

Summary: 'Escaping the Deterrence Trap: Key Building Blocks for a Better Migration System'

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Escaping the Deterrence Trap: Key Building Blocks for a Better Migration System

Toplines:

- Current migration policymaking focuses on harsh deterrence measures alone and is not well-equipped to address today's migration challenges.
- This policy brief explores new approaches to migration policymaking to address such challenges.
- In migration policymaking, control should not be considered to be deterrence alone but rather it requires systems thinking.
- New innovative policies are system-aware, flexible, and create options for displaced people.
- New migration policymaking should incorporate, leverage, and create social networks, engage stakeholders, and enhance the agency of migrants and other actors.
- These principles can help establish new responses to address climate migration challenges.
- EU's Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), Safe Mobility Offices (SMOs), Western Balkan Regulation (WBR), community sponsorship, refugee labour mobility, and emergency evacuations and humanitarian visas are presented as examples.
- A responsibly designed digital infrastructure can help making systems and tools more flexible and adaptable.

Executive Summary

- This policy brief explores new approaches to migration policymaking.
- Current migration system focuses on deterrence alone and approaches 'control' as harsh deterrence measures. Such migration policymaking is not well-equipped to address the uncertainties and complexities of migration. Moreover, it creates adverse effects such as wearing down trust in governments, increasing migration numbers, and people using more dangerous routes.
- In policymaking, we should **rethink what control means** in today's complex world. This requires **systems thinking**, therefore being more flexible, agile, designing policies that allow continuous learning, and involve those impacted by policies.
- In the last decade, there have been innovative policies in Europe, North America, and Latin America. These new approaches to migration policy have **common key features**:
 - They are system-aware,
 - They allow for more flexibility,
 - They create more options for people on the move.
- **System awareness** refers to establishing connections between different policies and their objectives, and being aware of and attuned to local and regional contexts. Isolated policy interventions lack system awareness. System-aware policy examples are SMOs and Germany's Western Balkan Regulation (WBR).

- **Flexible policy design and implementation** allows for adaptation and adjustment in the face of uncertainties and challenges. Flexibility can lower implementation costs, increasing efficiency and effectiveness. Being able to quickly change criteria for protection or including non-state actors in decision-making are various ways to create flexible structures and processes. Some examples are:
 - Ukrainians' ability to choose their residency in the EU's TPD.
 - Groups of individuals being able to host displaced people through community sponsorship. Such schemes especially proved to be flexible when they were expanded to include refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine.
- **Creating more options** for people on the move requires being aware of the variety and changing nature of aspirations and needs of displaced people. Individuals often find themselves in one of the two categories of refugee and migrant, and cannot move between. Providing employment pathways to refugees is an example of thinking out of the box, and creates options for displaced people.
- **Key mechanisms** that make these new tools and approaches work better:
 - **Incorporating and leveraging social networks** (e.g., EU'S TPD and Germany's WBR) **and creating new ones.** Labour-migration policies should consider social networks in policy planning.
 - **Engaging stakeholders** such as civil society, cities, employers, migrants, and refugees in design and decision-making, which establishes social licenses for these policies. E.g., community sponsorship, labour mobility initiatives for refugees, and Germany's WBR.
 - **Enhancing the agency of migrants and other actors:** This can be achieved by creating more options for them and ensuring they have the necessary information and access to these options. E.g., refugee labour mobility initiatives and SMOs.
- These principles should be adopted to manage migration and mobility induced by **climate change**. There is an opportunity to develop creative new responses to address challenges arising from climate change in the absence of adequate migration policy tools.
- Authors recommend a responsibly designed **digital infrastructure** to make systems and tools more flexible and adaptable during crisis situations or with changing rules and demands. Such a system can be more decentralized, include more stakeholders, and prevent bureaucratic inefficiency.