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The importance of preserving the human capital in conditions of mass migration as a basis for sustainable development

The Issue of Mass Migration

Arrival of more than one million migrants last year has become one of the main challenges of the present day EU. The number of migrants has significantly dwindled, since we have come to an agreement with Turkey. Yet there are still many questions ahead of us, which necessarily need to be answered in satisfactory way. Crucial question is how to cope with arrival of so many people?

The Case of Jordan and Lebanon

I have been travelling all over Europe, trying to visit different refugee and detention camps to create a comprehensive picture about the situation of refugees and asylum seekers coming to the continent. However, last week I was also able to be part of a delegation of the European Parliament visiting two countries that are hit the hardest by the migration crisis: Lebanon and Jordan. What I experienced was terrifying for I not only saw the massive number of refugees escaping Syria and Iraq fearing the ongoing armed conflicts. But I saw that there is no deadline to such crisis and for many people, the life of refugees can become the reality for the rest of their lives as I could see on the case of Palestinian refugees, whose presence is dating back to 1948. There are refugees of a second or even third generation displaced in the two countries, in the case of Lebanon it is around quarter million Palestinians and in the case of Jordan over two million Palestinians. This is of course paralysing. Not only for the refugees themselves, but even for the hosting nations. I realized that there is a real potential that millions of Syrian refugees flowing into neighbouring countries or even all the way to Europe may meet the same fate as Palestinians and the life on the run can become their reality dozens of years to come. More than 75% of refugees that cross the Lebanese border are women and children, 370 000 Syrian refugees are children between 6 and 14 years of which 60% are out of school. The adult refugees have restricted access to work. And this situation is now of course spilling into other countries. The capacities of neighbouring countries are exhausted, millions of migrants are flowing to Europe, where they only meet

with disappointment and get caught in a political limbo. The situation is unsustainable.

Brain Waste

We need to ensure that millions of displaced people will not fall victims of brain waste and we should secure access to education for all children and access to work for successful asylum seekers. Nevertheless, in reality these decisions are always more difficult to implement effectively. The situation we are facing now in the European Union is struck by the divide between the East and the West over the relocation mechanism and it seems that we miss the bigger picture. Successful integration of people with different background is a long-term run, conditioned by language abilities and socialization through employment, which again is conditioned by adequate qualification. Looking at the statistical data, I was very concerned to find out that by June 2016, 30 largest companies in Germany were able to employ only 54 refugees, although there were 665,000 job vacancies. By the end of July, just about from one tenth to one eighth of refugees looking for a job had been able to get one. The biggest problem was a lack of qualification or German proficiency. Two thirds of young Syrian refugees in Germany are illiterate.

The European Union leaders are currently discussing whether to accept refugees, under what conditions and how to stop other ones from accessing Europe. But another real question we need to seriously pose ourselves is what are we going to do about the future of all those who are already displaced, awaiting their fate in provisional camps on the borders, without real hope for change? If we do not act quickly, we risk entire future generations suffering the consequences of life in refuge. This will lead to even a greater problem in the future and potential security risk.