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## **WP10-Deliverable 10.2 Strategic Research Agenda on Migration**

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**Lead contractor for this deliverable:** UNIROMA2

**Contributors:** CNRS, IDOS, ISMU, MIUR, PSE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Migration and migration-related diversity are likely to remain key topics of the European policy and research agenda for the foreseeable future. This asks for a rethinking of the research agenda on migration, from a strategic perspective as well as from a research perspective. How to benefit from and get access to available knowledge and expertise? How to promote the accumulation of knowledge and expertise? And how to address gaps in knowledge? These questions have been at the heart of the H2020 CrossMigration research project and have led to the definition of this strategic research agenda. In the following we will elaborate our advice on the research agenda on migration, addressing what funding could focus on, how funding could be organized and who should be involved in funding (and procedures). The objective is to suggest applications that are useful in shaping the next funding opportunities for migration research in the EU, and to provide roadmaps for the optimisation of research efforts in order to avoid overlapping and make them filling, where possible, the gaps in the spectrum of EU and national initiatives on migration.

### #WHAT: on what to focus research funding?

The systematic mapping and synthesis of studies on migration shows that a lot of research has been done over the last decades. EU funding programs and instruments from the past have played a key role in this. There are important opportunities to develop knowledge on migration further, by focusing on topics that we believe are understudied as well as by promoting systematic knowledge accumulation of existing research. Here, Crossmigration recommends a number of priorities:

- **Mainstreaming research on migration into a focus area.** Migration is not a stand-alone topic. It connects to broader themes as climate change, economy, international relations, gender, social policies, and many more. That is why we prefer speaking of research on migration rather than on migration research. We advocate a stronger connection with and embedding of research on migration in research on other themes and areas in which migration plays a role. Looking at the experiences with *Water and Food* and *Circular Economy*, we think a Focus Area on migration would be an interesting model to look. At issue is the phenomenon of migration in the sense of epochal mobility in its complex and articulated shape, that embraces a series of aspects that are first and foremost socio-economic and cultural but have a substantial bearing on security, health-care, environmental and nutritional issues.
- **Globalizing research on migration.** The theme of migration to (and from) Europe cannot be understood from a European or EU perspective only. It is crucial to study the broader socio-economic and political circumstances in the countries of origin that lead to migration in the first place, explore migration processes, including transit migration and look at the challenging situation in migrant receiving countries in the Global South, such as Lebanon, Jordan,



Uganda or Rwanda. In order to do so, voices from the Global South, also those of migrants themselves, should be included in creating a rich and diverse field of research. A strengthening of collaboration in research on migration, with non-European partners should be more encouraged. This includes partners from across the Mediterranean, but also partners from across Africa and Asia in particular.

- **Methodological innovation in research on migration.** There are great opportunities for innovation in how migration and diversity are studied. This includes working with big data or working with satellite-cartographic data. Such methodological innovations require investments without which their application in research on migration is yet limited.
- **Filling the gaps in research on migration.** The mapping and synthesis of research on migration has revealed that although much work has been done, specific urgent topics still remain understudied. We recommend to target funding instruments at those topics, including:
  - *Macro factors and micro-level migration decision making.* Our understanding of how migratory decisions are made ‘in the real world’ remains rather limited. More specifically, how do macro-level factors (e.g. development, conflict, climate change) shape micro-level aspirations to migrate? Analysing how structural and individual factors interact is necessary to understand why people move. This is an area particularly interesting for development, foreign policy and humanitarian actors, as they try to better assess how their interventions impact migration and forced displacement. Amongst other disciplines, behavioural economics and social psychology could provide much insight on how actors take decisions; whether to migrate, where to go to (or from), how to migrate, when to migrate, etc.
  - *How do EU interventions influence the drivers of migration?* The EU considers influencing the drivers of irregular migration and forced displacement as part of its strategic objectives but key questions remain on how the EU can leverage its instruments and whether its objectives are realistic and coherent. Besides, this questioning needs to extend to other migration flows (e.g. how EU interventions influence students who wish to come to Europe).
  - *What are the profiles of migrants arriving into Europe, what categorisations are used by the EU, and what are the effects of EU policies on these categories?* Policies often distinguish between different types of migration flows, and policymakers need data and analysis on the profiles of newcomers to design adequate migration, asylum and integration policies. However, more research is required on how these categories work out in practice, to what extent they reflect



the different profiles of migrants coming to Europe (i.e. mixed migration), and also what the effects of EU policies are on these categories or flows. It is important to study not only the effects of EU migration policies, but also the general social and economic policies (i.e. welfare) on both intra-EU and external migration flows. Studying inter-EU mobility and migration outside Europe together will be beneficial for exploring policy implications more comprehensively. More specifically, we suggest to examine what are the implications of the recent large scale refugee intake in Europe for the upcoming family mobility; the new geographies of the intra-EU and outside EU labour migration; what role changes in wage differentials play in both; what are the factors affecting changes in migration temporalities (permanent, temporary, circular, seasonal, short-term...). How these are affected by uncertainties and exclusion.

- *Integration.* Migration is an important factor in increasing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity within receiving societies. Migration poses questions of social and cultural (not only economic) integration, raises tensions about dominant values or prevailing traditions, stresses the limits of the institutional make up of receiving countries with the quest of accommodating new populations with different cultures and needs.
- *Migration infrastructures.* There is a comparably strong focus on human smugglers and traffickers in migration studies. Compared to this, there is less research on regular agents such as work recruitment agencies, student mobility consultants or marriage agents which is surprising when taking into account how many (regular) migrants use their services. Also, digital migration studies are an emerging field of interest. Finally, there is little research on the interface of migration and tourism or migration and travel logistics. Notably, means of transportation, such as carriers, air(ports) or bus and train stations are widely neglected in migration research.
- *What is the future of the Schengen system?* The pending negotiations on the reform of the Common European Asylum System and the tensions resulting from secondary movements within Europe raise many questions on the sustainability of Schengen. What are the current limitations of the Schengen system? What are the new practices tested by the Member States, and what are their implications for the Schengen system? Could alternatives to the Schengen system be modelled, based on their economic, social and political costs and benefits, along with their legal implications?
- *What is EU's external migration policy achieving?* The EU is increasingly investing resources in its foreign policy, from cooperation on border management to readmission agreements with countries of origin. What



are the objectives of the EU and Member States in the field of external migration policy and do they match, overlap or conflict? What are the instruments available to the EU and Member States and do these initiatives complement each other or do they compete?

- *Focusing more on decision making in migration governance.* There has been significant research on structure of migration and diversity policymaking, at the EU, national, regional and local level. However, much less is known of how governance actors actually take decisions in real world settings. Rather than focusing on evaluation of policy outcomes, we suggest focussing also on policy decision making. This can lead to important contributions to the quality of migration governance. It can cover topics as evidence-based policymaking, how to cope with social complexity, how to cope with contestation and politicization, how to cope with incident-driven politics, etc.

### **#HOW: how to focus research funding?**

In the following, we have looked into how to focus research funding, including the use of funding instruments. Especially, we will consider the community response to the way migration related themes have been posted on Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge 6 calls and topics, on the Joint Programming Initiative Urban Europe, on the joint research projects of NORFACE and HERA as well as on the several calls posted by the DG HOME for the AMIF and IAG programmes. A survey within the community has shown that what has been proposed so far is sufficient. What the community asks the European Commission and the governments of MS and AC is a new approach and the present Strategic Research Agenda might well serve as a first step in this direction. In particular, the CrossMigration strategic research agenda recommends the following:

- **Joint Initiatives.** Nowadays, we are witnessing the emergence of the European Partnership model, the novel and comprehensive EC funding instrument for EU R&I Partnerships, which is expected to replace in the next EU R&I Framework Programme 2021-2027 Horizon Europe the toolbox currently in use for funding public-public (P2P) and public-private (PPP) partnerships. In fact, the new European Partnerships can implement a logic of intervention similar to the JPIs, even if they are a financing tool and not a strategic approach. CrossMigration has followed closely the process started in November 2016 towards the establishment of a Joint Programming Research Initiative on Migrants, Migration and Integration by the High Level Group for Joint Programming (GPC), which contributes to the preparation of the debates and decisions of the Competitiveness Council on joint programming (ERAC 2016). Completed in March 2017, the document issued by GPC *ad-hoc* Task Force puts the emphasis on the need of a Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) for implementing the required strategic approach to EU research on migration (ERAC 2018). Explicit



reference to a JPI might be useful to clarify what is considered the most appropriate, especially in terms of the mode of operation, strategic action or composition of the partnership, for the implementation of this Strategic Research Agenda. See the *Report from the GPC ad-hoc Task Force Towards a proposal for a new JPI on Migration, Migrants and Integration (March 2017)*, which has been endorsed by EUI, DE, EL, ES, FR, IT, NO, SE, SI, TR, COM.

- **Coordination and Support Actions.** There would also be a need for separate CSAs that would cover dialogue between researchers and stakeholders from different countries (e.g. Social Platforms); CSAs that would focus on researchers' dialogue (Research Platforms); and for instance pure Dissemination or Policy Advice CSAs that would engage specifically with bringing together research results, distilling them and coming up with new findings that would have a direct relevance for policy development.
- **More responsive funding structures.** The definition of funding programmes currently takes a very significant amount of time. This makes it difficult to bring together experts and do research on more immediate topics on the agenda. In recent years, funding schemes have favored either short technical assistance projects conducted by small teams of experts or long large-scale research projects by large consortiums of institutions. This leaves a gap for medium scale medium-duration projects by medium-size teams to produce more targeted and faster results. This suggests that further diversification of funding schemes would be beneficial. We believe that funding structures could become more responsive by providing, besides longer and long-term oriented research projects, also shorter and smaller short-term oriented projects. This enables the use of knowledge and research for more immediate issues on the policy agenda, and it could be a stepping stone towards longer term projects.
- **Enhancing the findability and accessibility of what is already there.** We strongly recommend that funding programmes more explicitly build on what is already there. This not only prevents overlaps in research, it also promotes systematic knowledge accumulation and it enables a focus on areas that really need more or new research. The Migration Research Hub built by IMISCOE and CrossMigration can provide a crucial instrument for taking stock of and reviewing existing work, before setting out and targeting new research.

### **#WHO: the process of defining research funding**

Finally, we have examined who could be involved, in different capacities, in the definition of sustainable funding programmes for the future.

- **Cooperation with non-research stakeholders.** In order to gain a comprehensive and deep understanding of the multitude of aspects relevant for migration it is important to foster collaboration with the civil society, policy



makers and practitioners from local to EU level and business. These actors pose knowledge internal to their practical involvement with the issues of migration, which is not immediately accessible to the academic researchers. However, given that stakeholders do not always have time to reflect on the use of the knowledge beyond their immediate every day work aims, it is important to stress that collaboration between academic researchers and practitioners in a broader sense could be mutually beneficial to gain a more nuanced picture on how migration is played out in wider contexts of social reality.

- **Cooperation with non-EU partners.** In order to grasp the global aspect of migration to (and from) Europe, we believe that cooperation with non-EU partners is crucial. We can only understand migration to and from Europe better when we understand the root causes of this migration better. And we believe the best way to develop such knowledge is by collaborating with partners in key countries of origin of migrants. This includes partners around the Mediterranean (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon) but for instance also partners from other parts of Africa and Asia.

**Structural collaboration with scholarly community.** We believe that a collaboration between the European Commission and the European migration scholarly community to maintain and uphold the Migration Research Hub can be of strong mutual benefit. It enhances overview of and accessibility to available research. It enhances opportunities for knowledge accumulation. And it strongly promotes the likelihood of research being found and used by stakeholders.

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