance at the conference:

*Egils Levits*, Judge, Court of Justice of the EU

*Marina del Corral Telléz*, Secretary General of Immigration and Emigration, Ministry of Employment and Social Security, Spain

*Walter Radermacher*, Director General, Eurostat, European Commission

*Dr. Yves Pascouau*, Director of Migration and Mobility Policies, European Policy Centre

*Prof. Raul Eamets*, University of Tartu, Chairman of the Fiscal Council, Estonia

*Luca Visentini*, Confederal Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation

*Elizabeth Collett*, Director of Migration Policy Institute Europe

*Juan Menéndez-Valdés*, Director, Eurofound

*Jonathan Chaloff*, International Migration Division, OECD

*Prof. Aija Lulle*, Director of Diaspora and Migration Studies Centre, University of Latvia

*Dr. Inta Mieriņa*, Scientific Director, University of Latvia

*Pierre-Yves Le Borgn'*, Member of the National Assembly, France

*Ginte Damušis*, Director, Department of Lithuanians Living Abroad, Ministry of Foreign affairs, Lithuania

*Dr. Raymond C. Xerri*, Director of Maltese Living Abroad Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malta, Europeans throughout the World

*Niels Jørgen Thøgersen*, President, Europeans Throughout the World

*Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger*, Ambassador, Director General IV for Legal and Consular Affairs, Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Austrian Coordinator on Combating Human Trafficking, Austria

## Description of the conference

The aim of the conference is to examine the macro-economic and fiscal effects of intra-EU labour migration after 2004, and to look at existing legal, social, cultural and cognitive impediments to greater mobility of people. The conference's ambition is to establish a set of policy recommendations for more integrated and better functioning internal market for labour, including maximizing the utility of diaspora communities, to be forwarded to the EU's decision-makers.

The first session - **labour mobility in the EU: from fundamental rights to freedom of movement to a more efficient allocation of labour resources?** - will be devoted to labour migration as a more efficient allocation of resources. Freedom of movement is a fundamental right of the citizens of the EU. Moreover, this right is closely linked to better economic performance of the EU, as cross-border movement of people is contributing to overall productivity growth. However, the great number of cases annually considered by the Court of Justice of the EU related to mobility points to significant loopholes in application of this fundamental right and, thus, also to a waste of economic potential. The purpose of this session would be to look at the evidence from the court room on most pertinent issues connected to people's mobility, and to assess how the current EU's legal framework could be improved to overcome the existing hindrances.

The second session - **macro-economic aspects of people's mobility** - will address the macro-economic aspects of mobility in the EU. Without doubt, the EU as a whole has benefited from a better utilisation of the workforce through labour mobility. However, from the EU economic governance perspective, labour mobility complicates timely identification of macroeconomic imbalances. Labour flows can be volatile – it is difficult to know how much of inflows/outflows are permanent. Migration affects wage dynamics – containing wage pressures in the recipient countries and stimulating wage increases in the countries of origin. The session will start with the examination of the overall numbers and profiles of migrants, and will address the problem of statistical “intangibility” of people’s cross-border movements.<sup>1</sup> Once there is a notion of overall figures, some general assessments can be made as to the effects on both sending and receiving countries. Is this true that the mostly motivated, harder-working have left/are emigrating? If yes, what impact will it have on competitiveness and economic prospects of affected Member States?<sup>2</sup> And what implications will it have for the EU as a whole?

This third session - **social, cultural and perception aspects of mobility** - will be dedicated to social, cultural and perception aspects of mobility: access and strain to social security systems and the transferability of social payments between/among the Member States. Allegedly, labour mobility has induced changes in the social security systems in the Member State, exposing weaknesses of the existing social welfare models (e.g., detrimental work incentives, welfare tourism, social benefits in one country pay more than salary in another country). This session will also examine how mobility affects family members of mobile citizens, especially children. Moreover, the diverging perceptions of how certain perceived problems correspond to reality, notably, how real is the receiving Member States' and their citizens' concerns about the risks of labour mobility on their countries' social systems and public services will also be addressed.

The informal session - **mobility from the perspective of non-EU countries**, - over the dinner, will be devoted to examination of the views of some non-European countries with large diaspora communities inside the European Union on the issues of freedom of movement and engagement of their diaspora communities.

This fourth session - **return migration and working with diaspora communities: what advice to Latvia?** – will deal with sharing Member States' experiences in fostering return migration and working with diaspora communities. If Latvia and other sending countries are to move from middle-income level countries to high income countries (with higher levels of innovation, higher value added exports, etc.), they will need to boost productivity very significantly. One potential source for high-qualified, educated, experienced workers are overseas' diaspora communities, which may have not only economic but also sentimental reasons to return and contribute to the economy. What are the lessons learned and 'success stories' from the Member States which have been able to re-attract their compatriots?

The Conference will conclude with concrete recommendations, policy proposals and suggestions addressed to European institutions regarding internal mobility and diaspora engagement. A draft text of policy recommendations, prepared by a group of experts before the event, will be available on the venue of the conference. Conference participants will be invited to reflect on these recommendations in written form. At the end of the conference, all relevant suggestions will be incorporated in the final text of the recommendations, which will be presented to the audience of the conference at the concluding session.

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<sup>1</sup> Empirically, Latvia and Lithuania have been the most affected countries in the EU in terms of outward labour migration: population and labour force has shrunk by at least 10% in both countries since EU accession. What is more, the surveys indicate that well educated people have more propensities to emigrate and less willingness to return.

<sup>2</sup> For example, what we are seeing in Latvia is a significantly higher structural unemployment (around 10%) than Estonia, which means that further employment growth may start driving-up wages/salaries to levels above productivity growth, which would negatively affect Latvia's growth prospects.