
Call for a New Look at Regularisation as a tool for Managing Migration

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Mr Chair: ICMC appreciates the work of this Council session, and in particular the emphases by the Director General on partner collaboration and the attention given to irregular migration and mixed flows. We know and appreciate partnership with IOM on the ground; we and our members especially commend the good sense and quality of IOM's collaboration with NGOs, the Red Cross and UNHCR within the 10 Point Plan of Action and in the ongoing development of joint operating procedures to identify and help victims of human trafficking.

We have been struck quite positively by a number of interventions these past three days. On Monday, the delegation of Germany referred to IOM's work in return and reintegration but mentioned how they now looked for IOM to increase its focus on aspects of migration itself, and specifically, integration and labour migration. On Tuesday, South Africa observed that countries that have managed international migration well have "reaped immense benefits." Several presentations made the point that responses to irregular migration and mixed flows should take place within a *comprehensive* plan of migration management.

Here is the question: can IOM organise a process of research and dialogue on the role of regularisation as a solution in the range of migration management? If we may venture to say, this is the underrated tool in migration management today. ICMC and other NGOs would be willing to collaborate on that research and dialogue with IOM and member states, contributing among other things our experience of partnering with States in concrete regularisation-related programmes of identification and outreach to potential applicants, legal counselling and processing, cultural orientation, language and other integration supports.

Even in difficult economic times—and perhaps *especially* in the effort to fix labour, economic and social structures that have not worked well, isn't it time to take a serious, calm and considered look at the practical value of regularisation in its full range: from temporary regularisations to more long term and permanent regularising processes—not just for the higher skilled but also for others structurally demanded by labour markets?

In the EU alone, 43 specific regularisation programmes in 17 member states have awarded legal status to 3.2 million people between 1996 and 2008. More common than the political and media rhetoric suggest, and more successful than admitted, we believe that research will demonstrate that regularisation, even in difficult economic times, is a concrete, cost-effective tool to combat irregular migration, at *both* ends of the migration experience, beginning in fact with providing safe and sensible channels of migration in the first place. We further believe that research will underscore how regularising processes not only reduce the hiding-in-shadows of whole sectors of the population, employment and markets but quite conspicuously strengthen rule of law, economies, social cohesion, social *security* and *national* security.

So another way of asking this question: how can we afford to not look at regularisation with greater care and purpose?

Thank you.