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# Migration and development policies: The state of affairs before the 2015 European migration crises in the Czech Republic and its current implications

Robert Stojanov <sup>a, b, \*</sup>, Oldřich Bureš <sup>c</sup>, Barbora Duží <sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Informatics, Faculty of Business and Economics, Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic

<sup>b</sup> Migration Policy Centre, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Florence, Italy

<sup>c</sup> Center for Security Studies, Metropolitan University Prague, Czech Republic

<sup>d</sup> Department of Environmental Geography, Institute of Geonics, Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic

## ARTICLE INFO

Article history:  
Available online xxx

### Keywords:

Development policy  
Migration policy  
Coherence  
International migration  
The Czech Republic  
European Union

## ABSTRACT

This article analyses attitudes of key stakeholders towards migration and development policies in the Czech Republic. It is generally understood that migration policy is a set of measures aimed primarily at handling immigration flows to developed countries, while development policy seeks to foster sustainable growth in developing countries. We conducted semi-structured interviews with 21 experts from the public decision-making, non-governmental, academic and private (legal) spheres to gather their opinions on the practice of, and relations between, the Czech migration and development policies. The findings of our research point to the lack of coherence between these two types of policies and they highlight several specific discrepancies across individual policy instruments. Moreover, albeit our research was conducted prior to the escalation of the EU migration crisis in 2015, several of our findings contextualize the Czech response to this crisis, both at the national and European Union level.

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## 1. Introduction

Migration of populations is an important socio-economic indicator of social processes. According to estimates by the United Nations Population Division (UNPD), the number of grants in 2015 reached about 244 million internationally, which accounts for approximately 3.3 percent of the world's population (UNPD, 2015). Labor migration, in particular, is considered to be a potential factor in development. The reasons for the growing interest in studying the links between migration and development are varied, however the most important ones undoubtedly include the rising number (in absolute terms) of immigrants from developing countries who are based in economically developed countries; the increasing quantity of remittances sent over the last 10–15 years; and the ageing population in economically developed countries. Another key reason lies in disenchantment with the failures of traditional development interventions such as Official Development Assistance (ODA) and the ensuing search for alternative solutions which, for example, give the issue of remittances considerable

\* Corresponding author. Department of Informatics, Faculty of Business and Economics, Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic, Migration Policy Centre, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Florence, Italy.

E-mail address: [stojanov@centrum.cz](mailto:stojanov@centrum.cz) (R. Stojanov).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2017.06.002>

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Please cite this article in press as: Stojanov, R., et al., Migration and development policies: The state of affairs before the 2015 European migration crises in the Czech Republic and its current implications, Communist and Post-Communist Studies (2017), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2017.06.002>

attention and importance. In this respect, research by [Stojanov and Strielkowski \(2013\)](#) points to greater stability in the flow of remittances than that of ODA and to the more positive impact of remittances than of ODA on economic growth.

The links between migration and development policy have already been the subject of a number of studies, and it is not possible to offer even a succinct review of all of these publications. Instead, we want to point out the emergence of several key thematic areas in the research on migration and development. The first area includes studies that try to determine to what extent individual migration policies (or their tools) contribute to development. [De Haas \(2012:21\)](#), for example, poses key questions along the following lines:

- i) How can differences in migration policies and in investment environments explain why migration plays a more positive role in development in some cases and a less positive (or negative) one in other cases?
- ii) Can the target country of migration increase the development potential of migration by creating legal channels for qualified or non-qualified migration? Alternatively, can this be done by using integration policies that prevent the marginalization of migrants (for example, by giving them the same rights as the majority population in the fields of basic rights, education, health care, employment, and others)?
- iii) How can the migration policies of target countries support the personal growth of migrants (instead of exploiting them) and thus maximize their social and economic ability to contribute to the development of their countries of origin?

The second area of research includes recent literature devoted to the links between migration and development which focuses primarily on quantifying the economic impact of remittances (for instance, [Adams, 2011](#); [Ziesemer, 2012](#); [Bettin et al., 2012](#)). These studies examine, for example, effects on health care ([Amuedo-Dorantes and Pozo, 2011](#)); the role of remittances in protecting households for natural disasters ([Mohapatra et al., 2009](#)); and the relationship between the determinants of migration and the motivation for sending remittances ([Garip, 2012](#)).

Some of the security-oriented literature, however, also highlights a serious security risk based on the lack of regulation of the informal banking systems (“hawalas”) through which a considerable portion of remittances flows due to their availability to illegal migrants and their lower charges compared to standard bank transfers ([Razavy and Haggerty, 2009](#)). Furthermore, [Sørensen \(2012:69\)](#) draws attention to the dangers of privatizing and outsourcing control measures in the field of migration, a concern closely related to the broader issue of the advantages and disadvantages of using the services of private military and/or security companies, which is now being discussed extensively within security studies ([Avant, 2004](#); [Bureš, 2014](#); [Jäger and Kümmel, 2007](#); [Ortiz, 2010](#); [Singer, 2003](#)). [Gammeltoft and Hansen \(2009\)](#), for example, examine the repercussions of the privatizing border controls in the UK since 2005 as well as the gradually increasing privatization of checkpoints between Israel and the Palestinian West Bank since the same year. Similarly, [Richey \(2006\)](#) investigates the unprecedented privatizing of US border controls with Mexico in terms not only of the scale of operations, but also of the rising prices which the US federal government pays to private companies.

In a recent study, [Saldivar and Price \(2015\)](#) explored the growing involvement of what they called “the prisons industrial complex” in immigration enforcement and in the running of immigration detention centers in the US, pointing out that companies operating private prisons have spent over 90% of their lobbying dollars in states that have proposed harsher and more stringent immigration laws, such as Arizona. Overall, therefore, the privatization of what have traditionally been understood as “inherently” governmental/state operations highlights the hitherto inadequate regulation and supervision of the private military and/or security companies which activities increasingly directly affect the lives, freedom and/or property of private persons ([Bureš, 2015](#)).

The third important area of research into the migration–development nexus covers the diversity of migration policies that attempt to control immigration flows of residents to economically developed countries (especially from the perspective of European Union (EU) member states). In this regard, [Castles \(2004\)](#), for example, believes that European migration policies fail for three major reasons, which are paraphrased below

- i) the policy instruments used by governments in the EU do not consider that migration processes have their own dynamics (for example, transnational networks) which cannot be bound by the regulations issued;
- ii) migration is “dictated” by processes of globalization and the economic and technological division of the world into North and South;
- iii) migration policies are formed on the basis of national political systems that do not allow efficient interconnection of policies into one supranational whole.

In addition, various instruments related to migration policies are adopted in the short term and often do not exceed the term of office of particular politicians. For this reason, [Skeldon \(2008:15\)](#) is skeptical about the effectiveness of political interventions in the area of international migration and development.

The importance of the links between migration and development, and the numerous dilemmas of policies that aim to manage immigration flows, have recently become particularly apparent within the EU, which the Czech Republic joined in 2004. It is nonetheless important to note that immigration has not emerged as a new issue in 2015, when the EU experienced an unprecedented influx of approximately 1.3 million asylum seekers, one half of whom claimed to flee the countries affected by civil conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan ([Eurostat, 2017](#)). Asylum migration towards the EU, via the routes from West

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