

MIGRATION INFORMATION SOURCE
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Migration Information Source
Top 10 Migration Issues
of 2007

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The Migration Information Source is a project of the
Migration Policy Institute

About the Source

The Migration Information Source provides fresh thought, authoritative data from numerous global organizations and governments, and global analysis of international migration and refugee trends. A unique, online resource, the Source offers useful tools, vital data, and essential facts on the movement of people worldwide.

Working with a team of international correspondents, we chronicle global migration movements, provide perspectives on current migration debates, and offer the tools and data from numerous global organizations and governments needed to understand migration. We do this in a way that is accessible to researchers, policy makers, journalists, and other opinion shapers.

Our advisory board and other prominent migration scholars who contribute to The Source include some of the most respected voices in the migration and refugee fields. The Source also relies on the good will of several global organizations and governments who make their data and research publicly available on our site.

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Issue #1: Political Paralysis: The Failure of US Immigration Reform

With a new Democrat-controlled Congress in place — and the presidential elections in 2008 on the horizon — many expected 2007 to be the year for bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform legislation.

The mood at the beginning of the year was cautious but hopeful. In his State of the Union address in January, President Bush renewed his call for immigration reform. In March, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) vowed to "take up a bill before the August recess."



After a comprehensive immigration reform bill failed in June, attempts to pass specific pieces of immigration reform failed as well.

Also in March, House Representatives Luis Gutierrez (D-IL) and Jeff Flake (R-AZ) introduced the Strive Act, which would have strengthened border security, eliminated the backlog of family immigration applications, created a guest worker program, and — sensitive to charges of "amnesty" from the media and many members of Congress — provided legalization only for unauthorized immigrants who first left the country and paid fines, fees, and back taxes as a condition for returning legally.

The White House informally circulated a similarly themed proposal around the same time. Its notable differences from the Strive Act: 1) eliminating preferences for family immigration and 2) instituting a points system that would have given priority to education, skills, US work experience, and English proficiency for employment-based immigration.

In April as a bipartisan group led by Senators Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Jon Kyl (R-AZ), working with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Michael Chertoff and Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez, negotiated a new immigration bill that was introduced in late May.

That bill would have significantly boosted enforcement of immigration laws (both at the borders and through mandatory verification by employers of the legal status of their employees), created a new temporary worker program, eliminated family immigration backlogs, instituted a points system, and allowed most of the country's 12 million unauthorized immigrants to earn legal status.

The Senate bill represented a "grand compromise" among widely differing points of view and political interests. President Bush even made a rare visit to Capitol Hill to speak with Republican leaders.

However, although it was the strongest enforcement bill yet to be considered by the Senate, the public perceived it primarily as an amnesty measure. Opposition to the amnesty provision brought the bill to a halt in June when a vote to cut off debate and vote on the bill failed.

The House subsequently abandoned acting on the Strive Act. Attempts over the summer and fall to pass specific pieces of immigration reform, such as the Dream Act and AgJobs, also have failed.

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In the aftermath, the message to federal government has been to enforce existing laws. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the agency charged with enforcing immigration laws in the interior of the country, made 863 criminal arrests and 4,077 administrative arrests in fiscal year (FY) 2007 compared with 716 criminal and 3,667 administrative arrests in FY 2006. In FY 2005, those numbers were far lower: 176 criminal and 1,116 administrative arrests.

Once immigration reform failed to pass, DHS revived an earlier proposal to target unauthorized workers another way: by sending guidance letters along with Social Security Administration (SSA) "no-match" letters to companies whose workers' names and Social Security numbers do not correspond. A federal judge's ruling in October barred DHS from sending out the guidance letters because the policy would cause thousands of employers to bear significant administrative expenses and it could cause many legal employees to lose their jobs due to errors in the SSA database.

Although the need for immigration reform will be a key issue in the 2008 presidential election (see [Ones to Watch](#)), Congress is not expected to take up the subject until 2009, leaving state and local governments (see [Issue #7: US Cities Face Legal Challenges](#), and [All 50 States Try Their Hand at Making Immigration-related Laws](#)) to respond out of frustration and public pressure.

For more information, please see the following articles on the Migration Information Source:

Feature:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who Does What in US Immigration
Policy Beats:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Judge Rules against DHS in Social Security "No-Match" Case (October 2007)• Alternative Immigration Reforms Follow Failed Legislation (August 2007)• Comprehensive Immigration Reform Eludes Senate, Again (July 2007)• Senate Immigration Bill, Attacked from All Sides, Gains Second Chance (June 2007)• After Long Negotiations, Senate Takes Up Immigration Reform Again (May 2007)• Congress and White House Release Competing Proposals for Immigration Reform (April 2007)
MPI:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Security "No Match" Letters: A Primer (PDF)• Proposed Points System and Its Likely Impact on Prospective Immigrants (PDF)

Issue #2: Iraqi Refugees: Diminished Options and Little US Support

Daily news reports frequently show the latest violence in Iraq, but it was not until 2007 that the stories of displaced Iraqis — and their fast-growing numbers — became more desperate and more widely known.

At the beginning of 2007, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was planning for up to 2.3 million post-2003-invasion internally displaced people (IDPs) within Iraq by the end of 2007. Of the estimated 2.4 million IDPs in Iraq in November, almost 1.2 million were displaced after the February 2006 Samarra mosque bombing, which ignited sectarian and ethnic arms conflict. According to UNHCR, 347,600 of that 1.2 million were displaced between April and September 2007 alone.



© UNHCR/P.Sands/December 2006

An Iraqi refugee looks out over Amman, Jordan, where many of Jordan's Iraqi refugees are living.

Estimates vary, but UNHCR reports that about 2.2 million Iraqis have left the country. Bearing the largest burden are Syria, which hosts as many as 1.4 million Iraqis, and Jordan, which has between 500,000 and 750,000; smaller numbers of Iraqis are in Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, and the Gulf states.

When Jordan imposed visa restrictions on Iraqis in late 2006, Syria became the only neighboring-country option for those fleeing the country. However, in October, Syria implemented visa restrictions as well, effectively sealing the border. Elsewhere in the region, Saudi Arabia announced the building of a 900-kilometer border security fence to keep out smugglers, terrorists, and Iraqi refugees.

Iraqis who have the means to leave the Middle East have applied for asylum in record numbers. In the first half of 2007, Iraqi citizens lodged some 19,800 asylum claims in the 36 industrialized countries that provide data to UNHCR, compared to the 13,600 applications received in the last six months of 2006.

Almost half of all Iraqi applications during the first half of 2007 were submitted in Sweden, already home to a significant Iraqi population. Although still accepting Iraqi asylum seekers, Sweden has asked other nations to shoulder more of the burden, warning that the current situation is unsustainable.

In addition to diminishing international options, Iraqis have increasingly faced difficulty moving within their own country in 2007 as "safer" governorates, particularly in the north, have struggled to cope with IDP flows. By late November, 11 of Iraq's 18 governorates had imposed entry restrictions. The result is that Iraqis fleeing danger have few options.

Many are wondering why the United States is not doing more for Iraqis, especially those who have worked for the US military. In February, Ellen Sauerbrey, Assistant Secretary of the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, said the country could admit 7,000 people by the end of 2007, too few and not fast enough according to many relief and refugee groups.

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As of September 2007, UNHCR had referred over 11,000 Iraqis to the United States, but less than 2,000 had actually entered. However, Sauerbrey stated in October that the bureaucratic obstacles to resettling Iraqi refugees were "crumbling" and that the United States would "easily" resettle 12,000 Iraqis by the end of 2007.

With the security situation in Iraq stabilizing somewhat by mid-November, thousands of Iraqis in the region have reportedly been returning home. UNHCR has learned through interviews that many are going back because they face economic difficulties or have depleted their savings. Only if the stability lasts — far from certain — will large numbers be able to return.

For more information, please see the following articles on the Migration Information Source:

Features:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where to Now? Decreasing Options for Displaced Iraqis• Iraqi Immigrants in the United States• Protecting the Rights of the Displaced in Iraq

Issue #3: Wanted More Than Ever: The Highly Skilled

While the countries that make a point of competing for the world's best and brightest tweaked their entry systems in 2007, the European Commission took a bold leap in late October: It formally proposed a European Union "Blue Card" scheme for admitting highly qualified non-EU workers who already have a work contract in a Member State and professional qualifications.

After two years in one Member State, Blue Card holders will be allowed to work in any other Member State without going through national-level immigration processes. Five years' residence in total will be enough to secure permanent residency. The idea was to create a flexible system that increases Europe's competitiveness but also respects each Member State's sovereignty.

Thus far, the proposal has left many questions unanswered, including how qualifications from outside Europe might be recognized and whether all Member States will participate. But the message Europe wants to send has come through: skilled migrants should be welcomed.

The United Kingdom may well choose to opt out of a Blue Card system since it announced this year that it will refine and expand its points-based system, a multistage process beginning in early 2008, to include all work and study-related migrants, abandoning the Highly Skilled Migrant Program launched in 2001.

The United States nearly jumped on the points system bandwagon when the US Congress considered an immigration reform bill that would have awarded points based on education, skill, unspecific work experience (on temporary visas), and English-speaking ability. Creating provisions for highly skilled workers, however, got lost in the debates over legalizing the unauthorized and securing the country's borders (see [Issue #1: Political Paralysis: The Failure of US Immigration Reform](#)) .

Elsewhere, the focus was on a subset of the highly skilled: investors and entrepreneurs. Germany reduced the minimum investment level for entrepreneurs wishing to immigrate to Germany from 1 million euros to 500,000 euros. Also, these immigrants will need to create five new jobs instead of 10 as previously required.

New Zealand adjusted its policy toward immigrant investors in 2007 to attract more of them, creating three levels that consider the migrant's potential contribution and the "risk" posed to the society (i.e., granting entry to a migrant who does not meet English-language requirements but who can make a substantial investment). The top and mid-level investors are not subject to a points system.



The EU's Blue Card scheme may help attract highly skilled professionals, such as IT specialists, to EU Member States.

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In a move that shows its desire to remain competitive, New Zealand responded to criticisms from the migrant community about its Work to Residence permits under the Skilled Migrant Category. As of April, those who qualify for such permits have nine months to find a job rather than six. Overseas applicants will also have an additional three months to get to New Zealand before that nine months begins.

For Singapore, where highly skilled immigrants have long been welcomed, a government announcement in February to plan for a population of 6.5 million (current population 4.5 million) raised concerns about allowing in too many foreigners too quickly.

Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Wong Kan Seng told the country's Parliament, "I do not share the view of those who fear being overwhelmed by new immigrants; I fear that they will instead bypass Singapore."

And that's a fear that all industrialized countries seem to share.

For more information, please see the following articles on the Migration Information Source:

Features:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selecting Economic Stream Immigrants through Points Systems• The "Brain Gain" Race Begins with Foreign Students• Secondary Migration: Who Re-Migrates and Why These Migrants Matter• France's New Law: Control Immigration Flows, Court the Highly Skilled• The Immigration Legacy of Tony Blair
Country Profile:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Singapore: Hungry for Foreign Workers at All Skill Levels
MPI:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposed Points System and Its Likely Impact on Prospective Immigrants (PDF)

Issue #4: Testing Immigrants — Literally

Prove you can fit in here. That is the challenge many countries placed in stark terms this year by implementing citizenship tests or increasing language requirements.

In the case of Australia, the government decided to do both.

Earlier this year, the mere mention of instituting a citizenship test that required cultural knowledge and basic English skills caused outrage among some Australians. They feared that such a test would scare off potential migrants (especially the much-desired highly skilled), contradict federal legislation and provincial multicultural policies, and disadvantage migrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Some called the citizenship test "fundamentally un-Australian."



Australia now requires immigrants to pass a test before they can become citizens.

Despite such arguments, the conservative government pushed ahead, and Parliament passed the measure. Nearly 300 people took the first citizenship test on October 1, and 83 percent achieved the 60 percent pass rate.

Acknowledging that better English language skills mean better jobs and pay for migrants, Australia also raised the English proficiency bar for its General Skilled Migration Program. As of September 1, those seeking entry as skilled migrants need to score at least a 6.0 when previously only a 5.0 was needed on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Those who score a 7.0 or higher receive 25 points, instead of the 15 points awarded to those who score at least a 6.0, toward their overall score for entry.

The United Kingdom's Highly Skilled Migrant Program already required a 6.0 IELTS score. Under its new point-based system — which covers all types of employment and students and will begin rolling out in 2008 in a multistage process — most migrants coming for skilled or highly skilled work will have to show they have an "acceptable standard" of English.

The French have joined the trend, too. Tests for language skills and French values became new requirements for prospective immigrants thanks to a law passed this fall. Immigrants recognized as lacking competency in written and spoken French are required to take 400 hours of subsidized French language courses in France.

While the United States does not require English language skills for entry, it has moved toward demanding a better understanding of US history and civic values of would-be citizens. This year, US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) tried out its civics questions on immigrants in numerous cities before narrowing the list down to 100 in September. USCIS will start giving the new test on October 1, 2008.

Although Singapore has not yet considered a citizenship test, the prosperous Southeast Asian country held its first National Citizenship Ceremony this August. One commentator suggested that a citizenship test might make the highly skilled choose another destination but also stated, "Neither should we be so desperate for a higher body count that we do not assert the need for some adherence to Singapore values."

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For more information, please see the following articles on the Migration Information Source:

Features:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Citizenship in a Globalized World• The Immigration Legacy of Tony Blair
Country Profiles:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australia's Continuing Transformation• Singapore: Hungry for Foreign Workers at All Skill Levels• A New Century: Immigration and the US
Policy Beat:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Changes Planned for US Citizenship Test" (February 2006)
MPI:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• US Immigration Fees Increases in Context

Issue #5: Managing Global Travel with Technology and Cooperation

Countries continue to adopt technological means of supporting border and immigration officials' decisions about what travelers pose risks or are barred by law, making biometrics the norm and not the exception.

Malaysia, which pioneered the use of biometric passports, credits them with reducing passport theft in 2007. Nigeria has had difficulty keeping up with demand for them this year.

The US-VISIT system, an automated entry-exit tracking system that collects biographical and biometric data from foreign nationals, began the tidal wave of change toward biometric-based border screening systems when it launched in January 2004.

In November, Japan began its own US-VISIT-style program of fingerprinting, photographing, and questioning foreign citizens every time they enter Japan. The country's 2.1 million foreign residents will eventually be included.

Also in November, the United Kingdom announced a GBP1.2 billion program to strengthen offshore border controls with new passenger screening technology. The electronic border security system will check all UK-bound passengers against immigration, customs, and police watch lists. The country boasts that successful trials of the new system have already led to the capture of more than 1,000 criminals.

Technology systems, however, raise privacy concerns and tensions among countries when standards differ. Since the early 1980s, the European Union has set standards for privacy protections of EU citizens' data. These are considerably tougher than those adopted by the United States as it has sought to tighten airline security and identify and track terrorists post-9/11.

But governments have been forced to compromise in order to keep airlines flying. The US Aviation and Transportation Security Act of November 2001 mandates that airlines operating passenger flights to, from or through the United States provide US authorities, upon request, with electronic access to passenger name records (PNRs) contained in their reservation and departure control systems.

EU citizens' data — specifically PNRs containing travel itineraries, payment details, and other information that comprises "travel intelligence" — became less private in July when the European Union and the United States signed a long-term agreement fulfilling the requirements of the 2001 US law.

Under the new agreement, which becomes effective January 1, 2008, the European Union will actively push 19 PNR data elements (of approximately 60) to a system run by the US



The European Union will actively push some airline passenger name record (PNR) data elements to a system run by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in early 2008.

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Department of Homeland Security (DHS). DHS will no longer pull PNR data from air carriers' reservation/departure control systems.

In addition, DHS will now keep the data for seven years in an active database and for eight years thereafter in an inactive status, accessing it only in exceptional circumstances and under strict conditions. However, these terms remain undefined.

The European Union sees PNRs as a useful tool for its own security, too. In November, the European Commission proposed a Council Decision Framework on the use of PNRs for law enforcement purposes. The idea is to upgrade and harmonize national efforts obligating air carriers making international flights to share passenger information in advance of their flights.

Whether the US-EU agreement stabilizes travel-security-related diplomacy and pays off more in counterterrorism, crime control, and immigration management than its political cost to US-EU relations remains to be seen.

For more information, please see the following articles on the Migration Information Source:

Features:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Countering Terrorist Mobility• Migration, Integration, and Security in the UK Since July 7
MPI:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Real Challenges for Virtual Borders: The Implementation of US-VISIT (PDF)

Issue #6: Integration Means Belonging

According to the dictionary, to "belong" means to "to be attached or bound by birth, allegiance, or dependency" — a logical definition when talking about immigrant integration. But it also means "to be suitable, appropriate, or advantageous." All these nuances, applied both positively and negatively, describe integration trends in industrialized countries in 2007.



Concerns over immigrants "belonging" to their host societies prompted various responses this year.

In the United States, which has no formal integration policy for family and economic migrants, communities that have become immigrant destinations only in the last 10 to 15 years care about immigration's practical effects — strains on schools and hospitals, for instance — but also about whether the culture will change and if the newcomers, particularly those from Latin America, will belong.

The numerous attempts in 2007 to regulate immigration at the state and local level reflect such fears about issues of belonging as well as immigrants' mobility and fiscal costs (see [Issue #7: US Cities Face Legal Challenges, and All 50 States Try Their Hand at Making Immigration-related Laws](#)).

Elsewhere, although nearly one in four Swiss residents are foreign born, Switzerland's anti-immigrant People's Party had its best showing ever, winning 29 percent of the vote in October elections. Its campaign imagery focused on fears about foreign criminals and foreigners' degradation of the Swiss way of life.

But not all policies or rhetoric around belonging were negative. In May, Canada launched the Foreign Credentials Referral Office (FCRO), which helps internationally trained individuals who want to work in Canada get their credentials assessed and recognized more quickly. By the end of 2007, FCRO services should be available at 320 Service Canada centers. The move is advantageous to both immigrants and Canada's economy, as Diane Finley, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, essentially stated.

The Dutch government, known for its rigid "norms and values" approach to integration, softened its tone this year when a new coalition took power. The coalition's agreement, entitled "Living Together, Working Together," addresses integration but focuses less on specific "problem groups" and more on general social welfare hurdles, including those facing nonimmigrants.

Germany showed that it wants to do a better job integrating its immigrants. Reforms instituted this year increased the maximum number of hours of German language instruction from 600 to 900 and imposed financial penalties for immigrants who are required to take the courses but fail to enroll. The federal government also decided to increase the integration course budget by 14 million euros to 154 million euros starting in 2008.

In July, Germany announced its National Integration Plan, which includes more than 400 measures and voluntary commitments relating to integration. Federal government officials, local authorities, associations of migrants, and numerous other nongovernmental players

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contributed to the plan. One notable outcome was the creation of language courses for targeted immigrant groups, including youth, women, women with children, and those with limited abilities to read and write.

Even South Korea has acknowledged that permanent migration is taking place and that the government should help them integrate. The government has proposed a 2008 budget of 22 billion won (about US\$24 million) for immigrant support, a 471.8 percent increase over 2007 (see [Issue #10: South Korea Opens Its Arms](#)).

Australia's move toward belonging was, perhaps, more symbolic. In January, the government changed the "Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs" to the "Department of Immigration and Citizenship" and, later in the year, the government rolled out its new citizenship test, which includes questions on Australian values (see [Issue #4: Testing Immigrants — Literally](#)).

For more information, please see the following articles on the Migration Information Source (by issue):

Features:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Germany Strives to Integrate Immigrants with New Policies• With Strict Policies in Place, Dutch Discourse on Integration Becomes More Inclusive
MPI:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrating Islam: A New Chapter in "Church-State" Relations (PDF)• Pathways to Success for the Children of Immigrants (PDF)• Language Policies and Practices for Helping Immigrants and Second-Generation Students Succeed (PDF)

Issue #7: US Cities Face Legal Challenges, and All 50 States Try Their Hand at Making Immigration-related Laws

Cities and states taking immigration matters into their hands — a trend that began in 2006 in response to federal-level failure (see [Issue #1: Political Paralysis: The Failure of US Immigration Reform](#)) — only gained momentum in 2007. Since the town of Hazleton, Pennsylvania passed its Illegal Immigrant Relief Act (IIRA) in July 2006, approximately 90 localities have proposed more than 100 similar IIRA ordinances that would sanction employers and landlords, and at least 35 have passed.



Courts have temporarily blocked or permanently barred immigration-related ordinances from going into effect.

But cities face an uphill legal battle. In Escondido, California; Valley Park, Missouri; and Farmers Branch, Texas, courts have temporarily blocked or permanently barred these ordinances from going into effect.

And this past July, in the first such case that has gone to trial, a US District Court judge struck down the Hazleton law on various constitutional and statutory grounds. The case is on appeal, and may potentially reach the US Supreme Court.

In addition to the legal obstacles, the fiscal and economic impact of these ordinances is gaining attention. In September, the township of Riverside, New Jersey, rescinded its Hazleton-type ordinance, citing the fiscal burden of defending it.

Prince William County, Virginia, a fast-growing suburban area southwest of Washington, DC, passed a narrower resolution in October to deny some county services to unauthorized immigrants, and to give local police increased powers to check their status.

A lawsuit challenging Prince William County's policy has been filed. The Washington Post has reported that a number of Hispanic immigrants, both legal and unauthorized, have left the county since July (see [Ones to Watch: New Settlement Patterns](#)), and that businesses catering to immigrants have experienced losses.

The action at the state level reached a new milestone in 2007. For the first time, all 50 states introduced a measure regulating immigrants. Over 1,000 such measures have been introduced nationwide; 182 have become law in 43 states.

States' bills have focused overwhelmingly on employment and driver's licenses and other forms of ID, but also on health, education, law enforcement, public benefits, human trafficking, and voting.

Not all state and local measures are punitive towards immigrants. California, for example, enacted a new law in October that makes it illegal for cities to require landlords to check the legal status of tenants, making it the first state in the country with such a law. Over the summer, New Haven, Connecticut, began offering municipal ID cards to residents regardless of status. In November, San Francisco passed a local law allowing unauthorized immigrants to obtain municipal identification cards.

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Perhaps the biggest state-level immigration controversy erupted in late October, when New York Governor Elliot Spitzer's plan to offer driver's license to all state residents regardless of legal status spilled into the Democratic presidential debates. Under intense political pressure, Spitzer abandoned the plan altogether in mid-November. The frustration with lack of progress on immigration reform at federal level guarantees that legal and political scrutiny of laws at state and local levels will continue in 2008.

For more information, please see the following articles on the Migration Information Source:

Feature:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How Los Angeles Deflected Mexican Immigrants to the American Heartland
Policy Beat:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New York Governor Abandons Driver's Licenses for the Unauthorized (November 2007)• Alternative Immigration Reforms Follow Failed Legislation (August 2007)

Issue #8: Mobility Partnerships, the Latest Policy Fashion

How do migrant sending and receiving countries both get more of what they want — without the receiving countries committing to a new stream of permanent migration? The European Union thinks it may have found an answer in the concept of "mobility partnerships," formally announced in a European Commission Communication this May.

Mobility partnerships essentially mean that sending countries (mainly in Africa) agree to take certain actions, such as discouraging illegal migration to EU countries and readmitting their own nationals caught in the destination country, in exchange for what they really want: legal migration

opportunities and short-term visas to study in or visit a Member State. In a nod to the importance of migration as a development tool (see [Issue #9: Migration and Development Issues: No Longer a Novelty in Policy Discussions](#)), sending countries may also ask for measures to address the risk of brain drain or to improve circular migration.

The Commission Communication makes clear that exact terms of any mobility partnership would depend on the sending and receiving country involved. In addition, mobility partnerships would be based on the EU's existing framework for legal movement — no new laws required.

The European Commission has dipped its toes in these waters already. For the last few years, it has funded pilot projects from Morocco to the Caucasus that help sending countries address their illegal flows to Europe, strengthen their own institutions related to employment, develop systems for managing seasonal workers, and reintegrate those who return. However, none of the projects has included the actual movement of people from one country to another to work on a temporary basis.

Thus far, the Commission has set no definite date for implementing mobility partnerships. The Communication in May said only that the Commission "will recommend that exploratory contacts be initiated with a limited number of potentially interested third countries."

Although the mobility partnerships themselves have yet to materialize, several EU Member States have been signing modestly sized bilateral worker agreements with countries beyond the European Union.

(Continued on next page)



Sending countries in Africa and destination countries in Europe could use mobility partnerships to deal with migration issues.

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For more information, please see the following articles on the Migration Information Source:

Features:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trans-Saharan Migration to North Africa and the EU: Historical Roots and Current Trends• The Changing Mosaic of Mediterranean Migrations• The Merits and Limitations of Spain's High-Tech Border Control• Linking Temporary Worker Schemes with Development
MPI:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gaining from Migration: Towards a New Mobility System (PDF)

Issue #9: Migration and Development Issues: No Longer a Novelty in Policy Discussions

The language of migration and development — remittances, diaspora, brain drain, circular migration — has become standard among researchers and NGOs interested in development issues. In 2007, that language formally became part of the migration policy agenda, particularly in Europe.

The EU Blue Card proposal released in October is designed to encourage highly skilled migration. But it also advocates ethical recruitment standards to limit — if not ban — active recruitment in developing countries already suffering from serious brain drain (see [Issue #3: Wanted More Than Ever: The Highly Skilled](#)).



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was among the attendees of the Global Forum on Migration and Development in Brussels this past summer.

In the immigration law France passed in 2006 (which went into force in 2007), the French government agreed to give "skills and talents" visas to qualified immigrants from a developing country only if the sending country has signed a "co-development" agreement with France or if the immigrants in question agree to return to their country of origin within six years.

The European Commission's communication on mobility partnerships in May made clear that third countries could ask for measures to address brain drain and mechanisms to encourage circular migration (see [Issue #8: Mobility Partnerships, the Latest Policy Fashion](#)).

A turning point for the migration and development policy agenda came in July, when Belgium hosted the first Global Forum on Migration and Development, a consultative process that followed up last year's UN High-Level Dialogue (UNHLD) on International Migration and Development. On the agenda: human capital development and labor mobility, remittances and other diaspora resources, and enhancing institutional/policy coherence and promoting partnerships.

In all, 200 civil-society actors participated in the Global Forum's Civil Society Day and representatives of 155 countries gathered in Brussels. None of the countries had to formally agree to anything, but several announced the launch of projects based on forum discussions; others declared their intentions to take on a variety of initiatives, many related to easing the flow of and reducing the costs of remittances.

Perhaps most importantly, Global Forum participants declared their intention to continue this unique multilateral meeting. The Philippines will host the 2008 Global Forum.

In her closing address, Global Forum organizer Ambassador Régine De Clercq said, "It is fair to say that our meeting of the last three days heralds a new common vision on migration and development, based on cooperation and partnership, rather than on confrontation."

The impact of the UNHLD and the Global Forum in 2007 extended to smaller groups, which used the forum as a reason to hold their own events on migration and development issues.

The Hague Process on Refugees and Migration held a cities-oriented event in The Hague in late January that included Ambassador De Clercq. Among its intentions was to feed its findings into the Global Forum.

In October, the Austrian government collaborated with the United Nations Information Service and the Vienna office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to host a one-day conference on migration and development. The conference reunited some of the players from the Global Forum, and, judging by the event's subtitle ("Progressing from Brussels 2007 to Manila 2008"), it was clearly positioned as a stepping stone.

Noticeably absent from the Global Forum was the United States, where immigration reform debates focused on the unauthorized population and a temporary worker program, with hardly a mention of migration and development issues.

In a "sense of Congress" resolution, the Senate bill that ultimately failed (see [Issue #1: Political Paralysis: The Failure of US Immigration Reform](#)) stated that the United States should help Mexico generate economic growth to reduce migration and should encourage the Mexican government to create incentives for Mexican citizens to return. However, such resolutions only express the opinion of Congress — they do not create law and are not enforceable.

With migration and development issues now a "normal" part of migration policy discussions, the question of what will actually change in both sending and receiving countries remains.

For more information, please see the following articles on the Migration Information Source:

Special Issue:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Migration and Development (February 2007)
Feature:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• France's New Law: Control Immigration Flows, Court the Highly Skilled
Policy Beat:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehensive Immigration Reform Eludes Senate, Again (July 2007)
MPI:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leveraging Remittances for Development (PDF)• Circular Migration and Development: Trends, Policy Routes, and Ways Forward (PDF)• How can circular migration and sustainable return serve as development tools? (Background paper for the Global Forum)(PDF)

Issue #10: South Korea Opens Its Arms

Sensitive to having too many outsiders, prosperous Asian countries generally have relied on temporary worker programs — with few rights for migrants — to fill gaps in their labor markets. With its historically diverse population, Singapore is the main exception as it sees migrants as a demographic necessity and courts highly skilled migrants.

For years, South Korea has struggled with a growing unauthorized population composed of workers from other Asian countries who overstayed tourist visas. In addition, South Koreans, particularly in rural areas, have increasingly sought brides from Vietnam, China, and the Philippines, leading to integration challenges.



About 65 percent of South Korea's foreigners live in metropolitan Seoul.

Although South Korea has long valued its homogeneous society, its government actively charted a different course in 2007 by acknowledging permanent immigration and the economic importance of immigrants, and literally rolling out the welcome mat.

It declared itself "the leader of embracing foreigners" in a November statement from Choo Kyu Ho, the commissioner of Korea Immigration Service. Choo even said that reaching out to foreigners is in Korea's founding ideology.

The country topped the 1 million foreigner mark in late August according to South Korea's Justice Ministry. That number — which includes unauthorized migrant workers and 720,000 residents — represents 2 percent of the total population.

About 65 percent of foreigners live in the Seoul metropolitan area, and 45.5 percent are Chinese although over 40 countries are represented. According to government figures, one out of every four men in rural areas is married to a foreign woman.

The 1 million mark was enough for the government to state in late October that Korea is turning into a "multiracial society." The government expects the foreign population to swell to 1.4 million by 2010, accounting for 2.84 percent of the country's population.

Civil society has played an important role in changing South Korea's attitude toward immigrants. In fact, political scientist Timothy C. Lim has written that the community of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) focused on migrant worker issues "has become a firmly entrenched and highly credible social force. The community has gradually transformed the issue of migrant labor rights into an issue of fundamental human rights and social justice."

By 2006, as Lim has noted, NGOs had already shifted their attention to the permanent settlement issue. A detention center fire in February that killed nine (eight Chinese nationals and one Uzbek) and injured 18 brought more attention to migrants' situation, but many substantive changes were already in motion.

Migration Information Source: Top 10 Migration Issues of 2007

Among the South Korean government's milestone events in 2007:

- passage of laws aimed at protecting migrant workers from abuse and exploitation (effective July 1, 2007);
- a Supreme Court ruling that migrants have the right to organize a labor union regardless of their status;
- free medical checkups to some 6,000 female immigrants married to Korean men;
- a plan to grant skilled foreign manual workers permanent residency;
- a proposed 2008 budget of 22 billion won (about US\$24 million) for immigrant support, a 471.8 percent increase over 2007; and
- a Ministry of Justice-sponsored information fair in Seoul where foreigners could get answers about topics including insurance, school enrollment, and injury compensation from representatives of six government ministries.

Whether or not other countries in the region follow South Korea's lead, the country has started a journey down its own promising path.

For more information, please see the following articles on the Migration Information Source:

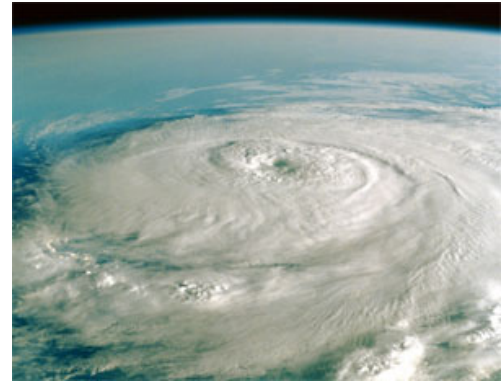
Country Profile:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• South Korea: Balancing Labor Demand with Strict Controls

Ones to Watch in 2008: The 2008 US Presidential Elections, New Settlement Patterns, Visa Waiver Program, Migration and Climate Change, and France

Immigration and the 2008 US Presidential Elections

In a Democratic presidential debate this fall, the issue of driver's licenses for unauthorized immigrants in New York State tripped up candidate Hillary Clinton; the same topic caused Democratic candidate Barack Obama and Republican candidates to stumble at a subsequent debate. Republicans have also had increasingly testy exchanges about immigration enforcement, charging each other with "sanctuary" practices in years past.

Although polls show that voters' main concerns are the war in Iraq, health care, and the economy, immigration is surfacing repeatedly. With 2007 having failed to produce immigration reform (see [Issue #1: Political Paralysis: The Failure of US Immigration Reform](#)), some voters are angry enough that candidates' stands on immigration may well get them to the polls — and may affect the outcome of races in some districts or states.



Hurricanes are among the extreme weather events that may cause people to migrate.

New Settlement Patterns in the United States as a Consequence of State/Local Lawmaking on Immigration

Even though many local-level ordinances targeting unauthorized immigrants have not been enforced, and Hazleton has a court injunction against its law (see [Issue #7: US Cities Face Legal Challenges, and All 50 States Try Their Hand at Making Immigration-related Laws](#)), the fact that communities support such regulations has caused immigrants to leave many of those towns, as the media have reported. Consequently, in 2008, we may hear more about immigrants settling in states and communities perceived as friendlier to them.

The End of the Visa Waiver Program as We Know It

The United States has been concerned for some years about the security loopholes in the air travel system (see [Issue #5: Managing Global Travel with Technology and Cooperation](#)), including the existing Visa Waiver Program (VWP). Under VWP, citizens of designated countries may travel to the United States for business or personal reasons for under 90 days without obtaining a visa.

Thanks to a law that President Bush signed in August, VWP travelers eventually will have to register online (but not for visas), and their submitted information will have to be approved before they can travel to the United States. Modeled on a system already in place in Australia, the Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) system will collect basic passenger biographic information that the Department of Homeland Security will use to assess potential threats. Although the target date for ETA's implementation is unknown, look for debate on its merits and drawbacks in 2008.

Migration and Climate Change

The Norwegian Nobel Committee focused public attention on climate change this year by awarding its Peace Prize to former Vice President Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The citation read, in part, "Extensive climate changes may...induce large-scale migration."

However, climate-change discussions have not seriously addressed the likelihood and mechanisms of cross-border movement of people affected by rising sea levels, prolonged droughts, desertification, and extreme weather events. The most basic steps toward consensus on appropriate responses to climate-induced migration have yet to be taken. Indeed, migration did not make the formal agenda of this month's UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Bali. Expect climatologists and migration specialists to start talking to each other in 2008.

France as a Trendsetter

Known for his law-and-order approach to immigration, Nicolas Sarkozy — France's interior minister twice during Jacques Chirac's presidency and the French President as of May 2007 — has already instituted some of the immigration measures he proposed leading up to the election.

He created the Ministry for Immigration, Integration, National Identity, and Co-development to address all these issues under one department. A law passed this fall requires prospective immigrants to take a French language test and an exam on French values. Relatives in France seeking to bring over family from abroad must prove they make enough money to support them.

A plan to test some would-be migrants' DNA to verify their relationship to family in France sparked heated criticism. DNA testing will now be an 18-month trial and done only on a voluntary basis, with the French government paying for all tests. Sarkozy even wanted France to begin collecting data on ethnicity — long banned because everybody is considered French — a proposal that failed.

None of these measures are considered radical by European standards, but Sarkozy is not finished. He wants to see a "Mediterranean Union" that would link the region's countries through educational, health, or cultural projects, as well as shared security and business deals.

These plans, which have already upset countries in northern Europe, took shape in October when Sarkozy announced in Morocco that France will host a conference next summer to lay the political and cultural groundwork for the union. Migration issues will likely figure largely in discussions.

Sarkozy's determination to shake things up means France could become the immigration trendsetter in Europe in 2008.