

India-EU Migration: An Overview of the Dimensions



By

by

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Background

Mobility and migration between India and the EU is multi-dimensional in nature

- Comprises of both regular and irregular flows
- Involves short and long duration, circular, sector and occupation specific flows, regulated and other professions
- Sizeable diaspora with long-standing roots and interesting characteristics

New issues and forms of mobility are emerging with growth in technology startups & entrepreneurial ventures, focus on MSMEs and growing digital opportunities

Varied nature of flows between India and the EU and large stock of Indian migrants in the EU makes historical, social, economic, and regulatory issues pertinent to this relationship

Thus need a multi-faceted approach that builds on existing initiatives but also looks ahead at emerging trends

Wide ranging nature of this relationship well captured by the India-EU dialogues which indicate the importance of:

- Encouraging people-to-people contacts and human exchanges
- Co-operating closely in the field of migration, to encourage legal and orderly migration of students, professional and skilled workers to each others' country
- Facilitating temporary and circular migration based on mobility and the encouragement for a return of skills to the home country;
- Taking joint steps to prevent and suppress irregular migration, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings in accordance with respective national legislation
- Assuring the return to their country of illegal migrants who have been properly identified as their national and to combat irregular migration

Statement notes the importance of such movement and exchanges to bring people together and that management in partnership can mutually benefit economic, social and cultural development in both countries

Regular migration and mobility



**Mobility of students, academics,
researchers, trainees, interns**



**Professionals- skilled and
semi-skilled**

IT, health care (nursing), engineers, managers,
tech entrepreneurs

ICTs (managers, business visitors, executives),
independent professionals, contractual service
suppliers, specialists

Student and academic mobility

- India is the second most important source of international students in EU after China
 - UK, Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, Ireland, Denmark, even small countries like Cyprus) host Indian students
- Mutually beneficial relationship
 - Indian students are a source of financing, ‘future global talent’ for the EU
 - Provides Indian students with exposure and good educational opportunities
 - Can promote mutual understanding, trade, investment, research ties
- Several initiatives and programmes to facilitate mobility
 - Erasmus Mundus Programme since 1990- students from India received the maximum number of scholarships
 - German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)
 - Campus France.
 - UK- India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) by British Council



Issues to consider

Visas

- Cumbersome, time consuming, discretionary, non transparent, associated conditions
- Streamlining and certainty needed, address pre-consular procedures

Recognition and Standards

- Mis-alignment between programmes of Indian universities and those of European Universities -1year masters course in Europe and transnational programmes' degree not acceptable in many universities in India
- Bridging and other mechanisms lacking for establishing equivalence
- More regulatory cooperation needed between accreditation bodies and educational establishments

Costs and finances

- High costs, limited scholarship and funded exchange programs
- More scholarships, post doctoral and funded research exchange schemes, academia internships /coop programs
- Information dissemination



Post study employment and stay

- Restrictions on post study work
- Prior local market search, residency conditions, Economic Needs tests, minimum wage requirements
- Greater flexibility on staying back and working following completion of studies needed
- Facilitate initial acquisition of professional experience post studies through internship and coop opportunities with industry

Language and culture

- Inhibits movement outside the UK
- Greater availability of programs and courses in the English language
- Language training tie-ups in India

Other social issues- integration, addressing discrimination

Technical and vocational education and exchange for youth

- Skilling alliances, youth internships, industry-academia collaboration schemes aligning with national initiatives in India

Marketing and promotion activities

- Thematic university missions at postgraduate and doctoral levels to strengthen research partnerships with India

Professional mobility

- EU labour mobility regulations are not harmonised
- Changes in immigration rules without prior notice
- Considerable differences in visa processing timelines among states, often cumbersome, not conducive to short term stays
- Restrictions on movement and employment of dependents
- Absence of long-term multiple entry visas



- Visa regulations not aligned with requirements of sectors such as IT where project requirements may vary and secondment between enterprises of the same group or to entities outside the parent company needed
- Restrictions on visits of Indian nationals working on economic, scientific, technological, cultural or humanitarian projects which could significantly contribute to bilateral relations (and vice versa)
- Mandatory requirements on foreign professionals to make social security contributions raises cost of doing business in EU
 - Several SSAs signed and in operation between India and EU countries- but review of impact, coverage, implications for secondments, future mobility patterns needed



Emerging segments

- Growth in technology startups, innovation, entrepreneurship and India's and the EU's strengths in this segment, will be an important area for promoting mobility and exchange of expertise
- Initiative launched to connect innovation and startup ecosystems between Europe and India- to support networking activities between startup incubators and accelerators on both sides, facilitate creation of an innovation platform
- Issue to address:
 - Do existing visa and residence schemes address the needs of the startup ecosystem on both sides and such partnerships?
 - Do innovative visa schemes have to be developed?



Irregular Migration

- Irregular migration from India to EU takes various paths.
 - Tourist visas, some as students, falsified reasons and forged documents
- Exploitative employment and abusive recruitment practices
 - Need to improve consular and other on-site welfare services
 - Greater cooperation between governments to identify and promote voluntary return of such persons
 - Using biometric identification, data and other information exchange and sharing of best practices
- Steps needed to reduce incentives for irregular migration
 - Current negotiations do not include low-skilled workers who enter through illegal means
 - Bilateral labour agreements addressing mobility of low skilled workers, selected occupations as exist between some countries and certain EU member states
 - Easing of entry barriers in certain sectors and occupations
 - Devising incentives for return and circular migration
 - Penalty mechanisms, enforcement of ethical recruitment and employment practices, justice mechanisms



Diaspora

- Three distinct categories of Indian diaspora in EU and their chief contributions:
 - Old migrants or ‘Indenture-origin migrants’
 - Post-independence migrants who have chosen host country citizenship
 - NRIs and Indian Students who are mostly there in professional capacity and retain their Indian passports
- Need to consider different approaches to target these diaspora segments in the EU for different purposes
 - philanthropy, voluntary contributions, remittances, investment and trade linkages, knowledge transfer, cultural ties, policy advocacy, capacity building, soft power and relations building, linkages with regions outside the EU





Summarizing the Dimensions



Types of mobility/persons

- Professionals
- Startups and technology entrepreneurs
- Researchers and innovators
- Students and academics
- Sector and occupation specific- health
- Low and semi-skilled
- Irregular migrants
- Diaspora

Types of associated issues to consider

- Visa and residence regimes-entry requirements, appropriateness of regimes, procedures, transparency, timeliness
- Standards, recognition, equivalence of qualifications
- Bilateral agreements- Social security, labour, sectoral
- Financial aspects-scholarships, funding mechanisms
- Labour market and other tests
- Establishment of partnerships between institutions
- Exchange of information, best practices, expertise
- Identification of irregular migrants, return and reintegration
- Welfare and protection of irregular migrants

To address the wide range of dimensions that characterize India-EU mobility and migration, need a multi-track approach involving multiple stakeholders:

Regulatory bodies
Government
Industry
Private entities
Civil society
Informal players

Research needed on:

- **Functioning and impact of bilateral agreements (SSAs, BLAs), review of existing agreements**
- **Survey of best practices in addressing irregular migration**
- **Sector and occupation specific mobility issues, demand-supply trends, barriers, incentives to return**
- **Study of visa regimes and applicability to sectors of mutual interest (IT, tech startups)**
- **Scope for regulatory cooperation and agreement on issues of equivalence and recognition of standards and training**
- **Impact of bilateral programs regarding student mobility, enhancing their impact and effectiveness**
- **Implications of various EU directives for India-EU mobility**
- **Investment-trade-mobility linkages**



Thank You

