

PRESS RELEASE

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Study: Migration to Europe on the rise until 2030

Immigration will increase in the new decade, especially from Africa and the Middle East. The EU should manage it intelligently in close partnership with Africa.

A new study by the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (wiiw) concludes that migration to Europe will increase. In the baseline scenario, 3.4 million immigrants from neighbouring regions will flow into the EU as well as the UK, Norway, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Iceland by the end of the decade. The majority of them are expected to come from Africa and the Middle East. *"The main reasons are the huge income gaps with the countries of origin, fragile state institutions, state collapse, climate change, natural disasters and armed conflicts"*, argues Professor Michael Landesmann, co-study author and economist at wiiw. But Europe's aging population will also continue to create demand for labour and thus attract young people, Landesmann says.

Different scenarios

Together with Isilda Mara, Richard Grieveson, and Sandra Kovacevic, Landesmann examined migration flows to Europe between 1995 and 2020 in terms of causes and patterns. Based on the results, various scenarios were calculated up to 2030. The conclusion: even in the event of a positive economic development scenario in Africa and the Middle East, around 2.9 million people from these regions will arrive in Europe within the next ten years. If immigration policies are relaxed, this figure could rise to 4.7 million. *"However, to conclude from this that we should continue to build Fortress Europe would be a mistake"*, says Landesmann, referring to the study.

Even with stricter immigration regulations, 2.5 million people are still likely to make the journey. In addition, the problem of illegal migration could worsen. *"And in the event of increased political instability and intensified climate change in the countries of origin, we expect almost 4 million migrants - regardless of how restrictive we make immigration in the EU"*, states wiiw economist Isilda Mara.

Managing immigration together with Africa

The EU should respond to this challenge with a comprehensive strategy that relies in particular on a close partnership with Africa to manage migration, the study recommends. In this way, the EU's economies would get the workforce they need, while a controlled influx would not overburden the population. People from Africa and the Middle East should also be given the opportunity to train in Europe and return after a certain period of time to boost the economy at home. Money transfers should also be made easier.

In addition, the study's authors advocate being better prepared for future conflicts and environmental disasters in regions neighbouring the EU. *"The EU should provide more money for decent living conditions of refugees near conflict zones, and above all set aside resources that can be deployed*

quickly to support poorer countries that experience a rapid increase in refugee arrivals due to unforeseen events", wiiw's Deputy Director, Richard Grieveson, stresses.

About the research project

The study "[Migration from Africa, Middle East and EU Eastern Partnership countries towards the EU-27: Challenges and prospects ahead](#)" is an independent research project by the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (wiiw) and was financed by the Anniversary Fund of Oesterreichische Nationalbank, Austria's central bank. We would like to express our sincere thanks for the financial support.

About the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (wiiw)

wiiw is an economic think tank that has been producing economic analyses and forecasts on currently 23 countries in Central, East and Southeast Europe for almost 50 years. Moreover, wiiw studies topics of international economic relations and conducts research on macroeconomics, trade issues, competitiveness, investment, the European integration process, regional development, labour markets, migration and income distribution.

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