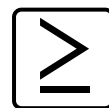


POLICY BRIEF



InterAgency Institute
BEYOND INSTITUTIONAL BOUNDARIES

IMMIGRATION POLICIES: POST-COVID 19 SCENARIOS

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POLICY STATEMENT

The EU knows responses must be rethought when the spaces of power are reconfigured through crisis environments. In terms of migration, it is possible to observe management initiatives based on border control with a low degree of compliance with current legislation. The effects of difficulties in harmonising regional and national policies lead to problems in human security, which is decisive for an eventual imbalance of forces within the Community political framework. At the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the region's countries mostly and, with the imposition of restrictive measures on the movement of people, the border closure was a measure of sanitary containment. This event set precedents for practices to control migration flow that affected the current commitments, already marked by little efficiency.

BACKGROUND

The border issue is closely linked to the migration issue. The EU institutions have sought to contain arbitrary measures that go beyond what the regulatory framework requires. Such political behaviour makes the integration process vulnerable; whose free movement of people is significant.

Since the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on migration and border dynamics. As a way of containing the contagion of the disease, one of the health measures imposed by WHO was social isolation. At the same time, across the world, several countries have adopted border closings to prevent displacement of people between countries and try to prevent the spread of the virus. However, the consequences have been noted on accession and Community policy.

With the blocking decrees, initially, in the largest cities, several jobs were closed. Migrant populations have directly suffered this impact when they lose their jobs, and their chances of survival are impaired, while, with the closure of borders, they are prevented from returning to their countries and enter a situation of social vulnerability.

Some European countries have ensured the regularisation of migrants to have access to health services, but there is no guarantee that services will be universalised in the post-pandemic. Besides, the economic slowdown may cause a reduction in integration and support for migration policies. In the political aspect, the pandemic increased restrictions and caused the loss of the regional governance system's status to the detriment of decisions based on national interest in the matter.



FINDINGS

For the stability of integration, it is necessary to create frameworks that work to deepen the relationships and links between agents, especially in the form of regulations that affect social life in the face of a new concept of society, of transnational identity based on regional borders. Among the most relevant changes, the most crucial is the division of competences and governance levels of several themes that have come to be considered part of a standard policy, to consolidate the objectives presented in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. Given the multiplicity of themes, the migration issue is part of the community normative framework and follows well-defined hierarchical criteria. At the supranational level, policies determine the guidelines that states must uphold, even if they implement them according to their realities and needs, especially after the Schengen Agreement's institutionalisation to the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, which treated borders as an issue of security.

According to an OECD report, the pandemic has hurt migrants. Offices responsible for consular, migration and asylum services have been temporarily closed, and return, and resettlement policies have been suspended.

This situation was described by Kocharov (2015) in which there are “static conflicts of interest between EU national policies”. Especially on the border agenda, as it is one of the most sensitive issues for the EU, for limiting the free movement of EU citizens and appreciably affecting the Common Market based on this flow.

CONCLUSIONS

When identifying institutional political changes and border policies, given the emergence of the pandemic, from a study that seeks results for the better care of migrant populations, we conclude that: the adoption of three-time frames - before, during and after the pandemic (this based on a prospective study) - it would be possible to adapt public policies to correct vulnerabilities. Potential gaps, if identified, can put compliance with planned migration policies at risk. At a sensitive time for every world citizen, human security should prevail in the face of migratory policies of a security nature.

SUGGESTIONS

A collection of theoretical references and data for subsequent analysis, before and during the pandemic, would help map institutions and policies to highlight changes and identify gaps. The mapping and identification phase of the measures adopted, completed or in progress, could be carried out through field surveys and surveys.



Finally, with the systematisation of the data obtained in each one, they could be used in a prospective study to identify gaps, public policies and political behaviours that would tend to remain after the pandemic. Next, the diagnosis that conditions the project, based on the incrementalism of policies that move regimes and, as such, the EU. Then, the agencies involved in the area of Migration and Home Affairs, as defined by the European Commission, can either evolve towards accession or an institutional crisis. Finally, the results of the policy of the case to be observed and the prospects for the future. The proposed scheme can be seen below:



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