

MEDIA RELEASE

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Attracting and retaining talented immigrants in Europe is essential for demographic and economic growth

Riga, 20 March 2015. On 19-20 March the Annual Conference of the European Migration Network “Attracting and Retaining Talent in Europe” took place at the National Library of Latvia, Riga.

The conference highlighted one of the priorities set by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, in the context of migration. This envisages development of a legal migration policy designed to make Europe one of the most popular destinations for migrants, thus addressing the demographic challenges that Europe is likely to face in the future. At the same time, this will be the first event to present preliminary findings from the study “Admitting third-country nationals for business purposes” developed by the European Migration Network. One of the main conclusions of the study is that there is no harmonised policy in the EU towards third-country nationals who enter for business purposes, and the Member States mostly use national programmes, which are adapted to their national priorities.

“Today one of the central aspects of well-managed and comprehensive migration policy in the EU focuses on the development of measures for attracting highly qualified migrants while respecting national competences. Thus, well-managed migration policy can be considered as ways of boosting economic growth and competitiveness, addressing labour market shortages and offsetting the costs of demographic ageing,” indicated Latvian Minister for the Interior Rihards Kozlovskis during the opening of the conference.

The conference was divided into five panel discussions: global challenges and competition over talent; the European Union’s readiness to attract talented migrants in competition with other countries; the European Union and national policies to attract talent; the role of a welcoming culture in retaining talent; and the perspective of migrants and their countries of origin.

During the conference participants also discussed issues such as cooperation among business representatives and social partners in attracting talented migrants to Europe, as well as the development of education system and other public services for migrants and their families.

One of the main conclusions of the conference was that it is necessary to include foreign dimension into the EU migration policy, envisaging cooperation with third countries and creating synergies in policy areas such as migration, employment and social sector.

The conference was attended by high-level officials including William Lacy Swing, IOM Director General and Belinda Pyke, the Director of Directorate B (Migration and Mobility) at the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, as well as migration experts from the Member States, representatives from the European Union institutions, researchers, and scientists and experts from New Zealand, Canada and India.

The conference was organised by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, as the Latvian Contact Point for the European Migration Network, in cooperation with the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs at the European Commission.

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