

Preliminary Expert Consultation on Business/Cities and Urbanisation/Migration

23 November 2010, The Hague

'How to Benefit from Human Mobility in Reaching One's Objectives?'

Participants

Business Group

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Cities Group

Steven BROERS, Murat DAOUDOV, Julia DEANS, Wilbert FLINTERMAN, Rachel KURIAN, Monica MADRIGAL, Hans METZEMAKERS, Marijke SHAHSAVARI (facilitator), Haydee SHEOMBAR, Coen VAN VULPEN.

Plenary

Han ENTZINGER and Ruud LUBBERS joined the afternoon plenary session.

Rationale

The consultation was designed to collect input from representatives of business and cities presenting their perspective on refugee and migration issues in relation to their professional objectives. The facilitators of both groups shared the main findings in plenary sessions to spark off a multidisciplinary debate and to work towards consensus.

Points from the discussions

- There is a tendency to see migration in terms of costs instead of benefits. This should be turned around. A public-private partnership should be created which promotes diversity and integration.
- (Local) governments should be aware of the successes business has reached so far in addressing and dealing with migration. Lessons learned should also be shared between governments and business.
- The global competition for talent is accelerating. Governments can be instrumental in enabling this competition by, e.g. lifting restrictive barriers.
- To make full use of corporate social responsibility (CSR) budgets, a business case should be made for the opportunities that integration and diversity policies offer.

Conclusions

- global developments force various stakeholders to become more strategically engaged in issues related to migration and refugees;
- business and cities have a shared interest in migration issues;
- differences in discourse between business and city representatives can hamper fruitful discussions;
- knowledge gaps seem to exist on both ends.

Recommendations

- Representatives from cities and business should cooperate to define local needs, making sure that national governments take these local needs into account in their decision making process.
- Popular perception towards migrants in Europe is increasingly negative. But distinguishing between groups of migrants presents an opportunity to move towards a more positive attitude.
- Diversity should be presented as an asset and not as a burden. Business and cities share an obligation to explain the rules and regulations already in place.
- Showcasing successful examples of high-level migrants could offer other migrants role models and could turn around perceptions in society. Objective data should be gathered to support a more positive line of thinking.
- Business and cities together can create opportunities to stimulate the build up of working experience, e.g. by offering short-term internship schemes.
- Representatives from cities and business should meet more frequently to identify obstacles and to exploit opportunities to overcome them.
- Migration organisations should be engaged in such meetings in order to make migrants stakeholders.
- THP could assist in developing an alliance model. An 'Alliance group' could be formed to set out an agenda to discuss how to put value into practice, how problems can be tackled and how a business case for migration can be made.

Decision

The participants in the consultation have decided to create from this consultation an 'Alliance Group' for follow-up, setting the stage for additional consultations.