Migration and Development in Serbia

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Migration as a Development Opportunity in Serbia?

- Serbia looses app. 35,000 / year (demographic loss);
- More due to emigration: more than 400,000 citizens live only in EU (000,000 US, Canada, Russia, Australia);
- Population 7,131,787, birth rate 4.9% and median age 42.6 years. Only two districts have more young than old people;
- Only two districts (Belgrade and South Backa) increase population due to internal migration. Others loose people.
- Urbanization;
- Still many “old” refugees and IDPs from the Balkan Wars;
Development Challenges in Serbia?

- Unemployment 18.5%
- Relative poverty line app. 120 EUR, 25.4% of the population;
- Only 20 cities/municipalities have more than 100,000, while 13 have less than 10,000;
- Increasing migration towards large urban centers;
- No employment incentives for horizontal internal migration;
Agenda 2030: Challenges and Gaps
Connection to Agenda 2030 Challenges and Gaps

- “Regular” migration: in 2014, 11,208 work permits (1/3 China, 10% Russia); Less than 1,000 foreigners on NES and 1,288 foreign students;
- Sound non-discrimination guarantees;
- Not explicitly recognizing migration as a factor of development;
- Very modest debate in the society on migration;
- Over 800,000 crossed in 2015 and close to 100,000 in 2016
• End poverty in all its forms everywhere

- There were no transiting migrants until recently. Many of them are refugees;
- Social protection measures aiming at poverty alleviation are defined in policies for persons applying for protection, those who are assigned status of refugees or subsidiary protection, returnees according to readmission agreement and victims of trafficking.
- “Irregular migrants” are mostly excluded from financial assistance. Protection of “new categories” of migrants is defined more by general policies related to the human rights.
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

- “For all is provided”, Foreign citizens and stateless persons who are accorded international protection (refugees or persons with subsidiary protection) are entitled to health care services at the expense of state budget if they do not possess sufficient means.
  - In the practice all asylum seekers are considered as persons without sufficient means.
- Health services in reception centers by local doctors reassigned to these tasks and by international NGOs.
- Lack of personal medical records which store information on illness, medication, treatments of adults or children.
Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning

- Universal primary and secondary education is granted to migrants with approved international protection.
- Foreign citizens and stateless persons have right to all levels of education under same terms as domestic population.
- Access to basic formal primary and secondary education, while education policies that are more elaborating various education promotion measures are not specific in targeting migrant groups.
• Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

• Persons granted international protection have right to work. Asylum seekers after nine months of asylum seeking process.

• Returnees according to readmission agreements are subject of employment and integration policies as one of the most vulnerable groups whose labour participation is stimulated by different measures.

• Foreign citizens from the asylum and refugee migrant flows are not specific targets of employment measures (although entitled to labour permits and right to employment).
• **Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries**

  - Greater inclusion of the local level in migration policy planning
  - Local communities that are burdened by the migration flows and particularly if belong to the group of underdeveloped municipalities, are in need of constant and specific support from the Government.
  - During 2015, 2,866 persons were returned to Serbia, of whom 2,340 were Roma. Municipalities in southern Serbia and Belgrade appear to be receiving the majority of returnees.
  - 50,000 - 200,000 people who can be returned from Western Europe based on the readmission agreements.
• Goal 11. Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

1. Housing support to various categories of migrants is part of national migration management policies.

2. With mass migration flows pressure to cities which are on transit route or where migrants find temporary or long term accommodation face challenge of optimizing various resources that should be accessible to these groups of migrants.

3. There are basic policy instruments to accommodate and shelter migrants whether in transit or in asylum procedure. However, quality of accommodation is not always on the satisfactory level.
• Other Goals

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
• The overall policy framework for climate change and environmental protection refers to all residents in the country, without references to any category of migrants.

Goal 16: Peace Justice and Strong Institutions
Prevention and combating crimes related to the migration flows, including human smuggling, trafficking, forced labour, begging and trafficking of children for the purpose of adoption is sanctioned by the Criminal Code of Serbia.

Issuing basic documents for children of migrants born in Serbia is not defined.
The impact of migration crisis on local communities in Serbia

March, 2016

Gallup - UNDP Survey, February - March 2016 - draft results
Missed Opportunity during 2015/16 Crisis;

- 830,000 passed through (UNHCR)
- Negligible interest of the displaced to stay in Serbia, 577,995 intentions to seek asylum;
- Several hundred actual asylum application;
- In 2015 approximately 11 refugee status and 14 subsidiary protection;
- Similar in 2016 96,117 entries, 2,484 intentions, 7 refugee status, 9 subsidiary protection;
- The Government facilitated safe, orderly and humane transit, with almost no incidents, and none with local population;
Local municipalities were disproportionately affected by the migration crisis:

- Local service delivery;
- Depreciation of municipal assets;
- Loss of development gains;
- Exposure of capacity gaps;

- Since 8 March 2016, more unregulated migration
Mainstreaming Migration Into National Development Strategies;

- Stakeholders engagement in preparation of key strategic UN framework for the period 2016-2020 and the reflection of the migration and development issues within these documents;
- The research on the economic impacts of diaspora investment in Serbia;
- **Strengthened evidence base on M&D for planning and policy development:** 1) on labour migration and its impact on demographic trends and labour market in Serbia (1-4% of unemployed willing to move (765,000 / 14,000)) 2) research on the extent to which migration is represented in academic curricula (launch a Master Studies Programme at University of Belgrade, (3) Analysis of the impact that education in minority languages has on migration; (4) internal and external migration with special emphasis on youth.
Thank you
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